FOCUS AREA PLANS
Master Plan Focus Areas

The master plan includes planning and design recommendations for three specific sites, or focus areas, which were identified by the stakeholders. These three areas include the existing Addicks Park & Ride lot north of I-10 (henceforth referred to as The Energy Corridor Transit Center or transit center), the northernmost section of Terry Hershey Park straddling I-10 (henceforth referred to as Langham Park), and Grisby Square at the intersection of I-10 and Route 6.

New Energy Corridor Destinations

Some of the common characteristics tying these three focus areas together include a lack of—or underutilization of—existing development, and a strong potential for increased activity. In the case of each focus area, the planning team identified opportunities to improve mobility infrastructure, access, development desirability, and overall quality of place, which, if implemented, would create new destinations within The Energy Corridor for employees, residents, and visitors.

The Terry Hershey Park Center will create a significant mixed-use destination along the redesigned park and Memorial Drive. Active public uses, new retail and restaurants, and a great public park can all be integrated into a new, high-density neighborhood. As a walkable urban center, the neighborhood will serve as an entertainment and recreation hub for The Energy Corridor as well as the greater community.

The Energy Corridor Transit Center envisions a transformation of the Addicks Park & Ride into a mixed-use, transit-oriented development and multi-modal transit hub—the center of West Houston’s transit system. The development concept includes residential, office, and hospitality uses with supporting retail and restaurants.

Grisby Square is already a great restaurant destination. The authentic character of the area, with its intimately scaled spaces, should be maintained and enhanced as a compact and walkable lunch and dinner destination and social center for The Energy Corridor.

The following pages describe the recommended interventions for each focus area in greater detail.
Destination: The Energy Corridor

In its current position and configuration, the Addicks Park & Ride transit station is primarily used as a means of exiting The Energy Corridor. With projections over the next two decades showing substantial increases in jobs and residents within The Energy Corridor, the redevelopment of the Addicks Park & Ride lot into a high-capacity transit hub for West Houston will allow The Energy Corridor to evolve from a point of departure into a true urban destination.

The site of the proposed transit center development is defined by I-10 to the south, Park Row to the north, the I-10 access ramp to the east, and Park and Ride Drive to the west. Situated between these streets on a single block, this site is currently host to the expansive parking lot required for the existing Addicks Park & Ride operation. The master plan focuses on several key steps that can be taken throughout the next few decades that will enable an economically robust, sustainable, and urban redevelopment of the Addicks Park & Ride lot. Some of the highlights of these recommendations include the following:

- Introduction of regularized street network
- Reconfiguration of transit center and I-10 access ramp
- Consolidation of METRO surface parking into garages
- Development of a signature transit center facility and urban plaza
- Parcelization and development of blocks
- Creation of a multi-modal main street as the spine of development
The Addicks Park & Ride and I-10 access ramp currently serve high-occupancy vehicles (HOV) and METRO local and express bus routes. As depicted in the diagram above, each of these modes accesses and navigates the site in a different way. Today, the site is surface parking for those utilizing the express bus system to head downtown. Given that the majority of these users are parked at the site only during business hours, the parking lot remains empty for the majority of each day. In consideration of the future development potential of the site, the planning team identified three main obstacles to address at the outset of this site’s regeneration: the location of the transit station, the configuration of the I-10 access ramp, and the distribution of surface parking across the site.
The primary recommendations for planning the redevelopment of the Addicks Park & Ride lot focus around themes of better and increased access to and from the site. As noted in the District Frameworks recommendations, the introduction of a regularized, finer-grain street grid is important to creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment, improved distribution of vehicular traffic, and flexible urban character across the site. Consolidating the existing surface parking into garages will provide equal parking capacity as exists today. Reconfiguring the transit station and I-10 access ramp will allow a more efficient and organized transit experience while opening the north and east edges of the site for future development. Organizing development, local transit service, and pedestrian access to the transit center along a central main street will create a distinctly urban experience within the site and help to establish it as a destination within The Energy Corridor.
The Energy Corridor Transit Center Redesign—High Occupancy Vehicle Traffic

By reconfiguring and shortening the I-10 access ramps, introducing a central main street running parallel to I-10 becomes possible. This central street could serve as a primary frontage street for new development north of the highway. The shortened ramp will allow increased access to and from the HOV lanes by creating options for accessing the ramp. The garages, shown here in blue, are situated to provide efficient access to the transit center and access ramps. Consolidating the parking lot into garages will allow for substantial mixed-use development potential within Houston METRO’s current land ownership. This scenario aims to be funded by private sector interests; tying the development of the transit infrastructure (including garages) to the development rights of the site will enable Houston METRO to complete the project with minimal public investment.

The Energy Corridor Transit Center Redesign—Local and Express Bus Routes

The reconfiguration of the transit station and I-10 access ramp provides a more direct and simplified means of moving more people efficiently through the site. In addition to the consolidation of cars within garages (blue) adjacent to the new transit center (red), the route taken by buses will change to respond to and improve the street experience of the newly developed site. In this configuration, express buses remain elevated at the level of the newly shortened transit loop. This loop allows express buses to quickly exit I-10 and queue at level two of the new transit center as passengers load and unload. Remaining elevated will remove express buses from the ground-level traffic, allowing for less congestion among passenger cars and local buses. Local buses also utilize the transit center, with routes that traverse the new main street at ground level.
FOCUS AREA PLANS

TODAY

Outer Park & Rides

Addick's Park & Ride

Downtown Houston & Medical Center

TOMORROW

Outer Park & Rides

The Energy Corridor Transit Center

The Energy Corridor District

Downtown Houston & Medical Center

The Energy Corridor District

The Energy Corridor Transit Center

Downtown Houston & Medical Center
Transit Center as a Destination

The transit center site is envisioned as a destination for The Energy Corridor, combining transit services, significant mixed use development, a new residential neighborhood, civic amenities, open space, and an integrated network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Employing the tenets of contemporary sustainable urban development on this site will allow for a form that will serve as a model for future urban mixed use development throughout The Energy Corridor. Emphasizing a mix of uses and a pedestrian-focused public realm will activate the space throughout the day while enhancing the value and potential of surrounding sites. One of the key features of this concept is the idea of a complete main street running east to west down the center of the site. This street should encourage a variety of uses and mobilities and begin to transcend the boundary between indoor retail activity and street life.

The Avenue, Washington D.C.

Fig. 1: Transit Arrival Plaza
Fig. 2: Retail/Outdoor Seating and Transit Headhouse
Fig. 3: Sidewalk/Plaza
Fig. 4: Entry to Transit Plaza
Transit Center Development Potential

The transit center site sits at the nexus of several of The Energy Corridor’s most important assets. Surrounded by largely vacant or underutilized parcels, this area north of I-10 provides a significant opportunity to accommodate some of the future development that will be necessary to meet the projected demand for housing and office space within The Energy Corridor.

Improved access to the site is vital to its development potential. Currently, the site is served by several major roadways, including I-10 and the westbound I-10 frontage road to the south, Park Row to the north, and Route 6 to the west. As the name suggests, the transit center site is also a major transit hub for residents and employees utilizing the express and local bus services that run through The Energy Corridor. Taking advantage of opportunities to enhance and expand these vehicular and transit adjacencies will go a long way towards bolstering the value of this property and securing its development potential.

As part of the conceptual planning for the transit center site, a preliminary mixed use development program was identified based upon market input from stakeholders, case studies of successful and ongoing development projects, and a vision of what this area could become. The table below summarizes this program relative to the massing and distribution depicted in the diagram to the left. These totals are approximate and intended to provide a baseline understanding of the site’s capacity and a desirable mix of uses for achieving an authentic sense of place at the transit center.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>1,200 (+400 Hotel)</strong></td>
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The Energy Corridor Transit Center Main Street
The Energy Corridor Transit Center Typical Street

Credit: Robert O’Brien, Texas A&M University, tree illustrations
Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge

One of the most significant challenges facing development in The Energy Corridor north of I-10 is the physical division created by the highway. Currently, the nearest opportunity for pedestrians and bicycles to traverse I-10 (one of few such opportunities in The Energy Corridor) exists along Route 6, requiring at least a half mile of circuitous travel with multiple road crossings before reaching the transit center site from the south of I-10. This distance and route will inhibit achieving the critical mass of pedestrians necessary to create and sustain a vibrant mixed-use and entertainment hub at the transit center site.

One solution is the construction of an iconic pedestrian and bicycle bridge spanning I-10, connecting the new developments in the north to the existing office and residential environments to the south. For the purposes of conceptualizing this possible connection, the master plan depicts the bridge crossing adjacent and parallel to the existing Park and Ride Drive to the north, and terminating at the south at Grisby Square—another restaurant destination and focus area of the master plan.

Pedestrian and bicycle bridges are bold statements for communities with similar infrastructure hurdles. In addition to expanding the reach of the districts they serve, these bridges offer and encourage alternative means of mobility for residents and workers previously limited to passenger car travel and transit options. The bridge can also serve as a significant architectural and engineering gesture, which in time can contribute to The Energy Corridor’s overall cohesive branding and messaging.

Image Key

**Fig. 1:** Cykelslangen; Copenhagen, Denmark
**Fig. 2:** Canopied Bridge, BioMed Town Center; San Diego, CA
**Fig. 3:** Nescio Bridge; Amsterdam
**Fig. 4:** Sundial Bridge at Turtle Bay, Redding, CA
Parking Garage Screening

Given the desired and contextual density of the transit center site and The Energy Corridor at large, most of the parking at full build-out will be structured. As part of a cohesive development plan, strategies for screening parking structures should be explored in order to enhance the visual and experiential quality of place in The Energy Corridor. These screenings contribute to the overall architectural language and help to complement surrounding developments and the public realm in which they participate.

Examples of screenings range from simple architectural details, such as screening materials and decoration, to complex works of public art, information communication, and interaction. A large scale public art project can transform the uninviting image of a parking garage into an iconic image that enhances The Energy Corridor and engages with the public.

In addition to these options, the screening could be done in a way to brand the transit center and Metro as a vital element to the Corridor. This could enhance the visibility of Metro and the Transit Center to the thousands of cars traveling on I-10 each day showing that alternative transportation is available and accessible.

Image Key

*Fig. 1:* Metal Screen Garage  
*Fig. 2:* Articulated Metal Screens Garage  
*Fig. 3:* Louvered Screens Garage  
*Fig. 4:* Interactive Wind Screen Garage
Interim Uses

Prior to the adoption of a comprehensive development plan, The Energy Corridor and Houston METRO should consider developing a strategy for branding and marketing the transit center site. A component of this plan could involve the creation of a temporary event space that can be used year-round for a variety of public purposes. Such spaces, when actively programmed with fun and unique activities, can serve as strong attractions for local and regional populations while drawing attention to the area as a premier entertainment destination. Events such as holiday celebrations, barbecues, concerts, sporting events, and festivals like The Energy Corridor’s EnergyFest are ideal examples of what could be hosted at the transit center site prior to the implementation of a more holistic development plan.

Case Study: Lawn on D, Boston, MA

Successful temporary and programmable spaces like Boston’s Lawn on D show that great public event/gathering spaces can be low cost and high impact, creating a buzz with minimal capital investment. The Lawn on D was commissioned by the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority as a component of a larger plan to expand the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center and redevelop the adjacent neighborhood into a vibrant mixed-use destination within South Boston. Through the use of paint, minimal planting, suspended lights, and plastic furniture, The Lawn on D has become a memorable space that is making news and drawing thousands of visitors to a previously unused area of the city.

At the Addicks Park & Ride, a colorful palette (in contrast to the existing surface parking context), minimal site improvements, and a rotating program of events such as the annual EnergyFest would create a draw for area employees, residents, and visitors.