



CENTRAL HOUSTON, INC.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT PLAN UPDATES

JANUARY 2023 - JUNE 2023



CENTRAL HOUSTON, INC.

JANUARY 2023

GOAL 1

Champion major projects, initiatives and investments that improve Downtown

1.2: Continue to advocate for the implementation of TxDOT's North Houston Highway Improvement Project and the Civic Opportunities that reconnect communities.

Highlight: In late December 2022, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner signed an amended MOU with TxDOT on the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP). The press conference and signing ceremony were held at the Central Library in Downtown. Days later, the Harris County Commissioners Court met on Thursday, Dec 22, and voted 4-0 to approve their version of the MOU and to drop the lawsuit against TxDOT. The findings and resolution from the FHWA Title VI investigation now become the critical path item for project to move forward.

Participating Agencies:



1.4: Guide the implementation of Plan Downtown, the HDMD Service & Improvement (S&I) Plan, and TIRZ project plan.

Highlight 1: In preparation for Houston hosting the NCAA Men's Final Four March 31-April 3, CHI will be convening a meeting on Tuesday, January 31 @ 11:30 AM at 1221 McKinney St. The meeting is for Downtown stakeholders to learn about preparations for and activities associated with the culmination of March Madness. CHI management is serving as the chair of NCAA committee which convenes district and municipal leaders to help Houston make a great impression on gameday. This effort is consistent with HDMD S&I Plan Goal 2: Excel in hosting 2023 Men's Final Four

Highlight 2: In November the DRA Board passed a resolution authorizing the submission to City of Houston City Council of the Part I Project Plan and Financial Plan expanding the boundaries of the TIRZ along Allen Parkway. The DRA's Executive Director discussed the Project Plan separately with the directly affected Council Members Kamin and Gallegos and further testified before City Council on December 14, 2022 in support of the Plan and Annexation prior to its unanimous passage by City Council. The capture of incremental tax revenues from development of the annexed area will assist the DRA in shaping projects aimed at alleviating blight and increasing vibrancy Downtown as well as supporting the DRA's recurring commitment to fund the operation and maintenance of the Buffalo Bayou Park between Shepherd and Sabine.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 2

Enhance and maintain a comfortable, welcoming, and well-managed public realm

2.3: Partner with local agencies to provide an exceptional network of parks and green spaces in Downtown.

Highlight: Downtown's newest park, Trebly Park, made its debut on Block 333 bounded by Bell, Fannin, Leland and San Jacinto Streets on December 2. Trebly Park was designed to support an inclusive community space for the huge influx of housing units developed in southern half Downtown over the last decade. With the addition of Trebly, every Downtown Houston resident will live within the Trust for Public Land's gold standard for having a park within a ten-minute walk from their home. The DRA funded the construction of the park, while the HDMD will provide maintenance and management.

Participating Agencies:



2.10: Broadly address the needs of people experiencing homelessness and the associated impacts.

Highlight: In November, the HDMD Board approved \$500,000 in pilot funding for a new initiative designed to accelerate the housing of 100 persons experiencing homelessness in Downtown in the next 100 days. The program, developed in partnership with the Coalition for the Homeless, expands CHI's multi-dimensional role in addressing homelessness in Downtown.

In Action: CHI/HDMD's pilot initiative provides interim rent subsidy during the 90-day waiting period so that unhoused residents can wait for their home, inside their home.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 3

Drive vibrancy through improved street-level connectivity, a commitment to walkability, and inclusive programming strategies

- **3.1:** Plan, design, and construct public infrastructure that supports safety and equity.

Highlight: In December, CHI released an RFP for planning and design services to imagine the next phase of transitioning a six-block stretch of Main Street into a better street for non-motorized transportation. This initiative will result in a more coherent, unified, and legible circulation route for safe and accessible pedestrian movement along Main Street. It will design strategic improvements that convert the roadway and promote sidewalk utilization in ways that benefit pedestrian access while maximizing the area for outdoor dining. Proposals due Feb 2, 2023

Participating Agencies:



- **3.7:** Utilize public art and other place enhancement strategies to help enliven the public realm.

Highlight: Friday, December 9th marked the arrival of two more spectacular murals across Downtown's cityscape as part of Big Art. Bigger Change. This brought the total number of murals delivered in 2022 to ten. The ambition is for the project to deliver one mural for each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly by the end of 2023.

The themes of the two new murals are:

- "Quality Education For All" painted by renowned Spanish artist Belin, located at The Franklin Garage, 805 Franklin St., and
- "Life Under Water" painted by artist Ricky Lee Gordon and is located at the Hyatt Regency, 1200 Louisiana St.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 4

Foster a vital and thriving economy through business growth, residential expansion, and enhanced reasons to be in Downtown

- **4.11:** Foster a thriving storefront economy, prioritizing recruitment efforts, where possible, to fill available properties that have favorable con-tenancy on key corridors.

Highlight: After a statewide recruitment effort, CHI recently hired a new staff member, David Gwin, to advance the aspirations of 4.11. David will serve as CHI's Economic Development Manager, and his work involves drafting, implementing and administering the new retail program and associated efforts.

David brings more than three decades of experience in urban planning and economic and community development with five Texas cities ranging in size from 35,000 to 350,000 in population. He is nationally certified under the APA's "AICP" professional credential and has earned the "Certified Economic Developer" (CEcD) designation from the IEDC.

Participating Agencies:



- **4.15:** Be the go-to organization for Downtown market research and intelligence.

Highlight: Within the month of December, CHI was approached by a local developer to help inform an investment & development group from NYC regarding the potential acquisition and conversion of a major Downtown Houston asset which has sat vacant for years.

CHI's research lead and executive team spent approximately 20 hours responding to their research requests, including items such as the residential pipeline, historical population trends, and projected tax liabilities, and forecasts for potential development support tools. CHI management understands that the group closed on the property on Dec 31 and intends to advance the project.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 5

Develop a hivemind of intelligence and goodwill by genuinely engaging and convening stakeholders

- **5.4:** Explore the potential for simplifying stakeholders' awareness of CHI and its affiliates by unifying their brand identities.

Highlight: CHI recently issued a RFP for marketing and design agencies to assist in developing unified organizational branding for CHI and its affiliates. This project will produce a refreshed, unified, and cohesive brand umbrella for the existing entities. It will help simplify stakeholders' understanding of the organization(s), improve communications efficacy, and provide clarified investment attribution. Proposals are due Jan 20, 2023.

Participating Agencies:



- **5.6:** Improve and expand external communications to increase awareness of CHI, its actions, and general Downtown happenings.

Highlight: CHI recently issued a RFP for public relations services to assist in communicating the organization's and Downtown's progress. This service will amplify the outward-facing voice of CHI while honoring its affiliates' legacies and purposes. Moreover, it will simplify the public's understanding of the organization as it transitions to operating under its new shared vision and mission statements. Proposals are due Jan 9, 2023.

Participating Agencies:





CENTRAL HOUSTON, INC.

FEBRUARY 2023

GOAL 1

Champion major projects, initiatives and investments that improve Downtown

1.1: Build and maintain cross-sector relationships with area leaders so that CHI can support, facilitate or lead on catalytic opportunities.

Highlight: Following the execution of the MOUs between the City/County and TxDOT, and in partnership with the Mayor's Office, CHI began charting the next phase of the Mayor's NHHIP Steering Committee which provides critical guidance to the Mayor for decisions on the project.

Participating Agencies:



1.5: Collaborate with partners such as the City of Houston, Harris County, Greater Houston Partnership and Houston First to leverage opportunities for shared strategies to improve Downtown Houston.

Highlight: Following the opening of the City's new Navigation Center, CHI/HDMD committed to provide support to the Coalition of the Homeless & the City of Houston to decommission the Chartres homeless encampment during the week of February 6th.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 2

Enhance and maintain a comfortable, welcoming, and well-managed public realm

2.1: Maintain and advance the standard of care for Downtown’s cleanliness and well-kept appearance.

Highlight: HDMD formalized and executed an agreement with Houston First to repair and oversee the maintenance of the eleven (11) "Cotswold" fountains located on Prairie, Preston and Congress beginning on January 30. The maintenance and repair costs for the Cotswold fountains will be fully reimbursed by Houston First.

Participating Agencies:



2.2: Cultivate nature across Downtown, including its urban forest, planters, and other greenspace elements.

Highlight: In January, the HDMD Board authorized management to enter into an agreement with Davey Resource Group to implement their TreeKeeper smart monitory system for Downtown’s trees. The initial phase will be to inventory and assess the health of all District maintained trees within the public right-of-way, and will lead to a more sophisticated and systemic urban forestry approach.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 3

Drive vibrancy through improved street-level connectivity, a commitment to walkability, and inclusive programming strategies

3.9: Support efforts to enable a more festive game day atmosphere better integrated into the built environment.

Highlight: In concert with the Harris County - Houston Sports Authority, CHI received approval from the NCAA to utilize the HDMD ambassador program to better represent Houston to visiting fans during the Final Four. In this role, the ambassadors will have special uniforms and graphics on their equipment that support a more fan-friendly environment.

Participating Agencies:



3.13: Develop programs and use strategies to connect area employers and residents with Downtown Parks.

Highlight: As part of Trebly Park's Grand Opening on January 27, 2023, local community vendors and (5) residential properties in close proximity to the park were included in the carnival-themed festivities with information booths for potential residents, and promotion to current residents to enjoy and use their new neighborhood park.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 3

Photo Highlights: Trebly Park's Grand Opening on January 27, 2023



GOAL 4

Foster a vital and thriving economy through business growth, residential expansion, and enhanced reasons to be in Downtown

4.9: Research and develop return-to-office strategies to accelerate the return of employees to Downtown.

Highlight: Downtown in-office occupancy reached a best-ever single-day occupancy rate of 76% on January 17, 2023. The month of January concluded with an average return-to-office rate of 62.50% across all workdays.

Participating Agencies:



4.10: Continue investing in innovation and technology start-ups to support the diversification of the Downtown employment base.

Highlight: On January 17, CHI hosted local business leaders from across Houston for a visit with Donald Cravins, the first Under Secretary for Minority Business Development, to discuss funding that would help minority and other underserved entrepreneurs launch and scale their businesses. CHI are working with local leaders to submit a grant application to the MBDA to further the Launchpad’s reach.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 5

Develop a hivemind of intelligence and goodwill by genuinely engaging and convening stakeholders

5.1: Develop a representative engagement structure that provides stakeholders the opportunity to inform decision making and advise on the direction of Downtown.

Highlight: CHI staff worked with members of the CHI, DRA, and HDMD boards to finalize assignments into the new collaborative committees. Board members were provided the opportunity to self-select in the committee whose focus best suits their interest and expertise. The new committees will kick off in February 2023.

Participating Agencies:



5.8: Improve and expand external communications to increase awareness of CHI, its actions, and general Downtown happenings.

Highlight: On January 27, the Houston Chronicle ran a feature story on the future of the Pierce Elevated, a key civic opportunity site made available through implementation of the future NHHIP project. Through pro-active public relations work, the article included interviews with CHI leadership, and included project renderings and other insight made possible through CHI and its affiliates.

Participating Agencies:





CENTRAL HOUSTON, INC.

MARCH 2023

GOAL 1

Champion major projects, initiatives and investments that improve Downtown.

1.1: Build and maintain cross-sector relationships with area leaders so that CHI can support, facilitate or lead on catalytic opportunities.

Highlight: As part of the fulfilling the requirements to receive funding from the Department Minority Business Development Agency of the U. S. Department of Commerce the MBDA, CHI coordinated a group of organizations dedicated to addressing the needs of Minority and Women Small Businesses. The purpose of the collaboration was to identify specific programs of these organizations that could build the operational capacity, address capital enhancement and provide funding opportunities for socially and economically disadvantaged individual (SEDI) entrepreneurs in Houston – the goal of the application process. CHI designated the important undertaking as the “Houston Entrepreneur Development Consortium” (HEDC) to establish a pipeline of resources that could continuously grow and assist SEDI entrepreneurs through networking, scaling and capital access.

Participating Agencies:



1.7: Partner with METRO, the City of Houston, and others to plan and support a variety of safe and efficient mobility options for people to get to, from, and around Downtown, including a robust transit network and non-motorized transportation.

Highlight: On February 2nd, HDMD received ten valid proposals for the Main Street: More Space 2.0 RFP. A seven-member evaluation panel, comprised of four Downtown District and three City of Houston staff, carried out evaluation of the proposals to identify three short-listed vendors for interview. Interviews and final deliberation to identify the highest ranked vendor were conducted on February 23rd. The highest ranked vendor was selected by the panel and will be brought forth for District Board consideration at the March 9th HDMD Board meeting.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 2

Enhance and maintain a comfortable, welcoming, and well-managed public realm.

2.7: Expand collaboration and explore novel approaches to maintain a low crime rate and make Downtown feel safe.

Highlight: In February, the HDMD made the decision to expand its SEAL Security team coverage will be available to respond to stakeholder calls 24/7 effective March 1st. With the Downtown residential community continuing to grow and Downtown getting back-to-business more each month, the decision enables coverage through the night to ensure that stakeholders always have someone to call in non-emergency situations.

Participating Agency:



2.10: Broadly address the needs of people experiencing homelessness and the associated impacts.

Highlight: The Complex Case Coordination Committee (4C) launched a pilot program to develop and implement tailored interventions for unhoused individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness and suffering from complex behavioral health issues which require intensive customized services to escape homelessness. This effort is intended to reach the most challenging cases and persons that current services are not equipped to serve. CHI & HDMD's ecosystem coordination efforts were the catalyst for the development of the 4C pilot initiative.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 3

Drive vibrancy through improved street-level connectivity, a commitment to walkability, and inclusive programming strategies.

3.4: Conduct site surveys and other analyses of ground floor conditions to determine key pedestrian corridors and connections between Downtown’s activity nodes; prioritize interventions and investments on key corridors.

Highlight: CHI management reached a key milestone in completing its blockface evaluation survey, as now each blockface that could connect Discovery Green to Market Square have been evaluated. The project evaluates each blockface according to a list of 21 site characteristics which inform pedestrian comfort and enjoyment. The evaluations feed into a proprietary algorithm which produces a tiered scoring output and recommendations for improvements to improve conditions.

Participating Agencies:



3.5: Partner with public and private property owners to beautify targeted corridors or block faces.

Highlight: As a component of its contributions to the POST HTX project, the DRA requested and received participation in the recognition of the historic aspect of the former Barbara Jordan Post Office by supporting the creation of the Barbara Jordan Plaza as site for a nine-foot sculpture of the late Congresswoman. It will also provide information on her contributions to our city and nation. The major portion of the sculpture arrived in Houston this month for additional modification. DRA convened a committee of local historians and art advocates to assist in the design of the Plaza. As the centerpiece of the project, the Plaza is in the area immediately south of the former multi-story building that contained administrative offices of the postal service for decades.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 4

Foster a vital and thriving economy through business growth, residential expansion, and enhanced reasons to be in Downtown.

4.6: Facilitate the delivery of more residential development, building toward a residential population of 15,000 by 2027.

Highlight: After reviewing several responses to a DRA-authorized RFP for initiating an Office Conversion Feasibility Study of select, underutilized office towers within the boundaries of the TIRZ, staff selected AECOM to carry out the work on three buildings of varying typology, size and structure over the next six months.

AECOM's deep study, along with accumulated financial data from office conversions currently underway, will enable CHI management to structure an "Office Conversion Incentive Program" for consideration by building owners within the TIRZ and eventually for all of Houston. The resulting program may involve several public entities and will focus on enhancing Downtown through the increased inclusion of residents from a diverse population as well as an enlivened street-level public realm.

Participating Agency:



4.10: Continue investing in innovation and technology start-ups to support the diversification of the Downtown employment base.

Highlight: Throughout the month of February, CHI supported a lineup of seven (7) programs entitled "This Is Us" which was a passion project powered by the Downtown Launchpad dedicated to inspiring, connecting, and empowering Black entrepreneurs to be better seen, heard, and celebrated. "This Is Us" was more than just a tribute to Black History, it was about paving a path forward for Black entrepreneurs to cultivate culture through their products and services. "This is Us" amplified Black voices and made the Downtown Launchpad a destination for hundreds of attendees seeking inspiration on innovation, impact, and intentionality.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 5

Develop a hivemind of intelligence and goodwill by genuinely engaging and convening stakeholders.

5.1: Develop a representative engagement structure that provides stakeholders the opportunity to inform decision making and advise on the direction of Downtown.

Highlight: The new collaborative committees kicked off in February 2023. The committees were envisioned as a key implementation component to the Strategic Alignment Plan. The meetings were filled with optimism and passionate dialogue, which will play a vital role in shaping the development and implementation of key strategies in 2023. The committees will work together to ensure alignment between our various boards, key partners, and residents to realize our vision.

Participating Agencies:



5.4: Explore the potential for simplifying stakeholders' awareness of CHI and its affiliates by unifying their brand identities.

Highlight: After interviewing three firms that responded to the branding RFP, CHI management has selected a vendor that possesses national experience leading branding efforts, specific expertise on urban real estate, and previous work in Downtown. This effort will produce a refreshed, unified, and cohesive brand umbrella for the existing entities, and simplify stakeholders' understanding of the organization(s), improve communications efficacy, and provide clarified investment attribution.

Participating Agencies:



5.8 Advance efforts to spotlight the initiatives, moments, and entities advancing Downtown as an inclusive community.

Highlight: February's social media focus on Black-owned businesses drew a wide audience, with 26,718 new visitors to @downtownhouston Instagram. Features included Black-owned winery, Pur Noir, Day Six Coffee, The Smoke barbecue in Finn Hall, a Black-owned business guide, "This Is Us" programming at Launch Pad, and more. Content honoring Black History Month was shared more than 3,500 times!

Participating Agencies:





CENTRAL HOUSTON, INC.

APRIL 2023

GOAL 1

Champion major projects, initiatives and investments that improve Downtown.

1.2: Continue to advocate for the implementation of TxDOT’s North Houston Highway Improvement Project and the Civic Opportunities that reconnect communities.

Highlight: Central Houston participated in a moderated panel discussion on the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) as part of University of Houston Downtown’s President’s Lecture series. CHI was joined by a representative from TxDOT and the City’s Director of Transportation for a robust conversation with students, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders. The standing room only crowd engaged the panel on questions ranging from the Civic Opportunities proposed for Segment 3, to the effect construction will have on the northern reaches of Downtown, the agreements struck between the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT, and the timing and phasing of the construction.

Participating Agencies:



1.3: Plan collaboratively for Downtown’s evolving edges, connections, and major attractions.

Highlight: Central Houston coordinated inter-agency meetings between TxDOT and Midtown and OST/Almeda TIRZs to advance planning among these entities on Segments 3A & 3B of the NHHIP, and further facilitated a meeting with TIRZ 15 and TxDOT to advance collaboration on a 72” storm drainage project that is part of the NHHIP and one of the initial construction projects to advance after the FHWA lifted the pause on the NHHIP.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 2

Enhance and maintain a comfortable, welcoming, and well-managed public realm.

2.1: Maintain and advance the standard of care for Downtown’s cleanliness and well-kept appearance.

Highlight: Since taking over the maintenance and repairs of the Cotswold fountains in early February, 6 of the 11 fountains that were previously non-operational have been restored and are now functioning properly. The bronze baseball at the Preston/Crawford fountain was cleaned, waxed, and polished in time for Astros Opening Day. Staff will continue to work diligently to bring the remaining fountains to operational status.

Participating Agency:



2.8: Utilize data and analytic tools to understand the prevalence of criminal activity and shape programmatic responses.

Highlight: The SMART reporting system utilized by our Ambassadors to track and report their safety and cleaning efforts was evaluated and streamlined to improve efficiency and accuracy of data reporting. In addition, our SEAL Private Security officers were introduced and trained on how to integrate and apply the SMART system into their data reporting methods. This new data collection strategy provides increased reporting accuracy which will guide program deployments and responses.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 3

Drive vibrancy through improved street-level connectivity, a commitment to walkability, and inclusive programming strategies.

3.6: Facilitate the development of pop-up uses, temporary installations, and other storefront or site activation strategies to help enliven the public realm.

Highlight: CHI recently facilitated an effort whereby The Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (KHSPVA) utilizes student artwork and performing arts sets to create displays in open ground floor areas of downtown buildings. The first of these displays is in the Parkside Residences at Discovery Green, 808 Crawford Street. The program began with a conversation during a KHSPVA Friends Board meeting when administrators were asked whether students and faculty would be interested in placing their sets, used in plays and/or other works, in the lobbies or open areas of downtown buildings. The answer was an enthusiastic “yes” and photographs taken by students were enlarged and installed in the Parkside lobby. CHI is now pursuing other such interventions, as many student works, including previously used theatrical sets that are now in storage areas throughout the school, could be put to good use and provide recognition for KHSPVA students. The displays could be ideal means to create interesting conversations in large spaces and stimulate walkability along our many corridors.

Participating Agencies:



3.9: Support efforts to enable a more festive game day atmosphere better integrated into the built environment.

Highlight: Engaged visitors and stakeholders around Downtown with creative wayfinding signage and pop ups with QR codes. These informative activations allowed visitors to easily explore Downtown apart from Final Four by providing helpful information such as bars and restaurants, hotels, parking, and current Downtown events. Additional enhancements and activations included the implementation of over 46,000 new flowers, 166 festive banners, Ambassador game day uniforms, building décor contest, and DJs playing music at key pedestrian locations throughout Downtown.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 4

Foster a vital and thriving economy through business growth, residential expansion, and enhanced reasons to be in Downtown.

4.15: Be the go-to organization for Downtown market research and intelligence.

Highlight: For the 39th consecutive year, CHI staff collected primary leasing and operations data from every multi-tenant office building in Downtown. This data is compiled annually into *Office Story*, a proprietary deep dive into the prior year in competitive office space leasing in Downtown. The peer-reviewed study goes further than a traditional brokerage house or market analysis by leveraging unprecedented access to the owners and operators of every competitive and non-owner-occupied office building in Downtown. Data collection concluded in March, and the report will be issued in April, 2023.

Participating Agency:



4.16: Enhance and expand data capabilities and reporting to provide more detailed intelligence to stakeholders and prospects.

Highlight: After considering several vendors, CHI has selected Field of Study to assist in designing and editing new Quarterly Reports. Field of Study will broaden the impact among the Report's stakeholders by providing accessible, comprehensible and digestible insights through data visualization. They were selected due to high-quality infographics they previously designed for the Rice Design Alliance and a strong track record of working on place-based projects such as Heights Mercantile and Sugar Land Town Square.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 5

Develop a hivemind of intelligence and goodwill by genuinely engaging and convening stakeholders.

5.4: Explore the potential for simplifying stakeholders' awareness of CHI and its affiliates by unifying their brand identities.

Highlight: After seven proposals and three firm interviews, CHI chose Streetsense, "A global collective of placeshapers, brandbuilders, and storytellers." With five global hubs and hundreds of creatives, Streetsense brings us objectivity and experience with complexity and myriad audiences place-based organizations need to reach, inspire, and motivate. Their exploration with the Engage Committee's March meeting informed an online survey to capture more voices leading up to April Board discovery sessions. This effort will produce a refreshed, unified, and cohesive brand umbrella for the existing entities, and simplify stakeholders' understanding of the organization(s), improve communications efficacy, and provide clarified investment attribution.

Participating Agencies:



5.6 Improve and expand external communications to increase awareness of CHI, its actions, and general Downtown happenings.

Highlight: Securing *Houston Business Journal* and *Bisnow* opportunities enabled us to shape conversations about Downtown's future. An expert roundtable with Hines and Brookfield Properties gave insight from two firms betting big on Downtown resilience. Adding Midway achieved Goal 1.3: to "Plan collaboratively for Downtown's evolving edges, connections, and major attractions." At Bisnow's panel, Kris Larson explained how to change misperceptions: "Build a Downtown where women feel comfortable, and men will follow."

Participating Agencies:





CENTRAL HOUSTON, INC.

MAY 2023

GOAL 1

Champion major projects, initiatives and investments that improve Downtown.

- 1.2** Continue to advocate for the implementation of TxDOT’s North Houston Highway Improvement Project and the Civic Opportunities that reconnect communities.

Highlight: In recent weeks, CHI management collaborated with the Mayor’s office to devise the next iteration of the Mayor’s Steering Committee on the North Houston Highway Improvement Project. CHI will support the Mayor’s team in developing content for the committees and participate as a committee member. The first meeting of the new iteration of the Steering Committee was held virtually on April 6th. The meeting was focused on comparing the MOUs / FHWA VRA, establishing a committee charter & answering questions from members. The next meeting is May 24th.

Participating Agencies:



- 1.3** Collaborate with partners such as the City of Houston, Harris County, Greater Houston Partnership and Houston First to leverage opportunities for shared strategies to improve Downtown Houston.

Highlight: As a component of the next phase for the Big Art. Bigger Change. mural program, CHI and the HDMD were joined by Harris County and the City of Houston in supporting the program. HDMD authorized up to \$270,000 in funding for the program, while the County has pledged up to \$330,000 and the City \$70,000. Additionally, the City and County have donated walls to the program and participated on the project’s oversight committee, ensuring that the mural designs are consistent with local sensibilities.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 2

Enhance and maintain a comfortable, welcoming, and well-managed public realm.

- 2.2** Cultivate nature across Downtown, including its urban forest, planters, and other greenspace elements.

Highlight: Earlier this year, CHI management authorized Davey Resource Group to begin implementation of their TreeKeeper smart monitoring system. DRG’s arborist inventoried and entered data for all 2,026 trees that HDMD is responsible for maintaining, which consists of right-of-way trees, Park trees, and Allen Parkway trees. 95.4% of the trees inventoried were in Good/Fair condition. The collected data will guide future maintenance initiatives and identify opportunities to expand the urban tree canopy.

Participating Agency:



- 2.8** Prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Highlight: The 2023 Downtown Emergency Preparedness/Hurricane Briefing has been scheduled for Wednesday, May 17th, from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM in Lyondell Basell Tower’s Exchange Conference Center at 1221 McKinney Street. Presentations and discussions of respective emergency plans and preparations will be provided by HDMD, the Houston Police Department, City of Houston’s Office of Emergency Management, METRO Transit Authority, and Houston Public Works.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 3

Drive vibrancy through improved street-level connectivity, a commitment to walkability, and inclusive programming strategies.

3.6 Plan, design, and construct public infrastructure that supports safety and equity.

Highlight: Generally bounded by Hamilton, Pierce, Fannin, and Polk Streets, the long-term project to improve sidewalks along 40-blockfaces in the southeast quadrant of Downtown is advancing towards construction. TxDOT is the lead agency for the project. The total construction grant is \$3,446,245, with \$2,259,445 funded by federal and state government and \$1,186,800 funded by the Downtown District as the local sponsor; the District's portion includes the full value of engineering-design services. On April 13th, the Downtown District submitted a proportional payment of \$362,259 per the construction estimate in partial fulfillment of the Advance Funding Agreement from 2022. Through the Texas Transportation Commission, TxDOT is expected to award the contract in late-May 2023, with construction to start 60-90 days after the award.

Participating Agencies:



3.8 Prioritize investments in pedestrian lighting on key walking corridors and near residential buildings.

Highlight: On April 14th, CHI management issued a Request for Proposals to forty-two lighting design consultants for the Downtown Pedestrian Lighting Framework. Seven proposals were received on May 2nd and reviewed by an evaluation panel on May 5th. A recommendation to execute an agreement and the related expenditures is scheduled for the Downtown District's Board meeting on May 11th. Fieldwork analysis and planning for prioritized implementation is scheduled to begin in late-May and run through the end of the year.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 4

Foster a vital and thriving economy through business growth, residential expansion, and enhanced reasons to be in Downtown.

- 4.9** Research and develop return-to-office strategies to accelerate the return of employees to Downtown.

Highlight: Return-to-office (RTO) trends continued to provide encouraging news for Downtown Houston. Relative to a 5-year average vs. pre-pandemic levels, in-office work continued to trend upward and recorded an average RTO rate of 67.70% for April, a 3.7% gain over March. Downtown posted another single-day peak RTO rate since the pandemic's onset, as Tuesday, April 4th, recorded a 78.5% RTO rate. That rate surpassed the previous peak day of 76.6% from Tuesday, March 21st. The 3.7% month-over-month gain translates into an additional 5,275 employees Downtown throughout the workweek.

Participating Agencies:



- 4.10** Continue investing in innovation and technology start-ups to support the diversification of the Downtown employment base.

Highlight: To advance on the "Optimize the Downtown Launchpad" item from CHI's 2023 Top 20 initiatives, CHI management hired Ryan LeVasseur as a part-time contract employee. Ryan's 12-week scope includes assessing the Downtown Launchpad's programmatic, operational, budgetary, and partnership structures and current conditions compared to the organization's goals. An analysis output will consist of identifying areas that require change and/or opportunities for improvements to maximize the development of future business enterprises that choose to locate more permanently Downtown.

Before joining CHI in this capacity, Ryan was the Managing Director of Real Estate at Rice Management Company. He directed all aspects of developing the Ion, including design and construction oversight, programming, activation, and leasing. Ryan began his tenure with CHI on May 1st, the 92nd anniversary of the Empire State Building's opening in New York in 1931.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 5

Develop a hivemind of intelligence and goodwill by genuinely engaging and convening stakeholders.

- 5.5** Consolidate websites to be more user-friendly, Downtown-focused, and valued as the most critical information clearinghouse about Downtown.

Highlight: After issuing a public RFP for web design services, CHI management received more than a dozen proposals to perform the specified scope of work. *Geocentric*, a US-based web design company that specializes in websites for urban place management entities such as Central Houston and its affiliates, was selected. This effort will consolidate the organization’s six stand-alone websites into a singular site that delivers an improved user experience and a more efficient method for accessing information about Downtown & the organizations advancing it. The new website will be launched by the end of 2023.

Participating Agencies:



- 5.6** Improve and expand external communications to increase awareness of CHI, its actions, and general Downtown happenings.

Highlight: After issuing a public RFP for public relations services, CHI management received numerous proposals from prospective agencies seeking to serve as the organization’s agency of record. Ultimately, CKP Group was selected. CKP group’s office is located in Downtown Houston, and they are a woman-owned, certified Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) in the State of Texas. To kick start their engagement, the team from CKP joined the *Goal 5 Engage Committee* for a robust discussion on stories about Downtown that the media doesn’t cover adequately.

Participating Agencies:





CENTRAL HOUSTON, INC.

JUNE 2023

GOAL 1

Champion major projects, initiatives and investments that improve Downtown.

- 1.1** Build and maintain cross-sector relationships with area leaders so that CHI can support, facilitate or lead on catalytic opportunities.

Highlight: On May 26th, CHI management hosted the second in a new series of quarterly luncheon engagements which welcome leaders from public, non-profit and philanthropic interests whose work affects Downtown Houston. Currently, a dozen C-suite leaders from the aforementioned industries are invited to the intimate luncheons which are focused on establishing, strengthening, and renewing relationships and partnerships. Board Chairs from the three CHI affiliates are also invited to take part in the luncheon. The next luncheon will be held on September 22nd.

Participating Agencies:



- 1.3** Collaborate with partners such as the City of Houston, Harris County, Greater Houston Partnership and Houston First to leverage opportunities for shared strategies to improve Downtown Houston.

Highlight: On May 27th, CHI produced a standing-room-only *Big Art. Bigger Change.* mural reveal event and bus tours in collaboration with leadership and staff of University of Houston-Downtown, Harris County, City of Houston, and U.S. Congress, District 18. To support the event, CHI also created and shared a Social Media Toolkit to facilitate partners' participation in expanding and amplifying CHI's communications and outreach efforts.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 2

Enhance and maintain a comfortable, welcoming, and well-managed public realm.

2.1 Maintain and advance the standard of care for Downtown’s cleanliness and well-kept appearance.

Highlight: The street light outage check for the entire HDMD District plus Allen Parkway was completed by CHI management during the month of May and resulted in 178 total observed outages. CHI reported 141 outages to CenterPoint, 13 outages to the City of Houston, and HDMD will repair 2 outages located along Allen Parkway from Downtown to Montrose Street.

Participating Agency:



2.8 Broadly address the needs of the people experiencing homelessness and the associated impacts.

Highlight: In response to continued concerns about conditions around the Beacon, the HDMD Board approved funding to support a new safety outpost at 401 San Jacinto St. in the former Rachel’s café space. This satellite office will provide a working space for our homeless outreach teams and partners involved in getting our most vulnerable into housing. The space will also provide a high level of transparency for security and law enforcement personnel and will be designed to serve as a regular drop-in location for HPD officers. Planning and space build-out is underway with the goal of opening in early July.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 3

Drive vibrancy through improved street-level connectivity, a commitment to walkability, and inclusive programming strategies.

3.6 Plan, design, and construct public infrastructure that supports safety and equity.

Highlight: May 2023 was particularly active for engagement on the More Space Main Street 2.0 project. The engagements included meetings with seven associated and partner agencies (HPW, P&D, HFD, HPD, METRO & CNP) plus five direct, one-on-one meetings with Main Street small business operators and hoteliers. On May 30, 2023, the District hosted a four-hour public workshop at Little Dipper’s More Space outdoor café which was attended by approximately 125 citizens. HDMD’s project team and consultants are now advancing towards the initial round of planning concepts with future agency and public engagement in August.

Participating Agencies:



3.8 Prioritize investments in pedestrian lighting on key walking corridors and near residential buildings.

Highlight: On May 11, 2023, the HDMD Board authorized a professional services agreement with Arup to perform downtown-wide photometric analysis along all sidewalks and provide initial recommendations for future pedestrian lighting enhancements. The lighting consultant will also perform an additional service, a Night-time Vulnerability Assessment, for certain areas of Downtown, thereby providing a higher level of analysis and understanding as to existing lighting conditions. Planning work will commence in mid-June and run through the end-of-year.

Participating Agency:



GOAL 4

Foster a vital and thriving economy through business growth, residential expansion, and enhanced reasons to be in Downtown.

- 4.11** Foster a thriving storefront economy, prioritizing recruitment efforts, where possible, to fill available properties that have favorable co-tenancy on key corridors.

Highlight: CHI welcomed urban retail expert Mike Berne, with MJB Consulting, to Downtown Houston from May 28th – June 3rd to explore Downtown Houston’s retail environment and storefront economy and advise on CHI’s emergent storefront development strategy. While here, Berne engaged long-term storefront stakeholders, leading retail brokers and property owners as well as toured and investigated Downtown and our competitive area markets. MJB Consulting will submit a written report on their findings and recommended competitive strategies to the Thrive Committee in August.

Participating Agencies:



- 4.15** Be the go-to organization for Downtown market research and intelligence.

Highlight: CHI management has made significant progress in better understanding the storefront ecosystem in Downtown. An internal team comprised of representatives from several CHI departments has recently completed the first phase of a comprehensive exploration and assessment of street-level storefronts across Downtown. This renewed storefront database effort will help us better understand who is in Downtown and where they are located. This data is critical to several concurrent CHI projects, including but not limited to the website overhaul, the quarterly market reports, and the retail recruitment strategy. The next phase of the effort will involve categorization of the identified business and the building of a long-term system to keep the data current.

Participating Agencies:



GOAL 5

Develop a hivemind of intelligence and goodwill by genuinely engaging and convening stakeholders.

- 5.4 Explore the potential for simplifying stakeholders' awareness of CHI and its affiliates by unifying their brand identities.

Highlight: CHI and its consulting team have concluded the discovery phase of the branding consolidation project, including a SWOT analysis, site tours, stakeholder surveys and facilitated discussions, and finalized project brief. Further, CHI management provided its consulting team with creative guidance to refine brand themes and visual mood boards.

Participating Agencies:



- 5.7 Develop programs and collateral to orient new companies, employees, and residents to Downtown.

Highlight: HDMD has developed new info cards to provide stakeholders greater ease in contacting us to respond to public realm concerns. The cards are designed for Downtown residents, employees, visitors and business owners and feature our brand-new simplified and centralized phone number for requesting a Downtown Public Safety Guide, a Cleaning Ambassador, a SEAL Security officer, or our operations office.

Participating Agencies:



Downtown Houston Helps
713-223-2003

Your Downtown is Safe and Welcoming
Downtown Public Safety Guides patrol pedestrian areas and special events as a visible, welcoming helpful presence.
These Safety Guides are available daily to assist residents, workers, visitors and business owners. Please call on us for prompt, courteous response to:

- Report any concern about safety
- Request a walking escort
- Connect people experiencing homelessness with social services
- Deter panhandling
- Assist with directions & information on Downtown happenings

For safety concerns that need a licensed security officer response, Downtown District provides 24/7 security officer coverage in partnership with SEAL Security.

Call 713-223-2003 or email operations@downtowndistrict.org for prompt, courteous response to services listed on back.
www.downtownhouston.org

Your Downtown is Clean and Beautiful
Downtown Cleaning Ambassadors maintain the attractive appearance of your Downtown public areas.
Every day, our teams empty 310 trash receptacles and remove over 1,700 tons of trash per year from Downtown. Cleaning Ambassadors work daily to remove graffiti, power wash sidewalks and surfaces and operate street sweepers.
Every year, our Downtown Operations teams plant more than 140,000 colorful, flowering plants, maintain over 2,000 shade trees, and keep 13 fountains splashing.
Your Downtown Cleaning Ambassadors also ensure Market Square Park and Trebly Park are beautiful places to play, dine, relax, and enjoy seasonal performances.
Help us keep Downtown clean and beautiful by reporting areas that need our attention.
Your Downtown Cleaning Ambassadors and Public Safety Guides are working to make Downtown a connected and thriving place for everyone.

CALL 713-223-2003 OR EMAIL OPERATIONS@DOWNTOWNDISTRICT.ORG:

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES	GENERAL PUBLIC SAFETY	SEAL SECURITY	DISTRICT OPERATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Information Street Closures Security Escort Quality of Life Issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident Reporting Small Business Quality of Life Signage Cleanup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies Partnership Public Information Issue Definition Violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trash Program Public Realm Services Landscaping Inspection Street Light Outages