

# SOUTHEAST HOUSTON MOBILITY PLAN

May 2019



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Council Member Dwight Boykins

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Gulfgate TIRZ

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Southeast Houston plays an important role in Houston's landscape and economic competitiveness. At the confluence of the nation's 36th largest airport, an extensive bayou trail network, and a dynamic collection of neighborhoods, Southeast Houston's mobility future will shape Houston's transportation decision-making and how distinct travel modes are integrated for a seamless user experience.

This Plan represents a step in the continued progress toward fostering an equitable transportation network that enhances safety for all road users, particularly in underserved communities where street safety and transportation affordability disparities persist, while simultaneously supporting our city's global economic reach. Six major concepts outline the mobility recommendations and work to answer the Plan's central questions.

1. Build out of major corridors to **enhance connectivity and spur development**
2. Facilitate more **context-sensitive street design** for each major corridor in the study area
3. **Right-size streets** and right-of-way designations
4. Increase **high-comfort bicycle connections** between Sims Bayou and the surrounding neighborhoods
5. Align **sidewalk and bikeway improvements** with METRO's planned high-capacity transit investments
6. **Prioritize improvements** related to the community's goals and objectives



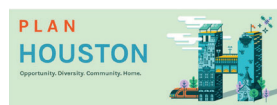
# PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Southeast Houston Mobility Plan is a comprehensive transportation study, focused on furthering the City of Houston's goals for a more healthy, resilient, and connected city established through PlanHouston and leaning on processes and technical guidance elaborated in the City's Mobility Plan. This plan allows for more in depth consideration of the existing transportation and mobility conditions, infrastructure, and development in the Southeast Houston Study Area.

The primary purpose is to identify short, medium and long-range projects, policies, and programs intended to promote better mobility for all road users, and to consider and develop a multi-modal classification for streets within the study area. This summary details the year-long study process, from existing conditions and public engagement efforts to improvement recommendations and implementation strategies.



PlanHouston	City of Houston Mobility Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend money wisely</li> <li>• Grow responsibly</li> <li>• Sustain quality infrastructure</li> <li>• Nurture safe and healthy neighborhoods</li> <li>• Connect people and places</li> <li>• Support our global economy</li> <li>• Foster an affordable city</li> <li>• Protect and conserve our resources</li> <li>• Communicate clearly and with transparency</li> <li>• Partner with others, public and private</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility is a key factor in a community's vitality</li> <li>• Costs associated with new development / redevelopment must be equitably allocated.</li> <li>• Access (curb cuts/medians) must be consistently and proactively managed.</li> <li>• Right-of-way standards for future major arteries must reflect "best practices," fully recognize aesthetic concerns, and anticipate peak traffic volumes at fully developed conditions.</li> <li>• Neighborhood concerns must be carefully balanced with the need to maintain circulation (recognize the value of connectivity/circulation).</li> <li>• Long-term "notice" provided by Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan must be effectively publicized and communicated.</li> <li>• Nonstructural approaches should be considered as well as new road construction.</li> </ul>



Goals and Principles



City Mobility Planning

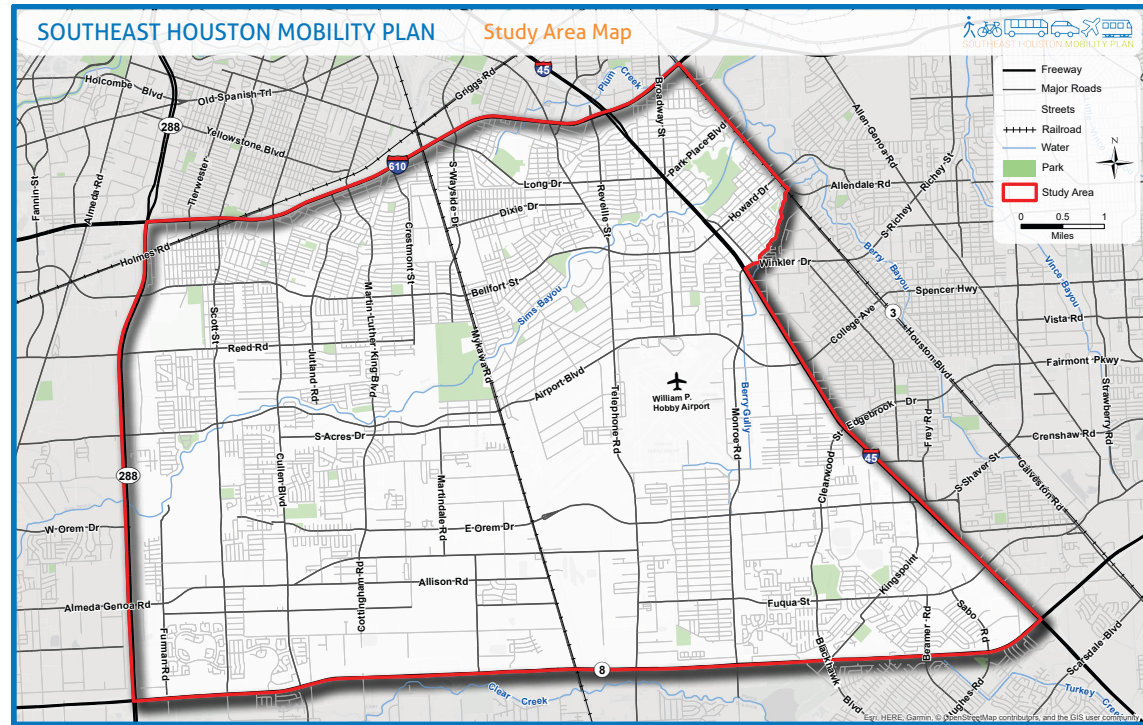


# CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The Study Area is bounded by Interstate 610 to the north, State Highway 288 to the west, Beltway 8 to the south and Interstate 45 and Galveston Rd to the east. Much of this area was developed post World War II and has seen modest growth since 2000. Major destinations within the study area include:

- Hobby Airport
- Sims Bayou
- Houston Botanic Garden (proposed)

According to the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the study area is expected to increase by 50% in population, 58% in households, and 19% in employment. Traffic volumes along the roadways are also expected to increase by 44%. Much of the anticipated growth is expected to occur in the south portion of the study area. This added stress will increase existing mobility gaps and add strain on the transportation systems in the area, making it critical to identify and overcome the mobility shortcomings that residents are currently experiencing.



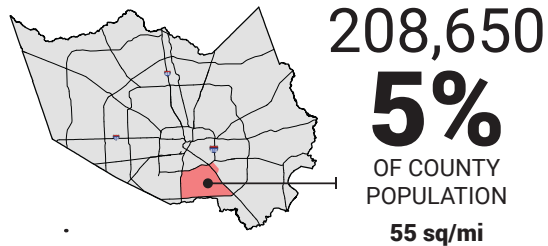
Hobby Airport  
Source: Fly 2 Houston



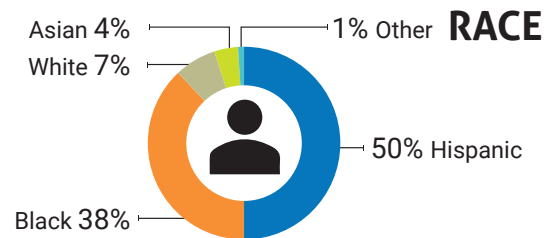
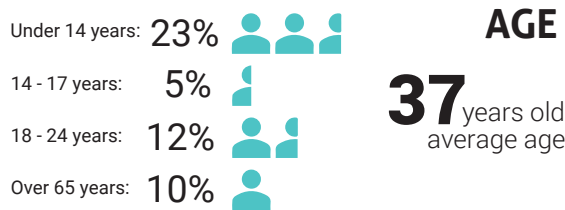
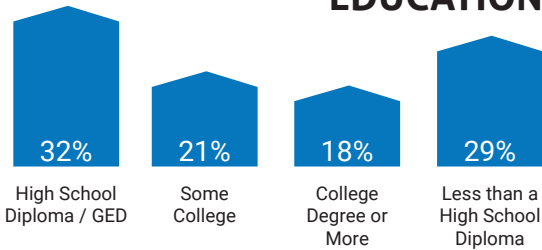
Sims Bayou at Mykawa Rd.  
Source: Harris County Flood Control District

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 2012 - 2016

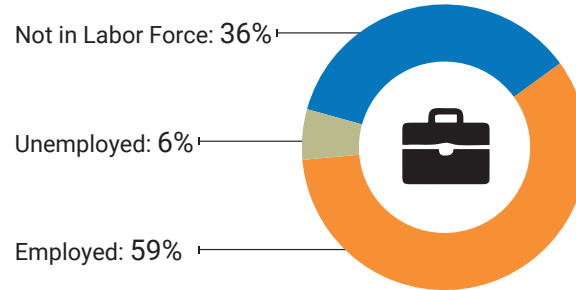
## POPULATION



## EDUCATION



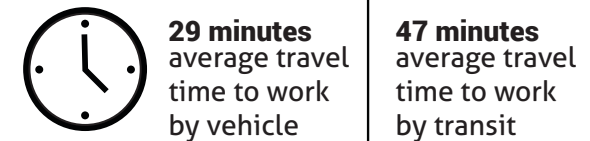
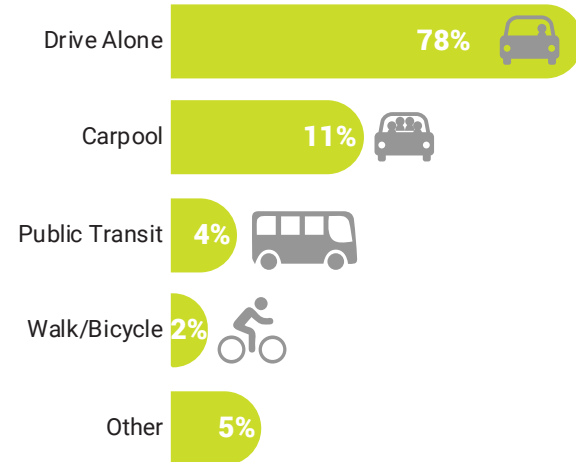
## EMPLOYMENT



## HOUSING



## TRANSPORTATION



Source: American Community Survey  
2012-2016 5-year estimates  
Walkscore data from walkscore.com



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & PROCESS

## Vision Statement

The Southeast Houston Mobility Plan addresses the dynamic mobility needs of the many communities in Southeast Houston. The Plans strategies, actions and performance measures will build on previous efforts with measurable, achievable and ambitious projects, policies, and programs that will create and reinforce connections to promote the area's economic competitiveness and well-being of its residents.

The planning process included three committee meetings, two public meetings, and six civic club meetings. A total of 120 comments were collected through the Online Public Comment Tool. Recommendations in this study were driven by the goals which were established by community leaders during the steering committee and refined through public workshops and community surveys.

## What We Heard

Workshop participants were able to provide direction to goals and refine recommendations through iterative feedback throughout the life of the project. For instance, participants at the first public workshop ranked the seven overarching goals put forth by the steering committee and afforded an opportunity to suggest new goals, where higher priority was emphasized on neighborhood connections, safety, public health, and resilience objectives. Consequently, the project team and steering committee put forth a neighborhood connections station for the second workshop

where participants were able to identify their preferred type of "neighborhood connections" by a low, mid, and high ranking of precedent images as seen here and could select from the following list:

- High quality sidewalks, crosswalks, and bikeways
- Closer destinations, infill, and mixed use development
- Street connectivity
- Microtransit (flexible service / on demand)
- Bikeshare
- Scooters

The results from this exercise favored the provision better walkability and microtransit solutions, in addition to more mix of land uses and higher density development patterns.



Community Goals

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The system improvement recommendations were developed through the guidance of the steering committee and refined by public input at workshops, the project survey, and an interactive mapping function. Project recommendations made in this plan fall within one of the following six categories:

## **Build out of major corridors to enhance connectivity and spur development**

Areas in the southwest portion of the study area would benefit greatly from the build-out of planned street connections to SH 288 and to Beltway 8. This would enhance regional access for undeveloped parcels and would attract more commercial and light industrial uses to the area. In addition, extending corridors would allow for the expansion of local bus routes to the new Veterans Administration Hospital currently in development.

## **Facilitate more context-sensitive street design for each major corridor in the study area**

The study area's major corridors are the connective tissue for the various neighborhoods and destinations that make up the study area. Each corridor has an opportunity to enhance connectivity in its own way, based on its available right-of-way, planned and future multimodal projects, and land use patterns. This study identifies the purpose each major corridor serves and how they can be leveraged to further bolster neighborhood connectivity.

## **Right-size streets and right-of-way designations**

Many of the streets in the study area are designed to handle much heavier traffic and are overbuilt, in many cases. This provides an opportunity to transform the area by right-sizing streets and reallocating right-of-way, where possible, to enhance the public realm and activate streetscapes with wider sidewalks and bikeways. Off-street parking could also be considered near commercial uses.

## **Increase high-comfort bicycle connections between Sims Bayou Greenway and the surrounding neighborhoods**

Sims Bayou is one of the most consequential segments in the 150 miles of linear parks and trail system the Houston Parks Board has developed to date. Expanding access to this amenity to the surrounding neighborhoods stands to make a significant improvement for households facing higher socioeconomic vulnerabilities and would facilitate more active transportation and recreation in an area of the city facing a legacy of health disparities and higher rates of chronic illness.

## **Align sidewalk and bikeway investments with METRO's planned high-capacity transit investments**

Future plans call for an expansion of high-capacity transit in the study area. This plan identifies where sidewalk and bikeway investments can be programmed in the near and mid-term future to complement the expansion of transit. Though the exact alignments and stations are unknown at this point, there is enough information available from METRO's long-range transit plan to know the general vicinity of where new transit infrastructure will be introduced.

## **Prioritize improvements related to the community's goals and objectives**

Prioritization in this plan is anchored by the vision and goals defined by the community in this planning process. For instance, neighborhood connections, public health, and safety are woven into the recommendations in this study but also shape the project list determined in this plan.







# SOUTHEAST HOUSTON MOBILITY PLAN