



CENTRAL HOUSTON, INC.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT PLAN UPDATES

JANUARY 2023 - MARCH 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:



Downtown
Redevelopment
Authority

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:

