

III. Community Involvement

Ongoing community and stakeholder involvement throughout the planning process was essential in developing a plan that balanced the general desires of the community with the mobility needs of the greater region. Community involvement was divided into two public meetings and two stakeholder meetings. The first public and stakeholder meetings were held at the beginning of the study to better understand the mobility goals and preferences of the citizens and stakeholders. Alternative meetings were held before the finalization of recommendations to ensure the consultant team properly reflected ideas and concerns generated by the public and stakeholder committee alike.

Additional information for the Heights area was provided through the Greater Heights Super-Neighborhood Council. This data was incorporated into the planning process for the Study Area.

In addition to the in-person meeting opportunities, the study also maintained an on-line platform where all interested parties could learn about the project, download related presentation material, and provide interactive comments in a blog-like format. Additionally, the public was able to provide comments on released information such as maps and pictures. Blog comments and discussions were also used interactively by citizens and stakeholders. The website for this study is <http://heights-northside.org>.



3.1 Public Meeting #1:

The first public meeting for the Heights was held on March 26, 2013 to gather public insight on issues and opportunities within the Study Area. The meeting began with a presentation of the existing conditions within the community based on data provided by the City of Houston, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and TxDOT. During this meeting, the public was able to view boards representing the data presented, as well as additional information. After the presentation, the public commented on aerials to provide detailed information on current conditions. This information was consolidated by the Consultant Team.



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3.2 Stakeholder Meeting #1:

The first stakeholder meeting was held on May 15, 2013 where stakeholders were able to review the feedback provided by the public during the March meeting. In addition to reviewing this material, stakeholders were given the opportunity to make comments on additional issues and opportunities within the Study Area. Since the Heights and Northside areas have a significantly different feel and stakeholder population, these two areas were studied separately for the purposes of this stakeholder meeting.

In the previous public meeting, several key issues were made apparent through the prominence of certain topics. Therefore stakeholders were asked to comment on the following issues specifically:



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Heights:

- Heights/Yale road cross section or improvements
- Reducing truck traffic
- Bicycle lane connections
- Pedestrian/bike crossings
- Critical pedestrian connections or improvements – neighborhood study improvements

Northside:

- Bicycle and pedestrian connections to rail
- Traffic issues associated with rail
- Transit Street designations

From these questions and the open discussion allotted during this time, stakeholders worked with facilitators to develop “big idea” solutions to the issues found within the Study Area. These ideas were incorporated into the development of the Mobility Plan for the Heights-Northside areas.



3.3 Stakeholder Meeting #2:

The second stakeholder meeting was held on August 19, 2013. At this session, stakeholders viewed the preliminary recommendations for road, pedestrian, bike, transit and intersection improvements. Feedback from this meeting was used to gauge how well the recommendations lined-up with the public feedback gathered from the first public meeting, stakeholder meeting, two steering committee meetings, and data collected from the project website.

Stakeholders were presented with a summary of all feedback, bike plan recommendations, and five model scenarios (with background on how each scenario was developed). They afterwards broke into sub-committees (the Heights area and the Northside area) to review the preliminary recommended improvements and provided comments.

The feedback from this meeting indicated that many corridors were on-par with public input, but several corridors were lacking a future design that accommodated the desired modes of transportation from residents. Stakeholders acknowledged that attention to non-MTFP streets is a reasonable alternative to accommodating needed modes on Major Corridors.



3.4 Public Meeting #2 (Planned)

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