

MIDTOWN PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACE MASTER PLAN

HOUSTON, TX - 2023

DRAFT

February 16, 2023



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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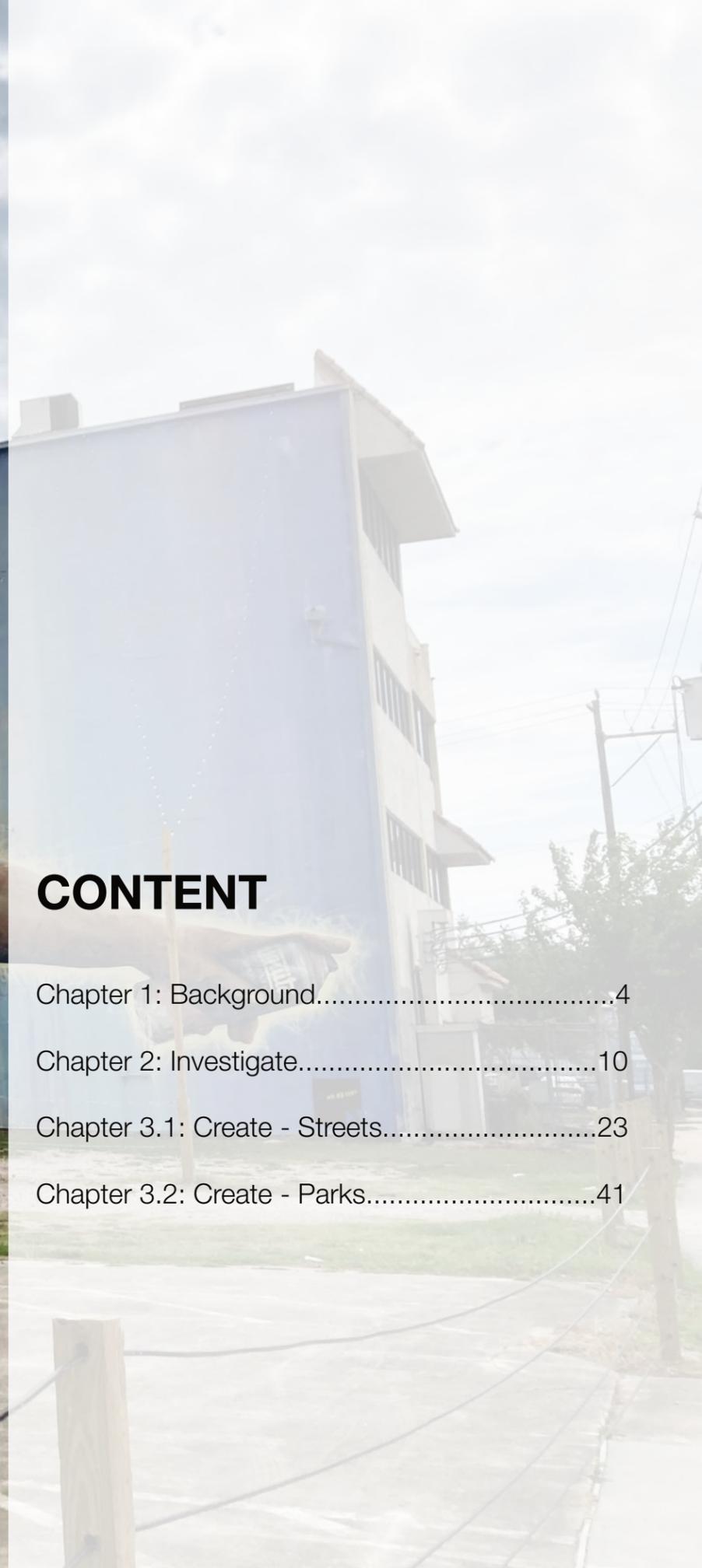
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BACKGROUND

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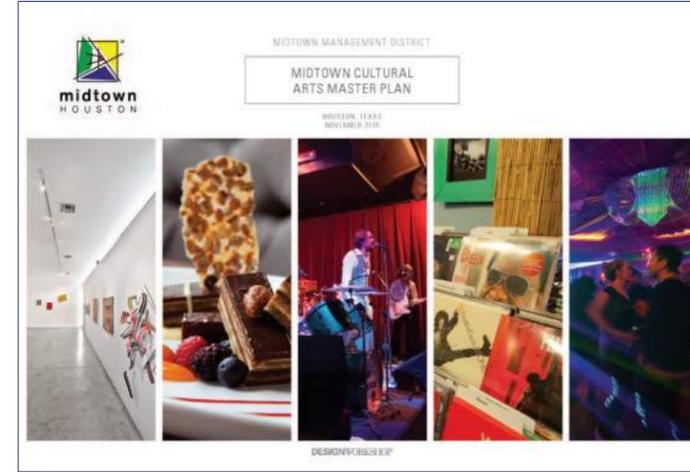
PREVIOUS MIDTOWN STUDIES



MIDTOWN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

2011

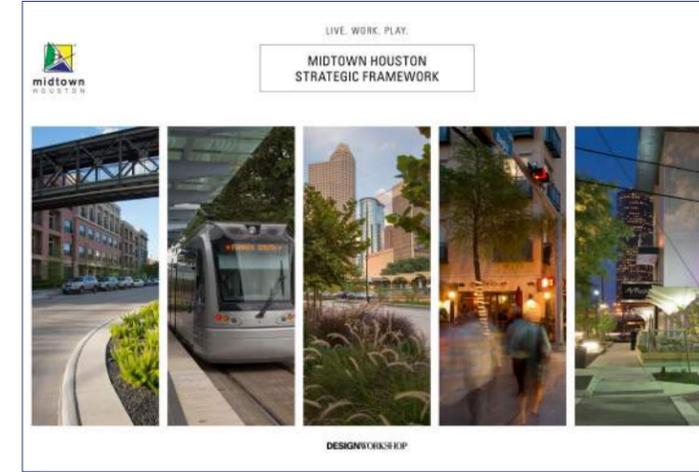
Completed in 2011, this report analyzes and recommends certain programs within each park. The report also recommends what parcels can be used for future park space in areas of scarce park service.



MIDTOWN CULTURAL ARTS MASTER PLAN

2016

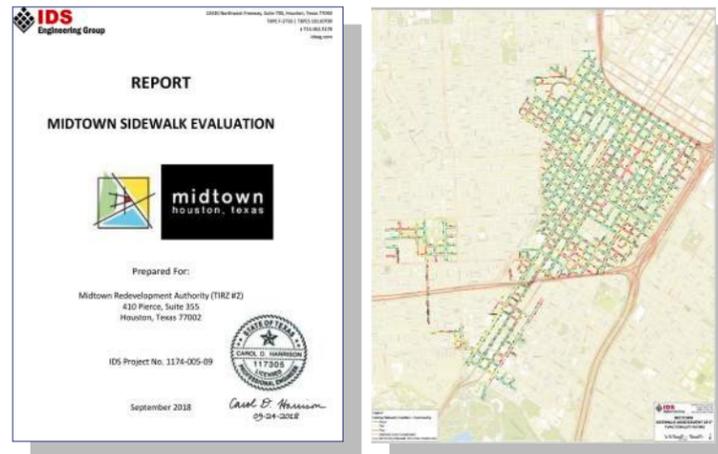
Developed in 2016, the purpose of the Midtown Cultural Arts Master Plan is to engage Midtown and the applicable community in creating a 10 year cultural arts strategic plan.



MIDTOWN HOUSTON STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2018

This strategic framework plan was developed in 2018. It examines existing conditions and creates an overall vision for development and improvements in Midtown.



MIDTOWN SIDEWALK EVALUATION

2018

This sidewalk evaluation was completed in 2018 and was a comprehensive examination of the condition of all sidewalk segments in Midtown. Sidewalks conditions are rated from “good” to “poor”.



SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL PROGRAM

2022

This document is still in development, but the draft presentation of Safe Streets and Roads from 2022 identifies strategies for improving mobility safety in the district, specifically addressing streets with high accident rates.

OTHER STUDIES

- HPARD Master Plan Phase II: Park Sector Profiles Study December 2015
- Houston METRO Transit Design Guidelines March 2022
- Museum Park Livable Centers Study 2016
- Walk Bike Montrose June 2020
- Houston Bike Plan February 2017
- City of Houston User's Guide for Walkable Places and Transit Oriented Development September 2020
- Plan Downtown Study November 2017
- North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) November 2021
- Houstons Incentives for Green Development August 2019
- City of Houston and Houston Public Works Infrastructure Design Manual July 2022
- Resilient Houston February 2020
- Houston Southeast Caroline Street Promenade February 2020

CONTEXT

PURPOSE

The Midtown Parks and Public Space Master Plan project is a follow-up to the 2011 Midtown Parks and Open Space Master Plan. Over a decade has passed since that initial plan was developed, but parks and public space remain of key importance to the Midtown community. The results of the 2022 Midtown Capital Improvements Plan Survey indicate that parks and public space, as well as active mobility, are top items that respondents feel need more attention and investment. In the survey, 93.2 percent of respondents felt that it is very/somewhat important that public and recreational amenities are within a short walk of their homes. Similarly, 88.5 percent of people considered creating more pedestrian/bike linkages as very/somewhat important. As a result, this master plan update will focus not only on parks, but also on walkable and bike able streetscapes that can provide comfortable connections throughout Midtown.

This document is intended to assist Midtown Houston in updating their goals, strategies and recommendations for their parks and public space. This plan ties into previous planning efforts by Midtown and references key plans created by the City of Houston as well. Where it makes sense, this master plan attempts to build off these past efforts, but while keeping an eye towards the current and future needs of Midtown. In some instances, this requires assisting Midtown in developing a stance in relation to outside plans that may impact the parks and open space opportunities in Midtown. The priority recommendations in this plan are organized sequentially into streets and parks, with some overlapping recommendations for both. For example, an enhanced streetscape may provide a linear park program opportunity. The master plan finishes with an implementation roadmap section that summarizes projects, programs and policies that will allow Midtown to execute their vision for parks and public space.

MIDTOWN HOUSTON DISTRICT

The Midtown Houston staff handle the day to day operations between three separate organizations: Midtown Redevelopment Authority (MRA) Midtown Management District (MMD), Midtown Parks Conservancy (MPC).

MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MRA)

This organization is paired with the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone No. 2 (TIRZ). The TIRZ was created on December 14, 1994 by ordinance no. 94-1345 and enlarged ordinance no. 95-1322. The MRA was created by City Resolution No 95-96 in January 1995 in order to foster economic development and revitalize Midtown Houston with new construction and the preservation and restorative of existing structures. MRA uses incremental taxes generated in Midtown Houston to provide basic infrastructure improvements and public right of way enhancements as well as financing and management necessary to alleviate deteriorated site conditions and obsolete platting, and encourage growth of residential, commercial/ industrial, retail, and institutional uses. The multi-use nature of the MRA/TIRZ is intended to provide new housing choices as well as employment, education, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents in Midtown Houston.

MIDTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (MMD)

The Midtown Management District (MMD) was created in 1999 by the 76th Texas Legislature in House Bill 2894, and began providing services under the Service Plan October 1, 2000. MMD provides valuable services to the neighborhood, which enhance the efforts of the MRA. It creates a safer environment by providing additional contracted law enforcement; serves as an advocate for constituents to ensure their concerns are made known and addressed; develop community based events and projects to assist in attracting more residents, businesses, and investments; and work diligently to encourage interaction between residents and businesses to continuously enhance Midtown Houston.

MIDTOWN PARKS CONSERVANCY (MPC)

The Midtown Improvement and Development Corporation is a non-profit corporation formed on December 30, 2013 and does business as the Midtown Parks Conservancy (MPC). MPC aids and assists the Midtown Redevelopment Authority (MRA) and the Midtown Management District (MMD) with the promotion, development, maintenance, safety, and the public welfare in Midtown Houston. In addition, MPC maintains and operates MRA-owned facilities, including Midtown Park, Midtown Park Parking Garage, and Bagby Park.

MIDTOWN HOUSTON VISION STATEMENT

Due to its strategic location between Houston's two largest employment centers, strong culture and personality, its unparalleled transportation, and the community's ongoing strategic efforts, Midtown Houston will be the place where much of Houston's enormous economic opportunity is fulfilled in the coming years.

We will deliver on this promise by ensuring that arts and culture alongside new and existing businesses in a walkable environment.

We will exceed the expectations of our people – residents, workforce, and visitors – for a safer, more sustainable, inspiring, and active community with the best neighborhoods. Our never-ending progress will celebrate the past, present and future of the place we all call “home!”

GOALS



DESTINATION QUALITY



Enhance Midtown as a citywide destination to live, work, and play.



RESILIENCE & MAINTENANCE



Make parks and public space infrastructure more resilient.



CULTURE & INNOVATION



Design and program parks and public spaces that reflect the culture and innovative spirit of Midtown.



HEALTH & WELLNESS



Increase the health of nearby residents by creating easy access to parks, public spaces, and cultural institutions.



EQUITABLE ACCESS



Expand equitable access to parks and public space resources.

APPROACH

0 CARE
CARE
 Lionheart’s approach starts with caring deeply about the people and communities with whom we work and the environment in which our projects are located. Lionheart focuses on climate action, equity, and health – as we feel these issues are key to addressing current challenges in the world. Lionheart also takes care of the client’s ambitions by implementing their overarching goals for the project before making decisions.

1 THINK
Think
 Think phase considered time, money, land, and people to develop a strong strategy with Midtown leadership and stakeholders to guide the management of the work, engagement of stakeholders, and achievement of project goals. Initial goals of the project are created.

2 INVESTIGATE
Investigate
 During investigate, the team reviewed the current state of the parks and public space for baseline mapping aligned to the initial goals of the project. The team sought out comparable or aspirational projects to understand the possibilities. Finally, the study used existing relevant plans and city codes.

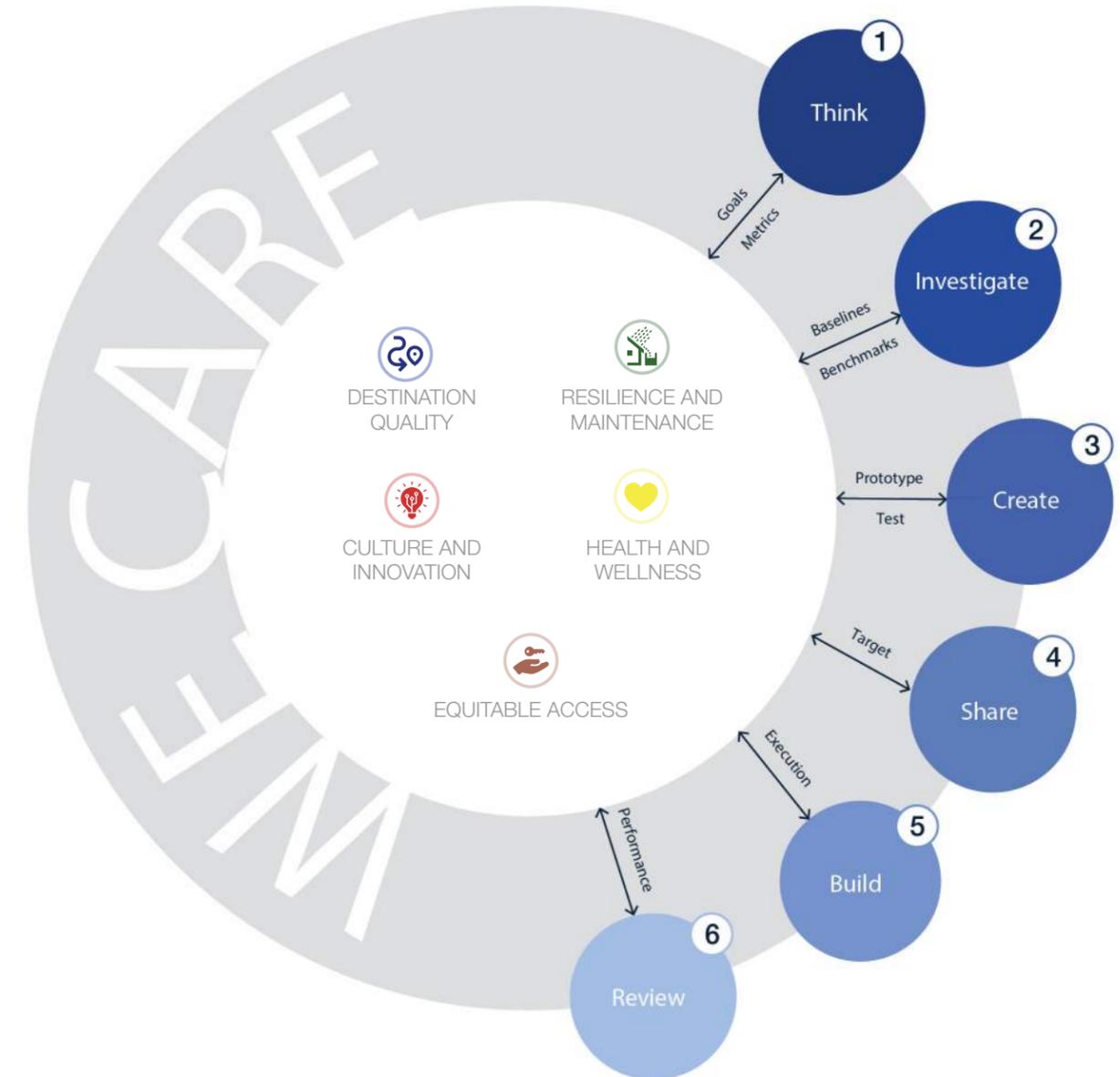
Investigate phase also included the Midtown Parks and Public Space - Values and Vision Workshop to engage participants in a discussion of the Midtown Parks and Public Space planning process.

3 CREATE
Create
 Lionheart charged forward with developing recommendations for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), possible programs, and policies for Midtown. These three categories help fill in the gaps and address the future needs of Midtown. The recommendations chapter includes analysis and design guidelines for streets and parks within Midtown. Through establishing the ‘hierarchy and priority’ maps, the team identified eleven streets and six park deficit areas within the district for further recommendations. The project team met with focus groups and will hold a public meeting to receive critical feedback on the recommendations, after which the final draft of the Create phase will developed.

4 SHARE
Share
 The Midtown Parks and Public Space Master Plan is the key deliverable for Midtown. The final deliverable will be of high quality, user-friendly, and visually interesting document.

5 BUILD AND REVIEW
Build
 The Midtown Parks and Public Space Master Plan should be used to initiate the next steps for possible construction of the recommended projects and other necessary plans.

6
Review



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

THINK PHASE - KICKOFF MEETING

The kickoff meeting included the client and members of the advisory committee. The meeting discussed the project management plan, stakeholder engagement strategy, project goals, and initial metrics. Also, members were tasked to also include their hopes and fears in relation to time, money, land, and people.

INVESTIGATE PHASE - MIDTOWN PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACE - VALUES AND VISION WORKSHOP

Midtown Parks and Public Space - Values and Vision Workshop was held on June 15th, 2022 and included members from the MRA, potential stakeholders and members of the community. Initial observations, goals, metrics, and strategies were presented. The participants were engaged in the Values and Vision Survey which was conducted live throughout the presentation. The Values and Vision Survey was open to the public after the workshop. The survey received 151 responses of which the results can be reviewed throughout this document.

INVESTIGATE PHASE - FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Five different focus groups were given the initial Values and Vision Workshop presentation to identify and fill in gaps and bridge connections. The five groups were categorized into: Super Neighborhoods, City Department/Public Agencies, Advisory Committee, Special Districts, and the Midtown Management District Urban Planning Committee. All the comments given during those meetings were integral to documenting the correct procedures to follow for the master plan. Other comments included the introduction of METRO's Urban Design Manual, City of Houston Infrastructure Design Manual, street closure events and high comfort connections.

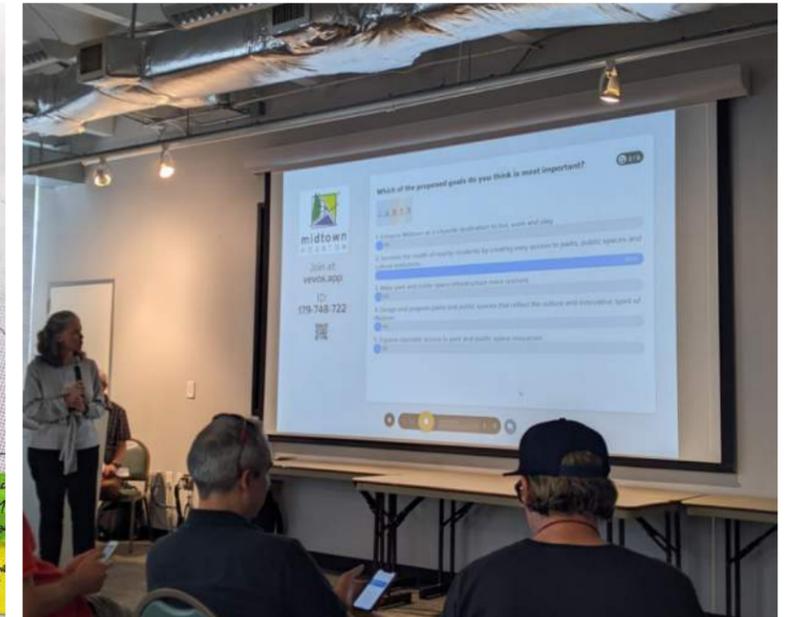
CREATE PHASE - FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

As a part of the create phase, Lionheart presented the set of street and parks recommendations to focus groups to gain feedback on feasibility, support, and challenges. The groups were MMD Urban Planning Committee, Museum Park Super Neighborhood groups and City of Houston/TxDOT/METRO public agency representatives. Valuable feedback was obtained which has been critical in shaping the recommendations.

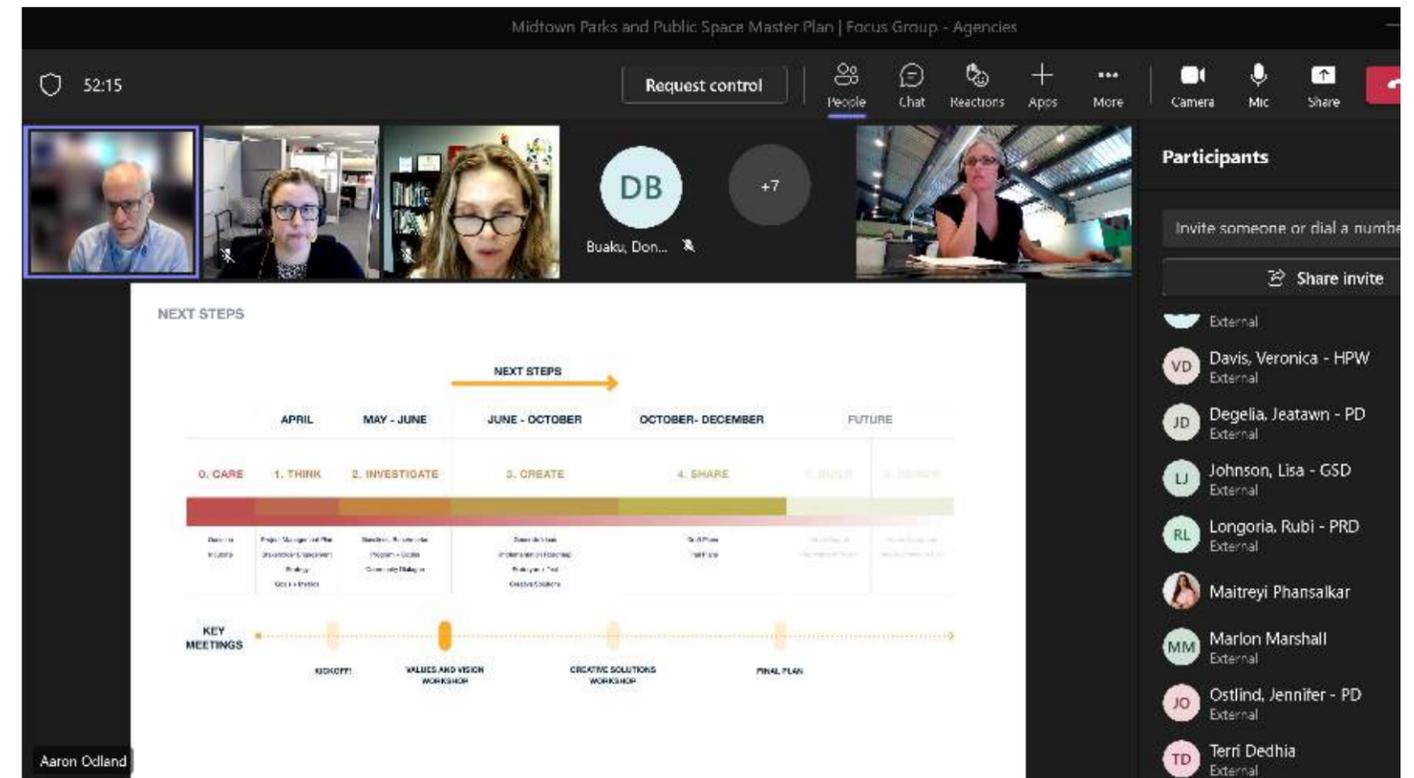
FURTHER OUTREACH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY PENDING



During the kick off meeting, project advisory committee members were invited to express their hopes and fears related to the master plan.



Live polling with mobile devices was used during the Values and Vision workshop to get real-time feedback on inventory and analysis information presented.



A virtual presentation was given to City Departments/ Public Agencies as one of the 5 focus groups during the investigate phase.



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INVESTIGATE

Existing Conditions Analysis

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METHODOLOGY

SUMMARY

The existing condition maps were developed using latest available GIS data and pre-existing studies. The analysis of the data is concurrent with past Midtown studies such as the Midtown Houston Strategic Framework Plan and Midtown Cultural Arts and Master Plan. The inventory and analysis data and maps includes topics relevant to parks and streets, with NHHIP Caps and Stitches, plans for Pierce Elevated and other related ideas.

The following maps are divided into analysis and inventory to set up the narrative for the upcoming Create (recommendations) chapter. The maps identify and analyze park ownership and proximity, perceived safety and comfort within Midtown, street hierarchy, public transit and bike facilities to list a few. In order to elevate the parks and public spaces in Midtown, the create chapter uses this data to draw recommendations for streets and parks.

ON-SITE VISIT

Lionheart did a site visit to examine all the parks and public spaces within the Midtown District. Using the list of park programs studied in Midtown's Strategic Framework Plan, the team analyzed each park documenting the current programmatic elements. Similarly, streets were studied for the speed of the vehicles, sidewalk conditions, existing and potential green infrastructure, and bike lanes.

SHARED KEY

MIDTOWN TIRZ

The current boundary of the Midtown TIRZ

1/4 MILE RADIUS

A quarter mile radius buffer around the Midtown TIRZ district boundary to help clearly identify parks within a 5 minute walk

GREENWAY TRAIL

A bike/pedestrian trail alongside a bayou

BAYOU

A slow moving natural body of water or stream

METRO RAIL

City of Houston's light rail system

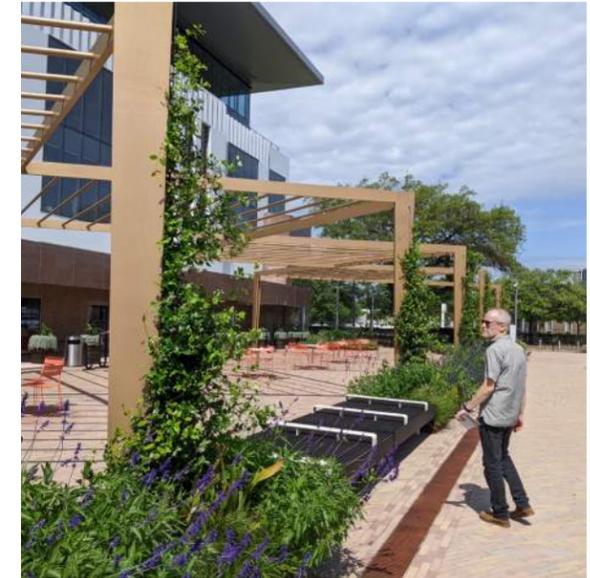
SURVEY RESULTS

The Midtown Parks and Public Space - Values and Vision Survey was taken by 151 participants, including the in-person workshop and online. It included questions about project goals, parks and public spaces, bike facilities, public transit, safety, and walkability within Midtown. Some of the results are integrated in the following pages.

ON-SITE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS PHOTOS



Measuring car speeds on prominent streets and streets adjacent to parks.



Analyzing existing public spaces.



Documenting murals and art work in the district.



Note taking and documentation at Menil Park.

OVERALL PARKS INVENTORY

SUMMARY

This map catalogs the parks within the Midtown TIRZ boundary as well as the parks within 1/4 mile of the boundary. The parks include typologies like public park, private park, plaza, community garden, and SPARK park.

PARK DATA

"A TYPICAL PARK AND RECREATION AGENCY OFFERS ONE PARK FOR EVERY 2,277 RESIDENTS SERVED, WITH 9.9 ACRES OF PARK LAND PER 1,000 RESIDENTS."

- NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION (NRPA), 2022

146
ACRES OF PARK

MIDTOWN HAS ACCESS TO ABOUT 146 ACRES OF PARK INCLUDING THE PARKS WITHIN THE 1/4 BOUNDARY.

10.1
ACRES PER 1000 RESIDENTS

AS OF 2022, ESRI DATA SHOWS MIDTOWN TO HAVE AN ESTIMATED POPULATION OF 14,500. BASED ON THE CURRENT PARK SPACE AVAILABLE, THIS CALCULATES TO 10.1 ACRES PER 1000 RESIDENTS. AT CURRENT GROWTH RATES, MIDTOWN POPULATION IS ANTICIPATED TO INCREASE TO 15,100 RESIDENTS BY THE YEAR 2027. ASSUMING NO ADDITION OF PARK SPACE, THIS WOULD RESULT IN 9.6 ACRES OF PARK PER 1000 RESIDENTS, JUST BELOW THE NRPA AVERAGE.

IN MIDTOWN

- 1 Bagby Park
- 2 Chenevert Urban Gardens
- 3 Cullens Sculpture Garden
- 4 Elizabeth Baldwin Park
- 5 Elizabeth Glover Park
- 6 HAIS SPARK Park
- 7 Menil Park
- 8 Midtown Park
- 9 Peggy's Point Plaza Park
- 10 Peggy's Point Sports Park
- 11 San Jacinto Memorial Green
- 12 Plant It Forward

WITHIN 1/4 MILE

- 1 Arabic Immersion SPARK Park
- 2 Bell Park
- 3 Bethel Park
- 4 Cravens Parkway
- 5 Emancipation Park
- 6 Harmonica Man Park
- 7 Heiner Street Park
- 8 Hermann Park
- 9 Mandell Park
- 10 Peggy Park
- 11 Trebly Park
- 12 West Webster Street Park
- 13 Wiley Park



Figure 1 Existing Parks in and around Midtown

PARK OWNERSHIP INVENTORY

SUMMARY

Ownership and maintenance of the spaces perceived of and used as parks varies in Midtown. The City of Houston and Midtown operated parks offer the most public access and are conventionally described as "public parks". Baldwin Park and Midtown Park are both examples of public parks. The SPARK program is a shared used model where schools open up their outdoor campus amenities to the public during non-school operation hours. In Midtown, the Houston Academy of International Studies (HAIS) is an example of this model. Private Parks are outdoor spaces that may be perceived of and used as park space, but the ownership and operations is controlled by a private entity. The Houston Community College Campus and Menil Park are two examples in Midtown. They allow access, but with limited public use of the space. Maintenance is also privately managed.



CITY OF HOUSTON | BALDWIN PARK



MIDTOWN | MIDTOWN PARK



PRIVATE PARKS | MENIL PARK



SPARK (SCHOOLS) | HAIS SPARK PARK

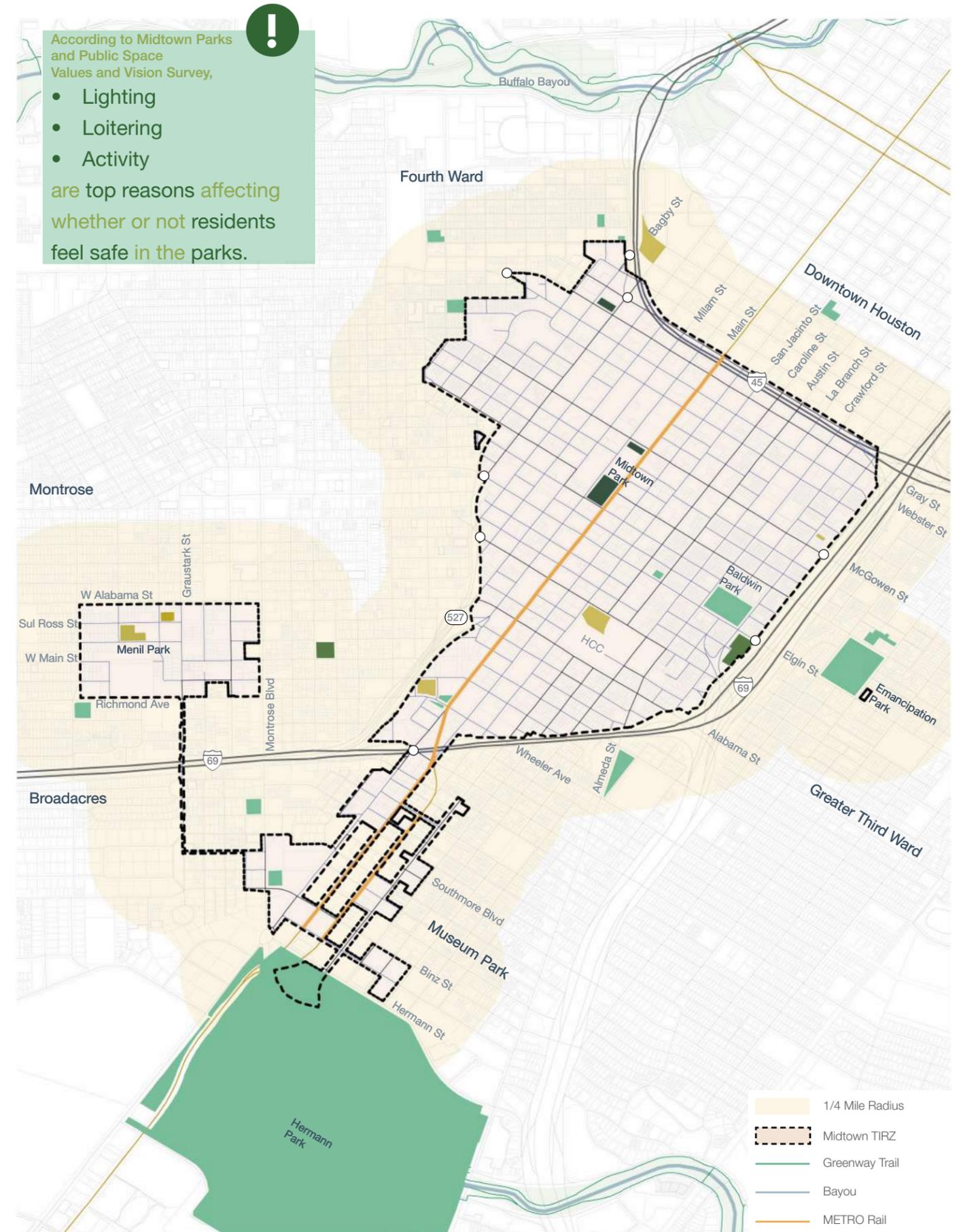


Figure 2 Park Ownership

PARK PROXIMITY ANALYSIS

SUMMARY

Park proximity is a key metric used to determine effective park access for the community. The Trust for Public Land has a Park Score system that uses a 1/2 mile radius (10 minute walk) as their baseline metric. In previous studies, Midtown has targeted a higher level of access and has consistently used a 1/4 radius (5 minute walk) as its baseline for park proximity. From inception to current day, the Midtown Redevelopment Authority has made progress in improving park access for all residents. In 1994, only two parks served the Midtown community. Today the parks have increased and their geographic distribution has helped fill gaps in under-served areas. Bagby Park and Midtown Park, both constructed and operated by the MRA, have been major contributors to this success, but there are still areas that lack park access and are opportunities for continued improvement.

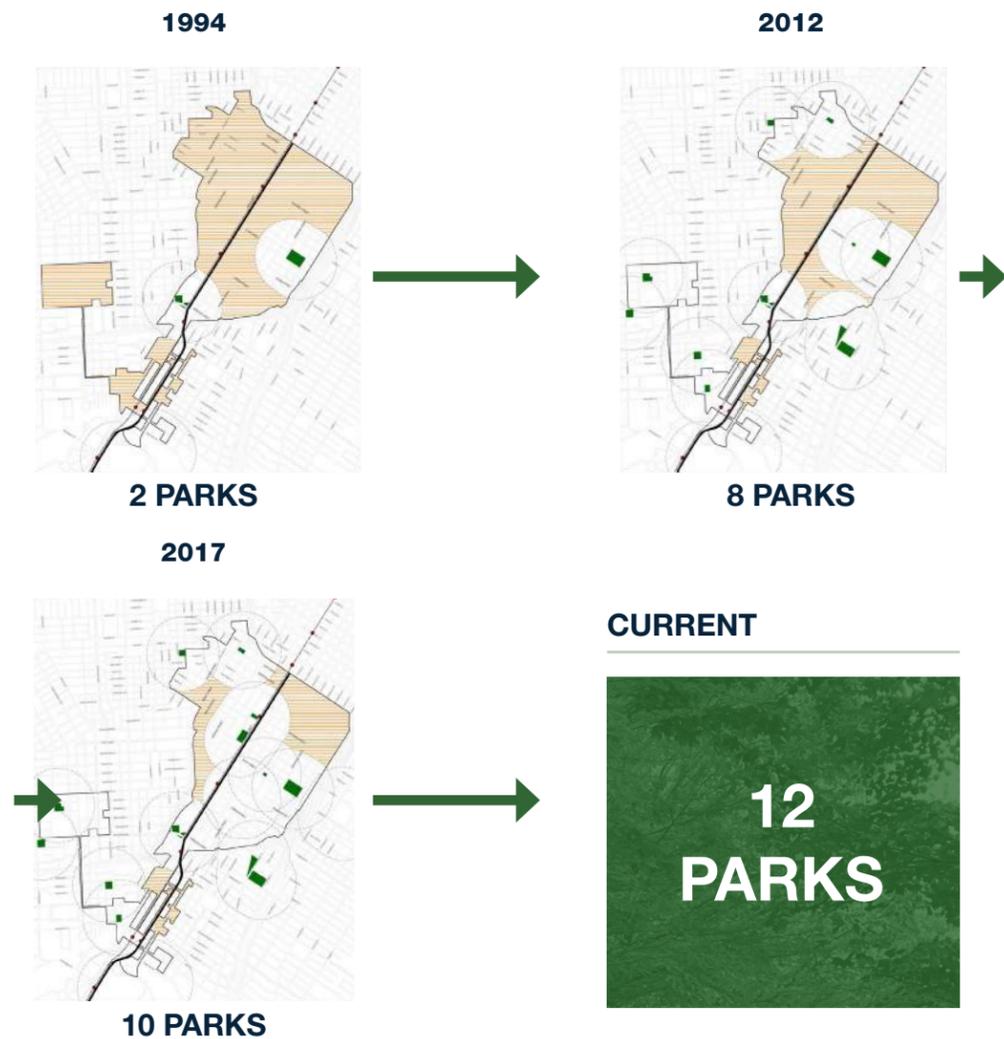


Figure 3 Park Buffer

SAFETY AND COMFORT ANALYSIS

SURVEY RESULT

Midtown Parks and Public Space - Values and Vision Survey asked respondents to locate on maps their most visited as well as least safe area within Midtown. The goal of these questions was to capture information on use of parks, prominent public spaces, and perceived safety. From the survey results, the most visited parts within Midtown, overlapped with parks like Baldwin Park, Bagby Park, and Midtown Park. North Midtown and areas under the Pierce Elevated were marked as the least safe area. They overlap with a park deficit area, as seen in the 'Park Proximity' analysis.



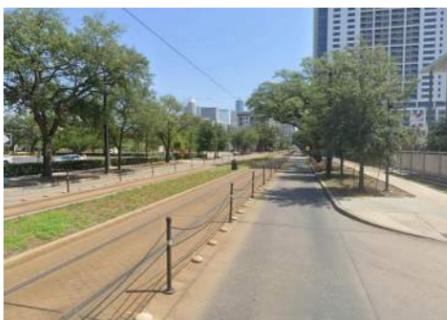
ELIZABETH BALDWIN PARK



FANNIN STREET



ELIZABETH GLOVER PARK



MAIN STREET



BAGBY PARK



ALABAMA STREET



Figure 4 Most Visited Parts within Midtown - According to the Midtown Parks and Public Space - Values and Vision Survey

KEY

- Most Visited
-
-
- Parks Outside Midtown
- 1/4 Mile Radius
- Midtown TIRZ
- Greenway Trail
- Bayou
- METRO Rail

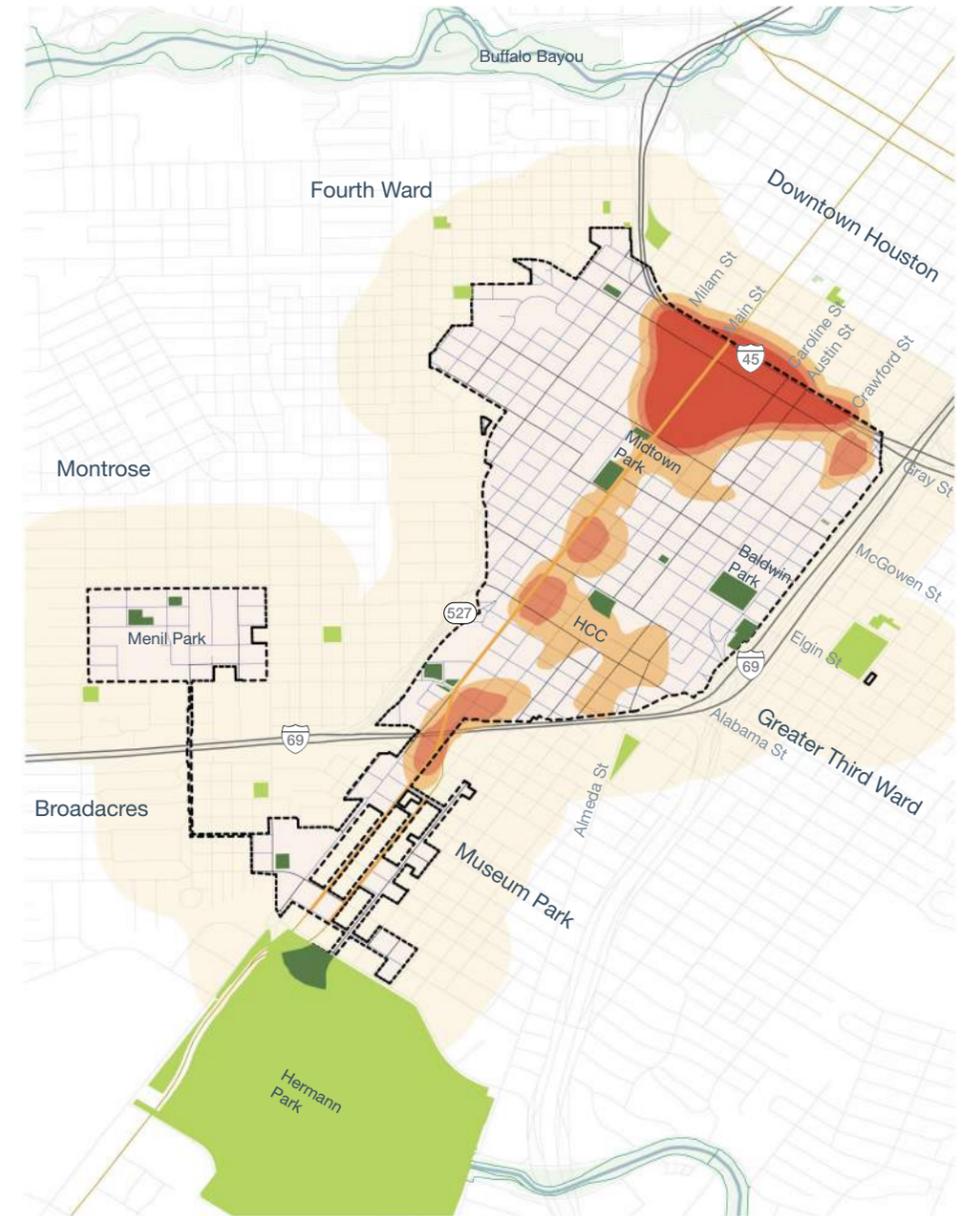


Figure 5 Areas of Least Perceived Safety within Midtown - According to the Midtown Parks and Public Space - Values and Vision Survey

KEY

- Least perceived safety
-
- Parks Outside Midtown
- 1/4 Mile Radius
- Midtown TIRZ
- Greenway Trail
- Bayou
- METRO Rail

VEHICULAR USE INVENTORY

SUMMARY

This map shows the current street hierarchy as defined in the City of Houston's Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan. The streets are classified by right of way width and general land uses they are connected to by motorized vehicles. Freeways border majority of the Midtown's edges and greatly impact its connectivity, especially pedestrians and bicyclists. Six streets to west of the Main Street provide north and south connections to Downtown Houston from Spur 527 and I-69. These are classified as Major Thoroughfares and Major Collectors and have wider right of way with 4-5 travel lanes. This condition creates a barrier for east - west mobility across the west Midtown.



MAJOR THOROUGHFARE | FANNIN



MAJOR COLLECTOR | MCGOWEN



MINOR COLLECTOR | HADLEY



LOCAL STREETS | HELENA



FREEWAY/EXPRESSWAY | IH-45/PIERCE ELEVATED

KEY

Major Thoroughfare (100' min. ROW)

Streets that accumulate traffic from Collectors and other Thoroughfares for distribution to the freeway system.

- Louisiana Street
- Milam Street
- Travis Street
- Fannin Street
- San Jacinto Street

Major Collector (80' min. ROW)

Streets that accumulate traffic from Local Streets and Minor Collectors for distribution to Thoroughfares.

- Babgy Street
- Brazos Street
- Smith Street
- Crawford Street
- Jackson Street
- Gray Street
- Webster Street
- McGowan Street
- Alabama Street

Minor Collector (60' min. ROW)

Public streets that accumulate traffic from Local Streets for distribution to a Thoroughfare or a Major Collector.

Local Streets

Streets that provide access to individual single-family residential lots, entry and exit to the neighborhood, and connectivity to collectors and thoroughfares.

Freeway/Expressway

A divided, controlled access highway for through traffic. The term includes a toll road.

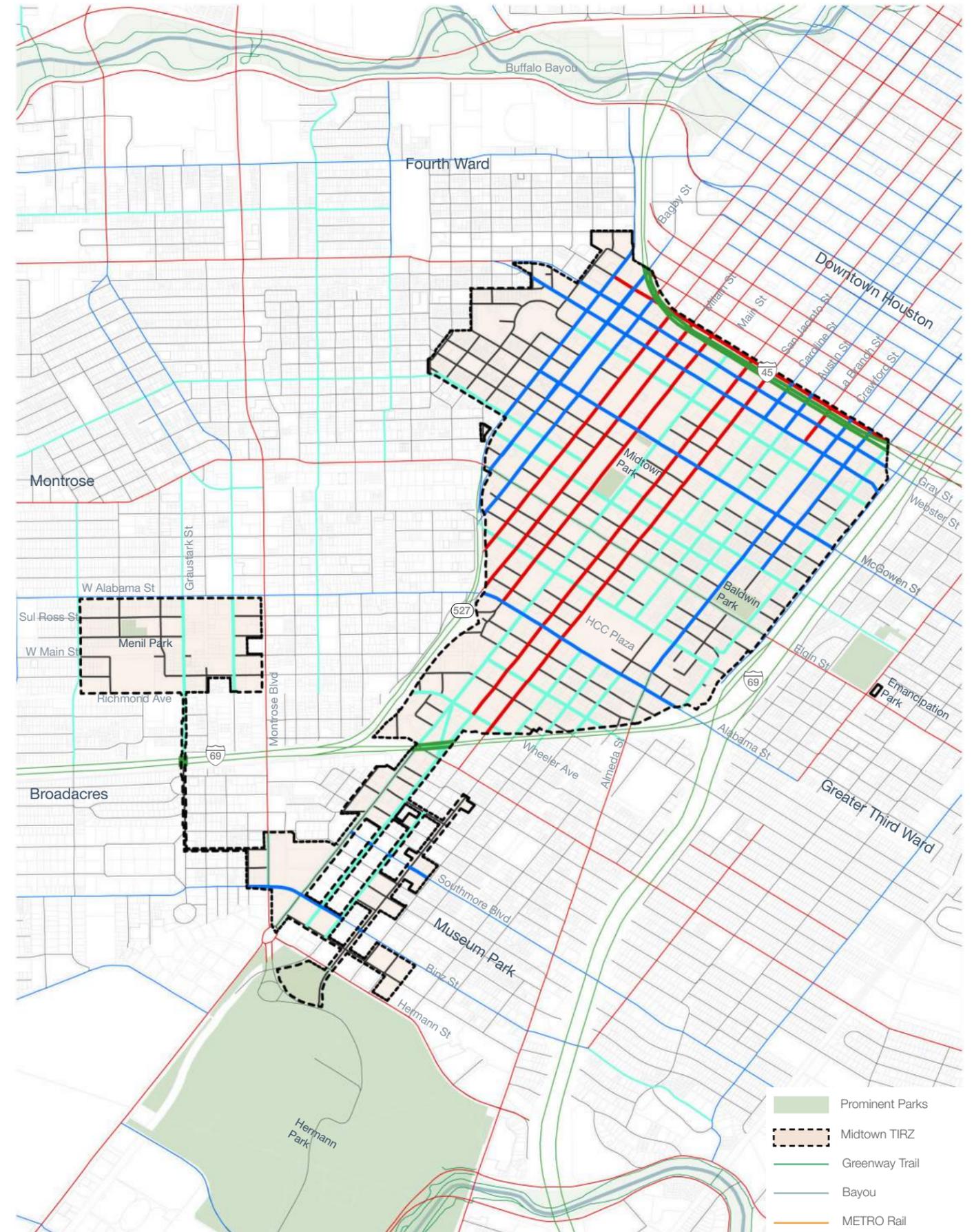


Figure 6 Street Categories by Vehicular Use

BIKE LANES INVENTORY

SUMMARY

Midtown has a mix of existing and proposed bicycle route types, and the ones shown on this map are pulled from the Houston Bike Plan. In addition, this map shows popular existing routes and stations for the B-Cycle shared bicycle program. The B-Cycle information is based on data downloaded from their website. The top level division of bike routes is based on how far they are from being constructed. Aside from "Existing", there are "Programmed" and "Proposed". According to the Houston Bike Plan, "Programmed" routes have already secured some funding source/and or have gone through some design. The Houston Bike Plan also has two main rider comfort categories: High Comfort (HC) and Low Comfort (LC). This level of comfort is based on factors such as separation from vehicles and vehicle speed. Sub-categories for lane types include Shared On-Street (no barrier), Dedicated On-Street (includes some type of physical barrier), and Off-Street (not on the roadway).



SHARED ON-STREET | LA BRANCH



DEDICATED ON-STREET | GRAY



OFF-STREET | BUFFALO BAYOU

KEY

EXISTING HIGH COMFORT

- Dedicated On-Street
- Shared On-Street
- Off-Street

EXISTING LOW COMFORT

- - - Shared On-Street

PROGRAMMED

- - - Dedicated On-Street
- - - Shared On-Street
- - - Off-Street

PROPOSED

- - - - Dedicated On-Street
- - - - Shared On-Street
- - - - Off-Street

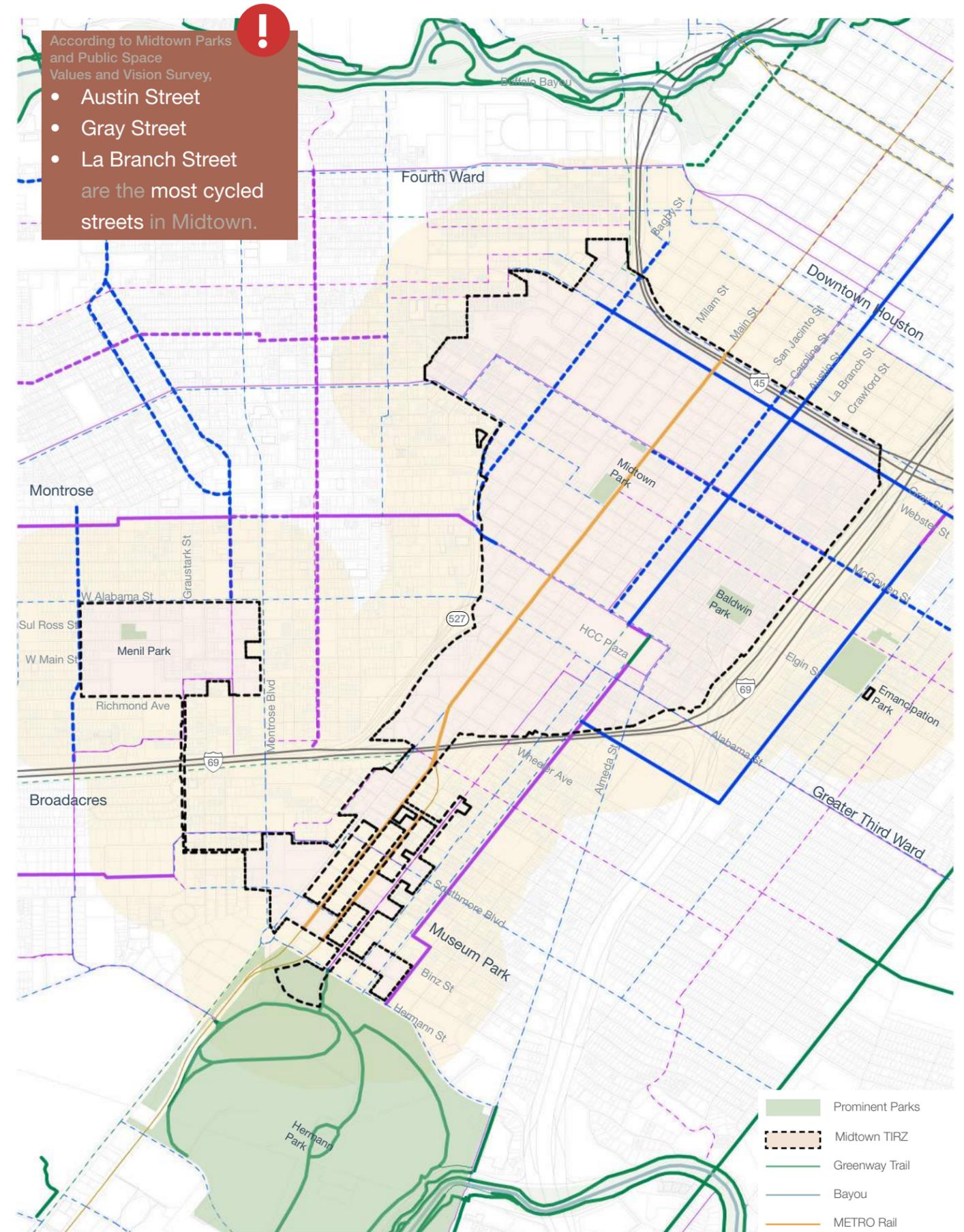


Figure 7 Bike Lanes

PUBLIC TRANSIT INVENTORY

SUMMARY

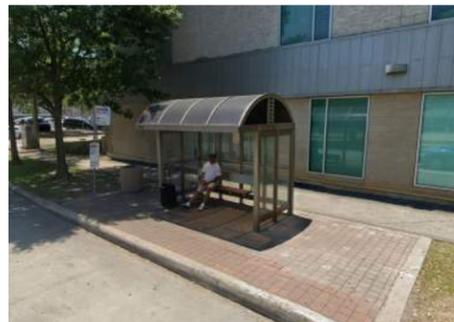
METRO Rail is a major north/south connector in Houston, and it links Midtown to Downtown Houston, Museum District, Texas Medical Center, and NRG Stadium. There are four stops of METRO Rail within Midtown, including the McGowen Station near Midtown Park. Bus routes thread through Midtown, but are concentrated in north and west Midtown. North - south bus routes linking Spur 529 and I-69 to the Central Business District are important to the commuters. Metro is proposing a bus rapid transit (BRT) route that would include a segment on Wheeler Ave in Midtown. Based on the Automatic Passenger Counter system, the METRO pre-pandemic ridership for rail and bus in Houston was about 59.5 million. METRO Rail contributed to about 30% (18.5 million) of the ridership. During the pandemic, overall ridership dropped to about 33.1 million in 2021. Close to 26% (8.8 million) of those riders used METRO Rail. This relatively high proportion of ridership for METRO Rail highlights the importance of the Red line connecting people to and from Midtown.



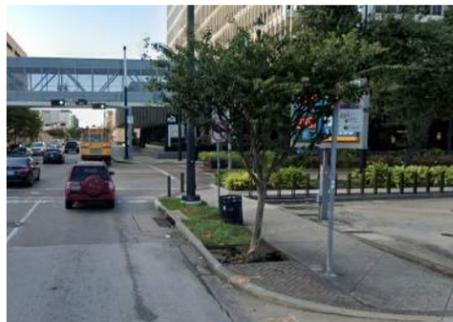
METRO RAIL | MIDTOWN



METRO RAIL STOP | MCGOWEN



COVERED BUS STOP | MCGOWEN



NOT COVERED BUS STOP | ELGIN

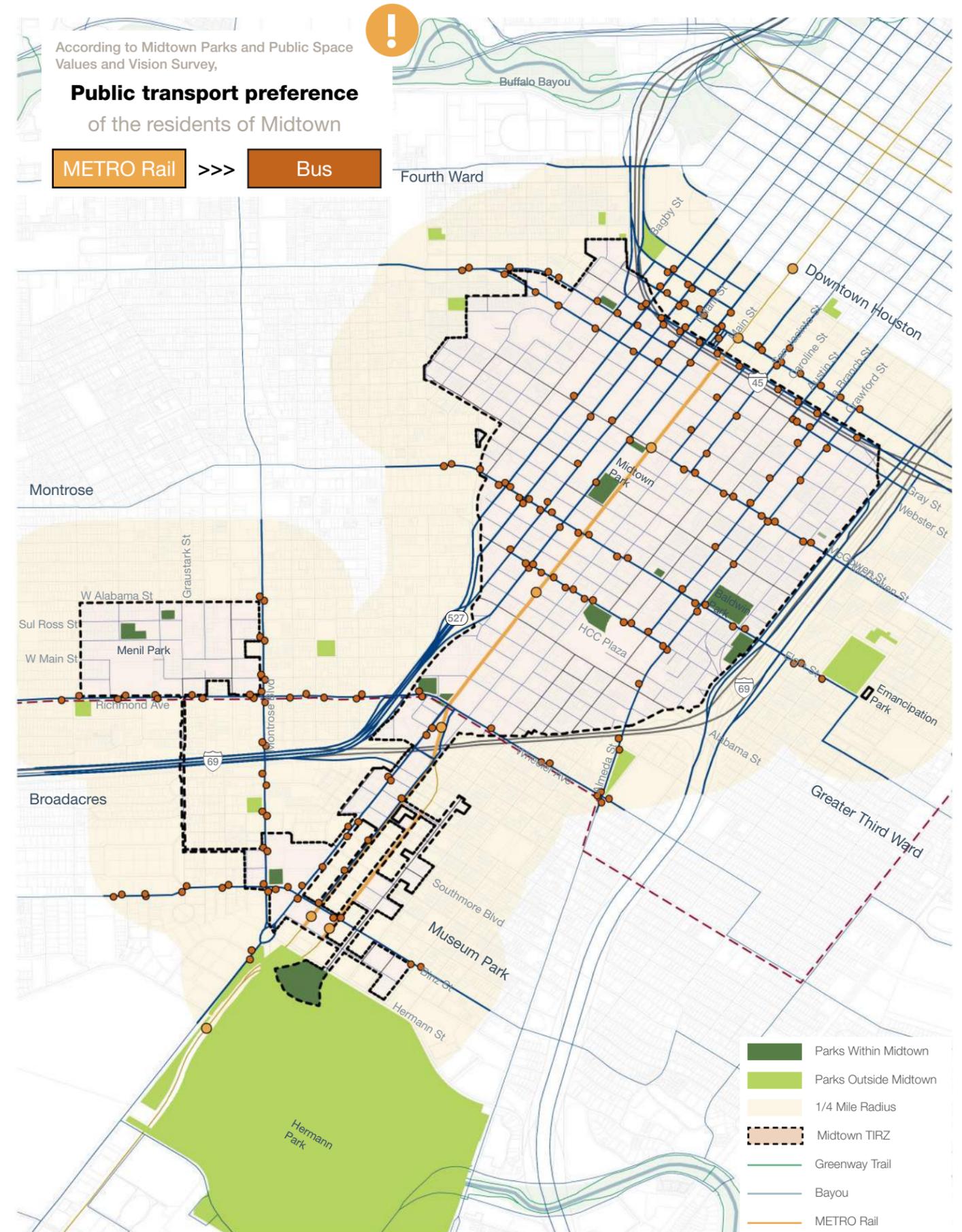


Figure 8 Transit

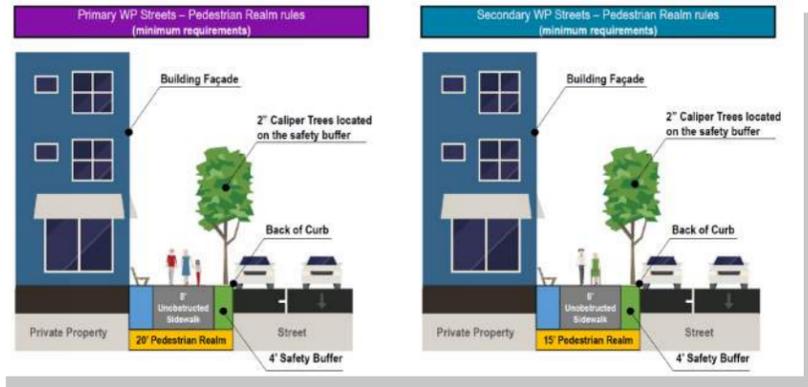
MIDTOWN'S WALKABLE AREAS

INVENTORY: HOUSTON'S WALKABLE PLACES

SUMMARY

Midtown was selected as a pilot for the City of Houston Walkable Places program. This program was initiated to make Houston more walkable. Goals included creating vibrant destinations and attracting higher density developments that support multi-modal transportation. This program has expanded to include Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) areas and is documented in the 'City of Houston Users' Guide for Walkable Place and Transit Oriented Development' planning document that was published in 2020. In the guidelines, Walkable Streets are divided into 'Primary' and 'Secondary'. New development or redevelopment on streets designated as "Primary" by the plan must meet the design guideline requirements. Development on "Secondary" streets can opt into the walkable places standards. For Primary streets, the minimum zone width is 20', whereas it is 15' for Secondary streets.

WALKABLE STREETS DOCUMENTS



WALKABLE PLACES PILOT PROGRAM



Source: City of Houston Users Guide for Walkable Places and Transit-Oriented Development

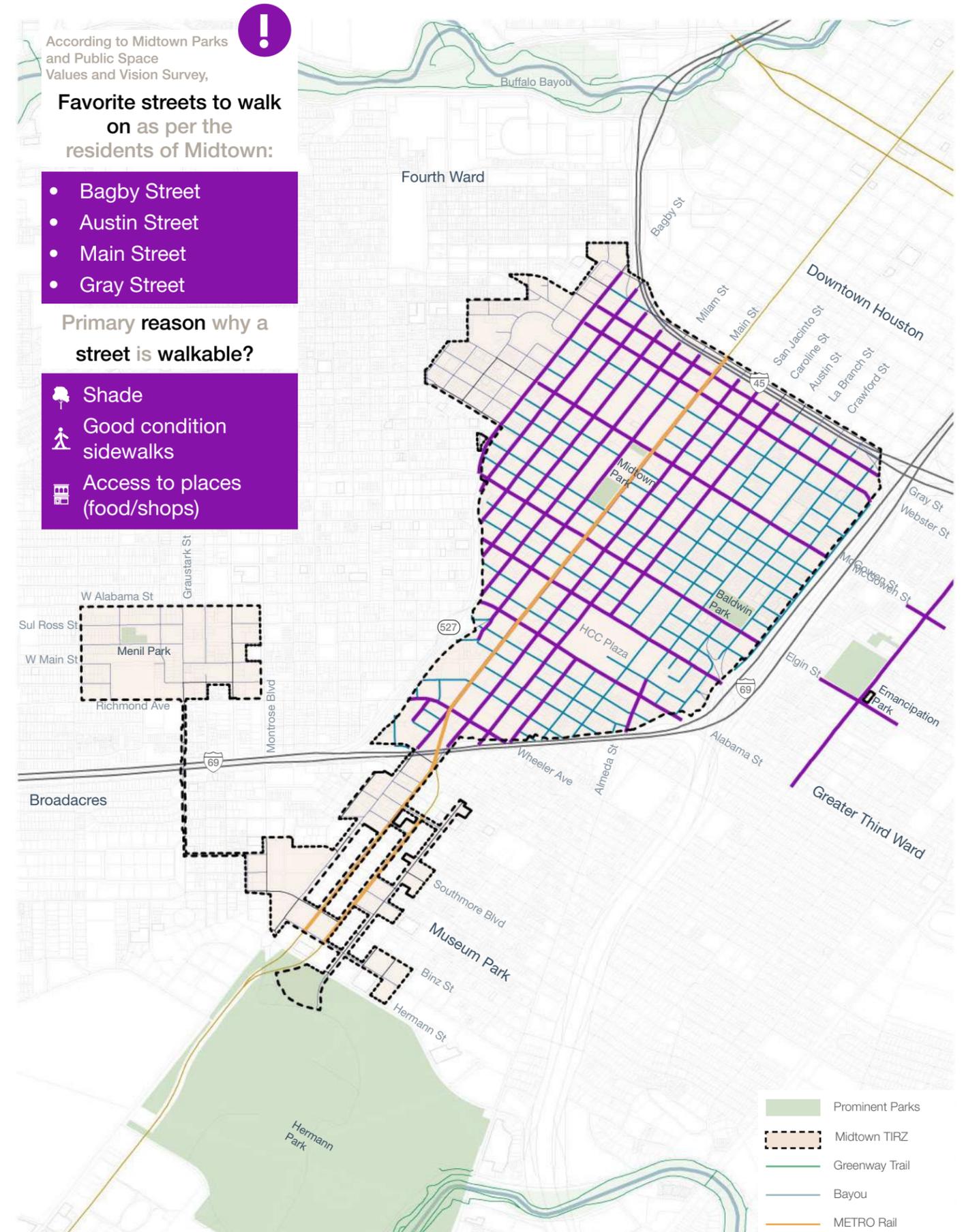


Figure 9 Walkable Streets | City of Houston Users' Guide for Walkable Place and Transit Oriented Development

STREET CONNECTIVITY AND DIRECTION ANALYSIS

SUMMARY

The connectivity and direction of the streets in Midtown is quite varied. The vast majority of north/south roadways are one way streets. Main Street, the only north/south street that connects all the way through Midtown from the Museum District to Downtown Houston, has only one lane of traffic in either direction with the METRO Rail line in the middle. There are more two way east/west streets, but only a handful of those link all the way through Midtown from Montrose/Fourth Ward on the west and Greater Third Ward on the east. I-69 /Highway 288 is a major barrier on the east. Twelve streets dead-end at the interstate because there are a limited number of overpasses. The Menil Park area has limited linkages to the central core of Midtown.



← ONE WAY STREET | AUSTIN STREET



↔ TWO WAY STREET | ELGIN STREET



↔ NOT THROUGH | TWO WAY STREETS: DENNIS STREET

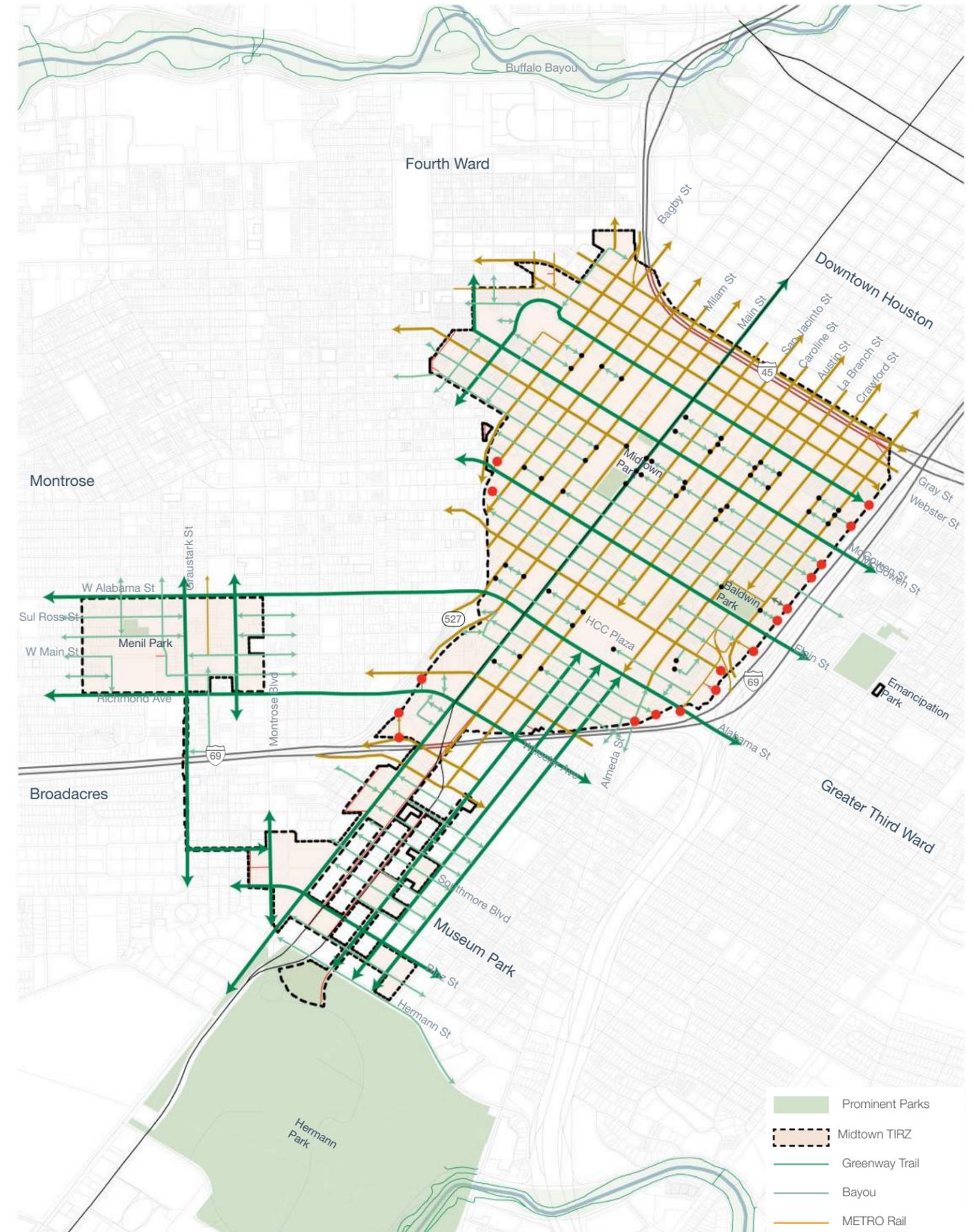


Figure 10 Street Connectivity and Direction

NHHIP CAP AND STITCH + PIERCE ELEVATED INVENTORY

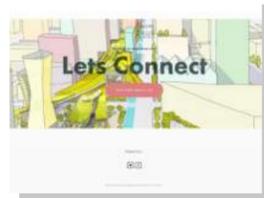
SUMMARY

The North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) is a roadway infrastructure improvement project being led by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Portions of I-45 and I-69 will be impacted by the work. There is a planned reconstruction of I-45 North between Houston's downtown and the North Sam Houston Tollway (also known as Beltway 8), and this will also affect connecting roadway segments. With regards to I-69, additional portions of the interstate will be depressed, and NHHIP proposes a series of "caps" and "stitches" over it. The "caps" will be larger in scope and have the potential to provide parks and public space amenities. The "stitches" are more modest in scale and will take the form of enhanced streetscapes. Three of Midtown's edges will be impacted by NHHIP. On the north edge, Pierce Elevated has been determined to be redundant, so it potentially could be removed or converted to an alternate use. Plan Downtown, which was developed by downtown partner organizations, proposes removal of the elevated roadway and creation of a greenway connecting to Buffalo Bayou. Other groups, such as Pierce Elevated Park and Pierce Sky Park, have proposed keeping the elevated structure and converting it to a signature linear park. On the west and southern edges of Midtown, additional portions of I-69 will be depressed, and NHHIP proposes a series of "caps" and "stitches" over the interstate. Where these occur in Midtown, there is the potential to advocate to maximize the parks and public space benefits that could be achieved at these areas.

CURRENT PROPOSALS & CONCEPTS



PIERCE ELEVATED PARK



PIERCE SKY PARK



PLAN DOWNTOWN - GREENWAY



MIDTOWN NHHIP VISION PLAN

KEY

- █ Stitch
- █ Cap
- █ Pierce Elevated
- █ Improved connections

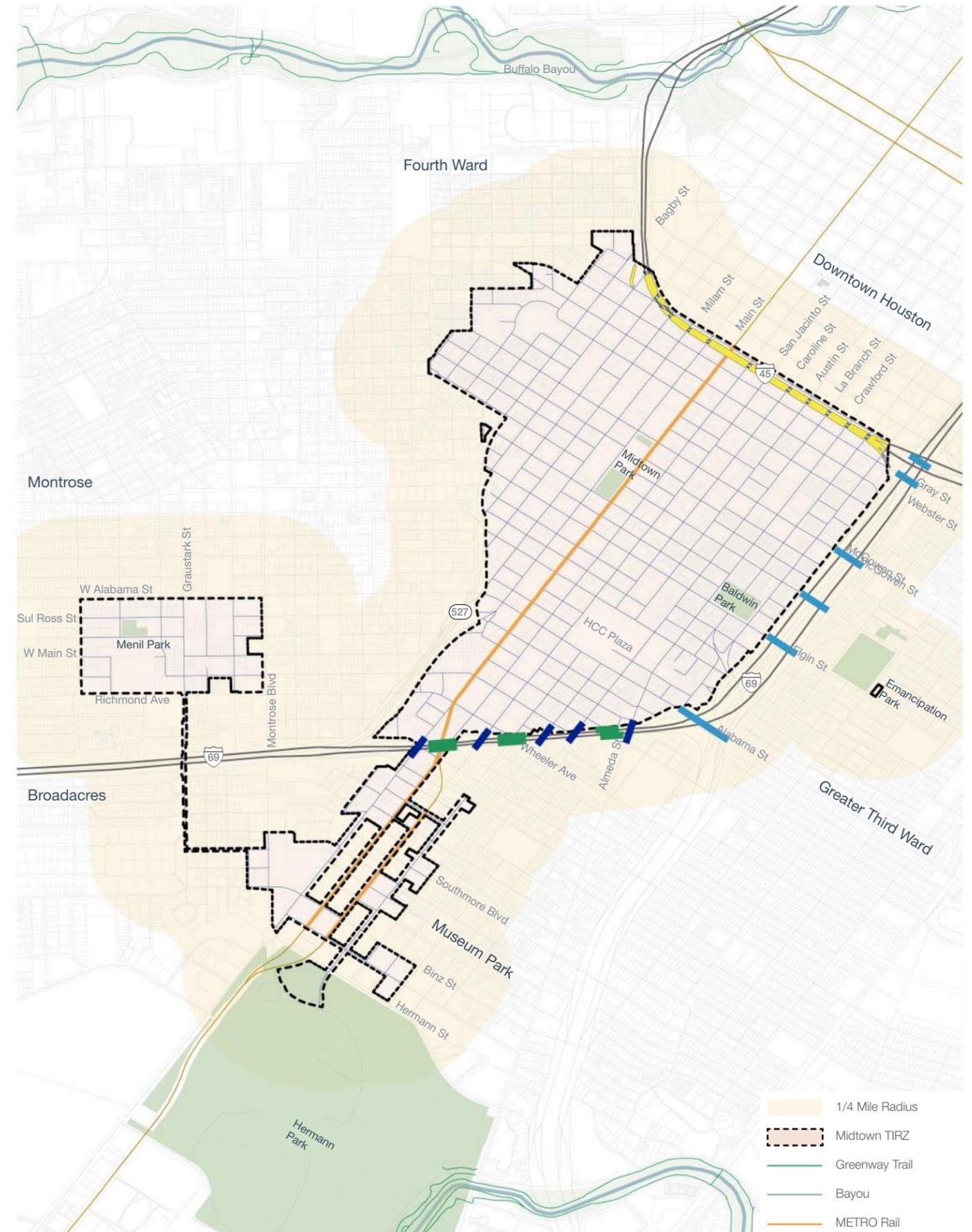


Figure 11 NHHIP Cap and Stitch + Pierce Elevated

CULTURAL SITES INVENTORY

SUMMARY

Cultural sites documents destinations including museums, historic sites, and public art for the Midtown residents and visitors. This map highlights some of the key current sites. The 2015 Midtown Cultural Arts Master Plan goes into more depth, especially with regards to dining and performance spaces. One metric of note is that Midtown is home to many museums. When looking at public space such as streetscapes, the clustering of cultural sites helps to start identify destinations and routes that may want to be linked together. These become areas where enhancing the pedestrian realm and increasing bicycle routes could help to strengthen Midtown's cultural network as well.



LIBRARY | CLAYTON LIBRARY CENTER FOR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH



PLACE OF WORSHIP | TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH



HISTORIC SITE | BUFFALO SOLDIERS NATIONAL MUSEUM



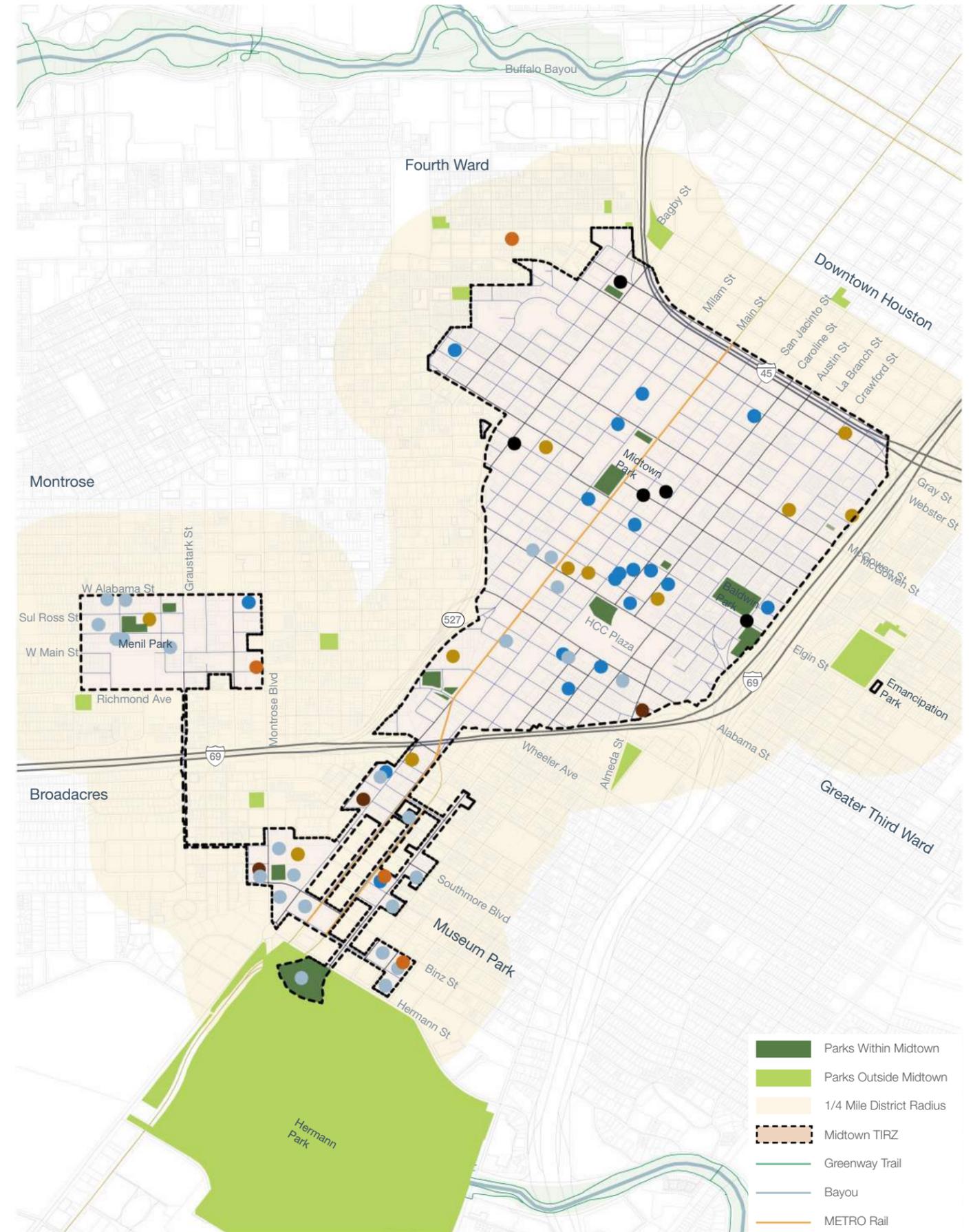
MUSEUM | HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE



COMMUNITY CENTER | SHAPE COMMUNITY CENTER



PUBLIC ART | MINI MURALS



KEY

- Library
- Place of Worship
- Historic Site
- Museum
- Community Center
- Public Art

- Parks Within Midtown
- Parks Outside Midtown
- 1/4 Mile District Radius
- Midtown TIRZ
- Greenway Trail
- Bayou
- METRO Rail

Figure 12 Cultural Sites



3.1

CREATE - STREETS

Recommendations

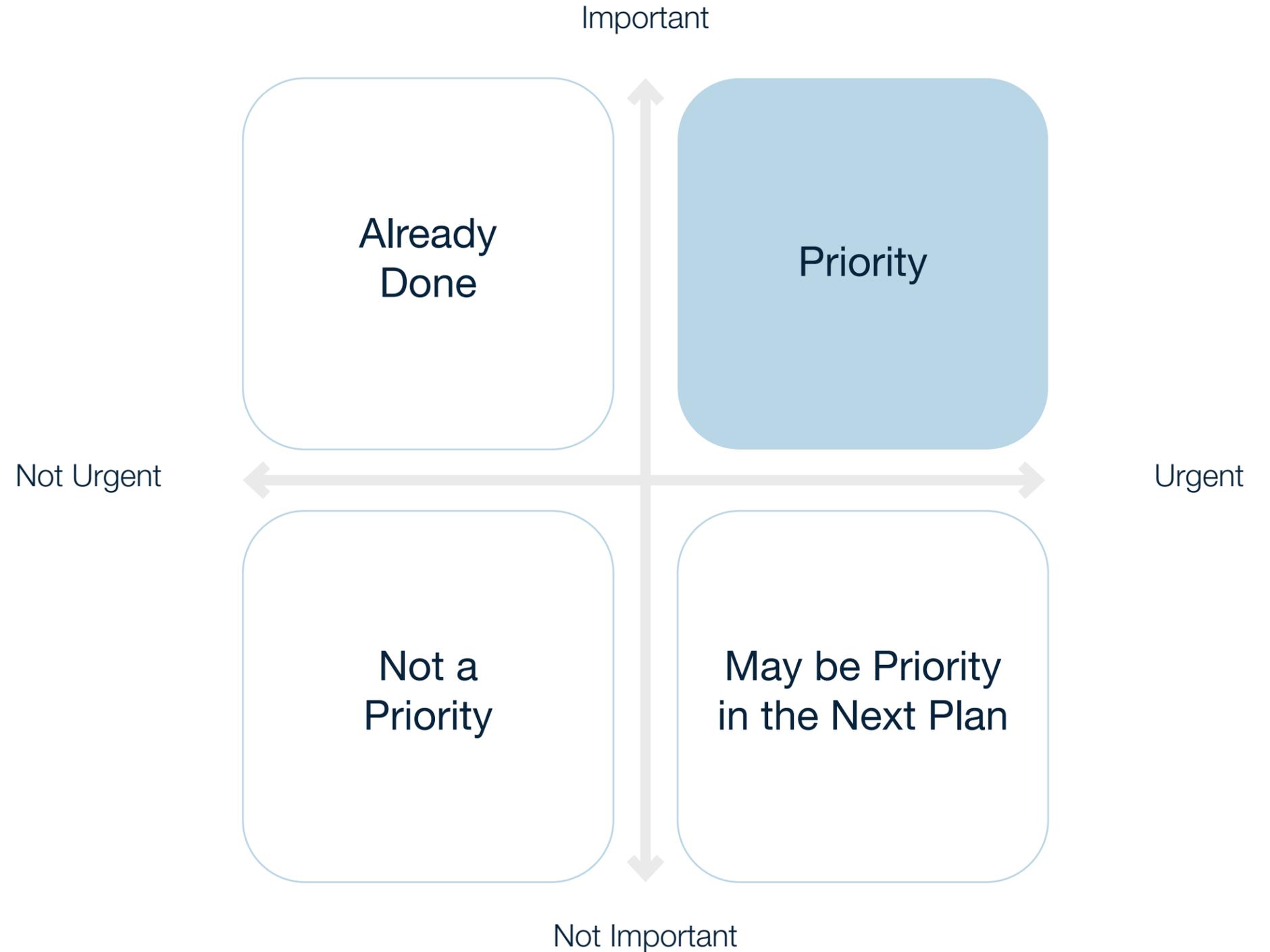
Hierarchy vs Priority.....	24
Hierarchy Streets.....	25
Street Improvement Zones.....	27
Priority Streets.....	28

HIERARCHY VS PRIORITY

DEFINITIONS

SUMMARY

Midtown Parks and Public Space Master Plan seeks to develop recommendations for capital improvements to public spaces over the next 5 to 10 years. In order to narrow down to the key priority projects for this time period, the project team started by establishing a hierarchy list for streets and a hierarchy list for parks. These lists assigned points to each street and each park based on analysis of the previous plans and other site factors, such as transit routes on streets. This helped the team to reduce the pool of candidates by establishing a ranking of importance. From those, a professional value judgment was made on the priority of the parks and public space to further distill the top candidates for capital improvements based on those that are the most urgent. The priority diagram on the right illustrates how this plan strives to target projects that will be both urgent and of high importance.



HIERARCHY STREETS

ANALYSIS

SUMMARY

The chart below is a compilation of hierarchical classifications from the previous plans to better establish the priority streets. It refers to the 2015 CAMP Plan, the 2018 Strategic Framework Plan, the Houston Bike Plan, the City of Houston Users' Guide for Walkable Place and Transit Oriented Development, and Midtown Safe Streets and Roads For All.

STREET NAME	2015 CAMP PLAN	2018 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PLAN	HOUSTON BIKE PLAN	WALKABLE STREETS	TRANSIT STREETS	SAFE STREET PRIORITY	LEVEL
McGowen St	Medium Priority Connector	Proposed Green Corridor	Existing HC Shared On-Street	Primary	Bus	Yes	6
Holman St	High Priority Connector	Existing Green Corridor	Existing HC Shared On-Street	Primary	Bus		5
Main St	High Priority Connector	Bike/Ped Promenade	Proposed Dedicated On-Street	Primary	Rail		5
Webster St	Medium Priority Connector	Proposed Green Corridor	Proposed Shared On-Street		Bus	Yes	5
Alabama St	High Priority Connector	Proposed Green Corridor	Proposed Shared On-Street	Primary			4
Crawford St	Medium Priority Connector			Secondary	Bus	Yes	4
Elgin St	Medium Priority Connector	Proposed Green Corridor		Primary	Bus		4
Gray St		Proposed Green Corridor	Proposed Shared On-Street	Primary	Bus		4
Tuam St		Proposed Green Corridor	Proposed Dedicated On-Street	Secondary		Yes	4
Almeda Rd			Proposed Shared On-Street	Primary	Bus		3
Binz St		Proposed Green Corridor	Proposed Shared On-Street		Bus		3
Caroline St	Medium Priority Connector		Existing HC Shared On-Street	Primary			3
Fannin St				Primary	Bus	Yes	3
La Branch St			Proposed Shared On-Street	Secondary	Bus		3
Louisiana St	Medium Priority Connector			Primary	Bus		3
Montrose Blvd		Proposed Green Corridor	Proposed Shared On-Street		Bus		3
Pierce St				Secondary	Bus	Yes	3
San Jacinto St				Primary	Bus	Yes	3
Travis St			Proposed Dedicated On-Street	Primary	Bus		3
Wheeler St		Proposed Green Corridor		Primary	Bus		3

HIERARCHY STREETS

ANALYSIS

SUMMARY

This map is a graphic representation of the hierarchical classifications of streets as defined on the previous table. The top level streets from this analysis are graphically shown as thicker lines on the map. It is from the top level streets that a more narrow set of priority streets was identified as the best candidates for capital improvements that could enhance the streetscape public space in Midtown.



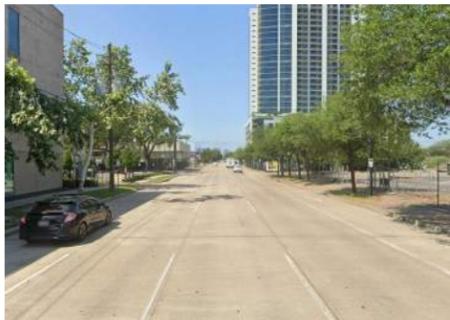
LEVEL 6 | MCGOWEN STREET



LEVEL 5 | MAIN STREET



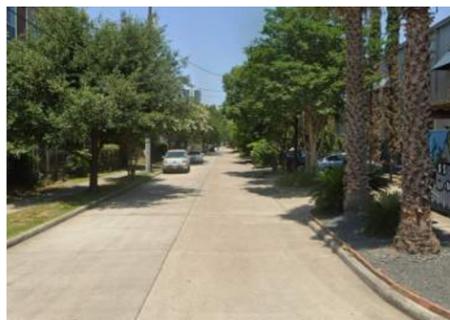
LEVEL 4 | ELGIN STREET



LEVEL 3 | FANNIN STREET



LEVEL 2 | MILAM STREET



LEVEL 1 | DREW STREET

KEY

- █ Level 6 street
- █ Level 5 street
- █ Level 4 street
- █ Level 3 street
- █ Level 2 street
- █ Level 1 street

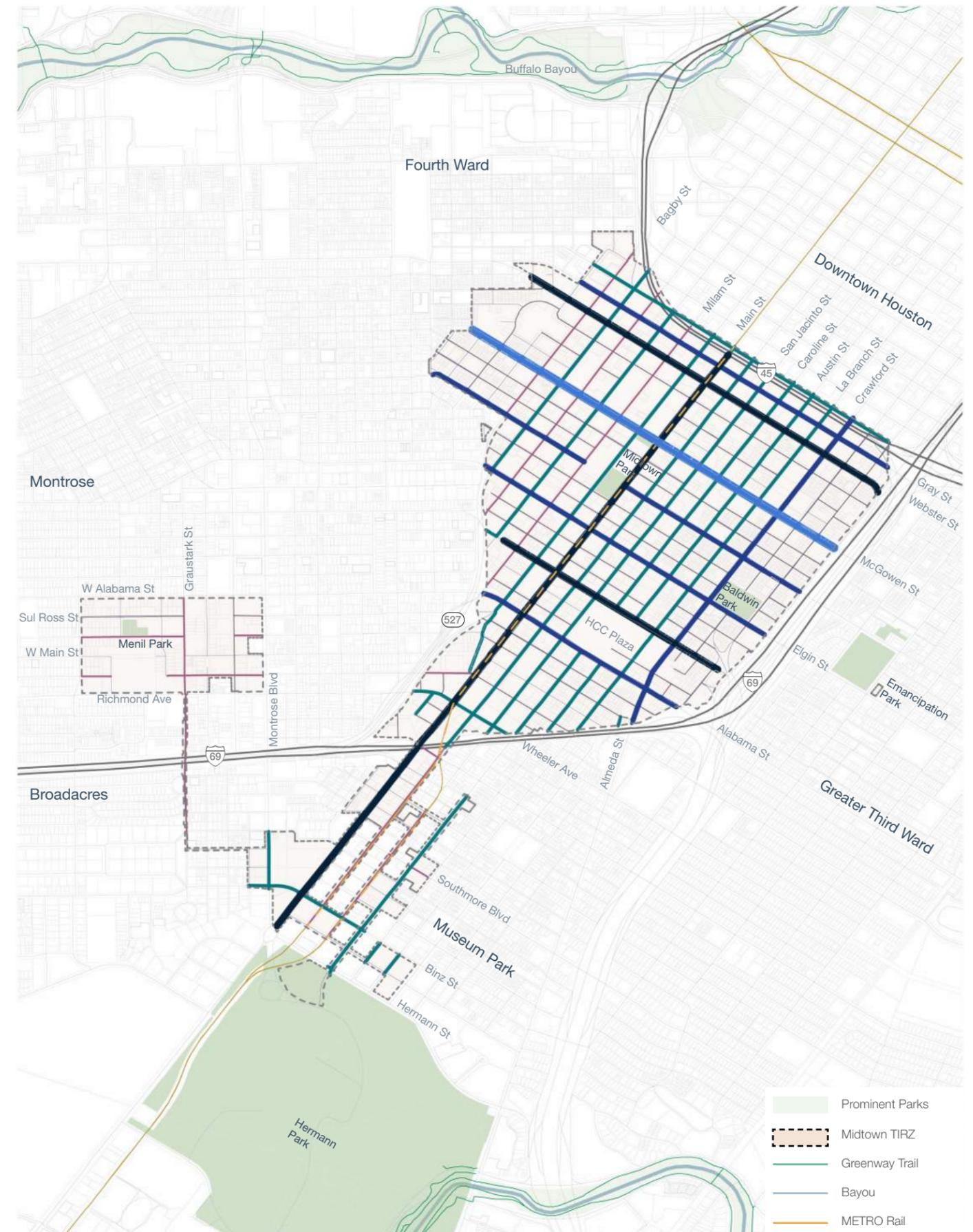


Figure 14 Street Hierarchy

STREET IMPROVEMENT ZONES

ANALYSIS CHART

STREETS

Streets are the spaces between the curb or between the on street parking lanes. It includes travel lanes for vehicles and bicycles.



Add Shared On Street Bike Lane



Add Dedicated Two Way On Street Bike Lane



Improve Crosswalk Striping

PEDESTRIAN REALM

The pedestrian realm includes the entire area from back of curb to the building facade. It is made up of four zones: Building Transition Zone, Sidewalk Zone, Planting Zone, and Street Furnishing Zone.



Improve Tree Zone



Add Street Furniture



Dedicated Off Street Bike Lane



Add Rain Garden



Add Street Benches



Green Medians



Add Street Lights



Engaging Pavement Patterns



Improve Signage

ON STREET PARKING

On-street parking is accommodated on many public streets in Midtown. These guidelines address the character and functionality of these parking spaces and their impact on the District.



On Street Parking - Buffer - Tree Zone



On Street Parking and Bike Lane



Single Side On Street Parking

PRIORITY STREETS ANALYSIS

SUMMARY

From the top hierarchy streets, a sub-set of 'priority streets' was established as the streets recommended for capital improvements that would have the most impact on Midtown. These top 11 priority streets include:

Alabama Street	
Brazos Street	
Crawford Street	
Elgin Street	
Fannin Street	
Gray Street	
Main Street	
McGowen Street	
San Jacinto Street	
Webster Street	
Wheeler Street	

The narrowing process took into consideration previous capital improvement projects. If a street recently had major construction that enhanced the public space, then the street or the specific portion of the street, was removed from the recommended priority street.

This map also shows the kit of parts elements being recommended on the individual priority streets. The street section recommendations on the following pages are representative of typical conditions. Detailed designs for streets should respond to specific site conditions. Bike lane types and locations shown are also conceptual and may be revised based on project design needs.

STREETS

- Remove/ reduce travel lane
- Improve crosswalk stripping
- Add dedicated bike lane
- Add shared bike lane
- Bury utility lines, raise utility lines, remove sidewalk hindrances

PEDESTRIAN REALM

- Add trees to the planting zone
- Improve/ add planting bed
- Add streetlights
- Improve sidewalk conditions
- Widen sidewalk
- Add planting bed to the median
- Add street furniture

ON STREET PARKING

- Reduce on street parking
- Add on street parking
- Add buffer between the street and pedestrian realm

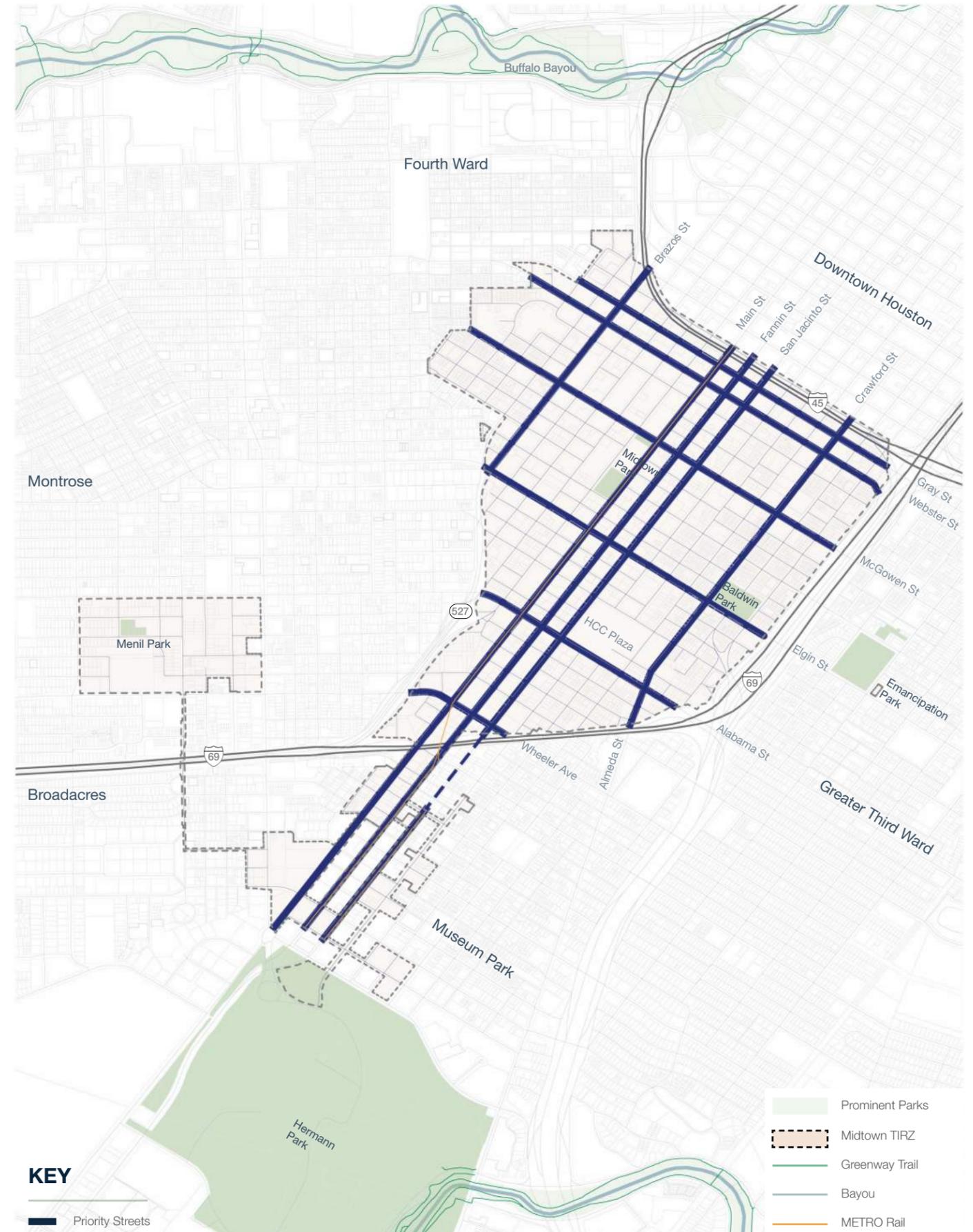


Figure 15 Street Priority

ALABAMA STREET

- High Priority Connector
- Proposed Green Corridor
- Existing LC Shared Bike Lane
- Proposed HC Dedicated Bike Lane
- Primary Walkable Street
- Major Collector

Alabama Street is a two way street and is bounded by Milam Street on the west and Chenevert Street on the east. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, 8 out of 19 sidewalk segments are in good condition, 6 segments are in fair condition, and 3 segments are in poor condition. The highlighted connection in red, is a stitch proposed by the NHHIP which will improve connections to Midtown.



Figure 16 Street Key

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Convert 2 travel lanes into an off-street dedicated 6' bike lane on either sides with signs and safety for bicyclists.
- 2 Maintain the travel lanes at 10' width.
- 3 Utility lines cleanup.
- 4 Widen sidewalk to a minimum of 6' width where necessary.
- 5 Improve sidewalk quality.
- 6 Rebuild the hardscape on the medians as necessary and convert planting beds to native and adapted plantings where possible.
- 7 Increase the width of planting zone.
- 8 Add Midtown standard streetlights at 20'-30' interval, evenly between street trees.
- 9 Add 2' raised buffer between the dedicated bike lane and travel lane.

KEY

- Sidewalk
- Planting Zone
- Bike Lane
- Travel Lane
- Curb

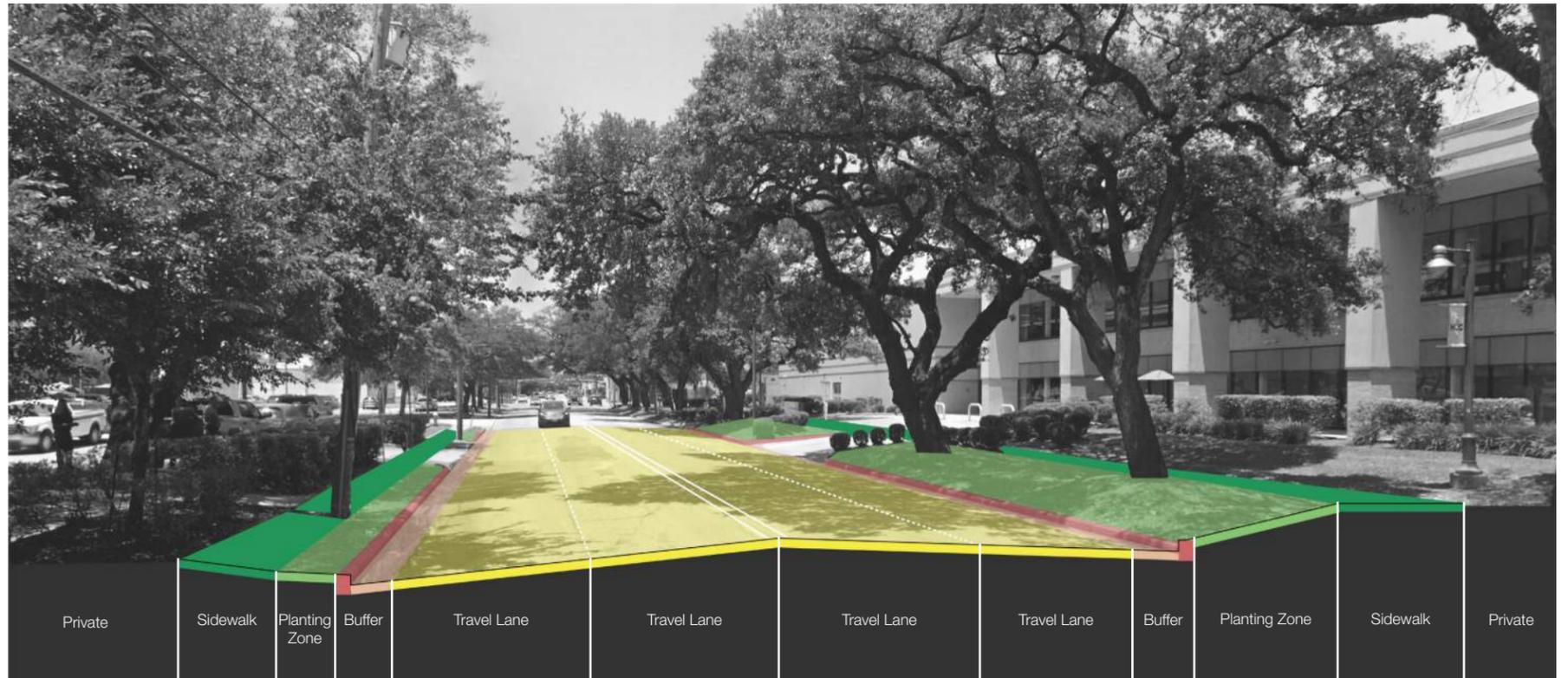


Figure 17 Existing Street Conditions

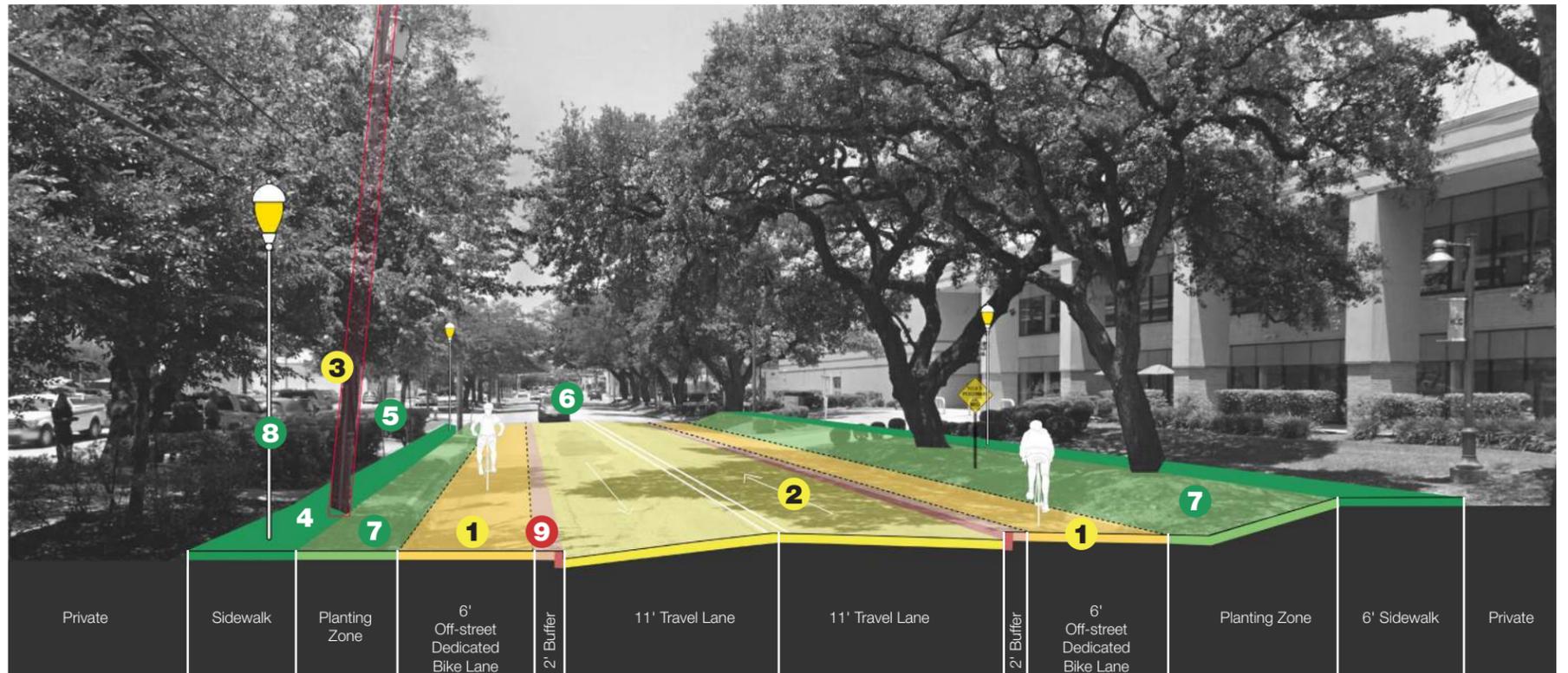


Figure 18 Recommended Street Conditions

BRAZOS STREET

- Programmed HC Dedicated Bike Lane
- Primary Walkable Street
- Major Collector

Brazos Street is a one way northbound street and is bounded by St. Joseph Parkway on the north and Elgin Street on the south. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, 14 out of 24 sidewalk segments are in good condition, 9 segments are in fair condition, and 1 segment is in poor condition.



Figure 19 Street Key



Figure 20 Existing Street Conditions

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Add a 10' two way dedicated bike lane.
- 2 Improve crosswalk striping.
- 3 Utility lines cleanup.
- 4 Add shade trees and native & adapted vegetation in the planting zone.
- 5 Add Midtown standard street and pedestrian lighting at 20'-30' interval, evenly between street trees.
- 6 Widen sidewalk to a minimum of 6' width where necessary.
- 7 Remove one parking lane.

KEY

- Sidewalk
- Planting Zone
- Bike Lane
- Travel Lane
- Curb
- On Street Parking

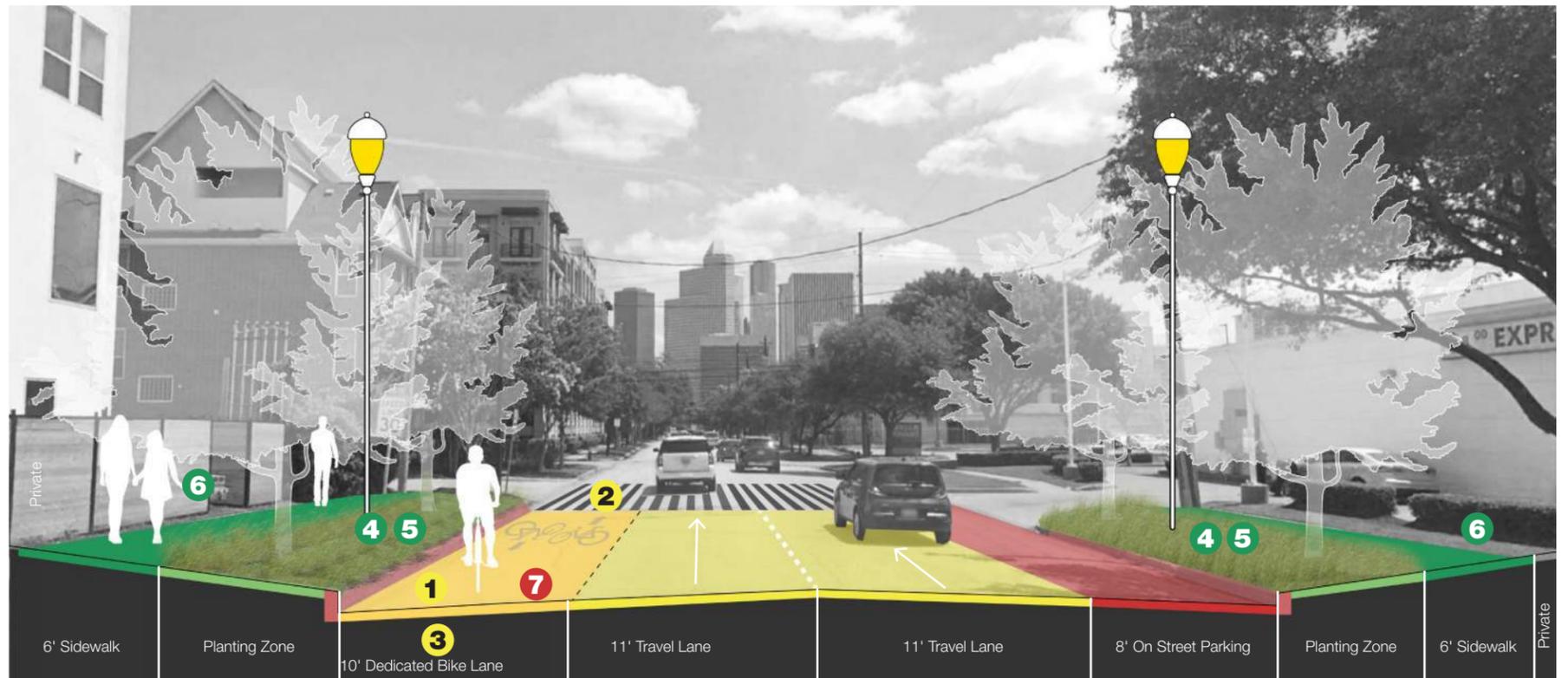


Figure 21 Recommended Street Conditions

CRAWFORD STREET

- **Medium Priority Connector**
- **Secondary Walkable Street**
- **Safe Streets Priority**
- **Bus Route**

Following the plans for the adjacent dedicated bike routes on Alabama Street, Crawford street could install a bike lane to connect into Baldwin Park and further. Other improvements could be within the pedestrians realm such as planting and improved sidewalk conditions. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, 18 out of 34 sidewalk segments are in good condition, 8 segments are in fair condition, and 8 segments are in poor condition. However, after the Crawford Street improvements, the sidewalk conditions have improved. The proposed cap at Alameda Street by NHHIP will depress I-69 improving connections Midtown.

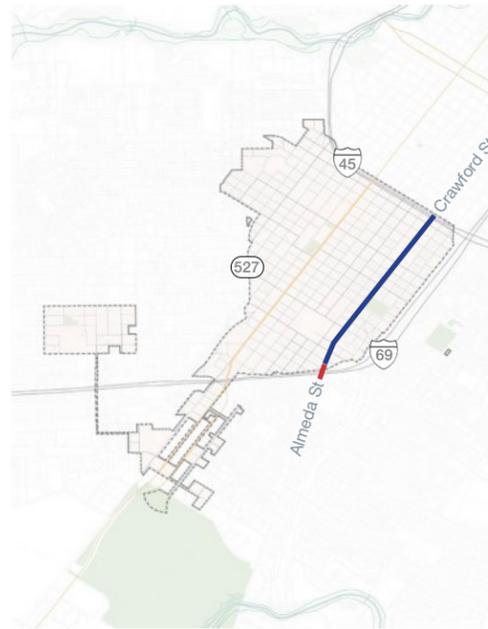


Figure 22 Street Key

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Convert a travel lane to a two way 10' dedicated bike lane with signs and safety for bicyclists.
- 2 Add buffer between the dedicated bike lane and travel lane.
- 3 Maintain the travel lanes with bus routes at 11' width.
- 4 Convert Crawford Street to a two way street, aligning to Alameda Street.
- 5 Utility lines cleanup.
- 6 Widen sidewalk to a minimum of 6' width where necessary.
- 7 Improve sidewalk quality where necessary.
- 8 Add Midtown standard streetlights at 20'-30' interval, evenly between street trees.
- 9 Add buffer between travel lane and bike lane.

KEY

- Sidewalk
- Planting Zone
- Bike Lane
- Travel Lane
- Curb

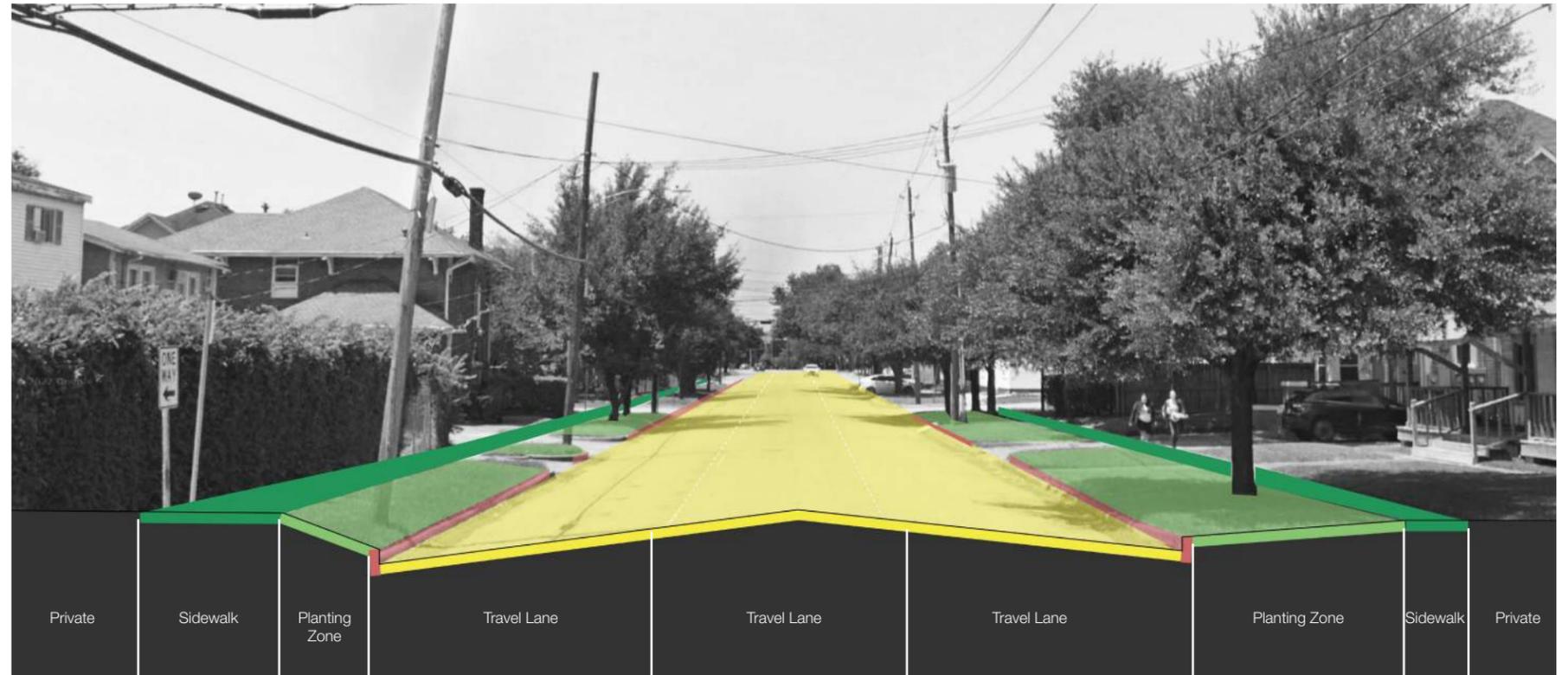


Figure 23 Existing Street Conditions

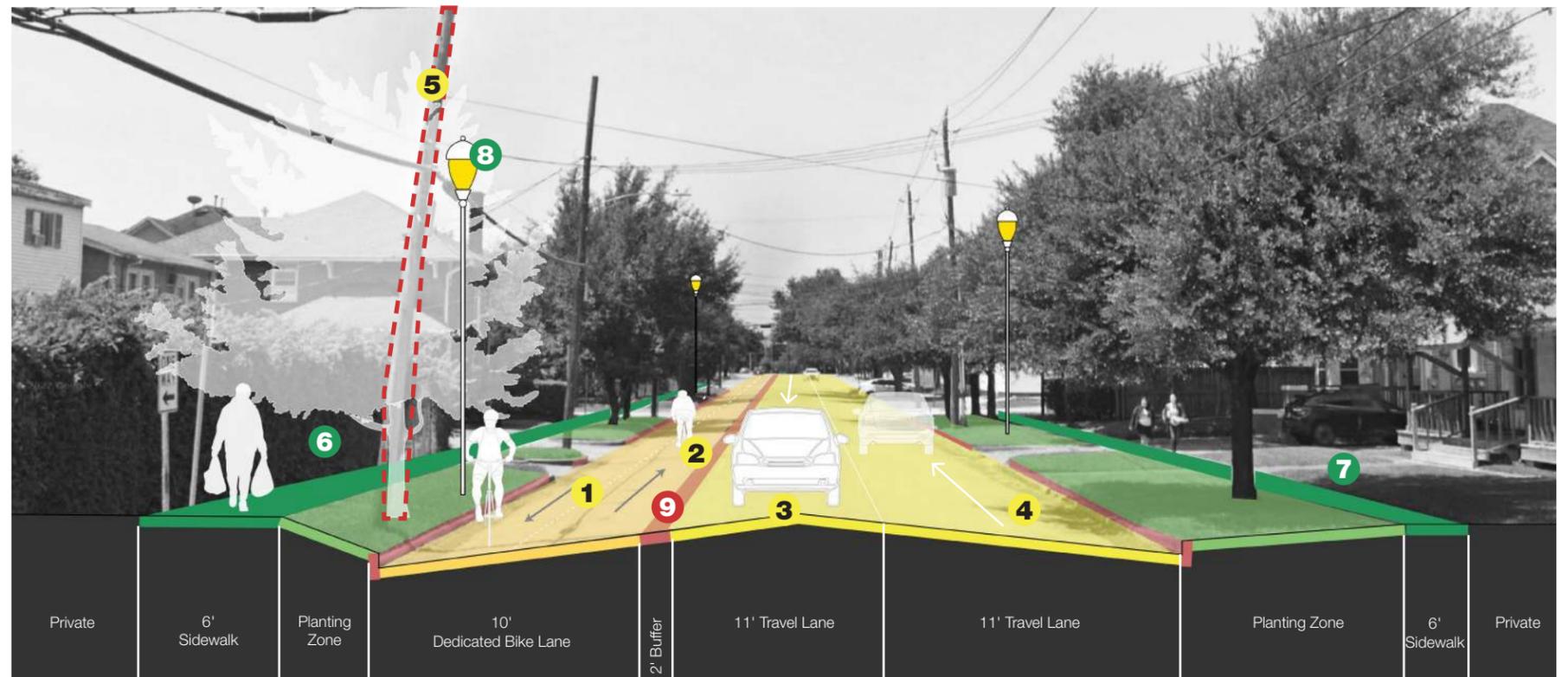


Figure 24 Recommended Street Conditions

ELGIN STREET

- **Medium Priority Connector**
- **Proposed Green Corridor**
- **Primary Walkable Street**
- **Bus Route**
- Minor Collector

Elgin Street is a major connector east to west and is currently a two-way street. The street has 4 travel lanes and a turning lane with minimal pedestrian spaces. The proposed section shows the potential to include some planted medians, and improve the quality of sidewalks. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, 29 out of 30 sidewalk segments are in good condition, 1 segment are in fair condition, and 0 segments are in poor condition. The highlighted connection in red, is a stitch proposed by the NHHIP which will improve connections to Midtown.



Figure 25 Street Key

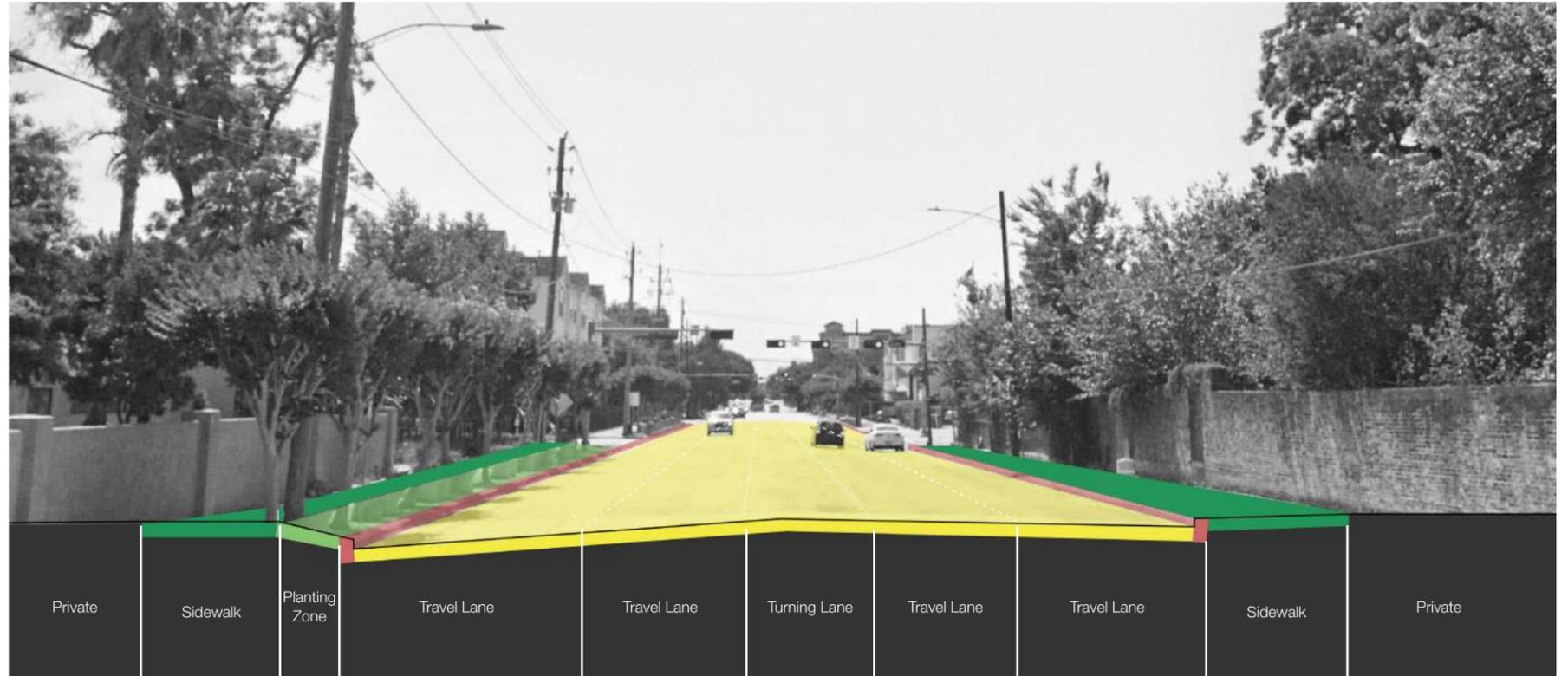


Figure 26 Existing Street Conditions

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Widen sidewalk to a minimum of 6' width where necessary.
- 2 Add Midtown standard street and pedestrian lighting at 20'-30' interval, evenly between street trees.
- 3 Upgrade turn lane to planted median with native trees.
- 4 Maintain travel lanes with bus routes at 11' width and travel lanes at 10' width.
- 5 Utility lines cleanup.

KEY

- Sidewalk
- Planting Zone
- Bike Lane
- Travel Lane
- Curb



Figure 27 Recommended Street Conditions

FANNIN STREET

- **Primary Walkable Street**
- **Safe Streets Priority**
- **Bus Route**
- Major Thoroughfare

Fannin Street is a major north to south one way connector. The street has 1 lane for parking and 4 travel lanes with 2 lanes restricted only for carpools and buses during particular hours. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, 64 out of 70 sidewalk segments are in good condition, 3 segments are in fair condition, and 3 segments are in poor condition. The highlighted part in red, is a cap and stitch proposed by the NHHIP which will improve connections to Midtown. It will improve the pedestrian conditions by adding improved sidewalks and green spaces.



Figure 28 Street Key

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Widen sidewalk to a minimum of 6' width where necessary.
- 2 Improve sidewalk quality.
- 3 Remove a travel lane dedicated to buses and carpools only.
- 4 Convert a travel lane dedicated to buses and carpools only to a turn lane.
- 5 Convert the street into a two-way street.
- 6 Maintain travel lanes with bus routes at 11' width.
- 7 Add 6' dedicated bike lane.
- 8 Shift the parking to accommodate the dedicated bike lane.
- 9 Add a paved median buffer between the dedicated bike lane and parking.

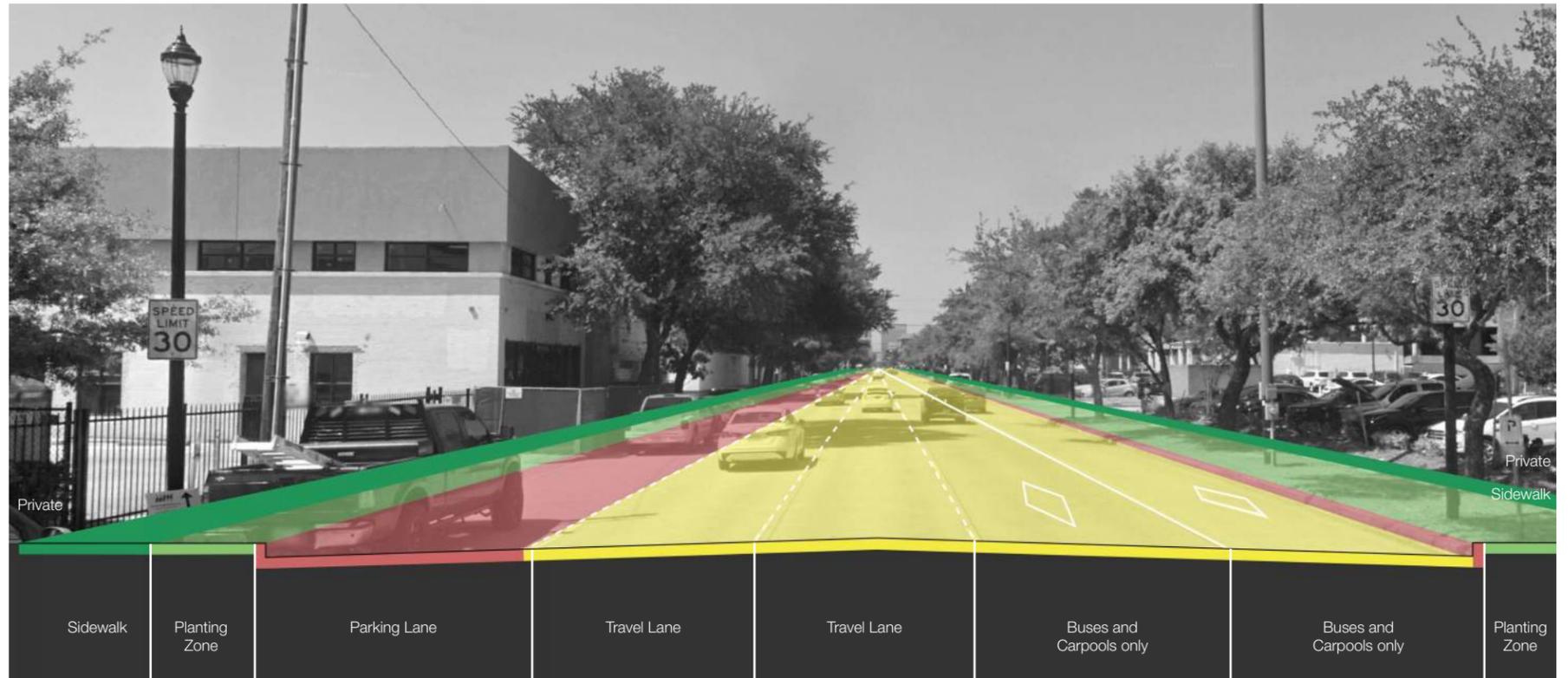


Figure 29 Existing Street Conditions

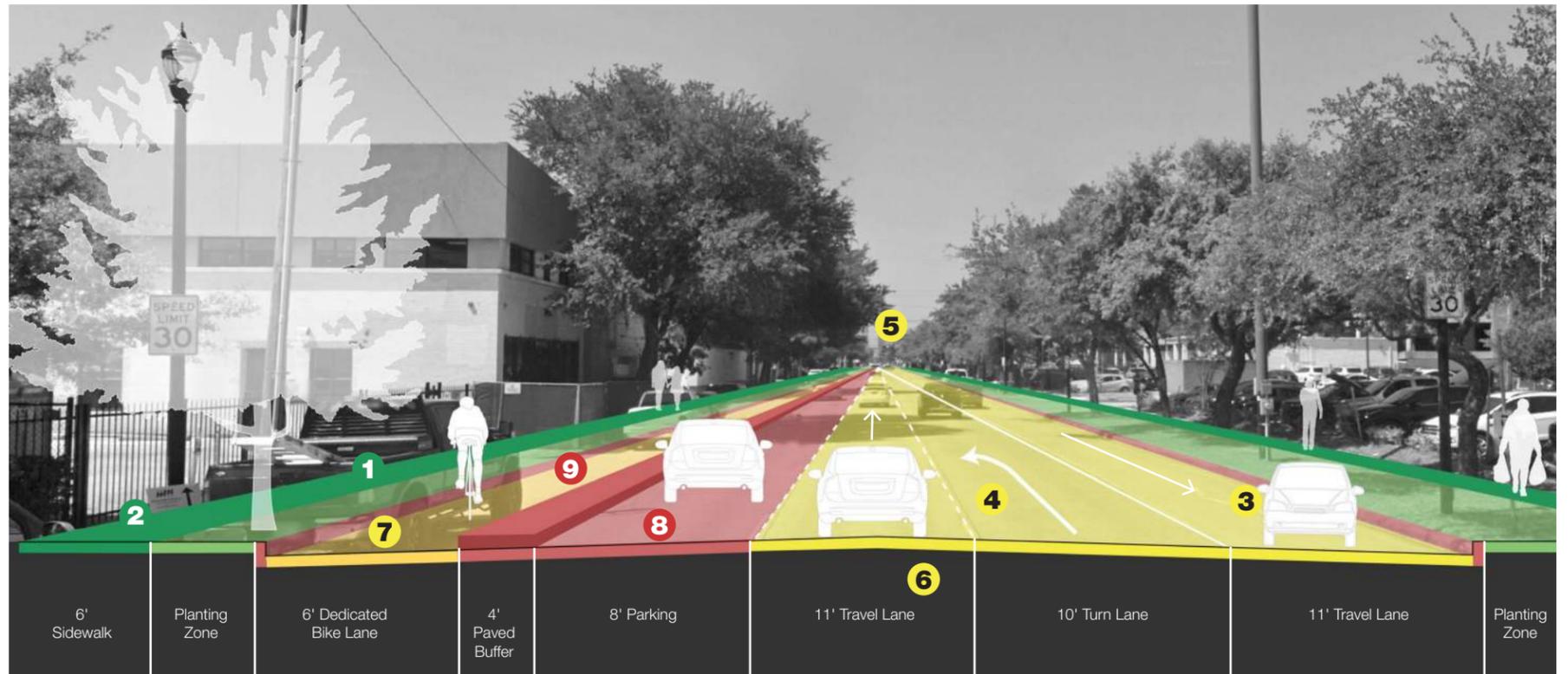


Figure 30 Recommended Street Conditions

GRAY STREET

- **Proposed Green Corridor**
- **Existing Two Way Dedicated Bike Lane**
- **Primary Walkable Street**
- **Bus Route**
- Major Collector

Gray Street is a one way westbound street and is bounded by Mathews Street on the west and Hamilton Street on the east. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, 30 out of 30 sidewalk segments are in good condition. The highlighted connection in red is a stitch proposed by the NHHIP which will improve connections to Midtown.



Figure 31 Street Key



Figure 32 Existing Street Conditions

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Utility lines cleanup.
- 2 Increase planting zone width and position it between the travel lane and sidewalk.
- 3 Add shade trees, and native and adapted vegetation in the planting zone.
- 4 Add Midtown standard street and pedestrian lighting at 20'-30' interval, evenly between street trees.
- 5 Widen sidewalk to a minimum of 8'.
- 6 Add street furniture.
- 7 Plan the back of the curb as a potential linear park.
- 8 Remove the one street parking lane.

KEY

- Sidewalk
- Planting Zone
- Bike Lane
- Travel Lane
- Curb
- On Street Parking



Figure 33 Recommended Street Conditions

MAIN STREET

- High Priority Connector
- Bike/Ped Promenade
- Proposed HC Shared
- Primary Walkable Street
- Transit Route
- Major Thoroughfare

Main Street is one of the most prominent north-south connection through Midtown. The METRO Rail Red Line runs in the center of the street with a travel lane on either side. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, most of 74 sidewalk segments are in good condition. The highlighted part in red, is a cap and stitch proposed by the NHHIP which will improve connections to Midtown. It will improve the pedestrian conditions by adding improved sidewalks and green spaces. Design treatments will need to vary along the corridor to accommodate access needs in certain locations.



Figure 34 Street Key

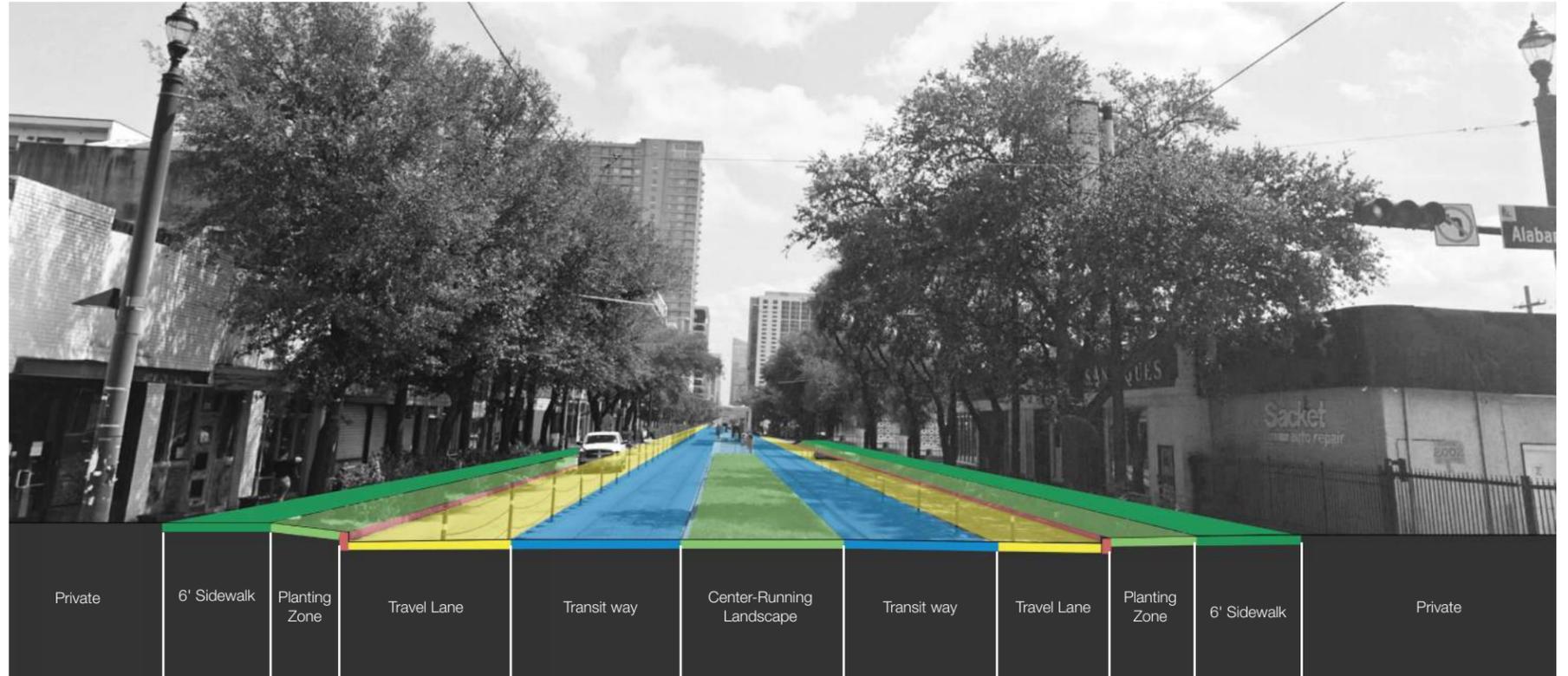


Figure 35 Existing Street Conditions

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Convert both travel lanes to a dedicated 10' bike lane with signs and safety for bicyclists.
- 2 Explore improved pedestrian crossing opportunities at all street intersections.
- 3 Widen sidewalk to a minimum of 6' width where necessary.
- 4 Improve sidewalk quality.
- 5 Add street furniture.

KEY

- Sidewalk
- Planting Zone
- Bike Lane
- Travel Lane
- Curb
- Transit way

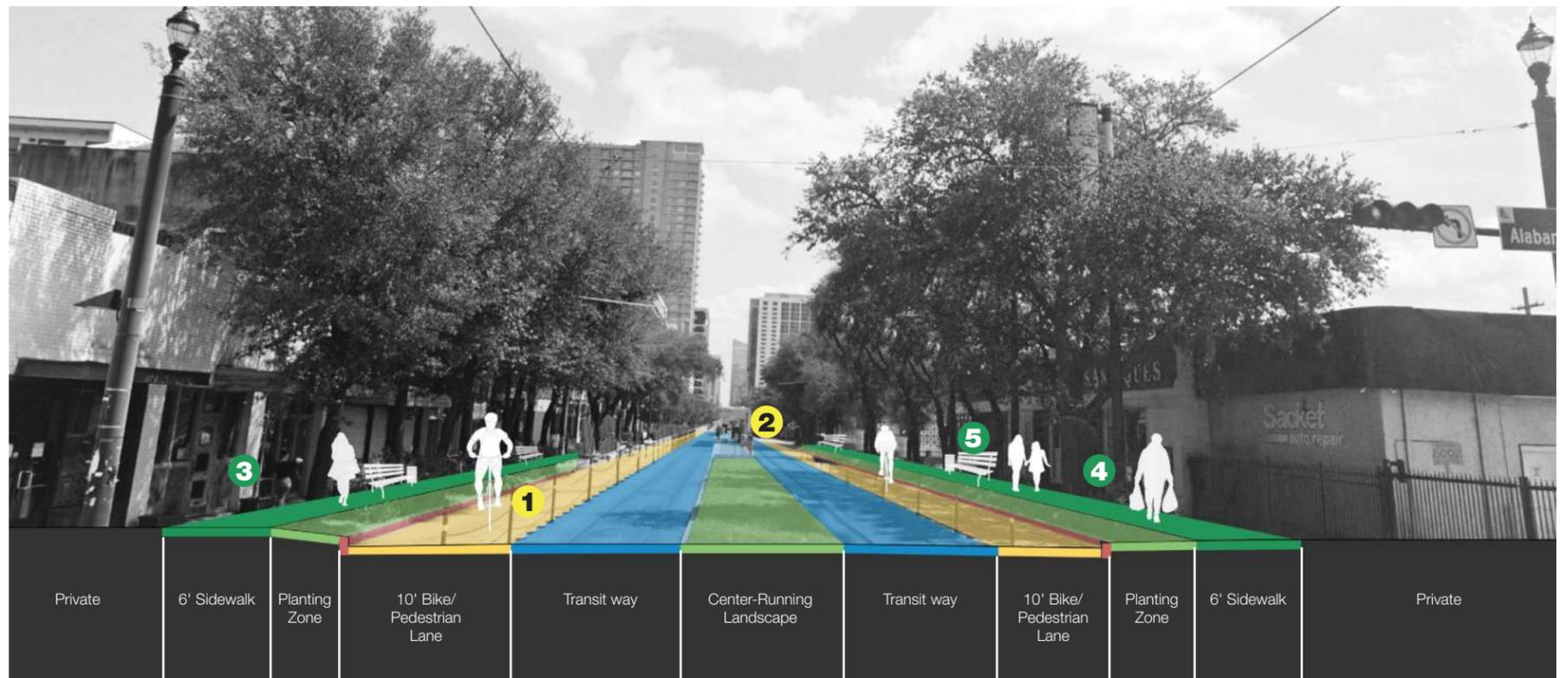


Figure 36 Recommended Street Conditions

MAIN STREET

PUBLIC ART/BRANDING CONCEPT

Streetscape improvements on Main Street offer an opportunity to revisit the existing Midtown entry portal experience at the Main Street and Pierce Elevated intersection.

BRANDING

- 1 Use the space in between the columns as opportunities for art or architectural paneling.
- 2 Work with a local artist to create graphic murals that create an engaging moment for pedestrians.

WAYFINDING

- 3 Integrate the names of parks, major businesses, and other important locations within a 5-min walking radius.
- 4 Include the dedicated bicycle symbol on Main Street as suggested in the Houston Bike Plan and recommendations.

PASSAGE

- 5 Re-paint the crosswalk zone with a simple graphic to clearly mark where cars should stop. Crosswalks should be smooth and slip-resistant.
- 6 Restore both the sidewalk realm and the median refuge island with durable concrete paint.
- 7 Improve ADA conditions.

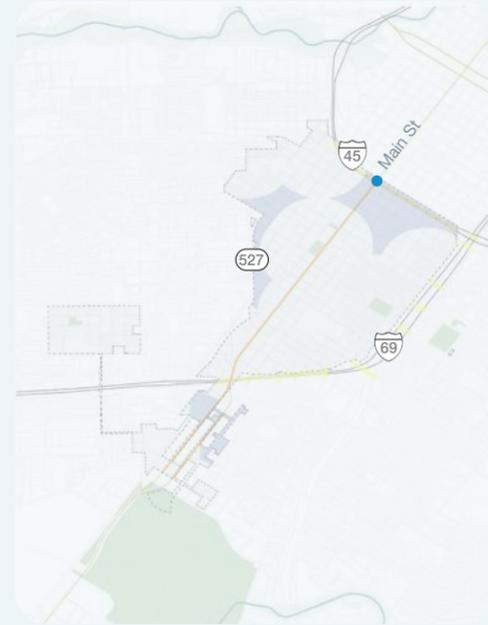
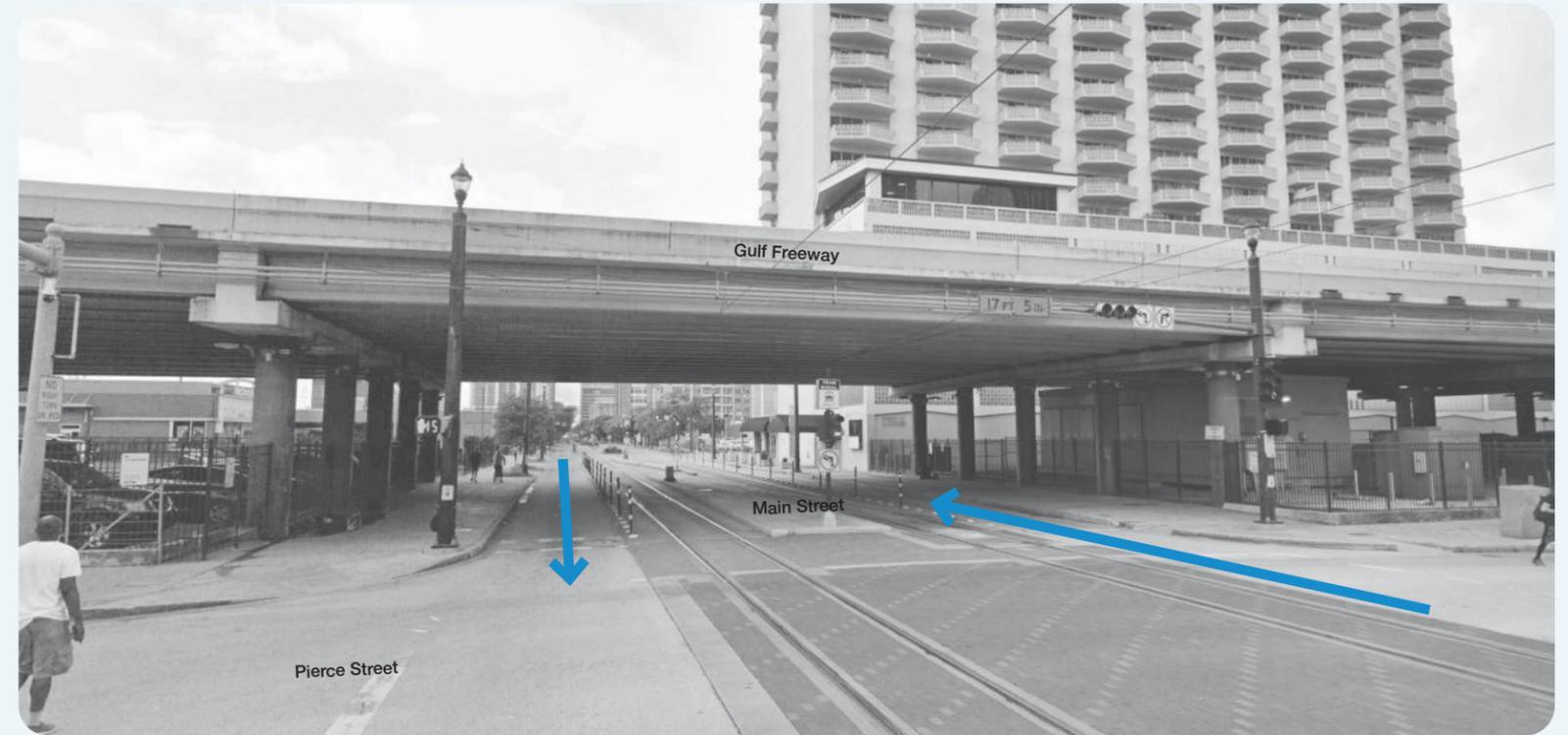


Figure 37 Key Map

EXISTING CONDITIONS



PROPOSED CONCEPT



MCGOWEN STREET

- **Medium Priority Connector**
- **Proposed Green Corridor**
- **Proposed Dedicated Bike Lane**
- **Primary Walkable Street**
- **Safe Street Priority**
- **Bus Route**
- Major Collector

McGowen Street is a two-way east-west street with changing segments of travel lanes and parking lanes along. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, all of the 40 sidewalk segments are in good condition. The highlighted connection in red, is a stitch proposed by the NHHIP which will improve connections to Midtown.



Figure 38 Street Key

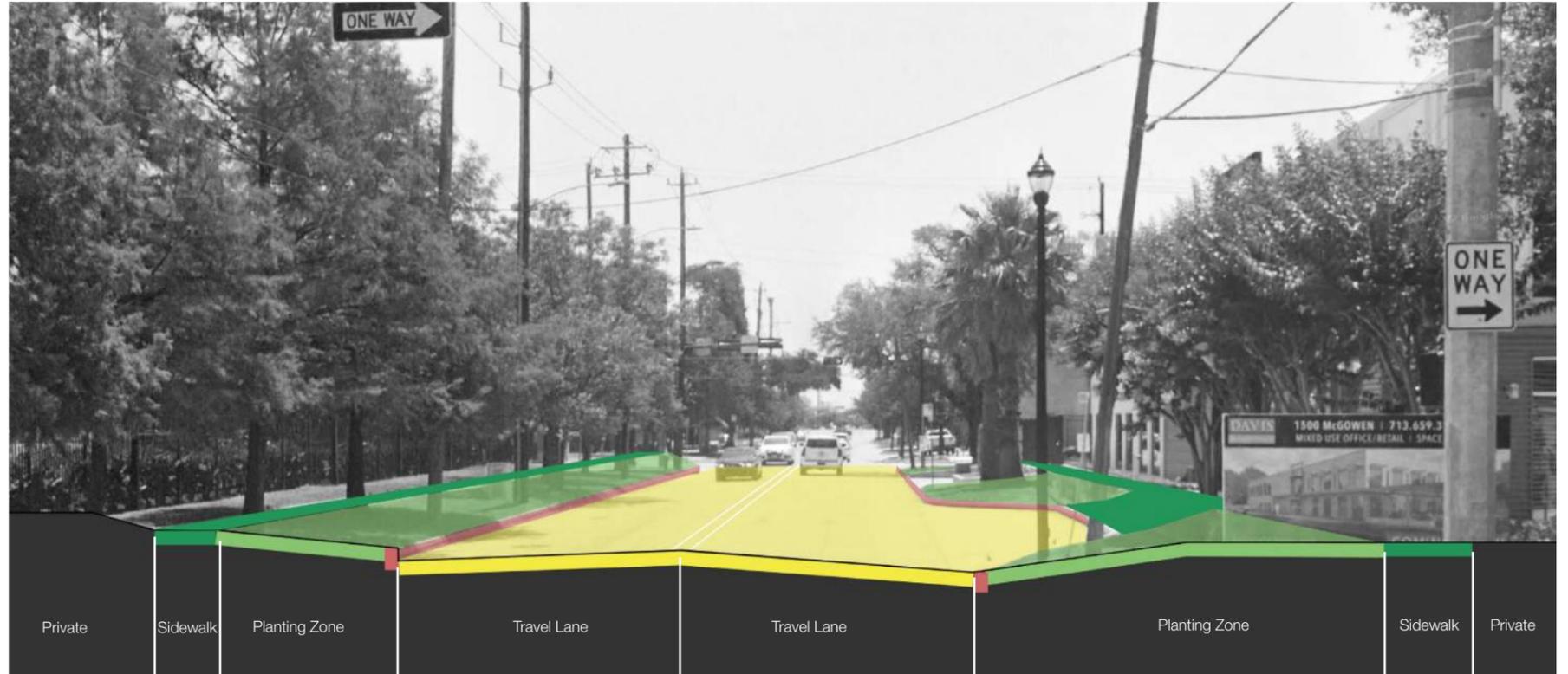


Figure 39 Existing Street Conditions

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Convert travel lane to a dedicated 6' bike lane with signs and safety for bicyclists.
- 2 Maintain travel lanes with bus routes at 11' width.
- 3 Utility lines cleanup.
- 4 Widen sidewalk to a minimum of 6' width where necessary.
- 5 Improve sidewalk quality.
- 6 Add Midtown standard street and pedestrian lighting at 20'-30' interval, evenly between street trees.
- 7 Add 2' buffer between the dedicated bike lane and travel lane.

KEY

- Sidewalk
- Planting Zone
- Bike Lane
- Travel Lane
- Curb



Figure 40 Recommended Street Conditions

SAN JACINTO STREET

- **Primary Walkable Street**
- **Safe Streets Priority**
- **Bus Route**
- Major Thoroughfare

San Jacinto Street is a one-way north-south street with 2 lanes for buses and carpools, 1 travel lane and parking. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, 50 out of the 60 sidewalk segments are in good condition, 6 segments are in fair condition, and 4 segments are in bad condition. The highlighted connection in red is a stitch proposed by the NHHIP which will improve connections to Midtown.



Figure 41 Street Key

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Maintain travel lanes with bus routes at 11' width and travel lanes at 10' width.
- 2 Utility lines cleanup.
- 3 Reduce a 'buses and carpools only' travel lane.
- 4 Convert a 'buses and carpools only' to a two-way travel lane.
- 5 Widen sidewalk to a minimum of 6' width where necessary.
- 6 Add 6'-8' wide rain garden to collect and hold rainwater and improve street quality for pedestrians.
- 7 Add Midtown standard street and pedestrian lighting at 20'-30' interval, evenly between street trees.

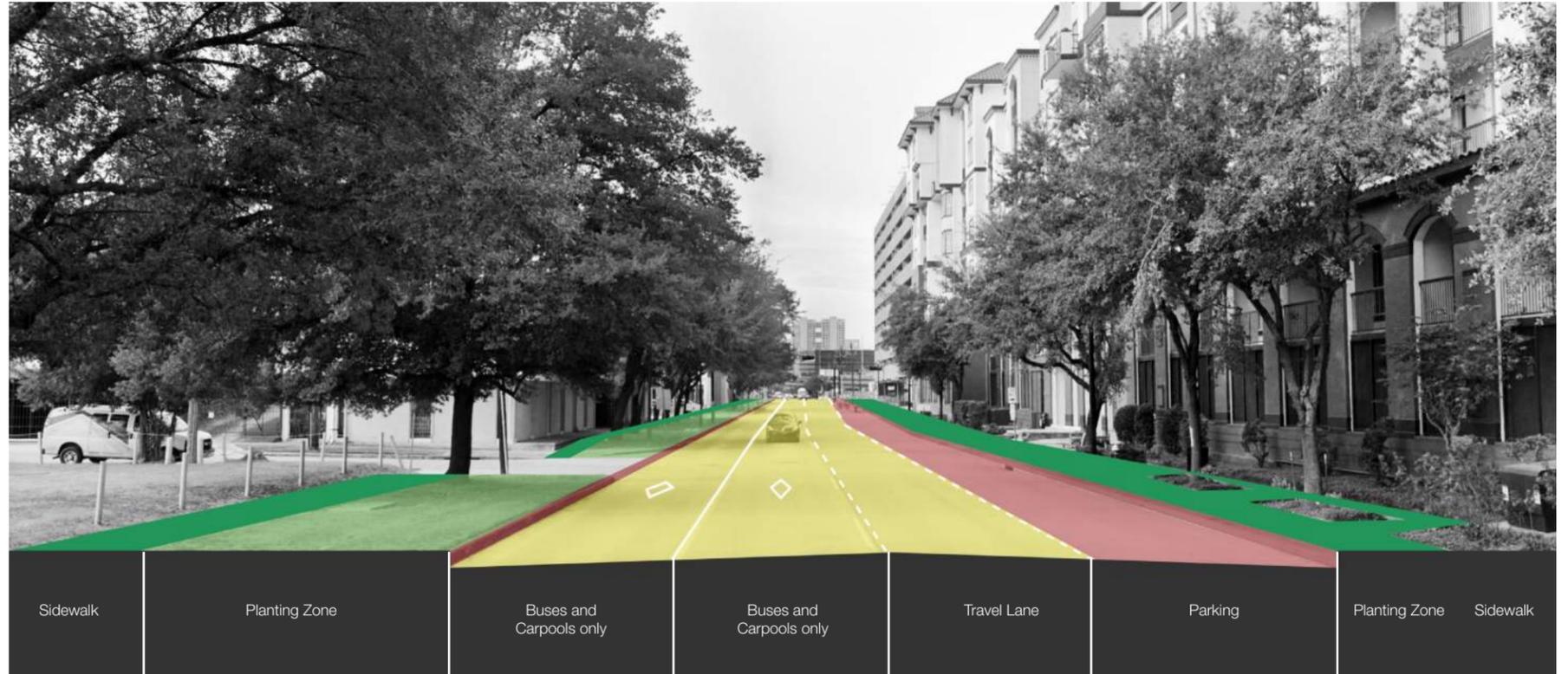


Figure 42 Existing Street Conditions

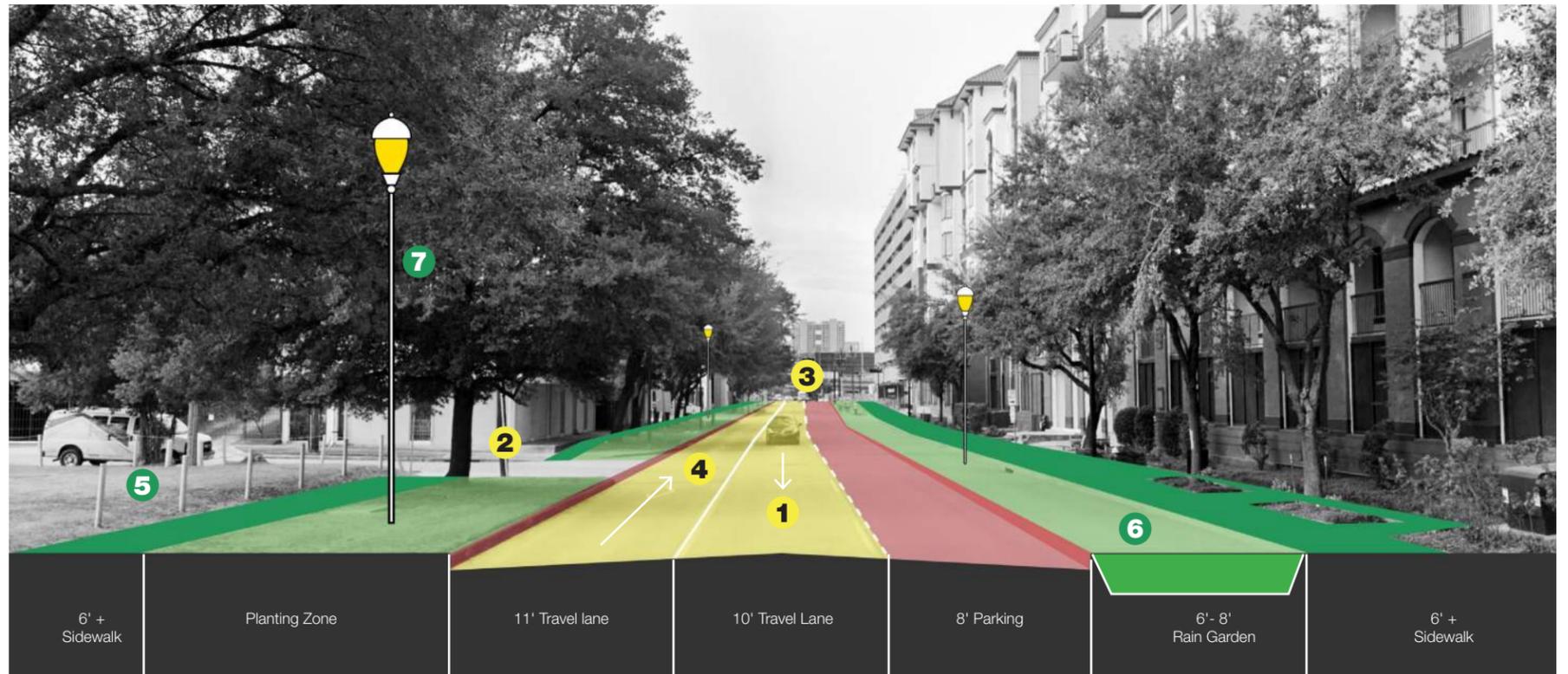


Figure 43 Recommended Street Conditions

WEBSTER STREET

- **Medium Priority Connector**
- **Proposed Green Connector**
- **Safe Street Priority**
- **Proposed Shared On-Street**
- **Primary Walkable Street**
- **Bus Route**
- Major Collector

Webster Street is a east bound one way street with 3 travel lanes. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, 18 out of the 38 sidewalk segments are in good condition, 12 segments are in fair condition, and 8 segments are in poor condition. To improve the pedestrian usage and experience, the recommendations involve increase width and better quality sidewalks with planting zones.



Figure 44 Street Key

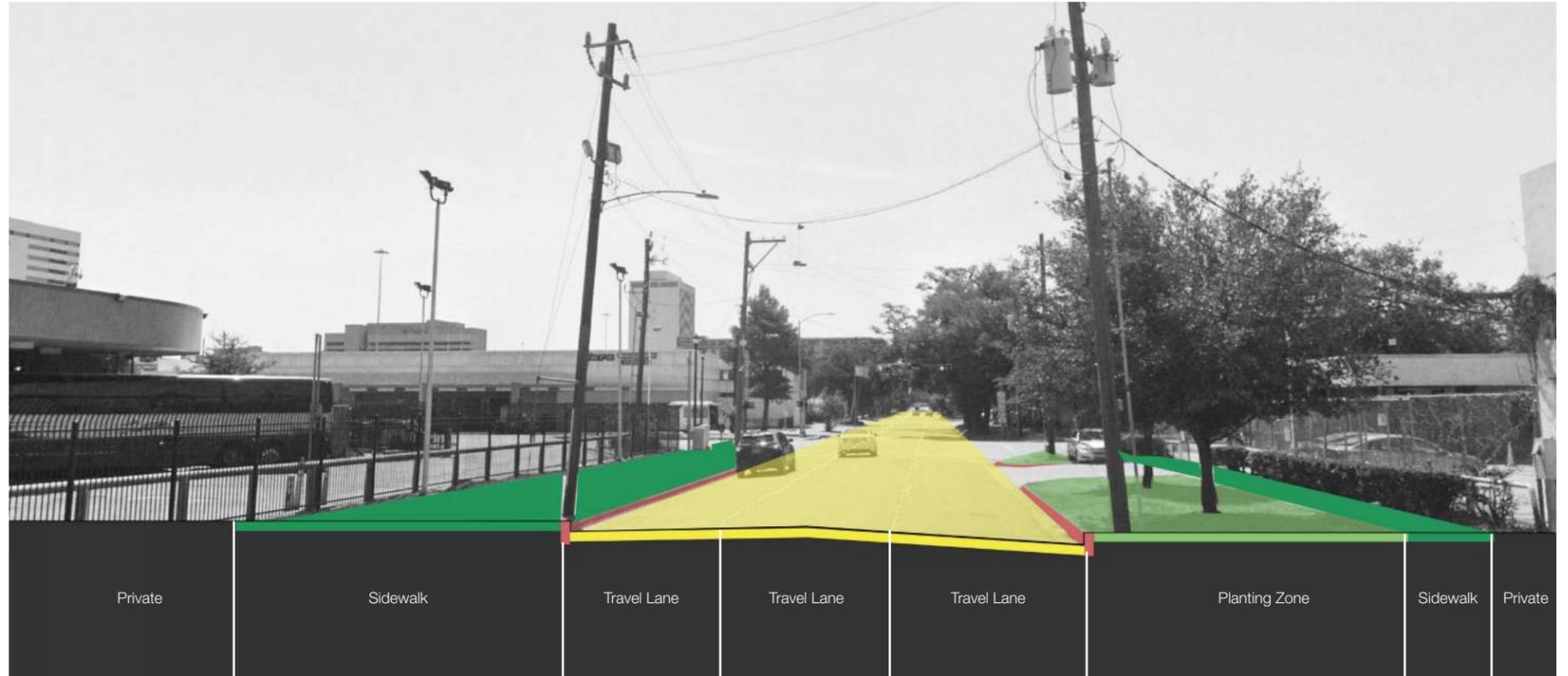


Figure 45 Existing Street Conditions

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Maintain travel lanes with bus routes at 11' width.
- 2 Utility lines cleanup.
- 3 Widen sidewalk to a minimum of 6' width where necessary.
- 4 Improve sidewalk quality.
- 5 Add Midtown standard street and pedestrian lighting at 20'-30' interval, evenly between street trees.
- 6 Add planting zones where necessary.

KEY

- Sidewalk
- Planting Zone
- Travel Lane
- Curb



Figure 46 Recommended Street Conditions

WHEELER STREET

- **Proposed Green Connector**
- **Primary Walkable Street**
- **Bus Route**
- Major Collector

There is a small portion of Wheeler Street within Midtown boundary. It is a two way street with 2 travel lanes in each direction. As per the 2018 Midtown Sidewalk Survey, 2 out of the 10 sidewalk segments are in good condition, and the street needs pedestrian improvements. The highlighted part in red, is a cap and stitch proposed by the NHHIP which will improve connections to Midtown. It will improve the pedestrian conditions by adding improved sidewalks and green spaces. The METRO Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposed line passing along Wheeler Street will add significant connectivity and opportunities to the region.



Figure 47 Street Key



Figure 48 Existing Street Conditions

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Utility lines cleanup.
- 2 Maintain travel lanes with bus routes at 11' width.
- 3 Add a 6'+ wide planting zone.
- 4 Add shade trees, and native and adapted vegetation in the planting zone.
- 5 Add Midtown standard street and pedestrian lighting at 20'-30' interval, evenly between street trees.
- 6 Improve sidewalk quality.

KEY

- Sidewalk
- Planting Zone
- Bike Lane
- Travel Lane
- Curb
- On Street Parking

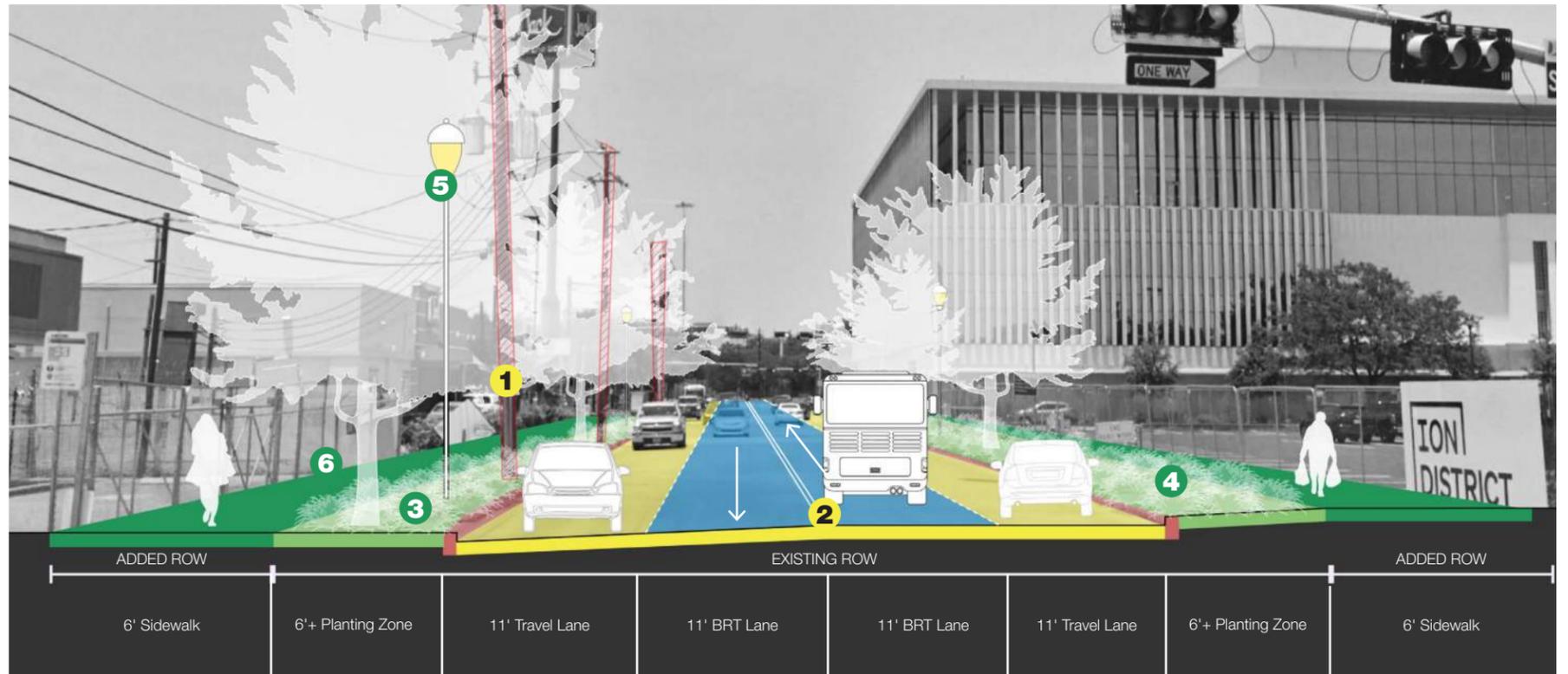


Figure 49 Recommended Street Conditions



Houston Technology Center

3.2

CREATE - PARKS

Recommendations

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PARKS HIERARCHY

ANALYSIS

The chart below is a compilation of hierarchical classifications based on 5 criteria: location of the park within/outside the Midtown boundary, number of program elements in the park, ownership of the park, park type, and the size of the park. The key metric is the number of the program elements in the park as it reflects the park deficit area within Midtown. The same park program elements were used to analyze park facilities in the 2011 Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

PARK NAME	MIDTOWN BOUNDARY	NUMBER OF PROGRAM	OWNERSHIP	PARK TYPE	AREA IN ACRES
Midtown Park	Inside	8	Midtown Redevelopment Authority	Urban Park	3.03
Elizabeth Baldwin Park	Inside	5	City of Houston	Neighborhood Park	4.97
Bagby Park	Inside	4	Midtown Redevelopment Authority	Pocket Park	0.62
Cullens Sculpture Garden	Inside	3	City of Houston	Neighborhood Park	1.02
Elizabeth Glover Park	Inside	3	City of Houston	Pocket Park	0.28
Hais Spark Park	Inside	2	Houston Independent School District	Neighborhood Park	2.10
Chenevert Urban Gardens	Inside	1	Private	Pocket Park	0.14
Menil Park	Inside	1	Private	Neighborhood Park	1.56
Peggy's Point Plaza Park	Inside	1	City of Houston	Pocket Park	0.50
Peggy's Point Sports Park	Inside	1	Private	Neighborhood Park	1.32
Plant It Forward	Inside	1	Private	Pocket Park	0.56
San Jacinto Memorial Green	Inside	1	Houston Community College	Neighborhood Park	2.23
Hermann Park	Outside	10	City of Houston	Community Park	420.59
Trebly Park	Outside	7	Downtown Redevelopment Authority	Neighborhood Park	1.02
Emancipation Park	Outside	6	City of Houston	Urban Park	10.87
Peggy Park	Outside	4	City of Houston	Neighborhood Park	2.24
Wiley Park	Outside	4	City of Houston	Pocket Park	0.92
Arabic Immersion Spark Park	Outside	3	Houston Independent School District	Neighborhood Park	1.43
Bell Park	Outside	3	City of Houston	Neighborhood Park	1.15
West Webster Street Park	Outside	3	City of Houston	Neighborhood Park	1.17
Cravens Parkway	Outside	2	Private	Neighborhood Park	7.69
Harmonica Man Park	Outside	2	Private	Neighborhood Park	2.65
Bethel Park	Outside	1	City of Houston	Pocket Park	0.47
Heiner Street Park	Outside	1	City of Houston	Pocket Park	0.18
Mandell Park	Outside	1	City of Houston	Neighborhood Park	1.26

PARKS HIERARCHY ANALYSIS

SUMMARY

This park hierarchy map catalogs the programming elements in the parks. The quantity and type of program elements in the parks varies on the park size, context, etc. This “heat map” show the density of program available within a 1/4 mile (5 minute) walk around the park. In consequence, the map displays areas that are lacking in park program diversity. Programming a park with the right elements can help increase the health and well being of the surrounding residents. Understanding the park deficit areas within Midtown can help to identify the need for potential parks and park program diversification.



MIDTOWN PARK

Out of the 10 measured program elements, Midtown Park has 8 programs that fit a wide variety of users.



MENIL PARK

Out of the 10 measured program elements, Menil Park appears to only have one program element.

KEY

- # Number of programs in the parks < 3
- # Number of programs in the parks > 3 < 5
- # Number of programs in the parks > 5
- # Number of programs in the parks outside Midtown
- No programs
- 1 program
- 2 programs
- 3 programs
- 4 programs
- 5 programs
- 6 programs
- 7 programs
- 8 programs
- 9 programs
- 10 programs

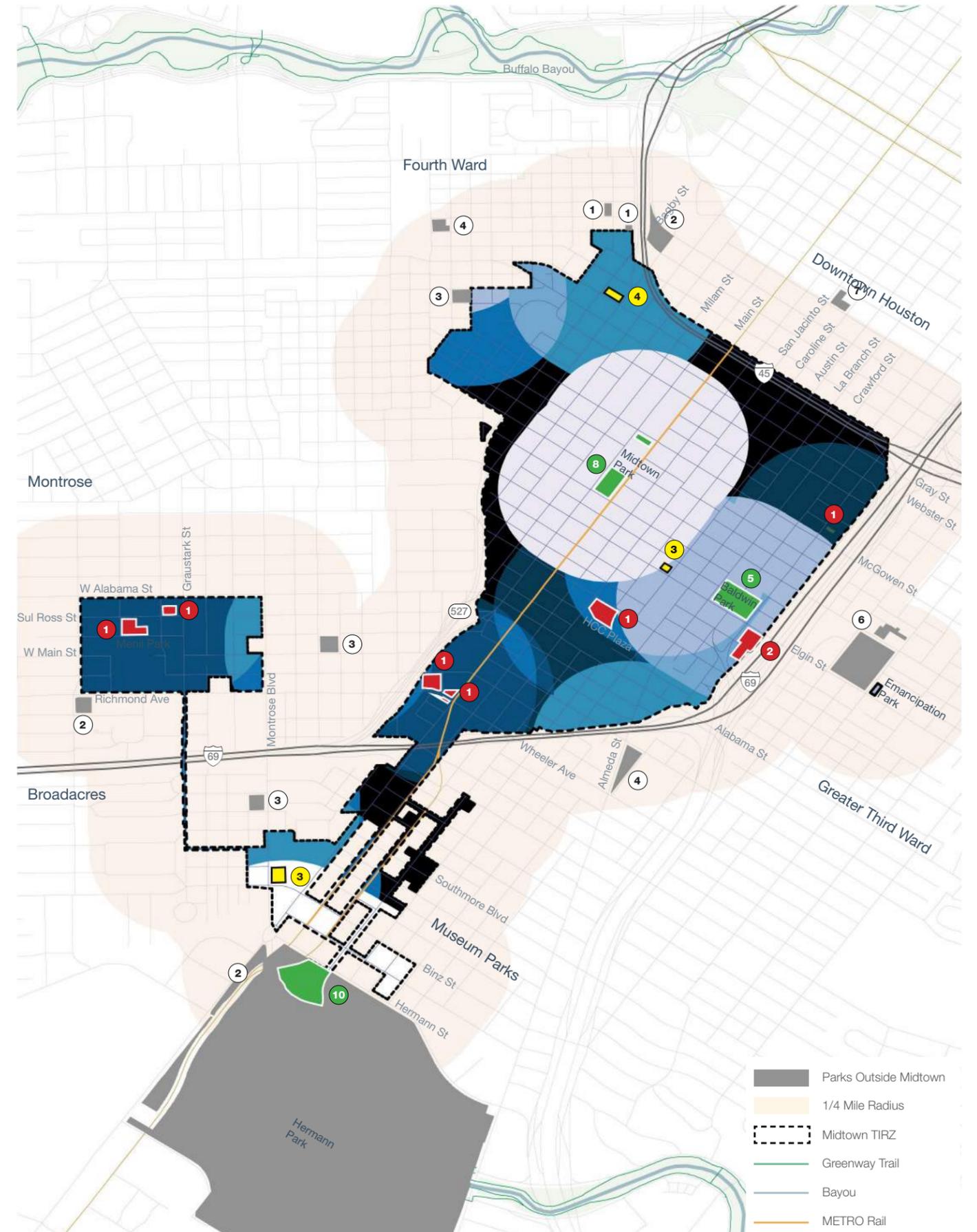


Figure 50 Park Hierarchy

PARK PROGRAM ELEMENTS ANALYSIS

PARKS IN MIDTOWN.

*PARKS WITHIN 1/4 MILE OF MIDTOWN.

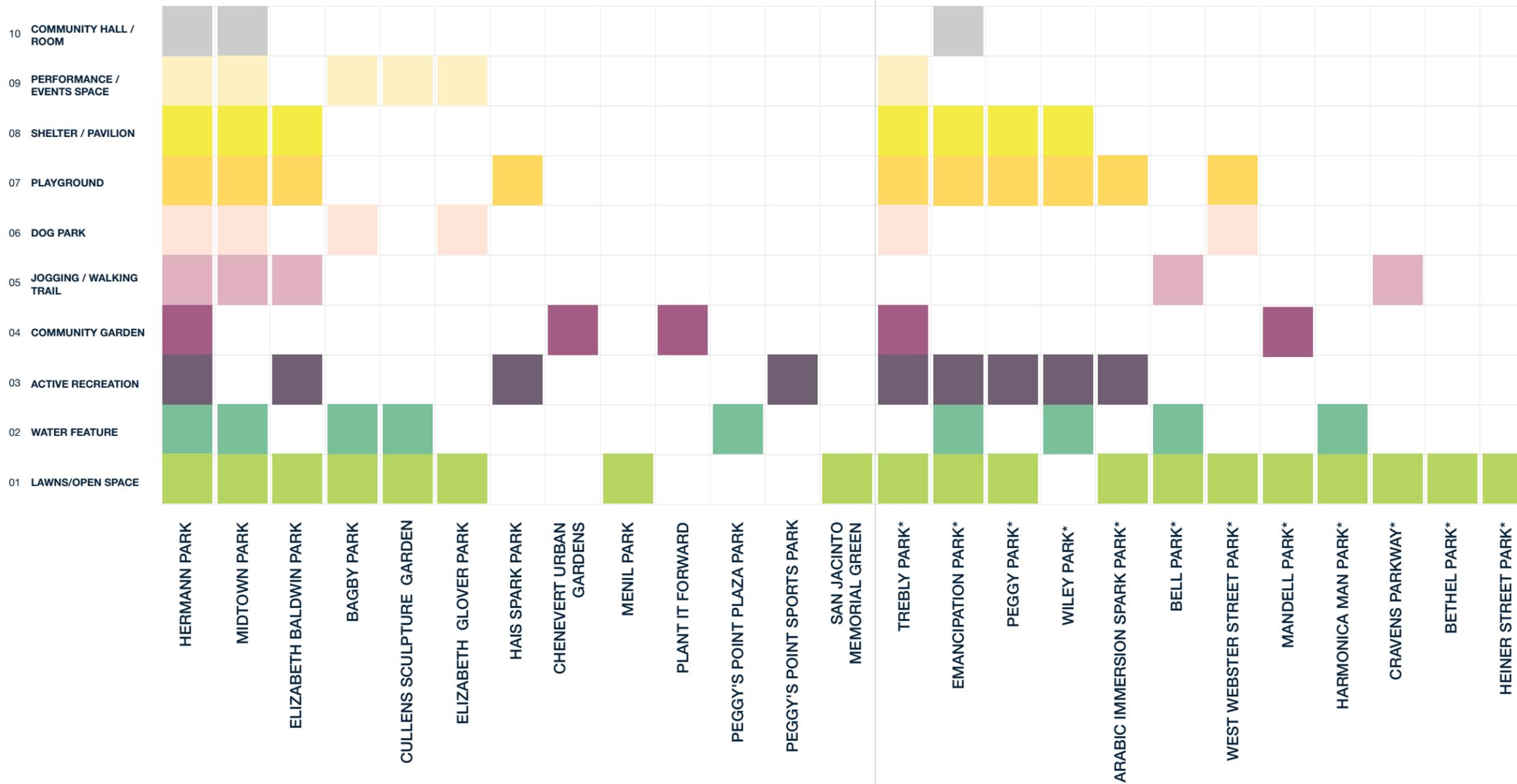


Figure 51 Park Amenities

PROGRAMS



LAWNS/OPEN SPACE



JOGGING/WALKING TRAIL



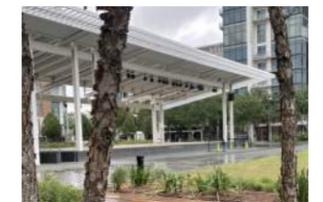
WATER FEATURE



DOG PARK



COMMUNITY GARDEN



PERFORMANCE/ EVENTS SPACE



ACTIVE RECREATION



SHELTER/PAVILION



PLAYGROUND



COMMUNITY HALL/ ROOM

METRIC

1 ON AVERAGE THERE ARE 3 PROGRAMS PER PARK.

2 7 OUT OF 24 OR 29% OF PARKS CURRENTLY HAVE ONLY 1 PROGRAM.

3 5 OUT OF 24 OR 21% OF PARKS CURRENTLY HAVE MORE THAN 4 PROGRAMS.

4 LAWN/OPEN SPACE IS THE MOST COMMON PROGRAM AT 19/77 TOTAL.

5 COMMUNITY GARDEN IS THE LEAST COMMON PROGRAM AT 3/77 TOTAL.

PARKS PRIORITY ANALYSIS

SUMMARY

Six priority park deficit zones are identified in this map. These are the areas in Midtown where there are no parks within a 1/4 walk and/or the parks that are within 1/4 mile walk collectively offer less than three program elements to users. The deficit zones have been shaped to conform to street boundaries to better define them. In addition to the deficit zones, this map also overlays the priority streets defined in this document. Recommendations to address park deficits should take into consideration how this might be accomplished in conjunction with the recommendations for the streetscape improvements. The following pages detail out the six deficit areas and suggest potential recommendations on adding additional park space or program elements.



PARK DEFICIT A | GAZEBO ON A UNDERUTILIZED PARCEL



PARK DEFICIT B | CHENEVERT URBAN GARDENS



PARK DEFICIT C | LULAC COUNCIL 60



PARK DEFICIT D | SAN JACINTO MEMORIAL GREEN



PARK DEFICIT E | PEGGY POINT PLAZA PARK



PARK DEFICIT F | MENIL PARK

KEY

- Park Deficit A
- Park Deficit B
- Park Deficit C
- Park Deficit D
- Park Deficit E
- Park Deficit F
- Non Park Deficit within Midtown
- Priority Streets

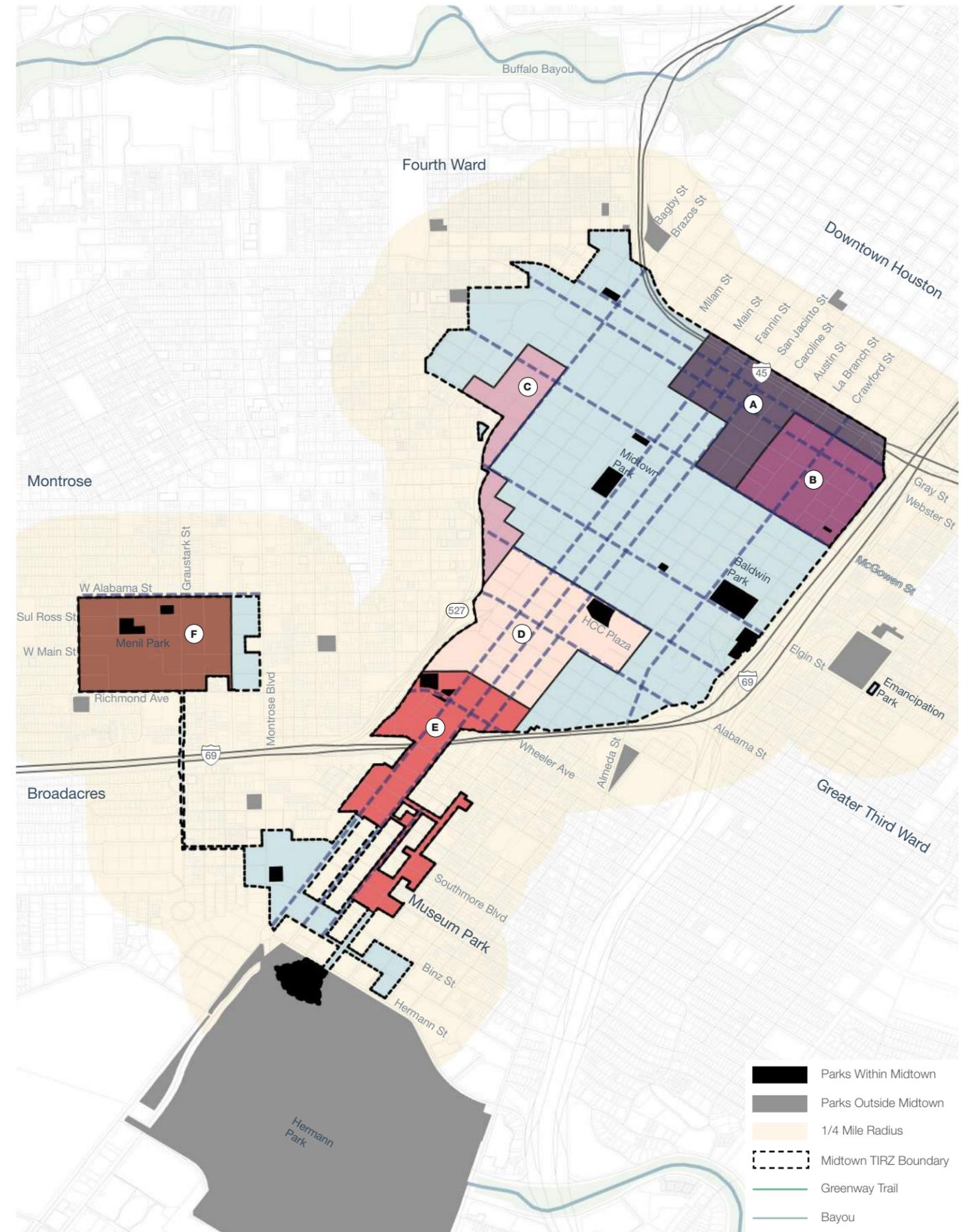


Figure 52 Park Priority: Park Deficit Areas

PARK DEFICIT A

Park Deficit A is located in the north Midtown and east of the Main Street, along I-45/Pierce Elevated. It is devoid of any parks. According to the Midtown Parks and Public Space - Values and Vision Survey, the deficit area is perceived least safe in Midtown.

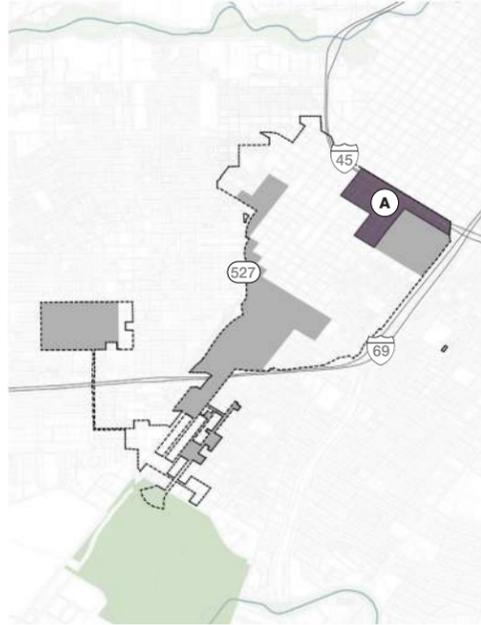
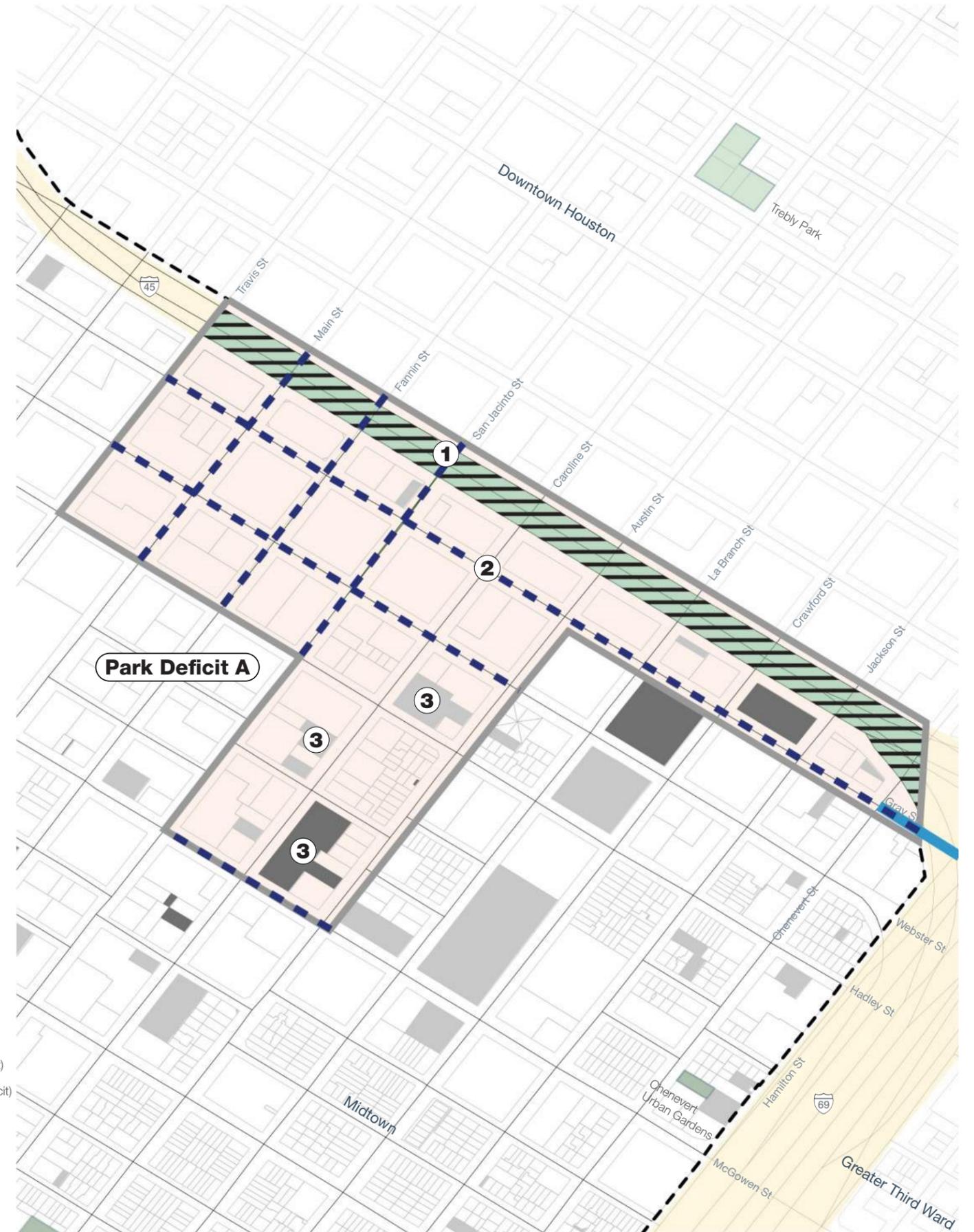


Figure 54 Key Plan

STRATEGIES

- 1 Potential long term park opportunity: parcels of Pierce Elevated.
- 2 Design priority streetscapes with added green and linear park spaces.
- 3 Utilize vacant/undeveloped lands to add park space and programming. This could include working with a private development to include publicly accessible private park space.



KEY

- NHHIP Stitch
- Park Deficit Area
- Existing Parks (within the deficit)
- Existing Parks (outside the deficit)
- Potential Park Programming Opportunity
- Priority Streets
- Land use
- Undeveloped
- Unknown

Figure 53 Park Deficit 'A'

PARK DEFICIT A

GRAY STREET LINEAR PARK

SUMMARY

In the near future, Gray Street has potential to attract future development due to TxDOT's NHHIP impact on the Pierce Elevated. As proposed within the create - streets chapter, Gray Street could incorporate linear parks creating moments of pause along the street. Street activation is at the core of creating vibrant urban spaces that attract the surrounding community. Some of the programs could include a community garden, active recreational spaces, or a jogging trail. There are other cities such as the Monon trail in Carmel, Indiana that have already implemented such strategies within their public spaces and have served them net positive results. The community garden could act as a native habitat for butterflies and bees. There have been projects around the world that implement "skate dots", small scale integrated skateboarding moments along the streetscape such as rails, and small ramps.

PARK PROGRAM

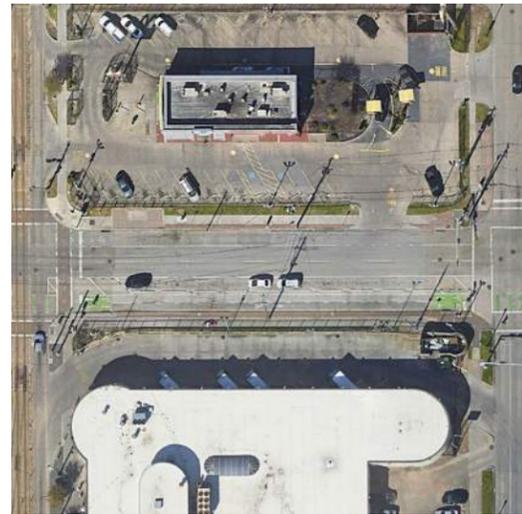
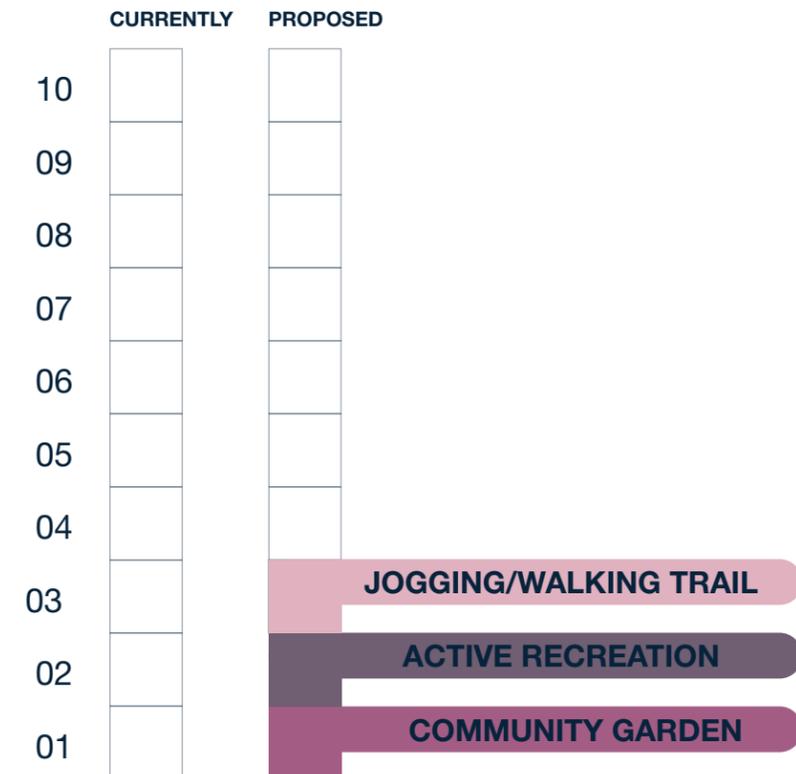


Figure 55 Existing Conditions

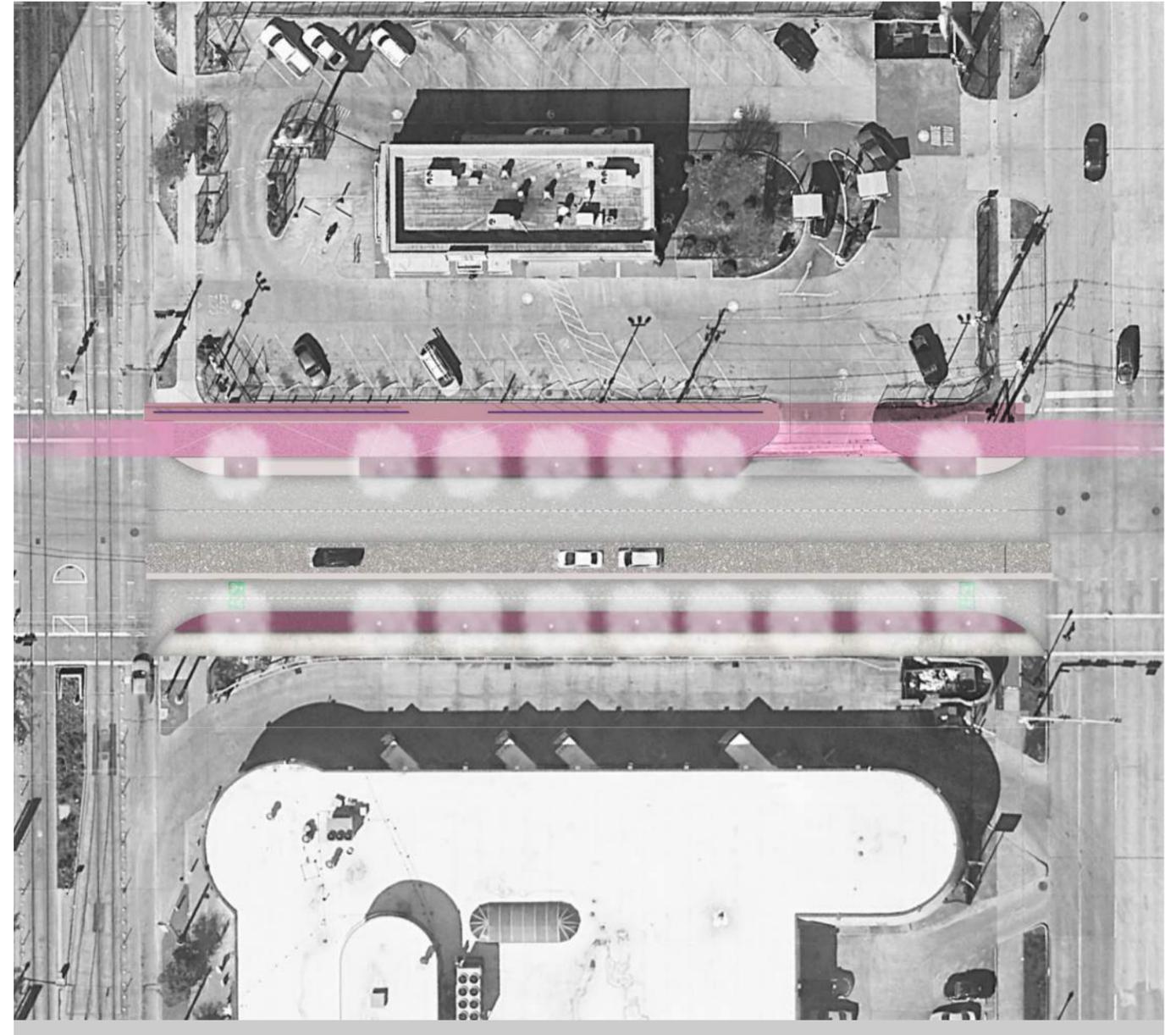
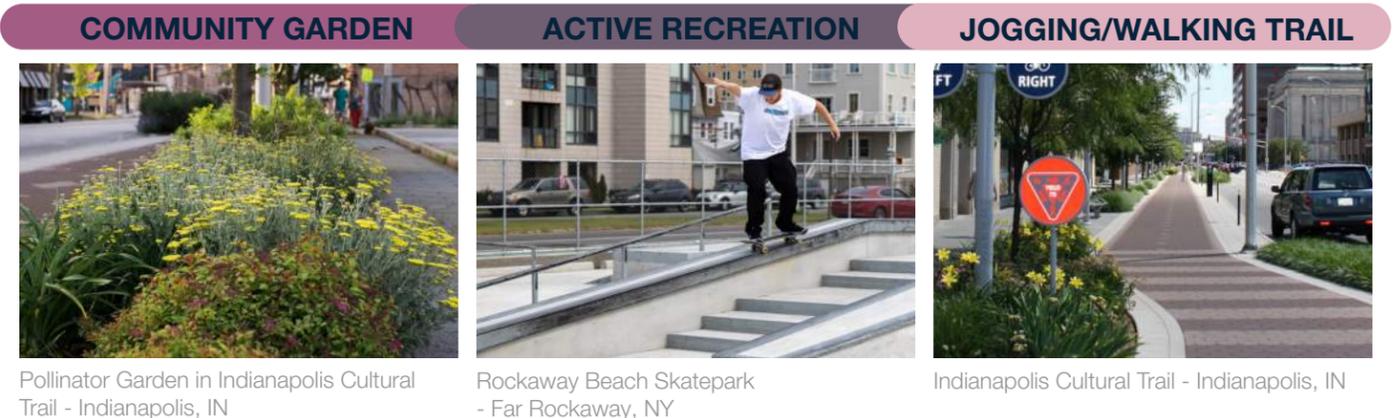


Figure 56 Proposed Conditions



PARK DEFICIT B

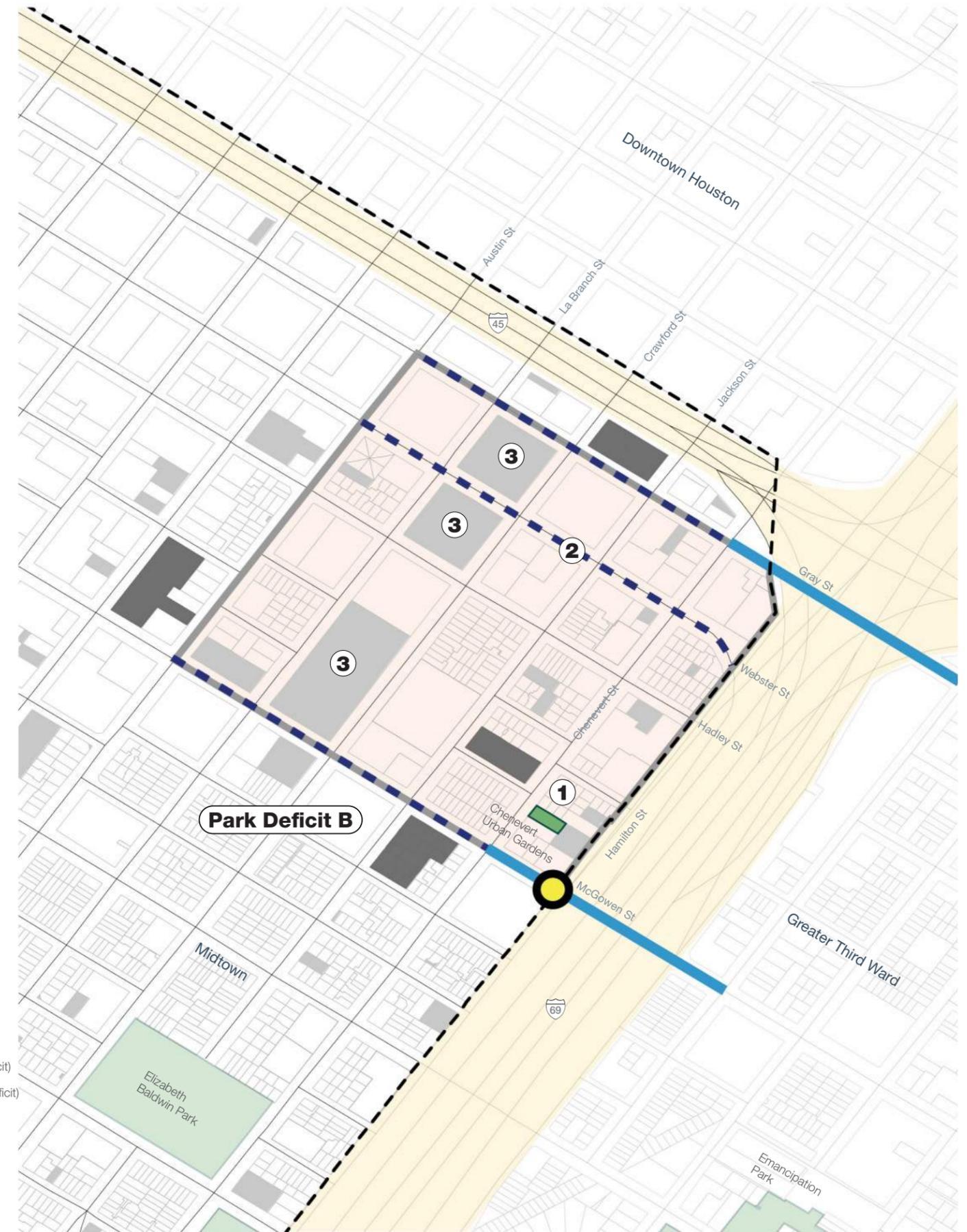
Park Deficit B is located in the north east part of Midtown, adjacent to I-45 and I-69 /Highway 288. Chenevert Urban Gardens, a community garden, is the only park located within the area. It is devoid of a neighborhood park and park programming.



Figure 58 Key Plan

STRATEGIES

- 1 Improve and add park programming to Chenevert Urban Gardens.
- 2 Design priority streetscapes with added green and linear park spaces.
- 3 Utilize vacant/undeveloped lands to add park space and programming. This could include working with a private development to include publicly accessible private park space.



KEY

- NHHIP Stitch
- Park Deficit Area
- Existing Parks (within the deficit)
- Existing Parks (outside the deficit)
- Priority Streets
- Existing Entry Portal
- Land use
- Undeveloped
- Unknown

Figure 57 Park Deficit 'B'

PARK DEFICIT B

CHENEVERT URBAN GARDENS

SUMMARY

A way to introduce diverse park programs into a park deficit area would be to add 'context appropriate' park programs to existing parks or public spaces. The Chenevert Urban Gardens is one such example. Currently, the space serves as community garden where nearby residents can rent a garden planter annually to grow fruits and vegetables. It only has one park program - community garden but could include upto three more in the upcoming years with design and partnership help. Added programs could include: nature play, a shelter/pavilion, and a water feature. This project would be a public-private partnership, similar to the private use agreement for public access in the case of the Ion and Midtown.



Figure 59 Existing Park

PARK PROGRAM

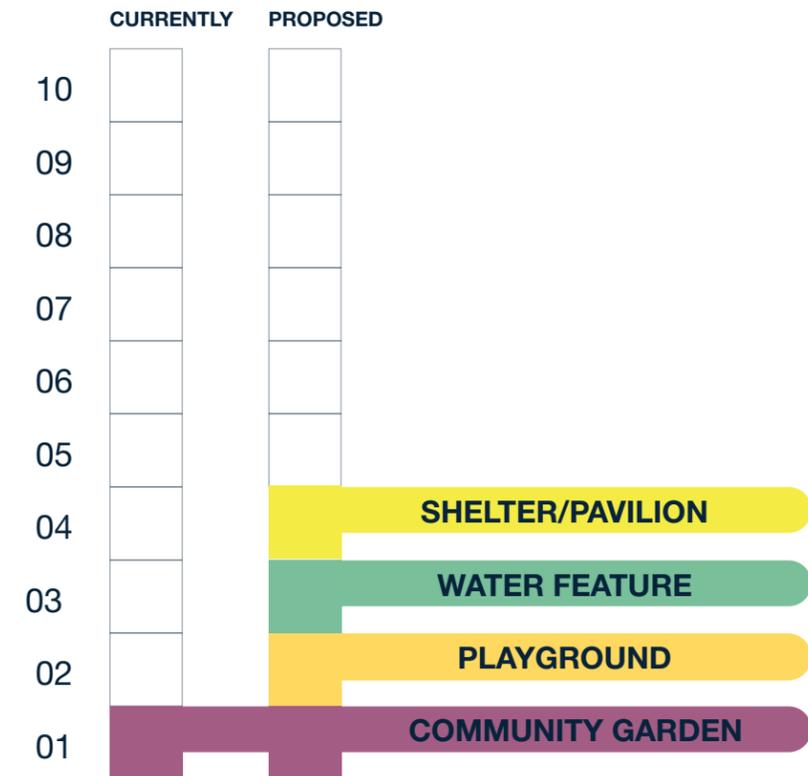


Figure 60 Proposed Park

SHELTER/PAVILION

WATER FEATURE

PLAYGROUND



Viaduct Rail Park by Hood Design - Philadelphia, PA



Stock Tank water garden at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center - Austin, TX



Cow Hollow School Natural Play scape by Surface Design - San Francisco, CA

PARK DEFICIT C

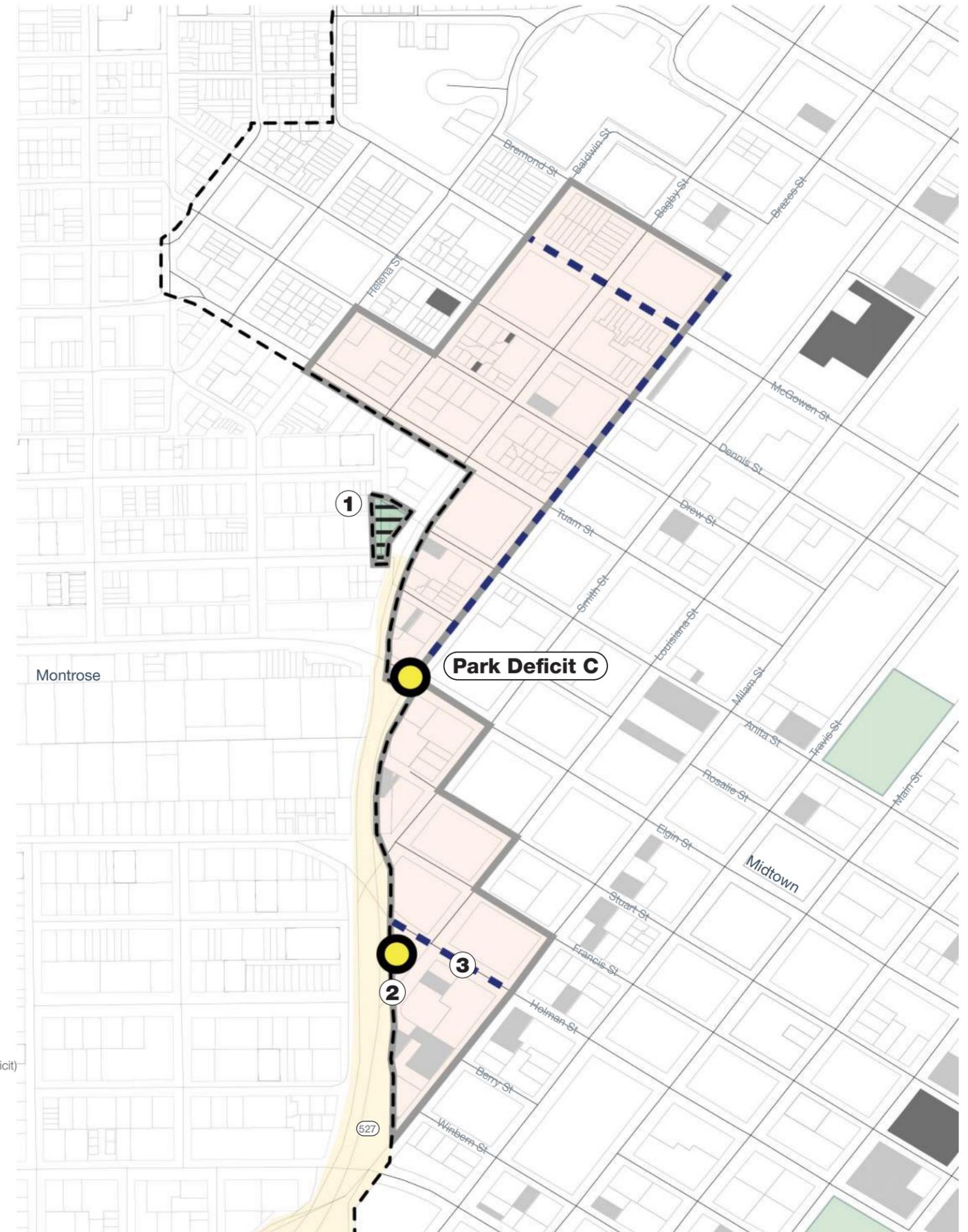
Park Deficit C is located in the western part of Midtown, adjacent to Spur 527. It is devoid of any parks, but has two existing entry portals which can be developed as potential public space. Additionally, the LULAC Council 60 is prominent community space.



Figure 62 Key Plan

STRATEGIES

- 1 Partner with LULAC Council 60 as a potential Community hall for the area.
- 2 Improve the existing entry portal at Holman Street and Louisiana Street with added park space and programming.
- 3 Design priority streetscapes with added green and linear park spaces.



KEY

- Park Deficit Area
- Existing Parks (outside the deficit)
- Potential Park Programming Opportunity
- Priority Streets
- Existing Entry Portal
- Land use
- Undeveloped
- Unknown

Figure 61 Park Deficit 'C'

PARK DEFICIT C

EXISTING ENTRY PORTAL - SPUR 527/ LOUISIANA STREET AND HOLMAN STREET

SUMMARY

Given its size and location, this entry portal has the potential to become a pocket park. At present, it serves as wayfinding and branding opportunity. Based on the scale of the space and its proximity to a highway ramp, possible program additions might include a dog park, shelter/pavilion, and active recreation in the form of adult fitness equipment.



Figure 63 Existing Conditions

PARK PROGRAMS

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
10		
09		
08		
07		
06		
05		
04		
03		ACTIVE RECREATION
02		DOG PARK
01		SHELTER/PAVILION



Figure 64 Proposed Conditions

SHELTER/PAVILION

DOG PARK

ACTIVE RECREATION



The Casitas by Ten Arquitectos - New York City, NY



Levy Park by OJB - Houston, TX



Elevate Fitness Course Ashburn, VA

PARK DEFICIT C

LULAC COUNCIL 60 BUILDING

SUMMARY

The LULAC Council 60 Building is under going renovation, and this effort has had past support from Midtown. The council's focus is on advancing the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, health, housing, and civil rights of the Latino population of Houston. The house will be preserved as a historical monument. It is has approximately 3,700 sq/ft of lawn space which is currently not accessible to the public and could be used as a major amenity for the surrounding neighborhood. The area is also highly visible from an adjacent restaurant. Since it already serves the community, it might be best to include an outdoor performance space for local musicians, lawn space for seating, and a community garden/pollinator garden.



Figure 65 Existing Conditions

PARK PROGRAMS

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
10		
09		
08		
07		
06		
05		
04		
03		COMMUNITY GARDEN
02		LAWN/OPEN SPACE
01		SHELTER/PAVILION



Figure 66 Proposed Conditions

SHELTER/PAVILION

LAWN/OPEN SPACE

COMMUNITY GARDEN



Fareground at One Eleven by DWG in Austin, TX



The Fountain Villa by Mjolk architekti - Prague, Czech Republic



New York Botanical Gardens New York City, NY

PARK DEFICIT D

Park Deficit D is located in the west part of Midtown, adjacent to Spur 527. Houston Community College's San Jacinto Memorial Green is the prominent public space in the area.

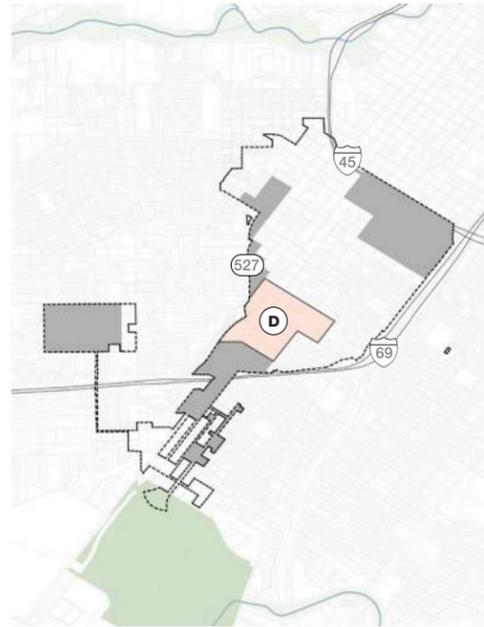
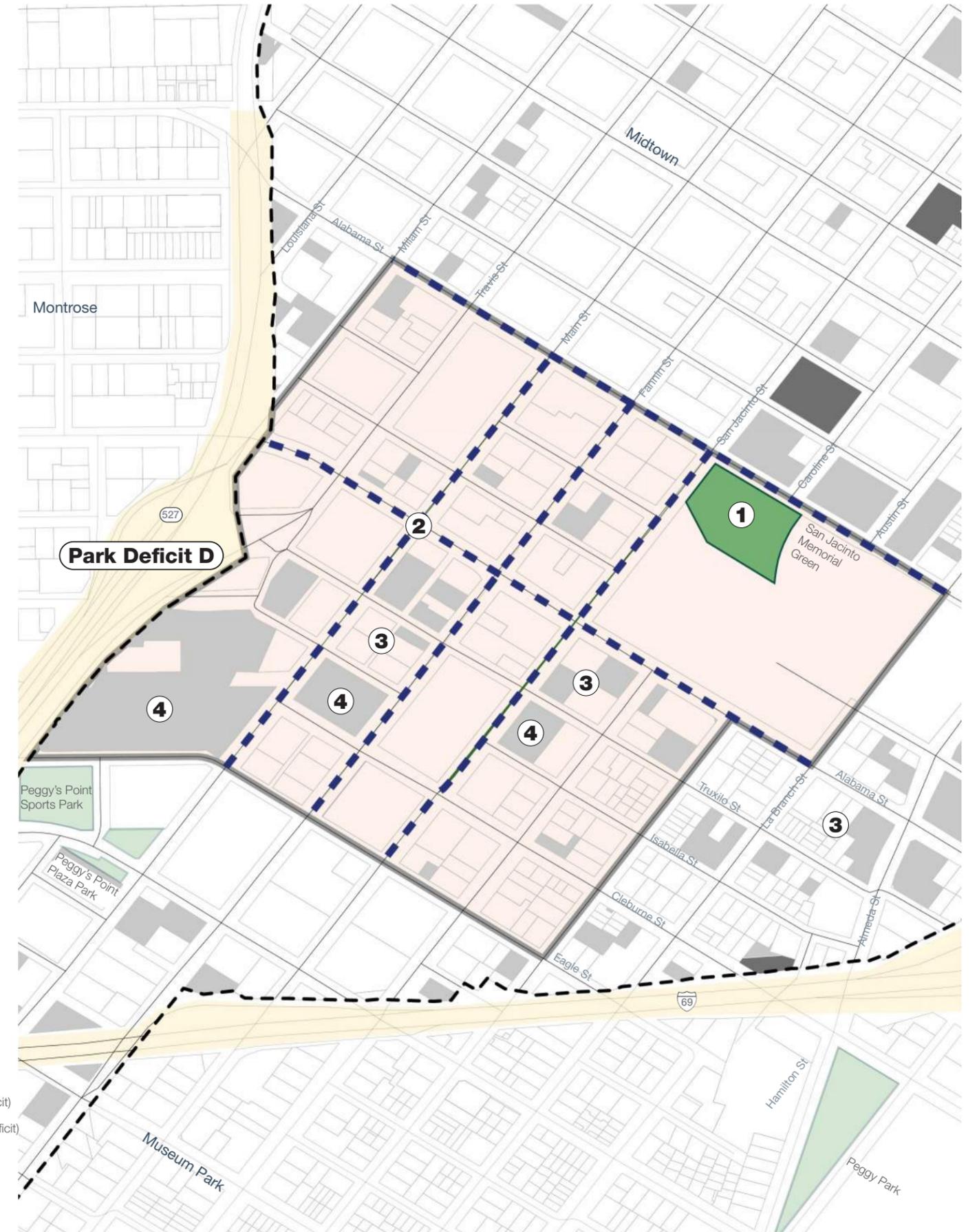


Figure 68 Key Plan

STRATEGIES

- 1 Partner with HCC to improve San Jacinto Memorial Green with added park programming.
- 2 Design priority streetscapes with added green and linear park spaces.
- 3 Partner and work with institution and museums to add park programming.
- 4 Utilize vacant/undeveloped lands to add parks within the area. This could include working with a private development to include publicly accessible private park space.



KEY

- Park Deficit Area
- Existing Parks (within the deficit)
- Existing Parks (outside the deficit)
- Priority Streets
- Land use
- Undeveloped
- Unknown

Figure 67 Park Deficit 'D'

PARK DEFICIT D

SAN JACINTO MEMORIAL GREEN

SUMMARY

San Jacinto Memorial Green is privately owned publicly accessible space by Houston Community College. The plaza currently serves as lawn with seating around. The plaza geometries follow most classical college campus design strategies with formal alleys leading towards important building entrances. Although this plaza is privately owned, Midtown Redevelopment Authority could partner with HCC, much like the public use agreement with The Ion, to incorporate more park programs alongside the San Jacinto Street. The programs could include a shelter/pavilion for outdoor classrooms, study spaces, and a garden for the community to learn about native plants.



Figure 69 Existing Plaza

PARK PROGRAMS

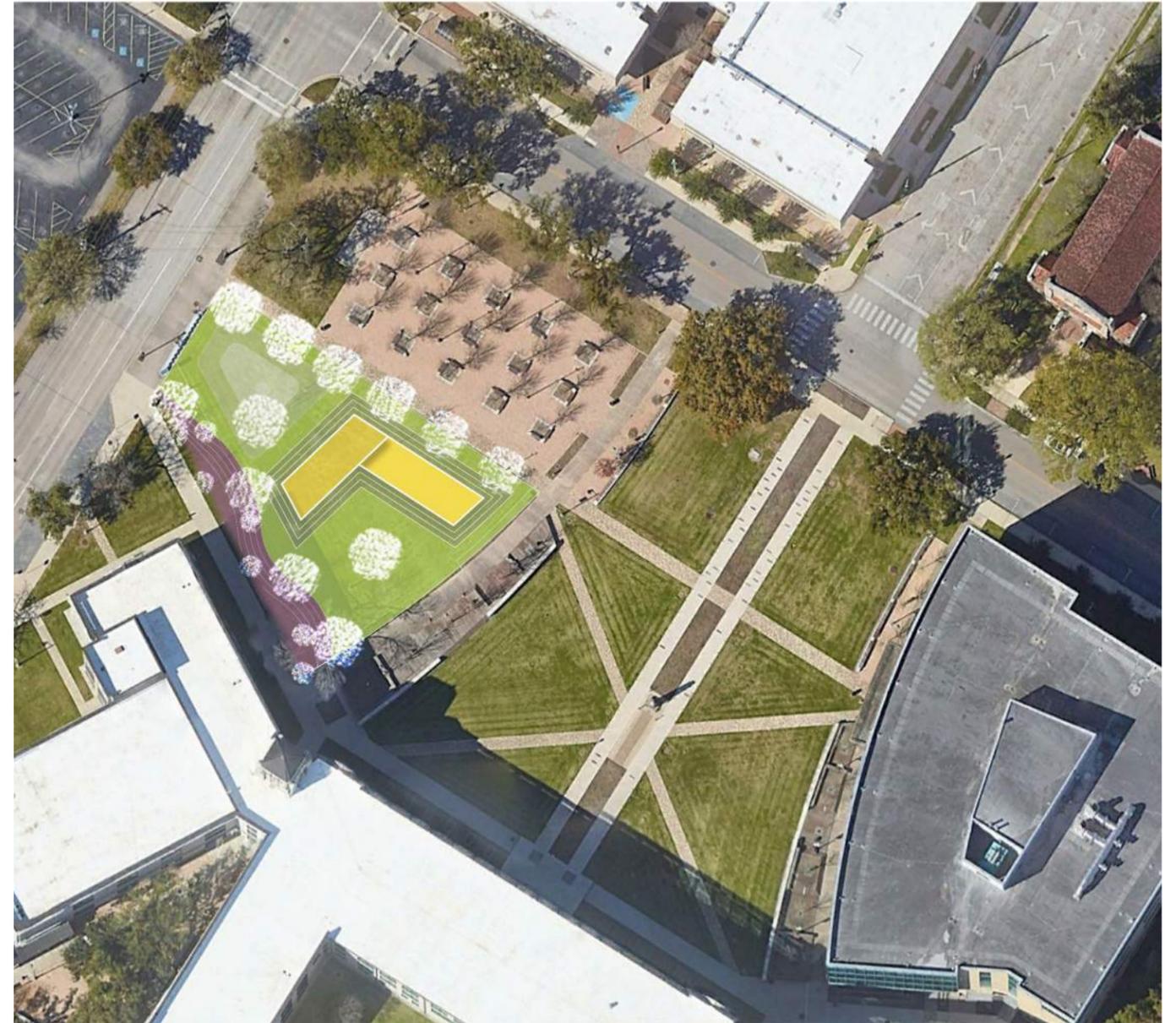
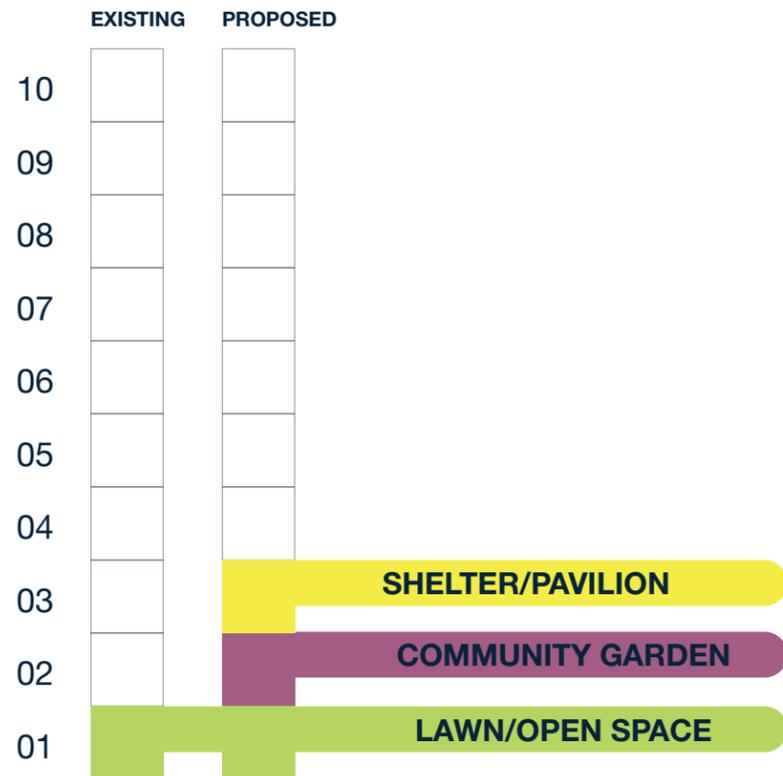


Figure 70 Proposed Park

LAWN/OPEN SPACE

COMMUNITY GARDEN

SHELTER/PAVILION



Limelight - Meyer Studio Land Architects



Mandell Park Prairie Garden - Houston, TX



HBS Schwartz Pavilion - REID architecture PLLC

PARK DEFICIT E

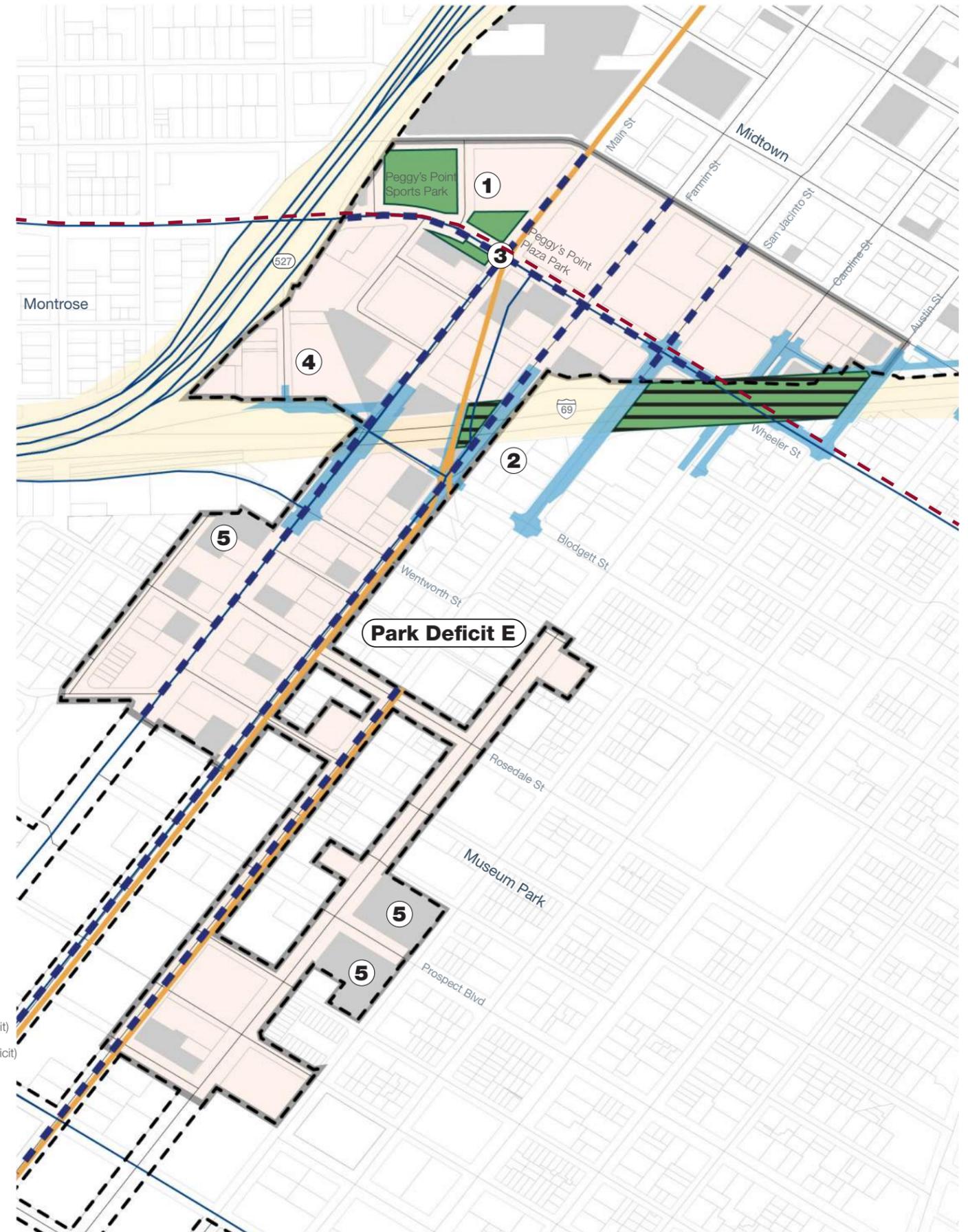
Park Deficit E is located in the south part of Midtown, adjacent to Spur 527 and on both the sides of I-69. The deficit area is part of the Museum Park area and has numerous museums. Peggy's Point Plaza Park and Peggy's Point Sports Park can help improve the park quality of this segment. The METRO Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposed line passing along Wheeler Street will add significant connectivity and opportunities to the region.



Figure 72 Key Plan

STRATEGIES

- 1 Improve and add park programming to Peggy's Point Plaza Park and Peggy's Point Sports Park.
- 2 Partner and work with institution and museums to add park programming.
- 3 Potential long term park opportunity: Cap @ Main Street and Caroline/Wheeler Street.
- 4 Design priority streetscapes with added green and linear park spaces.
- 5 Utilize vacant/undeveloped lands to add park space and programming. This could include working with a private development to include publicly accessible private park space.



KEY

- NHHIP Stitch
- Park Deficit Area
- Existing Parks (within the deficit)
- Existing Parks (outside the deficit)
- Potential Park Programming Opportunity
- Priority Streets
- Land use
 - Undeveloped
 - Unknown
- METRO BRT proposed segments

Figure 71 Park Deficit 'E'

PARK DEFICIT E

PEGGY'S POINT SPORTS PARK

SUMMARY

Peggy's Point Sports Park is 1.5 acres in size, which means it fits the size class for a Neighborhood Park. This allows for more potential program elements that what can fit in a pocket park. In particular, many sports fields and other active recreation uses are too big for pocket parks. Currently an informal baseball/ softball field fills the majority of the site. Although the park is privately owned, it could serve as an opportunity for Midtown to develop a partnership with owner to improve the program offerings and provide public access to the space. According to the HPARD Master Plan, the park sector that includes most of Midtown is lacking in soccer fields in particular, so that and other active recreation could be potential additions to the site. There is currently no contiguous sidewalk around the site, and adding a jogging/ walking trail could change that. Open lawn and a picnic pavilion with food truck access are other program elements that might be introduced.



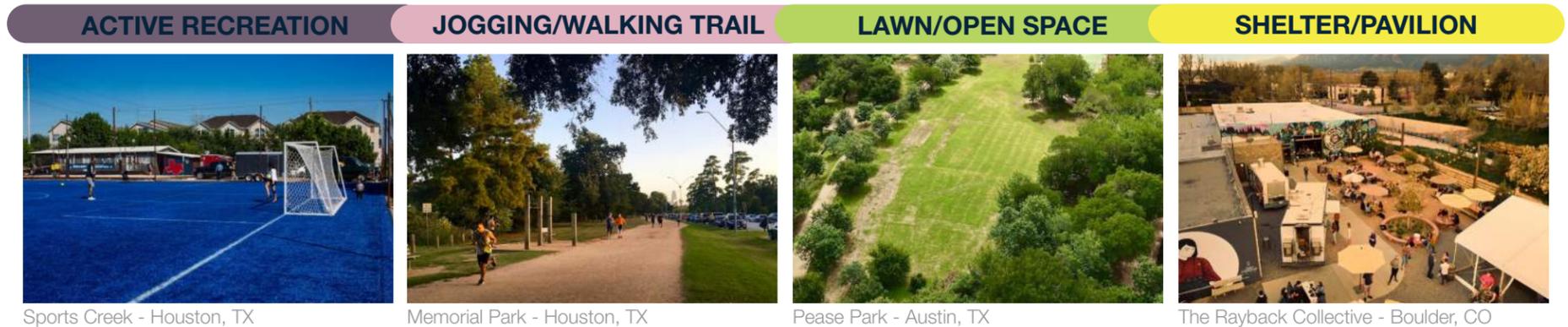
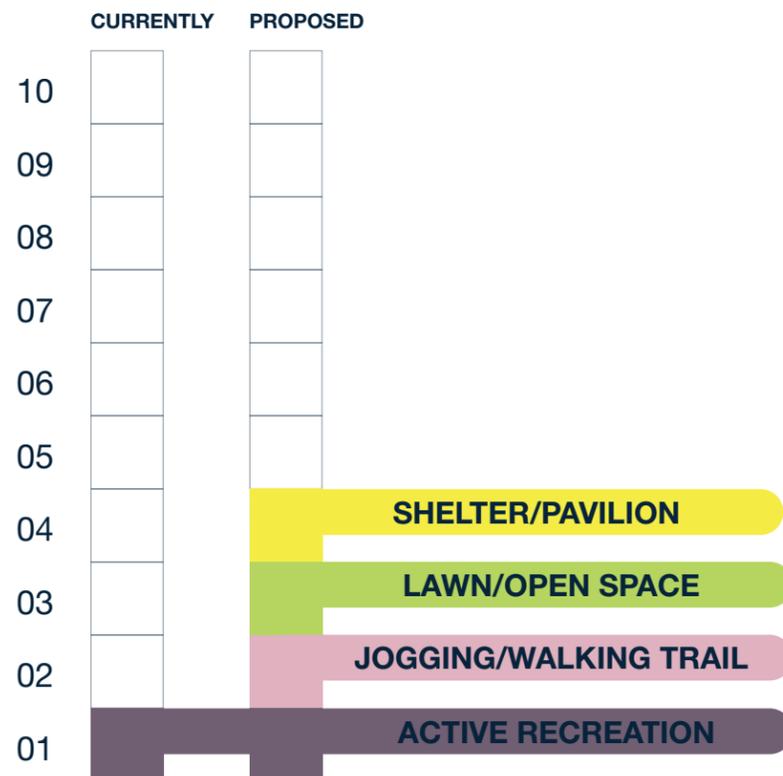
Figure 73 Existing Park



Figure 74 Proposed Park

Proposed Conditions

PARK PROGRAMS



Sports Creek - Houston, TX

Memorial Park - Houston, TX

Pease Park - Austin, TX

The Rayback Collective - Boulder, CO

PARK DEFICIT F

Park Deficit F is located in the western Midtown District. The Menil Foundation and the Menil Park are prominent public spaces. It additionally has a community garden: Plant it Forward. The METRO Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposed line passing along Richmond Avenue will add significant connectivity and opportunities to the region.



Figure 76 Key Plan

STRATEGIES

- 1 Improve and add park programming to Menil Park and Plant it Forward.
- 2 Partner and work with Menil Foundation to add more park space and programming.
- 3 Utilize vacant/undeveloped lands to add park space and programming. This could include working with a private development to include publicly accessible private park space.

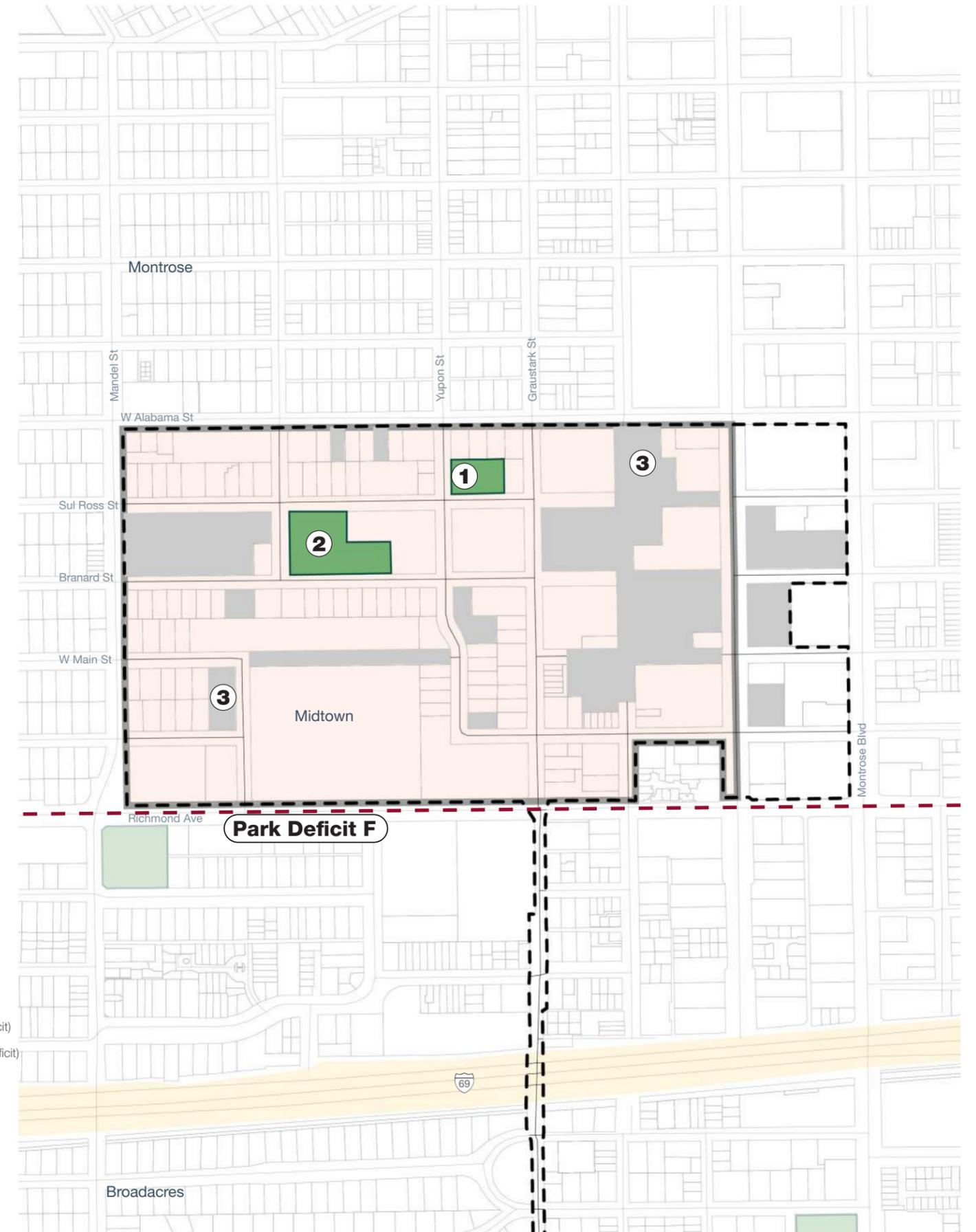


Figure 75 Park Deficit 'F'

PARK DEFICIT F

PLANT IT FORWARD

SUMMARY

The neighborhood has a community garden - Plant it Forward, that Midtown could help with installing quality plant beds, as well as other maintenance items needed by the surrounding community. The area has access to a community garden nearby - Mandell Park which can collaborate with the Plant It Forward organization as well. To help fill in the program deficit, the community gardens could include shipping containers as shelter/pavilion, a nature play garden, and updated planters with automatic irrigation.



Figure 77 Existing Park

PARK PROGRAM

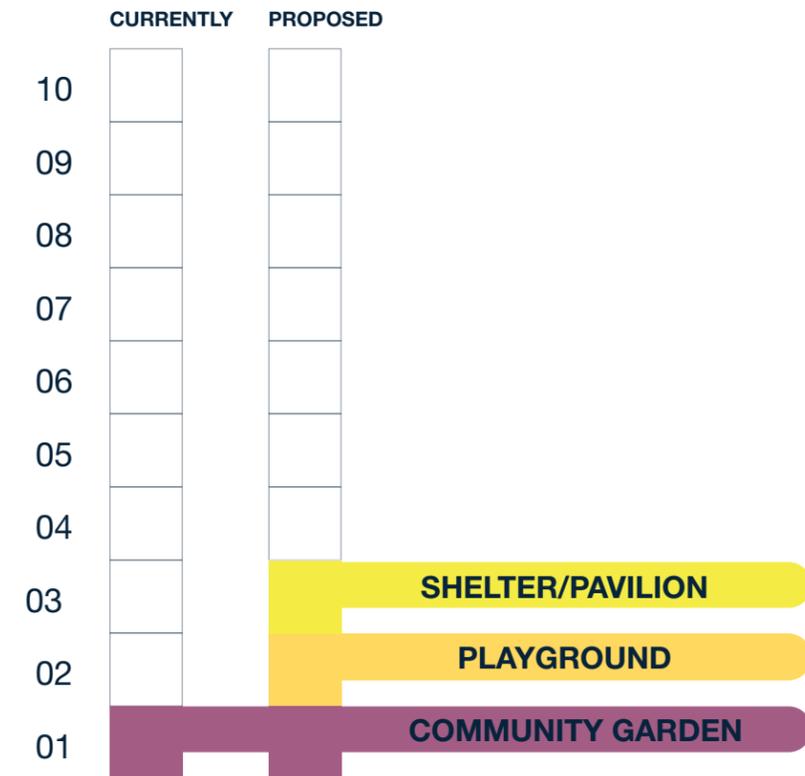


Figure 78 Proposed Park

Proposed Conditions

COMMUNITY GARDEN **SHELTER/PAVILION** **PLAYGROUND**



Community Gardens in Levy Park - Houston, TX



The Yard at Mission Rock by YDI - San Francisco, CA



Barbara Fish Daniels Nature Play Center - Houston, TX