

Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA)

Harris County developed and applied for a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area designation from HUD in its 2008-2012 Consolidated Plan submission for the Airline Community. The county partnered with the Airline Improvement District to create a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for the Airline NRSA. This plan identified many issues within the community and outlined goals and recommendations toward alleviating problems and improving the residents' quality of life.

Airline Improvement District

The Airline Improvement District was created by House Bill #1458 during the 79th Texas Legislature and took effect June 17, 2005. The District's mission is to supplement government services to improve the overall quality of the District and its desirability for residents, consumers and businesses. To accomplish its mission, the District has worked diligently with Harris County, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, other agencies and community groups to seek out funding for planning and implementation of improvements.

Boundaries

The Airline Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area is located in unincorporated northern Harris County, just north of the City of Houston, south of Greenspoint Mall and within Precinct One. Airline's NRSA is bound by West Road, Hambrick Road, Lillja Road, and Aldine Mail Road to the north; the Hardy Toll Road, Bauman Road and the City of Houston city limits to the east; East Canino Road and Carby Road to the south; and Sweetwater Lane to the west consisting of approximately 2,809 acres. This area includes census tract 2216, block groups 1, 2, 3, and 4; census tract 2217, block groups 1 and 3; and census tract 2224, block groups 3 and 4. Airline NRSA is divided by two school districts with the northern two-thirds located in Aldine ISD and the southern third in Houston ISD.

Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community

The NRSA boundaries are also contiguous with a federally designated Empowerment Zone (EZ) with approximately 878 acres of the Airline NRSA's total acreage inside the EZ.

Land Use

Airline NRSA is primarily residential with a mixture of suburban and rural development typified by parcels/lots larger than 0.5 acres and mobile home communities. Development is generally clustered along the major thoroughfares and other arterials in the community. Over 75 percent (75.51%) of Airline residents reside in owner occupied housing while the remaining 25 percent (24.49%) reside in renter occupied housing.

Low-to-Moderate Income

The Airline NRSA is 69 percent low-to-moderate income residents and 18.6 percent are classified as below poverty according to 2000 Census Bureau data.

Public Consultation to Develop NRSA Strategies

To assist the community, HCCSD utilized a community planning process that engaged residents, business owners, civic leaders and potential investors. HCCSD, in partnership with State Representative Kevin Bailey and Harris County Precinct One Commissioner El Franco Lee, worked with Airline residents, business owners, and civic leaders to develop a community revitalization plan for the Airline area. The planning process began in May 2005 with the creation of the Airline Vision Team that partnered with HCCSD. Community meetings were held and these groups were asked to actively recognize community

challenges, visions, goals, and resources that could be utilized in the plan. The groups then worked with HCCSD and the Airline Vision Team to create viable solutions and develop a comprehensive community revitalization plan.

Incentives

To date, the Airline Community has not participated in any of the NRSA incentives to implement its Strategy.

Benchmarks

Benchmarks for the community have been identified key strategies and benchmarks on pages 24-29 of the Airline NRSA section under Key Strategies/Airline Projects and Recommendations. The PY2010 Annual Action Plan discusses goals for the NRSA on page 12.

Reporting

Activities within the Airline NRSA are being reported annually in Harris County's Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). A wide range of activities have benefited the NRSA, including:

- Creation of the Airline Community Revitalization Plan in April 2006 that set forth goals and revitalization strategies
- In PY2007, the Airline Improvement District received a total award of \$117,875 in CDBG General Funds from Harris County to acquire land for Raymac Park.
- Airline Improvement District contributed \$50,000 towards Raymac Park.
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department awarded Airline a grant for \$200,000 toward Raymac Park.
- Houston – Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) partnered with the Airline Improvement District and completed a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan in 2009
- Implementation of pedestrian and bicycle related improvements estimated to occur in 2012 with use of Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Funds
- Airline Improvement District applied for an H-GAC Livable Centers Study for 2011-2012 and was awarded \$120,000 to help create quality, walkable, mixed-use places that have multi-modal travel choices, improve environmental quality and promote economic development and housing choice.
- Airline Improvement District awarded \$720,000 PY 2011 CDBG Funds for the Northwest Service Zone #2 – Design (Phase I). Future Lift Stations/Force Main (Phase II) and Water/Sewer (Phase III) are expected to be funded in coming program years.
- Aldine Independent School District awarded \$133,100 in PY2011 CDBG Funds for a SPARK Park at Carroll Academy, located within the Airline NRSA.

Progress

Harris County has not received notification from HUD that there are any issues with meeting expected projections. The county is continuing to work with the community to develop activities and additional funding sources to leverage the funding received from HUD and other sources.

The creation of the Airline Community Revitalization Plan set forth the goals and strategies to begin the revitalization effort within the Airline NRSA. Actions within the community have been on track with the goals and recommendations outlined in the Revitalization Plan.

Recommendations under the Community Facilities and Public Service Section of the Revitalization Plan include locating new parks in Airline. Through the use of Harris County CDBG, Airline Improvement District and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department funds, as well as cooperation between these agencies and the Airline community, creation of Raymac Park is underway.

Other recommendations under the Transportation and Infrastructure Section of the Revitalization Plan call for the installation of sidewalks and crosswalks, better traffic management, improved pedestrian access and transportation alternatives. The partnership with H-GAC by the Airline Improvement District resulted in the creation of an Airline Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. The community will soon see the benefits of the partnership when construction of new sidewalks along major thoroughfares and improvements to crosswalks at major intersections begins. The area will also receive a raised median along Airline Drive for access management and to serve as a pedestrian refuge.

The recent Livable Centers Grant awarded to the Airline Improvement District from H-GAC, with assistance from Harris County, will serve to identify areas that need improvements in order to promote mixed uses, better housing, higher quality of the surrounding environment and multi-modal transportation choices. These areas will be priorities for future funding and serve to fulfill many recommendations in the Revitalization Plan under Housing, Transportation and Infrastructure, Economic Empowerment and Community Facilities and Services.

Finally the funds awarded to the Airline Improvement District and Carroll Academy in the Airline NRSA are an additional step towards making community improvements and following the recommendations of the Revitalization Plan. The Airline Improvement District's award will allow design work to begin on water and sewer infrastructure improvements. Funding for a new SPARK Park at Carroll Academy will improve the quality of the recreation facilities for school children during the day and create a new community park for residents after school and on weekends.

Amendments

No amendments to the original Airline NRSA Plan have occurred.

Guide for Review of a HUD-Approved Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA)			
Name of Program Participant: Harris County Community Services Department			
Staff Consulted: Christy Lambright			
Name of NRSA: Airline NRSA		Date of HUD Approval: 2008-2012 Consolidated Plan	
Period of Time Covered by Strategy: PY2008 - 2012			
Name(s) of Reviewer(s)		Date	

NOTE: All questions that address requirements contain the citation for the source of the requirement (statute, regulation, NOFA, grant agreement.). If the requirement is not met, HUD must make a finding of noncompliance. All other questions (questions that do not contain the citation for the requirement) do not address requirements, but are included to assist the reviewer in understanding the participant's program more fully and/or to identify issues that, if not properly addressed, could result in deficient performance. Negative conclusions to these questions may result in a "concern" being raised, but not a "finding."

Instructions: Use this Exhibit to monitor the program participant's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA). Requirements for an NRSA are contained in the *CDBG Program Guide to National Objectives & Eligible Activities for Entitlement Communities*. The HUD reviewer is required to examine the program participant's HUD-approved Strategy prior to conducting this review. One Exhibit is to be completed for each NRSA monitored.

Questions:

1.

a. What are the boundaries that the program participant described for this NRSA?
Describe Basis for Conclusion: The Airline target area is located in northern Harris County, just north of the City of Houston, south of Greenspoint Mall and situated within unincorporated Harris County - Precinct One. Airline is bound by West Road, Hambrick Road, Lillja Road, and Aldine Mail Road to the north; the Hardy Toll Road, Bauman Road and the City of Houston limits to the east; East Canino Road and Carby Road to the south; and Sweetwater Lane to the west. The Airline target area consists of approximately 2,809.60 acres. (See pg. 3 of the Airline NRSA Plan)

b. Are the NRSA boundaries contiguous with those of a Federally-designated Empowerment Zone (EZ) or Enterprise Community (EC)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes No
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Describe Basis for Conclusion:
 The Airline Target Area boundaries are contiguous with the federally designated Empowerment Zone (EZ). Approximately 878.25 acres lie in the EZ. See Airline NRSA Federally-Designated EZ Map.

2.

a. Is the NRSA "primarily residential?"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes No
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Describe Basis for Conclusion:
 Housing Primarily Residential

- While urban communities are typified by high density residential land use, Airline has suburban and rural development—specifically parcels/lots larger than .5 acres and mobile home communities— clustered along major thoroughfares and other arterials in the community.
- More than 75 percent (75.51 percent) of Airline residents reside in owner occupied housing; approximately 25 percent (24.49 percent) reside in renter occupied housing. (See pg. 6 of the Airline NRSA Plan)

b. What is the percentage of low- and moderate-income residents in the NSRA?
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Describe Basis for Conclusion:
 The Airline NRSA is 69 percent low- to moderate-income residents and 18.6 percent are below poverty according to the 2000 Census Bureau.

c. Did the percentage in "b." above contain the appropriate percentage of low- and moderate-income residents (between 51-70%) at the time HUD approved the NRSA?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes No
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Describe Basis for Conclusion:
At the time HUD approved the NRSA, the Airline low-to-moderate income residents percentage was 69 percent according to the 2000 Census Bureau.

3.

What documentation supports that the NRSA Strategy was developed in consultation with the involvement and support of a wide segment of the area's stakeholders?

Describe Basis for Conclusion:
To assist communities, HCCSD utilizes a community planning process that engages residents, business owners, civic leaders and potential investors to actively recognize community challenges, visions, goals and resources to seek viable solutions and develop a comprehensive community revitalization plan. This plan not only serves as a flexible roadmap to revitalization and reinvestment, but also reflects an innovative approach to rebuilding communities through civic participation at the local level with a comprehensive focus. HCCSD in partnership with State Representative Kevin Bailey and Harris County Precinct One Commissioner El Franco Lee worked with Airline residents, business owners, and civic leaders to develop a community revitalization plan for the Airline locale. (See pg. 8-10 of the Airline NRSA).

4.

Note and describe below which of the following incentives the program participant has taken advantage of in implementing its Strategy:

- Job creation/retention as a low- and moderate-income area benefit?
- Aggregation of housing units?
- Aggregate public benefit standard exemption?
- Public service cap exemption?

Describe Basis for Conclusion:
The community has not participated in these strategies. The community has received grant funding to complete a park project and perform a bicycle study.

5.

Exhibit 3-15
CDBG Entitlement Program

Is the program participant identifying, in the Integrated Disbursements and Information System, activities that are being carried out in a NRSA? [24 CFR 570.507(d)]	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Describe Basis for Conclusion: Not at this time. Activities are in development for PY2011.	

6.

Has the program participant identified in its Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan the benchmarks it expects to achieve for that program year?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Describe Basis for Conclusion: See pg. 24-29 of the Airline NRSA under Key Strategies/Airline Projects and Recommendations and the PY2010 Annual Action Plan - Consolidated Plan Measureable Objectives.	

7.

a. Is the program participant annually reporting its progress in achieving the benchmarks at the end of each program year, either in the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) or the EZ/EC Performance Measurement System (PERMS) report? [24 CFR 85.40, 24 CFR 84.51; 24 CFR 570.900]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Describe Basis for Conclusion: The project was reported in the PY2010 CAPER on p. 66 and Appendix J. See attachment. No activities were funded in PY2010.	

b. Is there any evidence to indicate that the program participant is not implementing its Strategy as approved by HUD and in accordance with civil rights-related program requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Describe Basis for Conclusion: Activities are under development and will be reported in the PY2011 CAPER.	

8.

a. Has HUD advised the program participant, or is there any evidence, that progress is substantially lagging behind expected projections?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Describe Basis for Conclusion: Harris County is working with the community to develop activities and additional funding sources to leverage HUD funding. A park and infrastructure projects within the community will be published in PY2011. The community has also received additional funding outside of HUD funds.	

b. If HUD has suspended or withdrawn approval of this NRSA, is there any evidence that the program participant has continued to take advantage of the regulatory incentives during the period of suspension or withdrawal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Describe Basis for Conclusion:	

9.

If the Strategy has been amended, has the program participant met the criteria for Strategy amendments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Describe Basis for Conclusion:	

Airline Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area

Introduction

The Airline Community has developed a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) in accordance with the 2008-2012 Consolidated Plan regulations, 24 CFR Part 91.215 (e)(2). The Airline Community NRSA was submitted with the 2008-2012 Harris County Consolidated Plan. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established criteria for approving locally determined strategies for revitalizing an area that is among the community's most distressed. The criteria to be met are as follows:

1. The NRSA must be submitted with the 5-Year Consolidated Plan or it must be made an amendment to the existing Consolidated Plan.
2. Grantee must clearly identify the neighborhood's boundaries and the boundaries must be contiguous.
3. The designated area must be primarily residential and contain at least 70 percent low-to moderate-income persons as determined by the most recent census data.
4. The strategy must be developed in consultation with the area's stakeholder, residents, owners/operators of businesses and financial institutions, non-profit organizations, and community groups that are in or serve the neighborhood.
5. An economic assessment of the area must be completed.
6. The economic development assessment must examine opportunities for Improvement within the area.
7. The economic development assessment must examine problems that are likely to be encountered.
8. The implementation plan must promote the area's economic progress with a focus on activities that will create meaningful jobs for the unemployed and low- and moderate-income residents of the area.
9. The plan must promote activities for the substantial revitalization of the neighborhood.
10. The strategy must identify the results (e.g., physical improvements, social initiatives and economic empowerment) expected to be achieved in terms that are readily measurable or "benchmarks."

In 1996, the Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a Community Planning and Development notice [CPD 96-01] encouraging Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement grantees to develop comprehensive revitalization strategies. HUD identified the development of NRSAs to be the best tool for creating measurable impacts at the neighborhood level. The HUD notice states, "Successful neighborhood revitalization strategies are those that bring together the neighborhoods' and the larger community's stakeholders to forge partnerships that:

- Obtain commitments to neighborhood building;
- Make neighborhoods attractive for investments, thereby creating a market for profit;
- Generate neighborhood participation to ensure that the benefits of economic activity are reinvested in the neighborhood for long-term community development;
- Support the use of neighborhood intermediary institutions to bridge the gaps between local government agencies, the business community, community groups, and residents; and
- Foster the growth of resident-based initiatives to identify and address their housing, economic, and human services needs."

Benefits of NRS

The incentives for entitlement communities to submit and secure approval for a revitalization strategy are described below.

- **Job Creation/Retention as Low/Moderate Income Area Benefit:** Job creation/retention activities undertaken pursuant to the strategy may be qualified as meeting area benefit requirements, thus eliminating the need for a business to track the income of persons that take, or are considered for, such jobs. (24 CFR 570.208 (a)(1)(vii) and (d)(5)(i).
- **Aggregation of Housing Units:** Housing units assisted pursuant to the strategy may be considered to be part of a single structure for purposes of applying the low- and moderate-income national objective criteria, thus providing greater flexibility to carry out housing programs that revitalize a neighborhood. (24 CFR 570.208 (a)(3) and (d)(5)(ii).
- **Aggregate Public Benefit Standard Exemption:** Economic development activities carried out under the strategy may, at the grantee's option, be exempt from the aggregate public benefit standards, thus increasing a grantee's flexibility for program design as well as reducing its record-keeping requirements (24 CFR 570.209 (b)(2)(v)(L) and (M).

- **Public Services Cap Exemption:** Public services carried out pursuant to the strategy by a Community-Based Development Organization (CBDO) will be exempt from the public service cap (24 CFR 570.204 (b)(2)(ii).

The Airline Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy is an effort to make a significant and measurable impact in the Airline community.

The Airline community seeks the opportunity to utilize CDBG funds to leverage private resources and make a lasting impact on the community. This focused funding approach will result in the revitalization of the Airline neighborhood, including development of new housing, new jobs, increased transportation options, and improved access to jobs, services, and public amenities.

In 2007, the Airline Improvement District received \$408,000.00 in CDBG funds from Harris County to acquire land for a park which was one of their planned activities in their 5 year revitalization plan.

Airline NRSA Boundaries

The Airline target area is located in northern Harris County, just north of the City of Houston, south of Greenspoint Mall and situated within unincorporated Harris County - Precinct One. Airline is bound by West Road, Hambrick Road, Lillja Road, and Aldine Mail Road to the north; the Hardy Toll Road, Bauman Road and the City of Houston limits to the east; East Canino Road and Carby Road to the south; and Sweetwater Lane to the west. The Airline target area consists of approximately 2,809.60 acres.

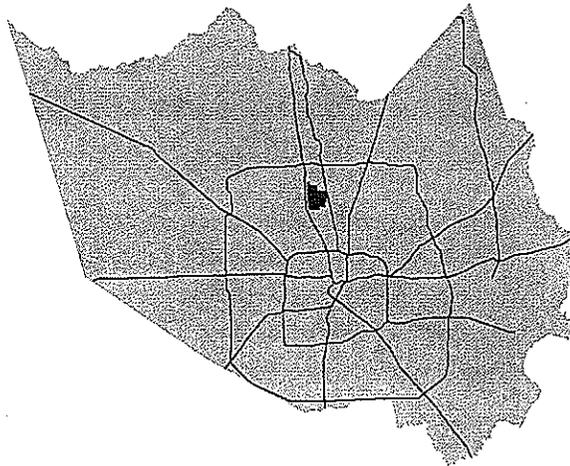


Table 1.1 details the location of Airline by key map, census tracts and block groups, county precinct, zip code and school district.

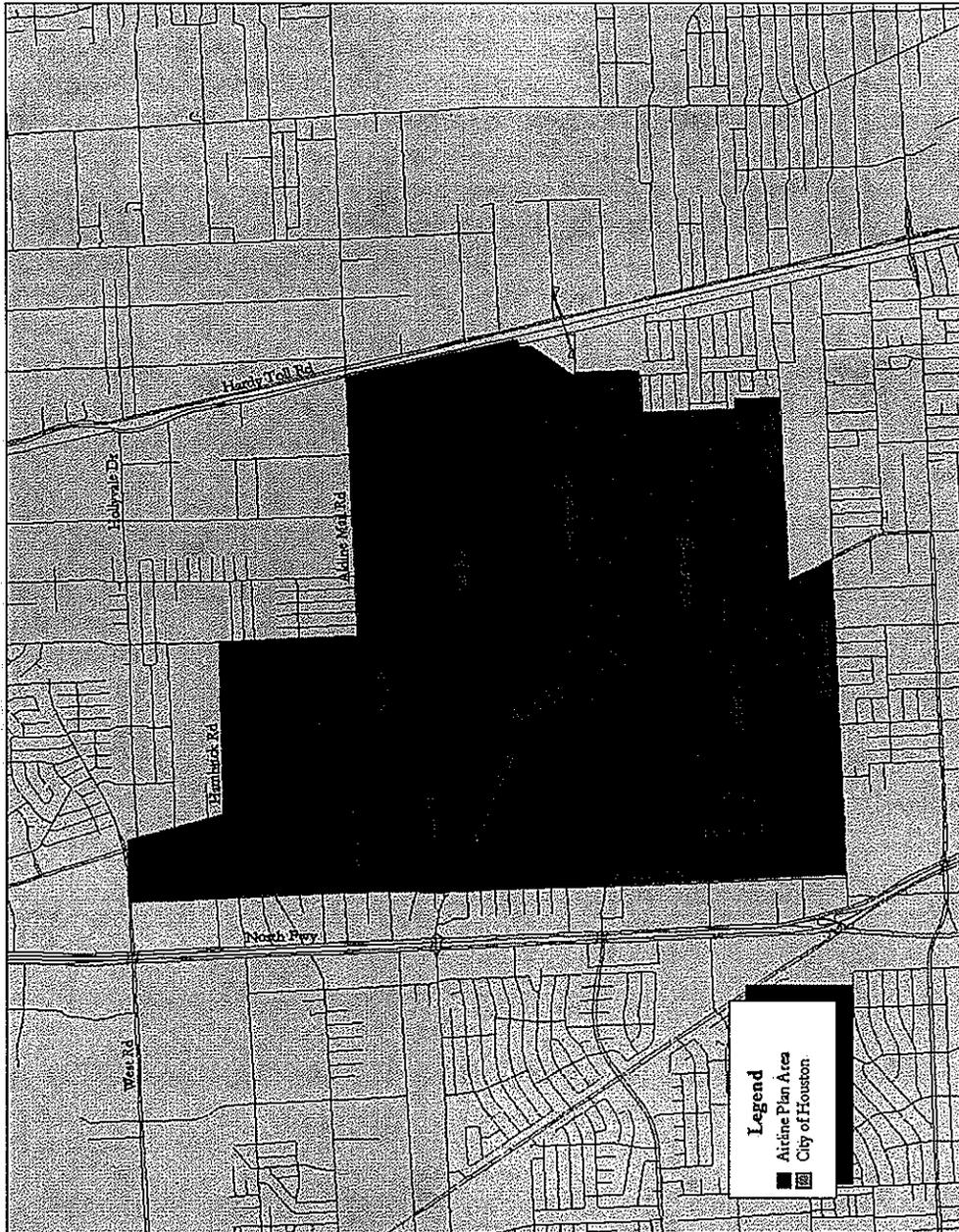
Table 1.1: Location Analysis of Airline

Identifier	Location/Information
Key Map, 2003 (pages)	412 and 413
Census Tracts	Tract 2216 (Block Groups 1,2, and 4) Tract 2217 (Block Groups 1 and 3) Tract 2224 (Block Groups 3 and 4)

County Precinct	Precinct One - Commissioner El Franco Lee
Zip Code	77037
School District	Aldine ISD

Source: Harris County Community & Economic Development Department, 2005

Map 1.1: Airline Target Area



Source: Harris County Community & Economic Development Department, 2005

Demographic Criteria

Understanding current conditions and trends of the target area establishes the foundation for recommendations about effective ways to transform the area from its current state to what the residents envision it can become. Key opportunities and challenges for the target area are revealed through the analysis of residents' characteristics, specifically, population density, race/ethnicity, income, educational attainment, and language proficiency.

A community's population size and location is dependent upon a number of factors, including, but not limited to:

- the effect of growth on a community's ability to provide acceptable levels of service for basic public services and facilities such as police, fire, emergency medical services, streets, parks, libraries, schools, and utilities at a cost that is politically acceptable to the community's taxpayers;
- the impact of growth on the natural environment;
- the effect of growth on traffic flow and congestion in the community;
- the impact of growth on community quality of life issues such as the aesthetic quality of new development ; and
- the effect of growth on the supply of housing for various age and income groups

Demographics and Land Use

Understanding current conditions, trends and land use in the target area establishes the foundation for recommendations regarding effective ways to transform the area from its current state to what the residents' visions of the future.

Demographics

- More than 16,500 residents inhabit the 4.39 square mile Airline community. The population has increased almost 30 percent since the 1990 Census.
- More than 60 percent of the Airline population is Hispanic or Latino. The community experienced a 187 percent increase in the Hispanic/Latino population between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses.
- Approximately 26 percent of the Airline population is 19 years of age or younger.
- Approximately 52 percent of Airline residents 25 years of age or older are not high school graduates. Only 3.95 percent of Airline residents 25 years of age or older have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- The median household income is \$35,701, approximately \$7,000 less than Harris County.
- Approximately 17 percent of Airline residents below poverty level. The greatest percentage of residents below the poverty level is children under the age of five.

- Approximately 74 percent of all children ages 5 to 17 in Airline speak English 'very well'. More than 67 percent of all adults ages 18 to 64 speak English 'very well' and adults ages 65 and older speak English 'very well'.

Land Use

- Airline is predominantly an urban area with facets of a suburban and rural landscape. While urban communities similar to Airline are commonly typified by high density residential land use, it has suburban and rural development—specifically parcels/lots larger than .5 acres and mobile home communities—clustered along major thoroughfares and other arterials in the community.
- Airline has a number of abandoned properties and vacant lots prime for (re)development. Several vacant and abandoned properties are ideal for a community center, pocket parks, or conducive for an infill housing development program.

Housing Primarily Residential

- While urban communities are typified by high density residential land use, Airline has suburban and rural development—specifically parcels/lots larger than .5 acres and mobile home communities— clustered along major thoroughfares and other arterials in the community.
- More than 75 percent (75.51 percent) of Airline residents reside in owner occupied housing; approximately 25 percent (24.49 percent) reside in renter occupied housing.

This indicates that the Airline community is stable as residents have made an economic investment in the community. More than 73 percent of the Airline population resides in owner occupied single family detached homes; 24 percent reside in owner occupied mobile homes.

As Map 2.2 illustrates, the predominant land uses in Airline are single and multi-family residential. Single family residential land use accounts for more than 75 percent of the total land use in the target area. Single family residential land use in Airline is primarily characterized by neighborhood/subdivision development in the south and southwestern parts of the target area. The Bellmar and Northline Terrace subdivisions either have water and sewer service provided by a private service, Nitsch & Sons Industries, or well and septic systems. The homes in these neighborhoods are typically constructed on concrete slab with brick masonry. This part of the target area is primarily void of sidewalks; shallow ditches and curbs and gutters are seen in this part of the target area.

Map 2.2: Land Use in Airline



Source: Harris County Appraisal District, 2003

The single family residential homes in the north and northwest parts of the Airline community either have water and sewer service provided by Sunbelt Freshwater Supply District (Sunbelt FWSD) or well and septic systems. The single family homes constructed in this part of the target area are typically constructed on concrete slab with brick masonry. These homes are also void of sidewalks; shallow and deep, unkempt ditches are representative of this part of the target area.

The east and southeastern parts of the target area have single family residential lots that are primarily larger than .5 acres. McClosky Road, Castledale Road, Hartwick Road, and Turner Place Rd. have large, multi-floor, suburban ranch-style homes built of brick masonry and siding. Residents either have water and sewer services provided by well and septic tanks or privately maintain their own water tanks. Single family residences in this part of the community are more rural in nature. Several residences are home to livestock—typically horses, cattle, and poultry.

Multi-family residential land use accounts for less than 2 percent of land use in Airline. Nevertheless, it is a contributing factor to the increasing population

density in the community. Many single family residential parcels are inhabited by multi-family apartment complexes and mobile home communities. There are approximately 17 mobile home communities and apartment complexes in Airline. Multi-family residences in Airline either have water and sewer service provided by a private water company or their own water system.

Consultation

To assist communities, HCCEDD utilizes a community planning process that engages residents, business owners, civic leaders and potential investors to actively recognize community challenges, visions, goals and resources to seek viable solutions and develop a comprehensive community revitalization plan. This plan not only serves as a flexible roadmap to revitalization and reinvestment, but also reflects an innovative approach to rebuilding communities through civic participation at the local level with a comprehensive focus. Strategies and recommendations are devised to improve transportation and infrastructure, housing, community facilities and public services, public health and human services, economic development and urban design. Harris County Community and Economic Development Department, in partnership with State Representative Kevin Bailey and Harris County Precinct One Commissioner El Franco Lee worked with Airline residents, business owners, and civic leaders to develop a community revitalization plan for the Airline locale.

Developing a community revitalization plan is a community's primary approach to initiating a comprehensive, coordinated effort to enhance the social, economic, and environmental conditions of its residents. This plan will enable the community to organize their revitalization efforts and when necessary seek federal, state, local and private foundation funding for implementation, as the plan represents an organized and clear strategy for comprehensive (re)development. Residents, the business community, educators, and civic leaders were charged with the development of a community plan and its implementation. Essentially, planning is the process of thinking systematically through a situation to devise a better recommendation and/or solution. If residents are to be empowered, each individual must act and participate in a systematic fashion that characterizes planning. Planning is merely a conduit for the most efficient use of scarce resources through:

- Identifying the highest priorities to which resources will be directed
- Devising alternative to address community challenges
- Designing projects that meet several needs at once

Community-based planning and revitalization is imperative as it separates successful communities from declining communities in the new millennium. The following factors illustrate examples of a community's revitalization agenda:

- Renovating an aging or non-existent water and sewer infrastructure with increasingly scarce resources for its upgrading

- Providing a socially and economically healthy environment for investments by corporations and individuals for commercial and retail activities
- Providing recreational opportunities and social services for children and adolescents to prevent and/or halt criminal activity and promote future educational prospects

Articulating a comprehensive community revitalization agenda relies on mobilizing human, social, physical and financial resources. The HCCEDD Planning staff was contacted in March 2005 by State Representative Kevin Bailey and Harris County Precinct One representatives to develop a comprehensive revitalization strategy for the Airline community. Thus, in May 2005 a diverse group of community leaders – residents, business owners, law enforcement personnel, and educators formed the Airline Vision Team and officially partnered with HCCEDD to begin the community development planning process.

In partnership with HCCEDD, Airline Vision Team members organized a community meeting in late June 2005. With more than 110 residents in attendance, citizens discussed concerns about housing, flooding; crime prevention and police patrol; traffic control, improving water and sewer service, youth and senior programs, and economic development. In late July 2005, the Airline Vision Team and HCCEDD organized an urban design meeting. Architects and urban designers from STOA/Golemon/Bolullo Architects assisted residents in envisioning a renewed future in Airline. Ideas and suggestions discussed the June 2005 community meeting were visually discussed at the urban design meeting. Pictures and design sketching of commercial developments, public facilities, streetscapes, sidewalks, park improvements, and traffic control improvements and other visual additions provided much conversation and commentary for area residents. In August 2005, HCCEDD and the Airline Vision Team organized a community business owners' meeting and an educators' meeting with Aldine Independent School District (AISD) and Houston Independent School District (HISD) teachers and administrators of Airline area schools.¹ Issues and concerns discussed at all meeting were analyzed by HCCEDD staff and the Airline Vision Team and serve as the basis for goals, proposals and recommendations in this community plan.

A community plan is merely a blueprint for all revitalization efforts in a specific locality. Two scenarios can immediately doom any community plan:

1. A plan is prepared by a government entity or a consultant with minimal contact and input with residents; or
2. A plan is prepared by *some* residents –usually self-selected—that do not involve other residents, community organizations, business leaders, educators.

Residents involved in community planning should be recruited from a range of community organizations to ensure that the plan represents the consensus of a community, not just a small faction of residents. Community plans are most effective when a collaborative effort among government entities and neighborhood residents (including commercial residents and educators), such is the case between HCCEDD, the Office of State Representative Kevin Bailey, and the Office of Harris County Precinct One Commissioner El Franco Lee with the Airline community.

The Airline Community Revitalization Plan recommends strategies, solutions, and initiatives to address challenges facing Airline residents, business owners, and educators. It is organized to examine the area's demographics and land use, transportation and infrastructure, housing, community facilities and public services, public health and human services, economic development and urban design challenges, goals, and recommendations. Proposed goals and recommendations were derived from citizen input at community meetings and prioritized by the Airline Vision Team and the HCCEDD Planning staff. An implementation timeline details project and program information to be completed over the next five years.

Based on the planning and strategies focused on the revitalization of Airline, a comprehensive targeted approach to revitalization through a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area has been determined to be the best use of CDBG and HOME funds for the next five years. Presentations for this approach have been made to area elected officials, businesses, boards and commissions, non-profit organizations, and citizens. All groups have enthusiastically supported this new approach.

Assessment

Economic Development

Economic development refers to progress toward a community's economic goals, including increases in economic productivity and competitiveness; employment; and business activity and investment. Economic development reflects qualitative factors such as human health, environmental quality and social equity, community development. When describing economic development, it is common to think of a series of job creation, retention, and training programs; a series of public and private capital investments; and a process of capacity building that allows a community to influence its economic future. This chapter details the current economic conditions and business environment in Airline. A market analysis was conducted analyzing the profitability of the Airline community to sustain retail (re)development.

Labor Force Characteristics

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Harris County's average weekly wage has been increasing at a modest rate. This indicates economic

growth and an enhanced quality of life for residents in Airline and Harris County.

- More than 67 percent of all males in the Airline community 16 years and older are in the labor force. Approximately 58 percent of all females in the Airline community 16 years and older are in the labor force.
- Construction, manufacturing and retail trade are the primary employment industries in Airline. A growing number of residents are employed in the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry.
- While more than 65 percent of Airline workers have commute times between 15 and 45 minutes, the 2000 Census reveals the travel time to work and the number of residents that work at home have increased since the 1990 Census.
- Approximately 65 percent of Airline workers drive their own vehicle to work; 3 percent use public transportation to get to work.

Business Environment

- Airline is home to a multitude of automotive-related businesses, childcare establishments, flea markets, professional services; feed and supply stores; trailer and boat storage; tractor sales; taqueria stands; appliance stores; washaterias; convenience stores; bridal and quinceañera shops; and hair and beauty establishments.
- There is no chain grocery store or fast food establishment located in the Airline target area.
- Since January 2000, more than 26 percent of all commercial permits issued in Airline have been for warehouse structures.
- As an integral economic engine in the community, the cluster of flea markets along Airline Drive attracts tens of thousand of shoppers every weekend.

Market Analysis

- Income density (purchasing power) data and supply indicators illustrate that Airline residents have a lack of retail establishments and levels of purchasing power comparable to other suburban locations in Harris County well-served by retail and could potentially support new retail establishments.
- Retail centers within the boundaries of the Airline target area function as destinations for multi-purpose shopping trips and attract more customers than stand alone businesses.

Goals

The Airline Improvement District is committed to improving the retail/commercial (re)investment and development in the Airline community. There are several overarching goals for strengthening and promoting retail development in Airline. These goals should inform the articulation of criteria for the selection of sites and choices of retail development.

1. Increase local access to goods and services at reasonable prices for Airline residents
2. Attract and retain businesses
3. Provide destinations and nodes to attract visitors/new residents to Airline
4. Reuse the existing commercial fabric in Airline
5. Provide employment for area residents
6. Increase the tax base
7. Reinforce and stimulate other investment in Airline
8. Encourage local entrepreneurship

Recommendations

The purpose of the following recommendations and goals is to support the Airline Improvement District commitment to sustainable economic development through the implementation and enforcement of appropriate organizations, incentives and programs, and legislation.

To support the Airline Improvement District's and the community's commitment to sustainable economic development, recommendation strategies include:

- The creation of an economic development council
- Enforcement of HB 414 (junkyard legislation approved in May 2005)
- Enforcement of HB 2509 (curbstoning law)
- Small business education workshops
- Locating a chain or independent grocery store in Airline
- The creation of a flea market business development organization

Transportation and Infrastructure

Transportation and infrastructure investment is fundamental to meeting the challenges of growth, development and shifting priorities in the Airline community. Strategic transportation and infrastructure investments will enable Airline to achieve economic, housing, and quality of life goals concurrently. This chapter examines the current transportation and infrastructure options available to Airline residents, identifies inadequacies and delinquencies, and provides recommendations to ensure that the development of facilities and services to keep pace with current and future development.

Transportation

Main Thoroughfares

- Automobile and pedestrian traffic is particularly problematic along Airline Drive on weekends. Not only is Airline Drive the hub of commercial businesses in Airline, but it is inundated with vehicular traffic from the flea markets.
- There are several transportation plans and improvements to major streets in Airline currently proposed, under consideration or in the

development process by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO), and the Harris County Public Infrastructure Department – Engineering Division.

METRO Routes in Airline

- Airline is served by four METRO bus routes: (8) South Main/Yale, (9) North Main/Gulfton, (56) Airline Limited, and (59) Aldine Mail Crosstown.
- Airline residents state that the current METRO routes do not adequately serve the population.

Light Rail Service in Airline

- In 2005, METRO officials submitted a revised transit system plan to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in response to the low rating the North Corridor (of which the Airline community is part of) light rail extension received.
- METRO has proposed installing bus rapid transit service along Airline Drive and maintains that once ridership in the corridor grows sufficiently to support light rail, the conversion will be made.

Infrastructure

Water and Sewer Service

- Water and sewer service is the most seriously delinquent public infrastructure item in Airline. While 99 percent of Airline housing units have complete plumbing facilities, there are a number of homes without access to public water or sewage services. Many housing units use underground water wells and septic tanks.
- Public infrastructure does not create economic growth in a community, but it does influence the location of growth. Water and sewer lines will not necessarily magically create economic development, but it is necessary for community growth and improvement.

Drainage

- Airline's drainage system consists of ditches, driveway culverts, road crossing culverts and few gutters.
- The eastern portion of the Airline community (closest to the Hardy Toll Road) is either in a floodway or in the 100 or 500 year flood plain.

Roads and Sidewalks

- The Airline community is virtually void of sidewalks. A lack of sidewalks is particularly difficult and dangerous for children as they are commonly forced to walk on street or deep ditches to avoid oncoming traffic.
- Many of the Airline roadways are paved, but some consist of rocks and concrete. Many streets are plagued with potholes and ruts.

Goals

Transportation & Infrastructure is the foundation of a community. Streets, water lines, sewer lines, sidewalks, and lighting are all part of the transportation and infrastructure framework. Basic services exist because of a solid infrastructure. An organized transportation system allows residents to access businesses both for employment and leisure. Transportation options, such as buses, walkways, and bike paths, diversify communities, reduce traffic, and enhance quality of life.

1. Improve traffic management of flea market patrons on weekends
2. Install flashing school zone speed signs
3. Install traffic signals at the intersection of Gulfbank Road and Cobbleshire Road
4. Improve pedestrian traffic control at the flea markets
5. Restripe yellow lines
6. Investigate installing speed bumps on Rockcliff, Lillja, and Karen Streets
7. Increase and improve METRO bus service
8. Prevent drivers from using turn lanes as passing lanes
9. Investigate feasibility bussing flea market patrons into community from nearby Park & Ride lots

Recommendations

The following recommendations will assist the Airline community in developing an effective transportation network in the community to assist current and future residents.

The following recommendations will assist the Airline community in developing an effective transportation network in the community to assist current and future residents:

- Installing of sidewalks
- Installing of streetlights
- Water and sewer service
- Addressing flooding and drainage issues with appropriate government entities
- Bilingual signage
- Restriping of major thoroughfares
- More flashing school zone speed signs
- Developing alternate routes to deal with weekend flea market traffics with the appropriate government entitites
- Installing crosswalk signals and widening streets
- Working with METRO to provide additional bus routes in Airline
- Becoming a partner agency with the Harris County Coordinated Transportation Program

Community Facilities and Public Services

The provision of community facilities and public services are the primary activities of local government and non-profit organizations. This element of the plan analyzes the current community facilities and public services available to Airline residents, identifies inadequacies and delinquencies, and provides recommendations to ensure that the development of facilities and services keep pace with current and future development.

Parks

- Airline residents have a fraction of park space per person recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Currently, Airline has less than 1/20 of the recommended park space per person. The necessary park space recommended by NRPA for urban communities accounts for less than 4 percent of the total acreage in Airline.
- Dow Park is the only park/recreational sports field located in the Airline target area.

Community Centers/Facilities/Programs

- There are no community centers in Airline. Pep Mueller Community Center and Hardy Community Center are within several miles of the Airline target area.
- Opportunities exist in the community for a multi-purpose community center and Sheriff storefront.

Crime and Police/Fire Services

- Between 2002 and 2004, crimes of assault, burglary, drug-related activity, and theft increased 24.50 percent. This indicates that Airline needs a more visible and unified law enforcement presence.
- Between 2002 and 2004, automobile accidents increased 7.29 percent; driving under the influence (DUI) traffic offenses decreased 10.00 percent.
- The nearest Harris County Sheriff's Department community storefronts/substations are located in the Aldine community and Greenspoint Mall.
- The Little York Volunteer Fire Department has an Insurance Services Office, Public Protection Classification System (ISO) rating of 6 (the best rating is 1 and the worst rating is 10). This rating is a critical determinant in what area residents will pay for the fire protection portion of their homeowner's insurance.

Education

- The Airline community is home to twelve early childhood/pre-kindergarten, elementary, middle and high schools. Of the twelve schools, only five are directly situated in the Airline plan/target area. The balance of schools is not located in the target area, but children from the target area attend their campuses.

- The Airline community is home to two school districts: Aldine Independent School District (AISD) and Houston Independent School District (HISD). AISD earned a *Recognized* accountability rating from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the 2004-2005 academic year. HISD earned an *Acceptable* accountability rating from the TEA for the 2004-2005 academic year.
- Several junior and community colleges located in proximity to the Airline community offer adult education programs in English as a Second Language (ESL), adult basic education, and general education development (GED).

Goals

Community Facilities constitute the cultural, educational, and social gathering places of a neighborhood. There are two types of community facilities: public and private. Public facilities include parks, schools, community centers, and any other site specifically designed for general resident gathering and owned by the public. Private facilities include churches, hospitals, theaters, and any other sites privately owned. Community centers, elementary schools, parish churches, and local libraries help define the sense of place within a given area. They provide a location for the collective energies of a community.

1. Locate a Harris County Sheriff's Department Storefront at the intersection of Airline Drive and Gulfbank Road.
2. Locate a community center in the target area
3. Provide greater police presence throughout the entire Community & Economic Development Department
4. Initiate a Weed & Seed Program in Airline
5. Clean up parks and locate new parks (possibly small pocket parks) in the Community & Economic Development Department

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been suggested to ensure that community facilities and public services meet current and future residents' needs and contribute to an enhanced quality of life.

The following recommendations are suggested to ensure that the community facilities and public services meet current and future residents' needs and contribute to an enhanced quality of life:

- Designation as a Weed and Seed community
- Annual National Night Out celebrations
- Hiring contract deputies to patrol the Airline Improvement District
- Hiring nuisance abatement officers
- Locating new parks in Airline
- Locating a community center in Airline

- Developing a newsletter and website
- Developing a community beautification program
- Organizing and partnering with community organizations to have after-school programs, summer and youth mentoring programs; and senior citizen programs
- Locating a Harris County Sheriff Storefront/Substation in Airline

Public Health and Human Services

Public health refers to the overall mental and physical health of a community. It includes the surveillance and control of infectious disease and promotion of healthy behaviors among members of a community.

- An assessment of the Airline community reveals that the area is void of hospitals and 24-hour medical clinics. There are a minimal number of physician's offices and dental clinics in the community.
- Data from the 2003 Harris County Public Health and Environmental (HCPHES) Retrospective Immunity Survey state that only 56 percent of children in the Airline community were appropriately immunized at age two.
- Litter and debris are threatening public health in Airline. Illegal dumping of household items and litter can collect water, which harbor and attract vermin and pests. Improperly stored automotive equipment can release noxious toxins into the water table and contaminate drinking water.

Goals

Human Services connect people to each other. They assist people in meeting health, welfare, employment, and other basic needs. Human service providers can be public or private, non-profit or for-profit, and range from day care to drug counseling to job training. Human services create the social fabric that supports a community.

1. More heavy trash collection days (4 times a year)
2. Develop a community watch program
3. Better litter control of public places
4. Provide more after-school programs/activities for children and adolescents (investigate partnerships with school districts and other youth organizations)
5. Investigate locating a 24-hr medical clinic in the community
6. Provide adult education programs
7. Make childcare more affordable

Recommendations

A community health initiative that merges existing and imminent health resources will provide more efficient services to Airline residents. The following recommendations will assist in this objective:

- Locating a 24-hour clinic in Airline
- More heavy trash collection days and litter control
- Ditch/culvert cleaning

Housing

Housing of profound importance to Airline residents. Housing is an anchor, providing a link to family, neighbors, and the greater community. The home provides an important foundation for obtaining and maintaining employment, creating a secure and supportive environment for raising children, accessing public and private services, and building the web of relationships that underpin a socially cohesive community.

Housing Supply

- Approximately 70 percent of all Airline residents reside in single-family detached housing. More than 23 percent of Airline residents reside in manufactured homes (mobile homes). The balance of residents lives in multi-family housing.
- More than 75 percent of Airline residents reside in owner-occupied housing. In contrast, approximately 60 percent of Harris County residents live in owner occupied housing.

Housing Tenure

- Homeownership enhances the lives of individual households and increases the social capital of communities.
- More than 75 percent of all housing units in Airline are owner-occupied. In contrast, 55 percent of all housing units in Harris County are owner-occupied.

Overcrowding

- Many residents find overcrowding a threat to property values, public safety, and public infrastructure. It also creates problems for trash removal and debris. This is a common occurrence in Airline as many families commonly live in housing units with a large number of intergenerational family members living in a single home.
- Approximately 28 percent of Airline households have five persons or more; nearly 15 percent of Harris County households have five persons or more.

Vacancy

- Housing vacancy rates are an indicator of the saturation of the total housing stock.
- Approximately 6 percent of housing units in Airline are vacant compared to 7.13 percent for Harris County.

Housing Values

- According to the National Association of Realtors, the average single-family home price in Airline is \$111,368; in Harris County, \$133,555.
- Almost 40 percent of owner occupied housing units in Airline are valued less than \$50,000.
- Approximately 70 percent of Airline renters pay between \$300 and \$699/month for housing.

Age of Housing Structures

- Airline did not equally share in the substantial growth in housing construction that occurred in Harris County in the 1970s and 1980s. The median year housing was built in Airline is 1968; in Harris County it is 1976.
- More than 58 percent of Airline's housing stock was constructed before 1969. Subsequently, residents have commented about the lack of resources for home repairs and infill housing to strengthen the housing stock.

Condition of Housing Structures

- The 2002 Harris County Appraisal District (HCAD) Housing Inspection Survey of houses in Airline indicates that the majority of dwellings are classified as *average*.
- No homes in Airline were classified as excellent. Homes west of Airline Drive are classified as *good*, *average*, or *fair*. Housing units to the north and east are primarily classified as *fair* and *average*, yet populated with several *poor*, *very poor* and *unsound* units.

Goals

The following goals support the Airline Improvement District and the community's commitment to sustainable, quality and affordable housing:

- Demolish abandoned properties
- Deed restriction enforcement
- Homeownership program/campaign
- Infill housing program
- Home repair program
- Nuisance abatement of garbage, noise, weeds, rodents, insects, and junk
- Restrictions on trucks with more than two axles in residential neighborhoods

Housing specifies places where one raises a family and displays personal items. Homes can be single-family, multi-family, and mobile, contain garages or patios, and generally portray any characteristics a resident wishes to display. It is important that housing contain basic services, such as safe drinking water, as well as providing both a sense of privacy and connection to the larger community.

1. Improve flooding and drainage problems

2. Greater enforcement of deed restrictions
3. Restrict multiple families (housing units) living on one lot
4. Restrict trucks with more than 2 axles on residential streets
5. Install streetlights and sidewalks along major thoroughfares and residential neighborhoods
6. Limit the number of mobile home communities
7. Remove abandoned cars from street and yards
8. Landscapè trees and cut overgrown lawns to beautify community
9. Demolish burnt and abandoned homes
10. Clean yards of trash and debris

Recommendations

The purpose of the following recommendations and goals is to support the Airline Improvement District and community's commitment to sustainable, quality and affordable housing through the implementation and enforcement of appropriate incentives and programs.

The following recommendations and goals support the Airline Improvement District and the community's commitment to sustainable, quality and affordable housing:

- Demolish abandoned properties
- Deed restriction enforcement
- Homeownership program/campaign
- Infill housing program
- Home repair program
- Nuisance abatement of garbage, noise, weeds, rodents, insects, and junk
- Restrictions on trucks with more than two axles in residential neighborhoods

Economic Empowerment

The Airline Improvement District is committed to improving the retail/commercial (re)investment and development in the Airline community. There are several overarching goals for strengthening and promoting retail development in Airline. These goals should inform the articulation of criteria for the selection of sites and choices of retail development.

1. Increase local access to goods and services at reasonable prices for Airline residents
2. Attract and retain businesses
3. Provide destinations and nodes to attract visitors/new residents to Airline
4. Reuse the existing commercial fabric in Airline
5. Provide employment for area residents
6. Increase the tax base
7. Reinforce and stimulate other investment in Airline

8. Encourage local entrepreneurship

Recommendations

The purpose of the following recommendations and goals is to support the Airline Improvement District commitment to sustainable economic development through the implementation and enforcement of appropriate organizations, incentives and programs, and legislation.

1. Economic Development Council

The creation of a local economic development council will benefit the Airline business community by creating a more favorable business environment; enhancing communication between businesses, government, and residents; and attracting new industries and businesses. To develop this organization:

- Determine if the organization should become private, nonprofit, or a membership driven organization
- Determine the focus of the organization (attracting, strengthening, and recruiting new businesses; encourage public/private cooperative partnerships)
- Create partnerships with the civic associations, the Airline Improvement District, the North Harris Greenspoint Chamber of Commerce, schools, Harris County Precinct One, the Greater Houston Partnership, University of Houston Small Business Development Center, SCORE: Counselors to America's Small Businesses
- Seek funding (grants and loans) to pay for business development or expansion, employee and business training, G.E.D. courses, remedial education, vocational training, professional certification, and advanced degrees

An economic development council, separate, but in coordination with the Airline Improvement District and North Houston Greenspoint Chamber of Commerce, will reinforce the Airline community's role in the regional business community. This organization will give citizens and business owners and employees the opportunity to enhance/improve local business networking opportunities and achieve greater economic prosperity for all business through a united and aggressive organization.

2. Enforcement of HB 414 (Junkyard Legislation)

The uncontrolled growth of automotive salvage and junkyards adjacent to residential homes, schools, and churches over the years in unincorporated Harris County has lead to the violation of state laws regulating distance requirements. Junkyard owners routinely pay the occasional Class C misdemeanor fine and consider it an expense of doing business in Airline.

Residents in Airline and other affected communities commonly live on small lots with backyard water wells that are 25-50 feet deep. Several schools have encroaching junkyards moving closer with cars piled high above fences, if indeed the back of the salvage and/or junkyard is fenced. The chemicals used at these

salvage and junkyards run-off into the local water table and penetrate the residents' shallow backyard water wells and cause other deleterious impacts to the potable water in the community. Rusting cars and automotive parts are commonly in violation of height requirements and are considered to be a visual blight on the community and threaten the public health and safety of all residents.

Thus, during the 79th Texas Legislative session, State Representative Kevin Bailey introduced legislation aiding Harris County in enforcing current laws restricting automotive wrecking and salvage yards from violating regulations and requirements for distance from existing homes, schools, and churches. The legislation, passed into law in May 2005, provides injunctive relief that will give Harris County a much desired tool in enforcing the existing law (Chapter 397, Texas Transportation Code – Automotive Wrecking and Salvage Yards in Certain Counties).

Enforcement of this law will quell Airline residents concerns with the lack of aesthetic attention junkyard owners give to their property. Retail establishments commonly locate in communities with a strong and stable housing stock and high property values. Economic prosperity can occur in harmony with the natural environment. Prospective businesses will not establish themselves in Airline if the drinking water is negatively impacted by other businesses.

3. Locate a Chain or Independent Grocery Store in Airline

The Airline Improvement District, in partnership with the North-Houston Greenspoint Chamber of Commerce, Airline residents, Airline business owners, and other concerned individuals must unite to locate a chain or large, independent grocery store in Airline. The Fiesta grocery store at West Rd. and Airline Drive is the closest grocery store to Airline.

A chain or independent grocery store in Airline will fill the voids that small convenience stores and fast food restaurants leave in the community. A chain or independent grocery store with a varied target niche to the community will provide higher wages to workers, yet provide staple and ethnic foods to consumers at lower prices. To locate a chain or independent grocery store in Airline:

- Create a partnership with the North Houston Greenspoint Chamber of Commerce, Airline business owners, residents, and other concerned individuals
- Seek subsidies and tax breaks from Harris County to locate a chain grocery store in Airline
- Locate vacant buildings/land for a grocery store
- Identify large developable parcels and parcel owners
- Raise support and interest of large land owners in redevelopment of land
- Gain control of land
- Issue a request for proposals to identify and attract potential developers

- Contract with a developer

Attempting to locate a large scale development in Airline will possibly take several years. While attempting to locate a chain grocery store in the community, ask independent grocers to begin carrying more staple foods at lower prices.

4. Flea Market Business Development Organization

A flea market business development organization/association will serve as a separate, but collaborative organization with the Airline Improvement District and the Airline Economic Development Council. This organization will benefit the community by regaining and maintaining public trust in Airline residents to engage in ethical businesses practices, controlling noise and traffic along major corridors and residential streets, providing greater police protection to consumers and community members, and facilitating revitalization in Airline.

5. Enforcement of HB 2509 (Curbstoning Law)

Curbstoning, or the illegal sale of automobiles on a street curb, right of way or in parking lots by individuals, licensed and unlicensed dealers, is a consumer protection issue. Not only does it reduce business of licensed dealers but it causes blight in local neighborhoods and brings an unsavory criminal element into communities. Curbstoners do not pay taxes on vehicle sales or transfer titles, thus creating a loss of revenue for the Airline Improvement District. Harris County has the power to adjudicate curbstoning cases.

6. Small Business Education Workshops. Small business education workshops strengthen local businesses and assist in attracting new and retaining businesses through employee and owner education and training.

Performance Measurement

Community Vision

The Airline Community created the Airline Improvement District which was created by House Bill #1458, authored by State Representative Kevin Bailey and sponsored in the Senate by Mario Gallegos in the 79th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature. The bill creating the District took effect June 17, 2005.

The Harris County Community and Economic Development Department (HCEDD), in coordination with the offices of State Representative Kevin Bailey and County Commissioner El Franco Lee, worked with area business and community leaders in a planning process for the Airline community's revitalization. The group, referred to as the Airline Drive District Community Plan Vision Team, held a series of public meetings conducted by area business and community leaders that helped develop a revitalization plan and established priorities for the District.

The District is located completely within unincorporated Harris County and is solely within a portion of the 77037 zip code. The District is predominately urban with some facets of suburban and rural landscape. It is approximately 4 square miles, has approximately 16,000 residents and is north of Downtown Houston. The District is surrounded by the City of Houston but is outside its corporate limits. Like many areas in unincorporated portions of North Houston it has experienced economic decline and social change. These elements have combined to create public needs that state laws do not empower county governments to serve.

The District's mission is to promote, develop, encourage and maintain employment, commerce, transportation, housing, tourism, recreation, the arts, entertainment, economic development, safety and the public welfare of the District. It is the desire of the District to improve the overall quality of life and create an environment where people want to live, work and raise their families.

The District generates revenue through a 1% retail sales tax that brings the total effective tax rate to 8.25% and began January 1, 2006 within the boundaries of the District. The revenue generated by the sales tax remains in the community to pay for projects improving such things as public safety, transportation and drainage, along with the costs of operating the District.

Key Strategies

The Airline Improvement District will implement the following strategies to promote economic empowerment for low- to moderate-income individuals and families.

Airline Projects and Recommendations

The following goals and recommendations have been organized to provide a systematic approach to community development and revitalization. The projects and recommendations are arranged in a matrix by year from one (2006) to five (2010). Each project or recommendation is described, objectives and responsible actors identified, and possible resources recognized. Projects and recommendations were developed in cooperation with Airline residents and community leaders utilizing a planning process that combines an understanding of the community's existing resources and innovative community development models.

Economic Opportunity

- 1. The creation of a Local Economic Development Council.** The local economic development council will benefit the Airline business community by creating a more favorable business environment; enhancing communication between businesses, government, and residents; and attracting new industries and businesses.
- 2. Enforcement of HB 414 (Junkyard Legislation).** Enforcement of this law will quell Airline residents concerns with the lack of aesthetic

attention junkyard owners give to their property. Retail establishments commonly locate in communities with a strong and stable housing stock and high property values. Economic prosperity can occur in harmony with the natural environment. Prospective businesses will not establish themselves in Airline if the drinking water is negatively impacted by other businesses.

- 3. Locate a Chain or Independent Grocery Store in Airline.** A chain or independent grocery store in Airline will fill the voids that small convenience stores and fast food restaurants leave in the community. A chain or independent grocery store with a varied target niche to the community will provide higher wages to workers, yet provide staple and ethnic foods to consumers at lower prices.
- 4. Flea Market Business Development Organization.** A flea market business development organization/association will serve as a separate, but collaborative organization with the Airline Improvement District and the Airline Economic Development Council. This organization will benefit the community by regaining and maintaining public trust in Airline residents to engage in ethical businesses practices, controlling noise and traffic along major corridors and residential streets, providing greater police protection to consumers and community members, and facilitating revitalization in Airline.
- 5. Enforcement of HB 2509 (Curbstoning Law).** Curbstoning, or the illegal sale of automobiles on a street curb, right of way or in parking lots by individuals, licensed and unlicensed dealers, is a consumer protection issue. Not only does it reduce business of licensed dealers but it causes blight in local neighborhoods and brings an unsavory criminal element into communities. Curbstoners do not pay taxes on vehicle sales or transfer titles, thus creating a loss of revenue for the Airline Improvement District. Harris County has the power to adjudicate curbstoning cases.
- 6. Small Business Education Workshops.** Small business education workshops strengthen local businesses and assist in attracting new and retaining businesses through employee and owner education and training.

Strategies Being Implemented

- **Strategy #1:** Airline Improvement District leveraging funds from the 1 percent tax on commercial properties. Funds are being used for revitalization efforts in Airline.
- **Strategy #2:** Ensure that CDBG and HOME funds are used in the Airline community.
- **Strategy #3:** Created a partnership with the North Houston Greenspoint Chamber of Commerce, Airline business owners, residents, and other concerned individuals.

- **Strategy #4:** Identified a large parcel of land to develop a park. In the process of acquisitioning the land.
- **Strategy #5:** Partnering with the North-Houston Greenspoint Chamber of Commerce, the University of Houston Small Business Development Center, North Harris Montgomery Community College, SCORE: Counselors to America's Small Businesses, residents, other organizations, businesses, schools to assess job skills/training programs needed and currently available in the greater Houston area.

Affordable Housing

1. **Demolish abandoned properties.** Reinvestment of abandoned properties supports the existing housing stock and increases property values in communities.
2. **Deed Restriction Enforcement.** Deed restrictions protect property values, residential character, and guard against locally unwanted land uses in communities. Northline Terrace and Bellmar Civic Associations have active deed restrictions that limit lots to residential use only. The Northline Terrace and Bellmar Civic Associations must work with property owners to ensure the proper and effective enforcement of deed restrictions in communities.
3. **Homeownership Program/Campaign.** Homeownership provides economic, social and civic benefits to communities. The Harris County CEDD Down-payment Assistance Program (DAP) assists prospective homeowners with down-payment and closing cost assistance. The Airline Improvement District will partner with the HCCEDD DAP to educate families about homeownership.
4. **Infill Housing Program.** Infill housing is an alternative for providing affordable housing to many low-income residents in Airline.
5. **Home Repair Program.** A home repair and rehabilitation program that includes minor home repairs and lead-based paint screening will assist local residents, particularly seniors, the disabled population, and families with young children with repairs, painting, etc.
6. **Nuisance Abatement (garbage, noise, weeds, rodents, insects, junk etc.).** The Neighborhood Nuisance Abatement Act (NNAA) is designed to abate public nuisances in unincorporated areas of Texas counties.
7. **Restrictions on Trucks with more than 2 Axles in neighborhoods.** To restrict trucks in the Airline community with more than 2 axles in neighborhoods (ex. Northline Terrace and Bellmar):

Strategies Being Implemented

- **Strategy #1:** Identified properties (residential and commercial) that need to be demolished in the Airline community. Met with the Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services Department to determine the process to clear abandoned properties in the area.

- **Strategy #2:** Investigating re-use opportunities for properties (possible pocket parks, infill housing, community center)
- **Strategy #3:** Developing a program to implement Infill Housing. The Airline Improvement District along with the civic associations contacted LISC for housing program development information. Members of the civic associations and members of the Airline Improvement District will develop a CDC to become a certified CHDO (Community Housing Development Corporation) and build affordable housing on vacant lots.
- **Strategy #4:** Selecting and purchasing vacant properties within existing neighborhoods and the entire Airline Improvement District for infill housing development.
- **Strategy #5:** Meeting with housing developers and realtors, banks, renters to discuss needs in community and plan programs.

Transportation and Infrastructure

1. **The installation of Sidewalks.** The installation of sidewalks will not only provide an alternate route of transit for residents, but it provides protection for children and other residents in the presence of vehicular traffic. The installation of sidewalks must be phased over several years to manage expenses, acquire right of way, establish plan for maintenance, etc.
2. **The installation of Streetlights.** The installation of streetlights in Airline will not only provide additional lighting and serve as a deterrent to crime. The installation of streetlights must be phased over several years to manage expenses, acquire right of way, establish plan for maintenance, etc.
3. **The installation of Water & Sewer Service.** The installation of water and sewer service is crucial for economic development, public health, public safety and overall quality of life. The installation of water and sewer service must be phased over several years to manage expenses, acquire right of way, establish plan for maintenance, etc.
4. **Eliminating Flooding and Drainage Issues.** Flooding and adequate drainage are critical issues for the Airline community. Flooding and inadequate drainage destroy private property, economic development opportunities, and infrastructure. The installation of adequate drainage must be phased over several years to manage expenses, acquire right of way, establish plan for maintenance, etc.
5. **Bilingual signage.** Hispanics/Latinos comprise 60.98% of all residents in Airline. Thus, in an effort to meet the need of all members of the Airline community, bilingual signage must be a consideration.

6. **Restriping of major thoroughfares.** The restriping of major thoroughfares is necessary for traffic safety – pedestrian and vehicular.
7. **Flashing school zone speed signs.** To combat traffic violations (speeding, pedestrian right of way) and ease traffic flow (particularly along Gulf Bank Rd. with the impeding construction and the September 2005 death of a Bussey Elementary school student), and protect the safety of all children in school zones, the installation of flashing school zone speed signs and other traffic calming techniques is needed.
8. **Flea market traffic.** Work with the flea market owners, engineering firms, and the Harris County Public Infrastructure Department regarding traffic on Airline Drive (develop alternate routes in and out the main area, provide more parking, work with METRO to use the nearest Park & Ride to alleviate congestion in the community).
9. **Cross walk signals/Widening of streets.** Investigate which intersections need cross walk signals and widening of streets (traffic feasibility studies done by an engineering or transportation firm). Met with Harris County PID – Engineering to discuss the plans to put cross walk signals at target intersections in the Airline Improvement District; possible traffic feasibility study conducted by Harris County PID. Met with Harris County PID – Engineering and TXDOT to discuss projected and impending construction plans.
10. **Greater bus service in the Airline community.** Discuss with METRO plans to add additional routes in the target area and increase frequency of pick-ups. Discuss with METRO plans to include the Airline community its transportation plans for light rail and/or bus rapid transit (BRT)

Strategies Being Implemented

- **Strategy #1:** The Airline Improvement District must develop a phased implementation program (budget, financing, location of sidewalks, design of sidewalks, acquiring right of way)
- **Strategy #2:** Partner with Precinct One to acquire, install, and maintain sidewalks (particularly with the installation of stormwater drains).
- **Strategy #3:** The Airline Improvement District is developing a phased implementation program (budget, financing, location of streetlights, design of lights, operating costs) and applying for grants.

- **Strategy #4:** The Airline Improvement District is in the process of hiring a consultant to do a water and sewer feasibility study to assess installation of lines and linkage to current water and sewer lines, etc.
- **Strategy #5:** Partnering with Precinct One, the Harris County Flood Control District, and water districts to deal with the installation of stormwater drains.

Community and Education Services

1. **24-Hour Medical Clinic.** Airline does not have a 24-Hour Medical Clinic. Residents must leave Airline for all emergent care needs.
2. **Provide adult education programs.** Partner with the Galena Park ISD and local community college to bring classes to local churches and schools in the evenings.

Strategies Being Implemented

- **Strategy #1:** Partnering with the Harris County Health Department and Harris County Precinct One to explore possibilities of bringing a mobile health provider or a 24 Hour Health Clinic to Airline.
- **Strategy #2:** Identify possible locations for a health clinic (existing or leased structure), possibly a community health clinic housed in a community center.
- **Strategy #3:** Identify school sites and local churches where classes can be held.
- **Strategy #4:** Investigate/explore partnerships with Precinct One, the Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services Department (HCPHES) to provide healthcare (immunizations, checkups, etc.) in the community (decide on frequency). The Airline Improvement District and the HCPHES should partner to bring mobile immunization units to the community. The Airline Improvement District can schedule immunization services with HCPHES to ensure that services are provided at convenient times for families (including evenings and weekends). The Airline Improvement District and HCPHES can distribute the information to the civic associations, schools, churches, apartment complexes, mobile home communities, and child care centers.
- **Strategy #5:** Investigate funding opportunities with other organizations to develop a clinic.

Economic Actions

Enforcement of County Salvage yard Regulations

Harris County Commissioners Court has created a committee to review how the county can administer and enforce county salvage yard regulations. The committee is made up of representatives from each Court member, the County Attorney's Office, Public Health and Environmental Services as well as industry representatives.

The Airline Improvement District supports the County's decision to enforce Chapter 397 of the Transportation code that governs auto salvage yards. The District is interested in the counties enforcement of the regulations so that both salvage yards and residents can operate and live in the same community while taking quality of life issues into account for area residents.

The Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services Department has requested the County Attorney to file suit on Ortiz Auto Parts located at 8401 Airline Drive to compel compliance with current regulations. Commissioners Court approved the order on August 22, 2006.

National Night out Celebration

The Bellmar and Northline Terrace Civic Clubs joined together to celebrate National Night Out. Teri Koerth, Executive Director for the Airline Improvement District presented the Deputies with a plaque in appreciation for their dedication and commitment to the District. "Police presence is a top priority of the District," said Airline Improvement District President Glenn Nitsch. "The goal of the Airline Improvement District is to improve our community where people want to live, work, and raise their families. To do that, we have been proactive in creating that environment and making sure people feel safe. Participating in the County's Contract Deputy Program was a huge step in that direction."

The Contract Deputy Program has provided Sheriff's deputies on patrol devoted strictly within the District boundaries since January 1, 2006 when the legislation authored by State Representative Kevin Bailey creating the District became effective.

Among the attendees, were approximately 65 citizens, staff from State Representative Kevin Bailey and Congressman Gene Green's offices, Glenn Nitsch, President of the Board of the Airline Improvement District, the Little York Volunteer Fire Department as well as Harris County Sheriff's Department Captain Tommy Wilson, Deputy J. Shriver, Deputy Malinowski and Reserve Deputy K. Horton. Also on hand was one of the Sheriff Department's mobile command centers.

Community Service Award The President of the Board of the Airline Improvement District received an award for community service from the North Houston – Greenspoint Chamber of Commerce during their annual Public Safety

awards luncheon on October 19, 2006. Glenn Nitsch was recognized by the Chamber for his continued dedication to the Airline area. Mr. Nitsch has been active in the community for many years and has testified in the Texas House and Senate on many occasions on topics such as noise levels, salvage yards, county rule making, creation of the Improvement District and water utility issues.

Joe Shriver, a Contract Deputy for the Airline Improvement District, also received an award from the Chamber for his outstanding performance during the past year. Deputy Shriver grew up near the Airline area and has chosen to come back and help the community with its revitalization plan. His dedication to making the Airline area a safer place is giving residents and businesses a renewed sense of hope and commitment to the Airline community.

The Airline community has already taken many positive steps to achieve thriving revitalization of the Airline community. According to the 2006 Airline Revitalization Plan, Airline has already taken positive steps to revitalizing their neighborhood.