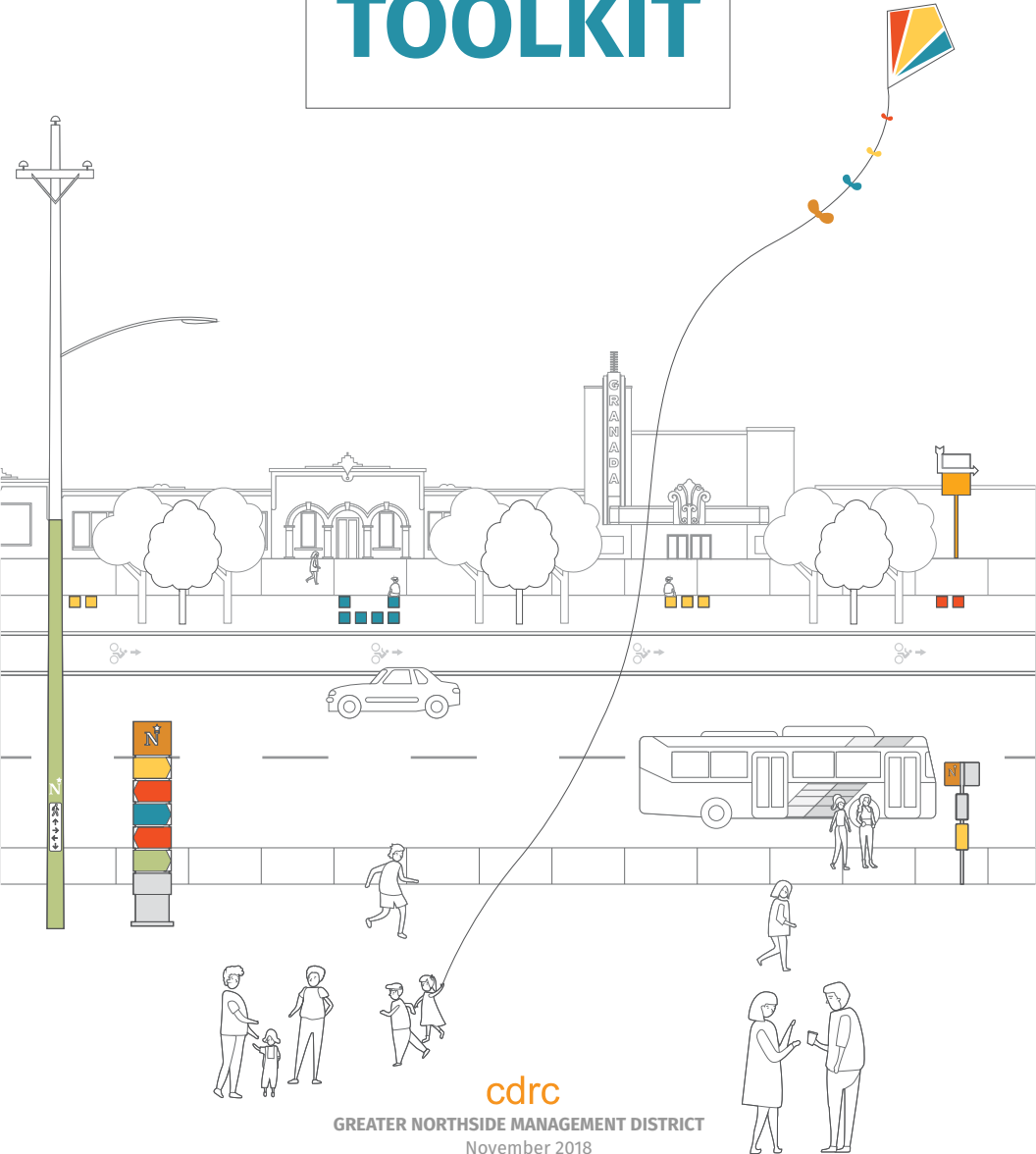


URBAN DESIGN TOOLKIT



cdrc

GREATER NORTHSIDE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

November 2018

URBAN DESIGN TOOLKIT

The Greater Northside District Urban Design Toolkit is a set of place-based design strategies that promote connectivity, enhance public spaces and spark economic development. Each strategy also strengthens the identity of the District overall and the five distinct neighborhoods that comprise it: Greater Heights, Near Northside, Northline, Independence Heights and Eastex Jensen.

The overarching goal is to tell the stories of place and celebrate the qualities that make the District and its neighborhoods special. The strategies re-think everyday urban elements and explore how they can contribute to building beauty, identity and place.

Greater Northside Management District

Rebecca Reyna, Executive Director
 Anibeth Turcios, Deputy Director
 Jorge Bustamante, Project Manager
 Sylvia Padilla, Executive Assistant
 Board Chair, Jeanette Rash
 Board Vice Chair, Jeff Procell
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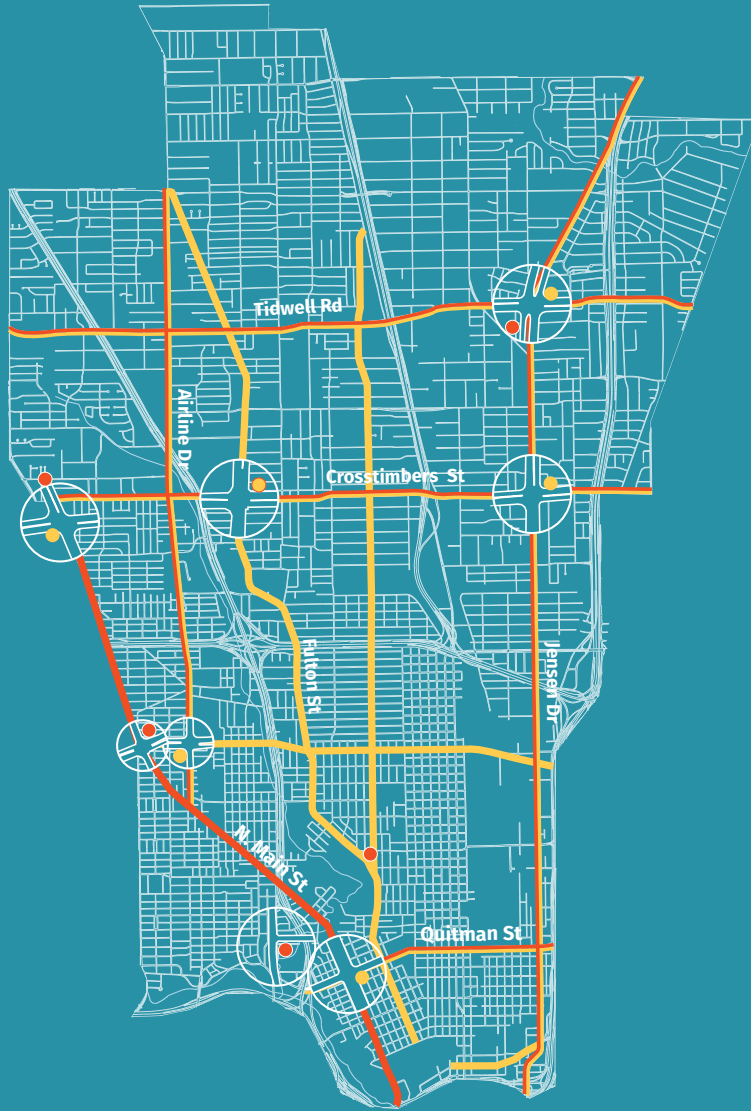
- FACADE IMPROVEMENT
- ART
- HISTORIC BUILDING
- POPULAR DESTINATION
- LIGHTING
- CONCERN
- FREQUENT ROUTE
- BUS SHELTER
- TRASH CAN
- WAYFINDING
- BENCHES NEEDED
- SEATING AREA
- TREES NEEDED
- BIKE RACKS

DESIGN PROCESS

The GNMD Urban Design Toolkit was developed through a series of community meetings, including a visioning meeting in each of the five Greater Northside Management District neighborhoods. The meetings focused on identifying concepts and strategies to promote the identity of each neighborhood, along with defining key locations for intervention. In total, 55 neighborhood leaders, stakeholders and business owners attended the meetings.

Specifically, in each neighborhood a mapping and brainstorming exercise was carried out to inform the design opportunities and locations included in this toolkit. Working with stakeholders a color was identified for each neighborhood, the color is used consistently to reinforce the character of each community.



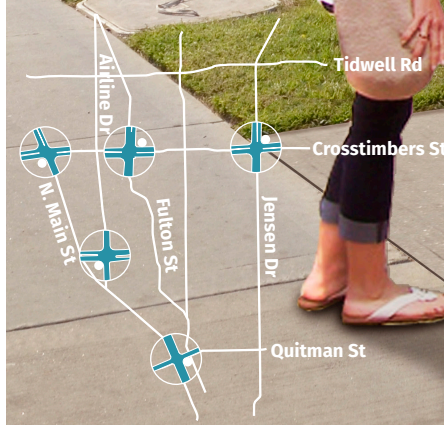


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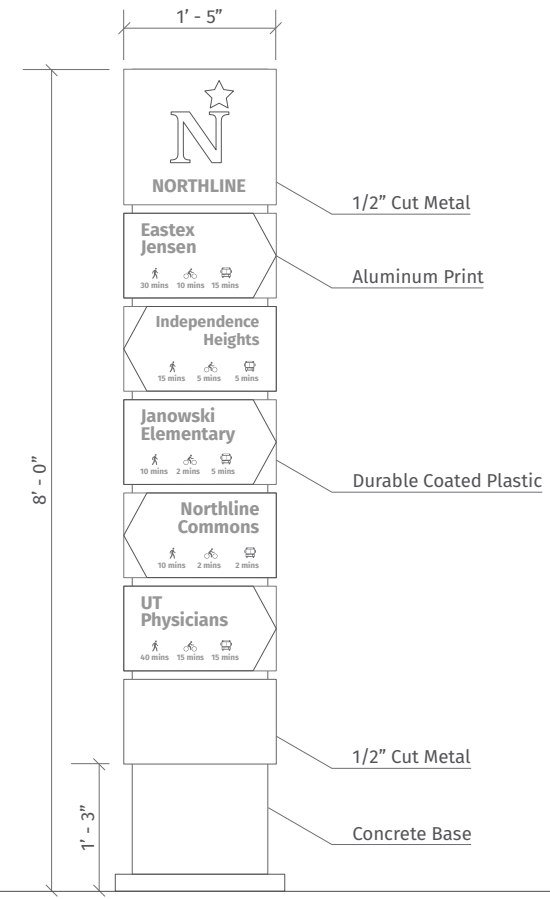
- Pedestrian Street Signage
- METRO Map and Bus Route Signage
- Neighborhood Signs
- District Signs

WAYFINDING

Wayfinding projects highlight each neighborhood’s unique character, destinations and strengths. The projects also assist residents and visitors with navigation, and encourage exploration via transit, on foot or bike. Combined, the four wayfinding projects create a cohesive network of signage, guiding visitors and residents to neighborhood destinations, including local businesses, parks and schools.



Proposed District Sign at Crosstimbers and Fulton Streets



DISTRICT SIGNS

District Signs are proposed for key intersections in each of the five neighborhoods: North Main and Crosstimbers Streets in Independence Heights, Airline Drive and West Calvacade Street in the Heights, North Main and Quitman Streets in Near Northside, Fulton and Crosstimbers Streets in Northline, and Jensen Drive and Tidwell Road in Eastex/Jensen. The District Signs would identify area businesses and activity centers, promote events and provide cultural information.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME

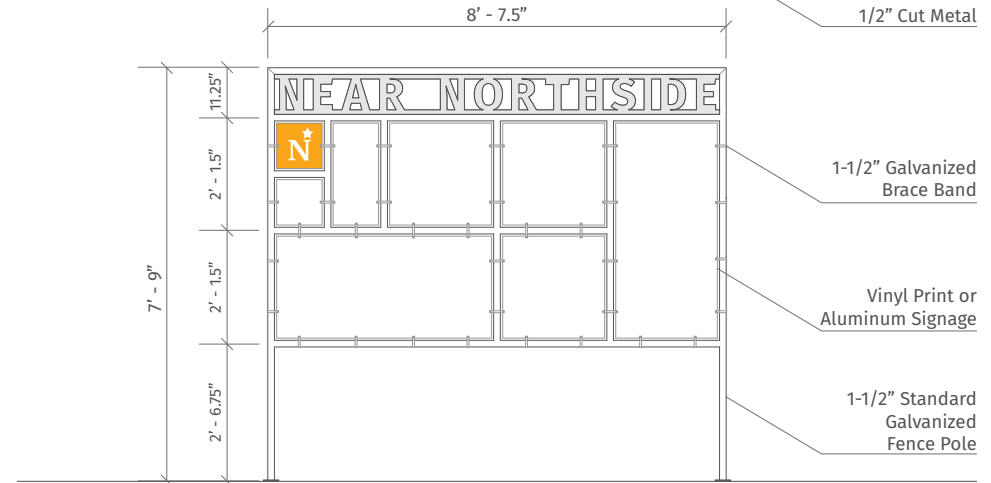




Proposed Neighborhood Sign at Irvington Boulevard and Fulton Streets

8' - 4.5"

N O R T H L I N E
E A S T E X J E N S E N
G R E A T E R H E I G H T S
N E A R N O R T H S I D E
I N D E P E N D E N C E H E I G H T S



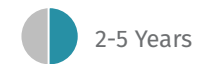
NEIGHBORHOOD SIGNS

Neighborhood Signs are strategically located in each of the five neighborhoods. The frame is uniform, with central changeable pieces to celebrate and share neighborhood events or destinations. Local schools or art groups would be encouraged to exhibit short term projects. Neighborhood Signs are proposed at the following intersections: North Main Street and E 33rd St in Independence Heights, former Heights Transit Center in the Heights, Irvington Boulevard and Fulton Street in Near Northside, Irvington Boulevard and Crosstimbers Street in Northline, and Jensen Drive and Aldine Westfield Rd in Eastex/Jensen.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME



2-5 Years



Proposed Pedestrian Sign along Airline Drive



PEDESTRIAN STREET SIGNAGE

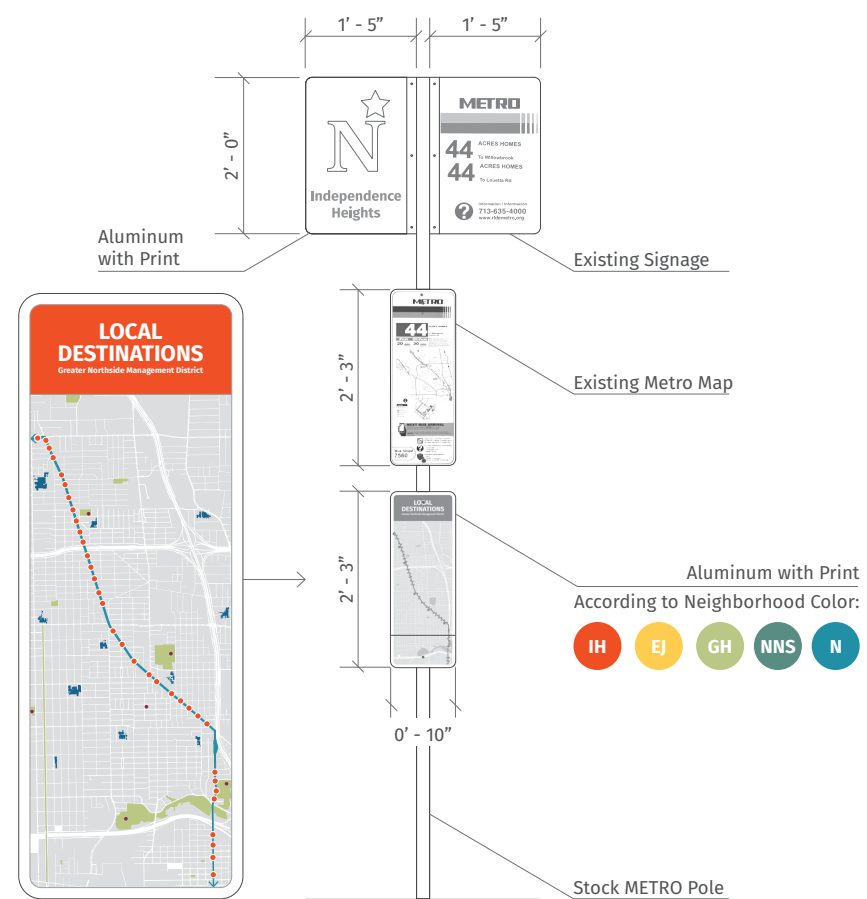
A local resident or visitor's experience is enhanced through the use of pedestrian scaled signage. We propose augmenting existing signs, light poles, or vertical structures through the use of directional plaques highlighting local destinations. These signs are adaptable, affordable, and identify each neighborhood through the color identity strategy. A series of these pedestrian signs will be located along the following roads: Airline Drive, Fulton Street, Jensen Drive, Crosstimbers Street, Lyons Avenue, Calvacade Street, Quitman Street, Tidwell Road and Irvington Boulevard.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME





METRO MAP and SIGNS

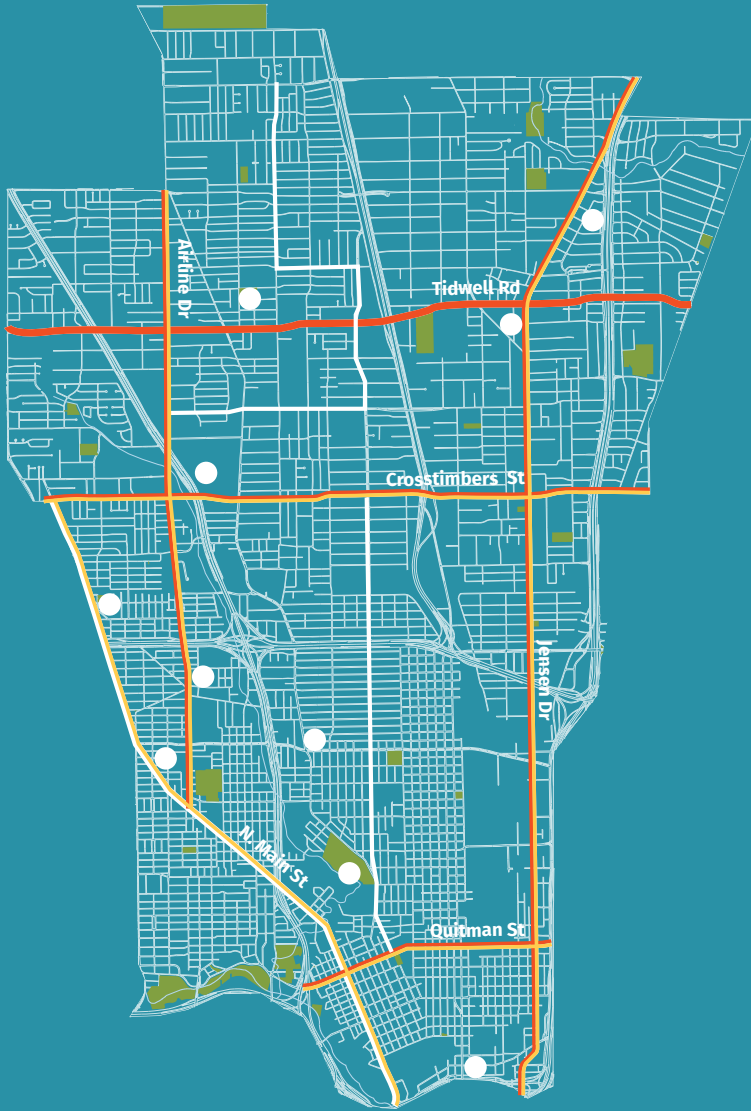
Retrofitting existing METRO signs with maps to highlight local destinations and adding the District logo will enhance identity at the neighborhood and district levels, as well as encourage exploration. The project will be initiated for the local bus routes along Airline Drive, Crosstimbers Street, Quitman Street, Jensen Drive, North Main Street and Tidwell Road. Along these routes maps and signage highlighting neighborhood destinations, such as schools, parks, local businesses and restaurants, will be installed on existing METRO signs.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME





Legend:

- New Bus Shelters
- Benches
- Local Business Benches
- Bike Racks

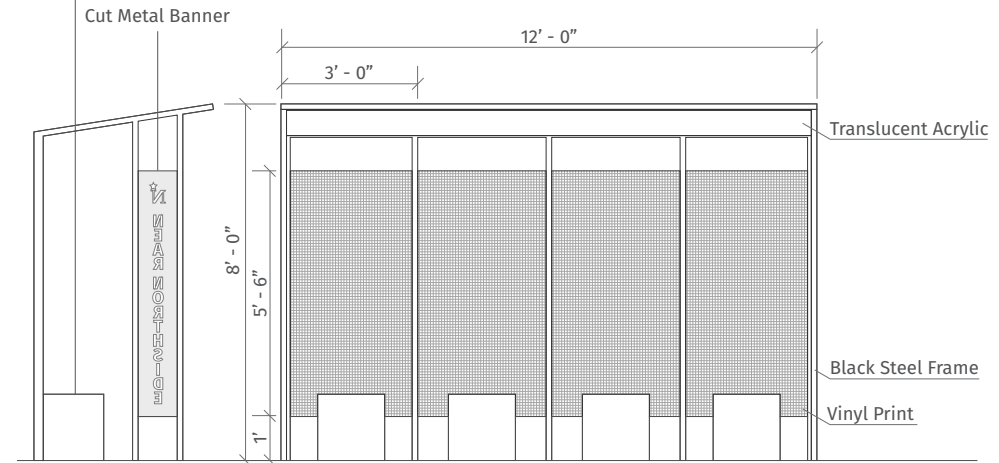
STREET AMENITIES

Street and transit amenities are important features that promote comfort, transit use and walkability. The bus shelter, benches, and bike racks proposed here utilize everyday elements to enhance and promote the civic life and identity of each neighborhood and the District overall.



Proposed Greater Northside District
METRO Bus Shelter

Dyed Concrete Seating
According to
Neighborhood Color:



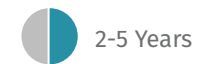
METRO Bus Shelter

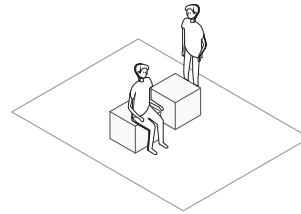
The standard METRO bus shelters are located throughout the Greater Northside Management District and concentrated along Airline Drive and Crosstimbers Street. Retrofitting the standard bus shelter to include additional colors and signage is proposed to enhance the District's and the neighborhood's identity. The strategy is focused along Irvington Boulevard and the W. Little York 79 bus route and North Main Street along the Acres Home 44 bus route, two routes that are without regular bus shelters.

ESTIMATED COST

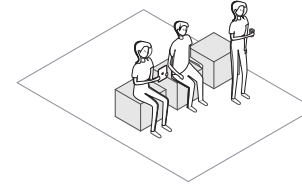


TIME FRAME

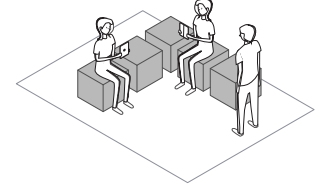




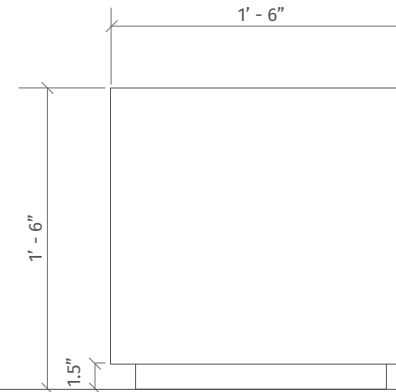
Paired



Grouped



Squared



- Dyed Concrete
According to Neighborhood Color:
- IH
 - EJ
 - GH
 - NNS
 - N

BENCHES

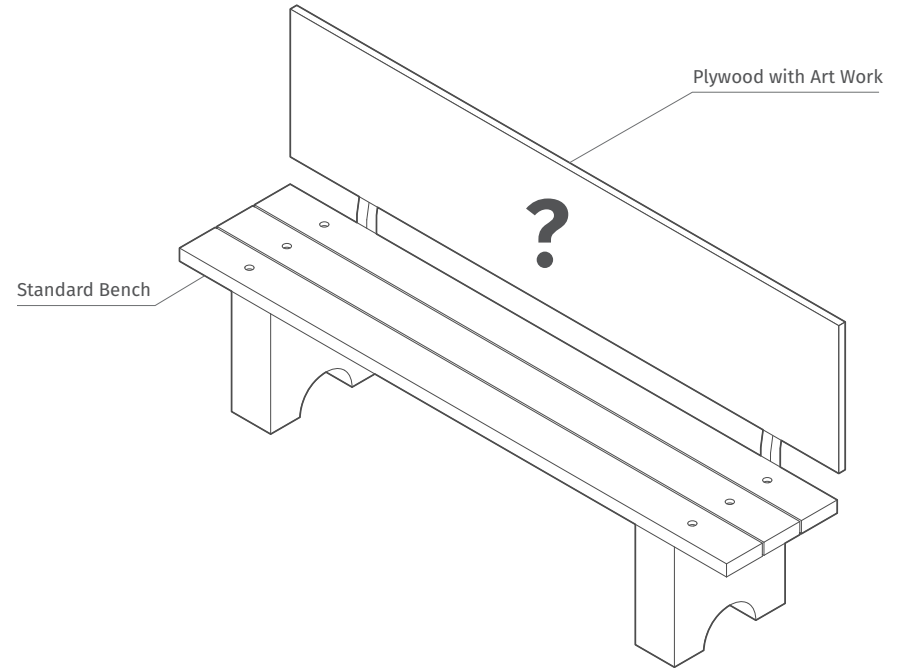
Public seating creates a comfortable, usable and active public realm where people can spend time, meet or wait for the bus. Benches create a sense of place. The proposed benches are cast concrete cubes that are dyed with a color that represents each of the five neighborhoods. Initially, these elements will be located along the following roads: Airline Drive, North Main Street, Crosstimbers Street, Jensen Drive and Quitman Street.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME





BENCH ARTWORK

Public art and amenities are key elements in building civic identity. This strategy proposes to utilize the backrests of existing benches as blank canvases for local artworks, designed by students from local schools, or Houston area artists. Proposed locations are benches along the following streets: Jensen Drive, Airline Drive, Crosstimbers Street, Quitman Street and Tidwell Road.

ESTIMATED COST



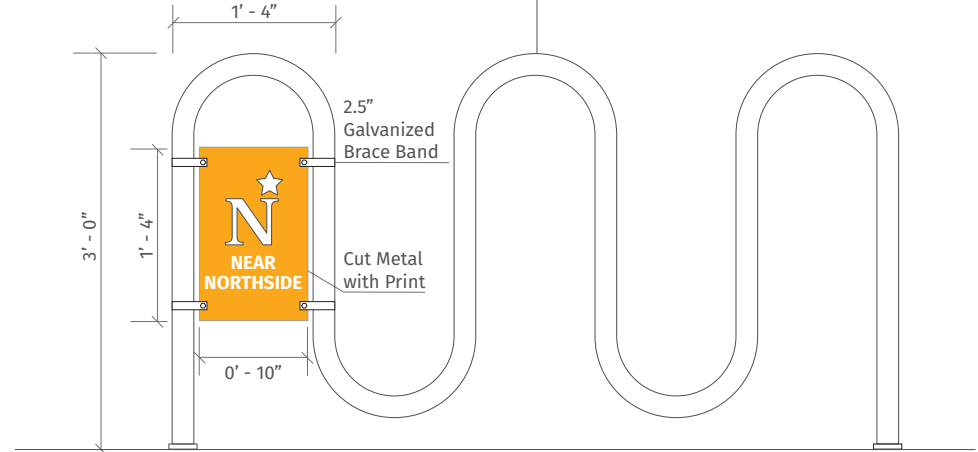
TIME FRAME





Proposed bike rack at Asia Market

Powder Coated Stock Bike Rack
According to Neighborhood Color:



BIKE RACKS

Providing bicycle amenities promotes bicycle use, and can also enhance the District's identity. The proposed bike racks will be funded through a sponsorship program with area businesses and organizations. A pilot program to expand area bike racks focuses on existing destinations such as: Asia Market Thai Restaurant, Airline Farmers Market, Northline Commons, Jensen Square, Moody Park, Clark Park, Independence Heights Park, White Oak Music Hall, Town In City Brewing, City Acre Brewing and Saint Arnold Brewing.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME



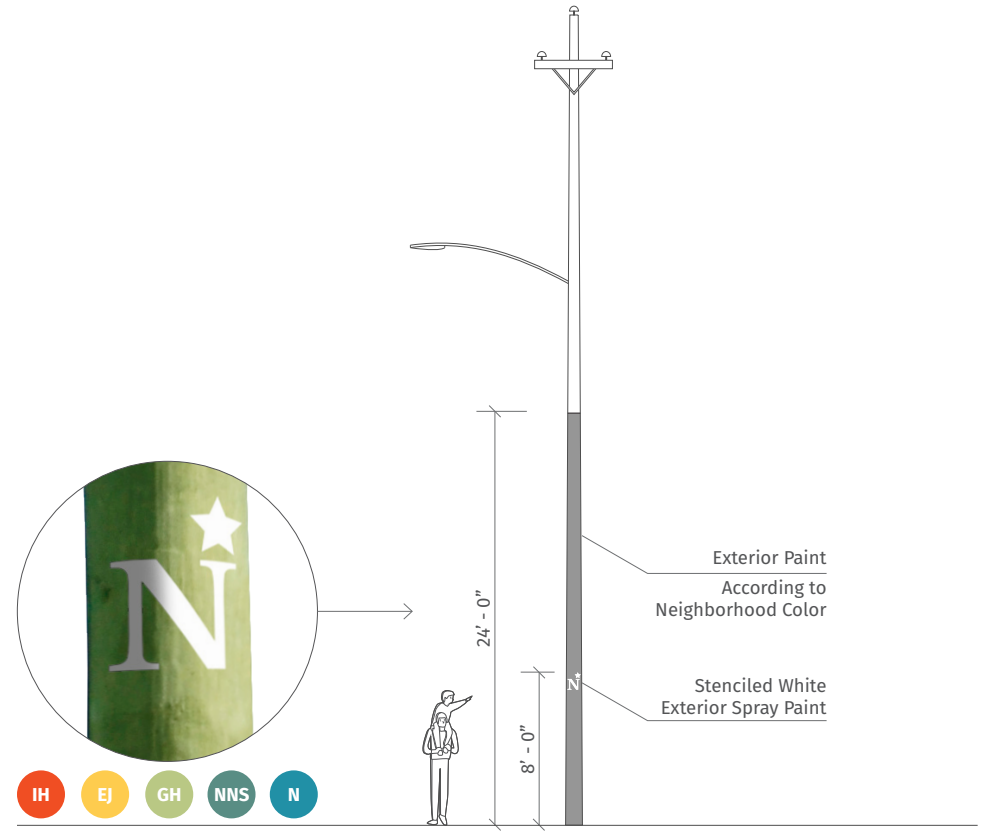
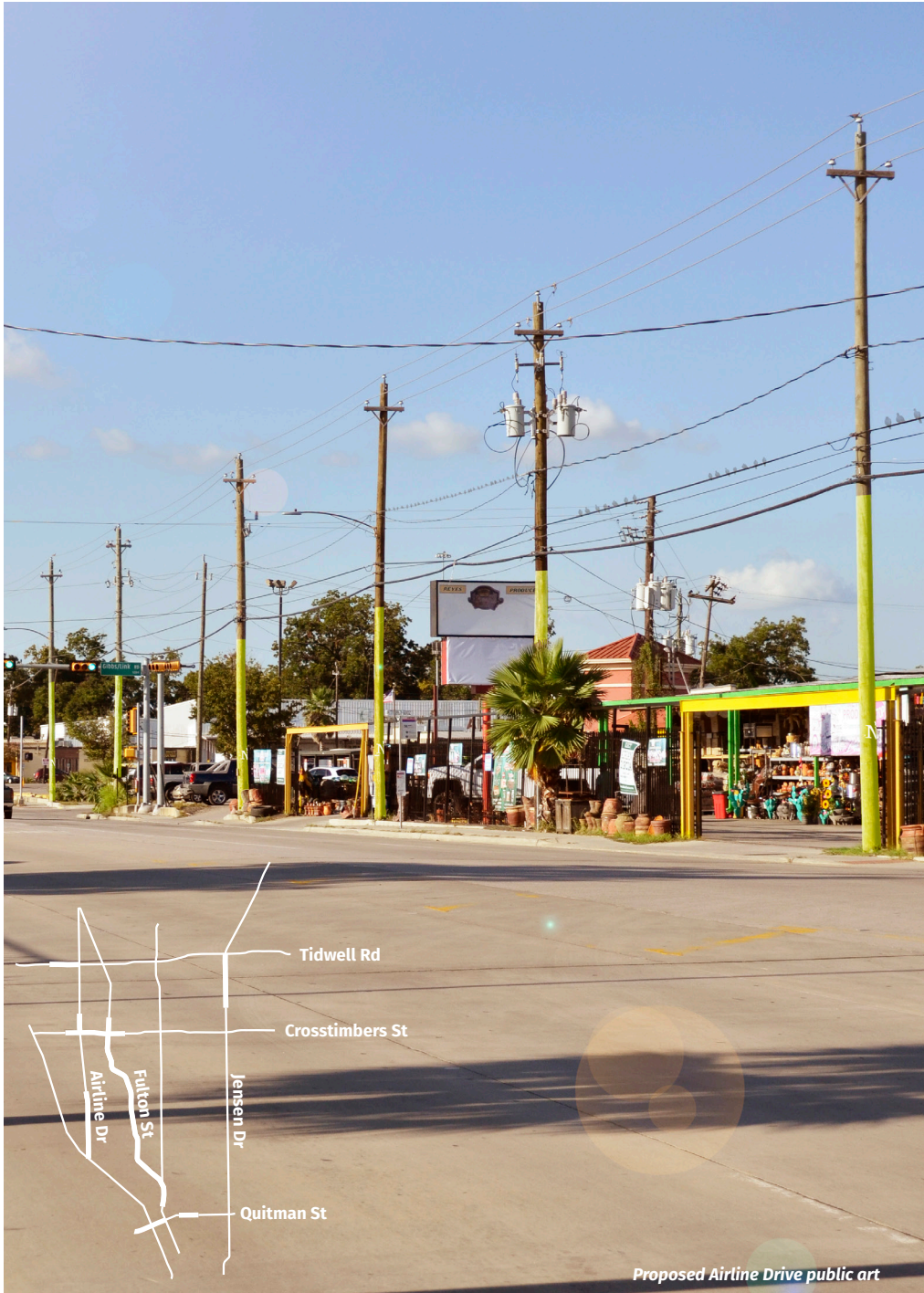


Legend:

- Telephone Poles along Streets
- Our Stories: Buildings, Fences and Walls
- Our Stories: Historic Signs on Jensen Drive
- Gateways: Underpasses
- Gateways: Overpasses

PUBLIC ART

Public art builds civic identity and celebrates place. The proposed public art projects re-imagine existing infrastructure and building elements across the five neighborhoods in order to enhance the character and identity of each place. The strategies include enhancing telephone poles, underpasses and overpasses, historic signs, buildings, fences and walls with public art.



TELEPHONE POLES

Telephone poles are a prominent feature along a number of major thoroughfares in the Greater Northside Management District. Celebrating the rhythm of this infrastructural element with vivid color will strengthen the neighborhood's identity and bring new life to a ubiquitous urban element. The project will be implemented along Airline Drive, Fulton Street, Jensen Drive, Crosstimbers Street, Quitman Street and Tidwell Road.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME

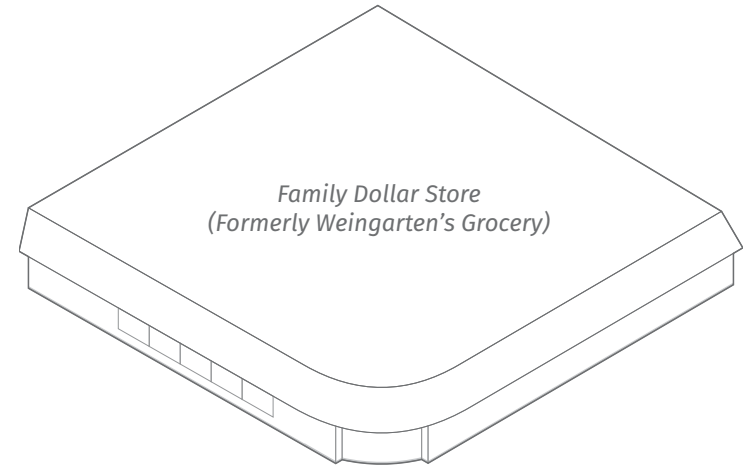




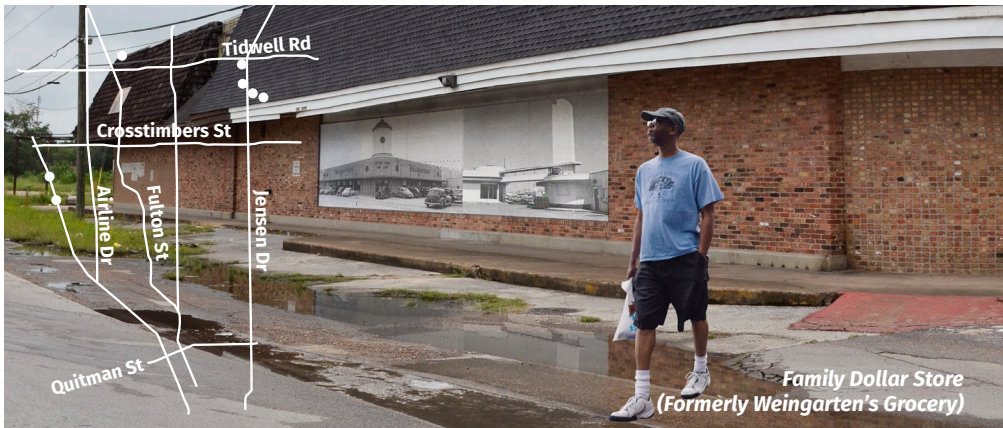
Former Foodarama Sign



Former Foodarama Sign



Family Dollar Store
(Formerly Weingarten's Grocery)



Family Dollar Store
(Formerly Weingarten's Grocery)

STORIES OF PLACE: BUILDINGS AND SIGNS

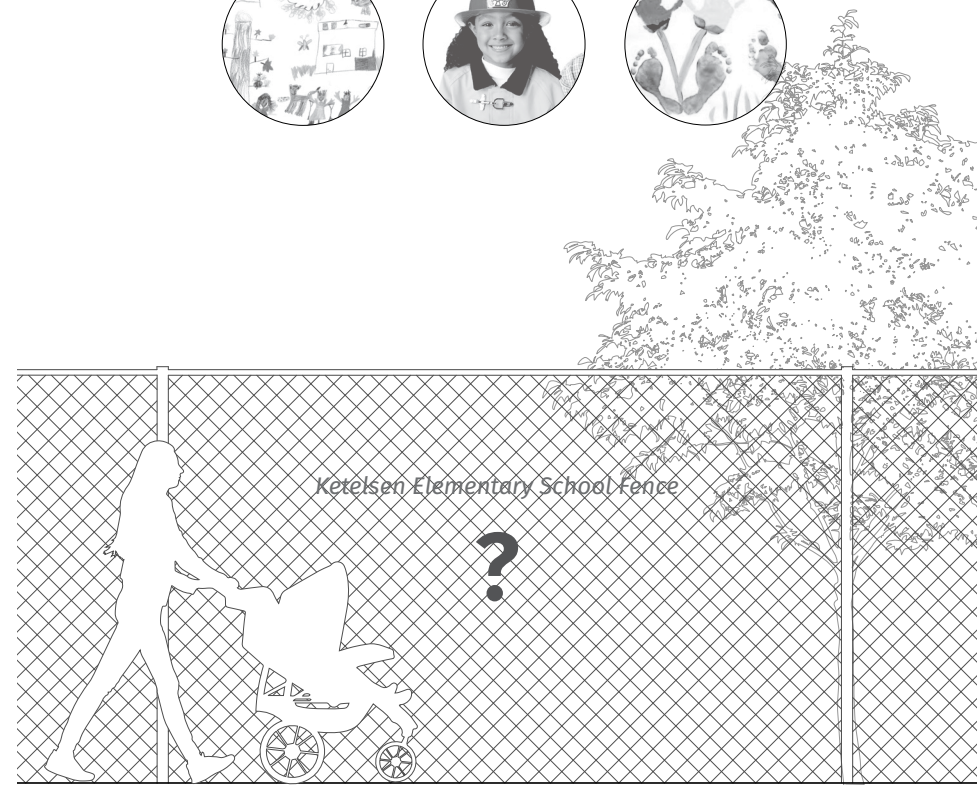
Identifying strategies to celebrate the stories of place in the Greater Northside Management District is the foundation of this toolkit. This includes activating vacant walls, buildings and signs with creative interventions that share the rich histories and stories of place. We propose developing a design competition for local artists, schools, or community groups to identify opportunity sites and develop design proposals for these sites, such as murals, photographs, or other creative projects.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME





STORIES OF PLACE: FENCES AND WALLS

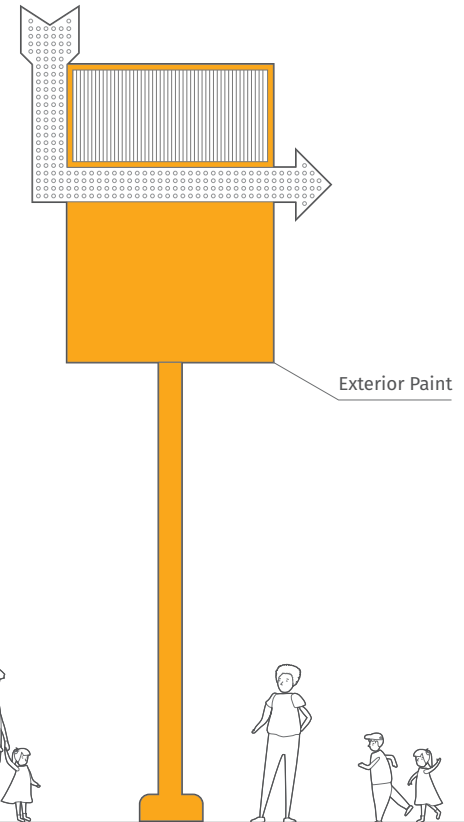
Stories of place can also be told by activating neighborhood fences and walls with creative interventions. All stories of place projects are proposed to be developed through a design competition for local artists, schools, or community groups. The competition will challenge these groups to identify opportunity sites and develop design proposals for the sites, such as murals, photographs, or other creative projects.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME





STORIES OF PLACE: HISTORIC SIGNS

Jensen Drive, once a bustling commercial corridor, is lined with a series of historic signs. Transforming these signs into public art will celebrate the history of Jensen Drive and enhance the identity of the neighborhood. This strategy is similar to the proposal for area telephone poles, where an everyday element in the urban environment is transformed into art.

ESTIMATED COST

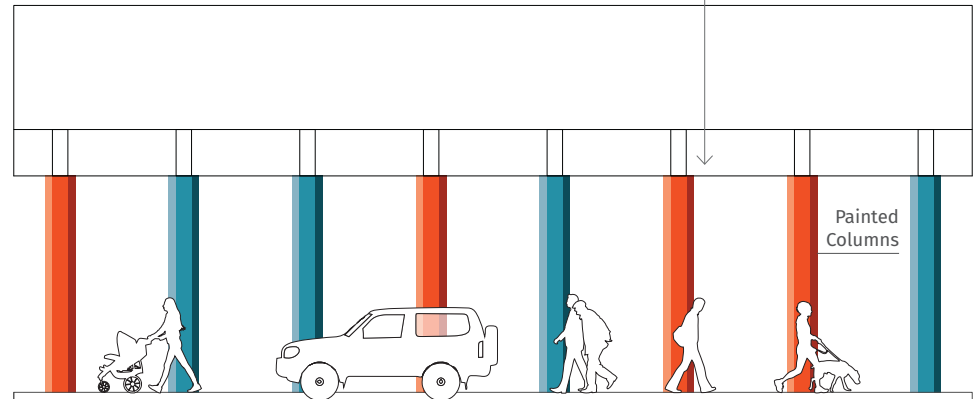
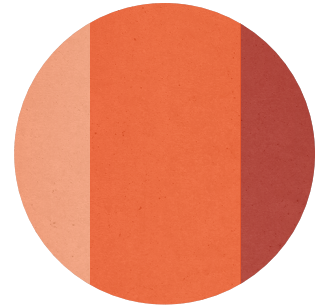


TIME FRAME





Proposed Gateway at I-45 and Airline Drive



Proposed Gateway: I-45 Intersection with Airline Drive, between Independence Heights and Northline

GATEWAYS: UNDERPASSES

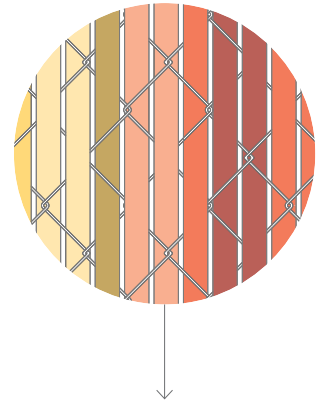
Freeway underpasses between neighborhoods and across the District can be enhanced with art and lighting to promote safety and connectivity. Underpasses can become gateways with creative and colorful public art interventions. Specifically, existing underpasses will be painted in a serape pattern, with two colors representing the Greater Northside Management District neighborhoods. Eleven underpass sites have been identified in the District (see map to the left).

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME





GATEWAYS: OVERPASSES

The gateway project re-imagines the existing infrastructure of freeway overpasses as artistic entry points into the neighborhood. Designed in a serape style, with bands of color enhancing the identity of the District, the signs could also showcase the name of each neighborhood. The initial pilot for this strategy is a pedestrian bridge located on the Hardy Toll Road near Little York. Ten potential sites have been identified across the District (see the map to the left).

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME

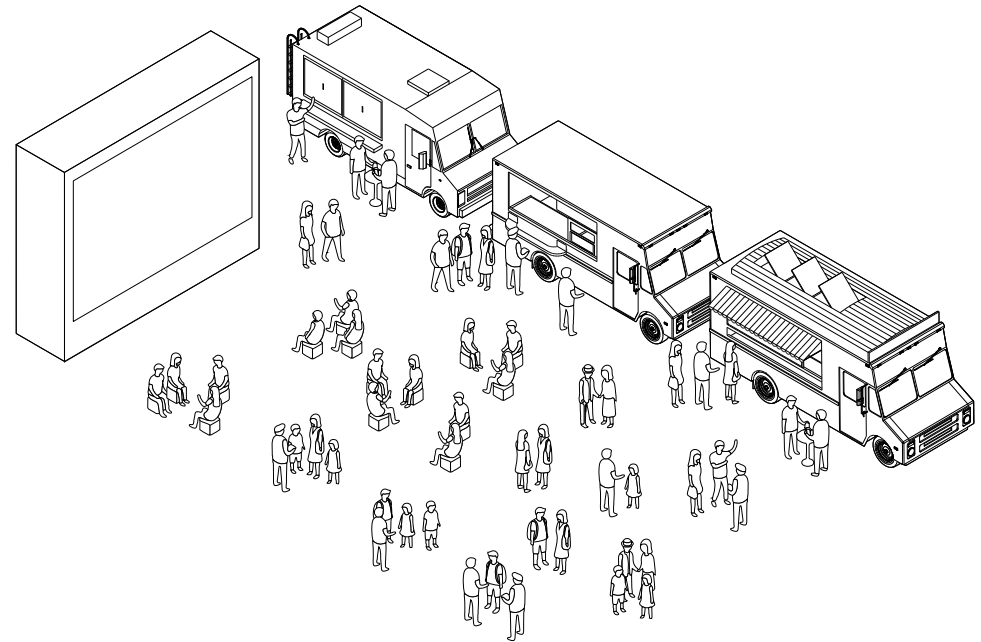


PROGRAMS+ EVENTS

The Greater Northside Management District hosts a number of events and programs annually, including the Tour de Northside and Mercado de Northside. These events and programs bring neighbors, leaders and area businesses together to celebrate the District. A series of new programs and events have been developed to further promote and celebrate the history and culture of the District's neighborhoods and continue to bring people together.



Proposed Food Truck Event at Jensen Square



POP-UP EVENTS

Parking lots are an opportunity to create temporary event spaces that celebrate our communities. Across the Greater Northside Management District there are a number of large parking lots that are perfect for hosting community event spaces, such as food trucks, movie nights, or other celebrations. Potential locations for these events and celebrations include: Jensen Square (pictured to the left) in Eastex Jensen, Northline Commons in Northline, Castillo Center, the Fulton Pocket Park and White Oak Music Hall in the Near Northside.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME





Sabor del Northside, Photo by EpicShots Houston, TX

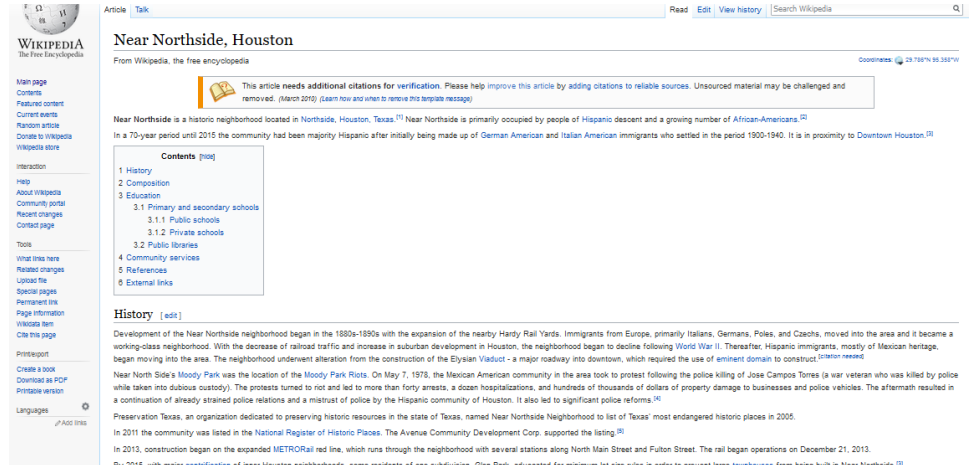
PERFORMANCE IN LOCAL SPOTS

Organizing performances in local businesses or everyday spaces, builds a greater connection between spaces, artists and local residents. Performances could incorporate elements of music, dance, theater or participatory art to engage people where they are.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME



Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon

NEIGHBORHOOD WIKI EDITS

The stories and history of a neighborhood are best told by local residents. The proposed "Neighborhood Wiki Edits" program would bring together neighborhood members, local students, teachers and other community members to edit the Wikipedia pages for their neighborhood. The program would be hosted by local organizations at libraries or other community centers.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME





Lions Park Playscape by Rural Studio
Greensboro, AL



Fifth Ward Jam Pavilion by Dan Havel and Dean Ruck
Fifth Ward, Houston, Texas



Tour de Northside

PAVILION COMPETITION

The Pavilion Competition would invite Houston artists, designers and contractors to develop design ideas for a public pavilion in each of the five neighborhoods of the Greater Northside Management District. The competition would be judged by a selected group of jurors who would focus on identifying the best low-cost and sustainable (re-used materials) design solutions.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME



< 2 Years

TOUR MY NEIGHBORHOOD

The “Tour My Neighborhood” program trains local residents and activists to lead walking, bicycle or transit tours in their neighborhoods. The tours would be developed in each of the five Greater Northside Management District neighborhoods. The tours would celebrate the assets of the neighborhood by focusing on local history, art, food, shops and destinations.

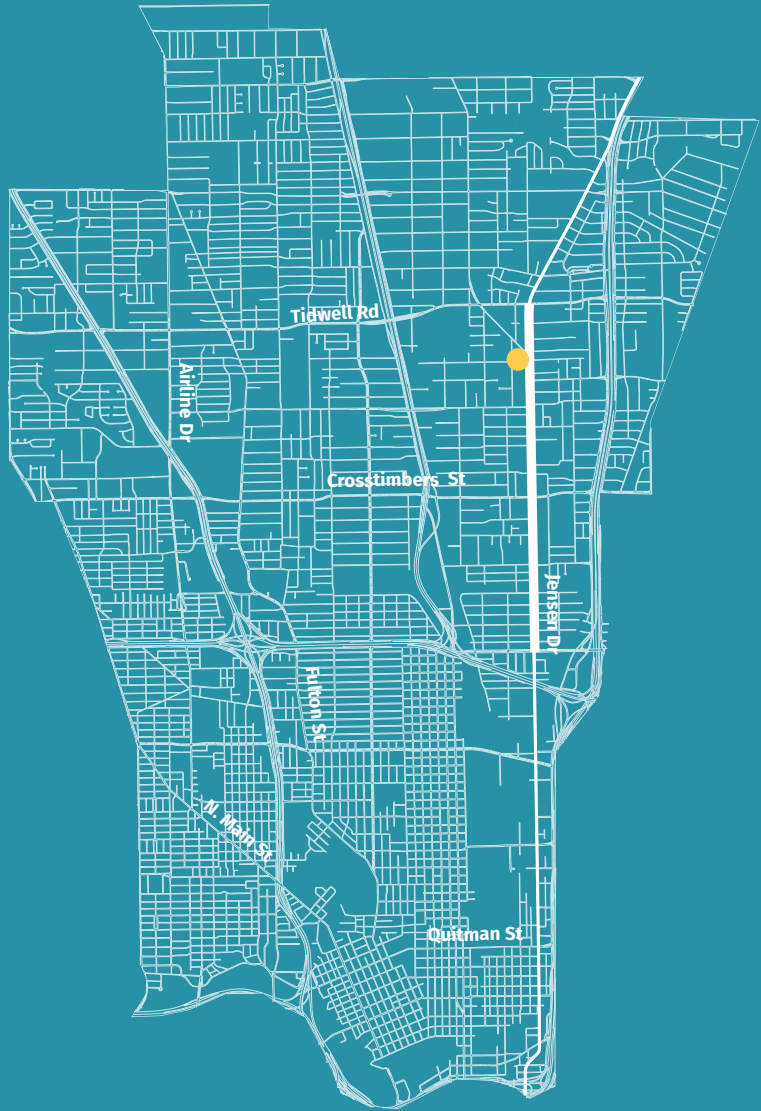
ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME



< 2 Years



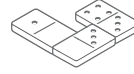
- Legend:**
- Jensen Drive Streetscaping
 - Supergraphics

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Jensen Drive is the spine of the Eastex Jensen neighborhood. Decades of disinvestment have resulted in vacant storefronts and vast empty parking lots, creating a lack of services and amenities in the community. In addition, the infrastructure of Jensen Drive needs improvement to accommodate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. In this Special Projects section, we propose two different strategies to re-activate Jensen Drive.



TABLE GAMES

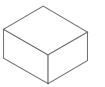


PLANTS

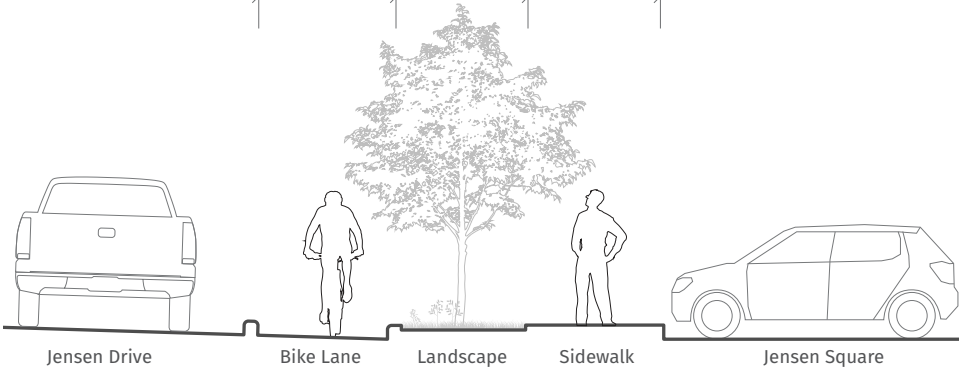


Marine Grade Plywood

Temporary and affordable streetscaping ideas (see above) could be designed and tested along Jensen Drive



SEATING



JENSEN DRIVE STREETSCAPING

In the 1950's Jensen Drive was the primary highway out of Houston to Humble and other destinations to the northeast. At this time, Jensen Drive was lined with businesses serving travelers moving through the area. Today, the once grand street has changed, and there are many vacant lots and buildings. The four-lane street has few well-defined sidewalks and is without landscaping, bike lanes or other amenities. As a result, developing a plan and funding strategy to improve the streetscaping along Jensen Drive should be a priority, including developing well-defined sidewalks, protected bike lanes, landscaping and pedestrian elements.

ESTIMATED COST

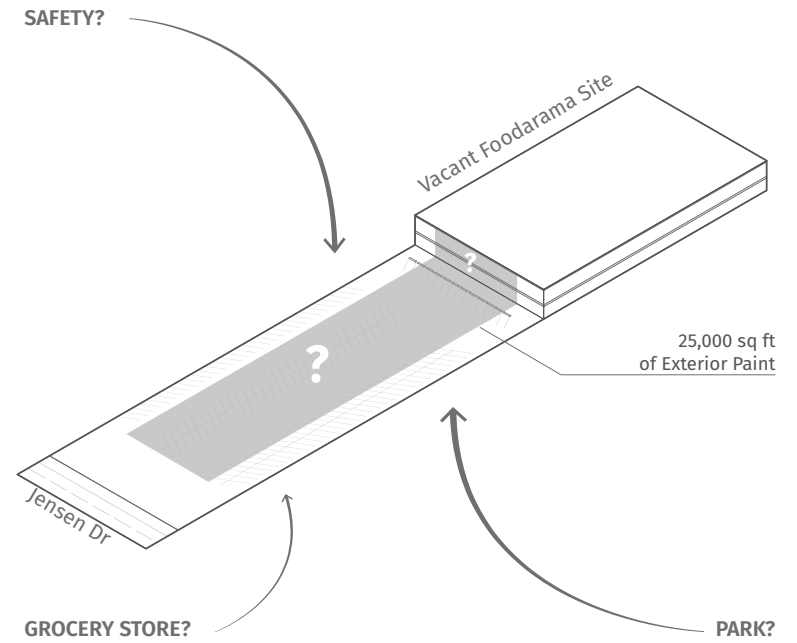


TIME FRAME





Proposed supergraphic at Foodarama



SUPERGRAPHICS

To spark economic development along Jensen Drive we are proposing a supergraphic strategy that focuses on needed amenities and spaces of opportunity along the street. Supergraphics are large-scaled graphic designs usually of bright colors and simple in design. In this example, a supergraphic is applied to the vacant Foodarama building and adjacent parking lot to draw attention to the need for a grocery store in the neighborhood.

ESTIMATED COST



TIME FRAME





OUR THANKS

The Greater Northside Management District's Urban Design Toolkit would not have been possible without the participation of local leaders, stakeholders and business owners that attended our meetings. We thank everyone for their time, commitment and collaboration.

Greater Northside Management District

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 Anibeth Turcios, Deputy Director
 Jorge Bustamante, Project Manager
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