



# CHAPTER 2

## Background and Existing Conditions





Sugar Land is considered by many to be one of the premier places in which to live and do business in Texas. In planning for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, this Plan considers both the Sugar Land of today as well as the kind of city its residents want it to become in the future. This section reviews existing conditions that relate to walking and bicycling, as well as future changes that may benefit from improved walking and bicycling infrastructure and encouragement. The desires and concerns of residents of the City are also discussed in this section.

## CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND & EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Regional Context

Sugar Land is a primarily suburban community of approximately 84,000 residents located in eastern Fort Bend County. Sugar Land is centrally located in the middle of the fast growing southwestern part of the greater Houston area.

The City incorporated in 1959 but has roots dating back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The town originally grew around a sugar mill that eventually became the home of the Imperial Sugar Company.

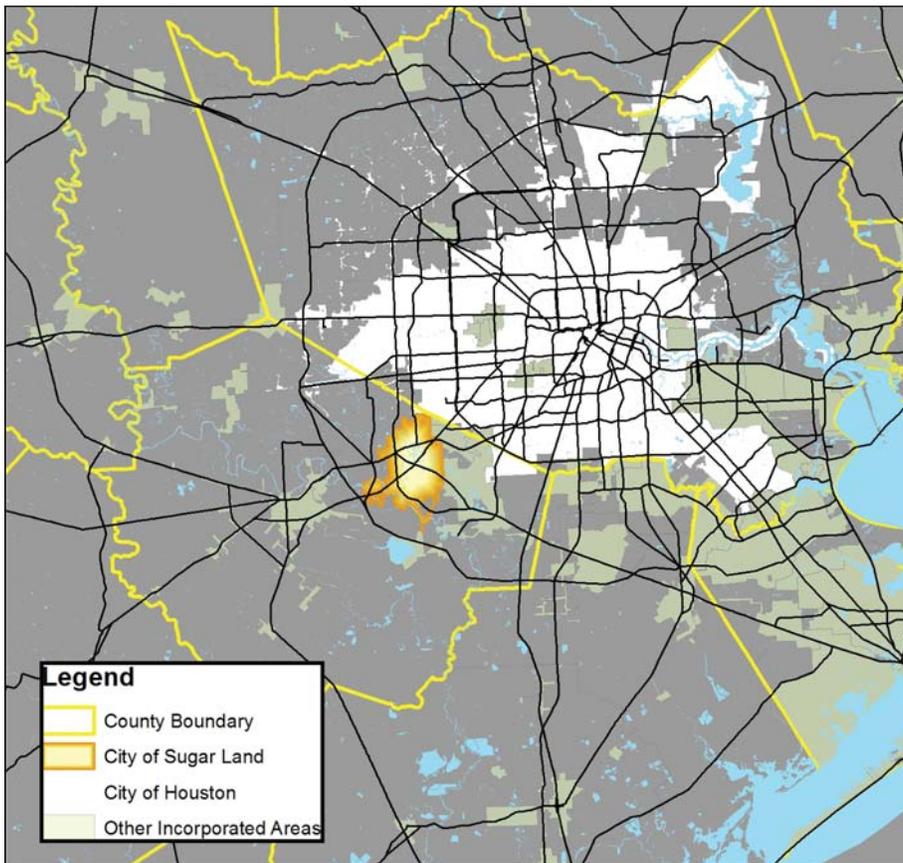


Figure 2-1 Sugar Land in the Houston Region



Sugar Land is located approximately 20 miles from downtown Houston and surrounded by other incorporated suburbs, including Missouri City, Stafford, and Richmond. It is linked to the rest of the region via three major highways: US 59, which connects Sugar Land into downtown Houston, Greenway Plaza, and the Galleria; SH 6, which connects Sugar Land north to Houston, and southeast to Missouri City; and US 90A, which connects Sugar Land to the southwest to Richmond and Rosenberg, and northeast to Houston and Texas Medical Center. These major corridors have attracted major office and commercial uses over the past decade.

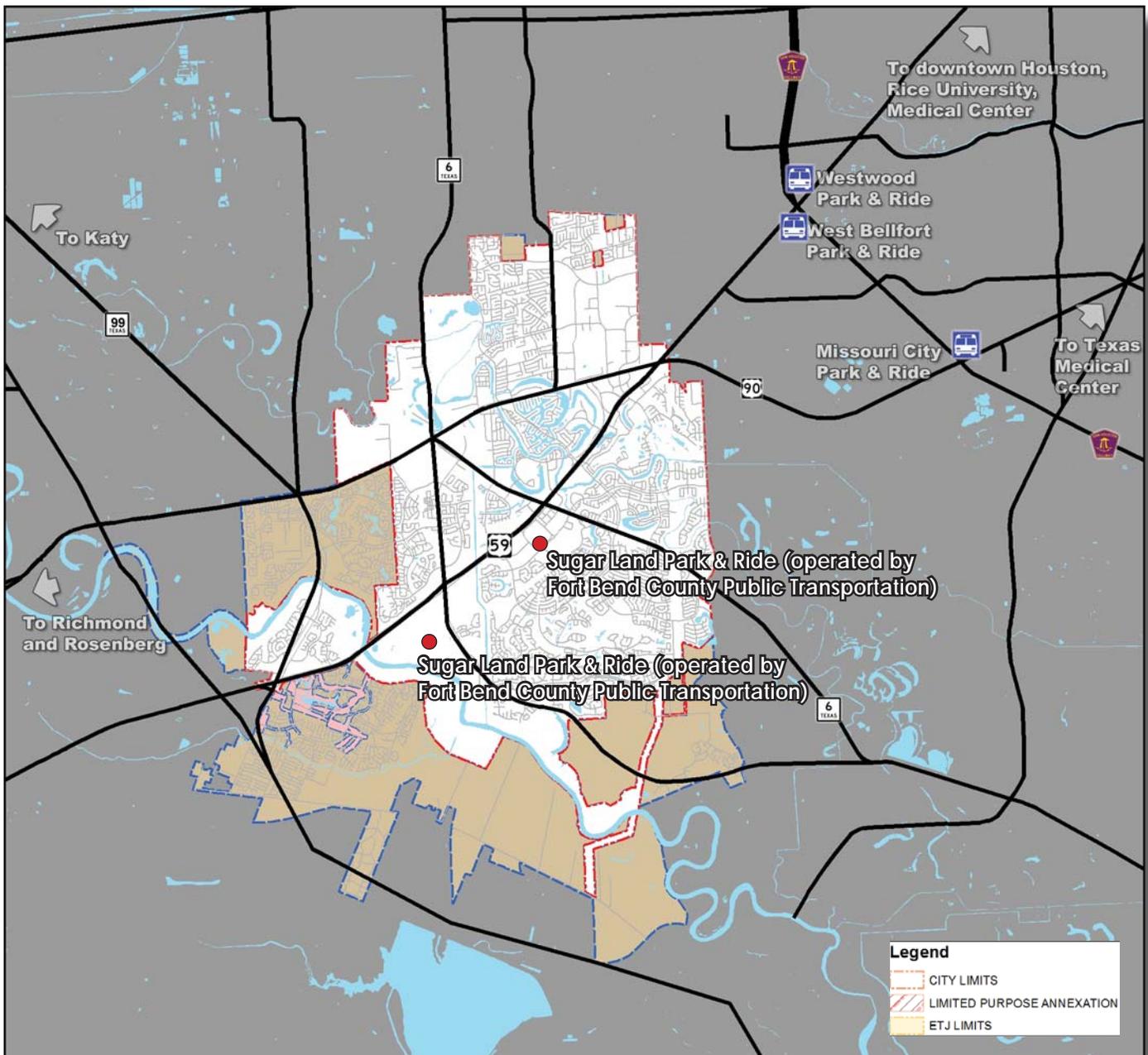


Figure 2-2 Regional Accessibility of Sugar Land



Much of Sugar Land’s growth occurred in the 1980s and 1990s through annexations of master-planned communities. Infrastructure development throughout the City has largely been accomplished through the development of these master-planned communities, and continues today with more recent developments such as Telfair, Imperial, and Riverstone.

Geographically, Sugar Land encompasses approximately 35 square miles within its City limits, and measures around 10 miles from north to south and 7 miles from east to west. Another 19 square miles in the extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) will become part of the City in the future.

Additionally, while the City is outside of the METRO service area, two Park & Rides operated by Fort Bend County Public Transportation are in the City, and three Park & Ride stations are in proximity to the City (see Figure 2-2).

## Local Context

### *Key Destinations*

An evaluation of where people are travelling between helps identify “desire lines” for trips, ultimately guiding the network of facilities and prioritization. Within Sugar Land, typical trip “attractors” most likely to be accessed by walking or bicycle riding include schools, parks, libraries, hospitals, the University of Houston, and commercial centers or activity centers such as the Town Center area. Residents of Sugar Land played a significant role in identifying where they would like to walk and bike. Some key destinations identified during the public input process as well as during the analysis phase are shown in Figure 2-3.



- Legend**
- Area Destinations**
- COLLEGE
  - SCHOOL
  - HOSPITAL
  - LIBRARY
  - PARK - CITY
  - PARK - HOA
  - TOWN CENTER AREA
  - TRANSIT
  - CITY LIMITS
  - LIMITED PURPOSE ANNEXATION
  - ETJ LIMITS

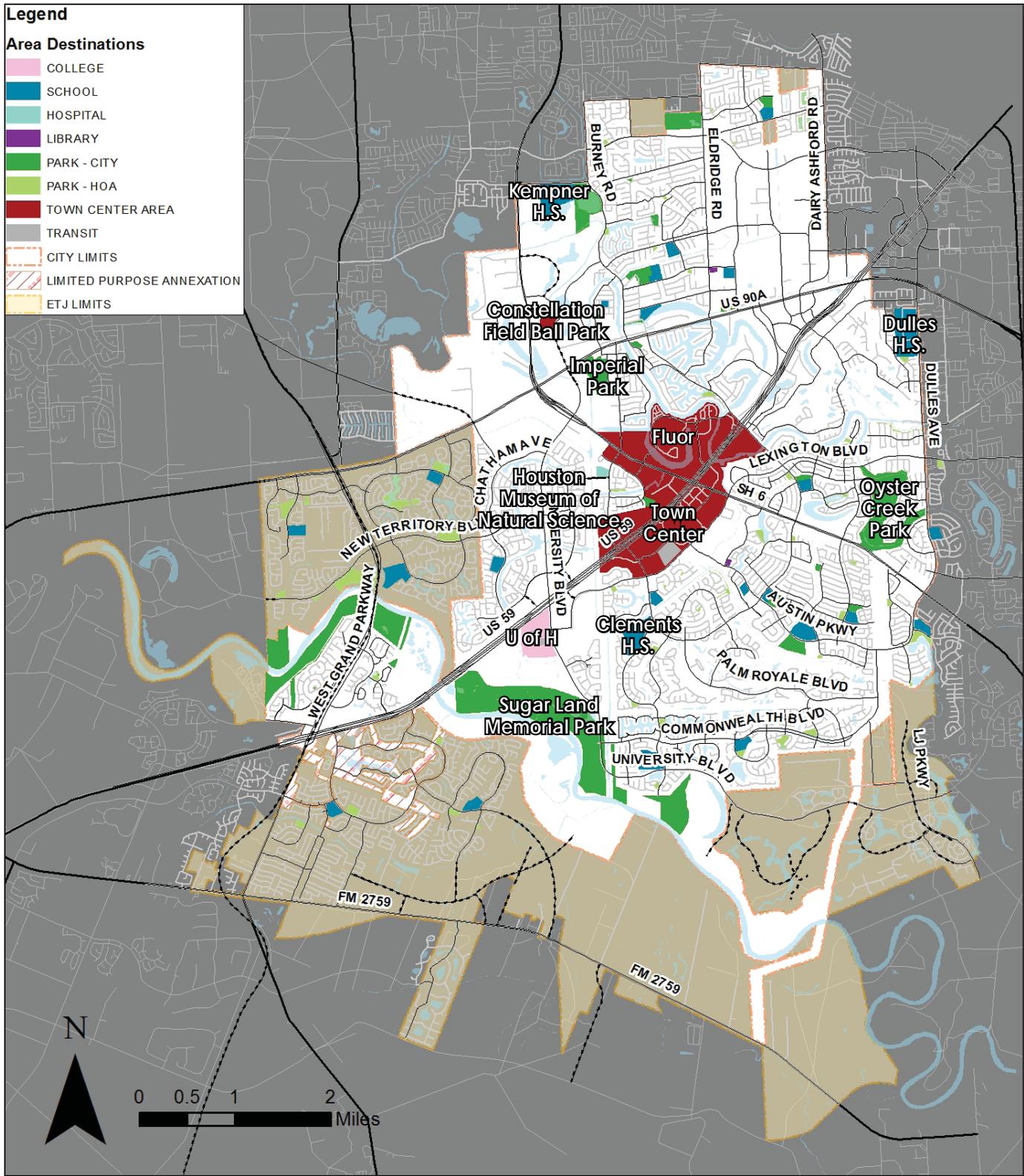


Figure 2-3 Some of the destinations in Sugar Land as noted by residents during the public input process.



### Land Use and Development Patterns

Land use is a critical determinant of transportation. Not only does the transportation system make land accessible for development, but land use decisions such as type of land use and density can influence travel behaviors, and therefore the design of the transportation system.

Likewise, the pattern of development will influence travel patterns. The more land uses are separated - either by distance or by discontinuity of the transportation network, the more a person must be dependent on a vehicle to get from one place to another. On the other hand, land uses that are brought closer together and connected will enable walking and bicycling.

Sugar Land grew as a predominantly residential suburban community, with an abundance of low-density, single-family housing. Most housing developments were designed and developed outside of the regulations of the City's Development Code and independent of one another. Internally, the street networks are well connected and sidewalks enable walking within the neighborhood, but beyond the borders of the low-density neighborhoods, they connect to each other only through a limited number of arterial and collector streets, resulting in a largely car-dependent community.

In recent decades, Sugar Land has been able to diversify its land use base, attracting a significant amount of retail and office uses, particularly along the US 59 and SH 6 corridors. In order to realize the vision for these activity centers to be accessible by walking and bicycling, the rest of Sugar Land needs to be walkable and bikable - not just the activity centers.

Other Sugar Land goals found in the Comprehensive Plan (2012) support a more walkable and bikable City. These goals include Sugar Land's improved transit options, reduced congestion, a healthy and active lifestyle for citizens, and an environmentally responsible community.

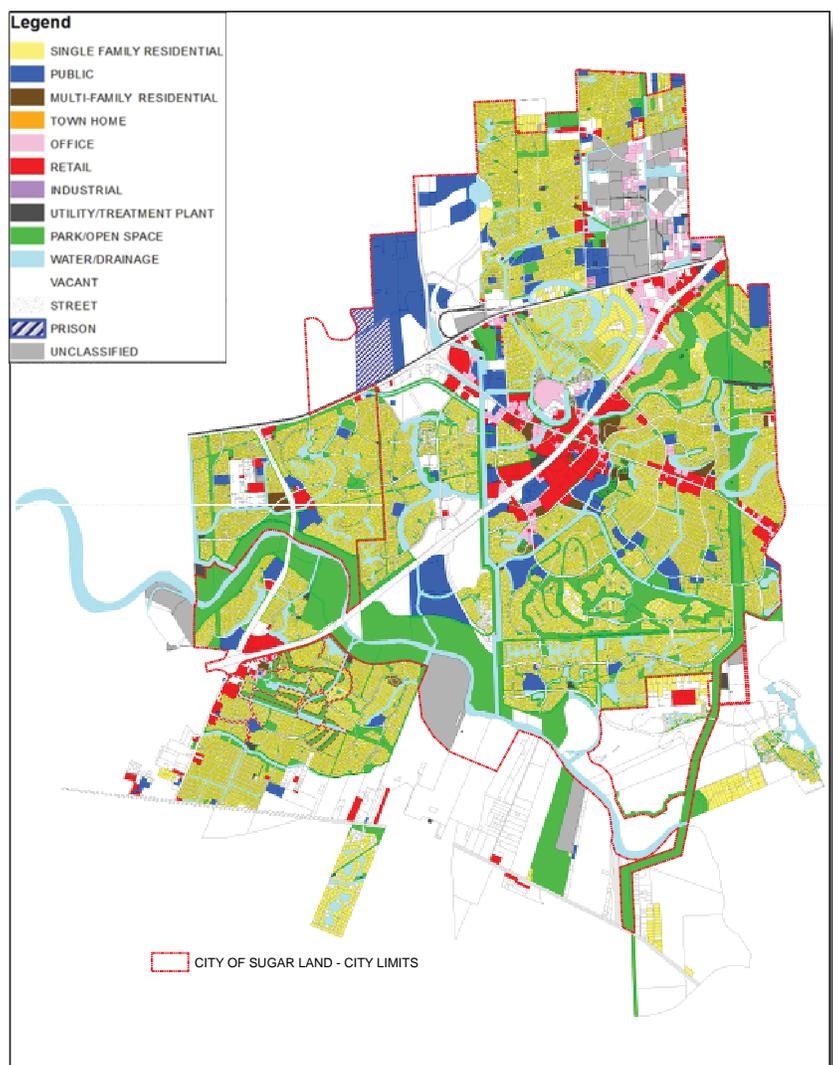


Figure 2-4 Sugar Land Land Use Inventory (2012)



### Demographics

Sugar Land’s strong and diverse employment opportunities, as well as high quality housing, good schools, and other factors located within well planned communities have resulted in strong population growth in the City. Since 2000, the population of the City of Sugar Land has grown from 63,328 to 84,511 in 2012 (City’s estimate). The growth represents a 33.45% growth rate over the 12-year period, and an average capture rate of 14% of the total growth in Fort Bend County during the same period. Population projections created by the City of Sugar Land 2012 Comprehensive Plan suggest that the City will grow to 95,313 by 2020 and 112,357 by 2025 with an ultimate build-out population of 144,559.

Moreover, the City has a relatively high number of residents in the age range 20 to 54. The median age, at over 41 years old, is older than the State of Texas’s median age, which is approximately 34 years. The availability of a good walking and bicycling network can make the City more attractive for younger residents.

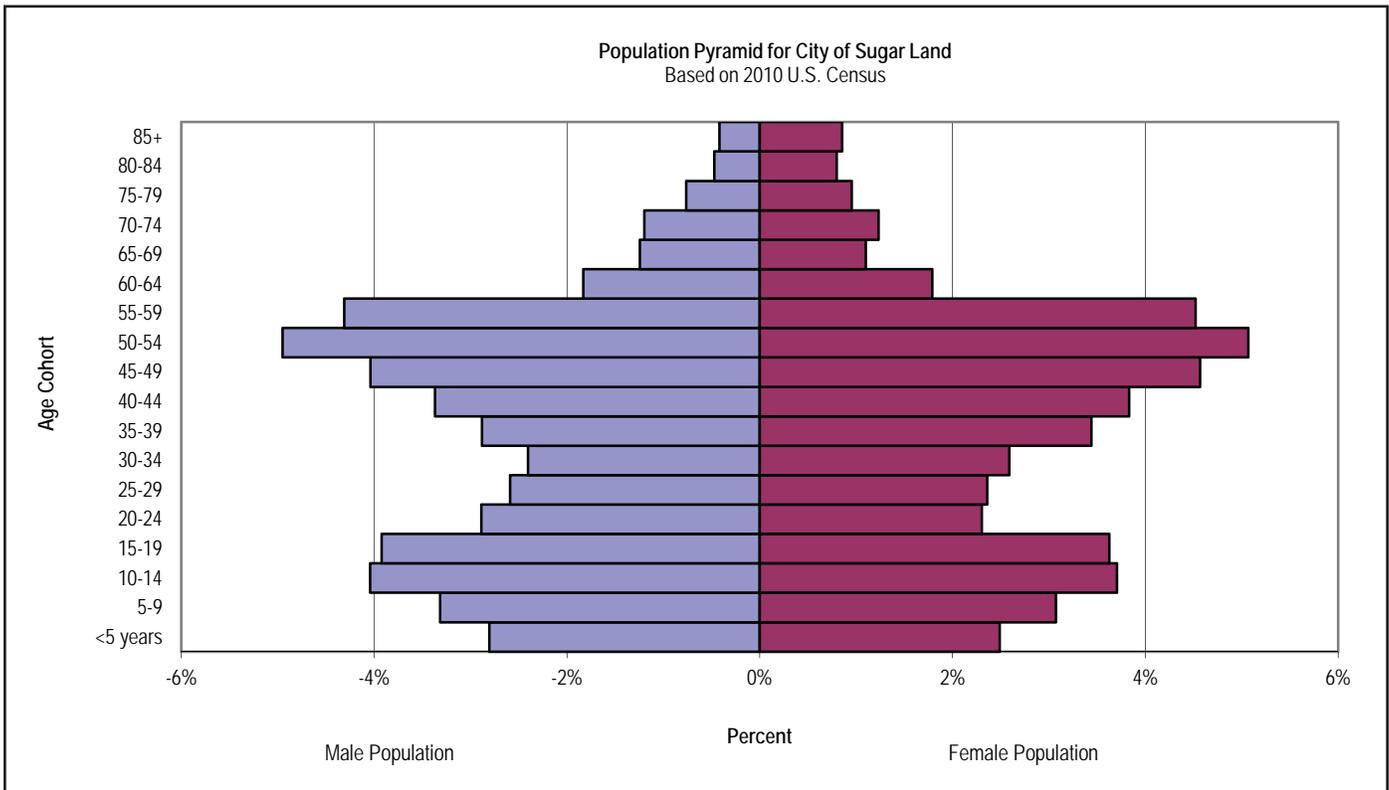


Figure 2-5 Sugar Land has an aging population, as shown by this population pyramid. The 20-54 population cohort represents a significant portion (47%) of Sugar Land’s population.



## Relationship to Other Plans and Studies

The need and desire for a strong bicycle and pedestrian network in Sugar Land is supported by other City plans. A review of these plans is stated below.

### **Sugar Land Comprehensive Plan**

The City's Comprehensive Plan was updated and adopted in July 2012. Specific goals of the Comprehensive Plan relate directly to pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Objective E.3 of the Comprehensive Plan is for "Pedestrian-friendly activity centers connected by alternative transportation modes and trails." Goal G of the Comprehensive Plan is "Superior Mobility", which is listed in detail on Figure 1-1 on Page 1.

### **2011 Comprehensive Mobility Plan**

As discussed in Chapter 1, the 2011 Mobility Plan identified eight goals and a series of strategies and initiatives to achieve Superior Mobility. This Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan builds upon those goals to identify where there are gaps in the mobility network, and where key facilities should be added to address those gaps.

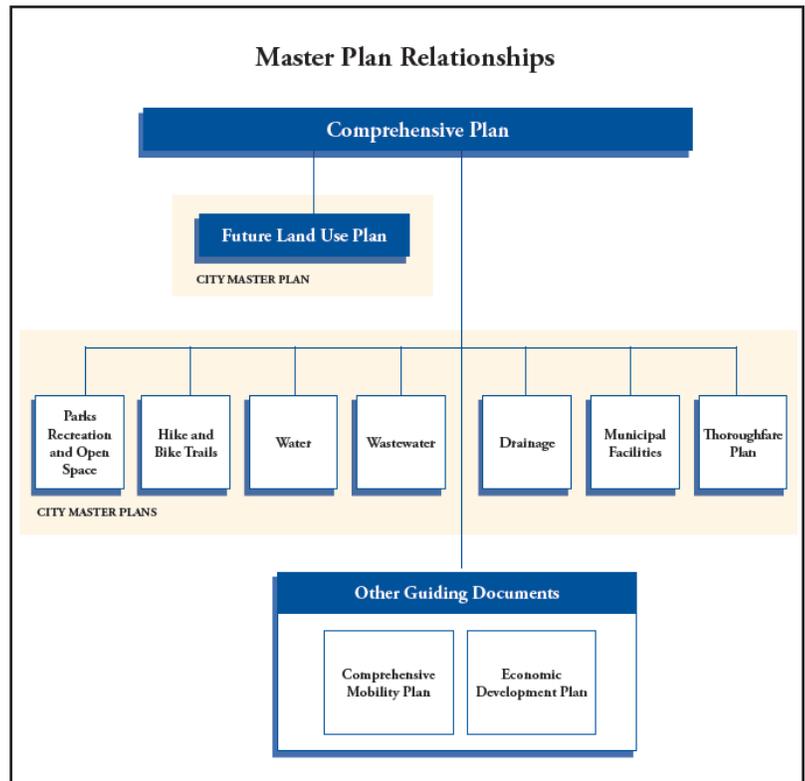


Figure 2-6 Master Plan Relationships. Source: Sugar Land Comprehensive Plan 2012, p. 7

### **Coordination with Regional Trail and Bicycle Planning Efforts**

Planning for trails in the area around Sugar Land is done both locally and at a regional level. Regional planning for the entire greater Houston area is accomplished by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), under the direction of the Pedestrian Bicyclist Transportation Program. The program serves as the central coordinator and collection point for plans prepared at the local level, and works to ensure that individual plans work together. This program develops guidelines and procedures to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian considerations are included in projects submitted for funding consideration in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). H-GAC also offers technical assistance to communities, transportation agencies and organizations to address pedestrian and bicyclist needs and safety issues. The regional bicycle plan for the greater Houston area is shown in Figure 2-7.



At a local level, individual cities each prepare their own bicycle and trail plans. Missouri City is in the process of completing a bike plan as shown in Figure 2-8. This Plan coordinates and connects with other planned area facilities, such as the existing trails in Missouri City, or future bikeway connections to Houston.

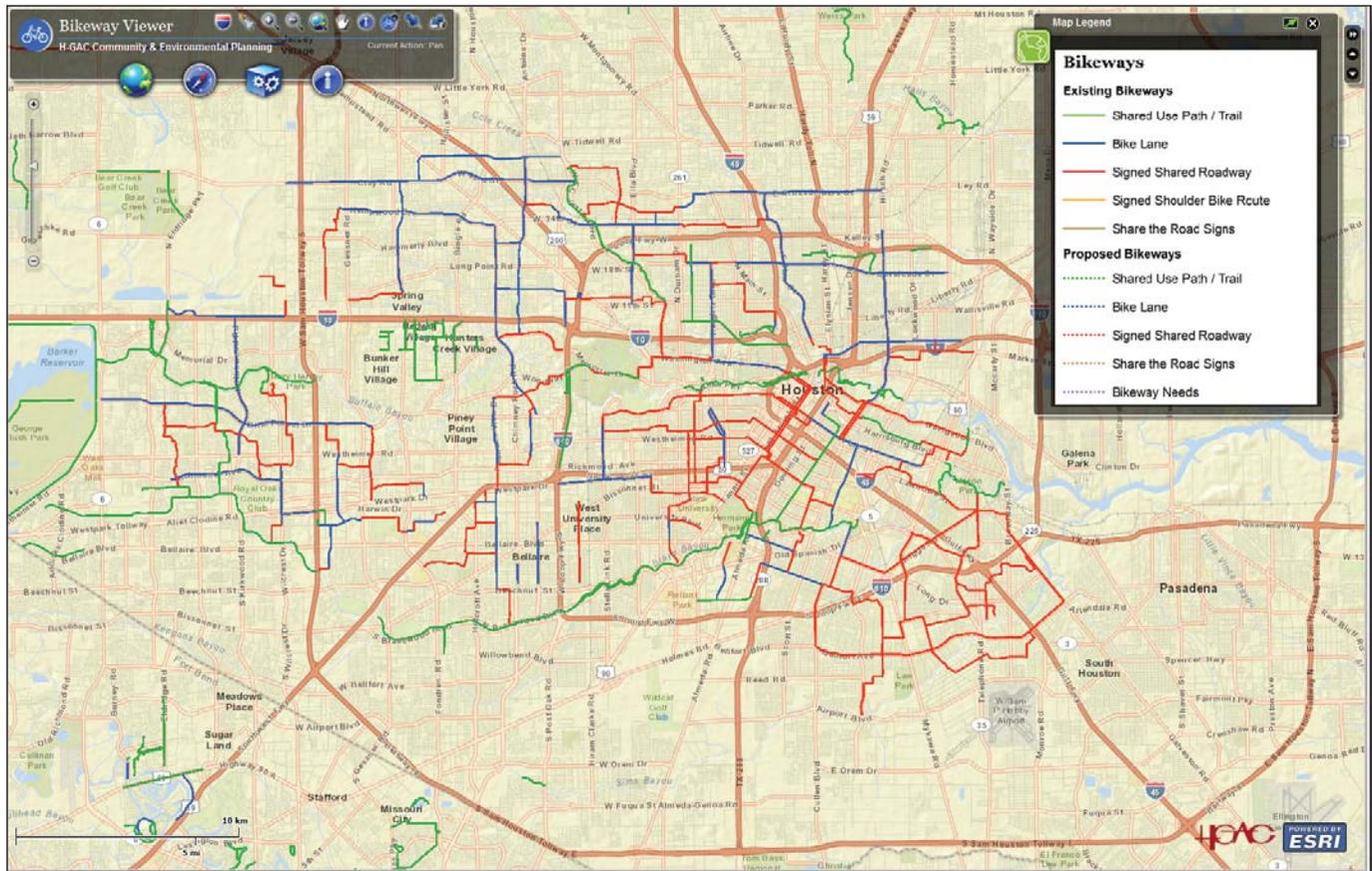


Figure 2-7 Overall Houston Area Bicycle Plan  
Source: H-GAC Regional Bikeway Viewer

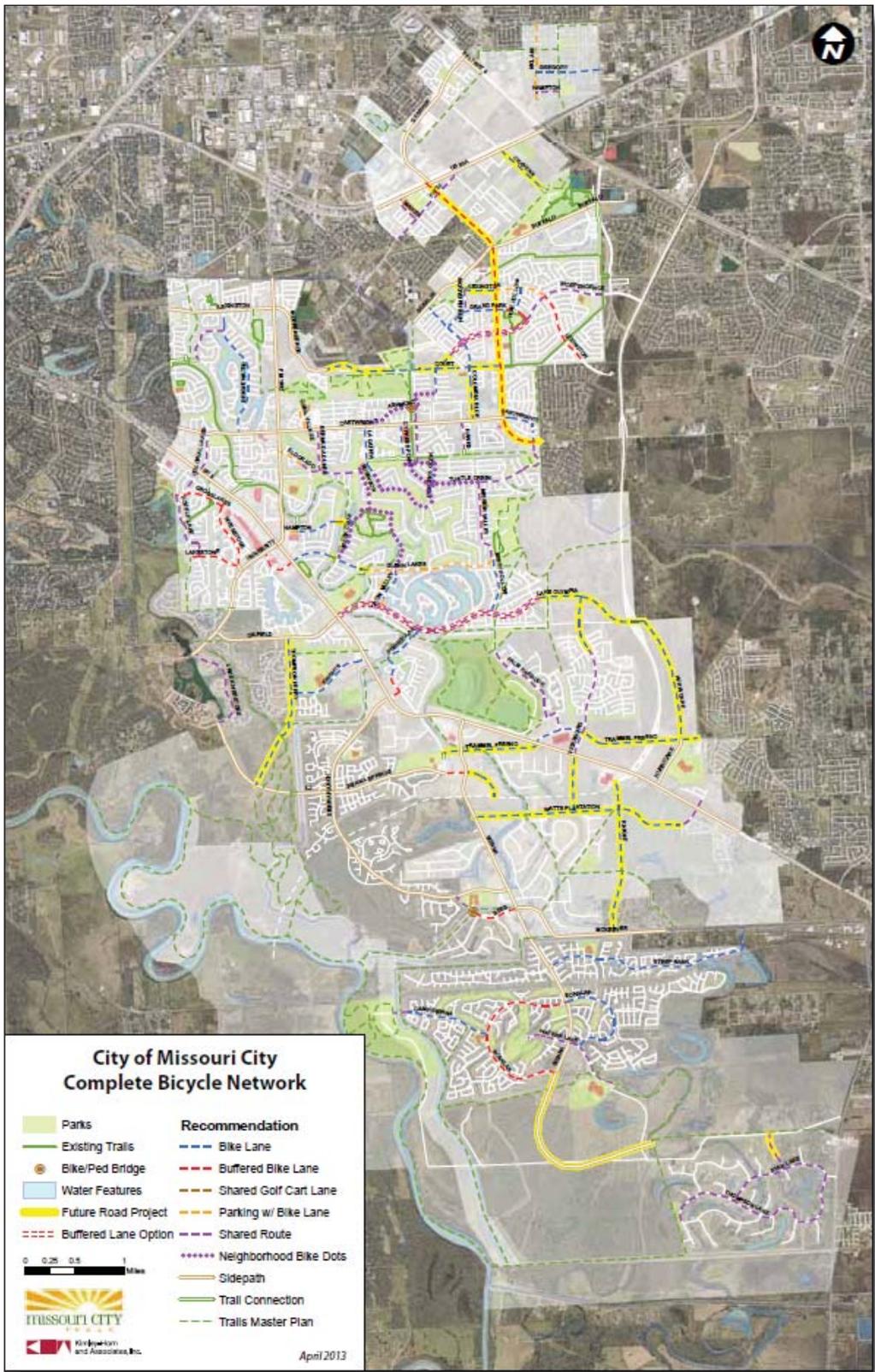


Figure 2-8 Missouri City Bicycle Plan (final draft April 2013)  
 Source: City of Missouri City, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.



### Sugar Land Town Center Pedestrian Study

The purpose of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan is to create a connected system of routes to destinations citywide. This Plan is coordinated with the Sugar Land Town Center Pedestrian and Bicycle Study which shows pedestrian and bike connections to the Town Center area. The Sugar Land Town Center Pedestrian and Bicycle Study was originally conducted in partnership with H-GAC in 2007, and further refining by the City through a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) in 2011. The map in Figure 2-9 shows the study area for the Town Center study.

Figure 2-10 shows the detailed recommendations for pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the Town Center area as established by the PER.

Figure 2-9 Town Center Study Area (September 2007)

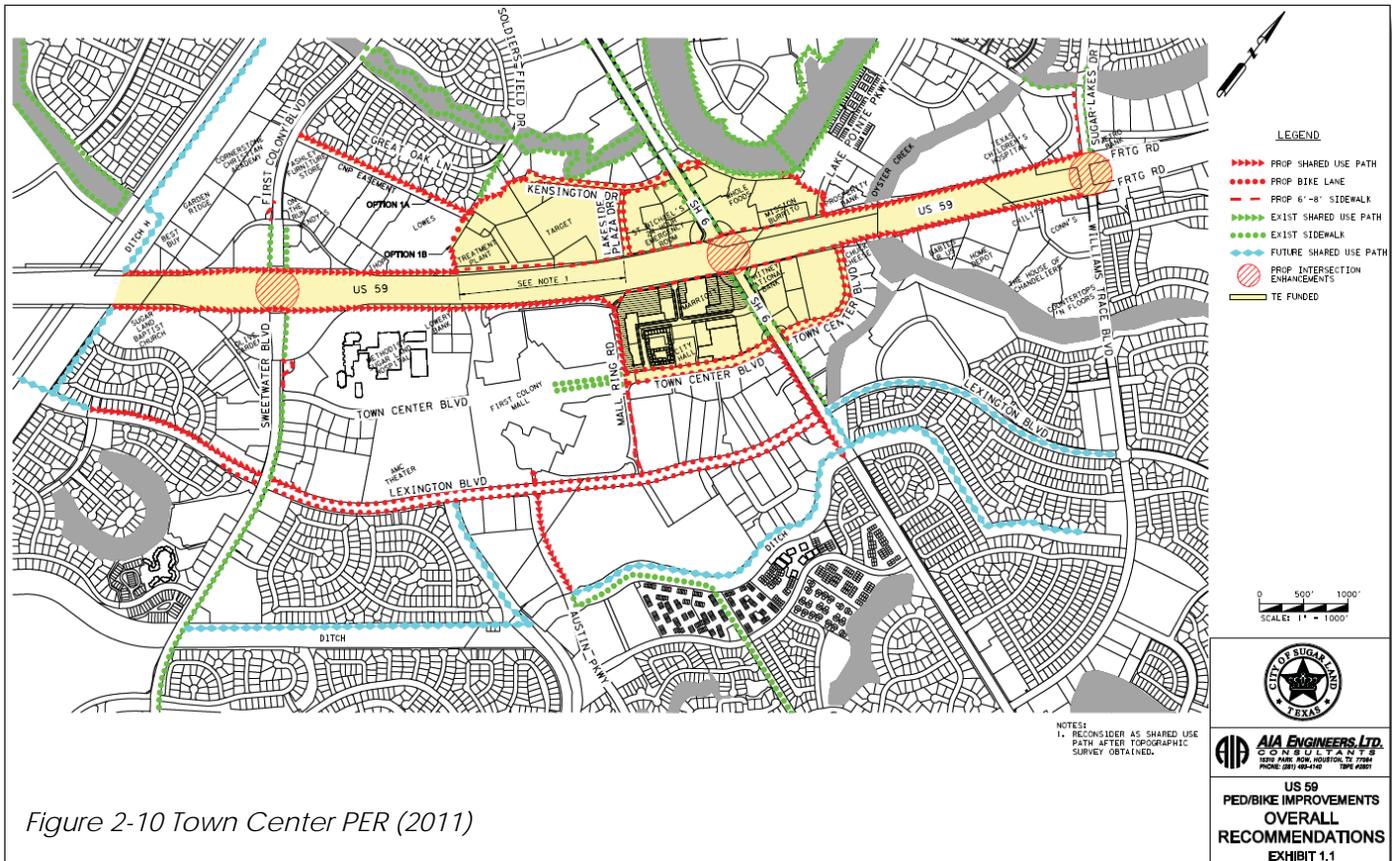


Figure 2-10 Town Center PER (2011)



### 2007 Hike and Bike Trails Plan

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan is an update to the 2007 Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan which identified opportunities to create trail corridors. The 2007 plan had an extraordinary amount of public input at multiple levels, including a task force, stakeholder meetings, input from citizens at public meetings throughout the City, and workshops with 17 Homeowners Associations (HOAs). The extensive public participation efforts helped secure buy-in and support among residents from all areas of Sugar Land.

The City was divided into five sectors, each of which was mapped in detail. The plan identified 172+ miles of potential trails. To facilitate implementation, the plan prioritized 26 miles of trails as major catalysts for creating a strong city-wide system and identified three major spine trails that are located along drainage corridors (Ditch "H" Corridor, First Colony Drainage Corridor, and East Sugar Land Corridor) and provide major connections across the City. This Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan builds upon the recommendations of the Hike and Bike Trails Master Plan and adds facilities to improve mobility and address key barriers throughout the City.

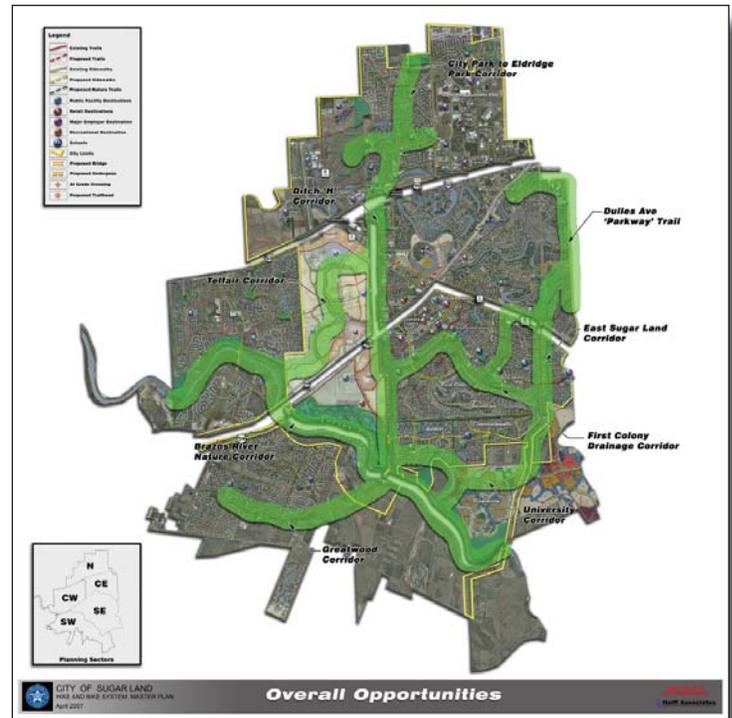


Figure 2-11 2007 Trails Plan High Priority recommendations

### Area Development Plans and Other Concept Plans

There are several planned development (PD) zoning districts throughout Sugar Land. The development plans for each of these areas were included when determining proposed facilities for this Master Plan, so that the proposed facilities of this Plan align with development plans. Specific areas included the Brazos River Park, Riverstone, Imperial, and Telfair as shown on page 18. This Plan also recognizes previous consensus by the City's Development Committee regarding sidewalks in the Sugar Land Business Park, as well as the trails that are proposed in the Brazos River Park Master Plan concept.



Figure 2-12 Brazos River Park Master Plan (2013)



Figure 2-13 Riverstone General Land Plan (2013)



Figure 2-14 Imperial General Land Plan (2012)

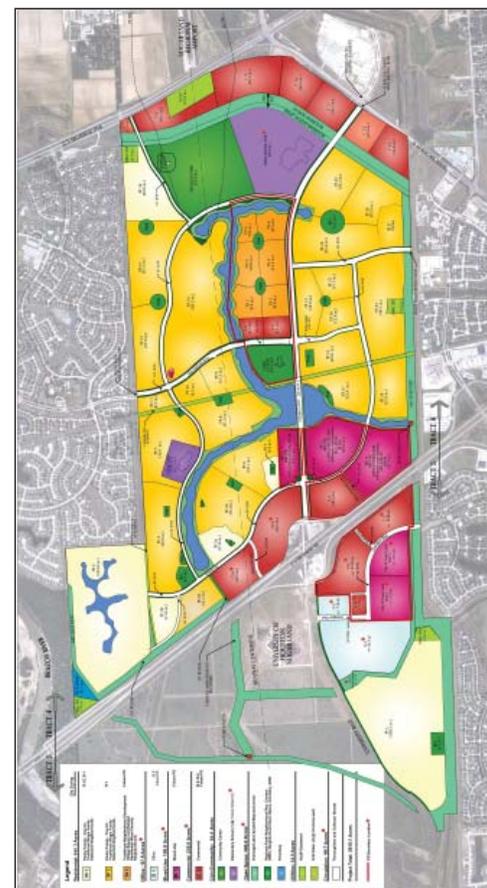


Figure 2-15 Telfair General Land Plan (2012)



## Existing Conditions and the State of Bicycling & Walking in Sugar Land

Sugar Land has many existing trails and some on-street bicycle facilities throughout the City. In general, these existing trails and bicycle facilities are well conceived and located, and are used often by area residents. Two areas of concern regarding the existing system are the width and whether those trail segments can support significant numbers of users, and key gaps that exist between certain links in the City. The map on Figure 2-17 illustrates the overall existing pedestrian and bicycle system in Sugar Land.



Figure 2-16 Existing facilities in Sugar Land (City and ETJ)



# Existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

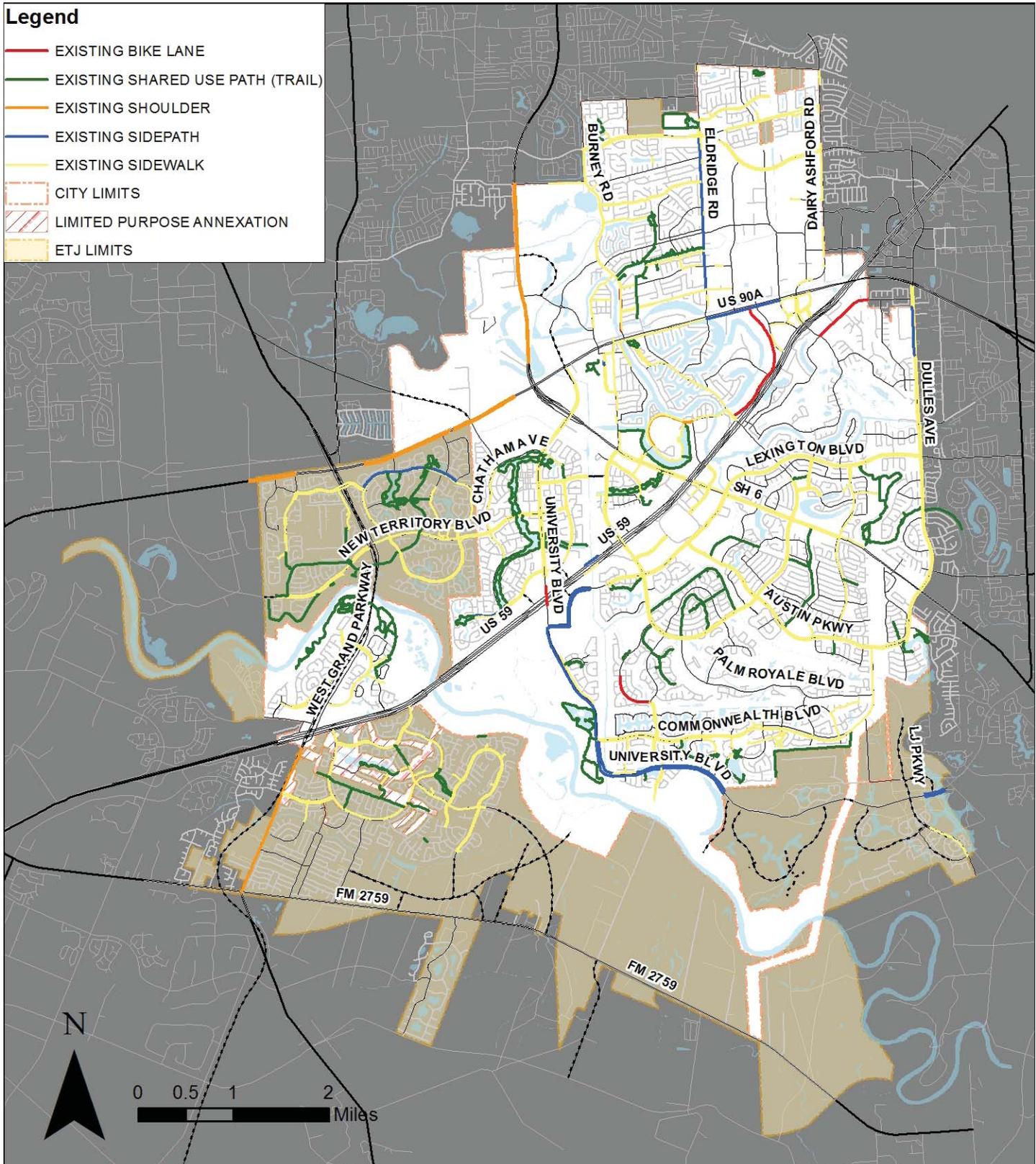


Figure 2-17 Existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities



## Barriers to Walking and Bicycling

Survey data and public feedback revealed that citizens are concerned about barriers to walking and biking. Barriers include major roadways, drainage channels, levees, railroads, and the Brazos River. The map below identifies where these barriers occur and a potential solution to get pedestrians and bicyclists across them. Solutions to resolve each barrier are further discussed in Chapter 4.

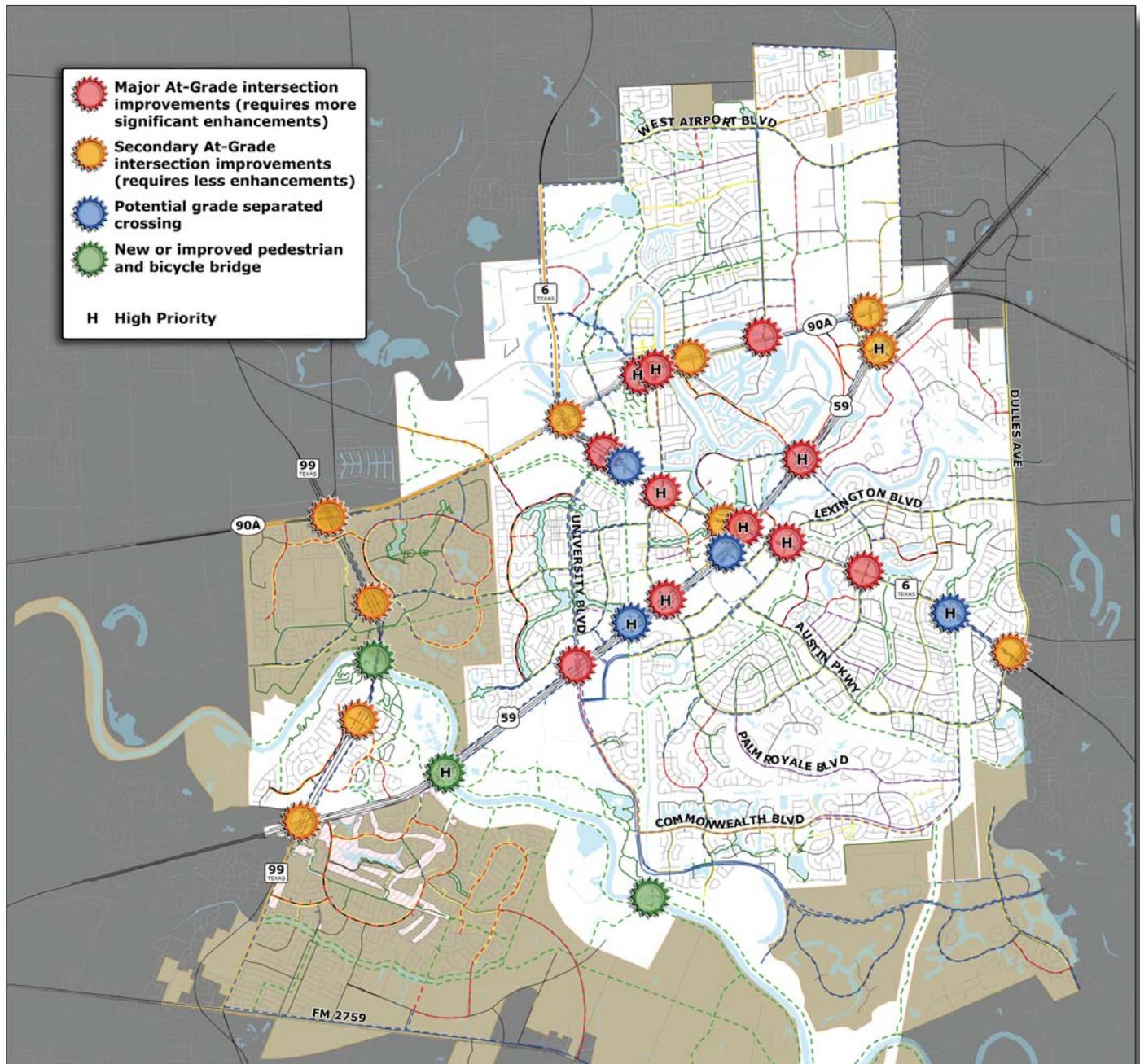


Figure 2-18 Barrier Corridors Generated by Citizen Input



## Pedestrian and Bicycle Accidents

Accident reports from 2005 to 2012 which involved a pedestrian or bicyclist injury were gathered by the City of Sugar Land and mapped to show potential problem areas within the existing system. Between 2005 and 2012, there have been 24 reported injury accidents involving a bicyclists, and no fatalities. The most commonly cited factor for the accidents involved failure to yield/give right-of-way (cited 8 times out of the 24 accidents) but does not specify if the bicyclists or the motorist failed to yield. Between 2005 and 2012, there have been 61 reported injury accidents involving a pedestrian, and three (3) reported fatalities. The two (2) most commonly cited factors for the accidents were backed without safety, meaning the driver backed up in an unsafe manner and it resulted in a crash (cited 10 times), and failed to yield/give right-of-way (cited 20 times). Figure 2-18 shows the locations of both pedestrian and bicycle involved accidents. Accident data was used as a criteria element to prioritize improvements.

### ***Pedestrian Accidents***

The most noticeable concentration of pedestrian-involved accidents are:

- Eldridge Rd. near Jess Pirtle Blvd. (6 accidents);
- SH 6 near Lexington Blvd. (4 accidents); and
- US 59 near Mall Ring Rd. (7 accidents).

### ***Bicycle Accidents***

The most noticeable concentration of bicycle involved accidents are:

- SH 6 near Town Center Blvd. (3 accidents);
- Austin Parkway near Lexington Blvd. (2 accidents);
- Elkins Rd. near Alcorn Oaks Dr. (2 accidents); and
- Colony Park Dr. near Sweetwater Blvd. (2 accidents).

### ***Conclusion***

Accidents that were identified represent on average a rate of three (3) accidents per year for bicyclists and seven (7) accidents per year for pedestrians. The recommendations for intersection treatments in Chapter 3, as well as barrier improvements discussed in Chapter 4 of this Plan, address improvements to many of the intersections where accidents have occurred.



# Site of Pedestrian and Bicycle Involved Accidents

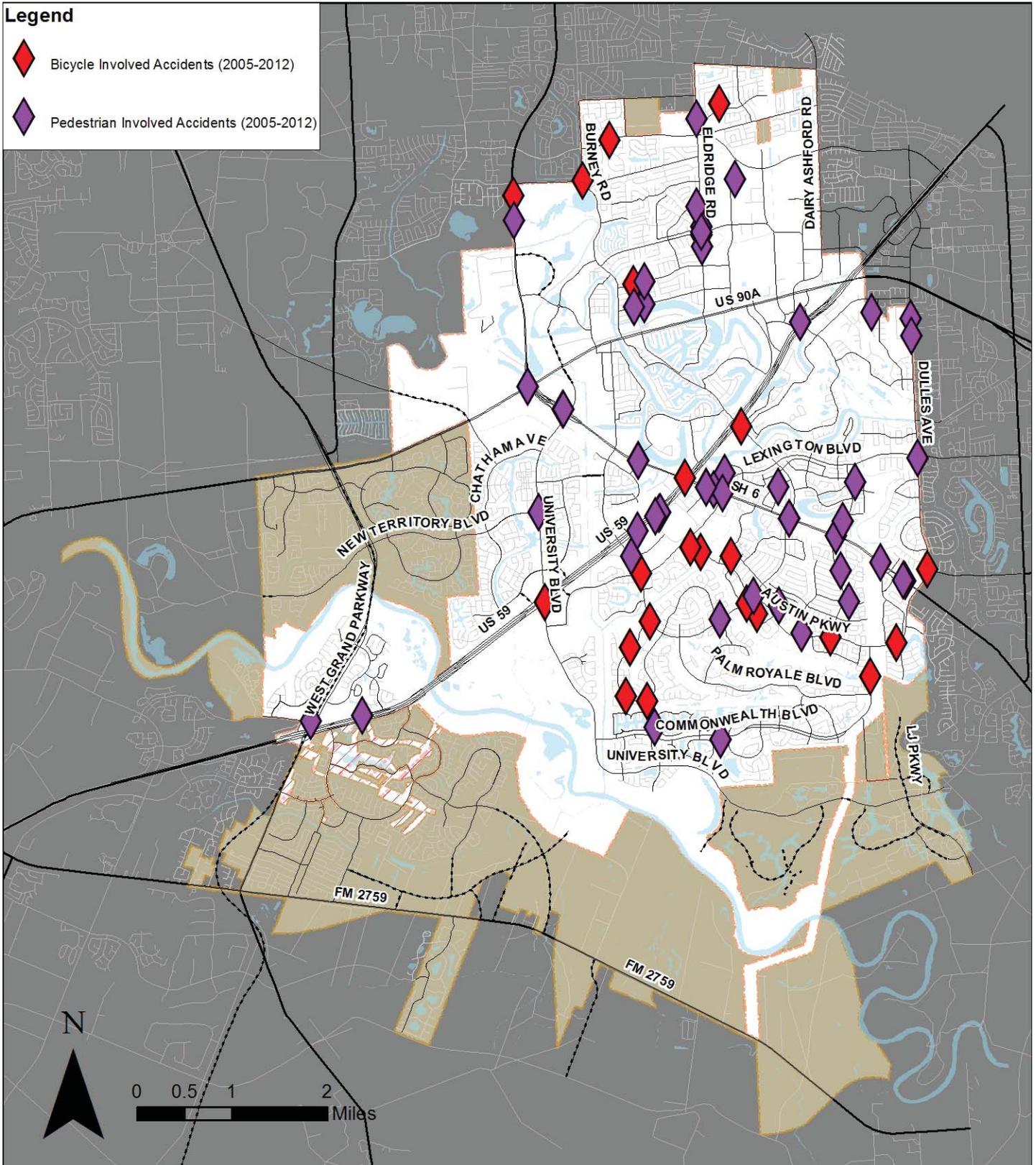


Figure 2-19 Pedestrian/Bicycle Involved Accident Locations (2005-2012)



## Public Input

This Plan is the result of significant public input, stakeholder input, and public meetings. The issues that emerged during this process helped shape the development of this Plan. The planning team used multiple methods to gather input from Sugar Land residents about their concerns and vision for the future of walking and bicycling, which ensures that this Plan is responsive to community preferences.

### *Online Survey*

An online survey was used to gain direct feedback from residents in Sugar Land and was available to everyone. The survey was promoted with a direct link to the survey on the City's project website, an e-mail blast to citizens, a Sugar Land Today newsletter article, on the Sugar Land local TV channel (SLTV 16), and through a message on City water bills. 380 people participated in the survey. The survey is a source of public input that reveals general preferences of those respondents but was not statistically valid across all City residents since the respondents were self-selected. A summary of the online survey results is found in Appendix A of this Master Plan.

### **Key responses from the online survey include:**

#### Biking:

- 76% said it is very important to improve walking and biking facilities in Sugar Land;
- 67% of respondents rode a bicycle a few times per month or more, and 10% of those rode almost daily;
- The most common reasons for riding a bicycle are for recreation or exercise (97%) and to visit a friend's house (51%);
- The most common problems that survey respondents encountered when biking in Sugar Land were no sidewalk or path (71%) and vehicles driving too fast (65%);
- The most commonly cited barriers discouraging respondents to bicycle more often were facilities are not available and facilities are not connected (both 35%);

#### Walking:

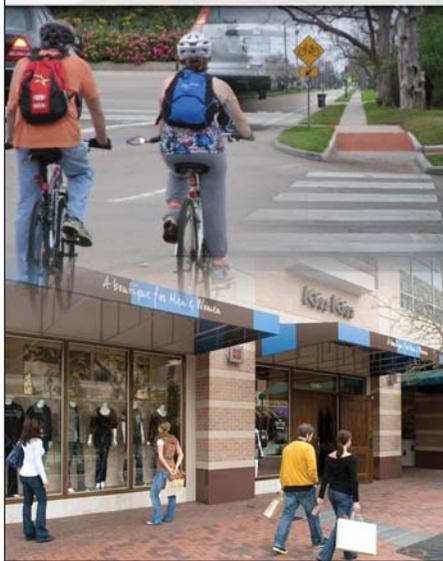
- 89% of respondents walked a few times per month or more, and 27% walked almost daily;
- The most common reasons for walking were recreation or exercise (98%) and to visit a friend's house (58%);
- The most common problems respondents encountered when walking in Sugar Land were no sidewalk or path (56%) and poor surface conditions (48%); and
- The most commonly cited barriers discouraging respondents to walk more often were facilities not available (74%) and traffic is too dangerous (71%).



**city of SUGAR LAND**  
pedestrian & bicycle  
master plan



**Interactive Bicycle & Pedestrian  
Conditions Map**  
powered by:  
**CommunityWalk®**  
**Instruction Brochure**



### CommunityWalk Interactive Mapping Exercise

This planning effort utilized an interactive mapping application, called CommunityWalk, to gain direct feedback from residents in Sugar Land. People were able to specifically communicate their issues and concerns for walking and biking. Directly pinpointed on a map were: intersections that are difficult to cross, important destinations where they want to go, places that need bicycle parking, and a variety of other options. In addition to placing different markers to communicate their concerns, residents were able to draw a path on the map of where they wanted to be able to walk or ride, or the route they are currently walking or riding along. A total of 663 markers were given, and 445 paths were drawn. The maps on the following pages summarize key input received from CommunityWalk. Complete maps showing all the markers and paths received from CommunityWalk can be found in Appendix B.

Figure 2-20 CommunityWalk brochure graphic

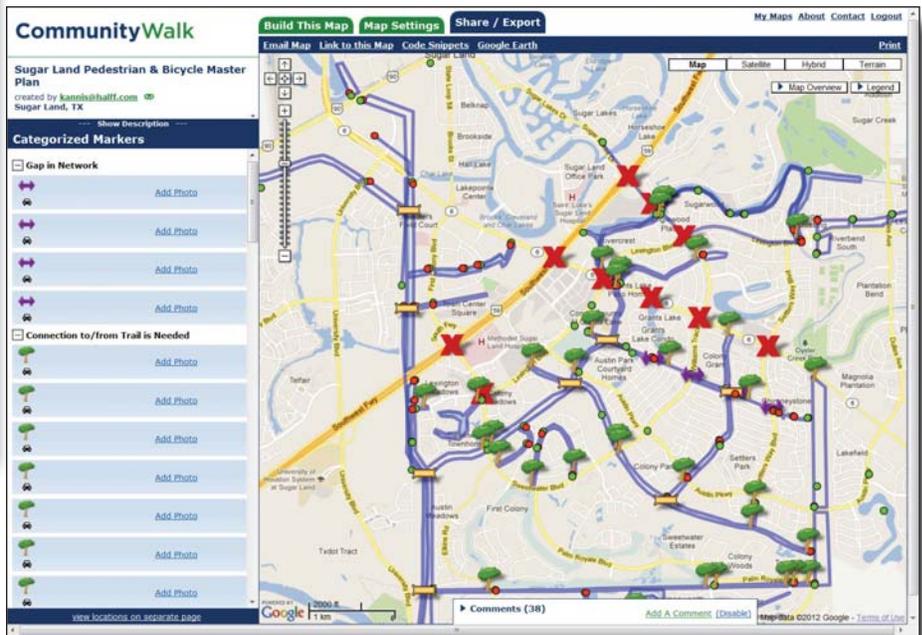


Figure 2-21 CommunityWalk screen shot image of the paths and markers that residents included.

#### Connection to/from Trail Is Needed:

Various locations and parks around Sugar Land were marked as needing a connection to/from a trail. The most heavily concentrated area that was marked was connecting homes to the existing trail that follows the utility corridor between Grants Lake Blvd. and Mesquite Dr. parallel to SH 6 (see Figure 2-22).



**Legend**  
 Connection to/from Trail Needed

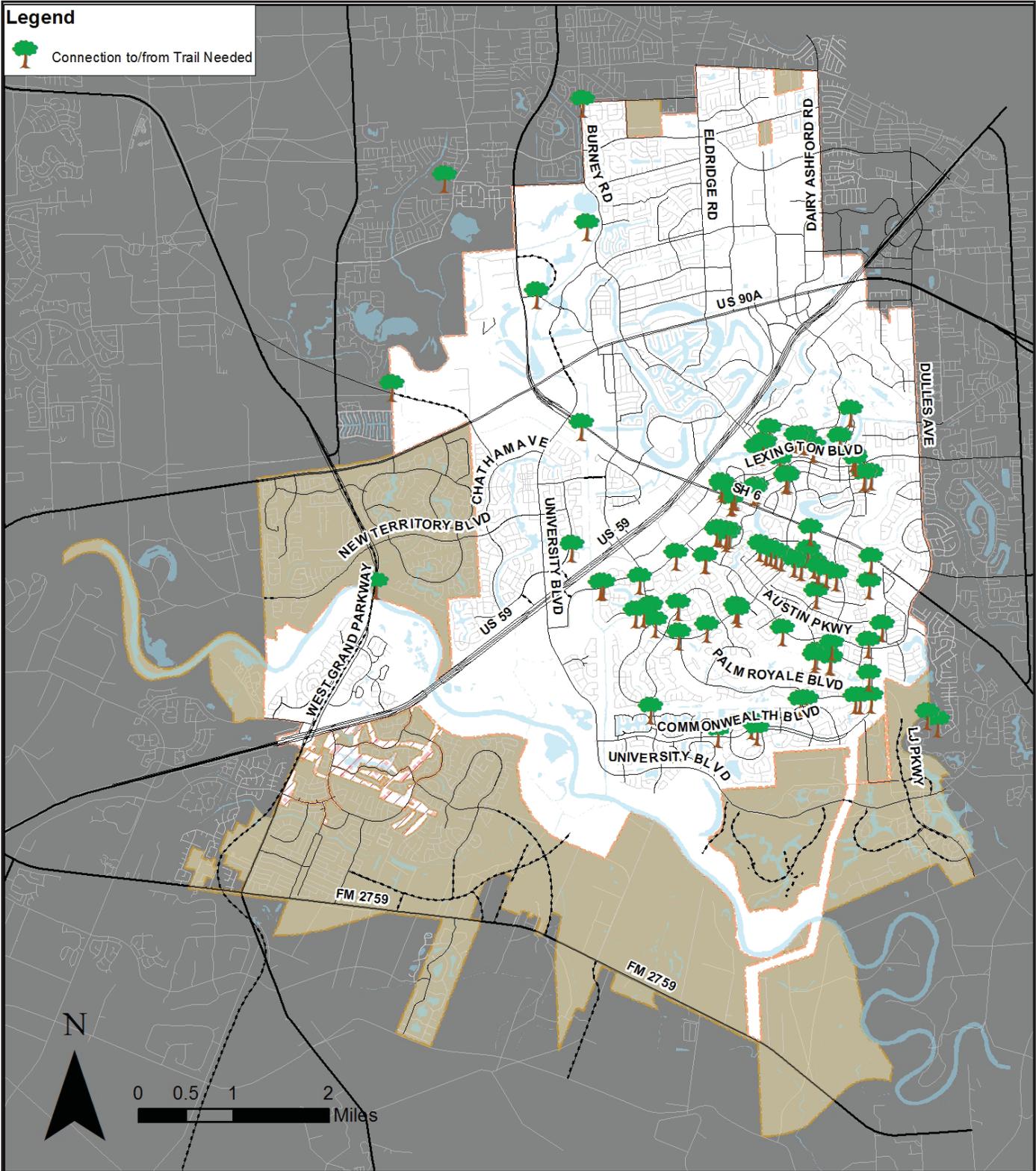


Figure 2-22 CommunityWalk interactive mapping exercise. Places where citizens marked that a connection to/from a trail is needed.



**Difficult Intersection to Cross:**

Not surprisingly, the majority of intersections that people marked as difficult to cross were over major highways and arterial streets. The two most commonly cited streets are SH 6 and Williams Trace Blvd. Approximately 70% of the intersections marked as difficult to cross were along one of these two streets.

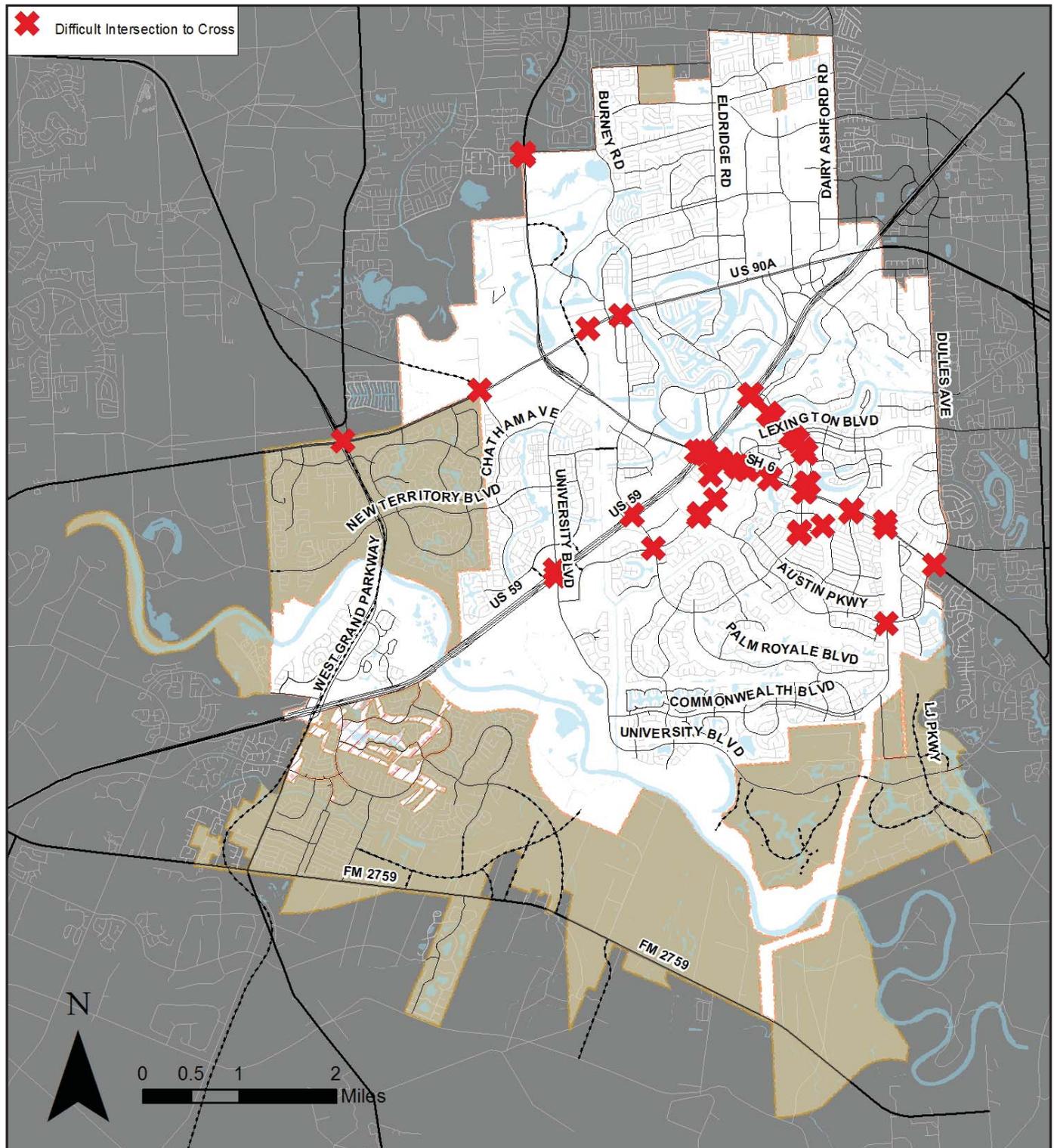


Figure 2-23 CommunityWalk interactive mapping exercise. Places marked as difficult intersections to cross



**Suggested Paths:**

Many paths and routes were suggested for on-street and off-street walking and biking facilities. Heavily marked areas were along the ditches and levees as well as SH 6, Williams Trace Blvd., Lexington Blvd., and University Blvd. The corridors highlighted in yellow are paths that were drawn multiple times by residents.

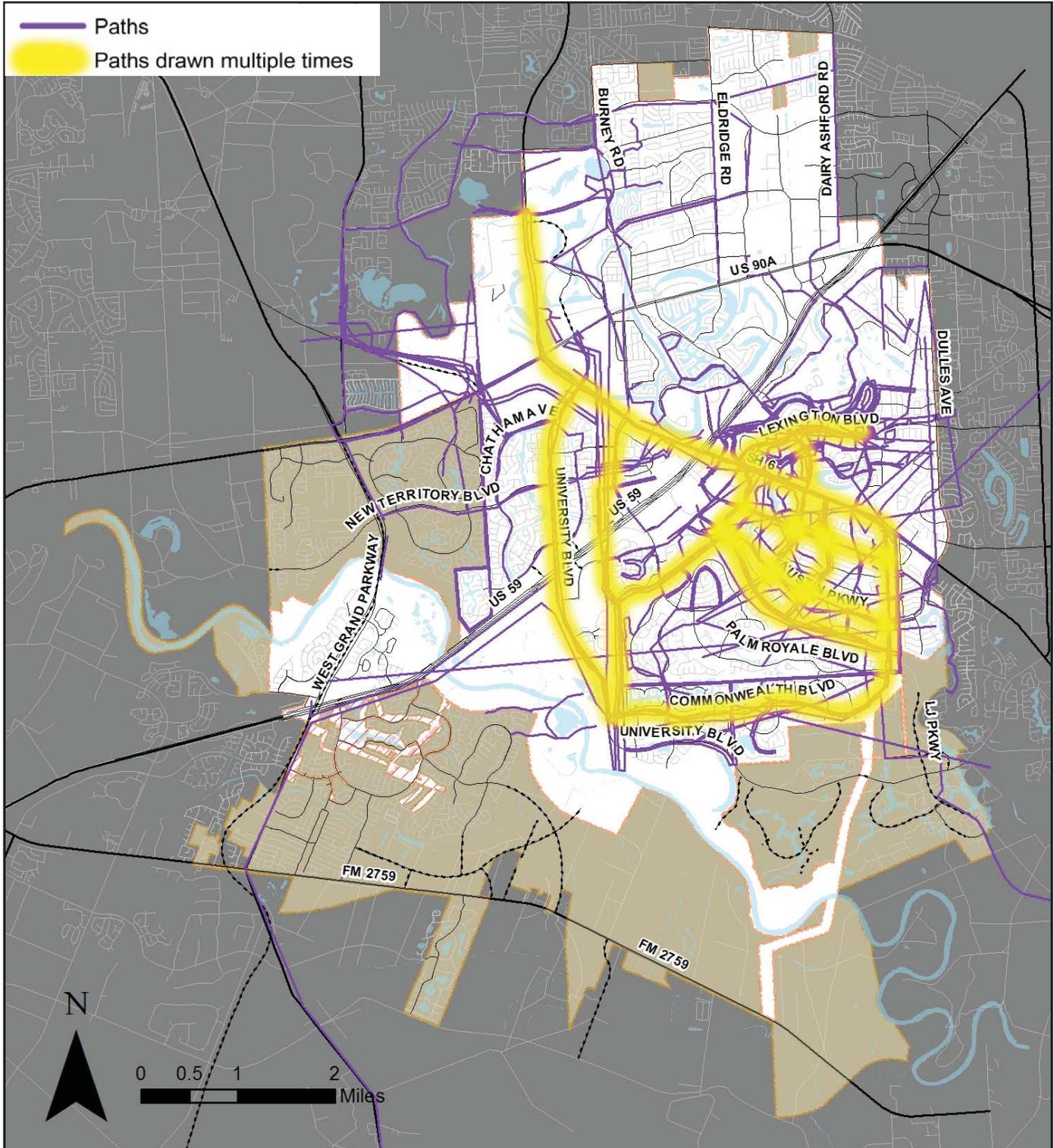


Figure 2-24 CommunityWalk interactive mapping exercise. Paths drawn showing routes citizens would like to take



**Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups:**

Over the course of a three-day series of workshop meetings in June 2012, the project team interviewed numerous stakeholders and focus groups. These groups included the following:

- Public agencies;
- Representatives from area schools;
- Sugar Land Parks and Recreation Advisory Board;
- Walking and bicycling interests;
- Business and economic development interests;
- Sugar Land Development Committee;
- Representatives from homeowner associations (HOAs) from throughout Sugar Land;
- Planning and Zoning Commission; and
- Levee Improvement Districts (LIDs)

A summary of the concerns and comments received from each of the groups is shown in Table 2.1. Detailed meeting notes can be found in Appendix C.

TABLE 2.1 SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER NEEDS AND CONCERNS

Stakeholder Group	Key Needs & Concerns
<p><b>Public Agencies - June 11, 2012</b></p> <p>Included representatives from Missouri City, Stafford, Meadows Place, Houston-Galveston Area Council, and Fort Bend County.</p> <p>Key findings – specific connections to area cities were mentioned, and significant interest exists and potential for partnerships.</p>	<p>Meadows Place staff were interested in exploring connections between Sugar Land and Stafford; Stafford staff noted that they had a smaller amount of residential than other area communities, and therefore had fewer calls for bicycle facilities or pathways. They were concerned about the safety of younger bicycle riders riding on streets and indicated that they liked the buffered lane option; Missouri City staff noted that they are considering a similar effort and that they are interested in on-street facilities as well. In particular, Missouri City would like to resolve the connection at Oyster Creek at Dulles Ave. Missouri City is also interested in the connection of bicycle facilities and/or trails in the Riverstone area; Fort Bend County typically defers to the design and intent of local jurisdictions. Consideration may be given to adding bicycle facilities on Fort Bend County buses in the future; Bicycle facility connections to area park and rides should be included, as well as connections to the Houston Community College campus on Murphy Road; All of the entities were interested in partnership opportunities, and asked that they continue to be included in any follow-up opportunities.</p>



<p><b>Representatives from Sugar Land Area Schools - June 12, 2012</b></p> <p>Included nine principals, assistant principals and some teachers from Fort Bend ISD high school, middle school and elementary school campuses (LCISD was invited but did not participate)</p>	<p>All of the school representatives present were extremely supportive of increasing opportunities for youth to be able to ride or walk to school; Attendees noted that today's culture does not support the independence of kids riding to school or being responsible for getting themselves there. Local cultures also may be much more protective of their children; Many youth currently ride to schools in Sugar Land because parents have work obligations and cannot drive their children to school; At the middle school level, 85% of the bicycle riders are boys. At the high school level, staff felt that it was almost 100% boys; Concern over stranger danger is very high in the community. There have been a few instances of adults inappropriately approaching children in the past; Drop-off and pick-up traffic is a concern. Parents are very focused on their children, and tend to overlook other children once theirs are left or picked up. Additional crossing guards are frequently needed, especially when one or more are sick or unable to attend for a personal reason. Speeding in school zones remains an issue and requires increased City of Sugar Land police and traffic enforcement.</p>
<p><b>Parks and Recreation Advisory Board - June 12, 2012</b></p>	<p>Prefer trails even though it is more expensive; what are the state and city laws about riding bikes on the sidewalks?; need to fill in the gaps/make the connections; education needs to be part of the plan/public campaign; iconic pedestrian bridges would benefit the City.</p>
<p><b>Walking &amp; Biking Interest Groups - June 13, 2012</b></p> <p>(Included local residents, bike shops and advocacy group representatives)</p>	<p>Fill in gaps in the system; Sugar Land is rated as fair for biking and good for walking; sidewalk width is an issue; turn signals do not respond to cyclists - now it is by cameras; shared use trails are the preferred way to go; we need to plan for complete streets rather than retrofit; we need community awareness and education to biking and walking; the Town Center is not ride able - maybe close Town Center streets to more car traffic.</p>
<p><b>Business &amp; Economic Development Interests - June 12, 2012</b></p>	<p>An increasing desire to be able to bike to work among younger generations; the Plan needs to have realism in its approach; Town Center, the ball park and schools are major starting points from which to radiate walking and biking facilities; should incentivize businesses to install bike racks; add information signs within HOAs such as 5 minute ride to Town Center; trees are of value to the community.</p>
<p><b>Development Committee - June 11, 2012</b></p>	<p>People are against taking away lanes; this community is car centric - people drive; fix the small areas and most traveled routes first; we need to put a price tag on this; the development community will cooperate but will not pay for it.</p>
<p><b>HOA Groups - June 13, 2012</b></p>	<p>US 59, SH 6, and US 90A are major thoroughfares and difficult to cross; there is concern that if a bond passes for walking and biking, all the money will be spent on a pedestrian bridge over US 59; it is not safe to walk on the shoulder of any street; we have a diverse range of people - we need to break it down to routes for recreation and routes for mobility; we should have misting stations at key destinations; there is a real issue of people backing out of driveways and not seeing/watching for bicyclists. The HOAs did support the idea of the City offering to accept ownership of HOA trails that are part of the citywide network.</p>



<p><b>Planning and Zoning Commission - May 24, 2012</b></p>	<p>Overall, most P&amp;Z members were concerned about the use of on-street bicycle lanes. Concerns over bicycle lanes included some of the following: Trash and rocks end up in the bicycle lanes, and the width does not allow for bikers to avoid them without going into traffic; traffic patterns such as turning traffic/right-on-red and drivers/bikers not paying attention to their surroundings can create hazards; some expressed concern over removing vehicular traffic lanes for bicycle lanes. There was concern that future traffic needs might be impacted if lanes were converted; the right solution needs to be identified for each area of Sugar Land, and may differ from area to area.</p>
<p><b>Levee Improvement Districts - July 23, 2012</b></p>	<p>Levees are flood control structures; recreational amenities such as trees, fountains, and benches are inconsistent with the use of the facility; the real opportunity might be in the floodway outside of the levee, not on the levee; safety and vandalism are concerns; LID wants to limit the risk and not increase insurance; they don't have the staff or employees like a city so putting in a trail will increase the liability and the LID will have an issue with that.</p>



### **Public Meeting/Open House Input**

A citywide public meeting was held on June 25, 2012 at City Hall. Approximately 54 people attended and were shown illustrations of different bicycling and walking facilities and potential destinations in the City. Attendees were offered the opportunity to give feedback in a round-table discussion group setting. They were asked specific questions about different areas of the City. A synopsis of the public comments received is included below, and detailed meeting notes are available in Appendix F.



**Residents were asked what was their vision for walking and biking in Sugar Land. Some of the common ideas that residents mentioned are listed below.**

- Make it safe;
- Make it connected;
- Implement facilities quickly;
- Have trails for more than just recreation; and
- Keep the trees and bushes trimmed for safety.



**Ways to improve the Town Center area to make it easier to walk and ride:**

- Offer shared bikes with short term rentals within the area.;
- Eliminate cars/close to cars;
- Add secured bike racks;
- Construct continuous sidewalks from neighborhoods to Town Center;
- Maps or marked routes; and
- Pedestrian crossing lights or crosswalks.



**Ways to improve Lexington to make it easier to walk and ride:**

- Fix the road surface;
- Improve sidewalks; and
- Improve street lighting during the day and night.



**Ways to improve Town Center Blvd. to make it easier to walk and ride:**

- Add shared use paths and widen the sidewalks;
- Have crosswalks under the street;
- Improve lighting;
- Add bike racks; and
- Add speed bumps.

### **Online Town Hall**

An Online Town Hall link was posted to the City's website in order to

Figure 2-25 Public Meeting



generate discussion from the public regarding what their vision is for walking and biking in Sugar Land. Residents were also asked to discuss any ideas they had for improving walking and bicycling, as well as making it safer and easier in the City. The online town hall was available for four weeks. 40 total responses were received. A detailed summary of the Online Town Hall is provided in Appendix F.

**The following is a summary of the topics discussed:**

- No to any trails along the levees in the Oyster Point neighborhood, predominantly due to concerns about privacy and security;
- Need better enforcement of bicycle riders who are not obeying traffic rules such as stop signs;
- Paving conditions need to be improved;
- Bicycle education, especially for young riders, is critically needed; and
- Secure bicycle parking is needed throughout the City.

**Specific locations for facilities were mentioned several times. These included:**

- Dairy Ashford to Eldridge along the drainage ditch; and
- Colony Grant to Austin Parkway, along power lines or ditch.

***General Public Comments Received***

Throughout the course of this planning project, some citizens directly communicated with the Transportation & Long Range Planning Department by phone or e-mail about their ideas and concerns regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The summary below highlights some of the general comments that were received from citizens either at public meetings or through e-mail.

- It needs to be implemented faster/City is moving too slowly;
- We need sidewalks on all streets that are level for walking and running in Sugar Land neighborhoods;
- We need sidewalks within all parks, and do not understand why the City does not do this already;
- There were conflicting public views about whether or not the levees were designed for trails. There is concern for an invasion of privacy and a potential increase in crime if those spaces were made public. However, some thought the levees were great opportunities for trails;
- Some residents are against bicyclists while other residents are against motorists. Some thought that bikes are dangerous, bikes do not belong in neighborhoods, and there are not enough bicyclists to justify the expenditure of removing vehicle lanes. While others thought that drivers are distracted, and drivers have poor attitudes towards sharing the road. We need an education campaign for courtesy/safety/laws of biking, walking and driving;
- Safety is the biggest concern. Street lighting is poor – walking or biking at night is dangerous;



- There needs to be connections between all destinations/ attractions and neighborhoods;
- There needs to be ways over major intersections such as US 90A, SH 6, University, and US 59. Major intersections are unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclists;
- The network is incomplete. In many cases the sidewalks just stop, or they switch to the other side of the street. We need a continuous network;
- There are no access points into neighborhoods except for roadways because of perimeter fencing; and
- Bike lanes need to be on both sides of the street. Are people expected to ride against traffic on the way back if you only put it on one side?



### **Task Force**

To help guide the planning process, a citizen based Task Force was assembled by the City Manager using nominations from the Sugar Land City Council. Members of the Task Force represented a diverse cross section of the City with interests in improving the condition of walking and bicycling. The Task Force met a total of five times during the planning process to provide feedback and direction. Detailed meeting notes can be found in Appendix D which includes feedback and direction received from Task Force Members.



**Meeting #1** - Introductory meeting and description of the planning process. Discussed what is the purpose of planning for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, what are task force members' personal interest in walking and bicycling, and how will increasing walking and bicycling benefit Sugar Land.

**Meeting #2** - Summary of public input received, potential opportunities for on-street and off-street facilities, and a review of AASHTO guidelines for bicycle facilities.

**Meeting #3** - Key corridor recommendations, review of barrier solutions and goals of the Master Plan. Review recommendations by sector of the City, review recommendations for the Town Center area, and review of facility types and conditions for each.

**Meeting #4** - Review of barrier recommendations, updates to the draft recommendations made from Task Force and staff feedback, potential facility costs, and prioritization criteria.

**Meeting #5** - Summary of public meeting #2 and specific HOA meetings, review prioritization and project sequencing, review final draft route recommendations and ask the Task Force to endorse the final recommendations of the Plan.

*Figure 2-26 Task Force members*



## What Does the Public Input Tell Us?

Many key themes were derived from combining all forms of public input that were received.

- Recreation still #1 reason for walking & bicycling. However, many trips are for shopping or to go to school;
- Off-street is the most preferred facility;
- High level of support for on-street bicycle lanes (buffered bike lanes preferred);
- Most popular destinations are parks & trails, Town Center, and shopping areas;
- Significant walking/biking to school among children;
- Barriers are a significant concern; and
- There is strong support for faster implementation of the network.



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