

OPEN HOUSE MEETING SUMMARY

Far East Community Area Plan Community Meeting #4

Meeting Date: April 7, 2025

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Location: Wheatley Heights Sports Complex

Planning Staff & Consultant Team

David Powell, Project Manager

Chris Ryerson, AICP, Planning Administrator

Jacob Howard, Interim Planning Coordinator

Gretchen Roufs, AMS Consultant

Clint Eliason, Planning Coordinator

Zack Magallanez, Senior Planner

Kenjala Felder, Planning Intern

Heather Yost, Senior Planner

Bridgett White, AICP, Director of Planning

Channary Gould, Interim Planning Manager

Kasey Wright, Senior Planner

Meeting Objectives:

The purpose of the fourth open house was to gather input from the public, to refine the draft Far East Community Area Plan and to confirm community vision and goals. 34 attendees signed in at the sign-in table, and several engagement activities, facilitated by Planning staff, were available for participants to record their feedback. The project manager was also conversing with attendees, at various stations, throughout the meeting.

Meeting Format

The meeting had a presentation at 6:00 PM presented by the Project Manager, David Powell. The remainder of the meeting was an open house format. At the entrance to the facility, a sign-in table was set up where attendees were encouraged to sign in and sign up for updates. The facility was also organized with stations to collect input and ideas from attendees, regarding draft recommendations and strategies for each of the plan topic areas:

- Land Use
- Mobility
- Focus Areas
- Amenities and Public Space
- Housing
- Economic Development

Draft Vision and Goals

The first station displayed the draft Vision and Goals for the area. Attendees were encouraged to write their thoughts or ideas on the draft Vision and Goals. Below are the draft Vision and Goals, along with the associated comments:

Draft Vision: *The Far East Community Area is comprised of safe and inviting neighborhoods with diverse, quality, and affordable options for housing, dining, shopping, health care, healthy food, and community gathering spaces, all organized around quality parks and the area's own walkable arts, entertainment and shopping district. Residents of all ages and incomes can get around easily using well-lit and well-maintained sidewalks, trails, bicycle facilities, and transit amenities lined with trees and landscaping, green stormwater treatments, and public art.*

- No responses were received for the draft vision statement.

Draft Goals

Goal #1: Improve comfort and safety throughout the area with improved lighting, signage, and enhancement of parks, trails, sidewalks, and other community assets.

Goal #2: Increase access to healthy food and health care for all residents.

Goal #3: Increase equitable access to parks, open space, trails, recreational amenities, and community gathering facilities throughout the community area.

Goal #4: Facilitate development patterns that include local employment and entertainment opportunities in one or more mixed-use urban centers or arts districts that are highly walkable and connected and serve as area destinations.

Goal #5: Create housing, employment, and goods and services that serve, support and are accessible to a variety of income levels, age groups, and multi-generational households.

Goal #6: Encourage commercial development to be less auto oriented and more walkable and provide a greater diversity of locally serving restaurant and retail options.

Goal #7: Improve comfort, safety and aesthetics throughout the Far East Area with tree-lined streets, other urban greening, and integration of sustainable infrastructure.

Goal #8: Expand the amount and variety of multimodal networks throughout the Far East Area.

- No responses were received for the draft goals.

Draft Land Use Recommendations and Strategies

A board was displayed showing each of the recommendations and strategies for the Land Use section and a draft map of Future Land Use. Participants were encouraged to comment and provide input towards each of the recommendations and strategies. Comments received include:

- Explore changing heavy industrial to lighter industrial.



Draft Focus Areas

Five boards were presented in the Focus Areas section. Participants were encouraged to comment and provide input towards each of the boards including each draft digital design charettes for Focus Area #2 and Focus Area #5. In addition, a map of each Focus Area with an accompanying vision statement. Comments received include:

- Add lighting to Focus Area #4 – Wheatley Heights.
- Add focus area under I-10 connection to Salado creek from neighborhood (Corliss, Bundy, Ferris).
- This area has been developed already - no vacant land available or very little land for Focus Area 5 – East Loop 410.
- Comerica Bank building: desire for new culturally diverse restaurants and healthy food – Focus Area #1 – East Houston Street.
- More food options. Activities for children. Venues for activities.

Draft Mobility Recommendations and Strategies

A board was presented to showcase recommendations and strategies for the Mobility Section of the draft plan. Participants were encouraged to comment and provide input towards each of the recommendations and strategies. Comments received include:

- More VIA Services at Foster and HEB warehouse area. Bus only goes into the area twice a day. Only available for the employees.
- 2nd Entrance and exit to MLK Park off MLK Dr. by light or Salado Creek.
- Not happy about MLK Drive diet: concern about adding congestion.
- School on MLK Jr. concern with a road diet for that portion of the street.
- Add bike lanes and sidewalks along Houston (east of Loop 410) and consider buffered bike lane and enhance pedestrian crossings.
- Not enough area to take away lanes (MLK).
- If school reopens, concern with traffic and congestion (in area of MLK Academy).
- MLK gets backed up during school and events at Frost Bank.
- Add complete sidewalks in neighborhood by MLK Elementary.
- Add crosswalk to Badger St. to Salado Creek.
- Add crosswalks on from Badger St. to Salado Creek trail way. Sidewalks from Corliss, Ferris area to creek way.
- Sidewalks down S WW White for bikers and walkers.
- Maintenance needed for I-10.

Draft Amenities and Public Space Recommendations and Strategies

Three boards were displayed to showcase Amenities and Public Space recommendations and strategies and a map reflecting recommendations presented within this section of the draft plan. Participants were encouraged to comment and provide input towards each of the recommendations and strategies.

Comments received include:

- MLK Cultural District desired.
- Are schools being considered and incorporated? There are lots of schools in D2.
- Maintain agricultural and establish a farm co-op.
- Is there some kind of opportunity to help people buy and improve vacant lots?
- Food forest and community gardens.
- Food forests at MLK Park - bring back acequias as education tool.
- Keep waterways clean and safe along trails.
- A lot of trees and we need to be able to maintain trees, bushes, and brush.
- Clean waterways.
- Keep Salado Creek clean!
- Add Food Forest at MLK Park.
- Cameras in reoccurring dump areas or community meetings to address solutions to this issue.
- Public art under I-10 columns at Salado greenway.
- Dog park needed.
- Park with walking trail (Noblewood and Houston Area).
- More community gardens along Green Road.

Draft Housing Recommendations and Strategies

Two boards were displayed to showcase Housing recommendations and strategies. Participants were encouraged to comment and provide input towards each of the recommendations and strategies. Comments received include:

- Need for similar housing development as Towne Twin Village
- Explore opportunities for helping residents with properties (residential and commercial properties).
- Continuum of care for homeless and offenders with support.



Draft Economic Development Recommendations and Strategies

Two boards were displayed to showcase Economic Development recommendations and strategies. Participants were encouraged to comment and provide input towards each of the recommendations and strategies. Comments received include:

- Stay aware of opportunities. Cultural and community activities and businesses (along MLK Dr.).
- Explore opportunities for helping residents with properties (residential and commercial properties).
- Develop multiple dining options.
- More food options. Activities for children. Venues for activities.
- Fee waivers for owners of vacant lots to do improvements. Grants?
- Community for young people learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.



Survey

A survey was created to gather feedback and comments for the Public Discussion Draft Plan for the Far East Community Area. The survey is available on the Far East Community Area website and is open until May 18, 2025: <https://fareast.sacompplan.com/>. Comments may be submitted also to the Project Manager by email. Physical copies of the draft plan are available at the Carver and Schaefer Libraries.

Next Steps

Staff will review feedback from the community meeting and the survey results (after the survey closes) to further refine the draft plan. Once the public discussion period has passed, the Project Manager will provide a summary of comments received with Planning Department responses publicly on the Far East Community Area website.

This meeting summary, along with all previous summaries can be found on the sub area page's resource page: <https://fareast.sacompplan.com/documents/?active=community-meetings>

The Administrative Draft will be produced once all comments and draft plan edits have been made.

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