

LYONS AVENUE REVITALIZATION PLAN (1996)

Authoring Organization, time frame, geographic area and primary issues:

This planning effort was co-coordinated by the City's Planning and Development Department under its Neighborhood Partnership Program. Several organizations and institutions participated in the planning process:

- The Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation
- Fifth Ward Civic Club
- Trees for Houston
- Cultural Arts Council of Houston / Harris County
- City of Houston Small Business Development Corporation (CHSBDC)
- University of Houston Small Business Development Center (HSBDC)
- City of Houston One Stop Business Center
- Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO)
- Texas Commerce Bank
- Weingarten Realty Investors

The study area is Lyons Avenue in the Fifth Ward – between US Highway 59 and the Railroad just east of Lockwood Drive.

The issues addressed by the plan include:

- Retail/Commercial Revitalization
- Housing Revitalization
- Urban Design

The document does not specify a time frame for the plan as a whole; most of the suggested actions in the plan have a time frame of five years or less.

Plan creation and public involvement:

The plan was developed by committees consisting of local residents and stakeholders formed to address the plan's major issues. The committee members held several workshops and conducted community surveys to formulate goals and action plans to address the identified issues.

The plan includes a detailed retail market potential study (funded by Weingarten Realty Investors) for the area. It also presents a fairly detailed documentation of significant buildings suitable for historic preservation.

Plan vision statement:



Plan goals or objectives:

The plan outlines goals for each of the three issues that it seeks to address. The goals are as follows:

Retail/commercial revitalization

- **New Development:** Restore Lyons Avenue's commercial vitality and reverse the leakage of local dollars by attracting new retail and office development
- **Existing Businesses:** Ensure the vitality and stability of existing businesses on Lyons Avenue by tapping the business assistance/finance programs offered by public, private and non-profit agencies
- **Financing:** Ensure the speedy and complete revitalization of Lyons Avenue by ensuring that all appropriate public, private and non profit financing tools are fully utilized
- **Community Relations:** Ensure a harmonious, equitable and mutually beneficial relationship between the fifth ward's residents and the local business community by organizing and coordinating community development interests.
- **Infrastructure:** Ensure that all public agency capital improvement plans fully benefit the fifth ward community

Housing Revitalization

- **New Housing:** Encourage the development of various housing prototypes appropriate for the Lyons Avenue Corridor. New housing must meet the needs of low to moderate income residents and of a large and growing number of elderly residents.
- **Existing Housing:** Encourage the rehabilitation of existing and structurally sound single family housing stock east of Gregg Street
- **Maintenance:** Encourage proper maintenance of the existing housing stock
- **Public Safety:** Promote a collective sense of security and public safety

Urban Design

- **Physical Improvement:** Improve the physical and visual environment of the Lyons Avenue Corridor
- **Enhance the aesthetic quality of Lyons Avenue** through various beautification improvement programs
- **Create special nodes of economic and cultural activities** at Lyons and Lockwood; and Lyons and Waco; Lyons and Gregg

Strategies:

A land redevelopment plan consisting of a land use proposal has been presented as a tool for guiding revitalization of Lyons Avenue. The plan was prepared by a selected group of committee members to address the main issues concerning Lyons Avenue's revitalization. The plan document acknowledges that in the absence of zoning ordinance and a comprehensive land use plan for Houston, there is no legal mechanism to enforce the redevelopment proposal.

Key Projects:

The plan identifies major development projects in the area that are either planned, currently being implemented, or in the conceptual phase that would further the goals of the plan. Examples include expansion of the Denver Harbor Metro Transit Center, State Farm Insurance Claim Center, Pleasant Hill Village (a senior citizen retirement home), and a mixed-use development near Gregg Street.

The plan presents locations and conceptual sketches of “gateways” to the Fifth Ward and of some existing structures to highlight their adaptive re-use potential. The plan does not present any implementation plan or strategies to execute these projects.

Implementation and Funding:

The Lyons Avenue Plan supports its goals with action plans for implementation. Each action item has an associated time frame and identifies organizations and institutions that can serve as potential resources. The plan does not identify any funding mechanisms except for projects that happen to be in the Capital Improvement Program (CIPs) of various public agencies. The plan lists all the proposed CIP projects in the area by the City of Houston, METRO, Texas Department of Transportation, and Greater Houston Wastewater Program and the proposed bikeway plan for the area.

