



OST/South Union Parks Project

Integrated Planning and Programming Study Report – Phase 1
September 2021

PREPARED FOR:

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

Old Spanish Trail (OST)/ South Union (SU) Community residents and stakeholders

OST/South Union Great Opportunity (GO) Neighborhoods

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Houston Parks and Recreation Department

DATE:

September 2021

LISC HOUSTON



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01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Old Spanish Trail (OST)/South Union Parks Project, a community-based parks initiative, focuses on the potential of existing parks to provide environmental, safety, educational, entertainment, health, and wellness benefits. The vision is to enhance neighborhood parks so that they act individually as beacons of light for the community, and collectively as a cohesive neighborhood park network.

The Southeast Houston Transformation Alliance (SEHTA) and OST/South Union Arts, Culture, Media and History GO Team worked with Texas Southern University's Urban Planning and Environmental Policy Program and Houston Parks Board to carry out the Phase 1 of the OST/South Union Parks Planning Study. It was made possible through a Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) Greater Opportunities (GO) Neighborhoods Innovative Project and Transformative Grant.

Phase 1 of the planning process documents the existing conditions and engages the community to identify the opportunities and constraints within the existing neighborhood park network. This study builds on the community development and engagement work that SEHTA has undertaken to create, maintain, and sustain positive change in this underserved community. It also considers previous parks and connectivity studies and plans that have been done in the area. The ultimate community engagement goal is to encourage community park stewardship.

Why? Because parks are an integral part of a healthy and resilient community. They provide essential infrastructure for gathering, exercise, recreation, and access to nature. A robust park network leads to a healthier community, environment, and economy, and therefore, to healthier people.

A neighborhood park network consists of the public parks, trails, and natural spaces within a community. These neighborhood green spaces work both individually and together as a complementary and connected whole.

For a high-quality park network the parks need to be assessed both together on a neighborhood level, and at the individual park level. The factors that need to be considered are:

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK NETWORK QUALITY ASSESSMENT:

- **Connectivity** – Are there safe pedestrian and bicyclist connections between parks, schools, businesses, and homes?
- **Location** – How close are residents to their neighborhood parks? Can they walk to their closest park in 10 minutes?
- **Quantity** – Is there enough park space for the residents of the area?
- **Amenities** – What are the amenities available throughout the parks in the network?
- **Park Programs** – What organized activities are available throughout the park system?

INDIVIDUAL PARK QUALITY ASSESSMENT:

- **Amenities** – What are the amenities available in the specific park?
- **Access** – How easy is it for people to get into and around the park?
- **Safety & Maintenance** – Is the park safe and well maintained?
- **Aesthetics** – Is the park attractive? Does it have a variety of landscape elements and materials?
- **Park Programs** – What organized activities are available in the park?

SUMMARY

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK NETWORK QUALITY ASSESSMENT:

Park Connectivity: POOR

Generally, connectivity between area parks is lacking but is trending in a positive direction. The sidewalk and bikeway network is sporadic in both quantity and quality. To improve the sidewalk network close collaboration with the City of Houston is needed. For bike connectivity, Neighborhood Greenways throughout the OST/South Union area have been identified. Houston Southwest, the area Management District, has completed one greenway and is planning future greenways.

Park Location: FAIR

Most residents (about 60%) in OST/South Union are within a 10-minute walk of a park. Suggestions to improve park access are:

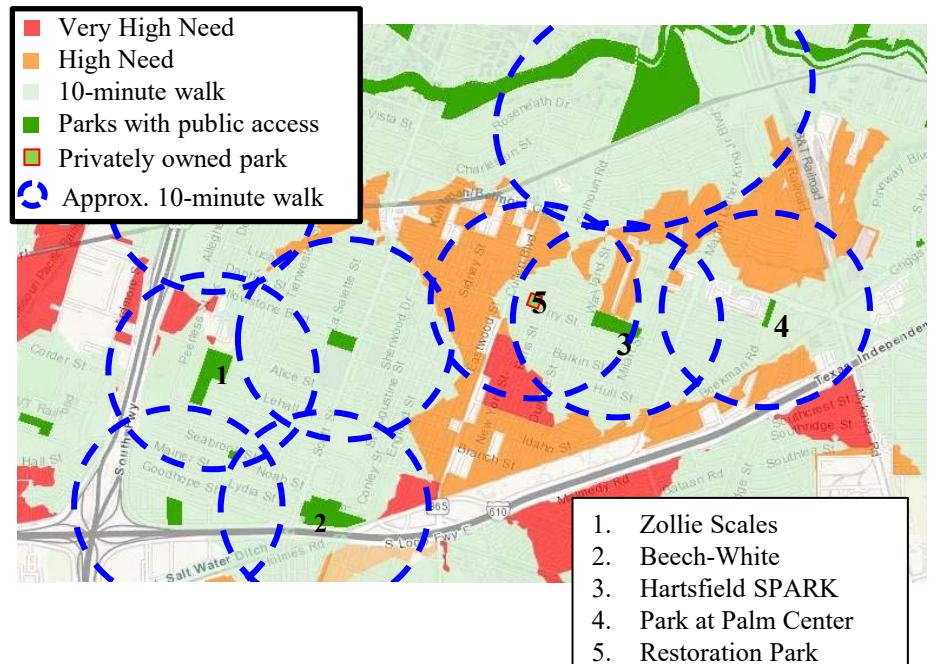
1. Confirm the 10-minute walk standard makes sense for Houston.
2. Improve access to Zollie Scales (1), Beech-White (2), Hartsfield Elementary SPARK (3), and Park at Palm Center (4). As indicated in the Trust for Public Land ParkServe map, if access points to these parks are improved, areas of need will be able to access the parks.
3. Include Restoration Park (5) as a public access park. It is currently a church owned park and could be considered public if an agreement to provide public access was in place.
4. Add park space along Cullen Boulevard if necessary. This area is not within a 10-minute walk of any park, adding park space would be necessary to provide residents in this area access.

NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAY MAP:



- Phase 1 Neighborhood Greenway Completed 2020
- 1. Cyrill Madison Park
- 2. Whidby Elementary SPARK Park

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND PARKSERVE MAP:



SUMMARY

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK NETWORK:

Park Quantity: GOOD

OST/South Union has enough park acreage per person with MacGregor Park and just under without according to current HPARD standards. Adding park space is therefore not the highest priority. Utilizing the space appropriately for the community needs attention.

Park Amenities: FAIR

HPARD has standards for park amenities per 1,000 people. According to these standards, OST/South Union has plenty of tennis courts, and adequate numbers of other amenities except that it could use a softball field, two soccer fields, volleyball, and a dog park. The team recommends:

1. Benchmarking HPARD standards against other peer city standards and working with HPARD to confirm any updates.
2. Confirming whether community needs differ significantly from standards.
3. Providing missing amenities as needed.

Refer to ‘Chapter 05 – Neighborhood Park Network Summary’ for more information.

Park Programs:

Park programming was not assessed in this study.

PARK QUANTITY (ACRES OF PARK PER 1,000 PEOPLE)

PARK NAME	OWNER	PARK TYPE	ACREAGE
Beech-White Park	COH	Neighborhood / Community	15.27
Cyrill Madison Park	COH	Neighborhood / Pocket	1.23
George T Nelson Park (Yellowstone Park)	COH	Neighborhood	6.03
Park at Palm Center	COH	Neighborhood	2.17
Zollie Scales Park	COH	Neighborhood	14.3
Whidby SPARK Park	HISD	SPARK/Neighborhood	1.46
Hartsfield SPARK Park	HISD	SPARK/Neighborhood	1.8
Restoration Park	Private	Private	
MacGregor Park	COH	Community (Regional)	65
Brays Bayou Greenway	COH	Linear / Regional	
Totals			107.26

Acreage Totals per type	Defined Size	Number in OST	Total Existing Acres	Total Acres Needed	Over/Under
Community/ Regional	16-150 Acres	2	80.27	29.25	51.02
Neighborhood	1-15 Acres	5	25.76	19.5	6.26
Pocket	< 1 Acre	1	1.23	1.95	-0.72
TOTALS		8	107.26	50.7	56.56
TOTAL WITHOUT MACGREGOR			42.26	50.7	-8.44

PARK LEVEL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

INDIVIDUAL PARK QUALITY

The Texas Southern University student team worked with the Houston Parks and Recreation Department to assess the neighborhood parks. The assessment entailed visiting the individual parks and scored them on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the best and 10 the worst) in four areas: access, amenities, safety/maintenance, and condition/aesthetics. See ‘Chapter 04 – Park Assessments’ and ‘Appendix C – Park Assessment Detailed Scoring’ for more information.

Scoring Values: Good = 1 to 3
 Fair = 4 to 6
 Poor = 7 to 9
 Immediate Attention = 10

INDIVIDUAL PARK QUALITY ASSESSMENTS

THE GOOD:

Park at Palm Center (5) – Score: 2.68

Positives - Variety of unique amenities, attractive and varied landscaping, well maintained, holds a variety of activities, well used. Houston Southeast recently completed the Greenway Project, a hike and bike connection between Park at Palm Center and MacGregor Park.

Suggestions - Access for walking and biking to the park could be further improved.

THE FAIR:

George T Nelson Park (2) – Score: 6.41

Cyrril Madison Park (B) – Score: 6.65

Positives – beautiful trees, good amenities

Suggestions – These parks are both at the low end of ‘Fair’. In both parks focus is needed to improve access and safety. Some amenity updates are needed (especially at Cyrril Madison Park). The top suggestions from community engagement were additional programming, landscaping, and community specific art.

THE FOCUS:

Zollie Scales Park (1) – Score: 7.68

Beech White Park (A) – Score: 7.27

Positives – A lot of open space

Suggestions – The parks are underdeveloped and underutilized. A park specific planning process is recommended for these parks to optimize all aspects of the parks.

PARK PROGRAMMING (OVERALL AND INDIVIDUAL):

This phase of the study took place in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. During most of the year playgrounds were closed, basketball hoops were removed, and in-person group activities were postponed to aid in stopping the spread of the disease. For these reasons, park programming will need to be studied in future phases.

From community input we learned that long-time residents remember a time when there were regular planned activities and celebrations in the parks. Generally, the community thought that more planned activities in parks, and an easier permitting process for events would increase park usage.

PROPOSED INTERIM PROJECTS

AGENTS OF DISCOVERY

- Educational mobile gaming platform that uses augmented reality to get youth active
- Parents/guardians download the FREE mobile gaming app on their phones to help their children complete the mission
- Mission is active at George T. Nelson/Yellowstone Park
- Timeframe: Until end of November
- How to market? YOU can help!
- Will expand to future OST/SU parks if this mission is successful!



SIDEWALK MATH:

- Fun and educational
- Low cost
- Artwork can be customized to the locations
- Quick to implement
- Can be implemented and stewarded by the community

Annie Zhu - Camp Readiness Across Mathematics. First installment at Agape Development.

Next step: Additional parks/locations



PROPOSED INTERIM PROJECTS

HISTORY:

As the OST/South Union area is under documented and community members think history is important, the team suggests a project to further investigate the history of parks in the OST/South Union area. The project would be developed with the community to:

- Further investigate and document the interesting history of the parks and the important citizens that some are named after.
- Gather information from the many community members that have lived in OST/South Union for decades. This could include personal photos and stories.
- Develop a repository of history through the OST/South Union GO Neighborhood Arts, Culture, History in partnership with Houston Public Library

This information can then be used to create historically inspired art and educational elements within the parks to celebrate and represent the history of the OST/South Union community.



Picture resource: <http://www.hearourhouston.com/tour/a-look-back-at-south-union-mr-wiley/>



NEXT STEPS

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING STUDY:

The Planning and Programming process consists of three phases per the outline below. This study represents the completion of phase 1. Funding is needed to carry out phases 2 and 3 of the process in order to

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING STUDY PROCESS:

Phase 1 – Information Gathering / Outreach (This Study)

- Why Neighborhood Parks are Important
- Existing Conditions Assessment
 - Neighborhood
 - Parks
- Identify Opportunities and Constraints
- Outreach / Park Stewardship Building

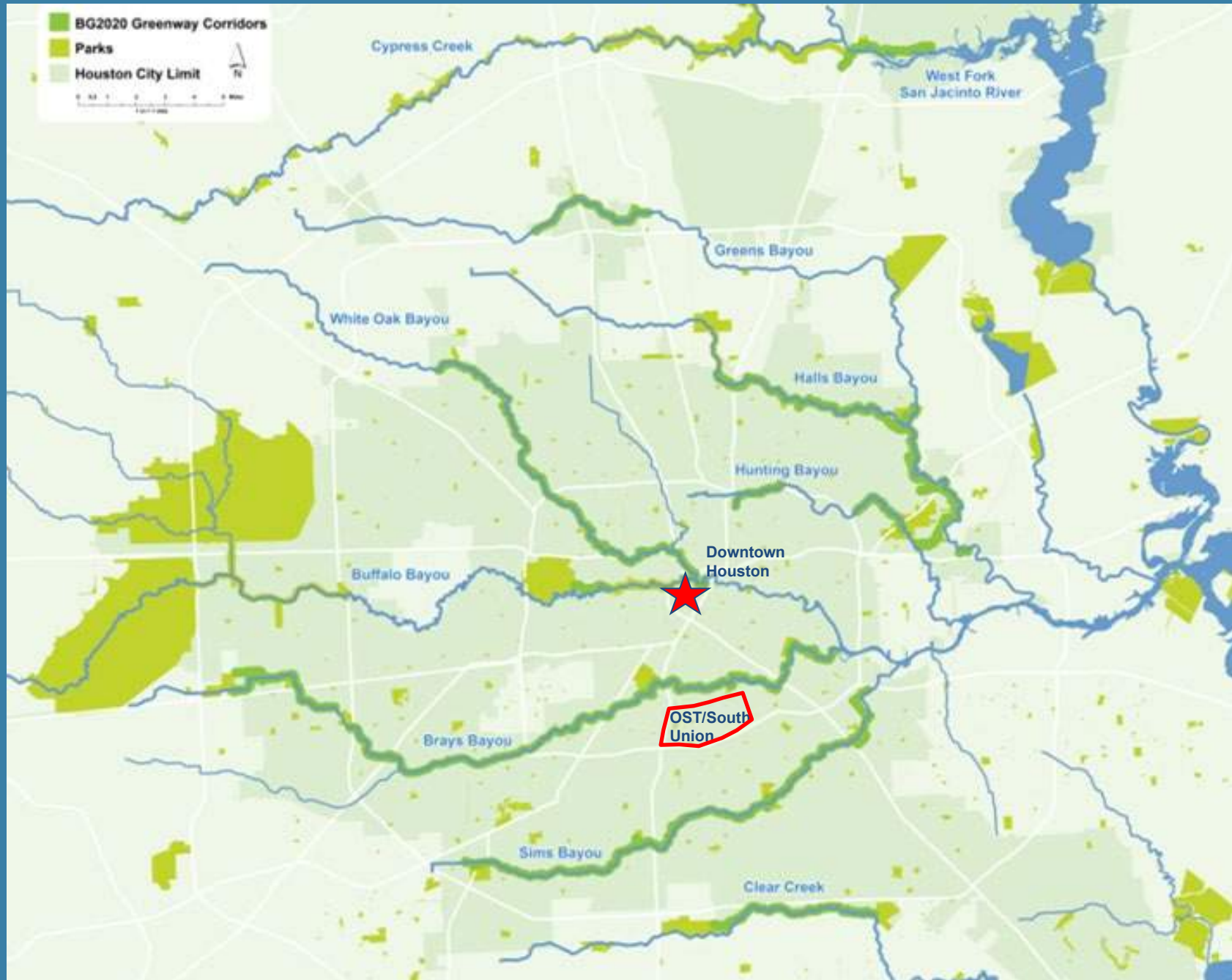
Phase 2 – Analysis / Outreach (Future Step)

- Information analysis
- Preliminary Recommendations
- Community Park Stewardship in action

Phase 3 – Plan Development / Outreach (Future Step)

- Updated Recommendations
- Cost Estimates
- Implementation Plan

The team recommends undertaking interim projects to show progress and continue to engage the community in the park system development process. Meanwhile funding to continue the planning process is needed.



02 INTRODUCTION

PROJECT PURPOSE

The Old Spanish Trail (OST)/South Union Parks Project, a community-based parks initiative, focuses on the potential of existing parks to provide environmental, safety, educational, entertainment, health, and wellness benefits. The vision is to enhance neighborhood parks so that they act individually as beacons of light for the community, and collectively as a neighborhood park network.

With appropriate planning and funding, each park can address and serve its community through unique landscape designs, customized public programs, art installations, and sustainable maintenance programs. Through the community's active civic engagement, this parks network can enhance the character of the area by more effectively providing space for recreation, entertainment, education, and gathering.

The OST/South Union neighborhood park network can also connect the community to Houston's regional park system linked by the Bayou Greenway 2020 network. The parks can bring together community members while connecting our neighborhoods to others throughout Houston. A connected park system can serve to connect the parks to one another, as well as the amenities that each park has. While not every park has a pool, or a baseball diamond, or a basketball court, as a stand alone/individual park, the neighborhood gains access to the types of amenities by engaging with the park system at large. A park system also supports the communal element that is vibrant in the OST South Union Neighborhood. As this project progressed, the planning team realized OST/South Union parks once served more strongly as places of light and engagement for this community as well as an essential component of Houston's urban park system.

Long-term residents remember the vibrancy of their parks; with memories, stories and photos of family and friends enjoying these spaces of gathering and camaraderie. As new generations find a home in the OST/South Union Community, they, in partnership with long-term residents, seek to prioritize their parks and reestablish the vibrancy that long-term residents remember.

To support this endeavor, members of the Southeast Houston Transformation Alliance and OST/South Union Arts, Culture, Media and History GO Team reached out to the Houston Parks Board and Texas Southern University's Urban Planning and Environmental Policy Program. Together these partners applied for and received a LISC GO Neighborhoods Innovative Project and Transformative Grant.

The purpose of this plan is to analyze neighborhood parks, refine and prioritize improvement strategies.

PURPOSE OF PARKS

Frederick Law Olmsted, one of the pioneers of landscape architecture in America, considered parks as essential infrastructure in neighborhoods. The mastermind behind New York City's Central Park, who'd go on to impact parks and park systems for the next century, stated:

We want a ground to which people may easily go when the day's work is done, and where they may stroll for an hour, seeing, hearing, and feeling nothing of the bustle and jar of the streets where they shall, in effect, find the city put far away from them....

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING PROCESS

Integrated Program and Planning Analysis involves multiple phases that assess neighborhood parks, refine and prioritize improvement strategies, and produce a plan with implementation steps and cost estimates. There are three phases to this process:

Phase 1 documents the existing conditions and engages the community and partners in identifying current use, which includes the barriers to use. This Integrated Program and Planning Study builds on the community development and engagement work that SEHTA has undertaken to create, maintain, and sustain positive change in this underserved community. It also considers previous parks and connectivity studies and plans that have been done in the area.

Phase 2 analyzes research, data, and assessments from Phase 1 to provide informed recommendations about individual parks as well as the park system at large, this includes initial cost estimates, time commitments, etc. The community and potential partners are involved in creating, reviewing, and commenting on this preliminary plan.

Phase 3 synthesizes the information from Phase 2 to define a Parks Plan Vision including specific projects, implementation steps, execution partners, cost estimates, and funding sources.

With appropriate planning each park can serve the neighborhood by including unique landscape designs, park-specific public programs and art, and sustainable maintenance programs. Through community input and civic engagement, this parks plan will enhance the character of the area by effectively providing space for recreation, entertainment, education, and gathering.

For this project, the main responsibilities of each partner were as follows:

- SEHTA OST/South Union GO Arts, Culture, History and Media Team focused on community engagement
- Texas Southern University Urban Planning and Environmental Policy Program students undertook data gathering and research
- Houston Parks Board provided overall Project Management
- Houston Parks and Recreation Department served as advisors
- LISC provided funding/financial support

In addition, the team would like to thank the Houston Southeast Management District for their support and advice.

OUR PARKS, OUR STORY

Every place has a story. Some stories are long, with many characters; others are short, with just a few. As we explored the Greater OST/South Union neighborhood, we learned the stories of the people and places that make up this neighborhood. These stories, supported by data and research, give us greater insight into the community. Through these stories, we learned how the built environment serves as a container for daily life; children learn in schools, people worship in churches, families live together in homes.

Every place has its purpose, yet the places we were most interested in were the neighborhood parks. The six parks originally identified for the study were: George T Nelson Park, Zollie Scales Park, Hartsfield Elementary SPARK Park, Restoration Park, MacGregor Park, and Park at Palm Center. Through our analysis we added other parks in the area including: Whidby Elementary SPARK Park, Beech White Park, and Cyrill Madison Park. Each park is in the Greater OST/South Union area and possesses unique characteristics to understand and explore. Within the context of place, finer details of the day to day become valuable, as it helps us understand what was once there, what is there, and what is to come.

Why parks? you might ask. Before we begin to answer that...

We ask you to close your eyes and think about the last time you went to the park. Close them completely and consider how going to the park is a sensory experience. Think about the way the playground looked, the smell of fresh cut grass or delicious barbecue, the taste of that barbecue or a sticky popsicle from the truck, the sound of children playing or even the creaky sound of the swing, and finally, the feeling of the wind gently blowing or the sun blazing onto your exposed skin. The park is all encompassing, and our time there lingers in our memory.

Parks and open space are features that are hard to imagine neighborhoods without, as they became an endemic feature of the American neighborhood. Houston's history with parks is unique; as the story goes, a previous mayor believed backyards were our park, reducing the priority of dedicated public park space. This mentality, strengthened by the amount of space often boasted about in Houston (and Texas at large), speaks to the municipal government's attitude towards parks and the subsequent formation of organizations and partnerships that are charged with responsibility and care for them today.

Generally, parks are a positive neighborhood feature, which is why it is no surprise that OST/South Union residents suggested they could be an asset that would better benefit their community. Every park is different, and in turn, have different histories, amenities, trails, and facilities. They also serve different groups and demographics of people and are located next to different land uses and businesses. Yet, there is one commonality amongst many parks, regardless of where it might be: they are all outside.

Frederick Law Olmstead understood the connection between parks and mental health. And, according to the National Recreation and Park Association, "*More time spent in parks and green spaces can help individuals fight against mental health issues like depression, anxiety and stress.*" There are also studies that indicate access to parks increases physical activity.

Just as parks have great impacts on individuals, they are also capable of serving the community at large as outdoor gathering space. Historically in communities of color, parks have been the home to events such as church homecomings, birthdays, Juneteenth celebrations, political organizing, etc. These types of events, many for close family members and others that involved the entire neighborhood, are a part of the social fabric that holds places and people together.

In the context of Houston, the public park as the place of choice for Juneteenth celebrations was set in stone by the creation of Emancipation Park, the oldest public park in the city and the state of Texas. Another notable historic park story includes that of Hartsfield Elementary SPARK Park, which was one of the first in Houston. The SPARK School Park Program is a unique public-private partnership that helps public schools develop their playgrounds into community parks.

Kathleen Ownby, SPARK Executive Director, explains that “*SPARK arranges for professional architects to work with each school committee to develop a park design that best meets the needs of the school and neighborhood. The children of each school take part in the design and upkeep of their SPARK Park. Community involvement is a cornerstone of the SPARK program; officials believe that the children and community should feel a sense of ownership for the park.*”

Parks are dynamic and can be used as an anchor for equity and positive change; as light has been shed on historic lack of access to parks for communities of color, the call to create equitable park access is more important than ever. While each park is a different size and features different amenities, establishing maintained basic uses such as a walkable trail/path, seating, and waste receptacles, complemented by good lighting, attractive foliage, and accessibility is a great start. Access to national parks and large regional parks might be outside of the socioeconomic means of those in the neighborhood, which makes it even more important to ensure that nearby parks provide value. According to Feinerman: “*poorer households prefer urban parks and richer households prefer national parks, the gap between the actual and preferred allocation is larger the lower the household’s income.*” where disproportionate spending is looked at empirically and ultimately proven to hurt neighborhoods with lower income individuals.

The year 2020 and the spread of COVID-19 pandemic has re-emphasized the importance of parks and open space. In a time where stress was high and gathering in groups often prohibited, getting out in nature provided a needed place of respite.

ORIGINAL PARKS IDENTIFIED FOR THE STUDY:



Note: This map was updated through the process to add parks and update their locations/sizes

03 BACKGROUND

COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

The impetus for this plan and the call for the reinvestment in the OST/South Union parks system generated from the community and its residents' desire to transform their community into a healthier, more vibrant, and economically stable one. Current and former community residents, those vested in the viability and livability of their neighborhoods, have taken a lead in not only developing community park plans, but placing parks on the agenda of public officials, foundations, and philanthropic organizations. They are encouraging investment in parks in the OST/South Union Community. The results of their initiative are evident in the documents referenced in this report.

CARROLL PARROTT BLUE



The team wanted to particularly acknowledge Carroll Parrott Blue for her pioneering work that led to the OST/South Union Parks Project as well as many other community efforts. A timeline detailing some of Carroll's work can be found on the next page.

Carroll, a scholar, producer, author and award-winning filmmaker with an interest in the revitalization of Southeast Houston neighborhoods, passed away on Dec. 11, 2019.

SOUTHEAST HOUSTON TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE



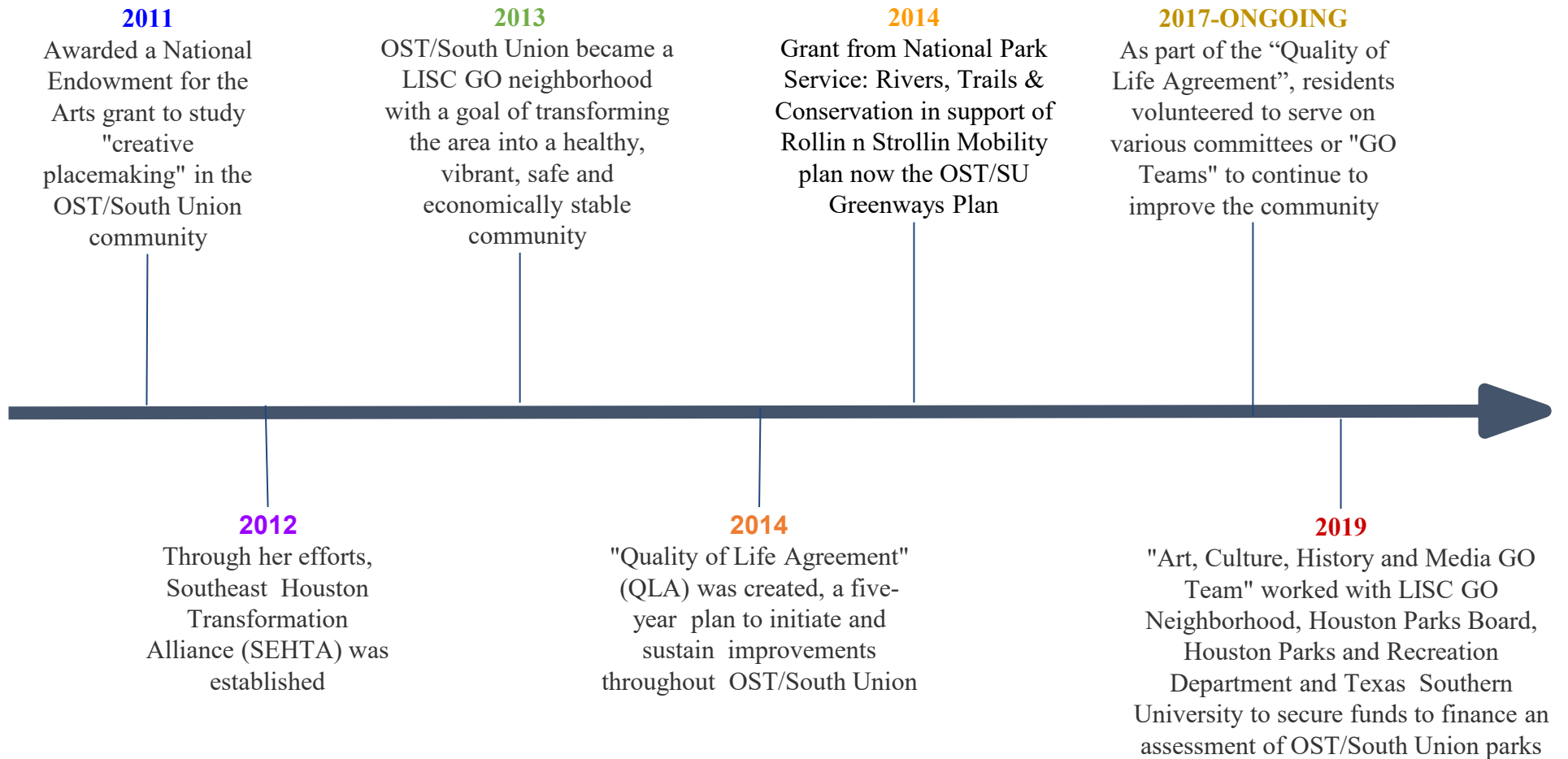
Pictured above are members of the Southeast Houston Transformation Alliance or SEHTA.

Front Row: Cedric Douglas, Roland Cotton, Bill McGee, and Jakobi Cotton;
Second Row: Carroll Blue, Ennis Johnson, Gwen Fedrick, Vivian Vincent, Paulette Wagner, Myra Fleeks,, Torey Powell;
Back Row: Verda Gaines, Lushon Thomas, Melissa Hill, David Hill, Preston Roe.

SEHTA was started by Carroll Parrott Blue and is a collaborative effort that brings together residents and key stakeholders to transform Southeast Houston area into a healthy, vibrant, and economically stable community.

CARROLL PARROTT BLUE

A timeline of Carroll's community work in the OST/South Union area is detailed below. As we can see, her consistent and sustained efforts in the OST/South Union Community will continue to bring positive change to the neighborhood for years to come.



OTHER AREA PLANS

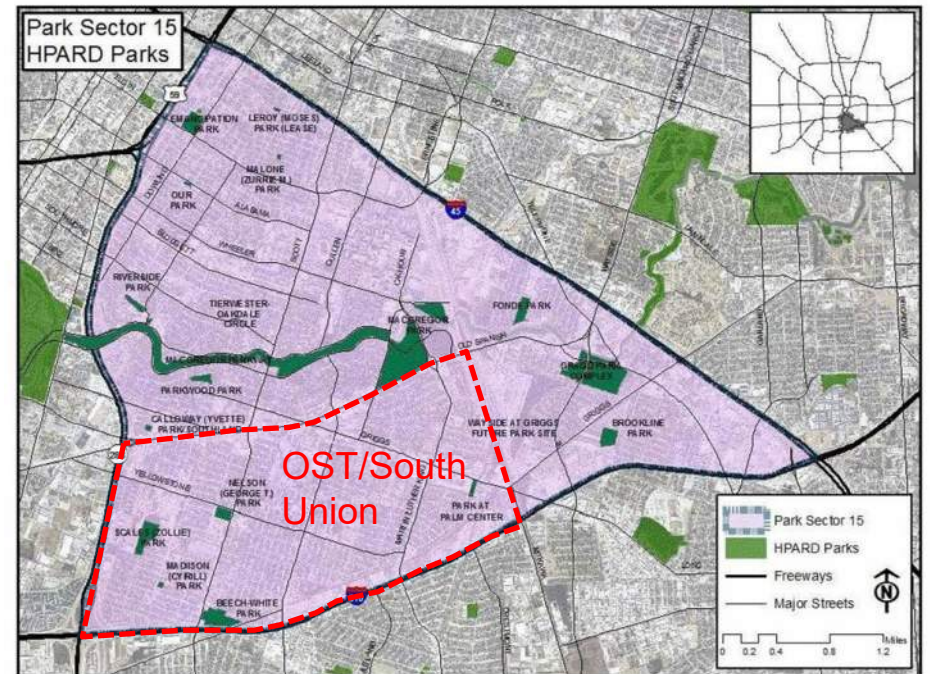
Previous plans covering the OST/South Union area have successfully identified needs of the community, as well as given suggestions that are helpful for neighborhood welfare. They have also looked at design elements that would improve beautification, functionality, and connectivity issues that support increased park usage and livability in the area. Each plan does an excellent job of focusing on their chosen elements. The effort of combining and creating synergy between each of the primary plans, secondary plans, and small area plans, is essential. Our assessment gives reference and deference to the work done in previous years. Some notable plans are detailed in the following pages.



OST/South Union Quality of Life Plan (2015) was created through the participation of more than 400 people representing neighborhoods, schools, churches, institutions, organizations, businesses, and elected officials. The plan called for the revitalization of neighborhood parks.

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) 2015 Master Plan is the result of a two-year assessment of the City by Park Sectors. The Parks and Open Space Ordinance divided the City of Houston into 21 Park Sectors. Recommendations were made on a city-wide basis as well as for individual Park Sectors through analysis of existing conditions, data analysis, and public input. The OST/South Union area is part of Park Sector 15. Priorities for this park sector were identified as:

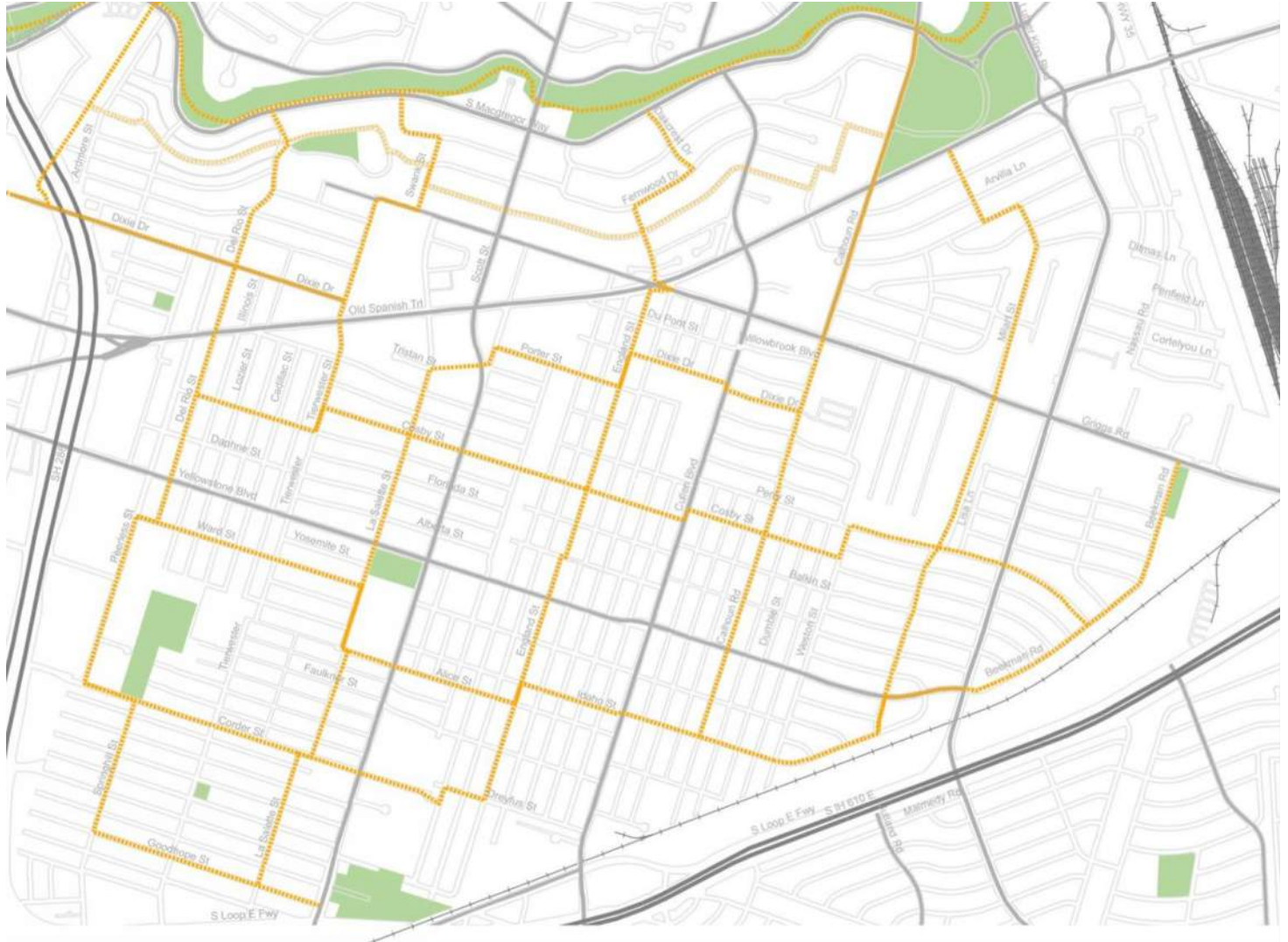
1. Revitalize existing parks
2. Develop neighborhood connections to parks and trails
3. Acquire new parkland
4. Develop new park facilities
5. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas
6. Develop partnerships



The **Strollin' & Rollin' Southeast Houston 2015 Neighborhood Greenways Plan**

resulted in the identification of major east-west, north-south connectors for bike activity within the community (noted as yellow dashed lines on the plan opposite). The plan was carried out by the OST/South Union GO Neighborhood Strollin' & Rollin' GO Team that was tasked with identifying and providing recommendations for mobility and infrastructure issues in the area. It included road assessment surveys, community surveys, and bike rides that identified opportunities for sidewalks and infrastructure improvements.

The plan identified several east-west and north-south thoroughfares that could serve as neighborhood greenways. The information was incorporated into the Houston Bike Plan. Houston Southeast, the area Management District, finished building one of the identified neighborhoods greenways in 2020 (see page 40 for more information).



In April of 2018, The Dawn Project drafted a proposal to fund a comprehensive community six-wide park master plan that included community parks, trails, esplanades, sidewalks and street restorations. The plan co-mingled resident voices and visions with creative placemaking and story mapping.

Southeast Houston Transformation Alliance (SEHTA) / The Dawn Project
 Our Parks, Our Community Connections: Six OST – South Union Parks

April 2018 Proposal

Carroll Parrott Blue, MFA
 carrollpblue@hotmail.com
 832-312-6932



Asakura Robinson’s **Six OST – South Union Area Parks** Study provides a concise framework and ideology for what a more equitable parks system could mean for the community.



The City of Houston’s **Resilient Houston** is the newest plan reviewed for the purposes of our project. **Resilient Houston** is a framework for collective action and links existing efforts with new ones that will work together to protect **Houston** against future disasters—from hurricanes and flooding to extreme heat waves—and chronic stresses such as aging infrastructure, poor air quality, and climate change.

Parks and park improvements can support many of Resilient Houston’s goals including Safe & Equitable Neighborhoods and Accessible & Adaptive City.

PREVIOUS COMMUNITY EFFORTS

COMMUNITY SURVEYS

Community Surveys, much like the one below, were distributed throughout the community via neighborhood events. The survey gathered information on park usage. Results of these and similar surveys are included in the report.

The OST/SOUTH Union ARTS GO team is interested in how the parks in the community are used. We know that you have taken a lot of surveys, however, your time and answers are important to helping us plan for and improve are parks.

1. Place an "X" by all parks that you or your family visit or use.

Park at Palm Center Hartsfield Elementary/SPARK Park
 McGregor Park Zolie Scales Park
 Restoration Park George T. Nelson Park / Yellowstone Park

2. For those parks that you or your family do NOT use, please tell us why. Check all that apply

Reason	Park at Palm Center	Hartsfield Elementary SPARK Park	McGregor Park	Zolie Scales Park	Restoration Park	George T. Nelson Yellowstone Park
Not aware of this park						
Park too far away to walk						
Not enough parking						
Not enough lighting						
Do not feel safe in park reason: _____						
Loose dogs or other animals						
Park not maintained						
Not enough activities in park						
Broken play equipment						
No reason, just do not go to parks						
Other Reasons: _____						

3. Is there anything you would like to tell us about why you do not use the parks selected above?

PARKS TOUR

On several occasions parks tours were held for stakeholders to provide an overview of and discuss the potential of parks in the OST/South Union community.

4. For those parks that you or your family do use, please tell us why. Check all that apply and add

	Park at Palm Center	Hartsfield Elementary SPARK Park	McGregor Park	Zolie Scales Park	Restoration Park	George T. Nelson Yellowstone Park
Walk or exercise						
Play with pets						
Picnic						
Not enough lighting						
Children play on equipment						
Family reunions or group gatherings						
Attend public events						
Go outside for fresh air						
Other Reasons: _____						

5. What do you like best about the parks that you use?

Please tell us about you and your family.

6. Do you live, work or play in the OST South Union Community (check all that apply)

Live _____ Work/School _____ Play/Worship _____

7. How long have you lived/worked or played in the OST/South Union Community? _____

8. How many people in your household? _____

9. Does your household have children below the age of 16? Yes _____ No _____

10. Does your household have adults over the age of 55? Yes _____ No _____

11. Are you a renter or homeowner? Renter _____ Owner _____

Thank you. We appreciate your time.

The Southeast Houston Transformation Alliance,
Houston LISC Arts GO Team
and The Dawn Project invites you

OST - South Union Six Parks Bus Tour
Area Orientation, Bus Tour and Brainstorming Discussion

Saturday June 8, 2019
9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Palm Center Training Room
5330 Griggs Road
Houston, Texas 77021

Parking Lot is FREE

Refer to Six Parks map below



Six OST - South Union Area Parks

1. Zolie Scales Park, 3101 Garden Street at Springhill Street
2. George T. Nelson Park, 6802 La Sombra Street at Wilkerson Boulevard
3. Restoration Community Park, 4514 Perry Street at New York Street
4. Hartsfield Elementary School SPARK Park, 5201 Perry Street at Willet Street
5. Park at Palm Center and Community Garden, 5400 Griggs Road at Rockham Road
6. McGregor Park, 4233 Calhoun Road at 51st Street

Public
OST Park Waste Site

CURRENT AREA PROJECTS

DREAM 77021 grew out of OST/South Union GO Neighborhood's Health Improvement Partnership (OHIP) project. Funded by the Episcopal Health Foundation, OHIP is a multi-sector coalition comprised of residents, partner organizations, and other community stakeholders. The project takes a collaborative approach to engaging historically excluded residents and community members in assessing and prioritizing community conditions that support mental health, wellbeing, resilience, and equity in OST/South Union.

The project will result in the development of a comprehensive action plan using Prevention Institute's THRIVE template as a framework to address 12 community factors, including *Parks and Open Space*.

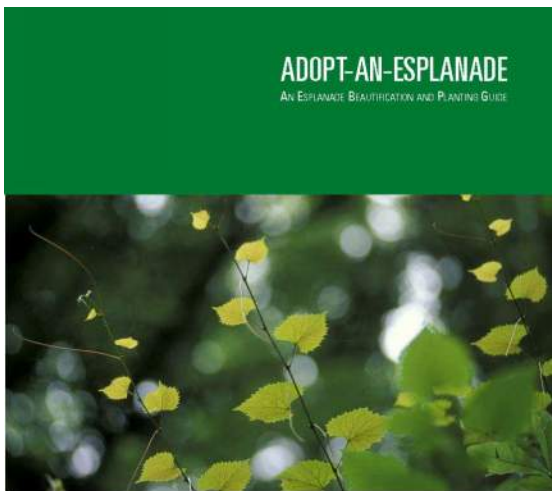


50 50 Park Partners is a collaboration between the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Houston Parks Board, and Greater Houston Partnership. This initiative is to challenge 50 companies to join a citywide campaign to uplift 50 neighborhood parks (parks that are between 1 and 15 acres in size). The program was announced by Mayor Sylvester Turner in October 2019.



Houston Parks and Recreation Department’s (HPARD’s) **Adopt-A-Park Program** welcomes homeowners associations and civic groups interested in providing long-term support for the maintenance and aesthetic quality of a park. It requires a minimum 2-year agreement.

HPARD’s Adoption Programs are a great way to show pride and commitment to Houston’s parks and green spaces. Whether you’re with a group or business interested in active community involvement, HPARD has a program that will fit your desire to improve the quality of our park system and public land. There are 5 different Adoption Programs: Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-An-Esplenade, Adopt-A-Sports Field, Adopt-A-Trail and Adopt-A-Library Greenspace.



A project of
Keep Houston Beautiful
Houston Parks and Recreation Department
& Texas Forest Service

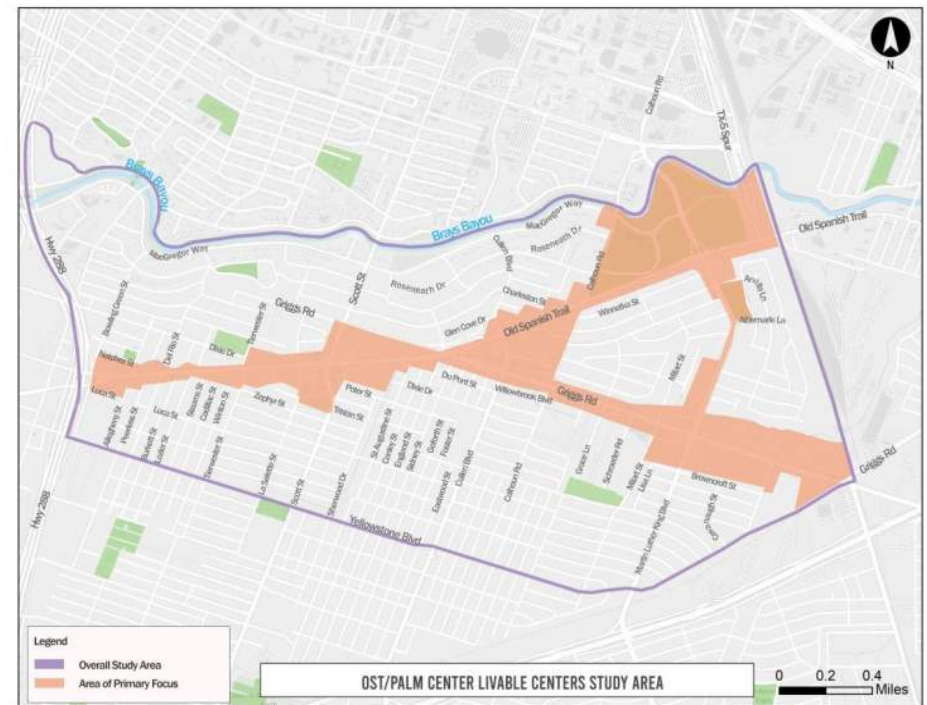


Regardless of the program, involvement helps us maintain green spaces that we’re all proud of!

For more information visit:
<https://www.houstontx.gov/parks/greenspace.html>

FUTURE AREA INITIATIVES

The objective of the Houston-Galveston Area Council **Livable Centers Study** is to reimagine auto-focused infrastructure and to help create quality, walkable, mixed-used places, create multi-modal travel choices, improve environmental quality, and promote economic development and housing choice. The study area includes MacGregor and Park at Palm Center and will begin in Fiscal Year 2021 and will be done in partnership with Houston Southeast Management District.



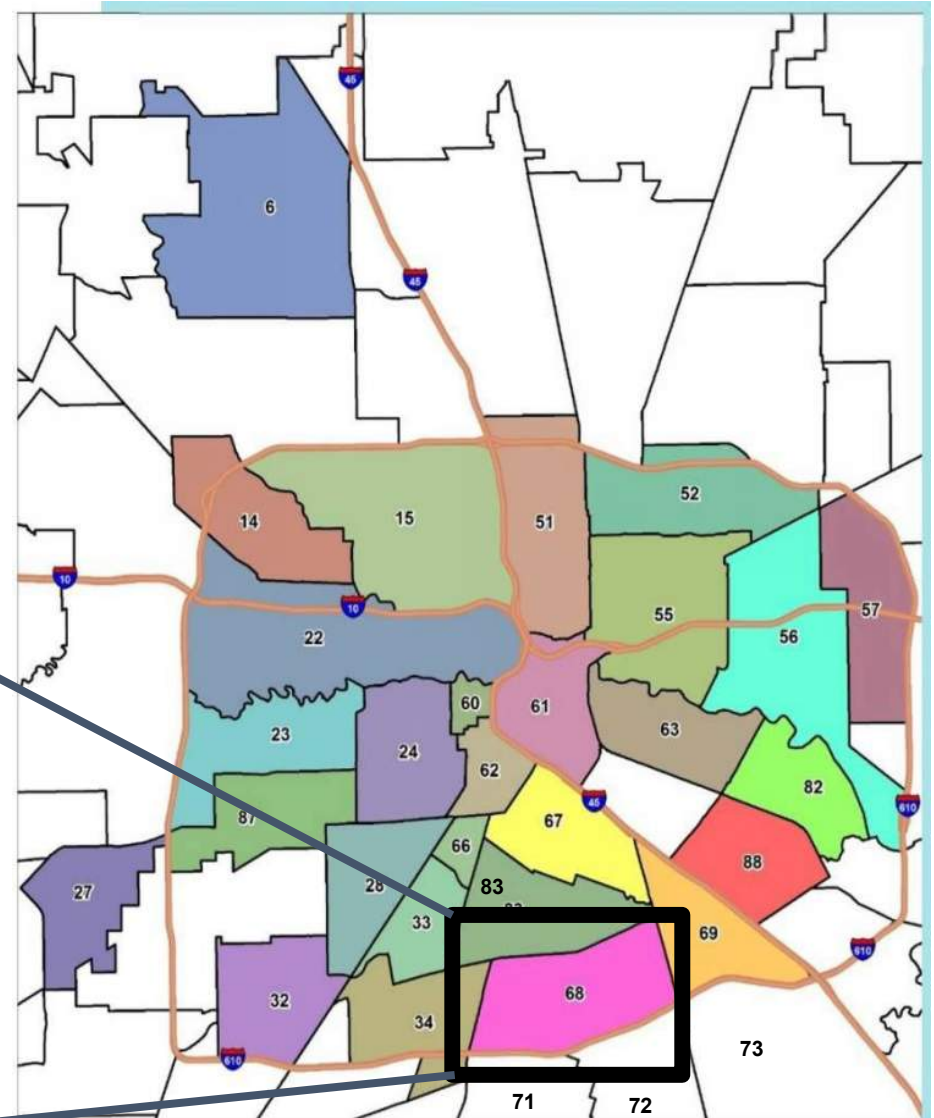
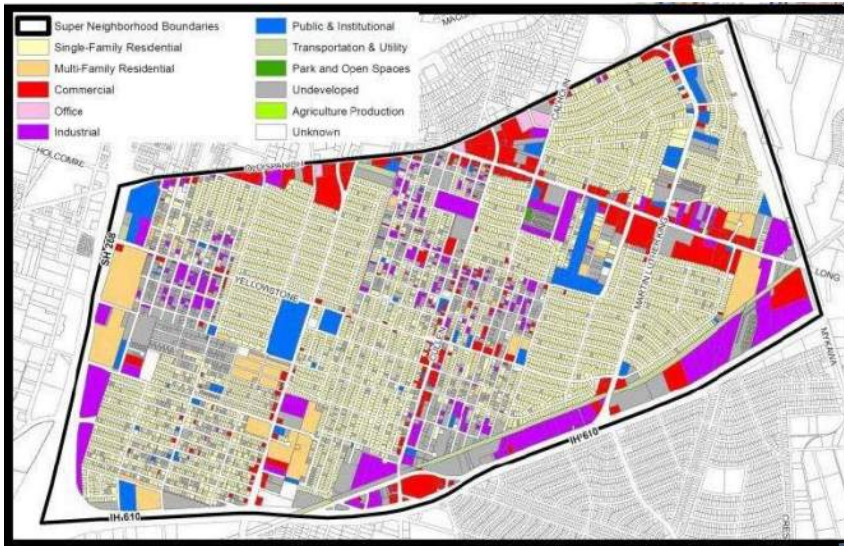
04 COMMUNITY

Information about the OST/South Union area. The Place sections provide location and place-based context. The People sections describes the demographics and general information about the people themselves.

THE PLACE – LOCATION

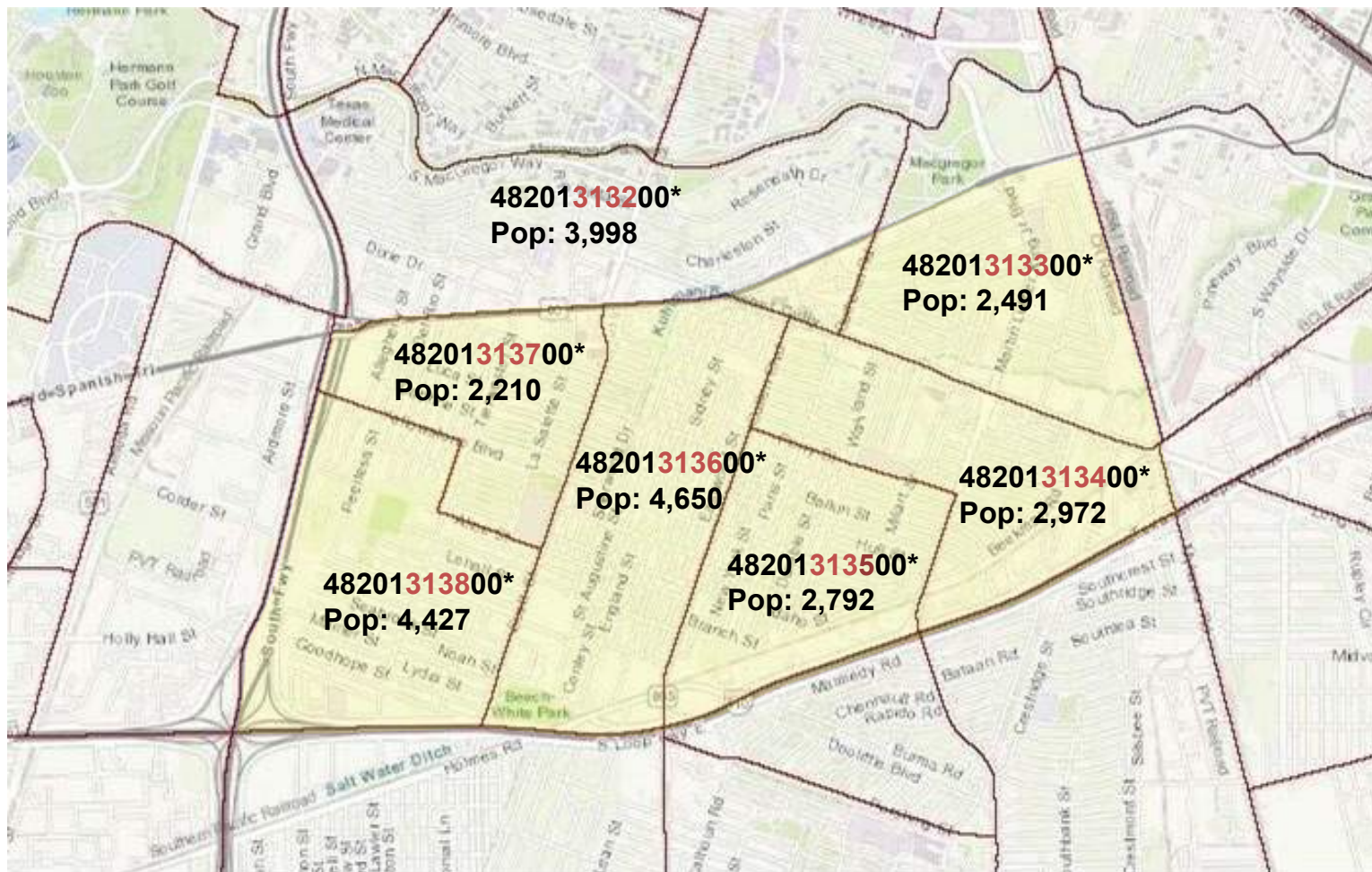
The OST/South Union is a super neighborhood which comprises approximately 2,773 acres (4.33 square miles). The community is in south central Houston. Its boundaries are Loop 610 to the south, Old Spanish Trail to the north, Highway 288 to the west, and Mykawa Road to the east. The Houston Super Neighborhoods Map shows the Greater OST/South Union Super Neighborhood #68, surrounding Super Neighborhoods are:

- #33 - Medical Center Area
- #34 – NRG/Astrodome Area
- #68 - Greater OST/ South Union**
- #69 - Gulfgate Riverview/ Pine Valley
- #71 - Sunnyside
- #72 - South Park
- #73 – Golfcrest/Bellfort/Reveille
- #83 - MacGregor



THE PLACE – POPULATION/CENSUS TRACTS

OST/South Union includes seven census tracts. Five of these – 48201313800, 700, 600, 500, and 400 are wholly within the OST/South Union boundary. Census tract 48201313300 (tract 3133) is mostly within the OST/South Union boundary. The parts of tract 3133 that are outside of the OST/South Union boundary are uninhabited - MacGregor Park and the undeveloped land to its east (future site of UH Medical School currently under construction). Therefore, this census tract population is included in the OST/South Union estimate. Census tract 48210313200 (tract 3132) is mostly outside of the OST/South Union boundary, the section within the OST/South Union boundary is commercial and has no residents, so the tract 200 population is not included in our estimate. Therefore, according to the Houston-Galveston Area Council the population of the OST/South Union area in 2019 estimated numbers is 19,542.



LEGEND:

- OST/South Union Area
- Census Tract Boundary
- Major Roads

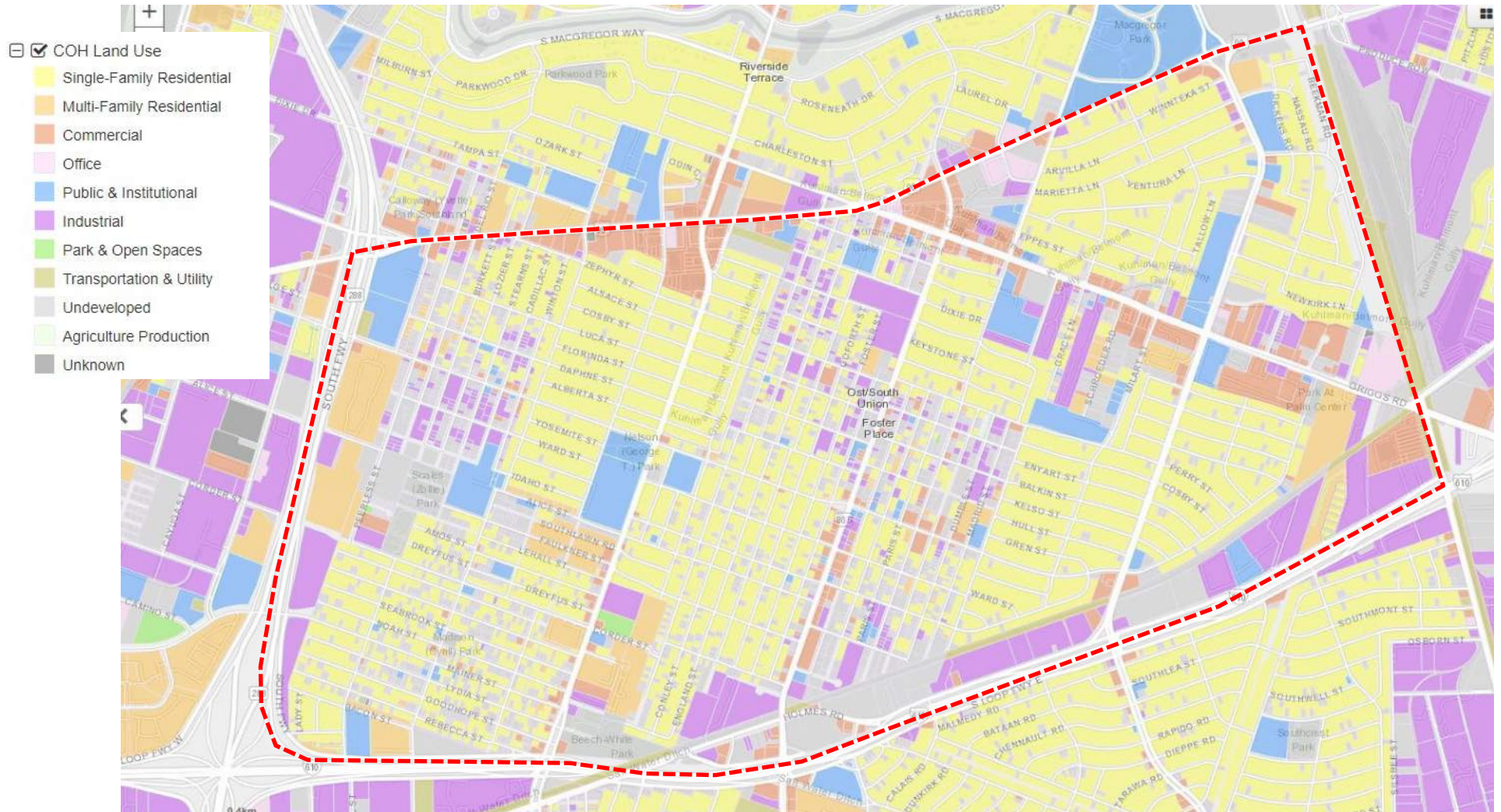
*NOTE:

Full census tract numbers are noted, these are abbreviated to the four-digit number highlighted in red throughout the rest of this report for brevity.

Map from H-GAC Demographic Data Explorer: https://datalab.h-gac.com/Census_ACS/

THE PLACE - LAND USE MAP

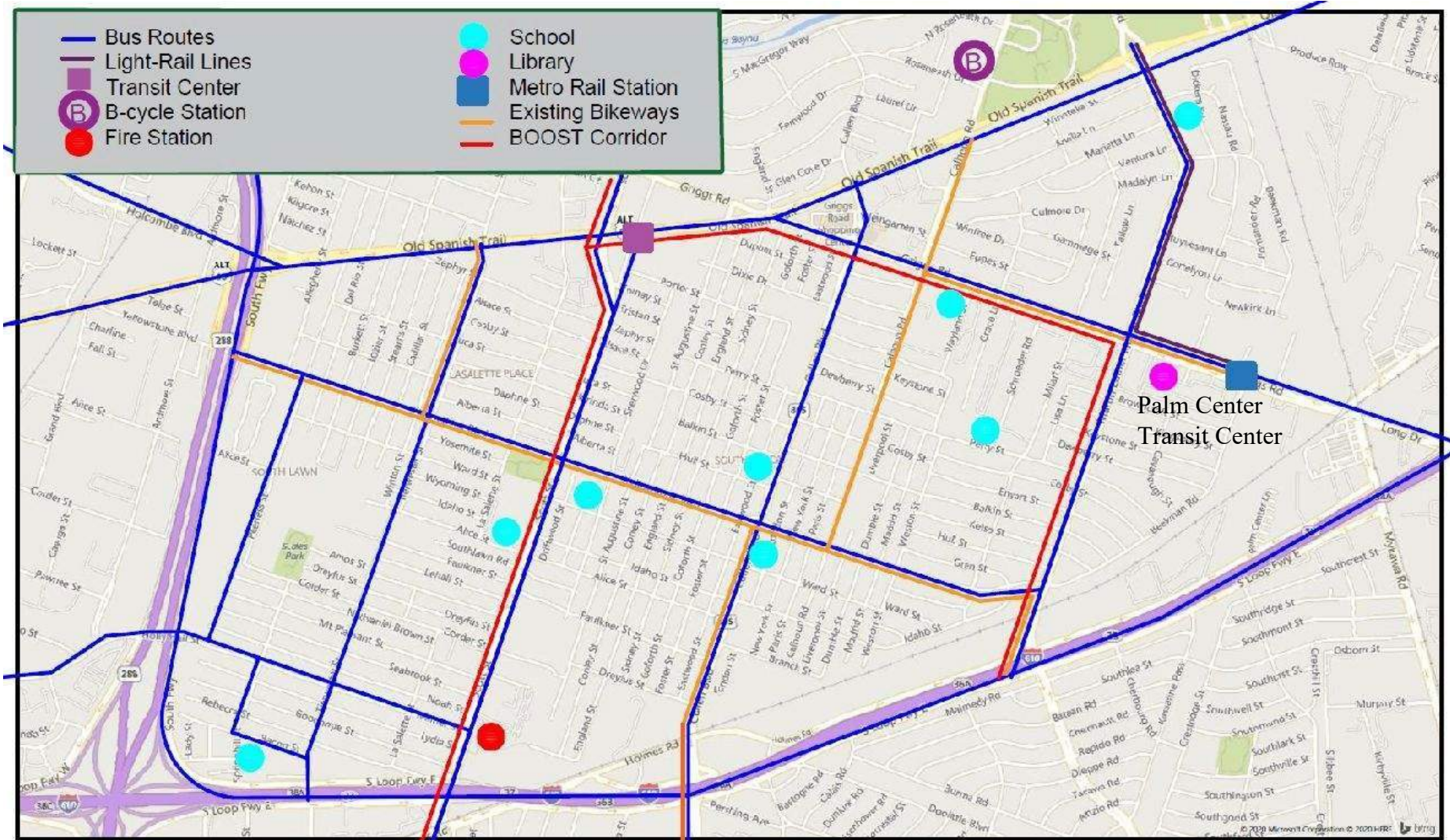
OST/South Union is primarily single family residential. Most of the houses were built after World War II. Many of the former residences along Martin Luther King Boulevard, Old Spanish Trail, Griggs Road, and Cullen Road have been converted to commercial use. Commercial development along Old Spanish Trail has been occurring recently. Housing development has been occurring in various locations in the neighborhood. The OST/South Union boundary is outlined with a red dashed line on the map below. Note that not all park spaces that we are considering in this report are indicated clearly on this map.



Map from City of Houston Map Viewer: <https://coegis.houstontx.gov/cogisweb/houstonmapviewer/>

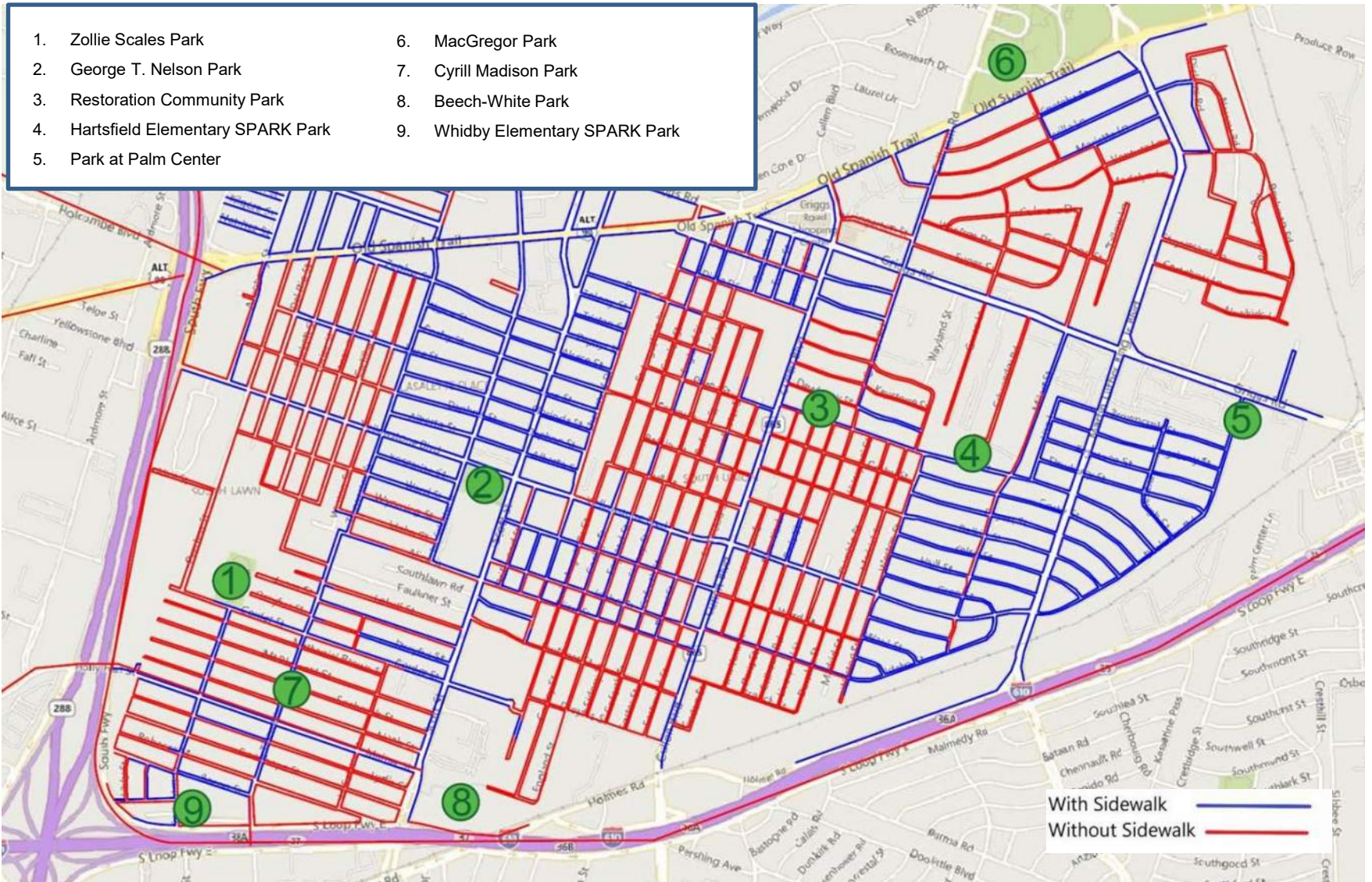
THE PLACE - NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

The neighborhood is well-located with good access to a network of collective streets, major thoroughfares, and freeways. Interstate 610 and Highway 288 border the community to the south and west respectively. Scott Street, Cullen Boulevard, and MLK Boulevard are existing north-south corridors. Old Spanish Trail (Highway 90), Griggs Road, and Yellowstone Boulevard are existing east-west corridors. The METRO Rail Purple Line begins/ends at the Palm Center Transit Center. The map below illustrates existing transportation and public facilities in the neighborhood.



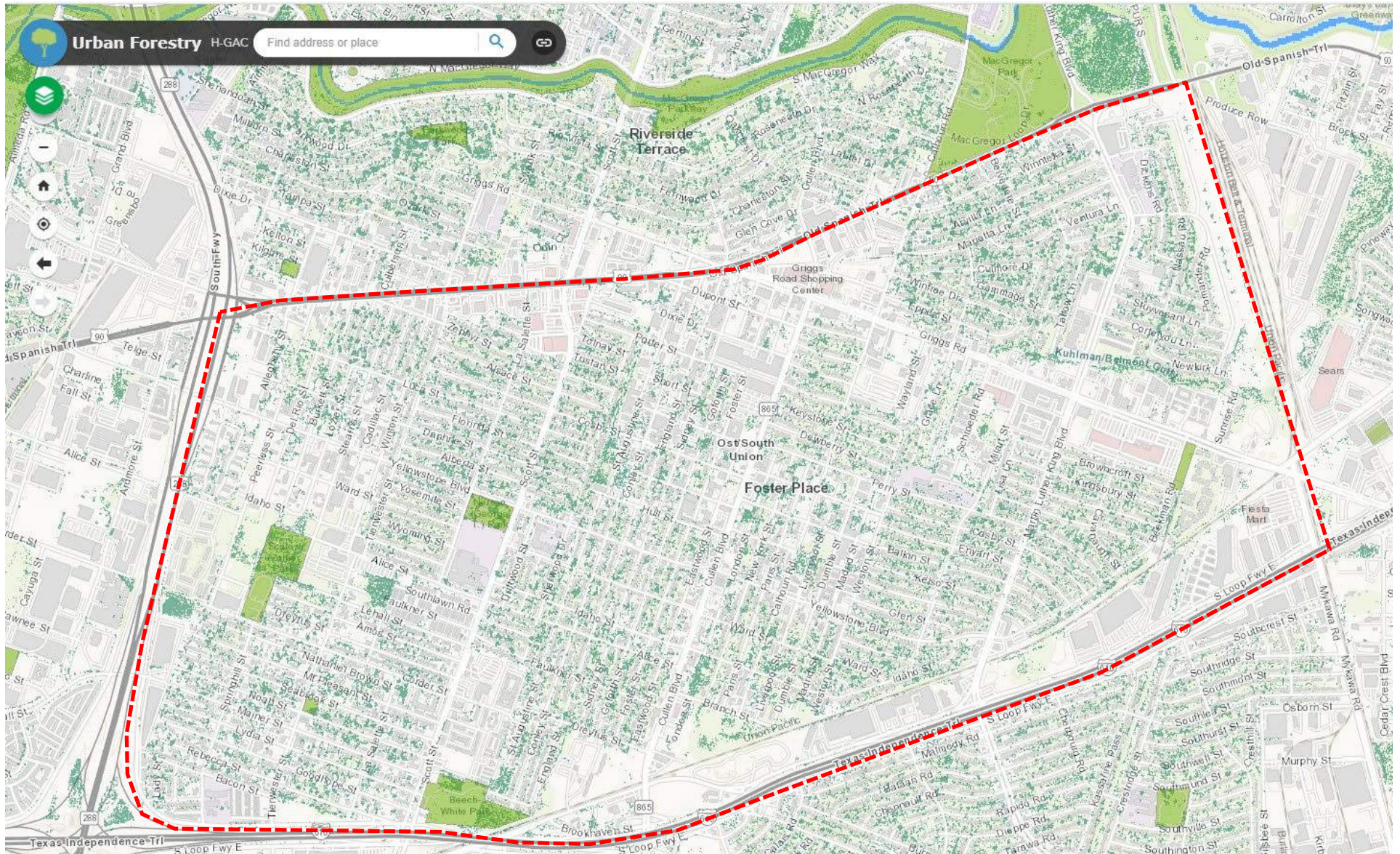
THE PLACE – SIDEWALK LOCATIONS AND CONDITION

A 2014 street and sidewalk assessment, carried out by the Strollin' & Rollin' GO Team members, found that an estimated 30% of streets had sidewalks on both sides of the streets, 10% had sidewalks on one side of the street, and 60% had no sidewalks on either side. The condition of the existing sidewalks is fragmented, many of the concrete slabs are cracked and buckled.



THE PLACE - TREE CANOPY ASSESSMENT

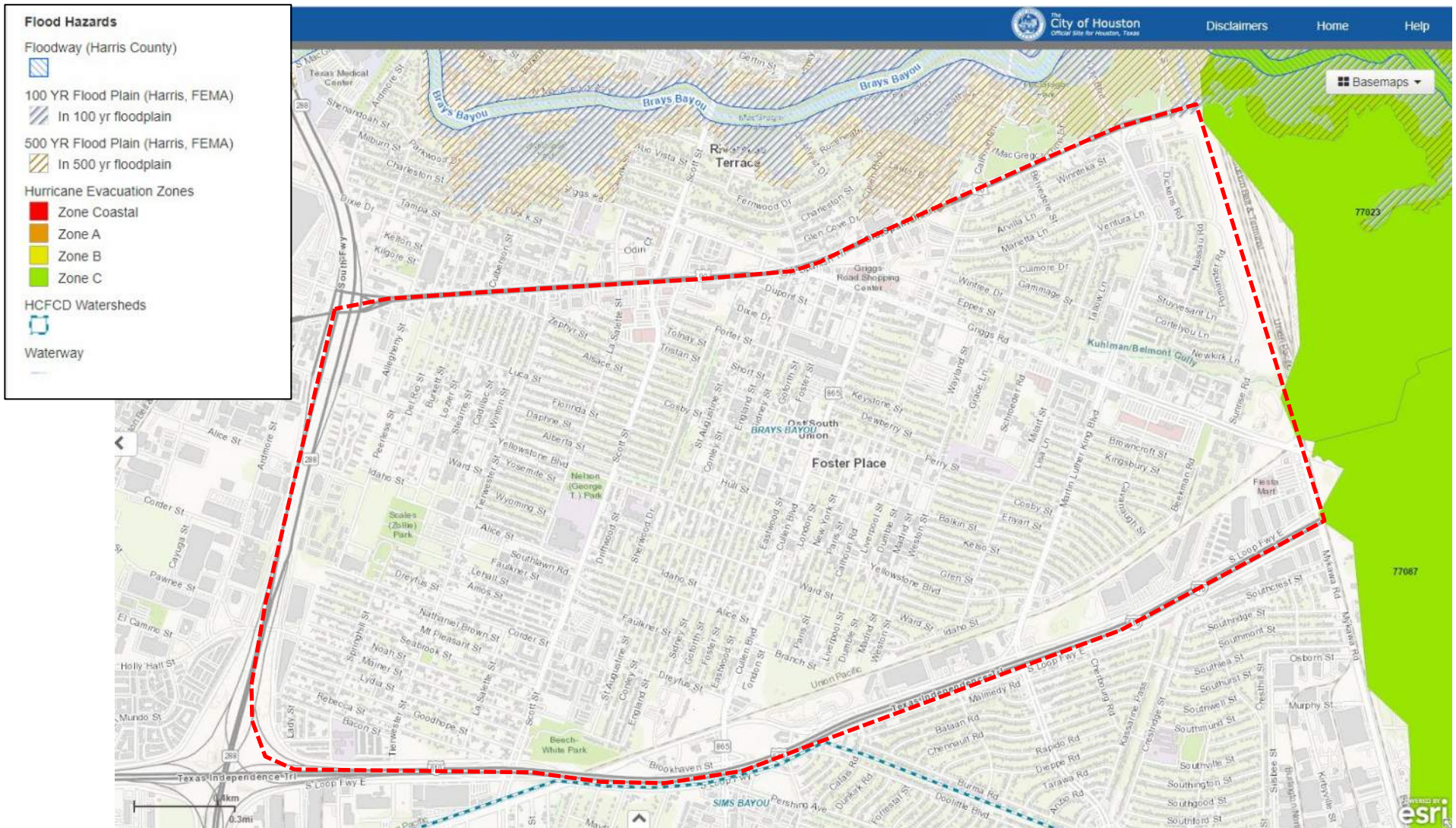
The map below shows the density of trees in the area in 2016. Generally, tree canopy throughout the neighborhood is sporadic. There are a couple of locations adjacent to Zollie Scales and Beech-White Parks that are not developed and so have heavier tree canopies.



Map from H-GAC Urban Forestry database: [Urban Forestry \(h-gac.com\)](http://UrbanForestry(h-gac.com))

THE PLACE - NEIGHBORHOOD FLOODPLAIN MAP

The map below shows the current floodplain map of the area, the OST/South Union boundary is delineated with a red dashed line. As expected, the floodplain is adjacent to Brays Bayou north of OST/South Union. This map doesn't reflect the floodplain changes that Harris County Flood Control District is undertaking due to updated ATLAS14 rainfall data. According to data from Hurricane Harvey, this area escaped major riverine flooding damage. Any flooding in the area during Harvey was most likely caused by blockages or backups in the neighborhood's drainage infrastructure.



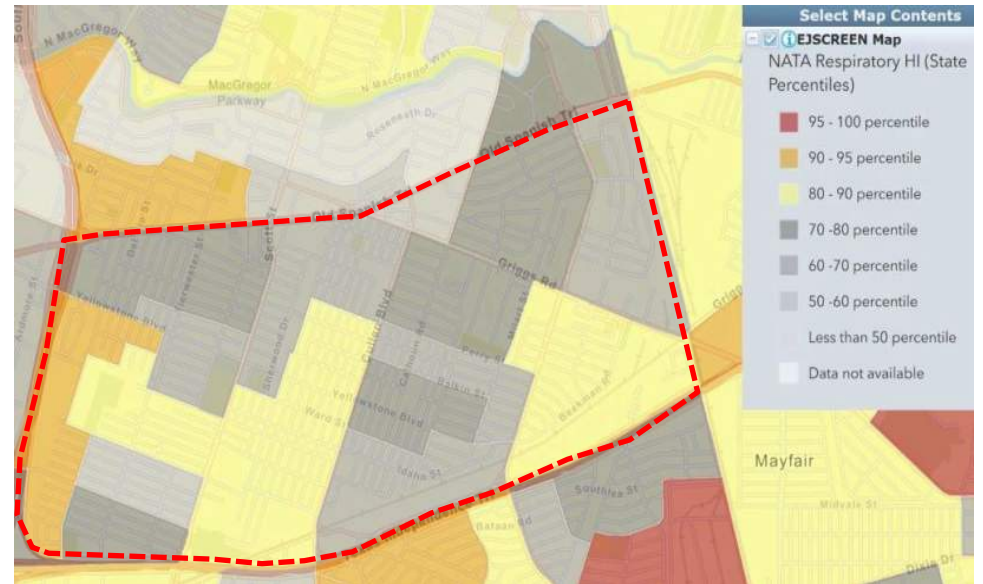
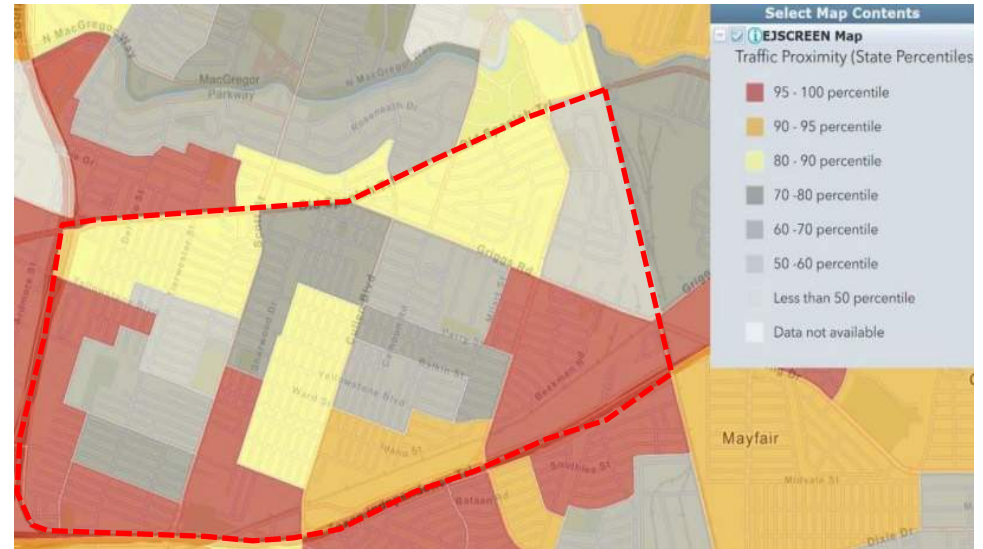
Map from City of Houston Map Viewer: <https://cohegis.houstontx.gov/cohegisweb/houstonmapviewer/>

THE PLACE – ENVIRONMENT

The U. S. EPA's Environmental Justice (EJ) Screening and Mapping Tool (Version 2019), EJSCREEN, uses maps to report Environmental indicators, demographic indicators, and EJ Indexes. An EJ index summarizes how environmental indicators and demographics come together. EJSCREEN lets you compare a community to the rest of the state using percentiles.

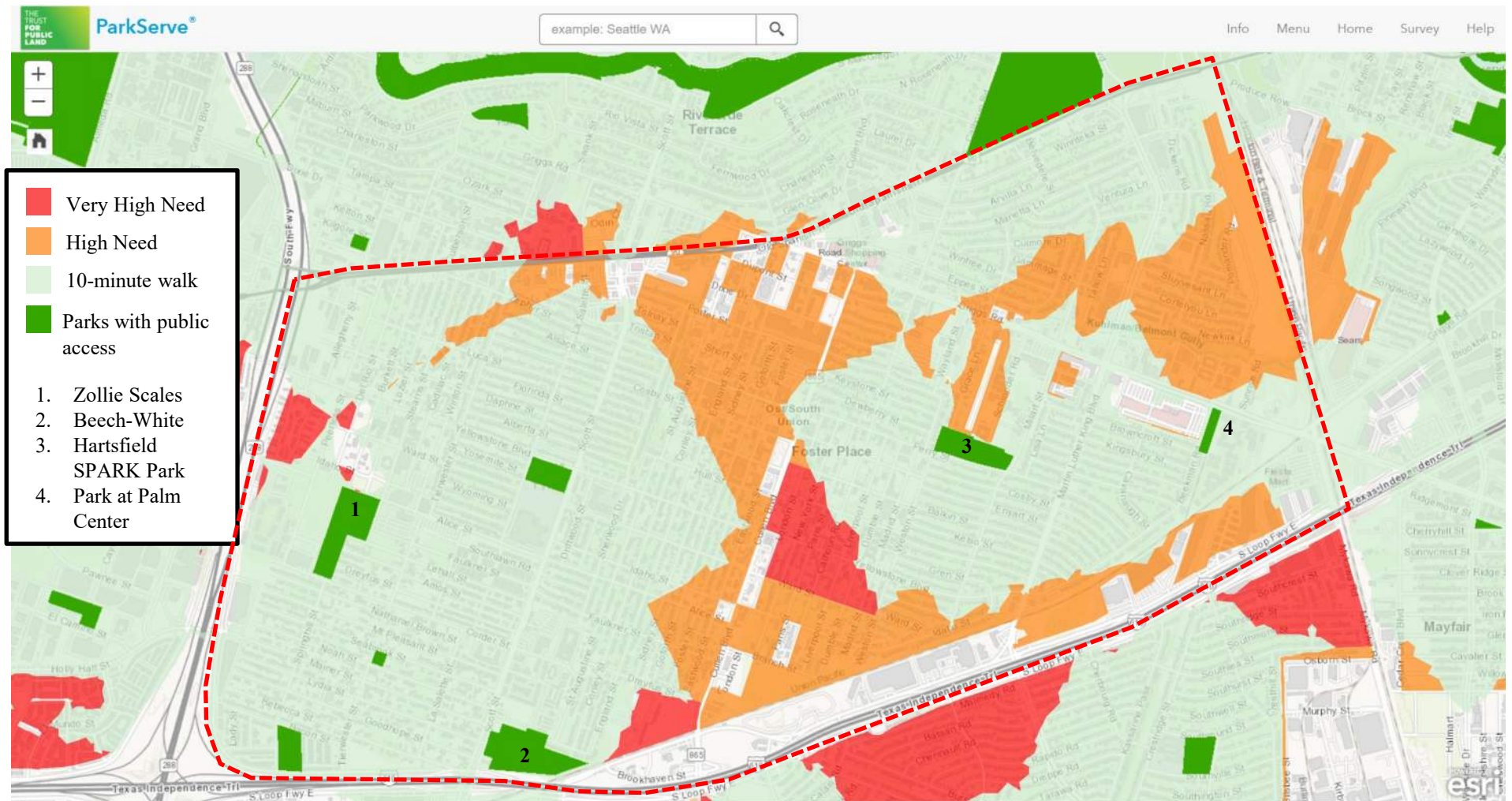
The table below shows the OST/South Union percentiles in the eleven Environmental Justice Indexes compared to the State of Texas. As you can see the area ranks in the 74th percentile and above in all indexes meaning that only 25% of locations in Texas have higher (worse) ratings. Therefore, utilizing parks to help improve air quality would be beneficial to the area.

Selected Variables	State Percentile
EJ Indexes	
EJ Index for PM2.5	80
EJ Index for Ozone	74
EJ Index for NATA* Diesel PM	89
EJ Index for NATA* Air Toxics Cancer Risk	81
EJ Index for NATA* Respiratory Hazard Index	80
EJ Index for Traffic Proximity and Volume	95
EJ Index for Lead Paint Indicator	94
EJ Index for Superfund Proximity	92
EJ Index for RMP Proximity	80
EJ Index for Hazardous Waste Proximity	97
EJ Index for Wastewater Discharge Indicator	79



THE PARKS – TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND ParkServe®

According to the Trust for Public Land 2020 ParkServe® map, approximately 30% of the OST/South Union community is identified as in the high and very high park need category. Park need is calculated by identifying all populated areas that fall outside of a 10-minute walk to a park. It is then weighted by population density, density of children 19 or younger, and density of households with income less than 75% of the regional median household income. Most of this park need is along Cullen Boulevard, on the east side of the OST, and along IH-610 where there are multi-family developments. As indicated on the map below, some of this could be alleviated by increasing access to Zollie Scales Park, Beech-White Park, Hartsfield Elementary SPARK Park, and Park at Palm Center.



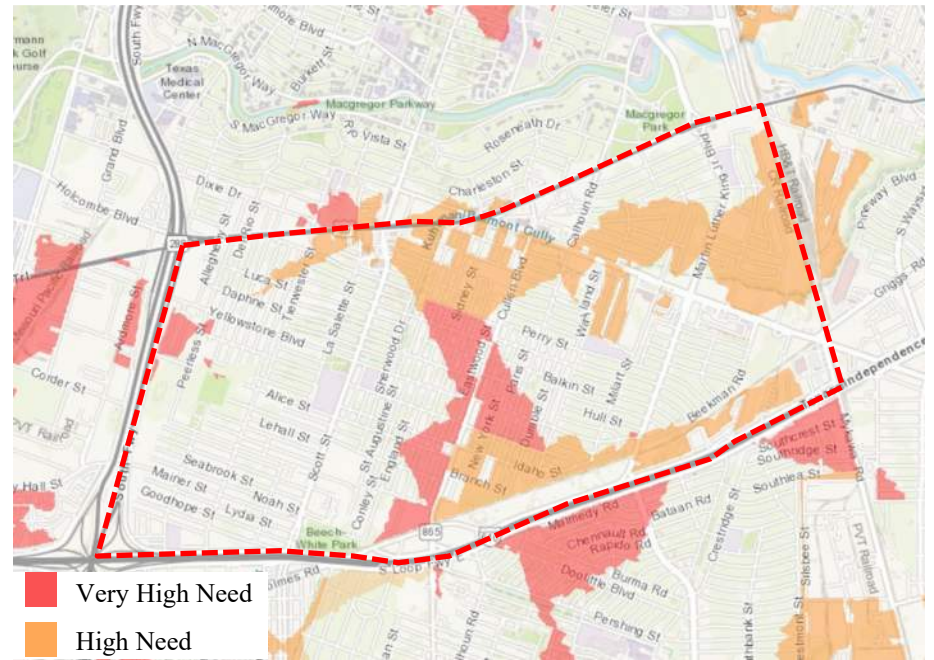
Map from Trust for Public Land ParkServe® mapping tool: <https://parkserve.tpl.org/mapping/>

THE PARKS – PARK-SMART PRECINCT ONE MAPPING

Park-Smart Precinct One is a collaboration between the Trust for Public Land and Precinct One with the goal of increasing environmental and community health and resilience through expanding access to parks and greenways.

The Park-Smart mapping tool analyzed areas where access to parks and green space can contribute most greatly by being improved and implemented in areas that can benefit most. These areas include: community health, flooding and water quality, heat island and poor air quality, level of park need, socioeconomic need, and trails and active transportation need. Each of these categories can be analyzed individually or together in a variety of combinations.

The maps on the following pages show the areas of highest need (red) where parks would provide the greatest benefit for that specific need.



PARK NEED MAP



Mapping Portal

Explore the Interactive Decision-



User Guide

Learn how to use the Decision-Support



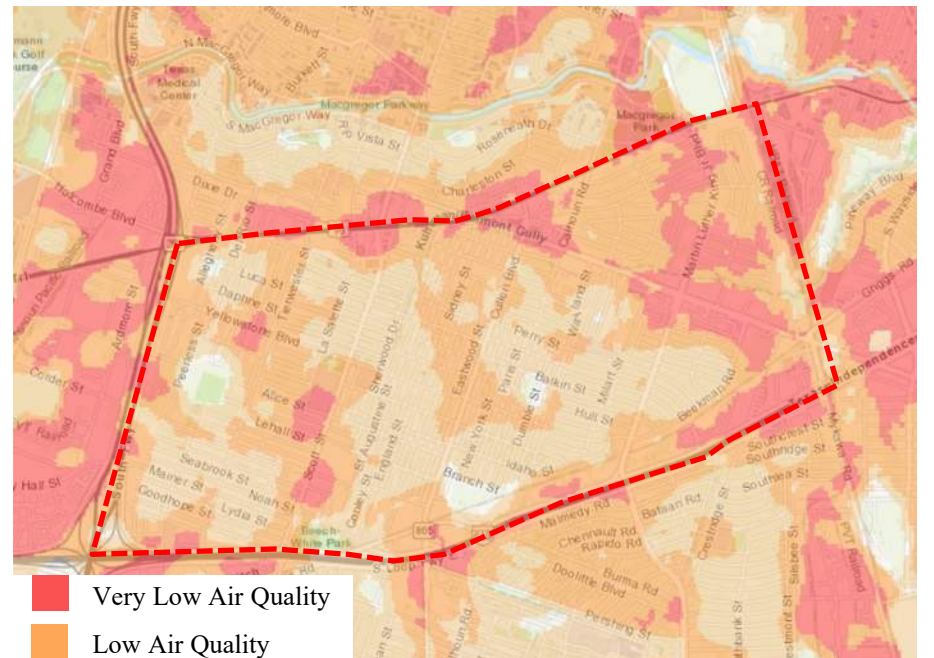
Data Description

View a description of the data that was



PDF Maps

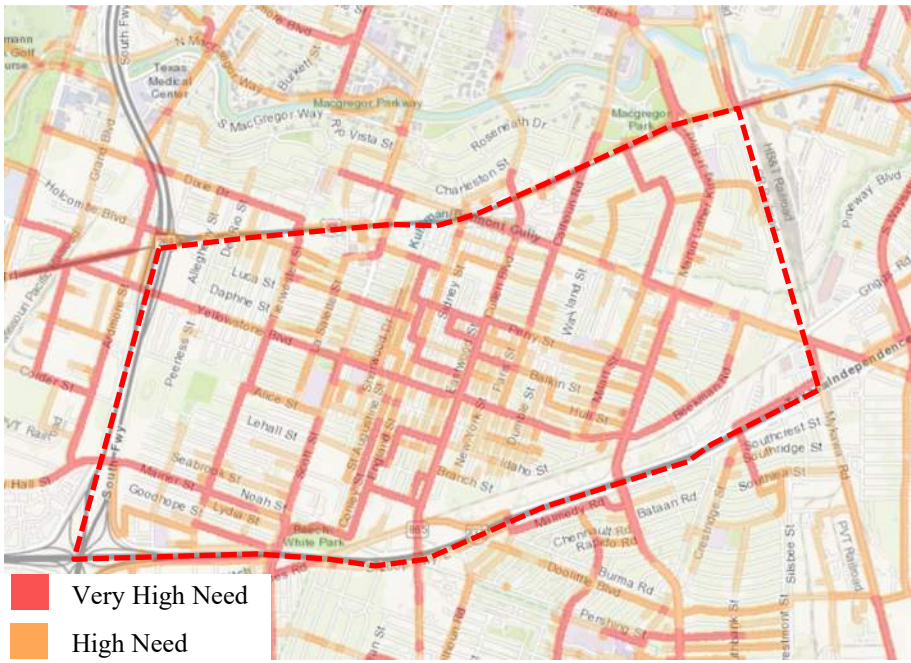
Download static PDF maps displaying



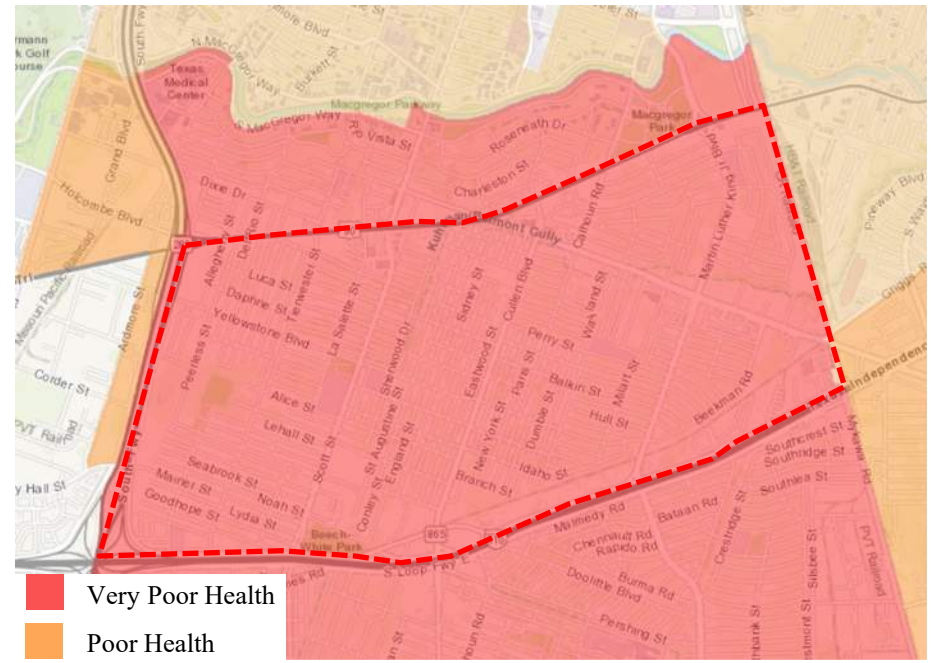
HEAT ISLAND/ AIR QUALITY MAP

Maps on pages 31-33 from Park-Smart Precinct One mapping tool:

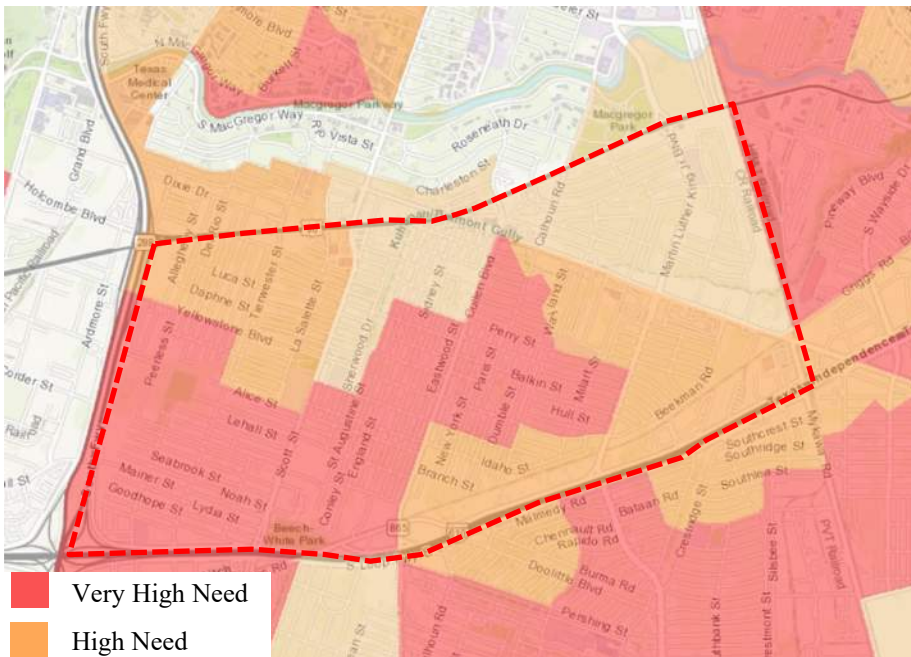
<https://web.tplgis.org/precinct1secure/viewer/>



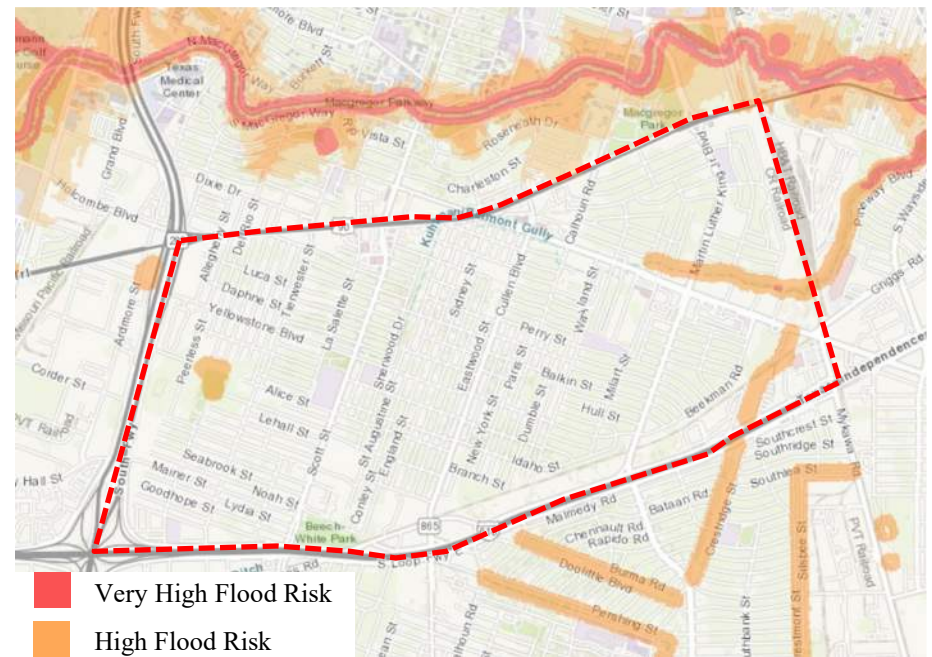
TRAILS AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NEED MAP



HEALTH MAP



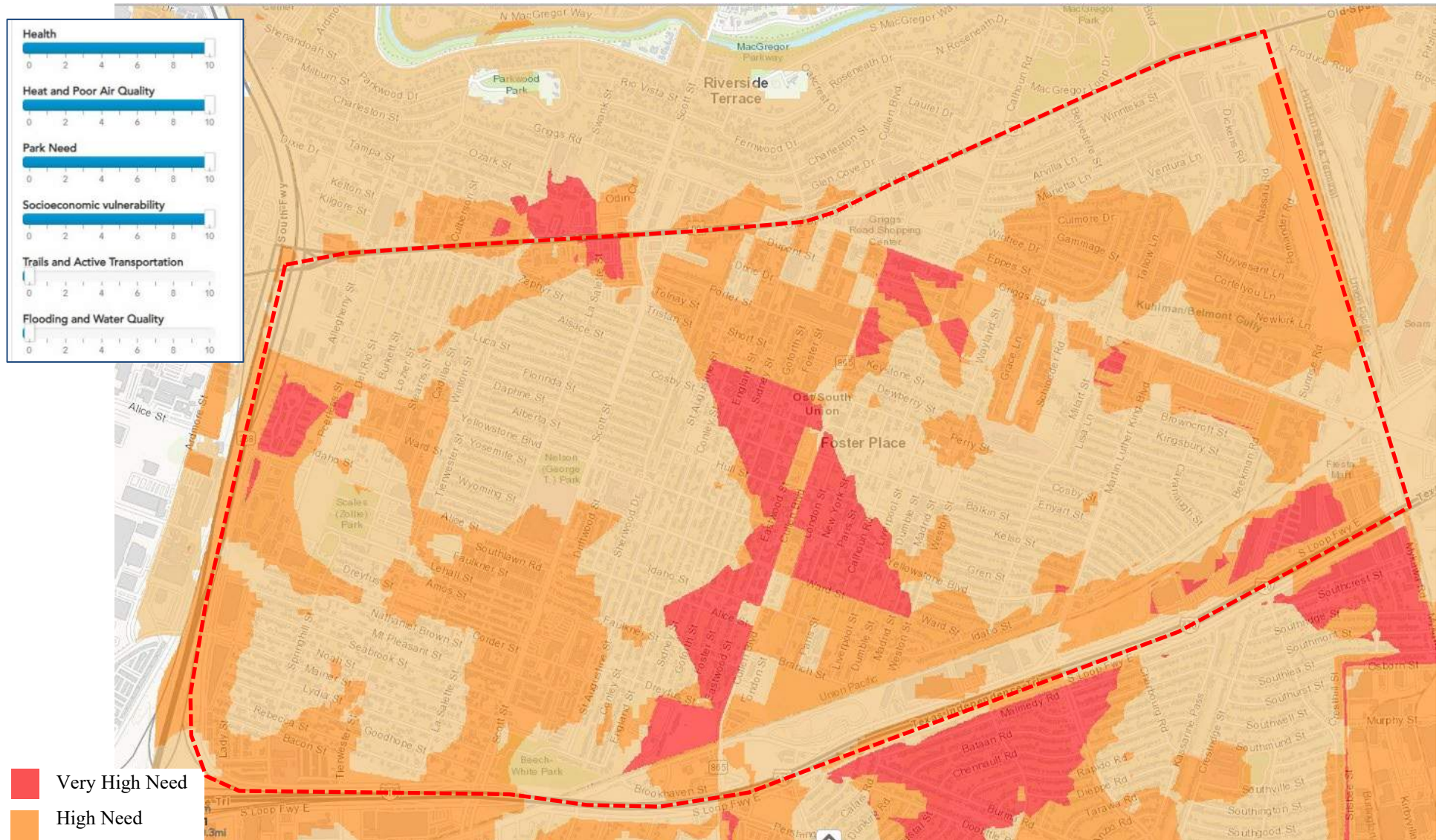
SOCIOECONOMIC NEED MAP



FLOODING AND WATER QUALITY MAP

THE PARKS – PARK-SMART PRECINCT ONE MAPPING SUMMARY

The Park-Smart indexes can be mapped individually or in combination depending on the relative importance that each factor is given on a zero to ten scale. The map below shows the most beneficial places for a park that address health, heat and poor air quality, park need, and socioeconomic vulnerability, all on a ‘ten’ scale. The relative importance of each factor can be adjusted per community input.

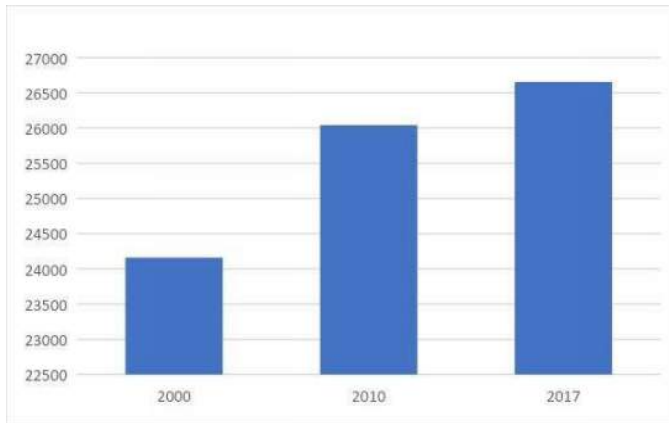


HEALTH, SOCIOECONOMIC, HEAT/AIR QUALITY, AND PARK COMPOSITE NEED MAP

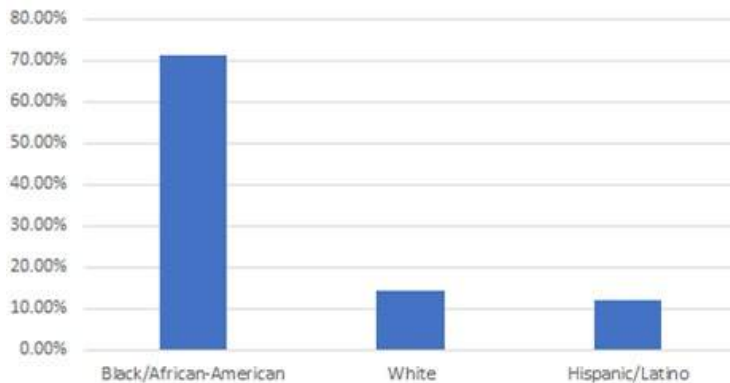
THE PEOPLE

Information about OST/SU the place provides the context, information about the people describes the character and the heart of the community.

Population - The community encompasses approximately 4.3 square miles and has experienced population growth from 2000 to 2017 as shown in the graph below. That growth trend is expected to continue.



Race/Ethnicity - The OST/South Union area has been primarily African American since the mid 1960s. However, the number of Latinos moving into the area is increasing, adding to the community's diversity.

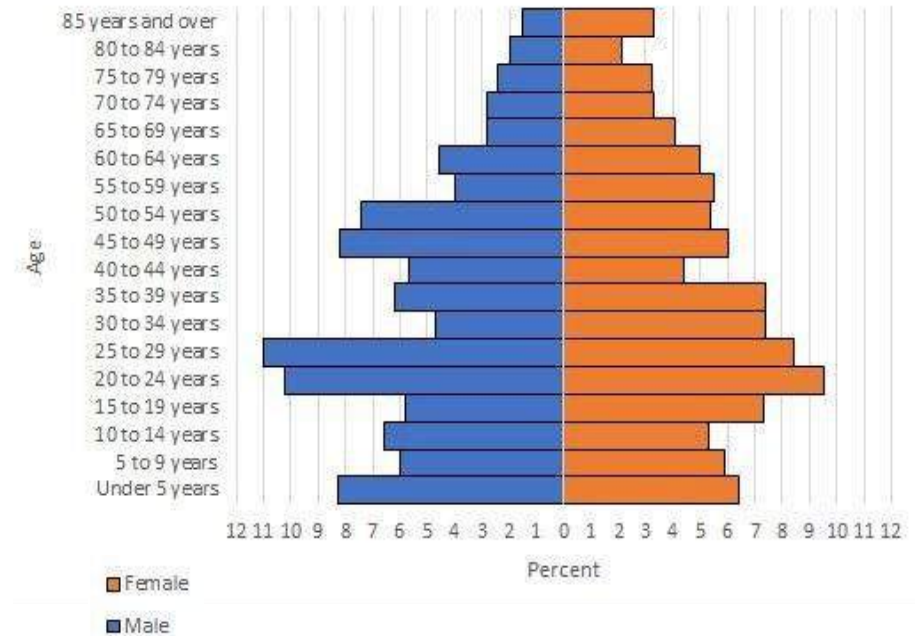


Age - Understanding the age distribution of the community is important as we think about possible needs that the park may satisfy per age group.

OST/SU is a young community with a large portion of the population between the ages 20-29 years old. The presence of the University of Houston, the proximity to downtown and the Medical Center, and the presence of affordably priced housing may be additional contributors.

The next most populous group is ages 45-54 years old. There is also a growing percentage of children who will be entering the local school system in the next 1 to 5 years.

OST/South Union Population



THE PEOPLE – INCOME, FOOD ACCESS, AND HEALTH

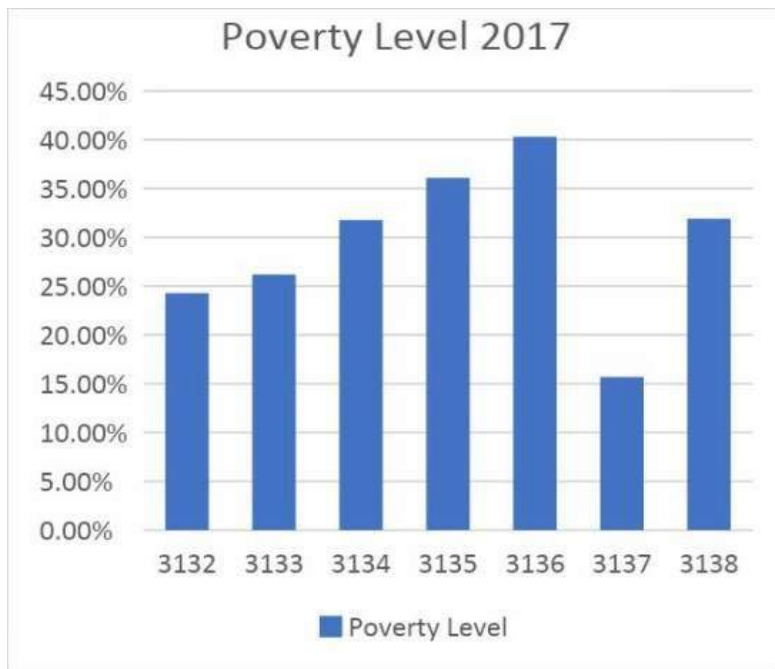
Income - According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) a low-income community is defined as having a poverty rate of 20% or greater. Poverty is defined as a median family income at or below 80% of the metropolitan area median family income.

The chart below shows the poverty level in the seven census tracts that make up the OST/South Union area. Of those, tracts 3134 to 3138 are entirely within the OST/South Union boundary. Tract 3132 is mostly within the boundary, and 3133 has only a small portion of the tract within the neighborhood boundary.

USDA’s 2017 estimate by census tract qualified OST/South Union as a low-income community.

Food Access - USDA defines food deserts per census tract. A census tract qualifies as a food desert if it is low-income and at least 500 people or 33% of the population live more than 1 mile from the nearest supermarket or large grocery store (10 miles in the case of rural census tracts). Large supermarkets or grocery stores are defined as food stores with at least \$2 million in annual sales and contain all the major food departments.

According to this definition census tract 3132 the northeast population of OST/South Union (north of Griggs Road and East of Calhoun Road) is a food desert.



Health – The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) 2015 Master Plan uses Health of Houston Survey 2010 data to assess health levels in the Park Sectors. OST/South Union is in Park Sector 15 which also encompasses portions of the MacGregor and Gulfgate Super Neighborhoods. Park Sector 15 has a high incidence of obesity among adults – 43% as compared to the Houston average of 31%. Diagnosis of diabetes in the area is also high at 15.5% compared to the Houston average of 11.4%.

The national initiative, Healthy People 2020, aims to increase the proportion of adults who engage in moderate physical activity for at least 150 minutes/week to 47.9% of the population from the current baseline of 43.5%. According to this survey only 33.9% of adults in the area do at least 150 minutes/week of moderate physical activity and 22% do not engage in physical activity at all.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK NETWORK MAP

- 1 ZOLLIE SCALES PARK
 - 2 GEORGE T NELSON PARK
 - 3 RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK *
 - 4 HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK**
 - 5 PARK AT PALM CENTER
 - 6 MACGREGOR PARK
 - 7 BRAYS BAYOU GREENWAY
 - 8 OTHER COMMUNITY INPUT PARKS
- A BEECH-WHITE PARK
 - B CYRILL MADISON PARK
 - C WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

* Restoration Community Park has since changed location. This park was not assessed as it is privately owned.

** The area shown is the entire Elementary School Campus, not the park area only.



05 NEIGHBORHOOD
PARK NETWORK
SUMMARY

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK NETWORK

The project began with six parks that were identified by the OST/South Union Arts, Culture, Media, and History GO Team. These parks are listed below:

1. Zollie Scales Park
2. George T. Nelson Park
3. Restoration Community Church Park
4. Hartsfield Elementary SPARK Park
5. Park at Palm Center
6. MacGregor Park

As Brays Bayou Greenway is a linear park adjacent to MacGregor Park that connects MacGregor Park into the greater regional park system, Brays Bayou Greenway was also added to the list of parks:

7. Brays Bayou Greenway

A neighborhood park network includes all spaces that can be used by the public as a park, no matter the owner. Therefore, the team was open to adding other parks to the original list.

As our neighborhood assessment began, we identified three parks to add to the neighborhood park network. These are:

- A. Whidby Elementary SPARK Park
- B. Beech White Park
- C. Cyrill Madison Park

These ten parks currently make up the OST/South Union Neighborhood Park Network. Refer to the map on page 36 for the park locations.

WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD PARK NETWORK?

A neighborhood park network consists of the public parks, trails, and natural spaces within a community. These neighborhood green spaces work both individually and together as a complementary and connected whole to provide the necessary park infrastructure to the community.

For a high-quality park network the parks need to be assessed both together on a neighborhood level, and individually.

NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL ASSESSMENT:

To assess how well the parks work together on a neighborhood level, the following items need to be considered:

- **Connectivity** – Are there safe pedestrian and bicyclist connections between parks, schools, businesses, and homes?
- **Location** – How close are residents to their neighborhood parks? Can they walk to their closest park in 10 minutes?
- **Quantity** – Is there enough park space for the residents of the area? This is typically measured in acres of park per 1,000 people.
- **Amenities** – What are the amenities available throughout the parks in the network? Targets are measured in amenities per 1,000 people. This accounts for the fact that different amenities can serve different numbers of people. For example, one swimming pool can be used by more people than one playground and so fewer swimming pools are needed within the system.
- **Park Programs** – What organized activities are available throughout the park system? Programs can include things like Little League or other organized sports, recreational activities, tours, exhibits, or special events.

INDIVIDUAL PARK LEVEL ASSESSMENT:

After looking at the parks together as a whole, each park within the network is assessed. In order to assess individual park quality, the following categories are considered:

- **Amenities** – What are the amenities available in the specific park?
- **Access** – How easy is it for people to get into and around the park? For example, how many entrance does the park have and are there safe sidewalks and crosswalks to get there.
- **Safety & Maintenance** – Is the park safe and well maintained?
- **Aesthetics** – Is the park attractive? Does it have a variety of landscape elements and materials?
- **Programming** – What organized activities are available in the park?

The team assessed the parks on both the neighborhood level and individual park level. A summary of the results are found in this chapter.

Further detail on the Individual Park Assessments is contained in ‘Chapter 05 Park Assessments’ and ‘Appendix C Detailed Park Assessment Scoring.’

In both the Neighborhood and Individual Park levels, programming was not assessed. Most of the study took during the 2020 pandemic and so programs in parks were not being held.

NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL ASSESSMENT – CONNECTIVITY

2015 NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAY PLAN:



- Phase 1
Neighborhood
Greenway
Completed 2020
- 1. Cyrill
Madison
Park
- 2. Whidby
Elementary
SPARK Park

SIDEWALKS:

In 2014, the community undertook an assessment of the sidewalks in the area and produced an assessment map (see page 26). In summary they found that the sidewalks need attention to increase usability and safety.

Currently repair and maintenance of sidewalks in the City of Houston is the responsibility of the landowner. This practice puts additional burden on the landowner and leads to non-uniform conditions in sidewalks across the City. The City recognizes that this is not optimal and has tried methods to remedy the situation which have not had great success.

SIDEWALK RECOMMENDATIONS:

Coordinate with the City of Houston to determine potential measures to improve sidewalks in the area. Specifically, sidewalk upgrades near Zollie Scales Park, Cyrill Madison Park, Beech White Park, Whidby SPARK Park, and Restoration Community Park are needed.

GREENWAY/BIKEWAYS:

In 2015, the Strollin' & Rollin' GO Team identified a number of neighborhood greenways based on their sidewalk assessments and key points of interest in the area. That 2015 Neighborhood Greenway Plan is shown on page 40. The plan was considered when the City of Houston developed the Southeast Houston Proposed Bikeways. In 2020, Houston Southeast completed a portion of one of the identified greenways that connects MacGregor Park to the Park at Palm Center. This Phase One Neighborhood Greenway location is indicated on the map on page 40.

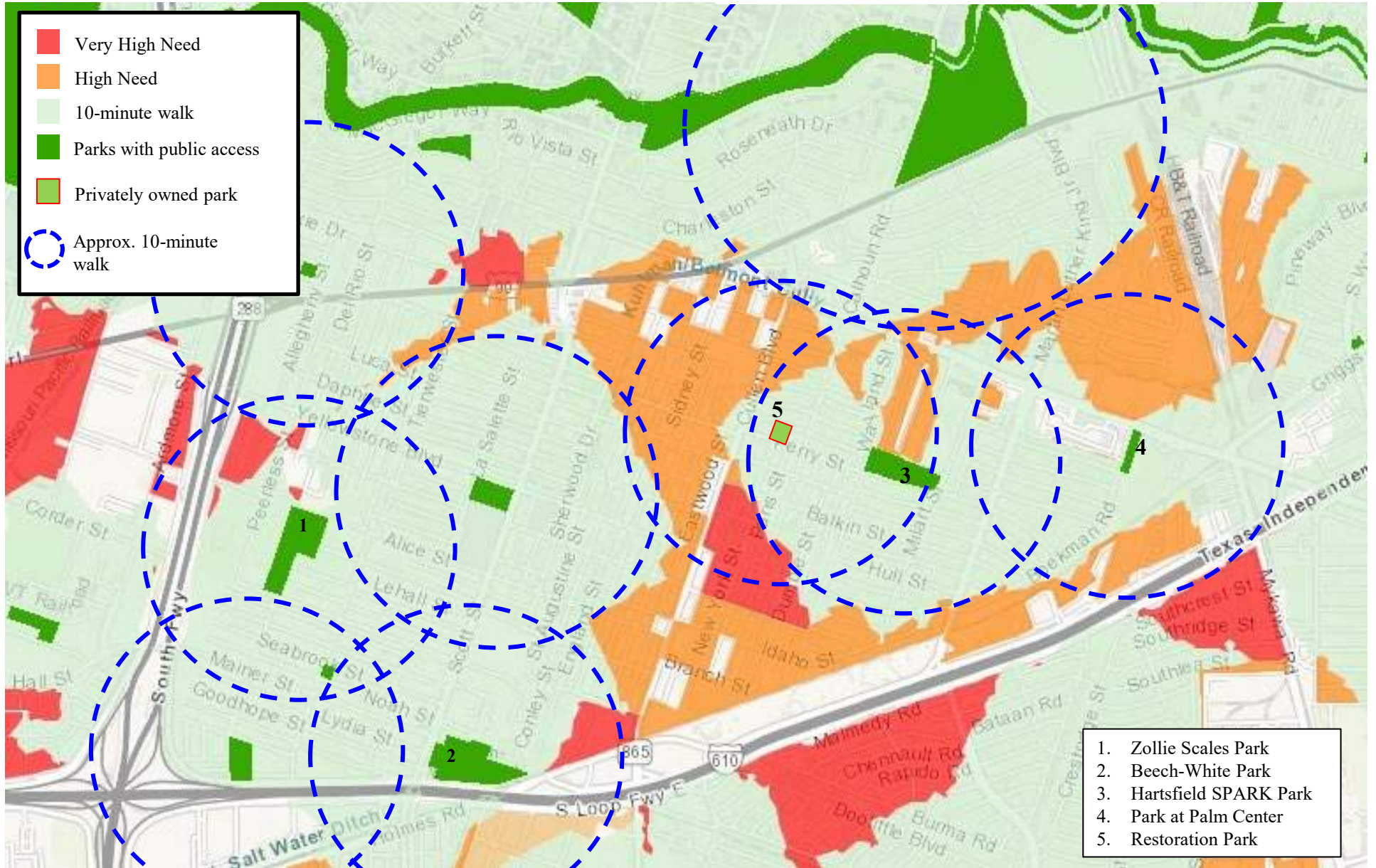
GREENWAY/BIKEWAYS RECOMMENDATION:

1. Confirm that the bikeways and greenways connect to all parks, schools and key points of interest in the area – for example Cyrill Madison Park, and Whidby Elementary SPARK Park
2. Review and prioritize the recommended greenways.
3. Partner with Houston Southeast, the City of Houston, and Harris County Precinct One to accomplish priority greenways.



NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL ASSESSMENT – PARK LOCATION

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND PARKSERVE MAP:



NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL ASSESSMENT – PARK LOCATION

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) ParkServe Map for the OST/South Union area is shown on page 42. TPL is leading a national campaign to ensure that everyone in America lives within a 10-minute walk of a park. To accomplish this, TPL first creates a 10-minute walk service area which is shown in light green on the map. Then, the areas outside the walk service area are rated for Park Need based on:

- Population density (weighted 50%),
- Density of children under 19 (weighted 25%), and
- Density of households that make less than 75% of the regional median income (weighted 25%)

Once mapped, this shows areas of high and very high park need.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

In the OST/South Union area about 60% of the neighborhood is within a 10-minute walk of a park. The highest need areas are in center of the neighborhood along Cullen Boulevard and in the east and southeast edges of the community.

- 1. Confirm 10-minute walk standard** – Is this the standard that Houston wants to aim towards?
- 2. Improve access to existing parks** - The blue dashed circles on the TPL ParkServe Map show the approximate 10-minute walk area around each park. Where the blue circles contain orange and red areas (areas of very high and high need), improving access to these parks would put the people living within those areas in a 10-minute walk of the park. Improving access to Zollie Scales (1), Beech-White (2), Hartsfield SPARK Park (3), and Park at Palm Center (4) would decrease park need in the area.

- 3. Include Restoration Park** – This park, noted as (5) on the TPL ParkServe Map is privately owned and is not included in TPL’s calculations. If Restoration Community Church and HPARD had a memorandum of understanding regarding the public’s ability to use the park, the population living within it’s associated 10-minute walk circle would have access to a park.

- 4. Create new parks where necessary.** According to the map, there are some areas that are outside of a 10-minute walk of any park. We may need to add new parks depending on confirmation of the 10-minutes walk standard (recommendation #1).

NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL ASSESSMENT – PARK QUANTITY

The 2015 Houston Parks and Recreations Department (HPARD) Master Plan analyzes parks per park sector. OST/South Union is in Park Sector 15. This sector also encompasses Gulfgate/Riverview, Greater Third Ward, and MacGregor Super Neighborhoods. HPARD’s headquarters is in Park Sector 15. HPARD 2015 Master Plan identified standards for park acreage and amenities per 1,000 residents for the City of Houston and applied these to park sectors. This study applies those standards to the OST/South Union area based on the estimated population of the area in 2019 of 19,542. Refer to page 23 for an explanation of how the population was estimated.

PARK QUANTITY (ACRES OF PARK PER 1,000 PEOPLE)

PARK NAME	OWNER	PARK TYPE	ACREAGE
Beech-White Park	COH	Neighborhood / Community	15.27
Cyrill Madison Park	COH	Neighborhood / Pocket	1.23
George T Nelson Park (Yellowstone Park)	COH	Neighborhood	6.03
Park at Palm Center	COH	Neighborhood	2.17
Zollie Scales Park	COH	Neighborhood	14.3
Whidby SPARK Park	HISD	SPARK/Neighborhood	1.46
Hartsfield SPARK Park	HISD	SPARK/Neighborhood	1.8
Restoration Park	Private	Private	
MacGregor Park	COH	Community (Regional)	65
Brays Bayou Greenway	COH	Linear / Regional	
Totals			107.26

Acreage Totals per type	Defined Size	Number in OST	Total Existing Acres	Total Acres Needed	Over/Under
Community/ Regional	16-150 Acres	2	80.27	29.25	51.02
Neighborhood	1-15 Acres	5	25.76	19.5	6.26
Pocket	< 1 Acre	1	1.23	1.95	-0.72
TOTALS		8	107.26	50.7	56.56
TOTAL WITHOUT MACGREGOR			42.26	50.7	-8.44

2007 RECOMMENDATION STANDARDS

(Used in HPARD 2015 Master Plan):

Pocket Park - 0.1 acres/1,000 people

Neighborhood Park - 1.0 acre/1,000 people

Community Park - 1.5 acres/1,000 people

OST/SOUTH UNION POPULATION: 19,542 Residents

NOTES:

- MacGregor Park was included in the numbers. Although it is technically outside the OST/South Union boundaries, it is immediately adjacent. Community members also often cite MacGregor Park as a frequented and favorite area parks.
- Brays Bayou Greenway isn’t included as it is wholly outside the OST/South Union boundary.
- Restoration Community Park isn’t included as it is privately owned.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Per current standards (created in 2007) the OST/South Union area has enough park acreage when MacGregor Park is included. Recommended next steps are:

1. Work with HPARD to benchmark and confirm and/or update standards.
2. Confirm with the community whether they think there is enough park acreage in their community. If not determine whether this is because of proximity, access, or quantity.

NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL ASSESSMENT - OVERALL PARK AMENITIES

PARK AMENITY SUMMARY TABLE

PARK NAME	ACREAGE	Play System	Swimming Pool	Sprayground	Basketball Court	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Soccer Field	Tennis Courts	Volleyball	Dog Parks	Picnic Shelters	Community Centers	Picnic Area	Trails & Paths	Community Garden	Football Field & Post	Bathrooms	Water Fountains	Open Space	Shade Trees
Beech-White Park	15.27	1												1	1		1	1	1	1	1
Cyrill Madison Park	1.23	1			0.5									1						1	1
George T Nelson Park (Yellowstone Park)	6.03	2	1		1	1						1		1	1			1	1	1	1
Park at Palm Center	2.17	1		1								1		1	1	1			1		1
Zollie Scales Park	14.3	1			1				1					1	1				1	1	
Whidby SPARK Park	1.46	1			1									1	1				1	1	
Hartsfield SPARK Park	1.8	1													1				1		1
Restoration Park																					
MacGregor Park	65	2	1			1			16			4	1	1	1			1	1	1	1
Brays Bayou Greenway																					
Totals	107.26	10	2	1	3.5	2	0	0	17	0	0	6	1	7	7	1	1	3	7	6	6
OST/SU Population		HPARD Standards = 1 per #K people																			
19,542	19.54	4	50	100	12	30	30	10	10	50	100	10	30								
	# Needed	4.9	0.4	0.2	1.6	0.7	0.7	2	2.0	0.39	0.2	2.0	0.7								
	Over/Under	5.1	1.6	0.8	1.9	1.3	-0.7	-2.0	15.0	-0.4	-0.2	4.0	0.3								

RECOMMENDATION FOR PARK AMENITIES:

1. Benchmark HPARD standards against other peer city standards and work with HPARD to confirm any updates.
2. Confirm whether community needs differ from standards.

PARK LEVEL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

INDIVIDUAL PARK QUALITY

The Texas Southern University student team worked with the Houston Parks and Recreation Department to assess the neighborhood parks. The assessment entailed visiting the individual parks and scored them on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the best and 10 the worst) in four areas: access, amenities, safety/maintenance, and condition/aesthetics. See ‘Chapter 04 – Park Assessments’ and ‘Appendix C – Park Assessment Detailed Scoring’ for more information.

Scoring Values: Good = 1 to 3
 Fair = 4 to 6
 Poor = 7 to 9
 Immediate Attention = 10

THE GOOD:

Park at Palm Center (5) – Score: 2.68

Positives - Variety of unique amenities, attractive and varied landscaping, well maintained, holds a variety of activities, well used.
Suggestions - Access by walking and bicycle could be improved. Houston Southeast recently completed the Greenway Project, a hike and bike connection between Park at Palm Center and MacGregor Park.

THE FAIR:

George T Nelson Park (2) – Score: 6.41

Cyrill Madison Park (B) – Score: 6.65

Positives – beautiful trees, good amenities
Suggestions – These parks are both at the low end of ‘Fair’. In both parks focus is needed on improving access and safety. Some amenity updates are needed (especially at Cyrill Madison Park). Through community engagement, increased programming, landscaping, and adding community specific art were top suggestions.

THE FOCUS:

Zollie Scales Park (1) – Score: 7.68

Beech White Park (A) – Score: 7.27

Positives – Plenty of space

Suggestions – A park specific planning process is recommended for these parks to optimize all aspects of the parks.

PARK PROGRAMMING (OVERALL AND INDIVIDUAL):

This phase of the study took place in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. During most of the year playgrounds were closed, basketball hoops were removed, and in-person group activities were postponed to aid in stopping the spread of the disease. For these reasons, park programming will need to be studied in future phases.

From community input we learned that long-time residents remember a time when there were regular planned activities and celebrations in the parks. Generally, the community thought that more planned activities in parks, and an easier permitting process for events would increase park usage.

06 PARK ASSESSMENTS

INDIVIDUAL PARKS ASSESSMENTS

PROCESS

During this study only the City of Houston Neighborhood parks were initially assessed. First, our intention was to focus on neighborhood parks vs the regional parks - MacGregor Park and Brays Bayou Greenway – have other groups that focus on their future. Second, as Restoration Park is privately owned, we didn't focus on that park. Therefore, the team provided assessments for the following parks:

- Zollie Scales Park
- George T. Nelson Par
- Park at Palm Center
- Hartsfield SPARK Park
- Beech White Park I
- Cyrill Madison Park
- Whidby SPARK Park

Taking into consideration the results of previous assessments, the TSU team assessed the OST/South Union Neighborhood Parks using Park Inspection and Evaluation tool created and approved by the Houston Parks Department. The tool evaluates parks on the basis of :

- Amenities
- Access (Accessibility)
- Safety & Maintenance
- Aesthetics (Park Condition)

The TSU team added 'History' to understand the park background and 'Surrounding Neighborhood Conditions' that may impact visitation to the park. The team's findings are detailed in the following pages. Detailed park assessments are in Appendix C.



Park Condition Assessment Scoring Criteria

Note: No pools or buildings were scored in the exercise. All pools and buildings have had a separate condition assessment performed in 2012 and 2014.

4 Primary Categories (each was comprised a variety of components and averaged)

- Safety – 35% (barriers and sight lines, Concrete and asphalt condition and security call outs)
- Amenities – 30% (general amenities, sports fields pavilions and water features)
- Park Condition – 20% (utilities, site condition, and greenspace)
- Accessibility – 15% (neighborhood accessibility, trail connectivity and playground accessibility)

Scoring Numerical Values:

- Good - 1-3
- Fair - 4-6
- Poor - 7-9
- Replace - 10

Definitions:

Good: New to near new condition (90% plus lifespan left)

Fair: Showing wear (rust chips needing paint, parts missing) or in need of minor renovations. (60% lifespan left)

Poor: Showing heavy wear/rot/extensive rust and in need of major renovation, but still salvageable. (30% of lifespan left) But can be lengthened if renovation takes place

Replace: cost to renovate exceeds amenity value (0% life span)

Scoring was assigned and collected by Parks employees who visit these parks everyday and have the expertise to assign values based on existing conditions. A meeting was held with all inspectors to outline grading procedures and ensure standards were set to minimize differing grade margins. Grading examples were provided to further validate the prescribed grading range.



A CAPRA Accredited Agency



- 1 ZOLLIE SCALES PARK
 - 2 GEORGE T NELSON PARK
 - 3 RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK *
 - 4 HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK **
 - 5 PARK AT PALM CENTER
 - 6 MACGREGOR PARK
 - 7 BRAYS BAYOU GREENWAY
 - 8 OTHER COMMUNITY INPUT PARKS
- A BEECH-WHITE PARK
 - B CYRILL MADISON PARK
 - C WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

* Restoration Community Park has since changed location. This park was not assessed as it is privately owned.
 ** The area shown is the entire Elementary School Campus, not the park area only.

1 ZOLLIE SCALES PARK

ZOLLIE SCALES PARK

Zollie Scales park is a 14.3-acre neighborhood park located at Springhill and Corder Streets on the west side of the OST/South Union area. The surrounding land uses are single-family residential, industrial, undeveloped, and commercial. Approximately 5 acres of the 14.3 is used as park space.

AMENITIES

Amenity assessment score – 5.8 (fair)

- Playground
- Covered basketball court
- Picnic area with four tables and a grill
- Tennis Court
- Trail – 0.23-mile paved loop trail

HISTORY

In May 1973, Institute Park was renamed Zollie Scales Park in honor of Zollie Scales Jr., a notable community activist. Scales joined the Harris County Council of Organizations, an African-American federation of civic, fraternal, labor, and religious groups of the county. He was very active in the organization and served as parliamentarian, first vice-president, chairman, and liaison between many political candidates and the black community. He also tackled injustices against blacks and served as vice-president of his community's civic club, the South Union Civic Association. Scales received awards from the NAACP Houston Branch, South Central YMCA, and Metropolitan Transit Authority. Scales died on August 3, 1994, integrity intact and with a long track record of community and political service to the Houston community.

Source - <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/scales-zollie-jr>



ACCESS

Access assessment score: 8 (poor)

Springhill Street dead ends into the park's parking lot. It provides a connection to the neighborhood to the south and Whidby Elementary School which is also located on Springhill Street. Corder Street borders the south side of the park.

Vehicular access to the park is off Corder Street, is gated, has poor signage placement, and has about 30 parking spaces. The other three sides of the park are inaccessible by car. There are two fence openings on the east side of the park leading to Amos and Dreyfus Streets which are residential cul-de-sacs. There are no sidewalks and crosswalks leading to the park.



SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

Assessment score: 8.5 (poor)

At the time of our assessment, we found the following: The tennis court needs to be repaved and fully fenced. The basketball court has cracks in the cement and debris was visible on the court. The playground has items that need to be repaired. There was some vandalism visible on the tables in the picnic area. Benches need to be repaired. There is a lack of shade and tree canopy. There are some broken lights. The restrooms were boarded up at the time of the assessment (see image below) and have since been demolished. The surrounding fence needs repair.



AESTHETICS

Assessment score: 7.65 (poor)

The landscaping is plain and the foliage at the perimeter needs to be trimmed. The park lacks tree canopy. There is large green open space that could be better utilized. The color scheme is muted and noises from the surrounding environment are noticeable. Only 5 of the 14.3 acres available for parkland is used as public park space.



ASSESSMENT SCORE SUMMARY

Total assessment score: 7.68 (poor)

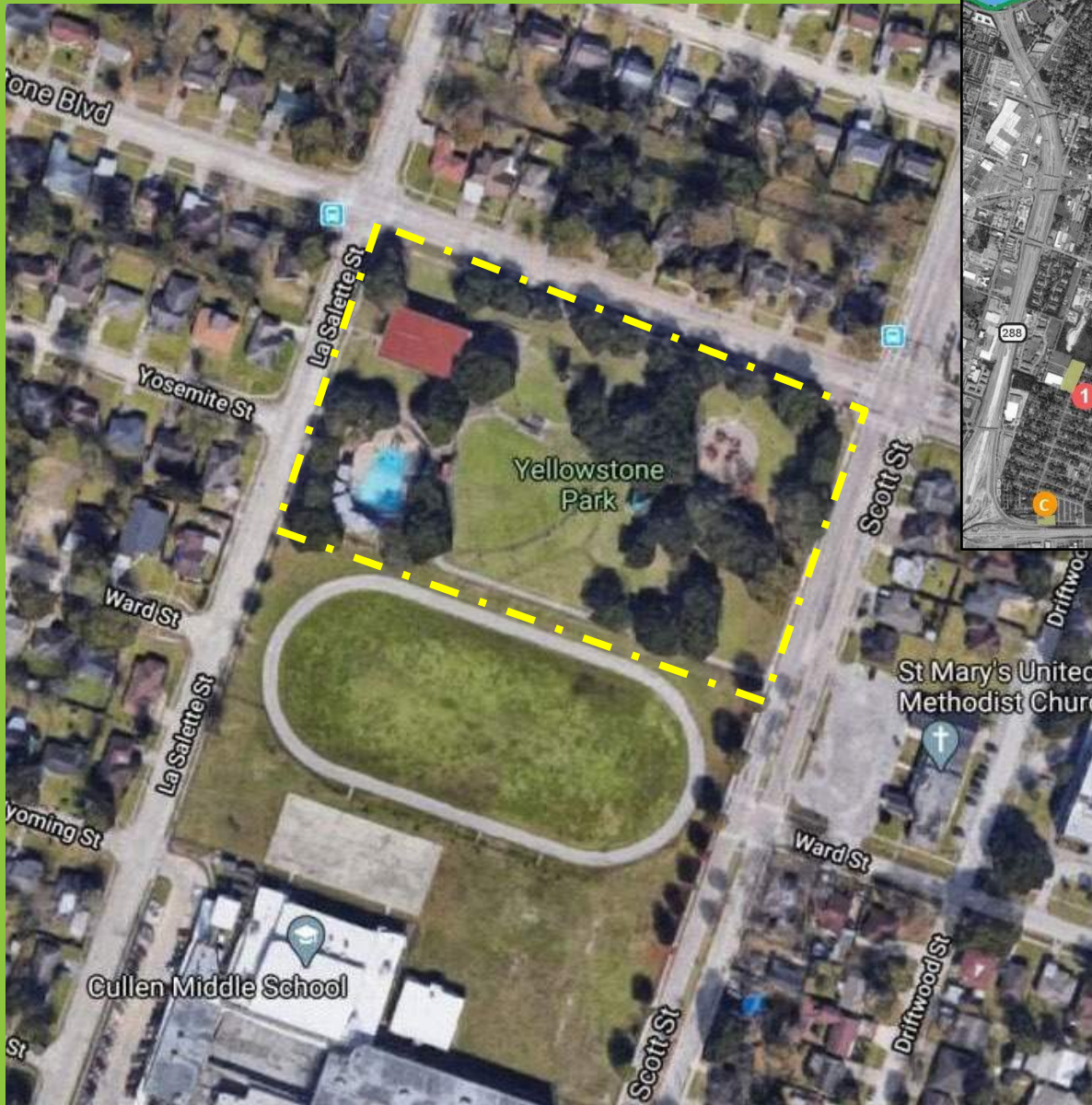
The assessment scores were averaged with weights as follows:
Amenities 20%, Access 30%, Safety/Maintenance 35%,
Condition/Aesthetics 15%.

Therefore, Zollie Scales has been categorized as a neighborhood park that needs focus to realize its potential.

SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

Zollie Scales Park is surrounded by single-family residential, industrial, undeveloped, and commercial land uses. A Rocket Moving & Storage Inc is located adjacent to the park. Some of the surrounding residences are boarded up and could be harboring illicit activities.





- 1 ZOLLIE SCALES PARK
 - 2 GEORGE T NELSON PARK
 - 3 RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK *
 - 4 HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK **
 - 5 PARK AT PALM CENTER
 - 6 MACGREGOR PARK
 - 7 BRAYS BAYOU GREENWAY
 - 8 OTHER COMMUNITY INPUT PARKS
- A BEECH-WHITE PARK
 - B CYRILL MADISON PARK
 - C WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

* Restoration Community Park has since changed location. This park was not assessed as it is privately owned.
 ** The area shown is the entire Elementary School Campus, not the park area only.

2 GEORGE T NELSON PARK (YELLOWSTONE)

GEORGE T NELSON PARK (YELLOWSTONE)

George T. Nelson Park, formerly known as Yellowstone Park is a neighborhood park that covers 6.03 acres. It is located off Scott Street, LaSalette Street, and Yellowstone Boulevard. Cullen Middle School borders the southern side of the park. George T. Nelson Park is the oldest of the parks assessed, acquired by the city in 1951.

AMENITIES:

Assessment score – 5.5 (fair)

Although the condition of amenities is fair, the park does not have a permanent bathroom structure, which makes it difficult for certain ages to use for extended periods of time. Amenities include:

- Playground (play system, swings)
- Covered basketball court
- Picnic area with grill
- Swimming pool
- Little League baseball field
- Ample green space
- Mature tree canopy
- Short trail



HISTORY

During the Summer of 2001, Houston City Council voted to rename Yellowstone Park as George T. Nelson Park. Community activist George T. Nelson played a pivotal role in Houston during the Civil Rights Movement. The name change was spearheaded by a community member, who believed it was important for people to know of Nelson and his legacy.

Nelson was a businessman and sports promoter, but he was especially well known for his role in the integration of Houston Independent School District and the University of Texas Law School. Nelson also played a role in seminal litigation against the U.S. Supreme Court to allow African Americans to vote in the democratic primary (Texas State Historical Association, Houston Chronicle).

In the story about the renaming of the park, an individual from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples called Nelson, “[the] Frederick Douglas of Houston”, likely a nod to Nelson’s intelligence and activism. The official renaming and dedication took place on June 30, 2001 and marked the opening of the pool which is presently one of the only public swimming pools in the OST/South Union Area (MacGregor Park also has a swimming pool).

On November 9, 2013, the basketball pavilion was dedicated to longtime civic leader and OST/South Union resident Preston Roe.

ACCESS

Assessment score – 6.5 (fair)

Two of the parks bordering streets, Scott Street and Yellowstone Boulevard are thoroughfares in the Greater OST/South Union neighborhood. However, access to the park is moderate as parking is limited to on street parking.

The park is located along two bus routes: 54-Scott, 87-Sunnyside.

Accessibility could be improved by updating surrounding sidewalks, many of them had cracks and the only ADA entrance was heavily damaged.



SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

Assessment score – 7.85 (poor)

There was some litter at the park, including an individual's clothing on the playground system. At the point of this assessment the baseball benches needed repair which has since been done. Trees near the basketball pavilion need trimming.

Areas of the playground where the rubber elements have gotten worn down need repair and graffiti on the playground system needs to be covered.

GEORGE T NELSON PARK (YELLOWSTONE)

AESTHETICS

Assessment score – 4.11 (fair)

George Nelson Park is generally beautiful, with diverse foliage and vegetation, plenty of shade, and a simple layout. While the park does not have the most advanced playground system and isn't the most colorful environment, there is something very calming about the shady and gentle park.

SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

Although the park is located off a major thoroughfare (Scott Street), areas where individuals play and sit have considerable separation from traffic. While most of the houses around the park are occupied, 2-3 vacant homes are partially boarded and that could cause some concern. Observation suggests that individuals may utilize them for undisclosed purposes. This impacts perceived safety in the park.

ASSESSMENT SCORE SUMMARY

Total assessment score: 6.41 (fair)

The assessment scores were averaged with weights as follows:
Amenities 20%, Access 30%, Safety/Maintenance 35%,
Condition/Aesthetics 15%.

Therefore, George T Nelson Park has been categorized as a neighborhood park that is in good or fair condition.

- 1 ZOLLIE SCALES PARK
- 2 GEORGE T NELSON PARK
- 3 RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK *
- 4 HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK**
- 5 PARK AT PALM CENTER
- 6 MACGREGOR PARK
- 7 BRAYS BAYOU GREENWAY
- 8 OTHER COMMUNITY INPUT PARKS

- A BEECH-WHITE PARK
- B CYRILL MADISON PARK
- C WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

* Restoration Community Park has since changed location. This park was not assessed as it is privately owned.

** The area shown is the entire Elementary School Campus, not the park area only.




NOTE:


This park was not assessed during this phase of the study as it is privately owned. It also moved location as shown on the map adjacent.

3 RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK

RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK

LOCATION:

3a  Original **RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK** location, This pocket park on Perry Street has since closed.

3b  Current **RESTORATION PARK** location adjacent to Restoration Community Church on New York Street.



3a - RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK

HISTORY:

Over the spring and summer of 2015, a committed group of 20 residents met every other Friday night to address burglaries and other crime and safety issues in the Grand Park and Southern Village communities around Perry Street between Cullen and Calhoun. Introducing CSI: HOOD (Community Safety Initiative: Helping Our Own Development) at a block party on a cleared lot where a city-designated nuisance property had been (4519 Perry), residents took ownership of a crime prevention initiative.

With the belief that having more eyes on the street would make the neighborhood safer, the CSI:HOOD initiative started the Restoration Community Park project. Gatherings were held including meetings, birthday parties, family gatherings, and outdoor movies at Restoration Community Park. On any given day, you could find a resident in the park reading or meditating.

The CSI: HOOD group was able to turn the Perry Street lot into a community park in large part due to their partnership with Restoration Community Church. The church provided funding to buy the lot, tear down the structure, and create the park. The park was named Restoration Community Park to honor this partnership.

Community volunteers took on the responsibility of maintaining the park. Unfortunately, without many volunteers, the residents were unable to keep the park beautiful and so it is no longer used for neighborhood gatherings. The 0.13-acre lot is still there but has been closed. A dedicated group to take on maintenance (adopt the park) is needed so that it can become a community asset again.



Original Location of Restoration Community Park Pre-Conversion



Original Location of Restoration Community Park Post-Conversion

3b - RESTORATION PARK

Meanwhile, Restoration Community Church relocated and has created a park for the community adjacent to their new location on New York Street (refer to the map page 62).

Now known as ‘Restoration Park’, this park is one phase in the vision of Restoration Community Church to create an epicenter where the community regularly gathers to experience the love of Christ in word and fellowship. This is currently done by inviting neighbors and families to enjoy the dedicated green space and basketball court as well as the covered pavilion with seating. In the coming year it is the church’s desire to expand the park through their health and wellness initiative with the possible addition of a community garden and exercise space with a walking trail.

SIZE: 0.2 Acres

AMENITIES:

- Basketball hoop
- Picnic areas
- Green Space



- 1 ZOLLIE SCALES PARK
- 2 GEORGE T NELSON PARK
- 3 RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK *
- 4 HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK**
- 5 PARK AT PALM CENTER
- 6 MACGREGOR PARK
- 7 BRAYS BAYOU GREENWAY
- 8 OTHER COMMUNITY INPUT PARKS

- A BEECH-WHITE PARK
- B CYRILL MADISON PARK
- C WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

* Restoration Community Park has since changed location. This park was not assessed as it is privately owned.

** The area shown is the entire Elementary School Campus, not the park area only.



4 HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

Hartsfield SPARK is adjacent to Hartsfield Elementary School located on the corner of Milart and Perry Streets.

HISTORY

Hartsfield SPARK Park was originally dedicated on September 27, 1986. It was one of the first schools selected for what was then a new program sponsored by City Councilwoman Eleanor Tinsley. The program turned the school playground into a new park for enjoyment of students and neighborhood residents. A committee of representatives from the school P.T.A. along with area civic clubs raised funds for the project that were matched by the Houston Independent School District and the City of Houston.

The park was re-SPARKed in 1996 (photo below) and then again in two phases in 2015 and 2017.



AMENITIES:

Assessment Score: 3.4

- Multiple playgrounds (play system, swings)
- Walking trail
- Ample green space
- Art

Hartsfield SPARK Park is truly designed for the elementary school aged children. It is equipped with colorful playground equipment, ample open space, and creative art features that could be used in a variety of ways to satisfy a creative mind.

Colorful seating is located along the edge of the playground equipment. Additionally, a walking /running trail that is currently partially shaded but with the new trees planted, shade will be available in several years.

An interesting component is the two ‘door art’ installations that are located along the trail. These show the story of the park and the people who have played on the grounds in the past and explains the role of youth in the community.





ACCESS

Assessment Score: 4.6

The park is located on the corner of Perry and Milart Streets. While it is not serviced by METRO, it is in walking distance for the neighborhood children who do not have to cross a major street for access.

There is only one access to the park from Perry Street. The entrance is well marked, colorful, and educational as shown below. The park can also be accessed from the school or the parking lot behind the school.

One challenge is the community may not realize that the park is open to the public after school hours and on weekends.

Sidewalks and crosswalks surround the park. Vehicles can park on the street or in the parking lot north of the SPARK park.



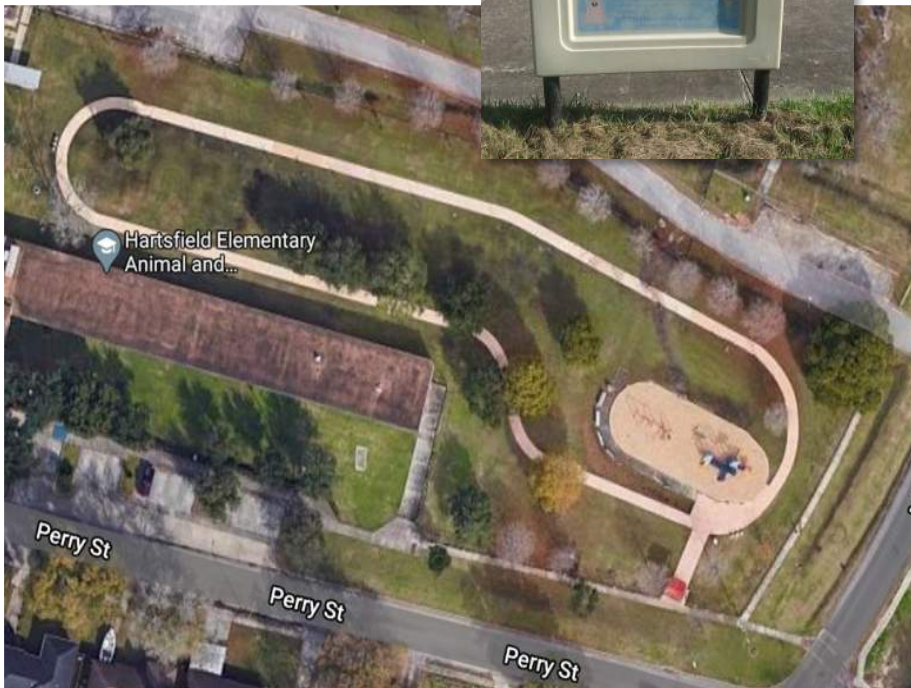
HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

Assessment Score: 4.6

The Park is well-maintained. Several signs are beginning to see normal wear and tear and in time, will need to be repainted.

The only potential area of concern is associated with the trail. The trail weaves behind the school, as shown below, and during non-school hours, is hidden from view.



AESTHETICS

Assessment Score: 3.7

Hartsfield SPARK Park is well-designed, new trees have been planted which will provide shade along the walking path. Beyond the playground there is not much else developed for passive or active use.

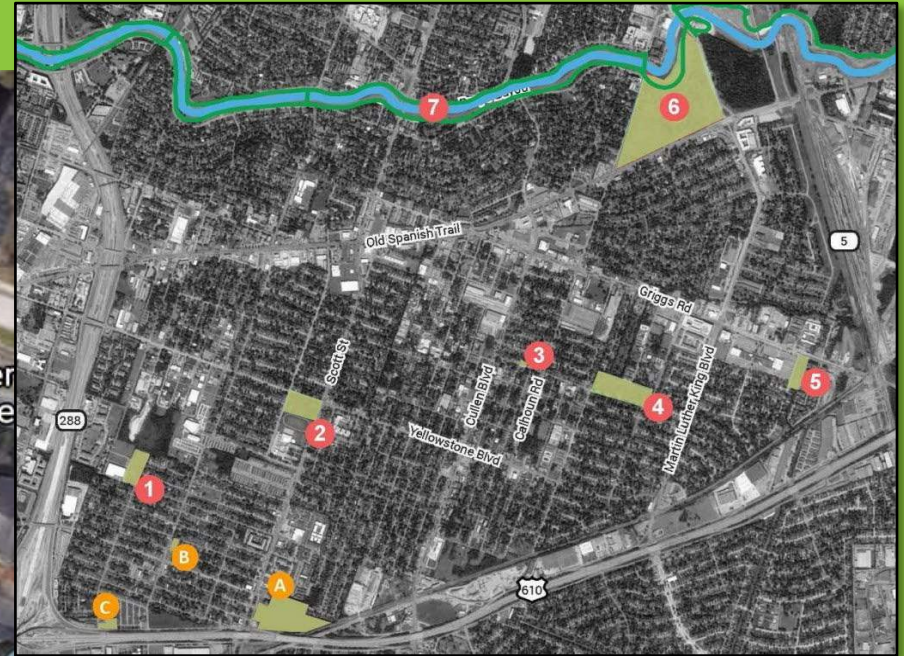
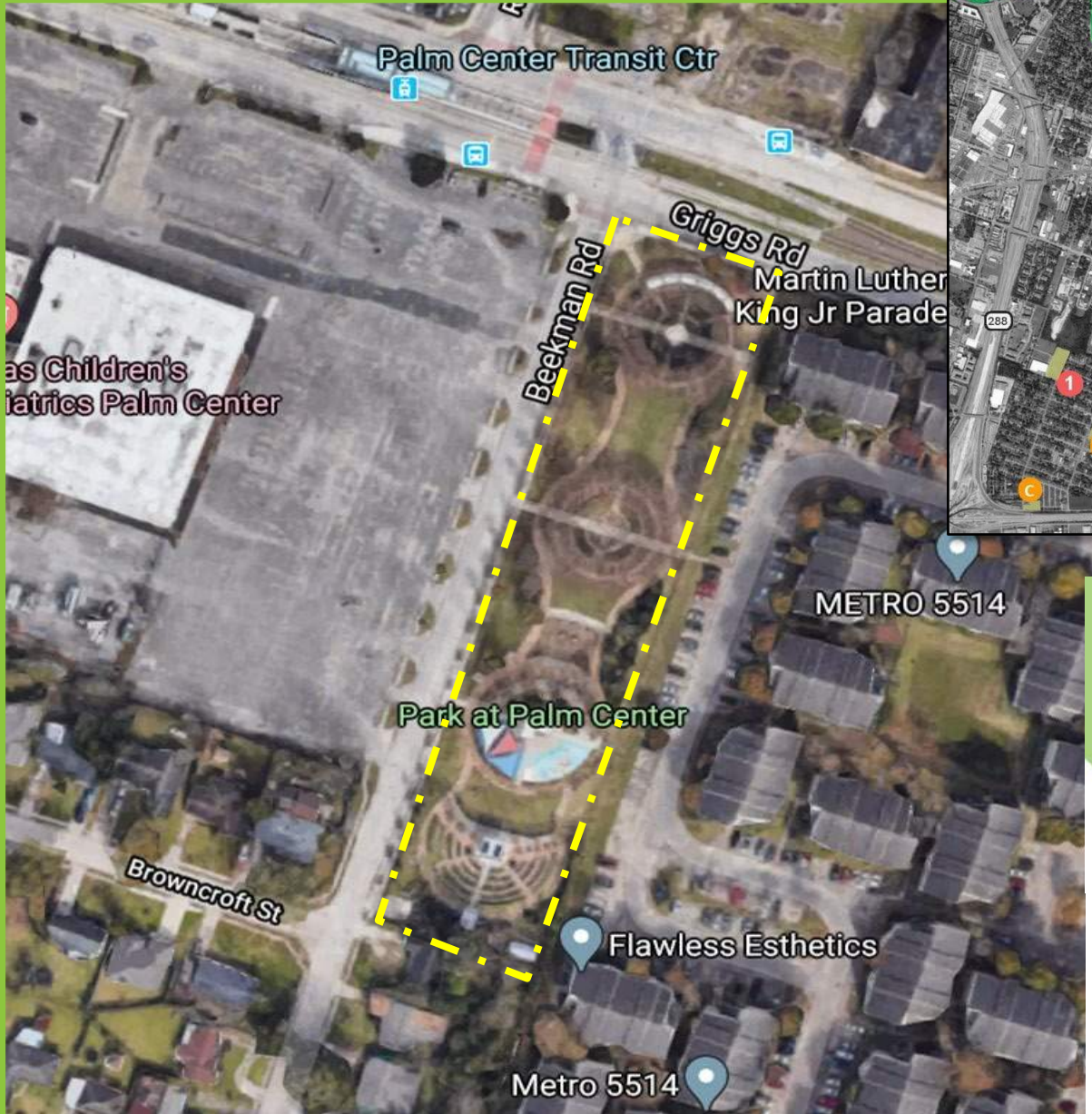


ASSESSMENT SCORE SUMMARY

Total assessment score: 4.23 (fair)

The assessment scores were averaged with weights as follows: Amenities 20%, Access 30%, Safety & Maintenance 35%, Aesthetics 15%.

Therefore, Hartsfield Elementary SPARK Park has been categorized as a neighborhood park that is in fair condition (4-6). As its score is 4.23, minor improvements would move it into the good category.



- 1 ZOLLIE SCALES PARK
 - 2 GEORGE T NELSON PARK
 - 3 RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK *
 - 4 HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK **
 - 5 PARK AT PALM CENTER
 - 6 MACGREGOR PARK
 - 7 BRAYS BAYOU GREENWAY
 - 8 OTHER COMMUNITY INPUT PARKS
- A BEECH-WHITE PARK
 - B CYRILL MADISON PARK
 - C WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

* Restoration Community Park has since changed location. This park was not assessed as it is privately owned.
 ** The area shown is the entire Elementary School Campus, not the park area only.

5 PARK AT PALM CENTER

PARK AT PALM CENTER

The Park at Palm Center, a neighborhood park, is one of the newest parks in the community. The Park at Palm Center encompasses 2.17 acres and was initially acquired in 2004.

HISTORY

For years the park remained simply a trail, benches, and young trees. The park was redeveloped by the OST/Almeda Corridors Redevelopment Authority through an Interlocal Agreement with Houston Parks and Recreation Department. Additionally, community residents Carroll Blue, Paulette Wagner (pictured below), and others, in partnership with the University of Houston received a grant to add a shade structure in the second phase of its redevelopment. A survey, sponsored by the University of Houston asked for community input on making the park interactive, educational, green, and fun. The design was influenced by this input.



AMENITIES

Assessment score: 2.3 (good)

- Playground
- Splashpad
- Picnic area with a shelter and BBQ pits
- Trail – 0.23-mile paved loop trail
- Community garden with demonstration area
- Orchard
- Amphitheater

The Park at Palm Center also has a few gems that are not common in parks across the community or Houston. The Park at Palm Center boasts a Community Garden that is the site of a bi-monthly Farmer's Market that offers fresh vegetables. Another unique attribute is the splash pad/park which is used by many children in the community. Its proximity next to the shelter makes it ideal for birthday parties or a resting spot for parents as their children play in the water.

Situated in the middle of the park, the interactive sundial is a source of amusement and education. The orchard along the walking trail allows people to pause, sample, and learn about a variety of fruits. The orchard is located along the southern fence line with grapefruits, peaches, tangerines, lemons, persimmons and figs.

ACCESS

Assessment score: 3.33 (good)

The park is accessible via all modes of transportation. The park sits on the southwest corner of Beekman and Griggs Streets. Signage is visible if the park is approached from the east. The Park at Palm Center is conveniently at the terminus or beginning point of Houston's newest METRO rail line, the purple line.

The park can be accessed by two bus routes. People from the surrounding community can always walk or ride their bike there. The park has two bike racks located at opposite ends of the garden.

While there is no parking within the park, there is ample parking directly across the street in the lot that was once the site of the historic Palms Shopping Center. One minor challenge is the lack of a crosswalk at Beekman Street for those choosing to park across the street. There is no curb accessibility from the street to the park. However, once in the park, all amenities are ADA accessible.

SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

Assessment score: 3.33 (good)

The park is well maintained by the Greater Southeast Houston Management District. Several elements of the park require yearly or regular maintenance such as signage (orchard) and the BBQ pits.

There is, at times, evidence of vagrancy at the park. Overall, the park is viewed as a safe place with proper lighting within and around the park.



PARK AT PALM CENTER

AESTHETICS

Assessment score: 2.11 (good)

Overall, the Park at Palm Center is a beautifully designed and executed park. The landscape architecture firm, Asakura Robinson, divided the park into four sections, each with a designated use. The diagram below outlines the park layout. The garden is attractive along both the perimeter and the interior.



SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

Palm Center is located at the edge of a residential neighborhood that is transitioning into a light commercial. Behind the park is an owner-occupied neighborhood.

ASSESSMENT SCORE SUMMARY

Total assessment score: 2.68 (good)

The assessment scores were averaged with weights as follows: Amenities 20%, Access 30%, Safety & Maintenance 35%, Aesthetics 15%.

The Park at Palm Center is a great park with many well-maintained and unique amenities as well as planned activities.

- 1 ZOLLIE SCALES PARK
- 2 GEORGE T NELSON PARK
- 3 RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK *
- 4 HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK**
- 5 PARK AT PALM CENTER
- 6 MACGREGOR PARK
- 7 BRAYS BAYOU GREENWAY
- 8 OTHER COMMUNITY INPUT PARKS

- A BEECH-WHITE PARK
- B CYRILL MADISON PARK
- C WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

* Restoration Community Park has since changed location. This park was not assessed as it is privately owned.

** The area shown is the entire Elementary School Campus, not the park area only.



A BEECH-WHITE PARK

BEECH-WHITE PARK

Beech-White Park, formerly known as Scott Street Park, is a neighborhood park that covers 15.27 acres and is located off Scott Street and Interstate 610. The park was acquired by the city in 1987.

HISTORY

Beech-White park is unique as it is dedicated to two notable female community leaders. The park dedication speaks of a friendship between Mrs Gould Beech and Mrs. Charles E. White, the wives of two prominent Houstonians, who were notable women themselves.

Hattie Mae Whiting White was the first African-American elected public official in Houston in the twentieth century. White was the first African American on the Houston School Board and would play a role in the desegregation of Houston schools. Her legacy is also preserved through the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center, Houston Independent School District's headquarters as well as Beech-White Park.

Mr. and Mrs. Beech moved to Houston from Alabama where they championed social justice causes to remove the barriers of class and race. Mary Foster Beech became involved in local Houston politics, notably working alongside her husband on campaigns for several notable politicians including future U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan.



AMENITIES

Assessment Score: 5.5 (fair)

- Playground Equipment
- Park seating
- Ample open space
- Football field
- Parking
- Short trail/path/street
- Designated First Amendment Area (see image)

The park at Beech-White is often overlooked unless you live in the surrounding community or have practiced football on its field. The park contains playground equipment, a walking trail, and a field with the infrastructure to indicate that it is to be used for football. Additionally, there is a designated area for first amendment expression as there is in every park, but this area is not physically marked.



BEECH-WHITE PARK

There is a path which used to be Mainer Street, a road that is now closed to through traffic. While conducting the assessment, it was initially believed to be a walking trail as that is how community residents walk around the park. Mainer Street is connected to the neighborhood to the east side of the park and does not circulate the park. The condition of this asphalt path is low.



ACCESS

Assessment Score: 7.5 (poor)

The park is easy to access as it is located off Interstate 610 and Scott Street, two major travel corridors. Although the park is located adjacent to a freeway and major thoroughfare, it is often overlooked, probably because it is recessed off Scott Street.

The park is accessible by bus, car, bicycle, and foot. There is a gate to secure the parking lot when the park is closed. The park can also be accessed from the neighborhood which borders it on the east. Parking is available, but the amount is insufficient if the park is used at its full capacity.



BEECH-WHITE PARK

SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

Assessment Score: 8.5 (poor)

The trail/street through the park needs repair and completion. It would benefit from being made into a loop trail. The playground and existing equipment are in good shape but show normal wear and tear. The field, if used for football, would need to be marked.

The park provides a port-a-potty that is located within the parking lot. During the assessment, it was used frequently by those either walking down Scott or waiting for the bus. Its location is in full view of the parking lot.

Given much of the park is set back from Scott Street, the amount of lighting could be increased. Safety, real or perceived, is an issue. During the assessment, several individuals were sleeping on benches. That and other activities made it uncomfortable to spend additional time in the area.

AESTHETICS

Assessment Score: 6.2 (fair)

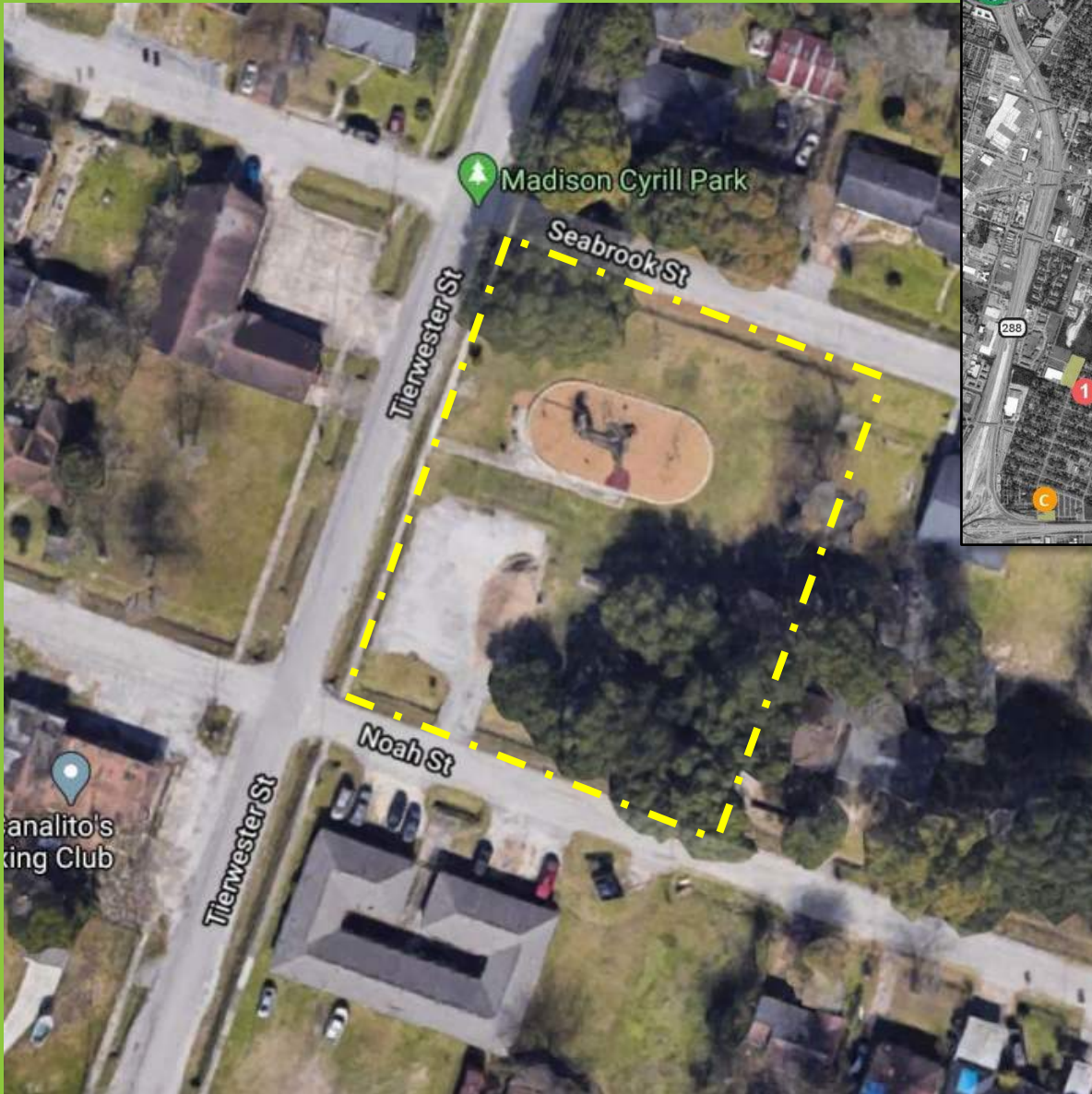
Beech-White is a large park with ample space. Most of the park perimeter is lined with trees. The trees provide shade and make the park look green and lush. However, there is nothing inviting about the park.

ASSESSMENT SCORE SUMMARY

Total assessment score: 7.27 (poor)

The assessment scores were averaged with weights as follows: Amenities 20%, Access 30%, Safety & Maintenance 35%, Aesthetics 15%.

Beech-White Park is rated as poor.



- 1 ZOLLIE SCALES PARK
 - 2 GEORGE T NELSON PARK
 - 3 RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK *
 - 4 HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK **
 - 5 PARK AT PALM CENTER
 - 6 MACGREGOR PARK
 - 7 BRAYS BAYOU GREENWAY
 - 8 OTHER COMMUNITY INPUT PARKS
- A BEECH-WHITE PARK
 - B CYRILL MADISON PARK
 - C WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

* Restoration Community Park has since changed location. This park was not assessed as it is privately owned.

** The area shown is the entire Elementary School Campus, not the park area only.

B CYRILL MADISON PARK


CYRILL MADISON PARK

Acquired in 1960, Cyrill Madison Park is a small 1.23-acre neighborhood park located at the corner of Tierwester Street, Seabrook Street, and Noah Street.

HISTORY

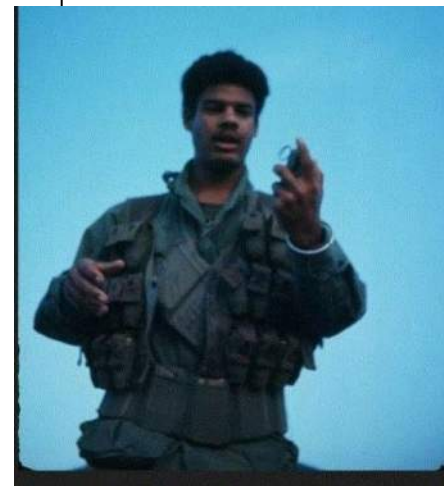
The park was originally called South Union Park but was renamed Cyrill Madison Park by Houston City Council on May 22, 1973.

Cyril Hyman Madison (note the spelling of his name is slightly different from the spelling of the park), was born on November 6, 1950 in Houston, Texas. He was drafted into the United States Army and began his tour in Vietnam on August 10, 1971. (HonorStates.org) Madison held the rank of Specialist Four. His life ended on May 17, 1972 while serving his country in the Vietnam War due to non-hostile action; an accident.

 Debra Jarmon
5 reviews

★★★★★ 2 years ago

I met Cyril and was known by his parents. The park plus the neighborhood named for him is a proper tribute to a young brave soldier who paid the ultimate price.



MOTION NO. 73-1549

MOTION by Councilman Ford that the recommendation of the Director of Parks and Recreation on request from citizens in the area of Institute and South Union Parks that Institute Park be renamed Zollie Scales Park for Mr. Zollie Scales, a well known civic leader in his community, who is still living, and that South Union Park be renamed Cyril Hyman Madison Park for Mr. Cyril Hyman Madison who died May 17, 1972, be adopted, with the exception that Institute Park be renamed Zollie Scales Park, and that South Union Park be renamed Cyril Hyman Madison Park, and the City Attorney be and he is hereby requested to prepare the necessary papers.

Seconded by Councilman Gottlieb and carried.

Mayor Welch, Councilmen McKaskle, Robinson, McConn, Ford, Mascaso, Gottlieb and Mann voting aye
Days none

Passed this 22nd day of May, 1973

Approved this 22nd day of May, 1973

[Signature]
Mayor of the City of Houston

Councilman Gayen absent

AMENITIES

Assessment Score: 6.44 (fair)

- Playground Equipment
- Picnic table
- Basketball court (1hoop)
- Parking

ACCESS

Assessment Score: 7.83 (poor)

The park has two access points; Noah Street and Seabrook Street. There is one sidewalk that faces Tierwester Street that could be a potential access point, but it is only accessible from Noah Street and Seabrook Street.



SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

Assessment Score: 6 (fair)

The park appears to be well maintained. The playground overall is in good condition but needs paint. The picnic area is sturdy, but it could be larger and shaded. The basketball court doubles as a parking lot, so is not used to its full potential. There are also two broken metal poles in the basketball court/parking lot that could cause injuries and/or car damages. Clean-up might need to occur more frequently to remove trash, i.e., beer bottles and caps, other drinking containers, and discarded clothes.

Cyrill Madison is 0.3 miles away from Zollie Scales and 0.6 miles from Beech-White, so it holds many of the same safety concerns as those parks, the presence of drug dealers being a major one.



CYRILL MADISON PARK

AESTHETICS

Assessment Score: 6.11 (fair)

Cyrill Madison Park has beautiful, large shade trees and grass.

SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

The neighborhood that encompasses Cyrill Madison is relatively quiet. The park is surrounded by residences, a church, and a corner store. Cyrill Madison Park is a neighborhood park that is mainly used by those who live within walking distance.



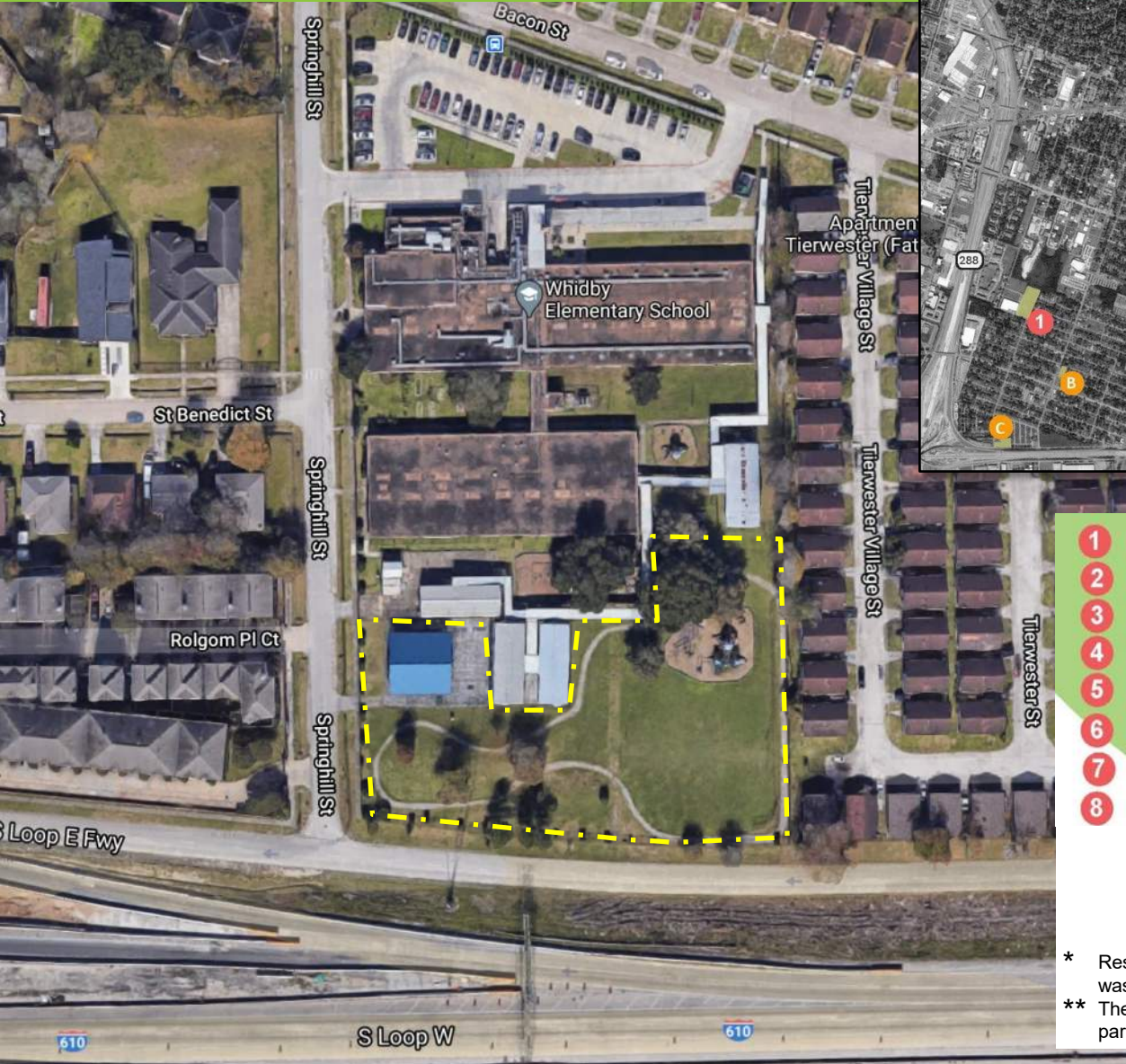
ASSESSMENT SCORE SUMMARY

Total assessment score: 6.65 (fair)

The assessment scores were averaged with weights as follows: Amenities 20%, Access 30%, Safety & Maintenance 35%, Aesthetics 15%.

Cyrill Madison Park is rated as a good or fair park. It is a small park. Some basic upgrades would make a big impact in increasing the quality of the park.





- 1 ZOLLIE SCALES PARK
 - 2 GEORGE T NELSON PARK
 - 3 RESTORATION COMMUNITY PARK *
 - 4 HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK **
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 - 8 OTHER COMMUNITY INPUT PARKS
- A BEECH-WHITE PARK
 - B CYRILL MADISON PARK
 - C WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

* Restoration Community Park has since changed location. This park was not assessed as it is privately owned.
 ** The area shown is the entire Elementary School Campus, not the park area only.

C WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

Whidby Elementary SPARK Park is adjacent to Whidby Elementary School; located on the corner of Springhill Street and the South Loop East Service Road.

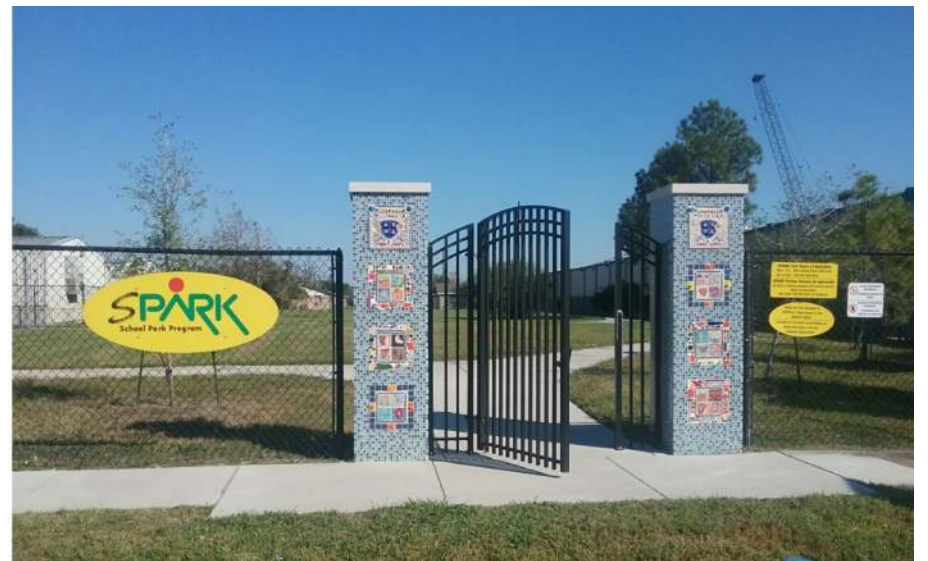
HISTORY

Whidby Elementary SPARK Park was originally dedicated on October 16, 1987. It was the twentieth school selected for the SPARK program. Multiple community members, community groups, non-profits, and organizations came together to make this project a reality.

Whidby Elementary SPARK Park dedication - 1987



Whidby Elementary SPARK Park dedication – Zollie Scales, Principal Vivian Harrison, Council Member Eleanor Tinsley - 1987



AMENITIES

Assessment Score: Not assessed due to access issues

- Playground Equipment
- Basketball Court
- Cover play/meeting place
- Green space
- Walking Path
- Bike Parking

Whidby's park features are tucked away between the elementary school and 610 freeway and are not visible from the neighborhood street.



WHIDBY ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK

ACCESS

Assessment Score: Not assessed due to access issues

Access into Whidby Elementary SPARK park is a challenge for the public unless one lives in the community and is visiting the park by foot or bike. There are two clear entrances to the park, one on the west- side with no designated parking lot and no space available for parking along the street. The west entrance is at the street's termination and the 'designated parking' areas for the 'public' sits awkwardly and it is unclear if parking is the permitted use.

The location of the school is cut off on the south side by highway 610 freeway and sound wall. Although the coloring of the barrier could contribute to the aesthetics of the park.



SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

Assessment Score: Not assessed due to access issues

AESTHETICS

Assessment Score: Not assessed due to access issues

ASSESSMENT SCORE SUMMARY

Total assessment score: Not assessed due to access issues

The assessment scores were averaged with weights as follows:
Amenities 20%, Access 30%, Safety & Maintenance 35%,
Aesthetics 15%.

Whidby Elementary SPARK Park was not assessed due to access issues

07 OUTREACH

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

BACKGROUND

The impetus for this plan and the call for the reinvestment in the OST/South Union parks system was championed by the community. Current and former community residents, those vested in the viability and livability of their neighborhoods, have taken a lead in developing community park plans. They have also placed parks on the agendas of public officials, foundations, and philanthropic organizations for investment in parks in their OST/South Union Community.

Specifically, the OST/South Union Arts, History, Culture, and Media GO Team proposed this community-centered plan to enhance their area parks and create a neighborhood park network. The team led community involvement for this project with guidance and support from the project partners.

Their commitment to this project, and the results of their passion, is evident in the documents referenced in this report.



STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

The core team for this project developed, and continues to refine, a strong list of project advocates, partners and stakeholders to ensure the continued success of this initiative. A sample of that list is below:

Houston Southeast Management District	OST/Alameda Redevelopment Authority (TIRZ 7)	Neighborhood Recovery Community Development Corporation
Harris County Flood Control District	Harris County Precinct One	Harris County Constable Precinct 7
Houston Police Department Southeast Division	Various City of Houston Departments	All elected officials for the OST/South Union area
HISD Schools within OST/South Union area	METRO	Houston-Galveston Area Council
SPARK Parks	Houston Texans YMCA	Bike Houston
Houston BCycle	The Nature Conservancy	Restoration Church
Agape Development	DAWN Project	LINK Houston
OST Community Partnership	OST/South Union Super Neighborhood	Foster Place Neighborhood
Grand Park Neighborhood	La Salette Place Neighborhood	MacGregor Palm Terrace Neighborhood
MacGregor Trails Neighborhood	Scott Terrace Neighborhood	South Union Neighborhood

ORIGINAL OUTREACH PLAN

The original project outreach plan included:

- Two community-wide meetings
- Two stakeholder meetings
- Five speak-outs (having a booth at neighborhood events)
- Activation events at the parks
- Multiple focus groups

PIVOTING TO VIRTUAL OUTREACH

Soon after project outreach began, it was placed on hold because of the COVID-19 virus which brought restrictions against meeting in person or gathering in groups. The core team determined a revised virtual outreach strategy to achieve the project’s goals and mission.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

A variety of methods and tools were research and developed to accomplish meaningful virtual outreach in the OST/South Union community. These strategies were derived from the core team’s understanding of the community combined with ideas being implemented by other organizations across the nation. Strategies include, but not limited to:

- “Walk and talks” where one or two members of the GO Team met at parks to talk with people they encounter and hand out goody bags.
- Social media challenges
- Online art contest with park/art gift boxes as the prize
- Collaborate with a local musician to create fun and engaging Zoom virtual meetings
- Utilize and optimize a project webpage where information can be found about the project
- Create virtual focus groups
- Online survey

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The core team took a revised look at the original engagement plan in the grant application and revised it to fit a new timeframe:

Ownership	Date	Item	Avenues	Notes
All partners	Late April to early May	Develop survey to determine technology capabilities and interest in project	Survey Monkey	Completed
HPB and Paulette Wagner	Late April to Early May	Collect civic club, super neighborhood and civic organization contact information	Google Drive	Completed
All partners	May 5, 2020	Survey sent to OST/South Union residents	Email/social media/drop ping off in mailboxes	Link to survey here
NRCDC / All partners	May 14, 2020	Stakeholder Meeting #1 (smaller, closed group)	Zoom	List of stakeholders here
NRCDC / All partners	July 9, 2020	Virtual Community Meeting #1 (anyone can attend)	Zoom	Bilingual postcards sent to 250 residents; 10 bilingual signs posted
HPB / All partners	September 30, 2020	Stakeholder Meeting #2 (smaller closed group)	TBD / all partners	List of stakeholders here
HPB/GO Arts/HPARD	Winter 2020	Focus Group meetings per park	Zoom	Completed
HPB / All partners	November 18, 2020	Virtual Community Meeting #2 (anyone can attend)	Zoom	Completed

METRICS OF SUCCESS AND RESULTS

To guide the outreach process and ensure the project reached the desired audience, metrics of success were established. The core team tracks metrics and uses this information to assess future outreach needs.. Metrics/goals are listed below, and actuals are listed in green:

- Survey response rate: Goal of 200 to 250 responses
 - **Update:** 190 responses received (182 at the time of the community meeting), survey results dashboard located [here](#)
- 1st virtual stakeholder meeting attendance: Goal of 25 people
 - **Update:** Goal reached – 40 people attended on 5/14/2020
- Publicity and promotion of 1st virtual community meeting: Goal of reaching 500 people
 - **Update:** 250 postcards mailed to homes (as shown in this slide) and 10 signs were posted around OST
 - Facebook event posts about community meeting
 - **Update:** Four total posts reached 649 people and received 26 engagements
 - Facebook event webpage
 - **Update:** 7,000 people reached, 436 event page views, and 225 event responses
 - Twitter event posts
 - **Update:** 648 impressions, 9 engagements and 2 likes
- 1st virtual community meeting attendance: Goal of 100 people; 50% community members
 - **Update:** 70 attendees on Zoom; appx. 10 people watching on FB
 - FB Live video viewed 205 times as of 7/24/2020, received 101 comments, three shares and 61 reactions
 - Approximately 34 of the 80 attendees were residents (42%)

You're invited!

**OST/South Union Parks Project
Virtual Community Meeting**

When: Thursday, July 9 at 6:00 PM
Where: Your computer or smartphone!
Why: Help improve neighborhood parks and connectivity in the OST/South Union area, and vote for your favorite **Create your Perfect Park** artwork created by students in the region.
How: Register for the meeting for a chance to win a \$50 gift card. Must be virtually present to win. Register at the link below:
<https://houstonparksboard.org/ostsouth-union-parks-project>

Create your Perfect Park art contest guidelines and details are available alongside meeting registration information online. Winners will receive \$50 gift cards and must submit artwork no later than Monday, July 6 to info@houstonparksboard.org.

Logos for Houston Parks Board, LSC Houston, TSU, Go Neighborhoods, and HPARD are displayed at the bottom.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

182 RESPONDENTS WHO ARE:

Familiar with the OST/South Union area

- 75% live in zip code 77021
- 97% are involved in the area somehow (live, work, play, pray, learn)

Ethnically representative of the area

- Black/African-American = 65% respondents / 72% demographics

Mostly females between 30 and 50

- 80% female, most of women who responded were between 30 and 50

Long-term residents

- 76 respondents (41.7%) have lived in the area for 11 years or longer
- 59 of those have lived there over 20 years!

Civically engaged or want to be

- 52% that answered the question were involved in a civic club
- 30% aren't currently involved in a civic group but would like to be

Note: There are 26,655 residents in OST/South Union



OST/South Union Parks Project Virtual Community Meeting, July 9, 2020

Zoom Meeting

Recording... **LIVE** on Facebook - Total non-video participants: 35

Speaker View

Participants (50)

Find a participant

- NR Neighborhood Recovery C... (Host, me)
- LG Lisa Graiff - Houston ... (Co-host, guest)
- LK Lisa Kasianowitz-Houston ... (Co-host, guest)
- SP Saul Paul (Guest)
- AL Aaron Limonthas (Guest)
- A Amin (Guest)
- AR Andret Rayford (Guest)
- AS Angie Shui (Guest)
- AZ Annie Zhu (Guest)
- AR Apriel R Powell Martin (Guest)
- AH Auna Hearne (Guest)
- BC blake coleman (Guest)

Unmute Start Video Security Participants Polls Chat 89 Share Screen Reactions More End

yes Activate Windows. Go to Settings to activate Windows. Invite Mute All

OUTREACH SUMMARY

The main points learned from the online survey, community and stakeholder virtual meetings, walk and talks, and interviews are summarized below. In depth summaries of each of these are detailed in Appendix A - Outreach.

- Many participants of the survey, meetings, and interviews have lived in the community for 11 years or more (41.7% of online survey respondents), as did all of the “walk and talk” interviewees.
- Residents generally like the community, history, and people.
- The vast majority believe that parks are important to the community. Some reasons are:
 - They add to the quality of life for residents
 - They build community pride and cohesion
 - Parks are good for physical and emotional health
- Amenities and qualities that were mentioned as needed are:
 - Shade including renovated pavilions
 - Walking trails and picnic areas
 - Recreation for seniors
 - Vegetable gardens
 - More organized events and activities
 - Dog Parks
 - Athletic fields and activities
- Focus group suggested topics for discussion were:
 - Nature/landscaping,
 - Outreach to youth and sports teams
 - Volunteer opportunities.
 - Safety and security
 - History and art
 - Parent/Guardians

What’s one word that describes what you like most about OST/South Union?



APPENDIX A - PARTNERS

PARTNERS



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Barbara Jordan – Mickey Leland
School of Public Affairs
Department of Urban Planning
& Environmental Policy

The Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) forges resilient and inclusive opportunities for communities across America. Through technical assistance and financial support LISC's goal is to:

- *Strengthen existing alliances while building new collaborations to increase its impact on the progress of people and places*
- *Equip talent in underinvested communities with the skills and credentials to compete successfully for quality income and wealth opportunities*
- *Invest in businesses, housing and other community infrastructure to catalyze economic, health, safety and educational mobility for individuals and communities*

Since 2009, the LISC Great Opportunities (GO) Neighborhoods program has supported the revitalization of Houston communities through a neighborhood-based approach. Great Opportunities Neighborhoods are exactly that – communities where there is incredible potential and strength. LISC invests in this potential to support and connect local organizations, residents, and community-based institutions. Often, these sectors do not have the opportunities to work together with a shared focus to improve the local neighborhood. The potential for creating thriving neighborhoods where residents can live, work, play and grow together is improved when all stakeholders work toward a shared vision that they create together.

OST/South Union was designated a LISC GO Neighborhood in 2013.

The Urban Planning and Environmental Policy Program at Texas Southern University serves in the capacity of research and community development. The program's mission is to offer its culturally and ethnically diverse student body a professional education in urban planning and environmental policy. Students and faculty approach projects with a social justice framework and embrace the history and stories of each place. The program prepares students to become planners who demonstrate critical, visionary, and utopian thinking with an ability to elicit, understanding, and respectfully characterize community values within planning projects.



The Houston Parks Board believes that all communities need parks. That's why our mission is to create, improve, protect, and advocate for parks for everyone. Parks play a critical part in the health, happiness, and economy of our city. But more than that, they're alive with possibilities for connection, growth, activity, and the imagination. In their Beyond the Bayous Plan, Houston Parks Board proposes the creation of Neighborhood Park Networks that connect parks to homes, jobs, and schools and enhance neighborhood cohesiveness so that everyone can enjoy equitable access to green space.



Neighborhood Recovery Community Development Corporation's (NRCDC's) mission is to revitalize defined target areas in Houston, to encourage economic development and investment, to effectively provide and encourage the development of housing for persons of low and moderate income, and to work with other private and public entities. We envision the creation of thriving self-reliant, inclusive communities in inner city Houston.



The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) was created by City ordinance on March 15, 1916, as the Department of Public Parks and began with two facilities - Sam Houston Park and Hermann Park. Since that time, the number of parks has grown to over 360, which offer a wide variety of amenities including swimming pools, community centers, tennis and basketball courts, fitness centers, golf courses, walking/jogging trails, skate parks, dog parks, and nature areas. The HPARD's mission is to enhance the quality of urban life by providing safe and well-maintained parks and offering affordable programs for the community. HPARD's nine divisions work together to fulfill the mission.



APPENDIX B - OUTREACH

STAKEHOLDER MEETING #1 SUMMARY



OST/South Union Stakeholder Meeting Notes

OST/South Union Parks Project

Thursday, May 14; 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm CST

Core Team:

The meeting was conducted by the core project team that includes NRCDC, Houston Parks Board (HPB), Texas State University Urban Planning and Environmental Policy Department (TSU), the OST/South Union Arts GO Team, and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD). The project was generously funded by a grant from Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC).

Participants:

There were 40 participants in the Zoom Meeting, including core team members. Participants were made up of community representatives, elected officials, non-profit partners, and agency partners. A full list of participants is included at the end of the notes.

Presentation and Project webpage:

The presentation slide deck link is [here](#)

The project information webpage link is [here](#)

Objectives:

- Introduce the OST/South Union Parks Project
 - Origins of project
 - Goals/Vision
 - Partners
 - Schedule
- Understand Phase 1 of the project
 - Research and Assessment – TSU
 - Community Outreach - OST/South Union
- Discuss how this project fits with other OST/South Union projects
 - Dream 77021
 - Livable Centers Study

- Greenway Project
- We will ask for:
 - Ideas on the best way to gather community input
 - Other projects going on in the area that we should coordinate with
- Understand the project next steps

Summary:

Welcome and Introduction:

Lisa Graiff, with the Houston Parks Board, welcomed everyone, provided a summary of the goals and agenda for the meeting, and introduced the core team (listed above). She explained that the plan is intended to be a community-centered plan to enhance area parks and create a neighborhood park network. The idea for the plan originated from community members.

Paulette Wagner, the OST/South Union Arts GO Team leader and a community member, explained the background of the project. It stemmed from an effort started by the late Carroll Blue, who was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts grant for creative placemaking in the OST/South Union Community. From that, the Southeast Houston Transformation Alliance (SEHTA) was born, which led to the OST/South Union area becoming a LISC Great Opportunity (GO) Neighborhood, a Quality of Life Agreement formation, and GO Neighborhood teams. The Arts GO Team came up with the idea of a parks network, recruited others to work on it by giving bus tours and spreading the word about the idea. This ultimately led to the partnership with the core team to apply for and receive a LISC Innovative Project and Transformation Grant.

Lisa G. reiterated that the team feels a responsibility to carry on Carroll Blue's great work. The team is considering other plans done in the area, such as the OST/South Union Parks review by Asakura Robinson and City of Houston mobility planning studies. The original plan was for six parks - Zollie Scales, George T Nelson (Yellowstone), Restoration Community Park, Hartsfield Elementary SPARK Park, Park at Palm Center, and MacGregor Park. The team is open to adding or changing these parks per community input.

Lisa Kasianowitz then led the participants in a round of introductions where everyone stated their name, affiliation, and a comment about OST/South Union. Attendees included District D Council Member Carolyn Evans-Shabazz, Representative Shawn Thierry, Garrett Auzenne representing Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and Jakob Stewart representing Harris County Precinct One Commissioner Rodney Ellis.

Lisa G. then described the typical Houston Parks Board Integrated Planning and Programming Process. She explained that it is typically done in three phases - information gathering/assessment, then analysis, and then plan development. This LISC grant was for Phase 1 - information gathering and outreach. TSU is responsible for the parks and neighborhood assessments and OST/SU GO Team for outreach.

Existing Conditions Assessments:

Professor Sheri Smith introduced her Planning Studio students: Chanelle Nicole Frazier, Elahe Roohbakhsh, and Charles Young. These Masters Degree students worked on the neighborhood and park assessments as their Planning Studio assignment. Chanelle is also a resident of the OST/SU area.

Sheri presented the neighborhood assessment information that included why parks are important to the area - for human health, community health, and for positive change. She then reviewed the neighborhood location, sidewalk study that had been done by the GO Neighborhoods Rollin' and Strollin' Team, tree canopy coverage, and demographics.

Sheri then explained the park assessment process, which was done in close collaboration with HPARD. The intent was to add to the information that HPARD already had on the parks in a way that is useful to HPARD in the future. The assessments started at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, so playgrounds were taped off, and the SPARK Parks were closed and so not assessed. The students then each reported on a park that they worked on including the park history and summary of the assessment of the conditions as follows:

Charles Young talked about Beech-White Park located east of Scott Street just north of I-610. It was acquired in 1987 and is named after Mrs. Gould Beech and Mrs. Charles E. White, two friends and prominent figures in the area. It includes sports fields, a playground area, work needed on the pathways, and the opportunity for expansion in the Beech-White II land acquired more recently.

Sheri Smith showed the Park at Palm Center that was acquired in 2004 and has some great amenities, including walking paths, a sundial, a community garden with an exhibition area, and an orchard. Paulette Wagner and other community members were instrumental in this park's development, which shows what community activism can do.

Charles then discussed Cyrill Madison Park, which is a small park a few blocks from Zollie Scales Park. It has a nice playground, trees, and benches. The basketball court and parking lot are the same space, which poses utility problems when people drive to the park.

Chanelle Nicole Frazier discussed Yellowstone/ George T Nelson Park. It is easily accessible being located at Yellowstone Road and Scott Street. George T Nelson, it's namesake, was an important figure in the civil rights movement in Houston. The park has a swimming pool, basketball pavilion, sports field and playground. It is well-shaded with many mature trees.

Elaheh Roohbakhsh told us about Zollie Scales Park. Also named after a prominent civil rights leader and community activist in Houston, Zollie Scales Park is at the western boundary of the neighborhood. Elaheh noted that the park had seen better days. The restroom building has been boarded up, the basketball pavilion and surface need repair, and there are few trees for shade on the site. It also has a playground and tennis courts.

Jaime Gonzalez asked if the group knew about park usage numbers and how those compared to other parks. Sheri said that they didn't have this information, but it is something the group can look into..

Kathleen Ownby said that on the bus tour, the community mentioned problems with water on the basketball courts, which are also seen in the photos.

Outreach/Park Stewardship Building:

After a stretch break, Lisa K talked about the outreach principles with the main focus being empowering community members and fostering long-term park stewardship. Lisa went through the schedule for outreach, which includes a virtual community meeting in June and a second stakeholder meeting in July. The outreach process has been interrupted somewhat by the pandemic and the fact that people are social distancing, so in-person outreach is hard. The online survey is meant to find out the best ways to get information out to the community and is going on now. She asked participants to share the survey.

Lisa discussed the outreach categories, including using social media, electronic outreach, speak-outs, and postcards for advertising the virtual community meeting. Lisa also discussed goals for outreach, including our stakeholder meeting goal of 25, which we have surpassed today with 40 participants.

The purpose of all the outreach is to encourage community involvement in parks and community park stewardship. Taking advantage of existing programs like HPARD Adopt-a-Park, Adopt-an-Esplanade, or other HPARD volunteer programs are one way of doing this. Adopt-a-Park is not for individuals but is for community groups. There are many civic associations in the OST/South Union area that we hope and encourage to participate!

Other Area Projects:

Finally, the group discussed other related projects happening in the OST/South Union area that the Parks Plan team is including in research. These include:

The neighborhood greenways project. Gwen Fedrick introduced the Greenway project. The concept was initiated by the Strollin' & Rollin' GO Team, which did weekly rides to assess the condition of sidewalks and infrastructure in the area as seen earlier in the conditions assessment. With assistance from the National Park Services and the completion of 435 resident and stakeholder surveys, the team produced a mobility plan that was included in the Houston Bike Plan. The resulting neighborhood greenway proposal is being built using Federal Transit Authority funding and is being managed by the Houston Southeast Management District (HSEMD).

Nikki Knight from the HSEMD showed plans and renderings for the greenway. Phase 1 is under construction with completion expected in August 2020. Phases 2 and 3 are in the planning and funding stages.

Dream 77021 is a collaborative approach to engaging area residents in assessing and prioritizing community conditions that support mental health, wellbeing, resilience, and equity. It is a project of the OST/South Union Go Neighborhood's Health Improvement Partnership (OHIP). Linda Bass and Adilifu Sabur presented the project.

Lisa Graiff talked about the 50/50 Park Partners Project, which is a collaboration between HPARD, HPB, and Greater Houston Partnership that aims to involve 50 companies in uplifting 50 community parks in the most need. Twenty-two of the fifty parks have been announced, and it is expected that at least one park will be in the OST/South Union Area.

Finally, there is an OST/Palm Center Livable Centers Study schedule for Fiscal Year 2021. Nikki Knight from the HSEMD discussed the project as they will be working on it along with Anita Hollman from H-GAC. It's boundaries encompass both Park at Palm Center and MacGregor Park.

It is undoubtedly an exciting time for the OST/South Union area!

Break Out Session:

Next, there were breakout sessions where the group was split into five smaller groups and asked the following questions, with the main points for each included below. After the breakout sessions, people were asked to share in the larger group. Those answers are bolded below:

- Any thoughts or feedback on the information so far?
 - **It was great to understand the history of the parks and the people behind the names.**
 - The process seems to be well organized
 - It is exciting to understand all the positive efforts underway.
 - It will be interesting to see how it all comes together.
- How has COVID-19 changed things in OST/SU or in general?
 - **The neighborhood seems to be quieter and cleaner with less traffic. More families are walking in the neighborhood.**
 - **There seems to be less crime, especially at the corner market near Zollie Scales.**
 - Engaging face-to-face is harder and using technology to connect will be more important
 - COVID has emphasized inequalities in our society that need to be addressed
 - Poverty may become more prevalent as more people are out of work
 - Basic needs are a priority now - how can parks help with these?
 - Personal responsibility seems to have increased in the community.
 - Harder access to food with the closure of HEB.
- Any comments on the strategies we presented?
 - Civic Clubs should be encouraged to adopt parks
 - Residents should volunteer as "park stewards"
 - Question as to how residents/potential stakeholders get involved in the process.
 - More ways to collaborate with HPB and local law enforcement would be beneficial.
 - Need to change neighborhood attitudes to support parks and become stewards.
- Ideas for engaging the community?

- **We need to think about engaging renters. They are a group that is typically forgotten about and that is generally harder to engage.** Work with landlords and leasing managers to do so.
- Engage noteworthy people from the community such as local rappers (Scarface) or others to encourage people to attend meetings.
- The City of Houston is considering street teams that can distribute flyers
- As most people have a smartphone, texting and QR code surveys can be utilized.
- Online engagement platforms can be used where ideas can be gathered, voted up and down, etc.
- The Palm Center Farmers' Market could be a vehicle for promoting parks and involving people in the planning process.
- Community members in their 20s and 30s are heavy social media users, so we should create a strong Instagram and twitter following
- Use the NextDoor app
- Create TikTok 20 second videos to reach younger generations
- Park staff and community members can work together to take back the parks.

- Any gaps or new ideas?

- Safety should be a consideration. It was mentioned in the chat that Zollie Scales has a particular problem with crime. Strategies mentioned were:
 - Lighting that works for both safety and wildlife. Do a lighting assessment.
 - Programming and people in the parks to make them feel safer
 - Maintenance - there is currently a lack. Mowing and cleanliness is important for the perception of safety.
 - Development of eyes on the street
 - Keep American Beautiful as a study for crime prevention metrics
- Neighborhood and Ecological Resilience should also be a consideration
 - Climate change may cause more flooding - parks can help mitigate this.
 - Greenery can reduce heat islands - TNC will be mapping heat islands.
 - Connecting people to nature is important
 - Parks and community gardens can provide access to healthy foods
- The park's plan could tie into the Mayor's program, Connecting Children to Nature.

To wrap up, the team thanked everyone for participating. We also reviewed the next steps, which include the online survey, virtual community outreach meeting, a second stakeholder meeting, and the wrap up of Phase 1 report.

Stakeholders can help by sharing the survey, spreading the word about the project, letting the team know about any virtual or other events going on in the area, and letting us know if your Civic Club is interested in adopting a park.

For any questions or comments, participants were asked to contact Lisa Kasianowitz at lisa@houstonparksboard.org. Lisa will share with the rest of the team.

Thanks again for everyone's valuable input into this important process!

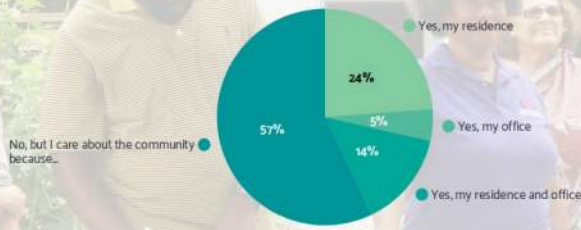
PARTICIPANT LIST

First Name	Last Name	Association
Daniel	Khuat	Houston Parks and Recreation Dept.
Jennifer	Ostlind	City of Houston Planning Dept.
Diana	Paredes	NRCDC
Shawn	Thierry	Texas State Representative
Paulette	Wagner	OST Arts GO Team
Chanelle	Frazier	TSU
Aubin	Pickens	METRO
Linda	Hollins	Community Member
Nikki	Knight	Houston Southeast Management District
Jeatawn	Degelia	Houston Parks and Recreation Dept.
Derek	Hawkins	Community Member / OST Arts GO Team
Carolyn	Evans-Shabazz	District D City Council Member
Jaime	González	The Nature Conservancy
Keiji	Asakura	OST Arts GO Team / Asakura Robinson
Rubi	Longoria	Houston Parks and Recreation Dept.
Senchel	Matthews	LISC
Melissa	Beeler	City of Houston Planning Dept
Linda	Bass	Dream 77021 project
Gwendolyn	Fedrick	NRCDC

Kathleen	Ownby	SPARK Park
Kirk	Craig	Agape Development
Peter	Freedman	Agape Development
JaRita	Laddimore Mitchell	Community Member / South Union Civic Association
Jakob	Stewart	Harris County Precinct 1
Zahyrah	Blakeney	Episcopal Health
Michael	Isermann	Houston Parks and Recreation Dept.
Adilifu	Sabur	Dream 77021 Project
Roberta	Burroughs	Burroughs Roberta F & Associates
Nwamaka	Unaka	District D Council Member's Office
Paul	Charles	NRCDC
Garrett	Auzenne	Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee's Office
Steve	Spillette	Community Development Strategies
Lisa	Graiff	Houston Parks Board
Nicola	Springer	Kirksey
Anita	Hollmann	H-GAC
Elaheh	Roohbakhsh	TSU
Sheri	Smith	TSU
Myra	Bell	Houston ISD
Lisa	Kasianowitz	Houston Parks Board
Charles	Young	TSU
Pauline	Brown	MacGregor Palm Terrace Civic Club

COMMUNITY MEETING #1 SUMMARY

Is your residence or office located in the OST/South Union area (77021)?



The parks will work individually as beacons of light for the community and together as a neighborhood park network.



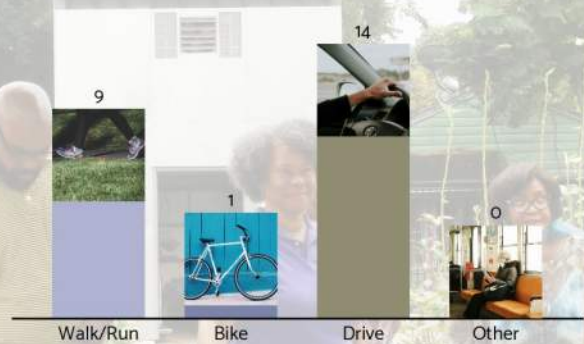
How often do you visit your local park?



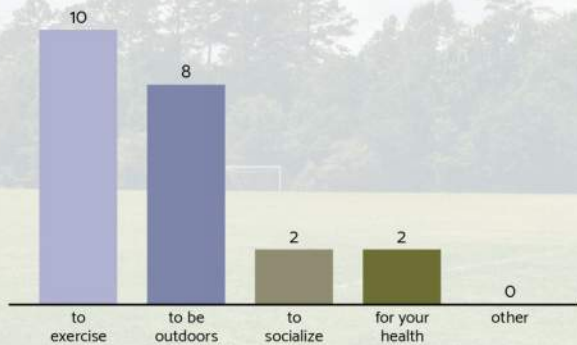
What's one word that describes what you like most about OST/South Union?



How do you get to your local park?

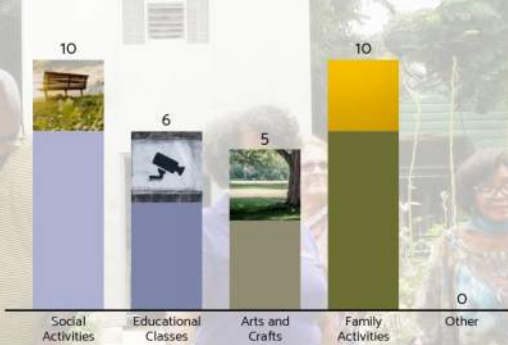


What's the main reason you go to parks?



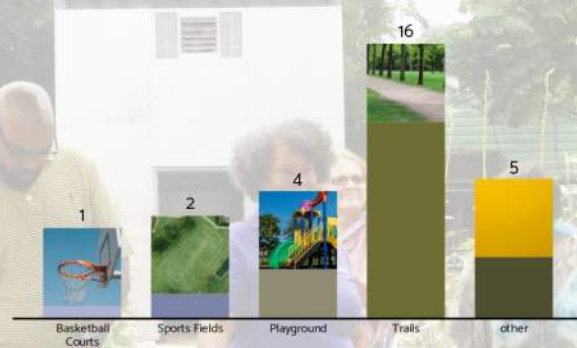
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What types of park programs would you be interested in participating?



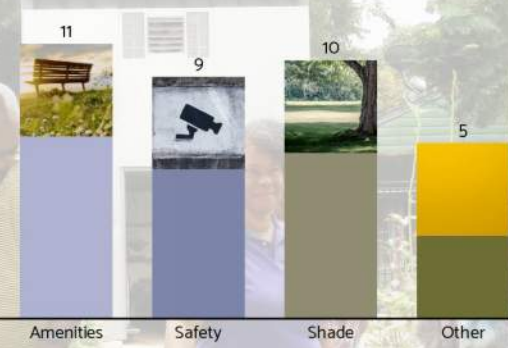
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Which do you use the most?



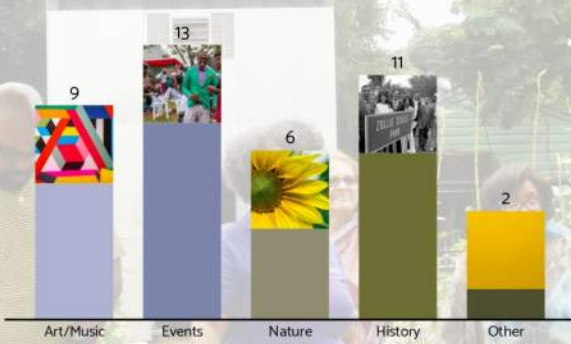
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What would help you use parks more?



21

What would make your park special?



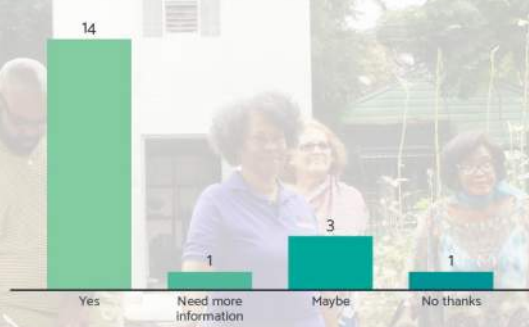
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How excited are you about getting more involved with parks in your area?



19

Would you be willing to join a focus group for this project?



18

STAKEHOLDER MEETING #2 SUMMARY



OST/South Union Stakeholder Meeting #2 Summary

OST/South Union Parks Project

Wednesday, September 30; 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm CST

Core Team:

The meeting was conducted by the core project team that includes NRCDC, Houston Parks Board (HPB), Texas State University Urban Planning and Environmental Policy Department (TSU), the OST/South Union Arts GO Team, and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD). The project was generously funded by a grant from the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC).

Participants:

There were 36 participants in the Zoom Meeting, including core team members. Participants included community representatives, elected officials, non-profit partners, and agency partners. A full list of participants is included at the end of the notes.

Presentation on Project webpage:

The project information webpage is located [here](#), which contains the recorded presentation and slide deck.

Objectives:

- Update attendees about the project progress
- Summarize where we are and what we learned
 - Research and Assessment – TSU
 - Community Outreach OST/South Union
 - Proposed Next Steps/future projects
- Other OST/South Union project updates
 - Greenway Project
 - Livable Centers Study
 - Dream 77021
- We will ask for:
 - Feedback so far
 - Questions for focus groups

- Any gaps or other ideas?
- How can you/your organization help
- Understand the project next steps

Summary:

Welcome and Introduction:

Lisa Kasianowitz, with HPB, welcomed everyone, provided a summary of the goals and agenda for the meeting, and re-introduced the core team (listed above). She reminded everyone of the partners and stakeholders we are working with on the project. Council Member Evans-Shabazz was present and said a few words about the project's importance to the area.

Lisa Graiff explained the HPB's Integrated Planning and Programming Process. She reminded everyone that the LISC grant was for Phase 1 (information gathering and outreach) of a three-phase process. TSU is responsible for the parks and neighborhood assessments and OST/SU GO Team for outreach.

What we learned:

Lisa Graiff talked about Neighborhood Park Networks as a way to look at all park spaces within the community (no matter who owns them) and ensure they work individually and as a connected whole. This means that each park can have its own personality to reflect the community it serves while amenities can be shared throughout the neighborhood parks. She reminded everyone that there were initially six parks identified for the study – Zollie Scales, George T Nelson / Yellowstone, Restoration Community, Hartsfield Elementary SPARK, Park at Palm Center, and MacGregor Park. Through the assessment, Beech-White, we added Cyril Madison and Whidby Elementary SPARK Parks.

A Neighborhood Park Network is assessed on two levels. On the neighborhood level, connectivity between parks, park location regarding park users, and park quantity in acres per person is important. At the individual park level, the park quality is assessed by looking at amenities, access, safety/maintenance, aesthetics, and park programming and usage.

Professor Sheri Smith and Chanelle Frazier then talked about what we learned on these subjects as follows:

Neighborhood Network Park Connectivity

Sidewalk Assessment Summary - In 2018 a community-driven sidewalk assessment was undertaken. A continuous network of well-maintained sidewalks allows community members to walk to and between neighborhood parks. The assessment involved community members visually documenting the location and quality of sidewalks in the area. The assessment found that 30% of streets had sidewalks on both sides of the street, 10% had sidewalks on one side, and 60% had no sidewalks at all. Many existing sidewalks consisted of cracked and buckled concrete slabs.

Sidewalks Assessment Conclusion – Coordination with the City of Houston to improve the state of sidewalks in the neighborhood is needed. The parks that need sidewalks in their proximity are Zollie Scales Park, Cyril Madison Park, Beech-White Park, Whidby SPARK Park, and Restoration Community Park.

[2015 Neighborhood Greenways Plan](#) Summary – The SEHTA Strollin' & Rollin' GO team identified several neighborhood greenways that they recommend. These would provide safe pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity between parks, schools, homes, and jobs. It provides recommendations for a comprehensive network of trails throughout the neighborhood that connect to the Brays Bayou Greenway and Columbia Tap Regional Greenways. The plan was integrated into the City of Houston Southeast Mobility Plan.

Neighborhood Greenways Plan Conclusion – The Houston Greater Southeast Management District is currently working to build greenways between MacGregor and Park at Palm Center, the first phase of which will be complete by the end of 2020. Adding or adjusting greenways to connect to Cyrill Madison, Whidby SPARK Park, and Restoration Community Park is suggested.

Neighborhood Network Park Locations

Park Location Summary - The Trust for Public Land is a national non-profit that assesses park access in cities throughout the United States. Their assessment is based on whether residents are within a ten-minute walk of a park. In the areas outside of a 10-minute walk, they assess park need based on population density, density of children 19 or younger, and household density with income less than 75% of the regional median household income. Their map shows that most of this need is along Cullen Blvd, on the east side of the OST, and along IH-610, where there are multi-family developments.

Park Location Conclusion - Although most of the neighborhood has good access to parks, about 30% doesn't. Improving access to Zollie Scales Park, Beech-White Park, Hartsfield SPARK Park, and Park at Palm Center has the potential to solve some of the identified park need. Creating a new park may be needed to meet the 10-minute walk standard for the community in other locations.

Neighborhood Network Park Acreages

Park Acreage Summary – Using the HPARD recommended standards for park acreage per person, the team applied that standard to the park acreage within the OST/South Union area compared to the 2018 estimated population of 20,106. This was necessary because the OST/South Union is one part of the larger HPARD Park Sector 15, and the population estimate has been updated since their 2015 Master Plan.

Park Acreage Conclusion – The team found that the OST/South Union has a lot more park acreage per person than the HPARD standards when MacGregor Park was included and just enough when MacGregor Park is not included. Restoration Community Park and Brays Bayou Greenway park space are not included.

Neighborhood Network Park Amenities

Park Amenities Summary – Using the HPARD recommended standards for park amenities per 1,000 people, the team assessed the number of overall amenities available to the neighborhood. Recreation fields, volleyball courts, and dog parks are the neighborhood amenity needs per HPARD standards. The neighborhood has almost twice the number of play systems and seven times the number of tennis courts (due to the tennis center at MacGregor Park).

Park Amenity Conclusions – The number of amenities per HPARD standards needs community input to determine whether those standards work for the community. The quality of the amenities is also important and is addressed in the individual park assessments.

Individual Park Assessments

Chanelle Frazier gave a brief summary of the park assessments. Due to COVID-19, the assessments didn't consider park usage as many amenities within the parks were closed. SPARK Parks were also not assessed as they were closed during the assessment timeframe.

Generally, the OST/South Union HPARD parks fall into three categories - the great, the good, and the focus. Park at Palm Center was considered great as it is an attractive, well-maintained park with a variety of unique amenities and activities. Better access would improve the park, and the Greater Southeast Management District is working to create a greenway that would do this.

George T Nelson and Cyrill Madison were considered good as they are generally attractive with beautiful trees and good amenities. Some amenities could use updating, park access could be improved, and increased programming would be beneficial.

Zollie Scales and Beech-White Parks are the focus for improvement. These two large parks lack amenities and need improved maintenance, access, and programming. A planning process to involve the community in a plan to optimize space and amenities is needed for both parks. There is a lot of potential!

Outreach/Park Stewardship Building:

Lisa K updated the team on the project outreach, which had to be adapted from the original plan due to pandemic restrictions on gathering in person. This included virtual stakeholder and community meetings, an online survey, phone interviews, and small group interviews or "walk and talks." Nevertheless, the team has come close to or exceeded goals for publicity and attendance of events.

Chanelle Frazier talked about the four in-depth (hour-long or more) interviews she conducted with interested community members. She found that the residents are proud of the area and remember the parks' former vibrancy and want to bring that back. Some of their suggestions included organized sports and events at parks and more splash pads, trails, dog parks, and event spaces.

Paulette Wagner reported on the "walk and talks" in which members of the OST/South Union Arts GO team met and talked with other committee members and residents and gave them a goody bag for their time. Feedback included wanting more city-sponsored events in parks and reflecting the parks' neighborhood pride and history. The team will continue "walk and talks" as they provided useful information.

These findings were also present in the first community meeting, where residents agreed that history and culture should be incorporated into parks and that parks are important to their community and quality of life. They also said parks were highly used decades ago, but that use has gone down potentially because of increased crime, lower maintenance, lack of shade and less programming.

The next step in the outreach process is focus groups. The subjects of parents/guardians, nature/landscaping, and history/art were identified through outreach. Common themes to each of those groups will be safety and security, volunteer opportunities, and active recreation choices for all ages. The team plans to conduct focus groups in October/November.

Finally, the group discussed projects that are being proposed to continue moving the project forward through small projects that can increase community engagement and excitement about the project. These include:

Agents of Discovery – This educational mobile gaming platform uses augmented reality to create missions for youth at parks. The mobile gaming app is free to download, and the first mission is planned for George T Nelson Park in November. This project is intended to get community members out to parks while restrictions on meeting in groups are still in place.

Sidewalk Math – This low-cost, fun, educational activity involves painting a hopscotch-like pattern on sidewalks that can teach kids how to count in multiples of 2, 3, 5, and 10 as well as pointing out prime numbers. The first installation has been done at Agape Development. The first park is intended to be Park at Palm Center.

History Project – OST/South Union is an under-documented area with parks that have an interesting history and are named after influential citizens. The history project is intended to make parks unique while providing opportunities to learn about the area's history. The first stage is gathering historical records, photographs, and stories that can be used to create park installations.

LISC's Inclusive Healthy Places Initiative – This is an opportunity for a small LISC grant to support mutually agreed upon efforts to increase safety, health, and/or equity. It comes with training on tools and methods to improve safety and perceptions of safety.

Break Out Session:

Next, there were breakout sessions where the group was split into smaller facilitated groups and asked the following questions. The main discussion points for each are included below. The answers that came up multiple times are bolded below:

- What are the questions we should pose in our focus groups?
 - Nature/Landscape:
 - Does the community know about existing landscape features of the parks, such as the walking orchard at the Park at Palm Center?
 - Parents/Guardians
 - Sidewalk math – what do they think about the idea, and which design do they like?
 - Do they use parks, how frequently, why or why not?
 - How safe do people feel in parks, and what would help? For example, lighting.
 - Do they feel they have adequate access to parks in the area?
 - History/Art
 - Could suggest activities such as an art crawl on bikes.
 - How can we do this through augmented reality and QR codes?
- Thoughts or feedback on the information so far, including the proposed projects?
 - SPARK Parks should be included in the assessment
 - Good work so far
 - The same people tend to participate. The challenge is to get a variety of people
 - Park focus groups – each group should include all of the parks
- Ideas on how your organization can help?
 - Bike Share –
 - New BCycle projects happening along Griggs Road in front of Palm Center and

Library

- Does the community want bike rental stations in the south and west side of the neighborhood? Bicycle would need funding for more stations.
- Bicycle usage? Do they feel comfortable using this area and will they utilize what would help them feel more comfortable - bike safety programs, etc.? Can work with Bike Houston on things like this.
- Greater Southeast Management District –
 - First phase Greenway will be done by November!
 - The intersection of Beekman and Griggs HSIP application to improve this area and install a traffic treatment in the intersection
 - Livable Centers Study approval September 15
 - Includes MacGregor Park, Park at Palm Center and maybe Beech White
 - Could be coordinated with this project
- SPARK Parks
 - Kathleen has information on the history of the parks that she can share for the report.
- Representative Thierry's office
 - Can help with policy issues that need to be addressed on the legislative level

To wrap up, the team thanked everyone for participating. We also reviewed the next steps, including the focus group and second virtual community outreach meeting, wrapping up the Phase 1 report, and planning for Phase 2 of the project.

For any questions or comments, participants were asked to contact Lisa Kasianowitz at lisa@houstonparksboard.org. Lisa will share with the rest of the team.

Thanks again for everyone's valuable input into this important process!

COMMUNITY MEETING #2 SUMMARY



OST/SU Community Meeting #2 Summary

OST/South Union Parks Project

Wednesday, November 18; 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm CST

Facilitating Team and Attendance

The community meeting took place on Wednesday, November 18, 2020. It was held virtually on Zoom. There were 52 attendees on the Zoom meeting. The recording of the video has been posted on facebook and there have been xx views to date.

The outreach goal was 100 attendees.

The meeting was facilitated by the core team members – Houston Parks Board, OST/South Union GO Arts Team, TSU, and NRCDC. Other stakeholder member organizations were represented including: HPARC, LISC, Harris County Precinct 1, and H-GAC. Council Member Evans-Shabazz and U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee were also in attendance.

Meeting Materials

Link to the pdf presentation is [here](#)

Link to the Zoom chat log is [here](#)

Link to the recorded presentation is [here](#)

Summary

Houston Parks Board kicked off the meeting by welcoming everyone and reminding everyone that this project is a community-driven master plan that includes parks and park connectivity. Council Member Evans-Shabazz then continued the welcome and thanked everyone for their time and participation. SaulPaul, a musician with a message from the Houston area, then inspired everyone by sharing his background and playing music to get us moving.

The project team then discussed the outreach that's happened for the project so far including: a survey, two virtual stakeholder meetings, two virtual community meetings, small in-person walk and talks, phone interviews, and focus groups. In general, the team has found that the

OST/South Union community members love the people, culture, history, blackness, and sense of community of the neighborhood. Many have lived in the neighborhood for more than a decade and remember that their parks used to be more vibrant and active and would like that to be the case again. Reflecting the OST/South Union history and culture through art and events in parks as well as increasing the amenities available in parks were mentioned as ways to enhance area parks.

The project team then talked about creating a Neighborhood Park Network where parks work to benefit the community both individually and as a connected whole. Keys to a successful park network happen on both an individual park level and a neighborhood park network level. At individual parks the number and condition of amenities, access to the park itself, safety, maintenance, and programming are considerations. On the neighborhood level connectivity between parks, location of parks (how close they are to people that use them), park size and quantity, and park amenities throughout the system are important. The project team looked at each of these elements and found the following:

Neighborhood Park Network Level:

- Connectivity – OST/South Union is doing well here. The Strollin' & Rollin' GO Team created the 2015 Neighborhood Greenways Plan the first of which was just completed by the Greater Southeast Management District (GSEMD). Plans for other phases are in the works. The team suggests the following next steps:
 - o Work with the City of Houston, GSEMD, and other implementation partners to prioritize and realize other identified neighborhood greenways
- Location – Park location in OST/South Union is good. Most of the neighborhood can walk to a park within 10 minutes. Suggestions for next steps are:
 - o First, determine whether a 10-minute walk to a park is the most fitting standard for Houston,
 - o Second, improve connections to existing parks
 - o Third, create new parks or park partnerships where needed to meet the identified standard
- Park size and quantity – According to the HPARC 2015 Master Plan the OST/South Union area is doing very well in this category. It has enough park space in a good variety of sizes. The project team suggests the following next steps:
 - o Benchmark Houston's standards for park space per 1K people with other cities in the nation
 - o Determine whether the Houston should consider revising the standard.
 - o Confirm with the OST/South Union community whether they think they have enough park space
 - o Identify reasons why or why not the community thinks they have enough park space
- Park amenities – The number of park amenities in OST/South Union is good per HPARC 2015 recommended standards. The neighborhood is slightly low in sports fields but high

in playgrounds and tennis courts (when MacGregor Park is included). The team suggests the following next steps:

- Benchmark Houston's standards for park amenities compared to other similar sized cities
- Determine whether Houston's standards for park amenities need to be updated
- Confirm with the OST/South Union community which amenities they think they have enough or not enough of
- Identify amenities that are lacking per community input and determine where these should be added

Individual Park Level:

The parks were assessed at an individual level and were categorized as follows:

- The Great – Park at Palm Center – This park has a variety of unique amenities, is attractive with varied landscaping, is well-maintained, and hosts a variety of activities. Park access is the main area for improvement.
- The Good – George T Nelson Park and Cyril Madison Park – These parks, although very different in size, both have good amenities and beautiful trees. Suggestions for improvements are:
 - Making amenity updates/upgrades where needed
 - Increasing programming
 - Improving park access
- The Focus – Zollie Scales and Beech White Parks – These parks both have some amenities and plenty of space. The team suggests that these parks go through a focused planning process to optimize the space and amenities. Potential for improvements include:
 - Adding and upgrading amenities
 - Increasing programming
 - Improving park access

Stretch Break with Saul Paul

Saul Paul then created a song using words suggested by the group. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee thanked everyone for taking park and said she was interested in learning more about Beech-White Park.

Current and Proposed Projects

The team then talked about current and proposed projects for the OST/South Union area including:

- Current - Agents of Discovery Mission in George T Nelson Park – This is a mobile gaming platform that uses augmented reality to create missions for youths in parks. It is going on now and will continue until the end of November, maybe longer! The plan is to expand missions into other OST/South Union Parks.

- Current - Sidewalk Math – This project is a fun and educational way for kids to learn about math through artwork that is painted on the sidewalk. There is an installation at Agape Development and the plan is to create other installations in the area.
- Proposed – History Project – Little documentation on the area exists. As community feedback emphasized that history is important, and as many community members have lived in the area for decades, the history project will focus on collecting historical documentation of the area that can then be used as installations in the parks.

Break Out Sessions:

The group broke up into smaller virtual groups to discuss the following questions listed below with a summary of the answers:

1. What is the best thing about the park you most frequent in OST/South Union? What is one improvement you would like to make to that park and why?
 - Zollie Scales – walking trail and the proximity to the community. The old bathroom was torn down in this park and there is concern with the tennis court. Who plays tennis?
 - Park at Palm Center - for walking or for the community garden.
 - Cyril Madison – only one community member knew about this park
 - Beech-White Park – most community members don't know about this park. Linda Hollins is distantly related to Ms. Haddie Mae White of Beech-White Park.
 - Yellowstone/George T Nelson - The basketball pavilion and the space it provides for a variety of community activities (e.g., youth events, distribution of food and other types of assistance programs, etc.) is the best part of the park. Improvements suggested were to upgrade/repair the basketball pavilion, add restrooms, picnic tables and parking.
 - MacGregor Park – The best things about the park are its size and amount of green space provided. Residents can engage in a variety of recreational activities in the park. Improvements suggested are to increase security features throughout the park. Install signage directing dog owners to keep their pet on a leash. Construct dedicated bike lanes on streets near the park (e.g., Calhoun Rd., MLK Blvd., North and South MacGregor).
 - General comments:
 - Parks must bring back engagement activities like baseball and flag football.
 - Since COVID-19 is ongoing, other ways to engage people distantly at parks must be considered.
 - No park engagement means a lot of kids are out doing other things (suggestion of getting into trouble).
 - Parks should have food fairs and farmers markets; can ask people that participate in nearby farmers markets to come to South Union.
 - Most parks don't have enough shade so the equipment becomes extremely hot and it's not good to be outdoors.

- Parks that we go to directly impact/encourage civic engagement. Parks we don't go to directly impact/encourage crime.
 - All parks in OST/South Union should have Bike Share equipment, making the program more accessible for residents.
2. How would you like to be more involved in that park? (hold events, attend clean-ups, etc)
Are there any local partners we should work with for that park (artists, performers, businesses, etc)?
- The churches in the area and should be approached for a partnership with OST/South Union. Love All God's Children initiative. The CCHI Church and Community Healthy Initiative WLAGC.
 - South Union Baptist Church, Lilly Grove, and Goodhope are all strong faith-based institutions in the area. They should be included as stakeholders on projects. They can help with spreading awareness about events and doing fundraisers.
 - Brighter Bites and Recipes for success might be open to doing an activity in the parks in the new year.

Wrap up and Next Steps:

The team then concluded by noting that this first phase of the project is almost complete. The existing conditions assessment was completed, outreach is mostly complete except for focus groups. The team will put together the phase 1 report to share with the community and will plan for the next project phase. This planning will include identification of potential funding sources, implementation of quick win projects, beginning of a community stewardship pilot project, and benchmarking and identifying community needs versus standards.

The team announced that we were awarded a LISC Inclusive Healthy Places Initiative grant to support efforts to increase safety, health, and equity in parks. Implementation of this work will begin in January 2021.

The project team then let the community know that they can help by completing the Agents of Discovery Mission, joining a focus group, or sharing any information they have on park history.

Danielle, the winner of the children's art contest was congratulated by the group, winners of the gift certificates for participation were announced, and the team expressed appreciation to everyone who took part in the meeting!

FOCUS GROUP – ART & HISTORY NOTES



OST/South Union Art and History Focus Group Notes

OST/South Union Parks Project

Monday, November 9; 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm CST

Facilitating Team

The meeting was organized through Houston Parks Board and led by community member facilitators Paulette Wagner and Chanelle Frazier.

Participants

There were 5 community member participants in the Zoom Meeting and our facilitators. Lisa Graiff also joined the meeting to take notes and be there to answer questions.

Project webpage

The project information webpage is located [here](#) for more details about the project.

Purpose

To get specific community input regarding opportunities to incorporate art and history into OST/South Union Parks.

Summary

Meeting attendees consisted of five (5) community residents, plus two (2) facilitators. An “ice breaker” question (“What is your favorite art form”) followed introductions. In order to stimulate conversation/feedback, eight (8) questions were raised with participants. All agreed that a community’s history is important and should be publicized in order to inform/educate residents, help build pride and possibly counteract gentrification. Parks provide a perfect location for placement of historical information and “art” is an excellent portal for conveyance of critical facts. Local resources (e.g., artists, educational institutions, business, etc.) should be tapped to create works that both entertain and inform. Such works could be in the form of informational plaques, murals, “spoken word” events, decorative benches, etc. Staging community events promoting music and art performances would be an excellent vehicle for attracting residents and encouraging increased use of area parks. Organizing an audio history tour in parks was another recommendation cited. It was shared that innovative strategies are already underway in that Yellowstone Park is currently the site of a digital scavenger hunt. Among attendees there was agreement that park maintenance and security remain major concerns

Meeting notes

Icebreaker question - What is your favorite art form?

- Music
- Music and sculpture
- Photography because it takes you to a place in time like no other.
- Theater and the performing arts
- Sculptures - they are city staples in parks in the east coast and provide places for people to gather.
- Public art – murals and even graffiti
- Art by local artists like in midtown. Some have a history message.
- Art and landscaping can overlap, such as mosaic pebbles creating pathways
- Pairing of art and history in the parks – art can document and reflect history.

1. Do you think it's important for OST/South Union parks to reflect the history of the community?

- a. It's important for members of the community to know their own history, especially people who grew up in the Union. It also helps new community members who might not know who the parks are named after, to learn about the people who put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into developing the community.
- b. Counteracting gentrification by upholding the values of the community and its foundation, especially as we build into the future and continue to improve the community so that these values and efforts are not forgotten or pushed by the wayside.
- c. Yes, they should reflect history. In San Francisco there are plaques in the parks that tell people what happened there. The history gives people a better respect for the area that they live in.
- d. It's powerful for both the residents and people in Houston to identify the community and know the history.
- e. There's a lack of awareness of the history of the area and the people whose families may still live there. Including history in the parks is an homage and is an important vehicle for community engagement (reading a plaque).

2. How can OST/South Union parks better reflect the history and art of the OST/South Union Neighborhood? Please provide specific ideas or examples for the group's consideration.

- a. The art should reflect the history but should also incorporate the community. TSU and high school programs have produced proliferative artists. We should patronize our local artist so that art be an industry and a career. We can give opportunities for local artists in public art and in art in general.
- b. Yellowstone Park next to Cullen Middle School could show that the area held the first mall in Houston. Otherwise how would people know that this was a space for commerce?
- c. The longer-term residents have a lot of valuable knowledge and insight into the area as they have lived through the history.

3. What do you think would best resonate with OST/South Union residents and get them to visit the parks more?

- a. A written history on plaques talk about the history behind the area.
- b. Agrees that using local artists. If the bathrooms in Zollie Scales are rebuilt with murals. Murals of the community by the community.
- c. Community could be involved by voting on sketches of murals that artists provide.
- d. There are athletes and other great people whose stories could be told in the parks.
- e. Quarterly rotational celebrations – There is a judge in the area off of Springhill that used to have celebrations for Juneteenth and Black History Month. That could be expanded to community celebrations around different topics. We could then have local schools and others perform.
- f. Zollie Scales was a community activist and businessman who worked with politicians and business leaders to advocate for and improve the community. He advocated for capital improvements in the community. It is unfortunate that there isn't more information about Zollie Scales circulating in the community. There could be a plaque about him in the park.
- g. George T Nelson park has a plaque, but people don't know about it. We need more engagement and information about these. It might help if they were all consistent.
- h. The Doors project by NRCDC profiled and honored different community members and events in the community. They installed them in multiple places including parks, there was a map developed and distributed so that people could find them.

4. Can history and art improve safety and security in OST/South Union Parks? If so, how?

- a. Better lighting has been mentioned many times.
- b. There is not a lot of lighting. The parks that are easily accessible from the road have the most unwanted activity in the evenings. Physical barriers could be used to deter this.
- c. Way to instill ownership in parks – a bench or chess boards or bricks that let the community feel ownership of the park, then they are more likely to protect the park.
- d. Community buy-in is important. Could make mural out of broken dishes from from people's houses – dishes, etc. It's an even more personal as it's made of something that came from their house.
- e. Volunteering for teenagers and community as neighborhood art proctor to give people responsibility.
- f. Regular maintenance and cleaning is important.
- g. Blue light emergency stations could be impactful.

5. Are there volunteer opportunities that you think community members would be interested in around history and art?

- a. Community buy-in is important. Could make mural out of broken dishes from people's houses which would be inexpensive and personal. A part of their home would now be part of the park.
- b. Volunteering for teenagers and community as neighborhood art proctor to give people responsibility.
- c. People come out for music and art.
- d. Parks used to be meet up points, let's make these meet up points memorable.

6. Are there any local organizations or schools you think could be involved in a history or art project at an OST/SU park?

- a. Art magnet schools in the area.
- b. TSU or local high schools.
- c. Local artists

7. Do you think that virtual engagement about art and history within the parks would be taken advantage of by residents? Ex: An audio history tour. Yellowstone Park has a digital scavenger hunt happening now as an example.

- a. Maybe not personally, there probably is a group that would. Access to high speed internet and smart phones is a challenge in the area though. If there were flyers that are sent to go through the same information as the virtual scavenger hunt so that people aren't left out that would be good so that they aren't left out.
- b. Lack of art and extracurricular activities is a complaint for the ISD. Parks could help with this – for example painting at Yellowstone Park.

8. Is there anything else about history and art in OST/South Union parks that you'd like to share? Or is there anything else that you want us to know?

- a. The statue opposite of Palm Center needs a touch up.
- b. Is money better spent making the existing parks functional or building new? Has there been a survey for community priorities on this?
- c. Yellowstone Park – one participant called about a baseball league for her son and got transferred around because nobody could answer her questions.
- d. Maintenance in parks is a concern

END OF NOTES

FOCUS GROUP – PARENTS & GUARDIANS NOTES



OST/South Union Parents and Guardians Focus Group Notes OST/South Union Parks Project

Monday, November 30; 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm CST

Facilitating Team:

The meeting was organized through Houston Parks Board and led by community member facilitators Ava Germany-Carter and Jennifer Anderson.

Participants:

There were 3 community member participants in the Zoom Meeting and our two facilitators. Lisa Kasianowitz also joined the meeting to take notes and be there to answer questions.

Project webpage:

The project information webpage is located [here](#) for more details about the project.

Purpose:

To get specific community input regarding opportunities to incorporate more family-oriented activities into OST/South Union Parks.

Summary:

Meeting attendees consisted of three (3) community residents, plus two (2) facilitators. An "ice breaker" question ("What is the favorite material possession you own?") followed introductions. In order to stimulate conversation/feedback, six (6) questions were raised with participants. There was a general consensus that infrastructure improvements, like lighting, would help the parks. The group participants also agreed that more sports programming could help activate the parks and are willing to make connections to help get more schools, churches and others (like civic clubs) involved. Sports teams can help build relationships and help people get to know each other, so the group felt it would be beneficial for the project team to dig deeper into this possibility.

Meeting Notes:

1. Which OST/South Union parks do you and your kids enjoy? Why?

- a. MacGregor Park – A participant shared that it is the ideal location for picnicking and spending time with your spouse/family. Another participant shared that the bike trail is nice.
- b. There was a discussion about what sports programming is available at the park. Currently, there are tennis courts, the basketball pavilion, the walking/bike trail and the indoor gym.
- c. A participant shared that the playground is very hot – there is no canopy or shade.
- d. George T. Nelson/Yellowstone Park – A participants visited this park to use the baseball field and track.
- e. Parkwood Park – Participant mentioned they have taken their dogs there, but it is more of a greenspace than a park.

2. Are there any challenges when you visit parks with your kids?

- a. Yellowstone Park is not well-lit, so they only go during the daytime. There was agreement that it is not well-lit. There is also gang activity that goes on at the basketball court. But the park used to be a hot spot because it was one of the only parks around with a swimming pool.
- b. A participant looked into starting a team through the Forge for Families with a focus on baseball. The participant knows some coaches that might be available,
- c. Another participant shared that her son's school cut some of the sports programs.
- d. For this area, there is mainly just football and basketball, so sports programming could be expanded at the parks. The facilitator/co-facilitator said they could bring this up with the project core team ("collaborative").
- e. A participant shared that art adds so much to a neighborhood and would love to have something closer/locally.

3. Do you feel safe and secure taking your kids to OST/South Union parks? Why or why not?

- a. A participant shared that they have traditionally felt safe at the park but growing up in the neighborhood has had an impact on the way the participant feels at the parks (biased). Since the participant "knows" the neighborhood, there are not many concerns. However, there could be improvements to infrastructure like lighting.
- b. A participant mentioned there are not as many people using Yellowstone Park as they would have thought since it is next to a school. There is an appreciation that the park is mostly enclosed, but the lighting could be improved. It is a busy street next to the park because people use it to get to 610. The participant wishes there were more kids. The park has a nice baseball field – one participant hasn't seen much activity on the field whereas another participant knows groups were using it prior to COVID.
- c. Meeting host shared the Agents of Discovery mission is live at Yellowstone Park and encouraged focus group participants to participate.
- d. Park at Palm Center has fruit trees that are available to be picked by the public. The group was excited to hear about this aspect of the park. Families mainly visit the park, and the splash pad and bbq pits have historically been used a lot. The farmer's market is

connected to the park, which is cool. There is a homeless guy who baths at the splash pad and uses the trail to walk.

- e. There is very sparse lighting at Yellowstone, primarily from the street lighting.
 - i. A participant goes to Zollie Scales and the Spark Park at Whidby Park. At Zollie Scales, there is no lighting around the park, and when it gets to be 5 pm, it is tricky to navigate. The participant used to play baseball at Zollie Scales, so they had to finish playing by 6 pm. The participant has not complained about the lighting, but perhaps others have raised awareness of this issue.
- f. A participant shared that issues at Zollie Scales haven't really impacted them in a negative sense, but in the past few years, the park has been locked up at night, which is helping to prevent cars from being parked there late at night. The way they view the parks and issues might be a cultural thing – people do not bother other people.

4. Are there any amenities or activities missing for your kids at OST/South Union parks?

- a. Beautification
- b. Lighting
- c. Baseball program
- d. Show the history of the parks

5. Are there any organizations, schools or partners you would suggest to help provide those amenities or activities?

- a. Cullen, Whidby and Foster schools – highlight Agents of Discovery with the school
- b. Seven churches in the OST/South Union area
- c. Not that many businesses, but there is a strip center with Sonic and Chase and they tend to engage locally

6. Is there anything else about OST/South Union parks that you'd like to share?

- a. Participants want to ensure their civic clubs are aware of the project, and the project team should include the perimeter of the neighborhoods because they use the parks as well.
- b. A participant recommended the project team find ways to engage the civic clubs through (for example) neighborhood competitions like kickball (pick a park/team you would play for) to connect them together to focus on kids/youth.
- c. Teams can help build relationships and get people to know each other.

END OF NOTES

FOCUS GROUP – NATURE & LANDSCAPING NOTES



OST/South Union Nature and Landscape Focus Group Notes OST/South Union Parks Project

Monday, November 16; 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm CST

Facilitating Team:

The meeting was organized through Houston Parks Board and led by community member facilitators Andret Rayford and JaRita Laddimore Mitchell.

Participants:

There were 2 community member participants in the Zoom Meeting and our two facilitators. Lisa Kasianowitz also joined the meeting to take notes and be there to answer questions.

Project webpage:

The project information webpage is located [here](#) for more details about the project.

Purpose:

To get specific community input regarding opportunities to incorporate more nature and landscaping into OST/South Union Parks.

Summary:

Meeting attendees consisted of three (3) community residents, plus two (2) facilitators. An "ice breaker" question ("What was your favorite sweet treat to eat at the park or your local green space when you were younger?") followed introductions. In order to stimulate conversation/feedback, six (6) questions were raised with participants. There was a general consensus that there are improvements needed to make the green space and trails within the parks smoother as well as focus on how to improve the sidewalks getting to the parks. The group participants suggested a variety of activities that could be implemented at the parks, like volunteer activities or educational activities surrounding the environment (ecosystems, pollinator gardens, insects, etc.). Last, the group provided many suggestions for including other local partners in the OST/SU Parks Project.

Meeting Notes:

1. **Do you think nature and landscaping in parks is important in parks? Why or why not?**
 - a. Yes, it is important. From a financial standpoint, it increases the value of the park, which increases value of the neighborhood, which then increases funding, and so on.
 - b. From an individual point of view, we want to empower residents to have pride in the neighborhood. A well-maintained park creates empowerment.
 - c. It would be really nice to see flowers and butterflies while walking around the parks since there is a big "go green" movement going on.
 - d. It would be beneficial to have more shade because the pavement gets really hot, especially for people that walk their dogs.

2. **What are your favorite trees or flowers in the OST/South Union Parks? Why are they your favorite?**
 - a. Participants were not too familiar with different trees and flowers, but education would be important to teach people about ecosystems and different insects and bugs' lifecycles.
 - b. Vines would be pretty to add to the parks, but it would also be great to see more gardens and insects.
 - c. Community gardens would be positive for people to learn how to grow their own food – seems to be on brand right now and trending. Participants would be supportive of having a community garden.
 - d. A participant mentioned there might be a community garden at MacGregor Park near tennis courts, but it is closed off to the public.
 - e. There also might be a community garden off Cullen before you get to Yellowstone (on the right side), but there is only a sign – no garden appears to be present.

3. **How can nature and landscaping in parks improve safety and security concerns in OST/South Union parks?**
 - a. The foliage needs to be tidied up at Zollie Scales Park in the park's backside (dead end). If the parks are kept neat, people will feel more secure in the back parts that are not as visible.
 - b. At George T. Nelson, perhaps some type of barriers could be added to the park to help prevent kids from wandering off and chasing balls into the street. There are active play areas right near the street.
 - c. If the parks are more appealing to people, more people will want to go and gather. Gatherings would help deter criminals because so many people would see them. Where there is more people, others won't want to do something in broad daylight.
 - d. When it comes to safety, at Zollie Scales, a participant has twisted an ankle while using the green space. Holes at the parks need to be filled in.
 - e. Parks needs to have smooth and even walking surfaces so people do not trip or get hurt.

- f. Whidby Spark Park, Zollie Scales and Cyrill Madison parks also need better irrigation and water flow.
 - i. At Whidby, there is grass growing on the track.
 - ii. At Cyrill Madison, the ground is pretty hard.
- g. Getting to Zollie Scales is more of the danger - sidewalks along Springhill Street are horrendous. The sidewalks are lop-sided and there are holes everywhere.
 - i. Children are seen walking along the street because the sidewalk is not walkable.
- h. The seniors like the small hills on the track for exercise at Zollie Scales.

4. Are there any volunteer events or activities to do with nature and landscaping that you would be interested in attending?

- a. Food trucks would be great to bring out residents and families. Once a month, the trucks could go to different parks. It would help to familiarize people with the parks.
- b. A volunteer event could be held in which there are organized teams to do tree plantings and a competition – who could plant the most trees.
- c. The track at Zollie Scales could host an NRDC OHIP event like a walk-a-thon with entertainment in the middle and a health fair.
- d. Participants agreed a walking group could be started at that park.
- e. There is a potential to bring in schools for a project at the park for something like pollinator gardens.
- f. Mr. Cotton takes care of the community garden at Palm Center and an aquaponics activity could be coordinated with him would to do at the parks since it is for all ages.
- g. There might be outside groups that could be invited into OST to help teach community leaders in OST to lead those same activities in the parks.
- h. Proposal to hold a skating and music event where people can skate around a walking track.
- i. Nothing seems to ever be going on at Beech White Park so more activities are needed to help people realize this park exists.
 - i. There are little leagues that use the park, but for the most part it is not utilized. It backs up to an area where you can't see what is going on.

5. Are there any local organizations, schools or partners you would suggest that can help with these volunteer activities?

- a. Foster Elementary and Cullen Junior High School
- b. Christian Oasis Center
- c. South Union Missionary Baptist
- d. South Union Church of Christ
- e. Lilly Grove Missionary Baptist (has a community center)
- f. Businesses (corner stores)
- g. A Rocket Moving Company is right next to Zollie Scales
- h. Pyburns and Popeyes have been helpful with cleanups
 - i. Participant shared that Pyburns are ok with their store baskets going home (Karen Wen is manager)

- i. Bud's Meat Market on Cullen might be interested
- j. Houston Texans YMCA should be more involved
- k. Barber Shops
- l. Sugar Rush is a bakery (she grew up in the community)
 - i. Lots of little businesses popped up near Sugar Rush
- m. Dixie's Hardware

6. Is there anything else about nature or landscaping in OST/South Union parks that you'd like to share?

- a. Concerts at the park in MacGregor Park could be brought back, but there would need to be other activities to go along with it – just having the concert would not be enough.
- b. The turf at Levy Park is soft (not real grass in certain areas), which could help kids not get hurt. Perhaps this could be implemented at parks in OST.
 - i. The material located at Zollie Scales in the playground area catches on fire (woodchips).
- c. People have to drive 15 minutes to the nearest dog park. People need a dog park/fenced area.
 - i. Beech White Park could have a dog park to help bring people there.

END OF NOTES

APPENDIX C – PARK
ASSESSMENT DETAILED
SCORING

ZOLLIE SCALES PARK ASSESSMENT

Park Inspection & Evaluation Tool

Park Name: Zollie Scales

Park Evaluator: Elaheh

Date: 4/9/2020 / 1/3/2021

Scoring Instructions: All items should be scored on a 1 to 10 scale. 1-3 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is poor, 4-6 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is fair, 7-9 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is good, and 10 means the park feature/amenity requires immediate replacement.

Park Access:

- 9 Sufficient number of park entrances that are highly visible and are easy to locate.
- 8 Park entrance is well designed with clear signage.
- 10 Safe and convenient access to the park (crosswalks, sidewalks, etc.)
- 8 Park entrance connects to the surrounding park trails and activity areas. Pathways connect to destinations with signage.
- 3 Sufficient parking for intended park uses/available park amenities.
- 10 Entrance and trails are ADA-accessible (n/a in dedicated hiking/biking areas).

Total Score: 48 **Total # of scored items: 6** **Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 8**

Amenities:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <u>6</u> Trails | <u>N/A</u> Community center |
| <u>N/A</u> Soccer/Football/Ultime/Filed hockey/Lacrosse field | <u>N/A</u> Fishing pier |
| <u>N/A</u> Baseball/Softball diamond/field | <u>9</u> Restrooms |
| <u>6</u> Tennis court | <u>2</u> Sufficient amount of trash receptacles |
| <u>6</u> Basketball court | <u>2</u> Sufficient number of drinking fountains |
| <u>N/A</u> Volleyball court | <u>N/A</u> Shelters for shade |
| <u>8</u> Fencing | <u>6</u> Benches |
| <u>8</u> Playground | |
| <u>N/A</u> Fitness station | |
| <u>N/A</u> Swimming pool | |
| <u>N/A</u> Community gardens | |
| <u>N/A</u> Skate park | |
| <u>N/A</u> Off-leash dog park | |
| <u>N/A</u> Splash pad/park | |
| <u>N/A</u> Natural areas | |
| <u>N/A</u> Amphitheaters/Music/Performance spaces | |
| <u>5</u> Picnic areas/Pavilions | |
| <u>N/A</u> BBQ Pit | |
| <u>N/A</u> Paved open spaces/Plazas | |

Total Score: 58 **Total # of scored items: 10** **Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 5.8**

Safety & Maintenance Concerns:

- 7 No graffiti, vandalism, litter, animal waste, etc.
- 10 No broken amenities.
- No evidence of unauthorized camping/vagrancy in the park.
- Proper lighting at park entrance.
- Proper lighting along the perimeter of the park.
- Proper lighting along park trails.
- Proper lighting at nighttime activity areas (tennis courts, sports fields, performance spaces, plazas, sitting areas, etc.).

Total Score: 17 **Total # of scored items: 2** **Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 8.5**

Aesthetics:

- 5 Variety of landscape types and environments (n/a if a single use facility such as a playground or pool).
- 8 Presence and variety of vegetation.
- 10 Abundant and well-placed trees in park/along park edge if a pocket park.
- 4 Attractive park surroundings, park perimeter, and presence of views from the park.
- N/A Variety and coordination of color in programmed environments (n/a for natural areas).
- 8 Attractively designed and coordinated signage, light fixtures, and furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, lamp posts, etc.).
- 8 Use of high-quality materials of park equipment, utilities, etc.
- 8 Pleasant sounds. Effective mitigation of loud/unappealing surrounding noises from highway, industry, etc.
- 10 Effective mitigation of unappealing surrounding land uses such as industrial facilities, derelict property, etc.

Total Score: 61 **Total # of scored items: 8** **Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 7.65**

Average Overall Score: 7.49

Average Overall Score weighted: 7.68 (Safety 35%, Access 30%, Amenities 20%, Condition 15%)

Comments:

- There is only one gated entrance on Corder St with a poor signage placement. On the other 3 sides have land use. It seems to be a walking entrance on the east side of the garden. There are no sidewalks and crosswalks leading into. There is no connectivity to the park. Accessibility score is low because there is not any accessibility outside of the parking lot.
- Park has a paved trail, with no signage, that loops around the park.
- Tennis court needs to be repaved and fully fenced. Basketball court has cracks in cement and heavy debris. Several man made holes can be seen. Playground and picnic area's benches need to be repaired and some replacement such as rubber floors, and slide. Also, these areas are not equipped with any canopy.
- Can see some vandalism on the tables and there are some broken lights needed to repair or replace. Restrooms are closed and need overhaul. Fencing needs to be repaired at the back corner. Landscape type is not various and needs to be trim especially at the back corner. Literally no trees in the park, just foliage surrounding the perimeter. There are horrible track surroundings, such as the A-rocket industry and boarded up homes. Which could be supporting illicit activity that the park attendant mentioned taking place.
- Everything is muted in its color scheme and equipment such as furnishing, vegetation, and lightning do not have enough quality. Park needs effective measures to mitigate surrounding noises.

GEORGE T NELSON PARK ASSESSMENT

Park Inspection & Evaluation Tool

Park Name: George Nelson Park (Yellowstone Park) **Park Evaluator:** Chanelle **Date:** 4-4-2020/1-4-2021

Scoring Instructions: All Items should be scored on a 1 to 10 scale. 1-3 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is good 4-6 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is fair, 7-9 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is poor, and 10 means the park feature/amenity requires immediate replacement.

Access:

- 6 Sufficient number of park entrances that are highly visible and are easy to locate.
- 5 Park entrance is well designed with clear signage.
- 5 Safe and convenient access to the park (crosswalks, sidewalks, etc.)
- 5 Park entrance connects to the surrounding park trails and activity areas. Pathways connect to destinations with signage.
- 8 Sufficient parking for intended park use/available park amenities.
- 10 Entrance and trails are ADA-accessible (n/a in dedicated hiking/biking areas).

Total Score: 39 **Total # of scored items:** 6 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 6.5

Amenities:

8	Trails	N/A	Community center
N/A	Soccer/Football/Ultimate/Field hockey/Lacrosse field	N/A	Fishing pier
8	Baseball/Softball diamond/field	N/A	Restrooms
N/A	Tennis court	1	Sufficient amount of trash receptacles
8	Basketball court	6	Sufficient number of drinking fountains
???	Volleyball court	3	Shelters for shade
N/A	Fencing	6	Benches
7	Playground		
N/A	Fitness station		
2	Swimming pool		
N/A	Community gardens		
N/A	Skate park		
N/A	Off-leash dog park		
N/A	Splash pad/park		
3	Natural areas		
N/A	Amphitheaters/Music/Performance spaces		
6	Picnic areas/Pavilions		
8	BBQ Pit		
N/A	Paved open spaces/Plazas		

Total Score: 66 **Total # of scored items:** 12 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 5.5

Safety:

- 10 No graffiti, vandalism, litter, animal waste, etc.
- 5 No broken amenities.
- 10 No evidence of unauthorized camping/vagrancy in the park.
- 10 Proper lighting at park entrance.
- 5 Proper lighting along the perimeter of the park.
- 10 Proper lighting along park trails.
- 5 Proper lighting at nighttime activity areas (tennis courts, sports fields, performance spaces, plazas, sitting areas, etc.).

Total Score: 55 **Total # of scored items:** 7 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 7.85

Condition/Aesthetics:

- 3 Variety of landscape types and environments (n/a if a single use facility such as a playground or pool).
- 3 Presence and variety of vegetation.
- 2 Abundant and well-placed trees in park/along park edge if a pocket park.
- 5 Attractive park surroundings, park perimeter, and presence of views from the park.
- 5 Variety and coordination of color in programmed environments (n/a for natural areas).
- 4 Attractively designed and coordinated signage, light fixtures, and furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, lamp posts, etc.).
- 5 Use of high-quality materials of park equipment, utilities, etc..
- 5 Pleasant sounds. Effective mitigation of loud/unappealing surrounding noises from highway, industry, etc.
- 5 Effective mitigation of unappealing surrounding land uses such as industrial facilities, derelict property, etc.

Total Score: 37 **Total # of scored items:** 9 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 4.11

Average Overall Score: 5.99

Average Overall Score weighted: 6.41 (Safety 35%, Access 30%, Amenities 20%, Condition 15%)

Comments:

1. George Nelson is overall a good park but there were certain elements and amenities that would benefit greatly from maintenance and consistent upkeep, such as the basketball court, foliage, pavilion area, playground, and baseball diamond.
2. Specifically, we see the basketball court has structural issues such as the uneven court that allows for pooling of water as well as the roof being impacted by nearby overgrowing foliage. Management of other foliage areas will allow for better grass growth.
3. Pavilion area is alright but tables tops need to be evened out, noticeable occupation by birds. Uncertainty on if light fixtures work. 4-5 tables in area for nice gathering/birthday party use.
4. Playground is in fair condition—can be played on and has most of the elements (slide, tic-tac-toe, monkey bars, swing is detached). Some of the rubber/synthetic flooring could be replaced. Also, graffiti on slides to be covered. Playground set looks to be for ages 5-12.
5. Some semblance of a “trail” but it is not defined. Could be a good feature if developed.
6. Infrastructure for baseball in place, benches could be updated, and diamond can be more well defined.

PARK AT PALM CENTER ASSESSMENT

Park Inspection & Evaluation Tool

Park Name: Park at Palm Center

Park Evaluator: Sheri Smith

Date: 3/27/20 r1 1/4/2021

Scoring Instructions: All items should be scored on a 1 to 10 scale. 1-3 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is good, 4-6 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is fair, 7-9 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is poor, and 10 means the park feature/amenity requires immediate replacement.

Access:

- 4 Sufficient number of park entrances that are highly visible and are easy to locate.
- 3 Park entrance is well designed with clear signage.
- 5 Safe and convenient access to the park (crosswalks, sidewalks, etc.)
- 2 Park entrance connects to the surrounding park trails and activity areas. Pathways connect to destinations with signage.
- 4 Sufficient parking for intended park use/available park amenities.
- 2 Entrance and trails are ADA-accessible (n/a in dedicated hiking/biking areas).

Total Score: 20 **Total # of scored items:** 6 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 3.33

Amenities:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <u>2</u> Trails | <u> </u> Community center |
| <u> </u> Soccer/Football/Ultimate/Field hockey/Lacrosse field | <u> </u> Fishing pier |
| <u> </u> Baseball/Softball diamond/field | <u> </u> Restrooms |
| <u> </u> Tennis court | <u>2</u> Sufficient amount of trash receptacles |
| <u> </u> Basketball court | <u>2</u> Sufficient number of drinking fountains |
| <u> </u> Volleyball court | <u>2</u> Shelters for shade |
| <u>2</u> Fencing | <u>2</u> Benches |
| <u>2</u> Playground | |
| <u> </u> Fitness station | |
| <u> </u> Swimming pool | |
| <u>2</u> Community gardens | |
| <u> </u> Skate park | |
| <u> </u> Off-leash dog park | |
| <u>2</u> Splash pad/park | |
| <u>3</u> Natural areas | |
| <u>2</u> Amphitheaters/Music/Performance spaces | |
| <u>3</u> Picnic areas/Pavilions | |
| <u>5</u> BBQ Pit | |
| <u>2</u> Paved open spaces/Plazas | |

Total Score: 33 **Total # of scored items:** 14 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 2.3

Safety:

- 2 No graffiti, vandalism, litter, animal waste, etc.
- 2 No broken amenities.
- 6 No evidence of unauthorized camping/vagrancy in the park.
- 2 Proper lighting at park entrance.
- 2 Proper lighting along the perimeter of the park.
- 2 Proper lighting along park trails.
- 2 Proper lighting at nighttime activity areas (tennis courts, sports fields, performance spaces, plazas, sitting areas, etc.).

Total Score: 18 **Total # of scored items:** 7 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 2.57

Condition/Aesthetics:

- 1 Variety of landscape types and environments (n/a if a single use facility such as a playground or pool).
- 1 Presence and variety of vegetation.
- 4 Abundant and well-placed trees in park/along park edge if a pocket park.
- 3 Attractive park surroundings, park perimeter, and presence of views from the park.
- 1 Variety and coordination of color in programmed environments (n/a for natural areas).
- 1 Attractively designed and coordinated signage, light fixtures, and furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, lamp posts, etc.).
- 2 Use of high-quality materials of park equipment, utilities, etc.
- 3 Pleasant sounds. Effective mitigation of loud/unappealing surrounding noises from highway, industry, etc.
- 3 Effective mitigation of unappealing surrounding land uses such as industrial facilities, derelict property, etc.

Total Score: 19 **Total # of scored items:** 9 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 2.11

Average Overall Score evenly weighted: 2.58

Average Overall Score weighted: 2.68 (Safety 35%, Access 30%, Amenities 20%, Condition 15%)

Comments:

Overall the park in good condition. There are a few areas that are in need of general maintenance such as chalk on the sidewalks, adding mulch at the base of the playground equipment. The signs identifying the various trees in the orchard and the etchings in the sun dial need of a facelift. Additionally, the fruit trees and the fruit that falls are not maintained.

There was evidence of vagrancy as someone was sleeping on the bench during the assessment. However, that did not stop the people from continuing their morning exercise.

There are two challenges to the park. The first is signage. There is only one sign facing the northeast of the park. If you approach from the west, there is no signage. The second is ADA accessibility IF you are crossing the street to enter the park. Either via the lot across the street or from bus or rail.

HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SPARK PARK ASSESSMENT

Park Inspection & Evaluation Tool

Park Name: Hartsfield Elementary SPARK Park **Park Evaluator:** S Smith **Date:** 1/20/2021

Scoring Instructions: All items should be scored on a 1 to 10 scale. 1-3 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is good, 4-6 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is fair, 7-9 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is poor, and 10 means the park feature/amenity requires immediate replacement.

Park Access:

- 7 Sufficient number of park entrances that are highly visible and are easy to locate.
- 1 Park entrance is well designed with clear signage.
- 4 Safe and convenient access to the park (crosswalks, sidewalks, etc.)
- NA Park entrance connects to the surrounding park trails and activity areas. Pathways connect to destinations with signage.
- 7 Sufficient parking for intended park use/available park amenities.
- 4 Entrance and trails are ADA-accessible (n/a in dedicated hiking/biking areas).

Total Score: 23 Total # of items scored: 5 Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 4.6

Park Features:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <u>2</u> Trails | <u>n/a</u> Community center |
| <u>n/a</u> Soccer/Football/Ultimate/Field hockey/Lacrosse field | <u>n/a</u> Fishing pier |
| <u>n/a</u> Baseball/Softball diamond/field | <u>7</u> Restrooms* |
| <u>n/a</u> Tennis court | <u>2</u> Sufficient amount of trash receptacles |
| <u>n/a</u> Basketball court | <u>2</u> Sufficient number of drinking fountains |
| <u>n/a</u> Volleyball court | <u>8</u> Shelters for shade |
| <u>1</u> Fencing | <u>1</u> Benches |
| <u>2</u> Playground | |
| <u>n/a</u> Fitness station | |
| <u>n/a</u> Swimming pool | |
| <u>n/a</u> Community gardens | |
| <u>n/a</u> Skate park | |
| <u>n/a</u> Off-leash dog park | |
| <u>n/a</u> Splash pad/park | |
| <u>6</u> Natural areas | |
| <u>n/a</u> Amphitheaters/Music/Performance spaces | |
| <u>n/a</u> Picnic areas/Pavilions | |
| <u>n/a</u> BBQ Pit | |
| <u>n/a</u> Paved open spaces/Plazas | |

Total Score: 31 Total # of scored items: 9 Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 3.4

Safety & Maintenance Concerns:

- 4 No graffiti, vandalism, litter, animal waste, etc.
- 2 No broken amenities.
- 1 No evidence of unauthorized camping/vagrancy in the park.
- 9 Proper lighting at park entrance.
- 2 Proper lighting along the perimeter of the park.
- 7 Proper lighting along park trails.
- 7 Proper lighting at nighttime activity areas (tennis courts, sports fields, performance spaces, plazas, sitting areas, etc.).

Total Score: 32 Total # of items scored: 7 Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 4.6

Aesthetics:

- 8 Variety of landscape types and environments (n/a if a single use facility such as a playground or pool).
- 5 Presence and variety of vegetation.
- 3 Abundant and well-placed trees in park/along park edge if a pocket park.
- 4 Attractive park surroundings, park perimeter, and presence of views from the park.
- 1 Variety and coordination of color in programmed environments (n/a for natural areas).
- 2 Attractively designed and coordinated signage, light fixtures, and furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, lamp posts, etc.).
- 3 Use of high-quality materials of park equipment, utilities, etc..
- 2 Pleasant sounds. Effective mitigation of loud/unappealing surrounding noises from highway, industry, etc.
- 5 Effective mitigation of unappealing surrounding land uses such as industrial facilities, derelict property, etc.

Total Score: 33 Total # of items scored: 9 Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 3.7

Overall Average Score: 4.1

Overall Weighted Score: 4.23 (Safety 35%, Access 30%, Amenities 20%, Condition 15%)

Comments:

The current Park Condition Assessment isn't designed for SPARK parks.

It is unclear if there is parking for spark park outside of school hours. There is a park behind and another park adjacent with a 'no trespassing' sign.

Spark park trails winds behind school and there is no line of sight from and of the street. Not used unless other activity.

Coverage /shade is not consistent around the park, however, additional trees have been planted

Park only designed for elementary and is well maintained. There are no other amenities

Colorful entrance and great signage about the neighborhood – does need updating

BEECH-WHITE PARK ASSESSMENT

Park Inspection & Evaluation Tool

Park Name: Beech-White

Park Evaluator: Charles A. Young

Date: April 17, 2020
January 3, 2021

Scoring Instructions: All items should be scored on a 1 to 10 scale. 1-3 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is good, 4-6 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is fair, 7-9 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is poor, and 10 means the park feature/amenity requires immediate replacement.

Access:

- 9 Sufficient number of park entrances that are highly visible and are easy to locate.
- 7 Park entrance is well designed with clear signage.
- 7 Safe and convenient access to the park (crosswalks, sidewalks, etc.)
- 7 Park entrance connects to the surrounding park trails and activity areas. Pathways connect to destinations with signage.
- 7 Sufficient parking for intended park use/available park amenities.
- 8 Entrance and trails are ADA-accessible (n/a in dedicated hiking/biking areas).

Total Score: 45 **Total # of scored items:** 6 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 7.5

Amenities:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <u>10</u> Trails | <u>N/a</u> Community center |
| <u>4</u> Soccer/Football/Ultimate/Field hockey/Lacrosse field | <u>N/a</u> Fishing pier |
| <u>N/a</u> Baseball/Softball diamond/field | <u>10</u> Restrooms |
| <u>N/a</u> Tennis court | <u>4</u> Sufficient amount of trash receptacles |
| <u>N/a</u> Basketball court | <u>5</u> Sufficient number of drinking fountains |
| <u>N/a</u> Volleyball court | <u>N/a</u> Shelters for shade |
| <u>3</u> Fencing | <u>6</u> Benches |
| <u>4</u> Playground | |
| <u>N/a</u> Fitness station | |
| <u>N/a</u> Swimming pool | |
| <u>N/a</u> Community gardens | |
| <u>N/a</u> Skate park | |
| <u>N/a</u> Off-leash dog park | |
| <u>N/a</u> Splash pad/park | |
| <u>4</u> Natural areas | |
| <u>N/a</u> Amphitheaters/Music/Performance spaces | |
| <u>N/a</u> Picnic areas/Pavilions | |
| <u>N/a</u> BBQ Pit | |
| <u>N/a</u> Paved open spaces/Plazas | |

Total Score: 50

Total # of scored items: 9

Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 5.55

Safety:

- 9 No graffiti, vandalism, litter, animal waste, etc.
- 9 No broken amenities.
- 10 No evidence of unauthorized camping/vagrancy in the park.
- 5 Proper lighting at park entrance.
- 8 Proper lighting along the perimeter of the park.
- 10 Proper lighting along park trails.
- N/a Proper lighting at nighttime activity areas (tennis courts, sports fields, performance spaces, plazas, sitting areas, etc.).

Total Score: 51

Total # of scored items: 6

Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 8.5

Condition/Aesthetics:

- 4 Variety of landscape types and environments (n/a if a single use facility such as a playground or pool).
- 4 Presence and variety of vegetation.
- 4 Abundant and well-placed trees in park/along park edge if a pocket park.
- 9 Attractive park surroundings, park perimeter, and presence of views from the park.
- 4 Variety and coordination of color in programmed environments (n/a for natural areas).
- 6 Attractively designed and coordinated signage, light fixtures, and furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, lamp posts, etc.).
- 6 Use of high-quality materials of park equipment, utilities, etc..
- 10 Pleasant sounds. Effective mitigation of loud/unappealing surrounding noises from highway, industry, etc.
- 9 Effective mitigation of unappealing surrounding land uses such as industrial facilities, derelict property, etc.

Total Score: 56

Total # of scored items: 9

Average Score (Total/# of scored items): 6.22

Average Overall Score: 6.94

Average Overall Score weighted: 7.27 (Safety 35%, Access 30%, Amenities 20%, Condition 15%)

Comments:

There's a lot of trash at the playground. The trail ends abruptly and is in very rough shape. There's only one bench, but it is in good shape. Fence is in overall good shape, but questionable in two end corners. Trees can be trimmed in easement between the fence. There's evidence of vagrancy: abandoned shopping cart, people digging through the trash receptacles, etc. There are eight trash receptacles in total. The playground is in fair shape but needs a paint job. The restroom is temporary and appears to be unsanitary.

The park has very few amenities. There are goal posts for football but no demarcations for the fields or stands/bleachers. It is basically an open field.

There is a remoteness to the park that lends itself to the potential of questionable activities. As mentioned above, during assessment a person was observed sleeping on a bench immediately outside of the park.

The park is surrounded by 610 and Scott Street. Two busy streets; noise is apparent while in the park. Finally, there is the extension of the park. North fencing aligns with the developing Beech White II which seems to be a community garden.

CYRILL MADISON PARK ASSESSMENT

Park Inspection & Evaluation Tool

Park Name: Cyrill Madison

Park Evaluator: Charles A. Young

Date: March 31, 2020

Scoring Instructions: All items should be scored on a 1 to 10 scale. 1-3 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is good, 4-6 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is fair, 7-9 means the condition of the park feature/amenity is poor, and 10 means the park feature/amenity requires immediate replacement.

Park Access:

- 10 Sufficient number of park entrances that are highly visible and are easy to locate.
- 7 Park entrance is well designed with clear signage.
- 7 Safe and convenient access to the park (crosswalks, sidewalks, etc.)
- 9 Park entrance connects to the surrounding park trails and activity areas. Pathways connect to destinations with signage.
- 7 Sufficient parking for intended park use/available park amenities.
- 7 Entrance and trails are ADA-accessible (n/a in dedicated hiking/biking areas).

Total Score: 47 **Total # of scored items:** 6 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 7.83

Amenities:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <u>N/a</u> Trails | <u>N/a</u> Community center |
| <u>N/a</u> Soccer/Football/Ultimate/Field hockey/Lacrosse field | <u>N/a</u> Fishing pier |
| <u>N/a</u> Baseball/Softball diamond/field | <u>N/a</u> Restrooms |
| <u>N/a</u> Tennis court | <u>3</u> Sufficient amount of trash receptacles |
| <u>10</u> Basketball court | <u>10</u> Sufficient number of drinking fountains |
| <u>N/a</u> Volleyball court | <u>10</u> Shelters for shade |
| <u>3</u> Fencing | <u>7</u> Benches |
| <u>6</u> Playground | |
| <u>N/a</u> Fitness station | |
| <u>N/a</u> Swimming pool | |
| <u>N/a</u> Community gardens | |
| <u>N/a</u> Skate park | |
| <u>N/a</u> Off-leash dog park | |
| <u>N/a</u> Splash pad/park | |
| <u>6</u> Natural areas | |
| <u>N/a</u> Amphitheaters/Music/Performance spaces | |
| <u>3</u> Picnic areas/Pavilions | |
| <u>N/a</u> BBQ Pit | |
| <u>N/a</u> Paved open spaces/Plazas | |

Total Score: 58 **Total # of scored items:** 9 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 6.44

Safety & Maintenance Concerns:

- 8 No graffiti, vandalism, litter, animal waste, etc.
- 9 No broken amenities.
- 2 No evidence of unauthorized camping/vagrancy in the park.
- 6 Proper lighting at park entrance.
- 5 Proper lighting along the perimeter of the park.
- NA Proper lighting along park trails.
- 6 Proper lighting at nighttime activity areas (tennis courts, sports fields, performance spaces, plazas, sitting areas, etc.).

Total Score: 36 **Total # of scored items:** 6 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 6

Aesthetics:

- 6 Variety of landscape types and environments (n/a if a single use facility such as a playground or pool).
- 6 Presence and variety of vegetation.
- 5 Abundant and well-placed trees in park/along park edge if a pocket park.
- 7 Attractive park surroundings, park perimeter, and presence of views from the park.
- 7 Variety and coordination of color in programmed environments (n/a for natural areas).
- 7 Attractively designed and coordinated signage, light fixtures, and furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, lamp posts, etc.).
- 6 Use of high-quality materials of park equipment, utilities, etc..
- 5 Pleasant sounds. Effective mitigation of loud/unappealing surrounding noises from highway, industry, etc.
- 6 Effective mitigation of unappealing surrounding land uses such as industrial facilities, derelict property, etc.

Total Score: 55 **Total # of scored items:** 9 **Average Score (Total/# of scored items):** 6.11

Average Overall Score: 6.60

Average Overall Score weighted: 6.65 (Safety 35%, Access 30%, Amenities 20%, Condition 15%)

Comments:

The park's entrances need to be redone as they may cause difficulty for those with disabilities and there only appears to be two entrances when there should at least four. The basketball court services as both the court and the parking which is a problem. There are also two broken metal spikes in court that could injure someone and/or pop someone's tire(s). The park is not very large so neither is its natural area, but there's a fair number of trees, though not much variety in vegetation. The fence is in good shape, but it is only on one side of the basketball court/parking lot and only goes from end to another, so I'm not sure of its purpose. The playground seems to be in pretty good shape, but it definitely needs to be repainted and a few of the wooded sections might also need to be sanded. There's only one picnic table w/ benches at the park and it is in good shape. They could probably use another one. There are two wooden benches by the playground and at least one of the planks needs to be replaced but both benches could use some sanding to avoid splinters. There is an overwhelming amount of beer bottle caps all over the park. Abandoned clothing, wrappers, cups, beer bottles, etc. were also left at the park. There were two trash receptacles but they could probably use two more. I surveyed the park during the daytime so I'm not sure about the functionality of the lights.