GRISBY SQUARE

Grisby Square is one of The Energy Corridor’s most popular dining destinations. The scale, walkability, and authentic character of this district will continue to serve residents and employees of The Energy Corridor as the area undergoes rapid redevelopment and growth. Grisby Square should be maintained, expanded, and improved to continue serving The Energy Corridor’s growing needs.

A Dining Destination

Grisby Square is already one of the most popular spots in The Energy Corridor for a midday lunch and an after-work dinner. In thinking about the future, one of the most important considerations is the preservation of what works there today. With many great eateries, superb outdoor dining availability, and accessibility from most areas of The Energy Corridor, the plan proposes interventions that will improve the existing environment and grow Grisby Square’s capacity in order to meet increasing demand for quality dining and entertainment venues. Below is a summary of the interventions recommended for the improvement of Grisby Square.

- Implement shared streets designs for Fortsmith and Stafford Streets
- Plan for infill developments within restaurant blocks
- Reconfigure outdoor seating adjacent to restaurants to enhance the unity of place
- Populate adjacent blocks with mixed-use development
- Enhance pedestrian experience within Grisby Square with design interventions (street furniture, lighting, landscape, etc.)
- Provide shuttle service from major employment centers to Grisby Square
Improvements and extensions of pedestrian-oriented streetscapes can preserve and enhance the special character of Grisby Square.

The clustering of restaurants on Grisby Square blocks creates a unique opportunity for shared outdoor dining space.

The open land situated between Grisby Square and the elementary school is a prime location for community gardens and a farm-to-table program.

Over time, new development will fill the streetscapes around Grisby Square which should respond to the area’s unique character.
Accommodating Growth at Grisby Square

Projections for growth in The Energy Corridor—both residential and commercial—are impressive. With so many new residents and employees coming to the area, there will be great opportunity for existing retail, dining, and entertainment venues to accommodate the growing demand.

Improved Access
While Grisby Square is well-served by its proximity to I-10 and Route 6, parking opportunities in the area are limited. Since many patrons are coming to the area from work at lunchtime, there should be an alternative to driving available for accessing Grisby Square. As noted in the District Frameworks section of this document, the master plan recommends a shuttle/circulator that will transport employees and residents to various retail, dining, and entertainment destinations. Grisby Square will be an important stop along that route. Additionally, improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along existing roadways will offer a better experience for patrons choosing to access the square by those means. The plan proposes Grisby Square as a landing spot for a bicycle and pedestrian bridge crossing over to the north side of I-10.

In addition to these measures, a shared parking strategy with new development and associated parking garages can further improve parking availability for patrons, especially in the evenings.

Enhanced Pedestrian Environment
Within the square, the pedestrian environment is a positive one. Details such as the smaller scale of buildings, outdoor dining spaces, street parking, and pedestrian-oriented streets are the building blocks of a great urban district and can serve as examples for the future growth of Grisby Square. The plan recommends carrying these elements forward by means of connecting the outdoor dining spaces, expanding the pedestrian-oriented streetscapes, and employing street furniture and urban design tools to deepen the authentic urban character of the area. The entire space between and among the restaurants is envisioned as a great outdoor gathering space with dining and events. The fences and other barriers between restaurants can be removed to allow free flow of people throughout the two main blocks.

Infill Development
To increase the capacity of Grisby Square and preserve the structure and character of the area, vacant lots can be infilled between Grasshopper Lane and Addicks Howell Road with additional dining or retail establishments.

Surrounding Development
Many of the parcels surrounding Grisby Square are currently undeveloped or underutilized. In the long term, it is recommended that development on these parcels increase the density from what is seen today to capitalize on the success and growth of Grisby Square. Additionally, urban design guidelines should be adopted and utilized in the planning, design, and execution of these properties. These parcels can become a mix of commercial and residential development with ground-level retail space to enhance the existing street character.
The most important intervention to be made at Grisby Square involves the expansion and enhancement of the pedestrian environment. The Energy Corridor District is making great strides in this respect with the installation of a woonerf, or a pedestrian-oriented street along the eastern end of Fortsmith Street. To reinforce Grisby Square as a special place within The Energy Corridor, this street treatment can continue along the full extent of Fortsmith Street and down Stafford Street (shown above in pink). With the introduction of multi-modal streetscapes, street furniture, and character elements such as catenary lighting, Grisby Square can transform into a vibrant day- and-night outdoor district.
Grisby Square Shared Street

Credit: Robert O’Brien, Texas A&M University, tree illustrations
Grisby Square Peripheral Street

Credit: Robert O'Brien, Texas A&M University, tree illustrations