

**GOAL 5.1:
Repositioning of the UV-T district in north Bellaire
as a mixed-use area with an Urban character.**

Guiding Principles

- A. Brand the UV-T area as a focal point of new amenities for Bellaire residents and a unique and inviting destination for visitors.
- B. Pursue the community’s life-cycle housing objectives in the UV-T area by encouraging varied residential living options not found elsewhere in the community.
- C. Protect adjacent residential neighborhoods from incompatible non-residential development.
- D. Recognize the UV-T area as one of the community’s best opportunities for gaining new public green space.
- E. Ensure that the UV-T area is conveniently and safely accessible to Bellaire residents by bike and on foot.
- F. Have the City take a more direct role in spurring commercial area revitalization, including in the UV-T area.

Consideration 1: Transformation of the UV-T into a Mixed-Use, Pedestrian-Oriented Area.

Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Focus on attracting retail establishments, restaurants, and services desired by Bellaire residents and intended to serve local needs, but also appealing to visitors to Bellaire.
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED, in large part, through standards for the new UV-T zoning district] Completely rework the current “RDD” zoning strategy to promote a transit-oriented, mixed-use station area district with an urban character. Code amendment priorities should include elimination of permitted uses not compatible with this vision (e.g., light industry, distribution, and typical horizontal uses such as auto dealerships); provision for attached housing types, as well as mid-rise residential structures (potentially with first-floor retail or service uses); zoning incentives for mixed-use projects (e.g., density/intensity bonuses), and an easier path to vertical mixed use buildings besides only the Planned Development process; and development standards specifically aimed at protection of adjacent, established residential neighborhoods. Also frame building height standards to allow for the tallest buildings in the core of the district, nearest the rail station, and then taper down the permitted heights in the southern portion of the district, closest to the adjacent existing residential neighborhood.
Capital Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pursue access and circulation improvements described in Chapter 3-Mobility, to open up east-west traffic movement across the UV-T area and support its redevelopment. ▶ Through development proposals and potential City-provided improvements, ensure that a small-block urban street grid is established as a framework for redevelopment in the UV-T area. Also provide wide sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities throughout the district.
Program/ Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As part of the special study recommended under Further Study/Planning, refine and establish a branding and marketing strategy for the UV-T area to ensure that, over time, it achieves a distinct image and unique appeal that is recognized across the Houston metropolitan area.
Partnerships/ Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue coordination with METRO, the City of Houston, Uptown Houston, the Harris County Toll Road Authority, private development interests, and others involved in planning for a potential new METRO transit center along Westpark, just outside of Bellaire. ▶ In conjunction with the City of Houston and other potential partners, pursue the South Rice Avenue improvement and enhancement strategy depicted in the <i>Bellaire Town Center Vision Plan</i> (Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects, July 2008). ▶ Recruit development partners, for potential public/private ventures, with a track record of quality results, interest in redevelopment projects, and ability to take on complex projects and see them through to successful completion.

<p>Further Study/ Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Complete a special strategic planning and market study of the UV-T area as was done in 2007 for the City Center area. This effort should help to clarify development and redevelopment potential in the UV-T area, especially given the indefinite postponement of any METRO light rail construction along Westpark since 2010. ▶ [Density bonuses ACCOMPLISHED through standards for the new UV-T zoning district] Consider financial and/or non-financial incentives the City may be able to offer (fiscally, politically) to encourage desired development and redevelopment outcomes (e.g., land assembly, infrastructure and drainage support, density bonuses).
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GOAL 5.2:

A revitalized City Center area geared toward the shopping, service, and entertainment needs of Bellaire residents.

Guiding Principles

- A. *Brand City Center as a convenient place for Bellaire residents to shop and dine, but also a comfortable place to meet and interact.*
- B. *Pursue the community’s life-cycle housing objectives in the City Center area by encouraging varied residential living options not found elsewhere in the community.*
- C. *Protect adjacent residential neighborhoods from incompatible non-residential development.*
- D. *Recognize the City Center area as one of the community’s best opportunities for gaining new public green space.*
- E. *Ensure that the City Center area is conveniently and safely accessible to Bellaire residents by bike and on foot.*
- F. *Improve safety and security—both real and perceived—in the City Center area.*
- G. *Have the City take a more direct role in spurring commercial area revitalization, especially in the City Center area.*

Consideration 1: Renewal of City Center to Provide the Small-Town Downtown Atmosphere Sought by Bellaire Residents

Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Focus on recruiting lifestyle amenities desired by Bellaire residents (e.g., “boutique”/niche retailers, quality restaurants, community theatre, etc.).
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED, in large part, through standards for the new CMU and UV-D zoning districts] Rework the City Center zoning strategy, as discussed in Chapter 2-Land Use & Community Character, to shift the focus toward residential development suited to the City Center environment (e.g., small-lot and attached forms such as townhouses) in the CCD-1 zoning district, and focus commercial revitalization efforts on major street frontages and within the higher-intensity CCD-2 district. Also allow for mid-rise residential structures, potentially with first-floor retail or service uses, in the CCD-2 district. ▶ Incorporate into the City Center zoning provisions allowing a relaxation of specified standards that may prevent or add difficulty to the redevelopment process, so long as certain precautions and mitigation criteria can be met. Common regulatory constraints to redevelopment include site access and circulation standards, limited on-site area for parking and loading, nonconforming setbacks, and on-site drainage requirements. ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED through standards for the new CMU and UV-D zoning districts] Add shared parking provisions within the CCD zoning framework to enable reduction of land-wasting surface parking, which detracts from a desired urban character.
Capital Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Through ongoing facility planning, pursue the potential relocation of certain City functions with significant public interaction to a suitable location in the City Center area. ▶ Expand the Rebuild Bellaire program to commercial areas, particularly the City Center area, not only to upgrade street surfaces and drainage, but also to improve street appearance and edges, convert excessive paved areas to sidewalks and green space (e.g., along Cedar and Spruce streets)—and to signal City commitment and public investment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide physical improvements intended to present a unified image and visual definition of the City Center area. Examples include unified district identification and wayfinding signage (including a possible new logo and design/color scheme for “branding” purposes); special street lighting and/or traffic signal fixtures; consistent landscaping across the district, particularly at key entry points and intersections; special paver and crosswalk designs at major intersections; distinctive pole banners; and special district-wide street signs (unique color and/or style). A more ambitious step would be to coordinate with property and business owners to replace scattered, competing signage with coordinated/joint signs using a consistent design across the entire district (and a prototype of this approach could be implemented in the catalyst revitalization area).
<p>Program/ Initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide special outreach and attention to established “mom and pop” businesses long patronized by Bellaire residents in the City Center area to help them make the transition and maintain their presence in a revitalizing City Center. ▶ Establish a more visible police/security presence in the City Center area, whether through horse/foot patrols, a high-profile police storefront location, or private contract security personnel.
<p>Partnerships/ Coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recruit development partners, for potential public/private ventures, with a track record of quality results, interest in redevelopment projects, and ability to take on complex projects and see them through to successful completion.
<p>Further Study/ Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify candidate locations for possible catalyst projects aimed at concentrating revitalization efforts and associated public and private investments and demonstrating City Center redevelopment potential. ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED through standards for the new CMU and UV-D zoning districts] Consider limiting the range of permitted uses in the CCD districts to focus on a use mix that better reflects the “small town atmosphere” consistently cited by Bellaire residents in various community discussions and studies (including the Rice University <i>Framework for Desirable Growth</i> report and the University of Houston <i>Quality of Life</i> report, both completed in 2005). ▶ Consider financial and/or non-financial incentives the City may be able to offer—fiscally and politically—to encourage desired development and redevelopment outcomes. This should include reducing the extent of streets and hardscape in the City Center area, and the potential abandonment of certain street segments to support redevelopment, whether for land assembly, drainage needs, additional public/open space, etc. ▶ Study the feasibility of structured parking as part of redevelopment efforts in the City Center area.

**GOAL 5.3:
Vibrant commercial corridors with improved aesthetics
and public and private design quality.**

Guiding Principles

- A. *Elevate the quality of Bellaire’s commercial areas and corridors to match the level of residential investment across the community.*
- B. *Seek a balance in commercial area zoning and regulation that does not inhibit beneficial business development and expansion but also protects private investment and community interests from incompatible and/or unappealing development outcomes.*
- C. *Protect adjacent residential neighborhoods from incompatible non-residential development.*
- D. *Take advantage of opportunities to achieve design upgrades along commercial corridors as private redevelopment is proposed and public street and infrastructure rehabilitation occurs.*
- E. *Incorporate more green space and features into Bellaire’s commercial areas both on private sites and in public ways.*
- F. *Pursue strategic opportunities for City government to take a more direct role in spurring commercial development and reinvestment to balance the local tax base, provided the proposed activity meets the fundamental criterion of advancing residents’ quality of life.*

Consideration 1: Upgraded Quality and Appearance of Bellaire’s Commercial Corridors to Match its Residential Neighborhoods and Major Office Developments

Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recognize the City’s major thoroughfares as the primary place—in a largely auto-oriented community— where Bellaire’s image is established in the eyes and minds of residents, visitors, and pass-through commuters.
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED, in large part, through standards for the new CMU, UV-D and UV-T zoning districts] Supplement existing zoning for non-residential and mixed-use development with new site and building design standards aimed at enhancing architectural quality; increasing landscaping around buildings, site perimeters and frontages, and within parking areas; and ensuring compatibility with the character of nearby residential development (i.e., building scale and design reflective of adjacent residential uses where a commercial or service activity is situated at a neighborhood edge). ▶ Conduct an in-depth evaluation of areas within the Suburban Office and Business Park designations on the Future Land Use & Character map in this Comprehensive Plan to consider “what if” scenarios of their desired re-use if the current uses were discontinued at some future point. As with the new CMU, UV-D and UV-T districts, one consideration would be whether to shift to a zoning approach that provides more flexibility.

<p>Capital Improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Design and construct signature gateway and streetscape treatments at high-profile entry points into Bellaire (e.g., Bellaire Boulevard, Bissonnet, Newcastle, South Rice, Chimney Rock), as well as at key intersections (e.g., Bellaire/Bissonnet, Bellaire/ Newcastle, Bissonnet/Newcastle, Bissonnet/Avenue B, Bellaire/ Avenue B, Bellaire/South Rice, Bellaire/Chimney Rock, Bissonnet/Chimney Rock, Bissonnet/Renwick, Evergreen/ South Rice, Bissonnet/South Rice, Elm/South Rice, Fournace/South Rice, and all major West Loop intersections). These improvements should include the types of features illustrated in the “before and after” corridor scenes in this chapter (installation of landscaped esplanades, more extensive landscaping within public rights-of-way and on private sites, special street lighting and traffic signal fixtures, enhanced traffic signals and street signage, overhead utility wires moved underground, and distinctive designs for intersection crosswalks and widened sidewalks). ▶ Install esplanades in place of continuous center turning lanes (e.g., on Bissonnet, South Rice) to control turning movements and increase safety, provide an intermediate refuge area for pedestrians crossing major streets, and enhance corridor aesthetics through landscaping of the new esplanades.
<p>Program/ Initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Offer mini-grants to existing commercial property and business owners to help finance building façade improvements, enhanced landscaping, or other site upgrades that might not otherwise occur where no construction activities are planned that would trigger compliance with newer development standards.
<p>Partnerships/ Coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explore opportunities to partner with the City of Houston and/or the City of West University Place to implement gateway enhancements at shared boundary points that would benefit both parties. ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED through successful formation and ongoing networking through the Bellaire Business Association (BBA)] Under the auspices of the Greater Southwest Houston Chamber of Commerce, establish a Bellaire-specific business network, especially as a forum for greater public/private interaction on issues of particular concern in Bellaire (recognizing that many area business owners do not live in the community). Also maintain connections through other local networks (e.g., Rotary Club).
<p>Further Study/ Planning</p>	<p>n/a</p>