Walkable Places

Presented by

Planning & Development Department
City of Houston

Walkable Places Subcommittee
Wednesday, April 5, 2017

Project Schedule

Meeting Agenda

I. Recap

II. Standards to Promote Walkable Places

III. Guess Speaker – Jeff Taebel

IV. Next Meeting Preparation

V. Homework

VI. Public Comment

I. Recap:

Other U.S. cities' practice to promote walkable places

- Approaches to decide location (Where)
  - -- City Initiated Approach
  - -- Applicant Initiated Approach

- Standards to promote walkable places (What)
  - -- Building Setbacks
  - -- Parking Requirements
  - -- Building Frontage
  - -- Pedestrian Realm

Standards to Promote Walkable Places

- Building Setbacks
- Parking Requirements
- Building Frontage
- Pedestrian Realm
- Active Ground Floor

Active Ground Floor Use

- By Street Classification
  - along specific streets
  - Number of entrances
- By Designated Area
- Applicable cities:
  - Austin
  - Denver
  - Oakland
  - Portland
  - Atlanta
  - Washington D.C.
  - Charlotte
  - San Francisco

Standards to Promote Walkable Places

- Building Setbacks
- Parking Requirements
- Building Frontage
- Pedestrian Realm
- Active Ground Floor
- Building Façade and Design
  - Transparency
  - Minimum and Maximum Building Height
  - Minimum Ground Floor Height
  - Parking Structures

Building Façade & Design Transparency

- Minimum ground floor transparency requirements
- Applicable cities:
  - Oakland
  - Atlanta
  - Denver
  - San Francisco
  - Portland
  - Austin
  - Charlotte
  - Washington D.C.

Building Façade & Design
Min and Max Building Height

- Min Height
- Max Height
  - Designated by corridor or area
- Applicable city:
  - Charlotte
  - Denver
  - Portland
  - Oakland
  - Atlanta

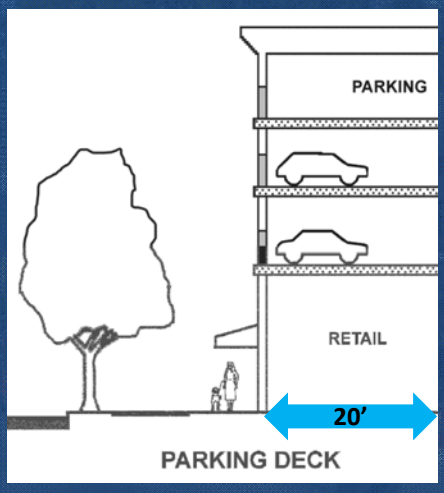
Building Façade & Design
Building Height

Building Façade & Design
Minimum Ground Floor Height

- Min Height
  - Ground Floor
  - Designated by corridor or area
- Applicable cities:
  - Charlotte
  - San Francisco
  - Austin
  - Denver
  - Portland
  - Oakland
  - Atlanta

Building Façade & Design
Parking Structures

- Required
  - Active ground floor
  - Screening
  - Min Height
  - Min Depth
- Applicable cities:
  - Charlotte
  - San Francisco
  - Austin
  - Atlanta



Building Design Standards Discussion

- Does building design significantly impact walkable places?
- If so, should we consider building design criteria for creating walkable places in Houston?

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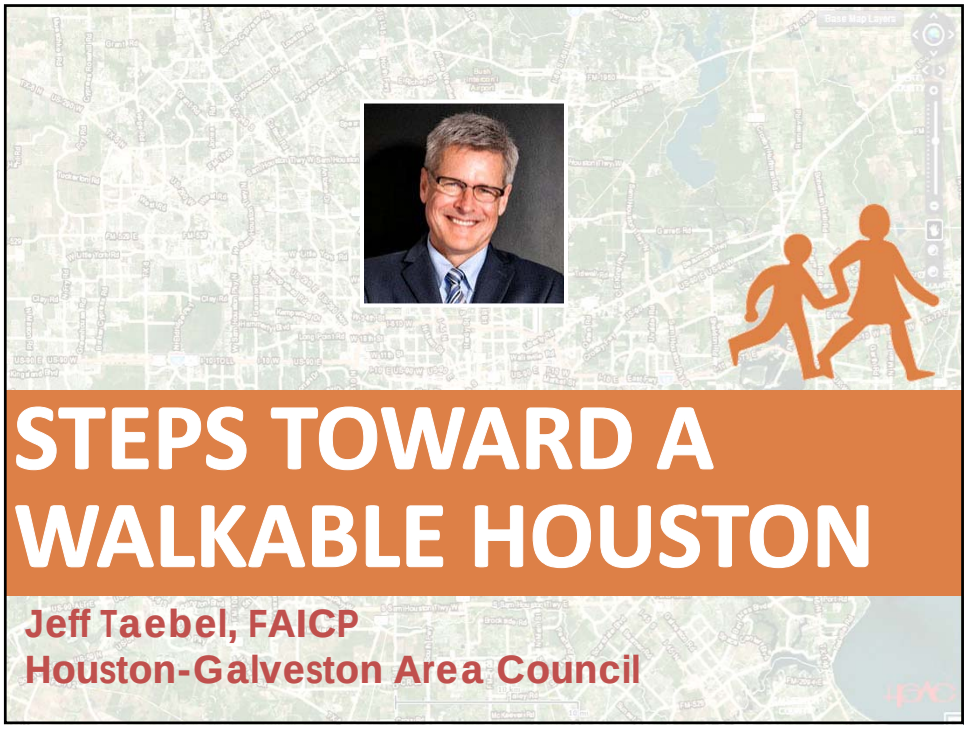
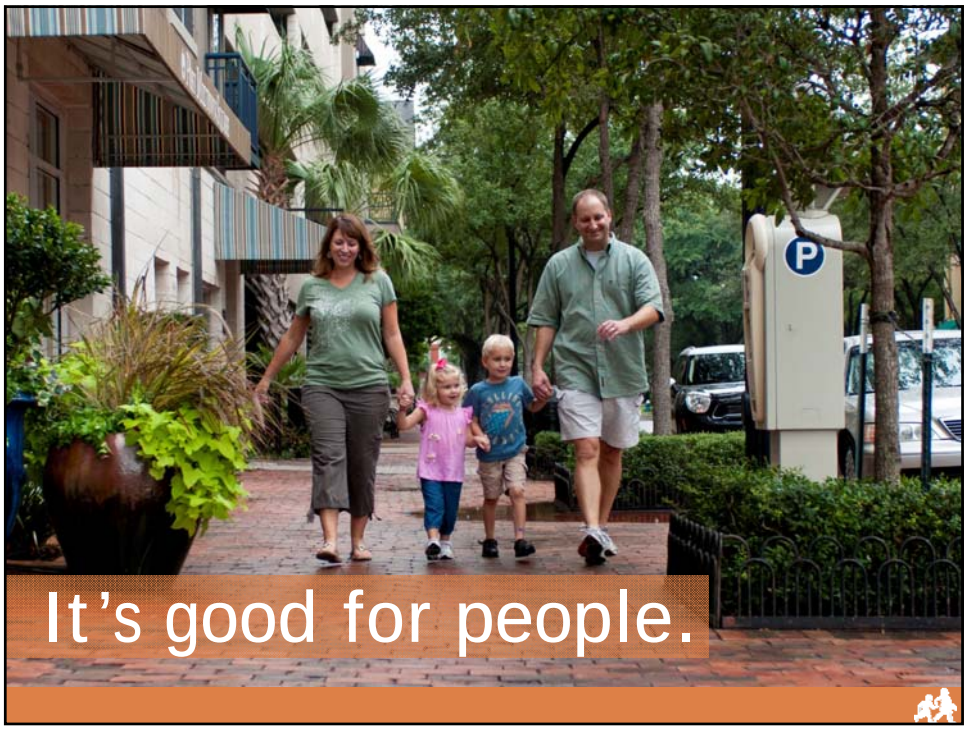

STEPS TOWARD A WALKABLE HOUSTON
Jeff Taebel, FAICP
Houston-Galveston Area Council

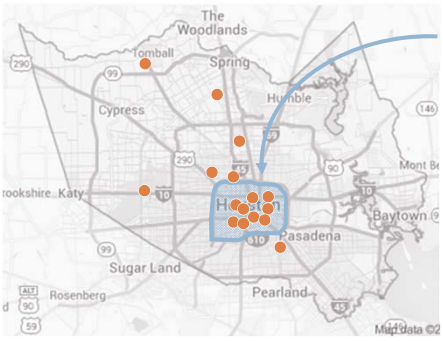

It's good for people.

109
It's good for the planet.

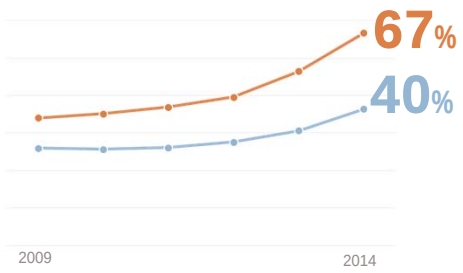
HAPPY HOUR
Come Enjoy our
It's good for our prosperity.

Property Value Increase

2009-2014

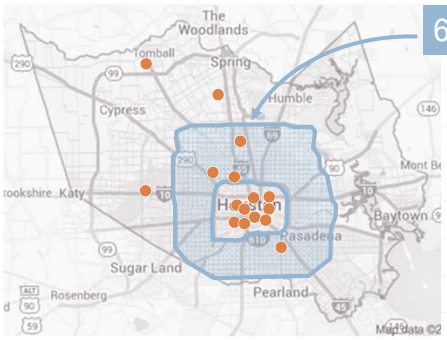


Inner Loop | Average LCS

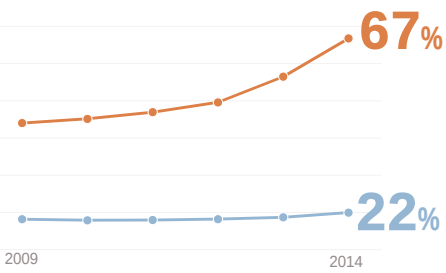


Property Value Increase

2009-2014



610 to BW8 | Average LCS



Property Value Increase

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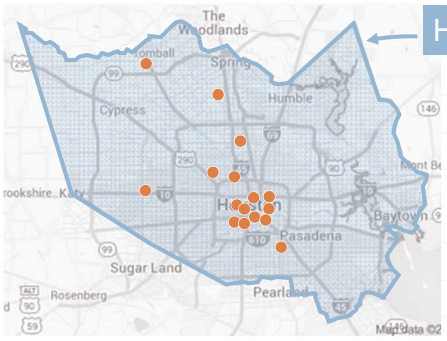
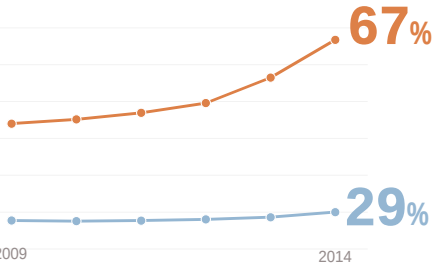
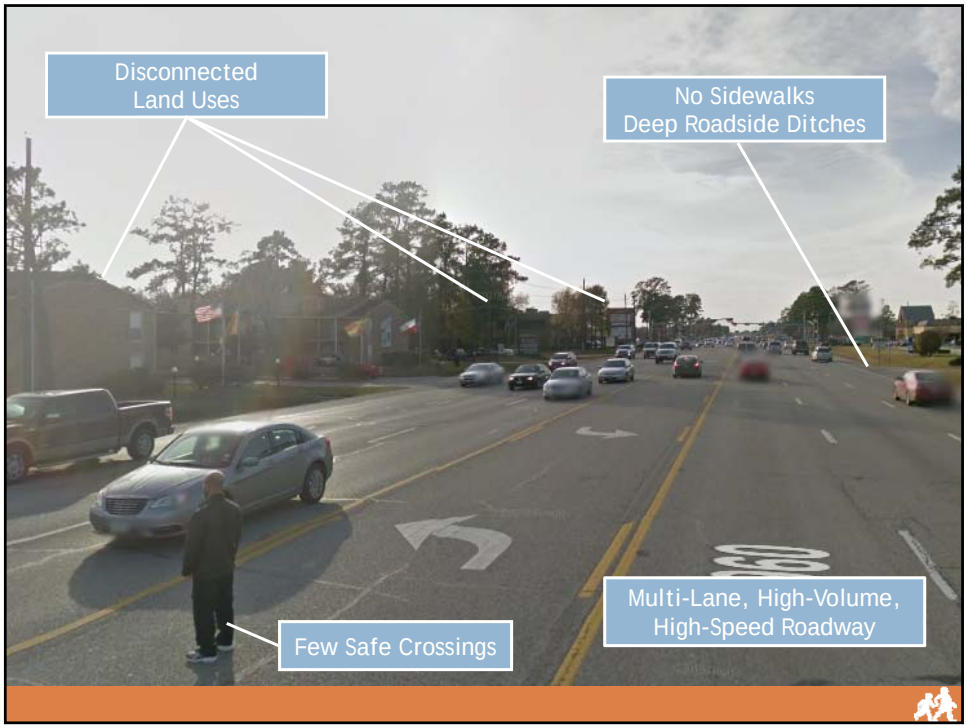


Harris Co.

Average LCS



Where do we start?



Targeted Strategies

Midtown

Airline

Goal: Activity Density

People + Jobs close together reduces trips by car

Downtown Houston*

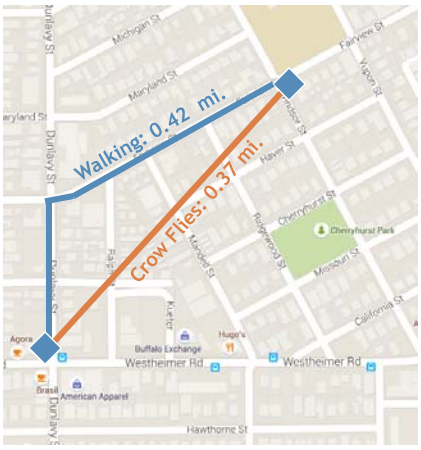
Greenway Plaza*

*Same scale

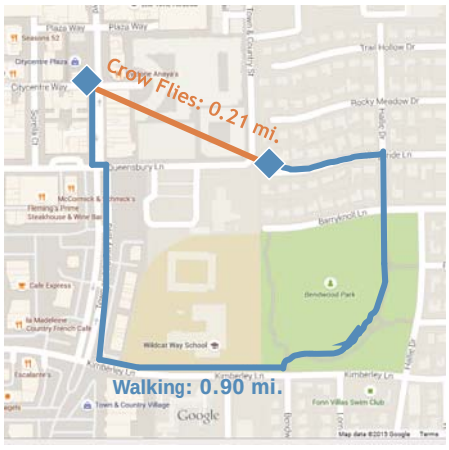
Connectivity

A TRIP TO THE COFFEE SHOP

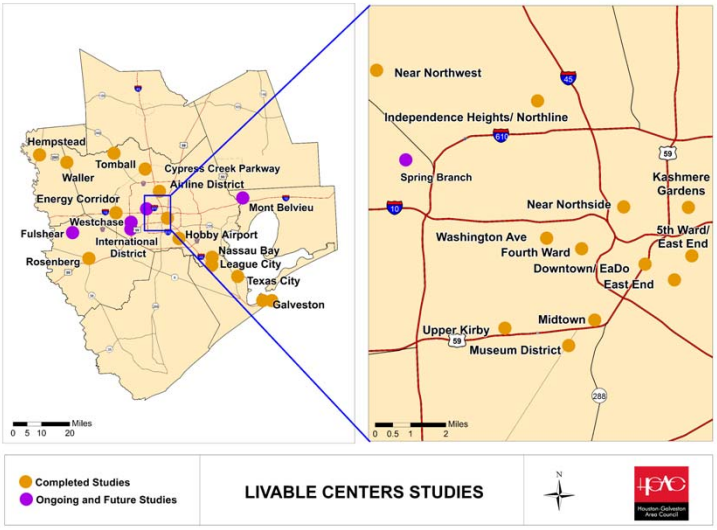
Gridded Street Network



Disconnected Street Network



Livable Centers Studies

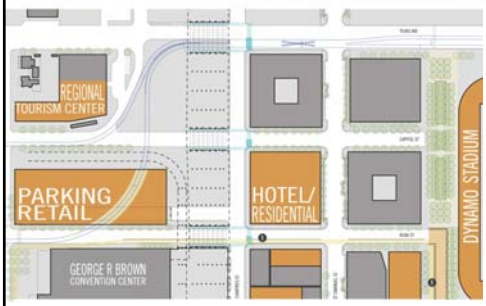


Livable Centers Studies

- Began in 2008
- 25 studies complete, 3 underway, 2 pending
- Selected through competitive process
- Average cost $200,000 (80% federal, 20% local match)
- 9 month timeframe
- H-GAC is project manager

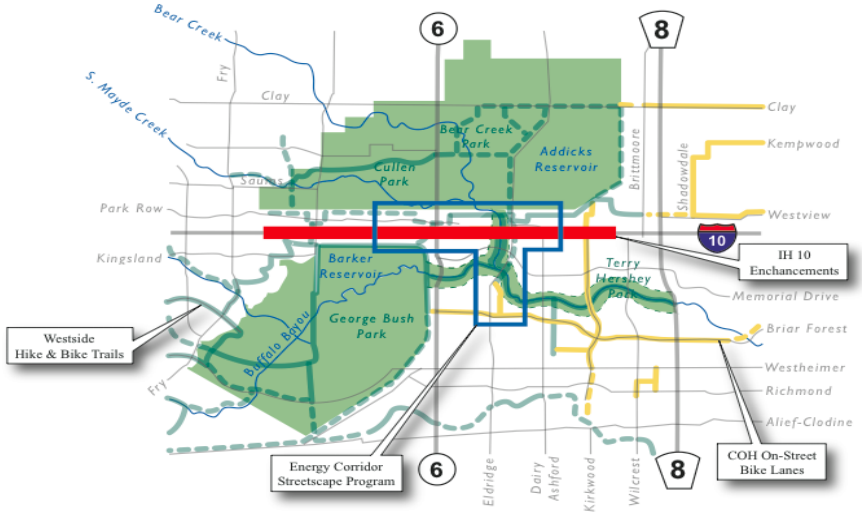
Downtown/EaDo

Downtown/EaDo



Energy Corridor

Energy Corridor



Airline Drive

Airline Drive

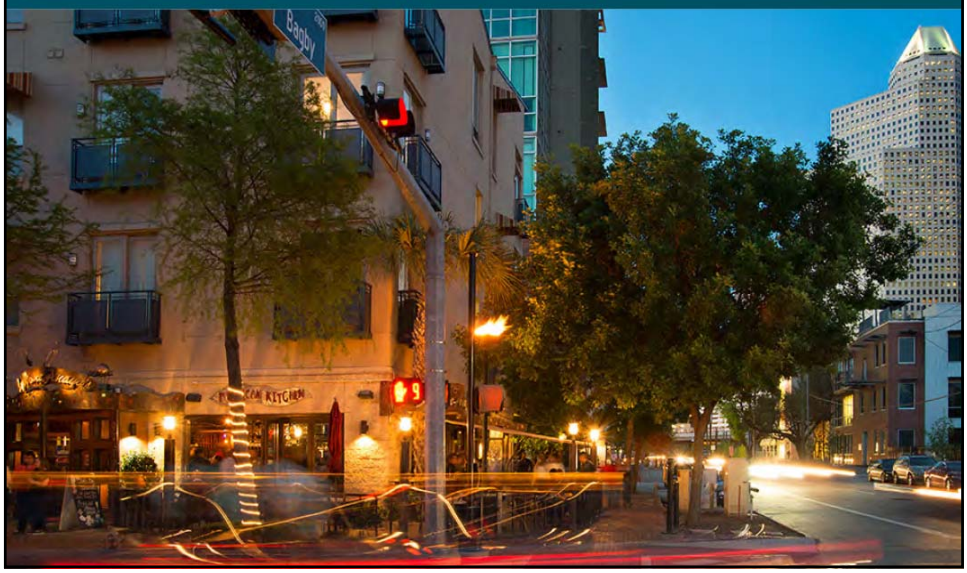
Houston-Galveston Area Council
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
DESIGNWORKSHOP

URBAN HOUSTON FRAMEWORK

Houston, Texas

A CASE STUDY FOR THE H-GAC REGIONAL PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

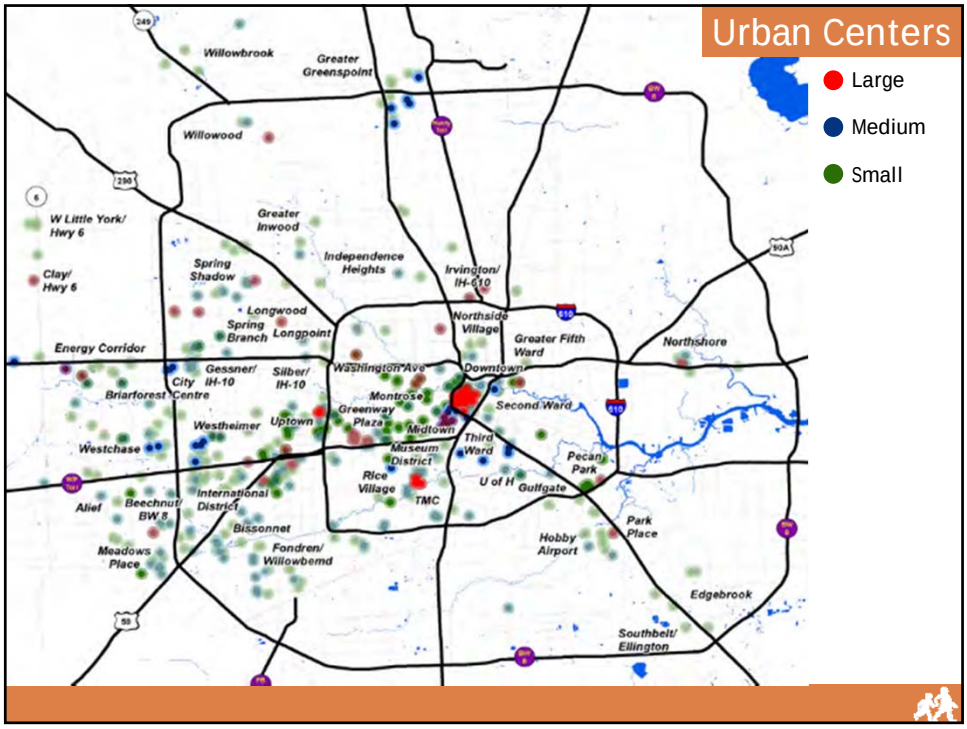
May 2013



Defined Urban Center Types

Downtown
Texas Medical Center
Uptown/Galleria
Midtown
Westchase
Fourth Ward
Energy Corridor
Third Ward
Rice Village
City Centre/Memorial City
Greater East End
Greater Greenspoint
Palm Center

Large Centers | Medium Centers | Small Centers



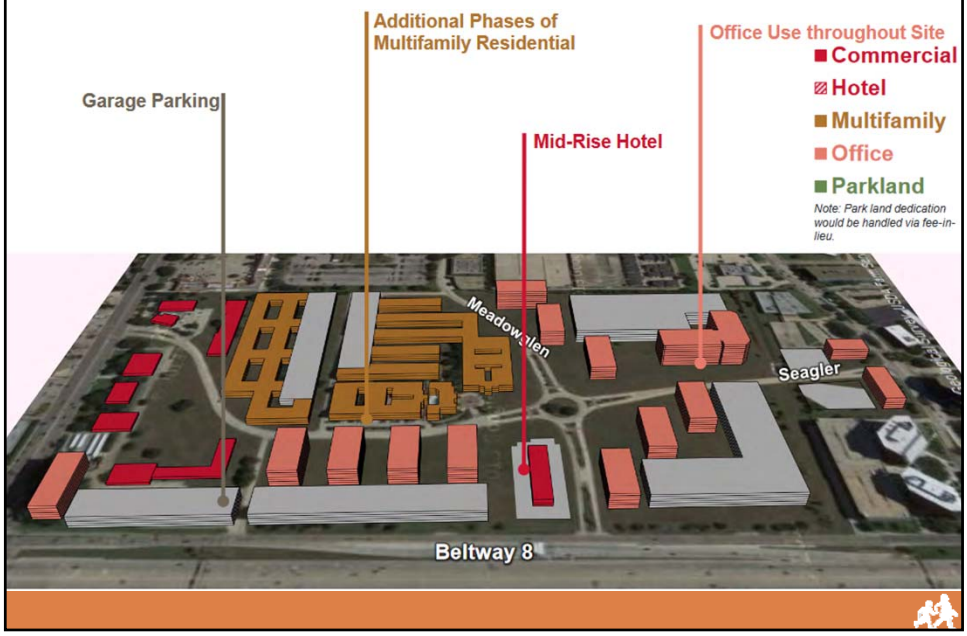
Proposed Policy Tools

- Setbacks
- Parking
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit considerations
- Incentives

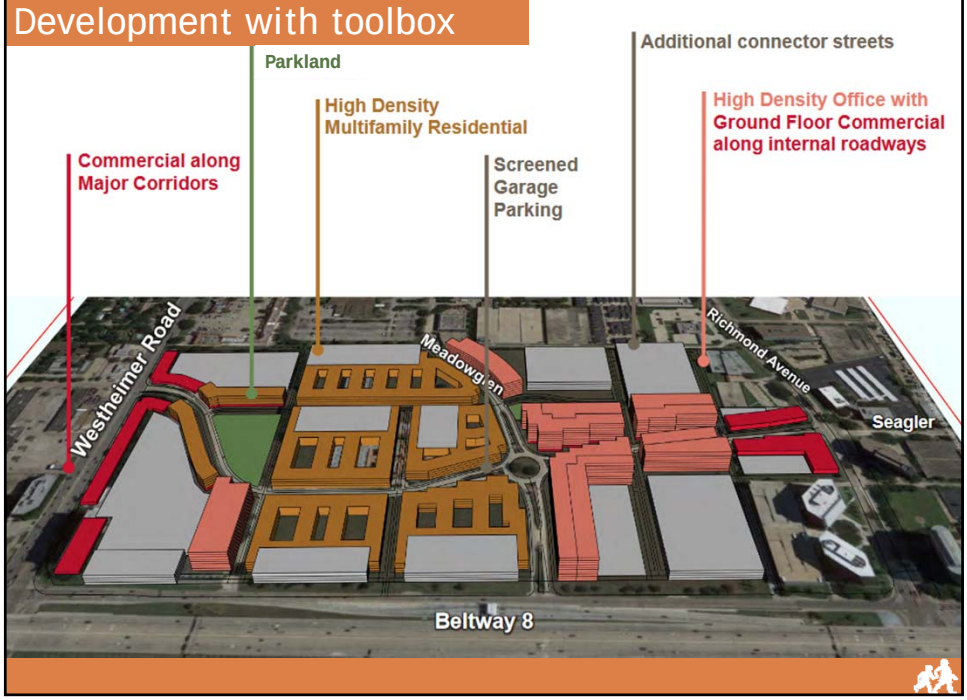
Case Study

102.2 acres in Westchase

Development without toolbox



Development with toolbox



Westchase: Side-by-Side

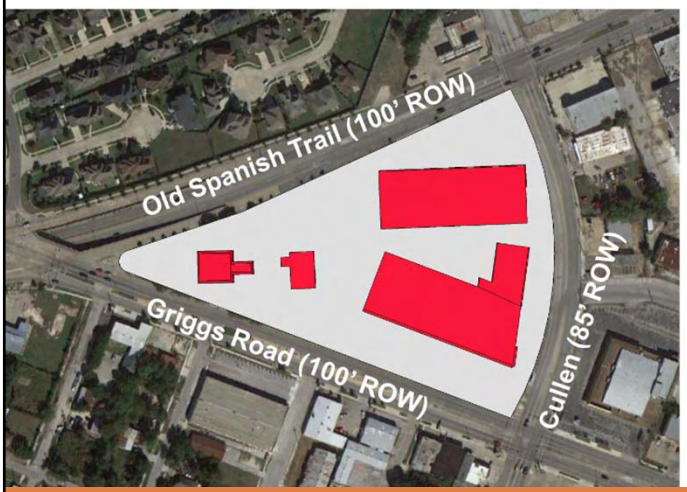
Without toolbox

With toolbox

Case Study

8.4 acres in Greater Third Ward

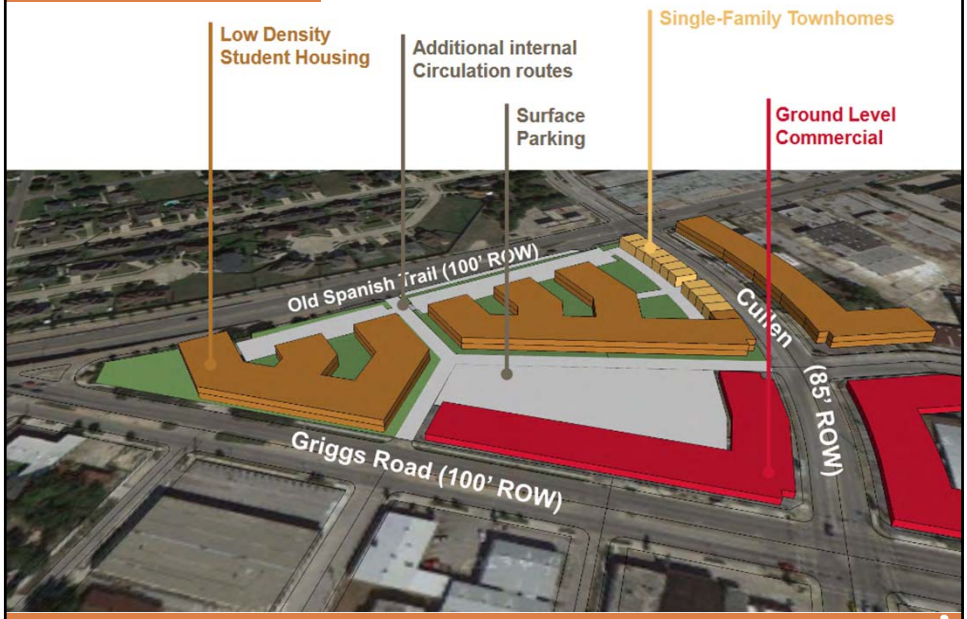
Without the toolbox



Land Use

- Commercial
- Hotel
- Multifamily
- Single-Family
- Office
- Parkland

With the toolbox

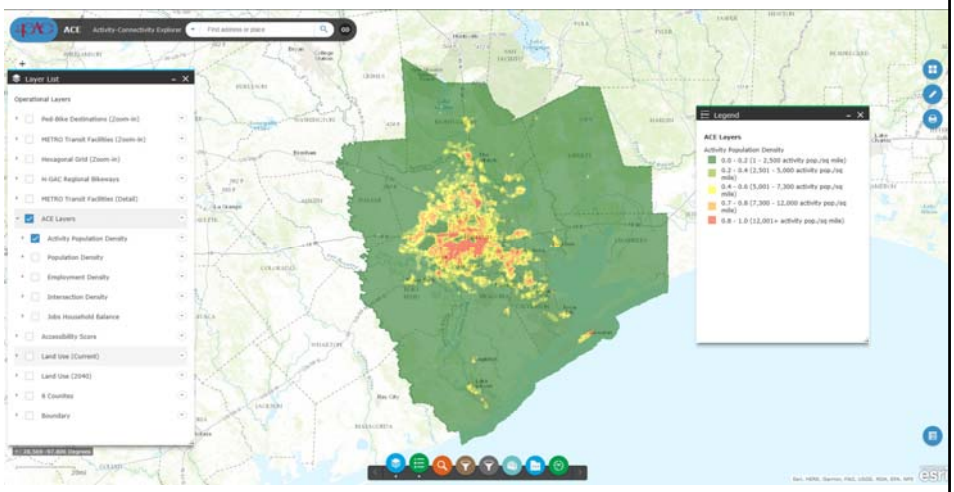


Greater Third Ward: Side-by-Side

Without toolbox

With toolbox

Activity Connectivity Explorer ACE



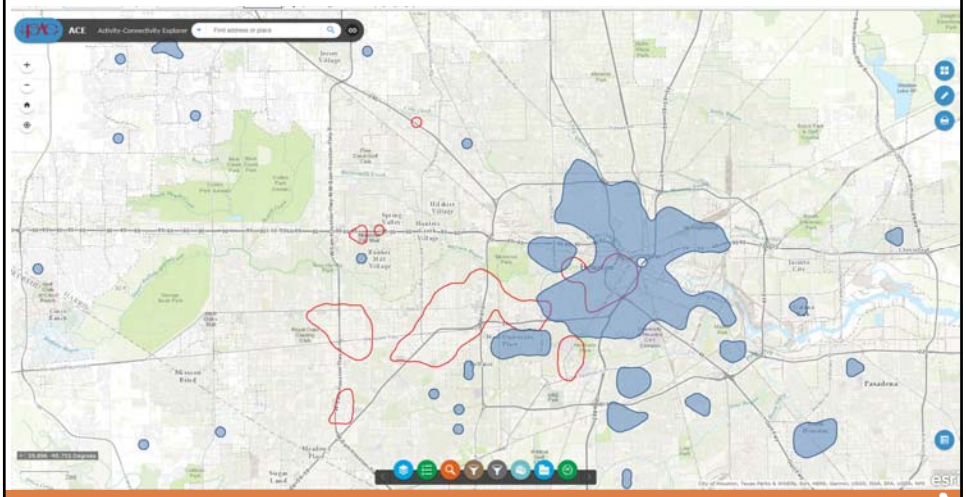
ACE Overview

- **Density Indicators**
  - Population
  - Employment
  - Activity Population (Population + Employment)
  - Jobs/Housing balance
- **Connectivity Indicators**
  - Intersections
- **Accessibility Indicators**
  - Amenities (Ped-bike destinations)

Accessibility Score =
Activity Index (40%) + Connectivity Index (20%) + Amenity Index (40%)

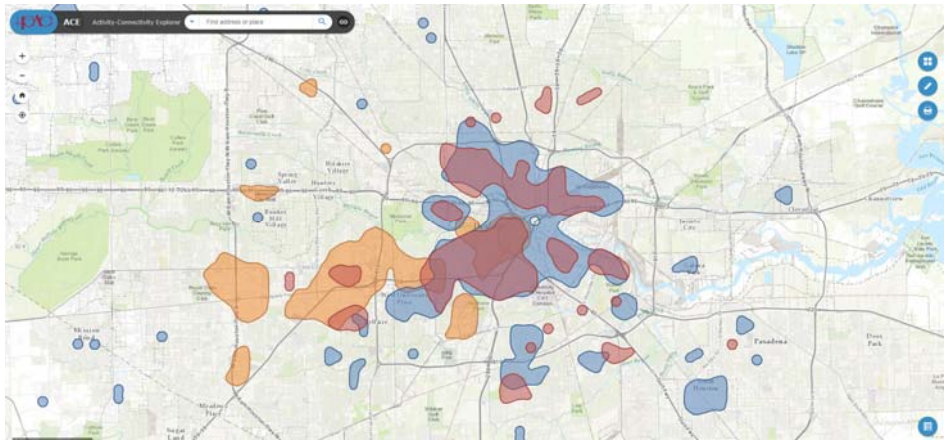
Activity and Connectivity

Top 10% Intersection Density
Top 10% Activity Population



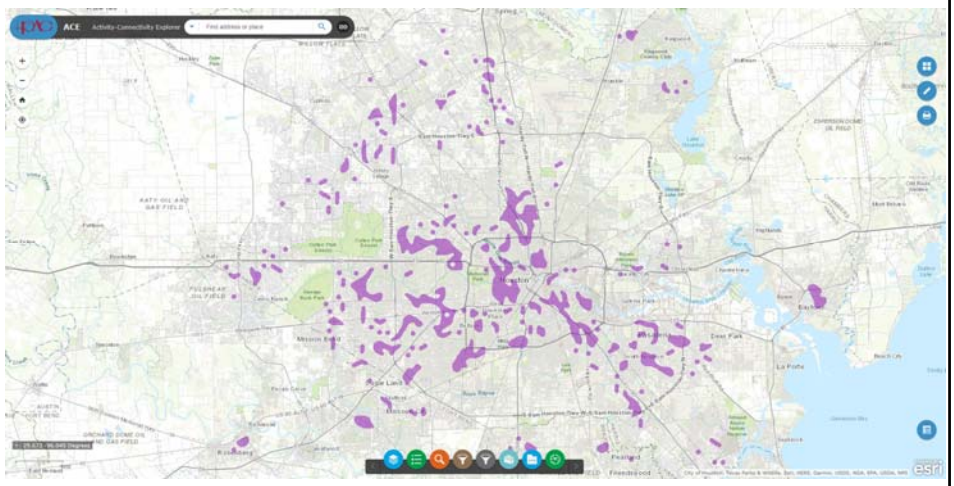
Activity, Connectivity, Amenities

Top 10% Connectivity
Top 10% Amenity Concentration
Top 10% Activity



Mixed Use Neighborhoods

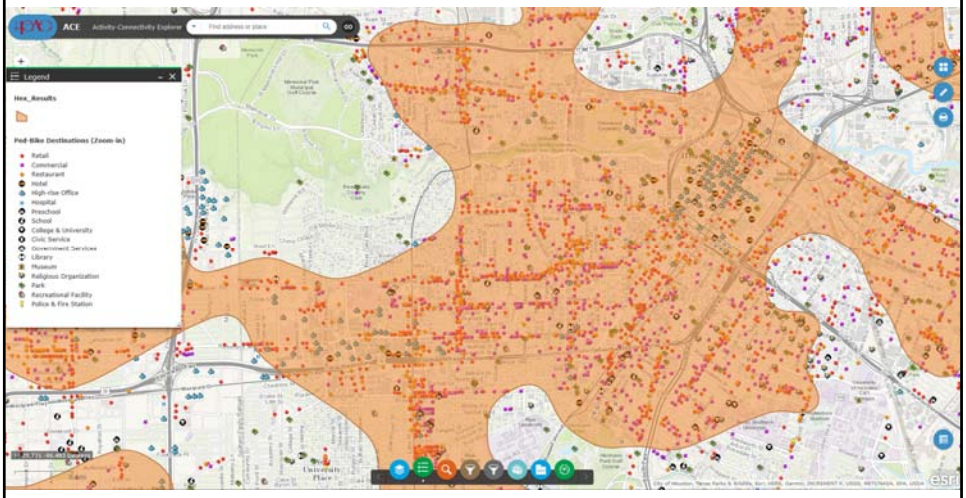
Jobs to Households ratio between 0.76 and 1.5



Type of Ped-Bike Destinations and Weights

Category	Type	No.	Weight
Total		**51,542**	**1**
Commercial & Retail (CNR)		**34,528**	**0.1**
	Hotel	148	
	Retail	17,116	
	Commercial	12,891	
	Restaurant	4,373	
Office (OFF)		**490**	**0.1**
	High-rise Office	490	
Educational (EDU)		**1,547**	**0.2**
	Preschool	722	
	School (K-12)	783	
	College & University	42	
Public & Institutional (PNI)		**3,096**	**0.2**
	Hospital	524	
	Civic Service	20	
	Library	105	
	Museum	50	
	Police/Fire Station	112	
	Religious Organizations	2,285	
Parks, Recreational & Natural Area (PRN)		**2,856**	**0.2**
	Parks, Recreation, & Natural Areas	2,564	
	Recreational Facility	292	
METRO Facilities (MET)		**9,025**	**0.2**
	LRT Station, Transit Center, and Park & Ride	93	0.6
	Bus Stop	8,932	0.4

In Top 10% of Accessibility Index



THANK YOU

Jeff Taebel, FAICP
Director of Community and Environmental Planning
Houston-Galveston Area Council
jeff.taebel@h-gac.com

Links

- h-gac.com/livablecenters
- ourregion.org/casestudies.html
- h-gac.com/livablecenters/tools.aspx

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Key Criteria to Identify Walkable Places

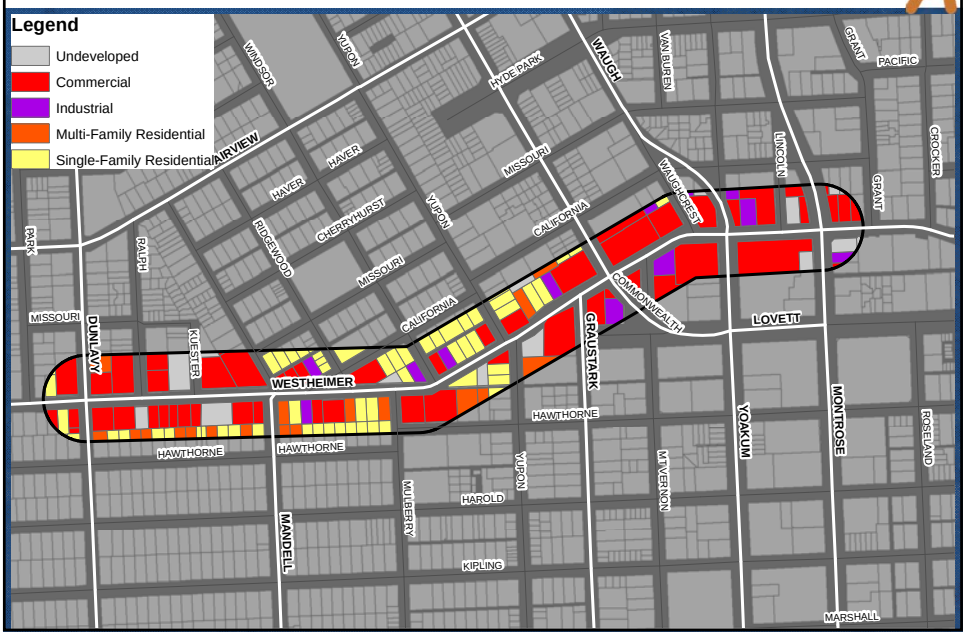
- Activity Population Density
- Land Use Diversity
- Infill/ Redevelopment Potential
- Area Connectivity
- Accessibility to Transit
- Accessibility to Bikeways
- Accessibility to Amenities
- Area Connectivity

Next Meeting Preparation

- Four Charrette Case Studies
  - Promoting Walkable Places along Corridors
    - Westheimer Rd between Dunlavy St & Montrose Blvd
    - North Main St between Quitman St & Hogan St
  - Promoting Walkable Places in Geographic Areas
    - Midtown Area
    - (East Downtown Area) EADO Area

Walkable Place Charrette Corridor:

Westheimer Rd between Dunlavy St & Montrose Blvd



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Westheimer Rd between Dunlavy St & Montrose Blvd

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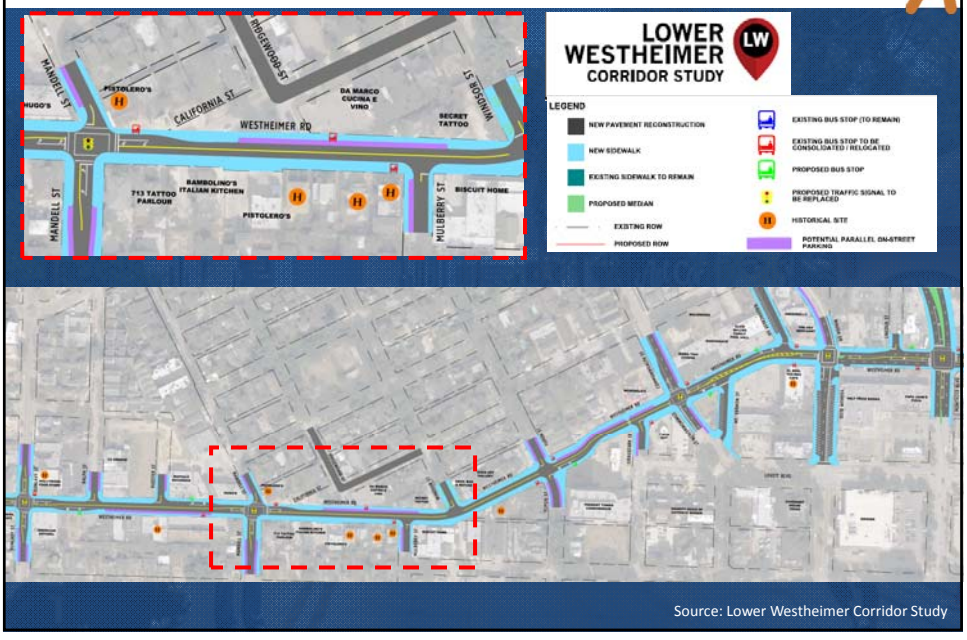

Source: Lower Westheimer Corridor Study

Walkable Place Charrette Corridor:
North Main St between Quitman St and Hogan St

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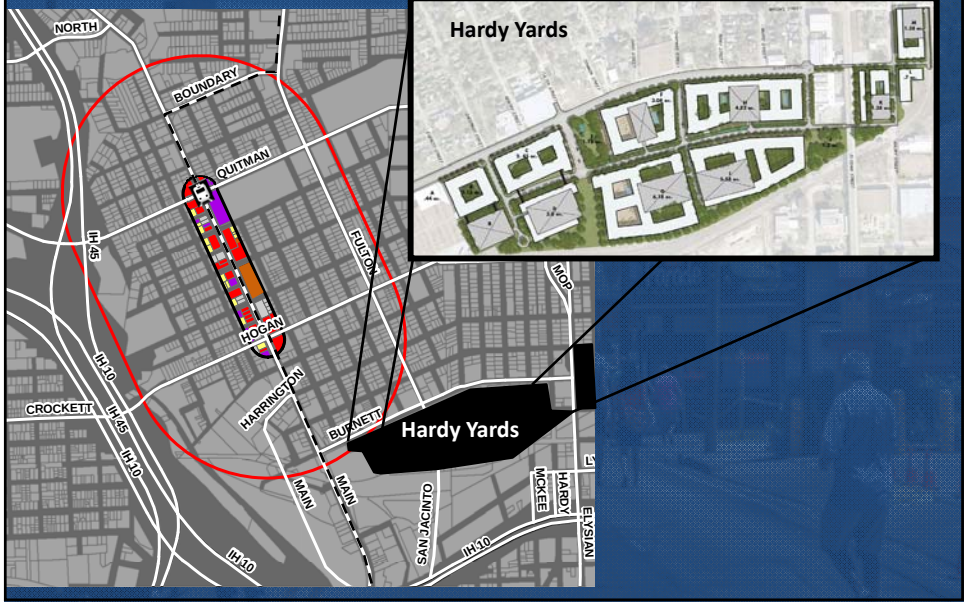


Walkable Place Charrette Area:
Midtown Area

Walkable Place Charrette Area:
Midtown Area

Walkable Place Charrette Area:
Midtown Area

Walkable Place Charrette Area:
East Downtown Area-EADO Area

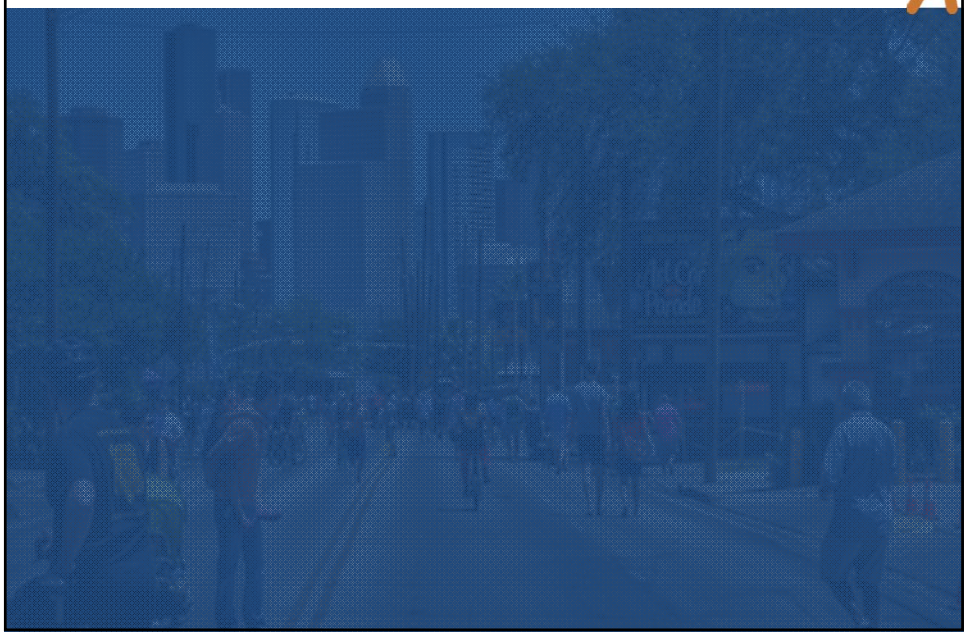
Walkable Place Charrette Area:
East Downtown Area-EADO Area

Walkable Place Charrette Area:
East Downtown Area-EADO Area

Homework

- 4 Charrette Groups:

May 17, 2017: Julia Ideson Library-Auditorium

  - Email preference to Muxian
  - Friday, April 7, 2017, noon
    Muxian.fang@houstontx.gov
  - Visit and experience assigned area

V. Public Comment