

Redevelopment in Sugar Land is City Council's top priority. With only 4% of vacant land left to develop in Sugar Land, we have to make that land the most valuable, highest and best use possible to provide a strong tax base which will aid in funding the City's high-quality services and amenities with the goal of keeping property taxes low. The preservation and redevelopment of the Char House and Imperial Historic District is the number one redevelopment priority. As such, the City has taken a proactive approach by partnering with Puma Development and initiating this rezoning and Land Use Plan amendment to provide a framework for redevelopment of the Imperial Historic District area. This meeting is to hold a public hearing followed by Consideration and Action on the Imperial Historic District General Development Plan (GDP) and Land Use Plan Amendment, and to provide a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council.

### **Feedback from Joint Workshop**

A joint workshop was held with the P&Z Commission and City Council on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Puma Development gave a presentation as well as city staff. Several members of the public spoke during the public comment period.

The Commission and Councilmembers discussed traffic, crime, impacts to the school district, and a question as to why this project requires an increase in the number of multi-family units. Following the workshop, staff has gathered the following information in response to the discussion items.

### **Crime Impacts**

The Sugar Land Police Department has analyzed the number of Police reports for 2019 (full calendar year) and 2021 (January – September) for multi-family and single-family housing in a representative sample geographical area of the City.

The results showed that crime per housing unit, broken down by multi-family housing versus single-family housing units, account for a comparatively similar number of crimes per unit. As the number of reports per housing unit are similar, there is no significant crime difference where multi-family homes have been introduced adjacent to single-family homes in Sugar Land.

### **Traffic Impacts & Future Traffic Studies**

Regarding traffic studies for the proposed development, the TIA will need to be updated. That update will be a future action when the project is sufficiently defined. TIA's evaluate and determine what, if any, necessary traffic improvements are warranted as well as the developer's pro-rata share of the improvement costs. Puma Development has engaged a traffic engineer and will be performing extensive traffic studies and anticipates modifications to existing surrounding roads will be identified once a more detailed plan for the development has been defined.

### **School Impacts**

According to Fort Bend ISD, single family houses generate more students for the school district than multi-family at a rate of 0.51 vs. 0.35 students per household. Data from Population and Survey Analysts (PASA), who is the demographer for Ft Bend ISD, states that newly built,

market-rate multi-family properties typically have fewer students since rental rates are usually higher. Student to housing unit ratios are typically affected by several factors, including number of bedrooms per unit, age and class rating of the property, building style, campus attendance boundary, and rental price. A recent School Impact Analysis performed for a previous multi-family project showed that for a development largely consisting of studio and one-bedroom units, the ratio of students per occupied unit was far below the district average. A full school impact study will be done for this development once a more detailed plan has been defined.

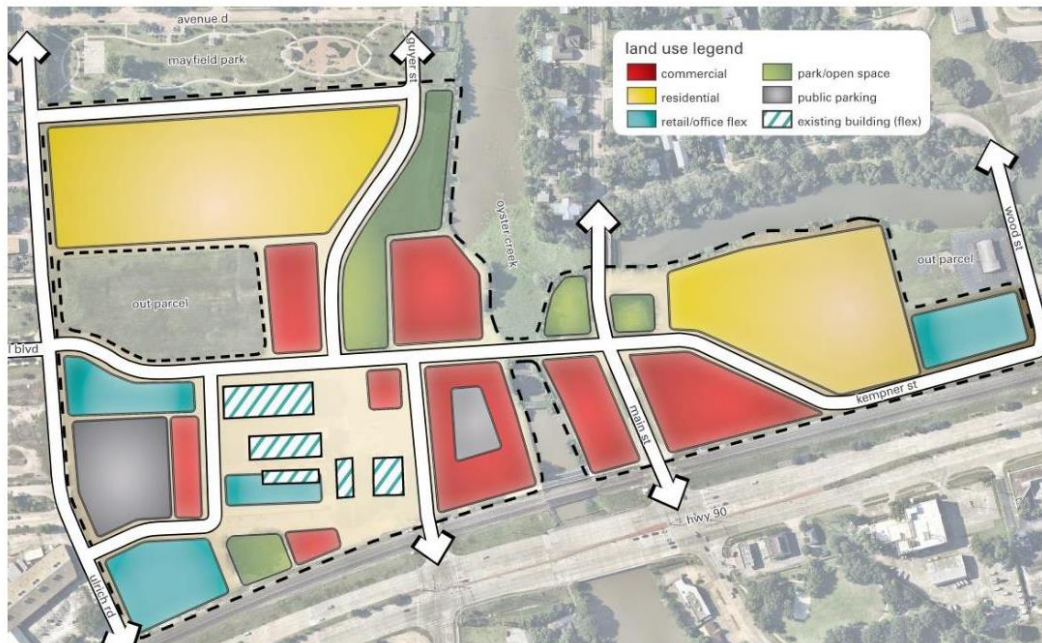
#### *Basis for Increase in Multi-family units*

To create a financially successful project for redeveloping the Char House, substantial retail, office, and residential will all be required. The multi-family units provide sufficient density to help attract and support great retail tenants. The multi-family units provide a place for employees who office on site to live nearby, helping to attract companies to locate on site. The preservation and restoration of historic buildings is very expensive. Having sufficient multi-family units will ensure the financial feasibility of the entire project so that the non-multi-family components of the development can be funded.

#### **PD - General Development Plan**

A PD - General Development Plan sets the general development framework for the property. We often refer to it as a first step PD. It does not contain the detail required in a Final Development Plan and is intended to provide sufficient information to make a preliminary, but not final, determination on the merits of the development without requiring the owner to incur the expense of preparing a Final Development Plan. Additionally, a General Development Plan does not authorize development or construction to begin within the district; a Final Development Plan must be approved before development can begin.

The property proposed for rezoning is currently zoned PD – Final Development (Imperial Market) and PD – General Development Plan (Imperial). This proposed Imperial Historic District GDP will replace the existing zoning approvals that are on the property. The proposed General Development Plan includes a list of proposed uses, general development standards, and a general site layout plan. The proposed GDP also addresses unique site elements such as the preservation of historic buildings and large existing trees found on the site. The use list includes office, retail, restaurants, bars, grocery markets, hotels, entertainment, as well as a variety of personal services. The concept layout plan is shown below which shows the entire development area. The layout plan includes the footprints of the existing historical buildings onsite, including the Char House and silos. It also includes areas where commercial, retail, office, residential, and open space could be envisioned. The GDP includes provisions for 660 multi-family units in one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. It also includes a variety of other residential housing options including but not limited to, townhomes, patio homes, duplex or tri-plex. The GDP also includes a framework of building regulations that will incorporate design features respective of the architectural elements of the existing historical industrial buildings. It also includes preservation of historical buildings/structures including the Char House, Engineering Building, 3-Bay Warehouse, Container Warehouse, Smoke Stacks, and the Water Tower. The proposed GDP is consistent with the requirements established in the Development Code for GDPs.



At this time, the historic Imperial Char House is the focus of Puma’s development plans, which is proposed to be adaptively reused as an office/co-working building. Puma proposes to make the Char House improvements as Phase 1 of the project. The actual timing and sequencing of the project phases will be controlled by the City Council through the final development plan process. Puma anticipates future plans for the remaining area to include multi-family, medium density (e.g., townhomes and urban homes), and single-family residential, retail, services, and other supporting uses.

## **Comprehensive Plan – Chapter 6 (Land Use Plan)**

### ***Introduction to the Plan***

The City’s Comprehensive Plan, particularly Chapter 6, the Land Use Plan (the Plan), serves as a guide for how the City should develop and redevelop. The city’s Land Use Plan was developed by a citizen-led committee, supported by the community and adopted by City Council in August of 2018. “The Land Use Plan outlines policy direction and guidance for making land use decisions and reaching the City’s long-term vision” (Land Use Plan p. 9). Furthermore, its important to understand that the Plan is not a series of regulations, but rather a guiding document that should be read and understood holistically. To this end, it is important to look at the intent of the Land Use Plan as a whole, and not at an individual guiding statement as a mandate. Additionally, the Plan articulates that periodic changes may be necessary in order to respond to demographic shifts and market trends:

*The overall intent of the Plan is as important as the individual words. The different goals and action items are complementary and supportive of the overall vision. In many cases,*

*different recommendations intertwine to create a livable city. For example, the land uses proposed here only make sense if the public spaces and transportation measures also proposed are implemented with them. Thus, no individual recommendation can be isolated from the rest of the Plan recommendations without understanding the broader context. In the event an exceptional development proposal is submitted that meets the overall spirit and intent of the Plan, but deviates from the specific detailed guidance established in the Plan, the Land Use Plan should be reviewed and any changes should include public input and review by Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council (Land Use Plan pg. 10).*

### **Land Use Plan Guidance**

The components of the Plan which most directly relate to the Imperial Historic District development plans include the Land Use Vision, Goals, and Policies, Areas of Change, and Future Land Use Map and Categories.

The Land Use Plan established a city-wide **Vision Statement** (pg. 37):

*Sugar Land will develop and redevelop to remain a desirable place to live and do business. The city will change in response to long-term shifts in market demands and demographic trends, managing that change to preserve the city's appeal. It will balance different land uses, preserve the character of its neighborhoods, and create new walkable mixed use Regional and Neighborhood Activity Centers with a variety of offices, housing, retail, entertainment, and civic institutions.*

The Plan further outlines specific **Goals and Policies** (pg. 38-67) to achieve this vision.

- Goal #2: Creating Mixed-Use Activity Centers: Sugar Land will have Regional Activity Centers and Neighborhood Activity Centers that will be mixed use, compact, walkable and bicycle-friendly areas with active public spaces. These Centers will draw people throughout the day, encourage interaction, grow and support business and build community.
  - Policy 2a: Support the creation of distinctive Regional Activity Centers through new development and redevelopment. These five Centers should contain a variety of uses, serve as destinations for both the City and the region, and have unique identities that distinguish each from one another.
  - Policy 2c: Activity Centers should be evaluated utilizing a multi-modal transportation analysis and school impact analysis.
  - Policy 2e: Activity Centers should include multiple public spaces that allow people to gather and share experiences and should be flexible to accommodate various activities throughout the day.
  - Policy 2f: Design streets and access ways within Activity Centers so they emphasize pedestrians over vehicles.

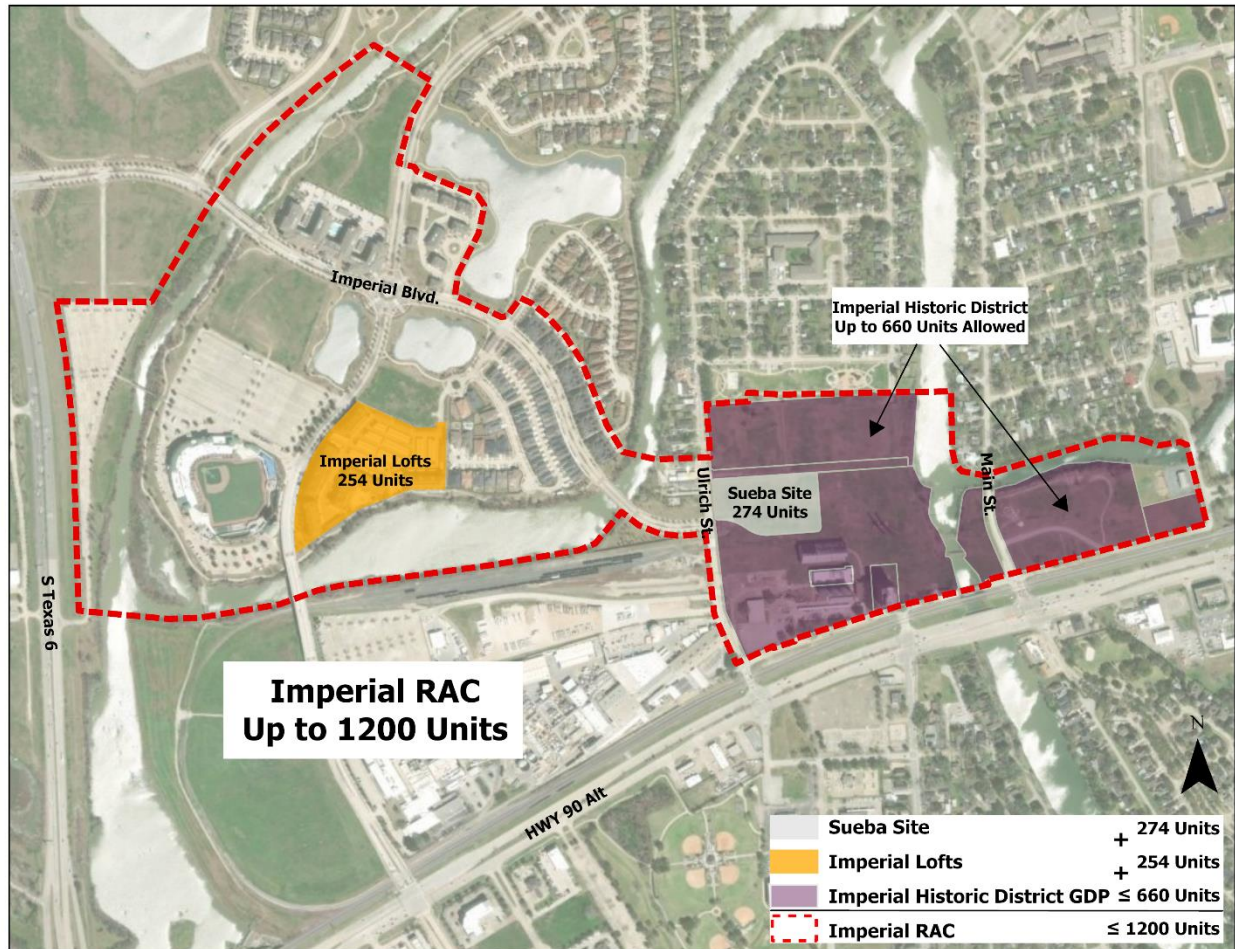
- Goal #3: Encouraging Residential Options (pg. 46-49): Sugar Land will offer a mixture of residential options in a variety of settings to appeal to a wide range of people.
  - This policy provides guidance that Sugar Land should provide housing opportunities to meet the needs for people of all ages and in all stages of life. It recognizes that the predominant residential type is traditional suburban single-family, but changing regional demographics and shifting trends have created a need for alternative housing types. In response to these broader trends, it is important for the City to encourage a variety of housing options to remain competitive in the Houston region.
  - Policy 3a: Promote walkable neighborhoods through development of more compact forms of single-family residential.
  - Policy 3c: Locate new multi-family units in vertically mixed-use settings in Regional or Neighborhood Activity Center or Medium Density Mixed Use areas that are appropriately scaled to their surroundings and are designed to retain their value over the long-term. This policy further guides how to preserve the nature of Sugar Land's single-family neighborhoods while at the same time ensuring an appropriate mix of housing options are available. This Plan envisions an 88% single-family housing / 12% multi-family housing ratio for the foreseeable future. The Plan states that this ratio could be reevaluated during future updates to the Land Use Plan, if the community and the market determines it is appropriate.

Furthermore, the Plan establishes a vision for the five identified Regional Activity Centers (RACs) in the **Areas of Change** section. The proposed development area is identified as part of the Imperial Regional Activity Center. The original (2018) vision was based on the Imperial General Development Plan (for the areas west of Oyster Creek) and the Imperial Market PD Final Development Plan (for the areas east of Oyster Creek). The vision anticipated a mix of housing types (single-family and multi-family) as well as a mixture of retail and office uses. The number of multi-family units was based on the Imperial Market PD and the Imperial Lofts PD, for a total of 526 units in the RAC.

The **Future Land Use Map and Categories** identify the location of the five Regional Activity Centers and provide further detail for the vision for all of the RACs. These RACs are *envisioned to be the commercial and civic hubs of the city that attract people from around the city and across the region to work, shop, eat and attend events. Each should contain a mix of uses such as offices, retail, residential and civic institutions, integrated together in a compact, walkable area and have its own unique character (Land Use Plan, p. 114).*

Additionally, since most of the land within RACs is already developed as car-centric office, retail, and other uses, “the majority of the Regional Activity Centers will be formed through the redevelopment or infill development of existing commercial areas” (Land Use Plan, pg. 115).





### ***Land Use Plan Assessment and Proposed Amendment***

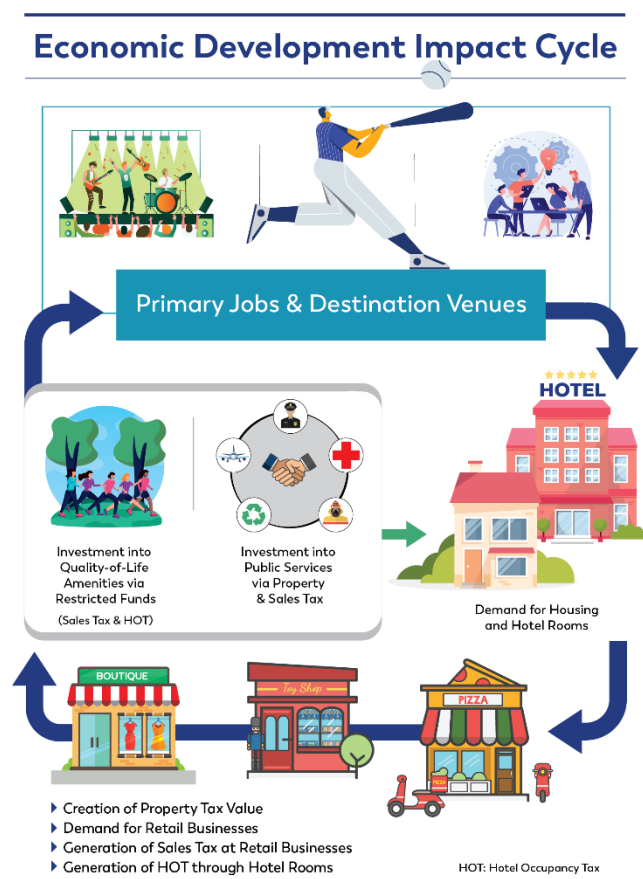
The proposed Imperial Historic District plan is consistent with the vision and intent of the Land Use Plan. From the Vision, Goals and Policies to the Areas of Change and Future Land Use Map, the vision for the Regional Activity Center to be a mixed-use, walkable, commercial and civic hub can be realized through development in accordance with the proposed General Development Plan framework, and with additional regulations that will be established in future zoning approvals prior to building permits.

Though the plan is consistent with the Land Use Plan vision, there is specific guidance in the Areas of Change section of the Plan that warrants modification. The description of the Imperial Regional Activity Center includes detail based on the approved Imperial Market PD, which was not developed. Additionally, the 2018 Plan enumerated a target number of 526 multi-family units for the Imperial Regional Activity Center. Though this number was based on existing zoning approvals at the time, no development/ redevelopment took place based on those zoning approvals because they were not market realistic. As such, staff and Puma have proposed an amendment to the Areas of Change section of the Land Use Plan in order to

ensure consistency between the Plan and the proposed zoning. The original Land Use Plan included 526 units, and the proposed amendment includes 1200. These changes will provide the City and Puma the flexibility needed to ensure the viability of the Char House reuse.

The Land Use Plan also identifies a target ratio of 88% single-family/ 12% multi-family housing. Even with the additional units proposed in the Imperial Regional Activity Center, Sugar Land continues to be largely single-family residential in nature. The current ratio of single-family housing to multi-family housing is 92.1% single family housing / 7.9% multi-family housing. With the projected build-out of the Imperial Regional Activity Center (addition of the new multi-family and single-family units in the Imperial Historic District project and build-out of existing vacant lots), the ratio would be 90% single family housing / 10% multi-family housing city-wide.

### **Economic Impacts of Land Use Decisions**



The City of Sugar Land is at a crossroads in our lifecycle and we need to reimagine what “growth” means. To stay relevant with a competitive edge, while also preserving the quality of life for current and future residents, we’ve got some choices to make. As mentioned above, as of 2021, only 4% of the City’s land remains undeveloped. We have to make the best use of the land we have remaining to sustain the revenues that maintain our high quality services and amenities.

The best way to optimize our remaining land for highest taxable value is to have mixed-use development. The City's 2018 Land Use Plan identifies five areas in the city, called Regional Activity Centers (RACs), to create walkable areas that have a mix of several land uses, including office space, entertainment, retail, hotels, civic areas, and residential. These are places where people can work, shop, eat and live all in one place. The key is having all of these elements together – the residential and then office and retail – because they have a cause-and-effect relationship, one creating demand for the other.

The Economic Development Department's primary mission is to attract "primary" jobs – jobs that produce goods and/or services for customers that are predominantly outside the community. These primary jobs then create demand for housing from employees moving into the community. The increase in households or individuals making up the community's population and therefore its buying power creates demand for retail and dining establishments. The combination of sales tax and property tax revenue generated by new employers housing and retail establishments is then used by the city to provide services and quality of life amenities to its residents. The city's services and quality of life amenities then serve as an attraction for more primary jobs beginning the cycle again. This cycle illustrates the dependence of jobs, population growth, land uses and revenues that keep a city moving and thriving.

An example of this cycle is Sugar Land's start as a company town. Imperial Sugar created jobs, and then homes and as it grew this economic engine was the corner stone of our community, our "company town", for generations. Sugar Land is still a "company town" serving as a major employment hub in the Houston region with over 70,000 jobs. However, with limited land remaining, our growth in terms of jobs and people has begun to slow. According to a workforce study conducted by EY in 2021, from 2015-2020 Sugar Land's workforce grew by 14.4 percent, twice the national average on a percentage basis, and an annual average growth of 4.1 percent. From 2014-2019 the population only grew 1.4 percent when previously assuming the annexations of 2017. The same report estimated future annual job creation to be 1.9 percent. Without a growing population, Sugar Land will not be able to complete the economic impact cycle, sustaining and creating new demand for new land uses, maintaining a quality workforce for future job attraction efforts and funding the City's high level of services.

### **Community Engagement & Outreach Efforts**

On Dec. 1, 2022, the City of Sugar Land publicly announced its commitment to preserve the iconic Imperial Char House and its partnership with Houston-based PUMA Development on redevelopment of the site. Since the announcement, city staff has taken great care to provide the public with engagement and feedback opportunities regarding the project. To date, staff has hosted two citywide town halls, attended numerous community meetings, and led a Sugar Land Leaders session dedicated to redevelopment.



Staff also heavily utilized digital platforms to engage residents - posting six times across eight social/non-social media platforms to educate residents on project and empower them to attend engagement opportunities and provide feedback. Between the time of this report and Dec. 1, 2022 the city's social sentiment tool, Zencity, shows 4,405 total comments made on digital media platforms either owned by the city or external sources (such as the news media) pertaining to the redevelopment of Imperial. Of those comments, 2,621 were positive, 222 were explicitly negative, and 1,562 were neutral in nature. This sentiment data also includes survey responses from residents who attended the two district town halls. Residents were asked to provide open-ended feedback in addition to letting us know to what extent they are excited about this proposal on a scale from 0 - Not at all, 10 - very much so. Finally, staff has received a total of 77 feedback forms since December, with 60% of those expressing support for the project with 51% of those positive respondents living within the RAC.

It's important to note that Zencity's sentiment collection is limited to public social media/digital platforms and so it was unable to collect data from private Facebook Groups, profiles, and Nextdoor. Nextdoor heavily limits the ability of local governments, like ours, to see or even respond to discourse that occurs outside of our agency page. This is why Nextdoor as a platform remains our biggest barrier to correcting misinformation within our community. From what we understand anecdotally, sentiment on Nextdoor skewed negative in response to several instances of misinformation with notable instances of residents pushing back on the negativity and attempts to correct the misinformation.

## **Public Hearing**

The Notice of Public Hearing was published in a newspaper of general circulation and on the City of Sugar Land's Internet Home Page. All property owners within 200' of the subject property were notified via mail and a courtesy sign was placed at the property. The public hearing notice included a link to an online form that can be submitted to provide comments in advance of the meeting. As of the date of this report, we have received 46 online public comment forms, which were provided to the Commission prior to this meeting. While we have received support for this project, especially from some of the surrounding communities, many of these public comment forms are responding to several instances of misinformation in the community.



## **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

### **PROPOSED REZONING FROM ORDINANCE NO. 1969 & ORDINANCE NO. 2036 TO GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – IMPERIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT AND PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE LAND USE PLAN**

**Planning and Zoning Commission Public Hearing 6:30 p.m., February 14, 2023**, City of Sugar Land City Council Chamber, 2700 Town Center Boulevard North, hosted via live stream at <http://www.sugarlandtx.gov/1238/SLTV-16-Live-Video> or <https://www.youtube.com/sugarlandtxgov/live>, and Sugar Land Comcast Subscribers can also tune-in on Channel 16, to hear all persons interested in the proposed rezoning for the Imperial Historic District General Development Plan and proposed Land Use Plan amendment for approximately 40 acres of land located along US 90-A, further described as 1.7540 acres being all of Reserve "D" Imperial Market, 19.154 acres being all of Reserve "A" Imperial Market, 0.470 acres being all of Reserve "C" Imperial Market, 9.334 acres out of a call 41.034 acre tract located in the S.M. Williams League, Abstract Number 97 in Fort Bend County, and 9.309 acres out of a call 12.916 acre tract located in the S.M. Williams League, Abstract Number 97 in Fort Bend County.

The proposed General Development Plan includes a list of uses, general development standards, and a general site layout plan, and also addresses unique site elements such as the preservation of historic buildings found on the site. The Land Use Plan identifies this area as part of the Imperial Regional Activity Center. It is envisioned to be a mixed-use, walkable area that draws people from around the region. Draft revisions to the Land Use Plan provide more general descriptions of the vision for the area and increase the anticipated number of multi-family units.

The agenda item for this meeting will be placed on the City of Sugar Land website at [www.sugarlandtx.gov](http://www.sugarlandtx.gov) under "Meeting Agendas" Planning and Zoning Commission no later than Friday, February 10, 2023. Request details or provide feedback on the proposed rezoning and proposed Land Use Plan amendment online at [www.sugarlandtx.gov/PublicHearingComment](http://www.sugarlandtx.gov/PublicHearingComment) or contact City of Sugar Land Planning & Development Services Department at (281) 275-2218.