



Neighborhood Listening Sessions

Summary Report

The Hill, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Sugar Land, has recently experienced an increase in houses being demolished and replaced with new, larger houses. Additionally, residents in recent years have voiced concerns regarding the changing character of the neighborhood. With that said, it is unknown how widespread these sentiments are and to what extent they reach within the community. The City Council initiated a project to engage the residents and property owners of The Hill and established a Hill Steering Committee made of residents and property owners in 2018. The purpose of this project is to engage The Hill residents and property owners to discuss if there is community interest in modifying the development standards or initiating other programs to help maintain the character of The Hill neighborhood. One of the first steps recommended by the Steering Committee was to hold a series of listening sessions for the neighborhood to come and learn about the project and start a community dialogue.

“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

Executive Summary

The City and The Hill Neighborhood Steering Committee hosted a series of three “Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” neighborhood listening sessions on Wednesday, November 14, Thursday, November 15, and Saturday, November 17, 2018. The purpose of these meetings was to have an open dialogue with the neighborhood and discuss if there is community interest in modifying development standards to maintain the existing character of the neighborhood.

The sessions were held at the Sugar Land Heritage Museum & Visitors Center on three different dates and times to give the community an opportunity to attend at their convenience. Notification of the listening sessions included 2 Nextdoor posts, 2 email blasts, and door hangers placed at each home within The Hill neighborhood.

The sessions consisted of a presentation and post-it note exercise facilitated by staff. Participants engaged in discussion via a post-it note exercise where they were asked to provide the top three items they liked most and liked least about The Hill neighborhood. The exercise helped spark discussion on the items that attendees thought would be important to stay the same and what needed to change. A common theme for each of the sessions was the community’s interest in maintaining the character of the neighborhood. However, they were unsure how involved the City should be in helping to maintain the character of the neighborhood.

The following report provides a summary of input received during each of the three sessions. Images of distributed marketing material and photos of responses can be found in the exhibits at the end of this report.

Neighborhood Listening Session Summary

Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for the Hill Neighborhood Listening Sessions Sugar Land Heritage Museum and Visitor Center		
Session #1 Wednesday, November 14, 2018 9:30am-11:00am	The Hill Residents and Property Owners Steering Committee Members City Staff	9 2 3
Session #2 Thursday, November 15, 2018 5:30pm-7:00pm	The Hill Residents and Property Owners Steering Committee Members City Staff	8, including 1 repeat attendee 3 2
Session #3 Saturday, November 17, 2018 9:30am-11:00am	The Hill Residents and Property Owners Steering Committee Members City Staff	11, including 2 repeat attendees 5 3
TOTAL	The Hill Residents and Property Owners	28, including 3 repeat attendees

Agenda:

- Welcome and sign in
- Presentation by Abigail Martinez (staff)
- Post-it note exercise and discussion

“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

Presentation and Discussion

To begin the session, Abigail Martinez thanked everyone for attending and did brief introductions of the Steering Committee and other staff members present. Then, attendees were asked to introduce themselves and provide their home or property street address in The Hill. Staff continued the presentation and provided some background information as to why the City initiated this project. The presentation moved on to cover the project purpose and approach to help attendees understand that this is the public engagement phase and no changes to the regulations will be made during this phase. Staff transitioned into discussion by asking the audience why they decided to attend the sessions. Discussion topics during all three sessions focused around the current zoning regulations and how there are no requirements in the City’s Development Code to build in a certain architecture style within The Hill neighborhood. Some attendees expressed concern over the size of the new homes while others thought they were nice additions to the neighborhood. To continue discussion, staff facilitated a post-it note exercise. A summary of the discussion from the exercise can be found in the following section.



Summary of Post-It Note Exercise:

The City asked attendees to write down three responses to each of the following questions:

- What do you like most about The Hill neighborhood that you would like to stay the same?
- What do you like least about The Hill neighborhood related to its physical characteristics that you would like to see change?

Staff then grouped the responses based on the overall theme such as architecture style, community, etc. Upon collecting and grouping all responses, staff went through each response and asked participants to elaborate. The exercise helped staff and those present visually see residents’ concerns.

The following are key takeaways for each of the sessions:

- Attendees value the tight-knit community and small town feel of The Hill.
- There is a concern that redevelopment will change The Hill neighborhood and make it lose its unique character. During discussion, attendees provided The Heights neighborhood and Bellaire as examples of what they feared The Hill could become.
- Attendees acknowledge that the older homes add value and character to The Hill neighborhood. However, they realize that some homes have not been maintained properly, and in some cases, it would be cost prohibitive to restore them.
- Attendees indicated they like that The Hill is one of the few communities without an HOA and do not want to see one in the future.

Attendees also brought up concerns about things such as traffic and drainage. However, staff clarified that those type of concerns were outside the scope of this project.

“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

Reponses received for each question at each of the three sessions are documented below. Please refer to Exhibit A for images of responses.

Session #1 Wednesday, November 14, 2018 9:30am-11:00am	
What do you like most about The Hill neighborhood that you would like to stay the same?	
House Architecture Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Style of homes • Arts & Crafts architecture style • Architectural design
Neighborhood Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable spacing of homes, not crowded • Larger lots, houses not as close together • Single family residences only • Area location • Walkability • Neighborhood School
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old fashioned feel • Hometown feel • Look of neighborhood • Small town feel • Neighbors • Family quaint
Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature trees • Mature trees • Lots of trees
HOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No deed restrictions; no HOA • No HOA's • No HOA
What do you like least about The Hill neighborhood related to its physical characteristics that you would like to see change?	
New Homes/ Demolitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictions on building – would like to see new homes meet architecture style • Worry it will become a West University with demolitions • Guideline with City – not same (different)
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much traffic – block Burney Rd between Harman and Jess Pirtle as solution • Traffic on Main St • No road bumps • Wood St railroad crossing closed (I realize that's not a City issue)
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage, city pipes • Better water pressure • Flooding, water drainage
Additional Shops	<p><i>Staff clarified attendee responses. Responses did not mean to say that homes should be replaced with shops. They would like to see shops near the neighborhood.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wouldn't mind a few more stores facing 90 where the metal buildings were • Not many stores – would love to see mom and pop shops in walking distance
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cats running freely

“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

Session #2 Thursday, November 15, 2018 5:30pm-7:00pm	
What do you like most about The Hill neighborhood that you would like to stay the same?	
House Architecture Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older, original homes • We're not all "cookie-cutter" homes
Neighborhood Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cyclone fences in backyards • Gravel driveways • Style – porches, bungalows • Old style street lights • Keep the bridge
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inherently peaceful – close to freeway/but not too close • The safe feeling • Small-town feel • The peace and quiet
HOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No HOA
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't widen Main St
What do you like least about The Hill neighborhood related to its physical characteristics that you would like to see change?	
New Homes/ Demolitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The north side of Lakeview should be zoned HR-1 like the rest of The Hill • No two-story houses • All future houses to comply with neighborhood theme/style • Big houses out of character with neighborhood
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High speed driving on my street • Main street is so busy
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That some properties are not kept up

“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

Session #3 Saturday, November 17, 2018 9:30am-11:00am	
What do you like most about The Hill neighborhood that you would like to stay the same?	
House Architecture Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character • Historic character • Home are cottage-style with porches • I like the historic “look” of the bungalows • Like old style houses • I like the old houses • Homes 1-2 story • Homes aren’t over-built • Style (character) • Love the look of the older homes • Houses are right sized for the lot • Siding/brick/stone homes • Well-cared for homes • Character of homes
Neighborhood Characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open (unfenced) front yards • Walkability • Walkable sidewalks • Few (if any) regulations implemented
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old town charm • Quiet • Old town field • Great place to raise kids (i.e. parks, schools within walking distance) • Neighbors
Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like all the trees
HOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No HOA • No HOA’s • No HOA
What do you like least about The Hill neighborhood related to its physical characteristics that you would like to see change?	
New Homes/ Demolitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New homes too big • I think some of the new construction is too large/modern • New homes too tall • Don’t like the houses that look out of place • There is one new home on Main St that seems too large for lot size – out of character • I don’t like the new construction that doesn’t look old. It doesn’t look like it belongs. • Too many tear downs and not being rebuilt on • Houses that don’t match the original style from 20’s/30’s • Houses covering too much lot • I don’t like the lack of trees and yard space in some new construction
Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic • Double yellow line on Lakeview Dr – promotes speeding, violates our ability to enter/exit driveways • Too much traffic on Main St and Wood St
Neighborhood Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yellow street lamps • Sidewalk damage
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power line placement

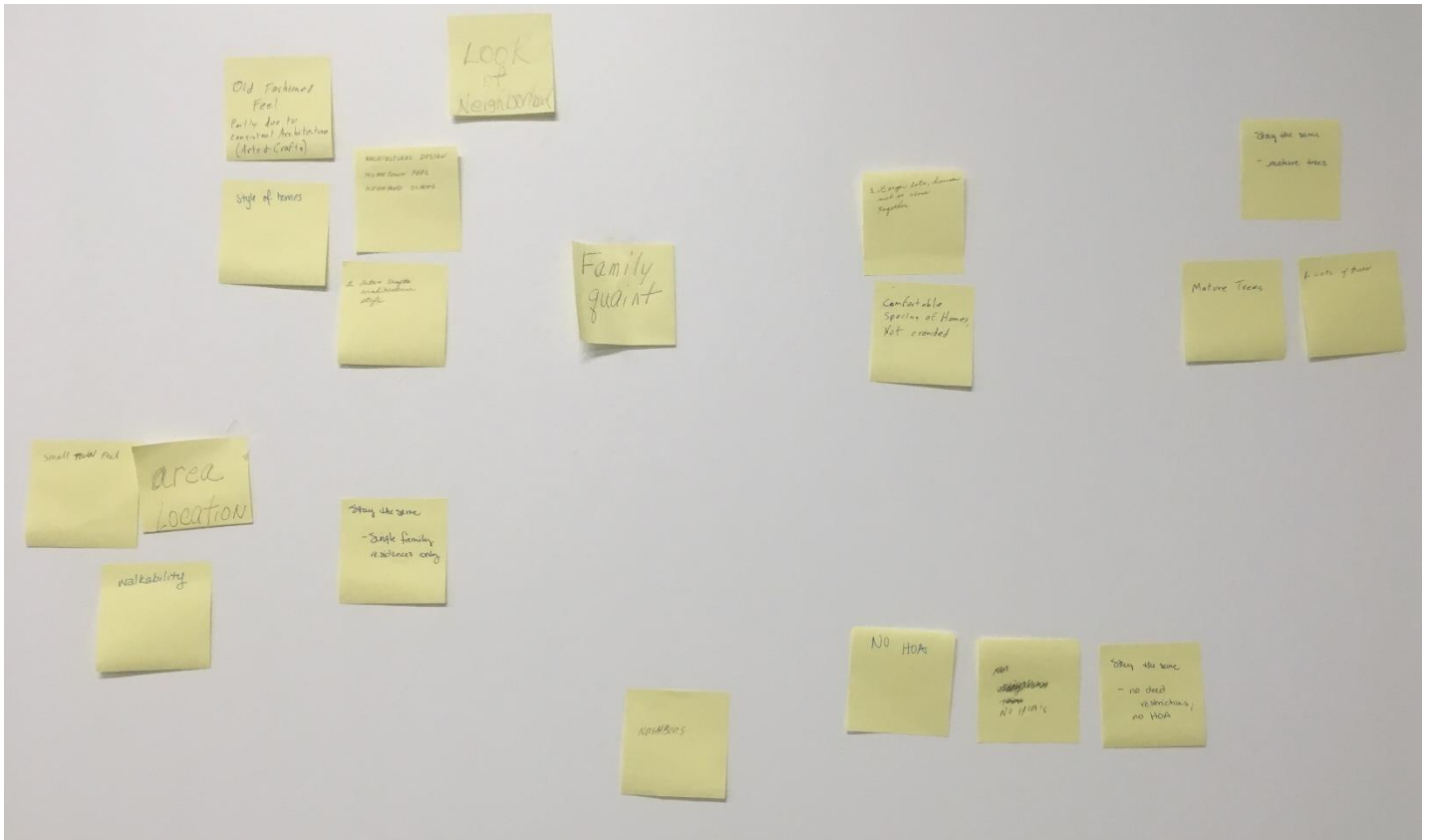
“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

EXHIBIT A: Photos of Listening Sessions

Attendees participated in a post-it note exercise facilitated by City Staff. During check-in, attendees were given yellow and blue post-it notes to write their responses. Yellow post-it notes corresponded to what residents and property owners liked most and would like to see stay the same about The Hill while blue post-it notes corresponded to what they liked least and would like to see change. The following photos show the responses received and photos of the audience during presentation and discussion.

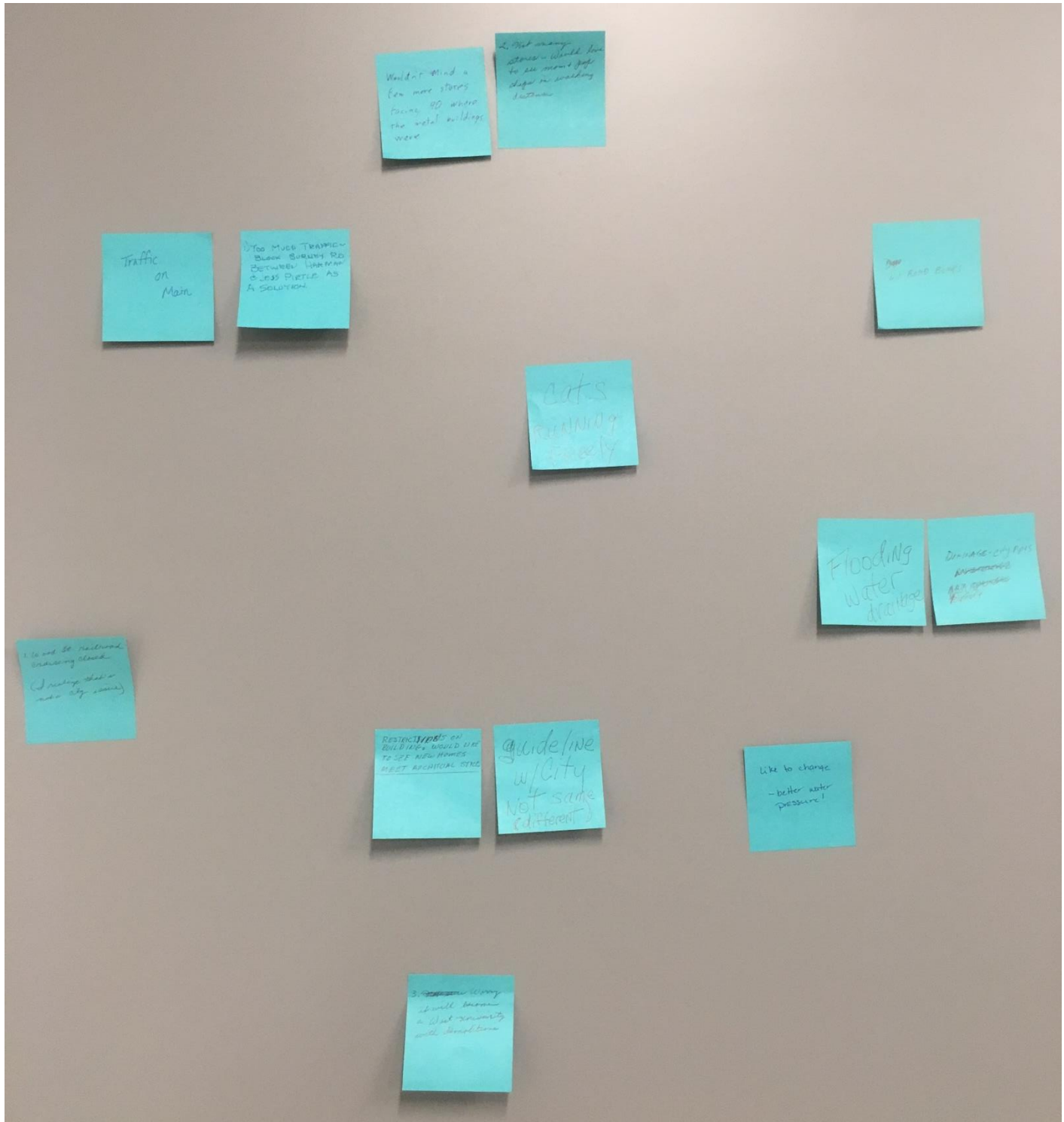
Session #1 Wednesday, November 14, 2018 9:30am-11:00am

What do you like most about The Hill neighborhood that you would like to stay the same?



"Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill" Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

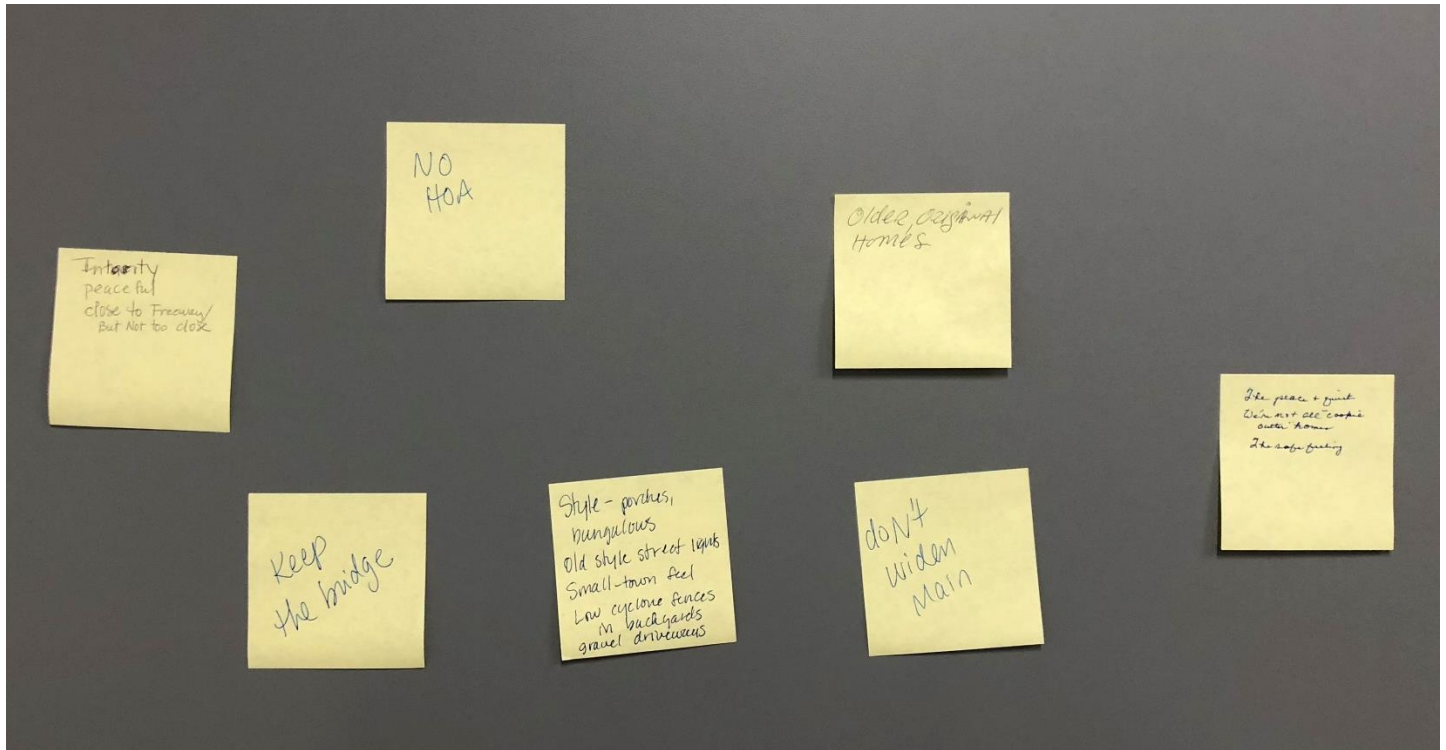
What do you like least about The Hill neighborhood related to its physical characteristics that you would like to see change?



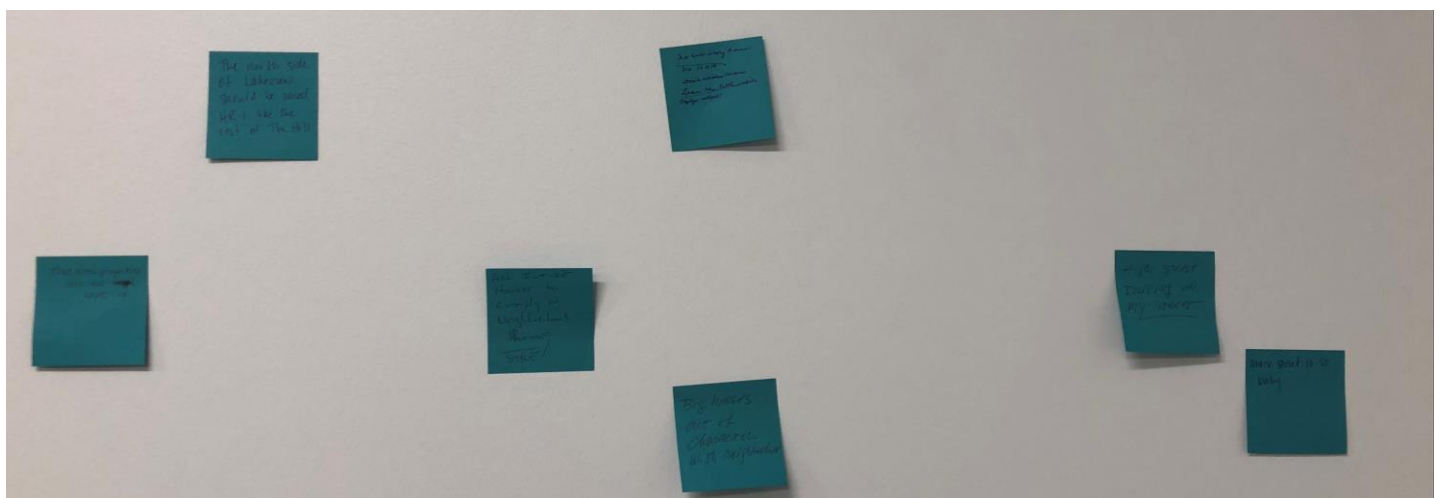
“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

Session #2 Thursday, November 15, 2018 5:30pm -7:00pm

What do you like most about The Hill neighborhood that you would like to stay the same?



What do you like least about The Hill neighborhood related to its physical characteristics that you would like to see change?



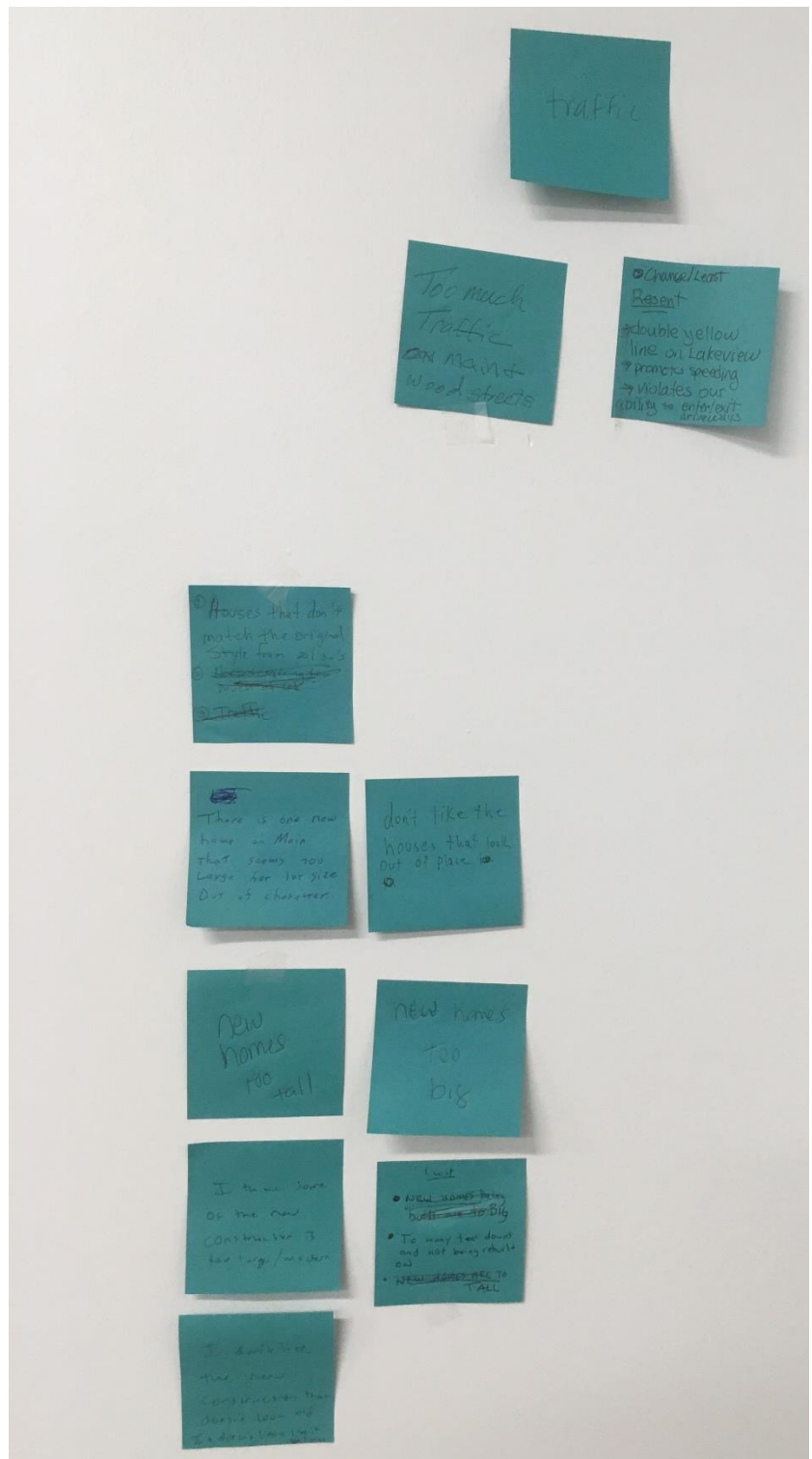
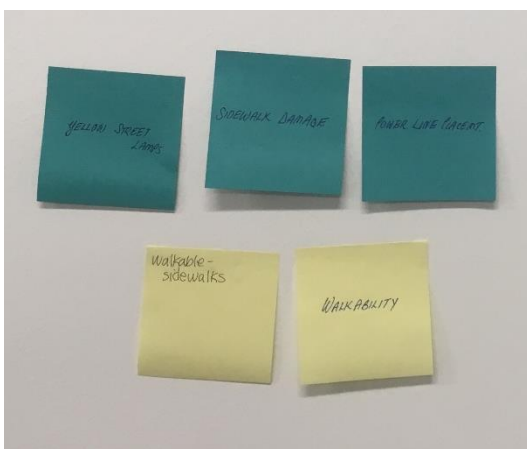
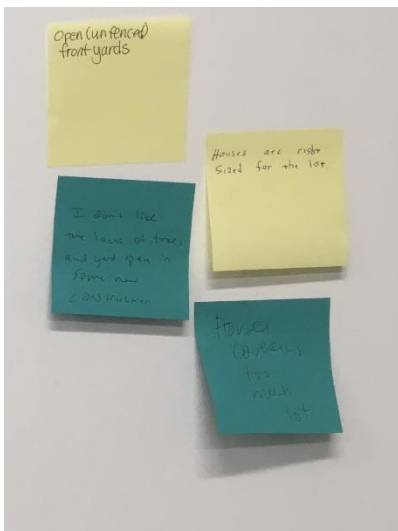
“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

Session #2 photos during presentation and discussion.



“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

What do you like least about The Hill neighborhood related to its physical characteristics that you would like to see change?



“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

Session #3 photos after presentation and discussion.



“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report



“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

EXHIBIT B: Door Hanger Distributed to Homes in The Hill Neighborhood

FRONT



The front of the door hanger features a large white circle at the top. Below it, the text "Connecting Over Coffee" is written in a script font, with a coffee cup icon in the center. Below this, the words "VISION for THE HILL" are displayed in a bold, sans-serif font, with "VISION" and "THE HILL" in all caps and "for" in lowercase. The background is a solid brown color.

Wednesday, Nov. 14, 9:30-11 a.m.
Thursday, Nov. 15, 5:30-7 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 17, 9:30-11 a.m.

**Sugar Land Heritage Museum
& Visitor Center**

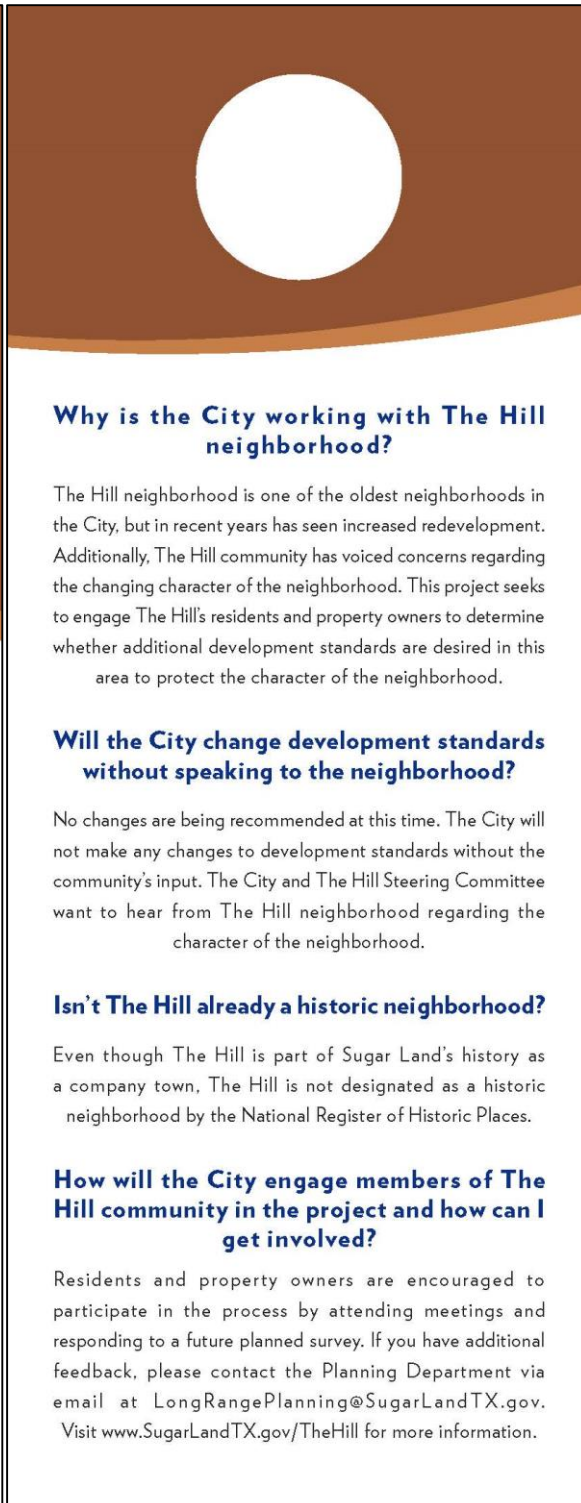
198 Kempner St., Bldg. B on the 2nd Floor

The City of Sugar Land and The Hill Neighborhood Steering Committee invite The Hill community to a series of listening-session meetings to discuss your vision for the character of your neighborhood. We want to know if there is community interest in discussing modifications to the development standards to maintain the existing character. No changes to the standards are being proposed at this time—we're looking to you to tell us if you want changes. For more information, please contact the Planning Department at 281-275-2218 or LongRangePlanning@SugarLandTX.gov, or visit the project webpage at www.SugarLandTX.gov/TheHill.



CITY OF SUGAR LAND

BACK



The back of the door hanger features a large white circle at the top. Below it, the text "Why is the City working with The Hill neighborhood?" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. The background is a solid brown color.

Why is the City working with The Hill neighborhood?

The Hill neighborhood is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the City, but in recent years has seen increased redevelopment. Additionally, The Hill community has voiced concerns regarding the changing character of the neighborhood. This project seeks to engage The Hill's residents and property owners to determine whether additional development standards are desired in this area to protect the character of the neighborhood.

Will the City change development standards without speaking to the neighborhood?

No changes are being recommended at this time. The City will not make any changes to development standards without the community's input. The City and The Hill Steering Committee want to hear from The Hill neighborhood regarding the character of the neighborhood.

Isn't The Hill already a historic neighborhood?

Even though The Hill is part of Sugar Land's history as a company town, The Hill is not designated as a historic neighborhood by the National Register of Historic Places.

How will the City engage members of The Hill community in the project and how can I get involved?

Residents and property owners are encouraged to participate in the process by attending meetings and responding to a future planned survey. If you have additional feedback, please contact the Planning Department via email at LongRangePlanning@SugarLandTX.gov. Visit www.SugarLandTX.gov/TheHill for more information.

"Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill" Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

EXHIBIT C: Next Door Posts

Next Door Post #1 – published Friday, Nov. 2, 2018



Publications Manager Alexi Holford, City of Sugar Land AGENCY



Neighborhood Listening Sessions

The City of Sugar Land invites The Hill community to our "Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill" neighborhood listening sessions to discuss your vision for the character of your neighborhood.

Wednesday, Nov. 14, 9:30-11 a.m.

Thursday, Nov. 15, 5:30-7 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 17, 9:30-11 a.m.

Sugar Land Heritage Museum & Visitor Center
198 Kempner St, Bldg B – 2nd Floor

We want to know if there is community interest in discussing modifications to the development standards to maintain the existing character. No changes to the standards are being proposed at this time - we're looking to you to tell us if you want changes. For more information, please contact the Planning Department at 281-275-2218 or longrangeplanning@sugarlandtx.gov or visit the project webpage at www.sugarlandtx.gov/TheHill.



The Hill Community Engagement | Sugar Land, TX - Official Website

The Hill Community Engagement project seeks to engage with residents and property owners of
SUGARLANDTX.GOV

Just now · Subscribers of City of Sugar Land in 1 neighborhood

“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

EXHIBIT C: Next Door Posts

Next Door Post #2 – published Monday, Nov. 12, 2018



Publications Manager Alexi Holford, [City of Sugar Land](#) AGENCY



Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill

Don't miss the “Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” neighborhood listening sessions to discuss your vision for the character of your neighborhood. In spite of the weather, the sessions will still be held on the following dates:

Wednesday, Nov. 14, 9:30-11 a.m.

Thursday, Nov. 15, 5:30-7 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 17, 9:30-11:00am

Sugar Land Heritage Museum & Visitor Center
198 Kempner St, Bldg B – 2nd Floor

We want to know if there is community interest in discussing modifications to the development standards to maintain the existing character. No changes to the standards are being proposed at this time - we're looking to you to tell us if you want changes. For more information, please contact the Planning Department at 281-275-2218 or longrangeplanning@sugarlandtx.gov or visit the project webpage at www.sugarlandtx.gov/TheHill.



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“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

EXHIBIT D: Email Blast – sent to Friends of Old Sugar Land group Friday, November 2, 2018

Subject: The Hill Neighborhood Listening Sessions - Please share with your neighbors



The City of Sugar Land and The Hill Neighborhood Steering Committee invite The Hill community to our “Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” neighborhood listening sessions. The purpose of these sessions is to have an open dialogue with The Hill neighborhood and to discuss your vision for the character of your neighborhood. We want to know if there is community interest in discussing modifications to the development standards to maintain the existing character. No changes to the standards are being proposed at this time - we’re looking to you to tell us if you want changes.

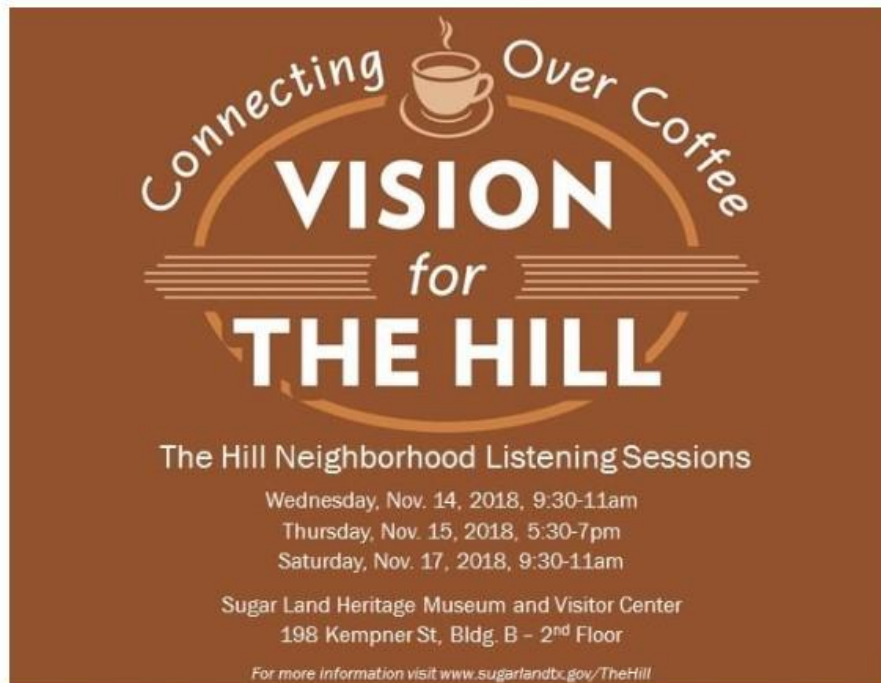
The Hill community may attend any one of the following sessions held at the Sugar Land Heritage Museum & Visitor Center (198 Kempner St, Building B – 2nd Floor) on:

Wednesday, Nov. 14, 9:30-11:00am
Thursday, Nov. 15, 5:30-7pm
Saturday, Nov. 17, 9:30-11:00am

For more information, please contact the Planning Department at 281-275-2218 or longrangeplanning@sugarlandtx.gov, or visit the project webpage at www.sugarlandtx.gov/TheHill.

“Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” Neighborhood Listening Sessions Summary Report

EXHIBIT D: Email Blast 2 – sent to email group of residents and property owners Monday, November 5, 2018



The City of Sugar Land and The Hill Neighborhood Steering Committee invite The Hill community to our “Connecting Over Coffee – Vision for The Hill” neighborhood listening sessions. The purpose of these sessions is to have an open dialogue with The Hill neighborhood and to discuss your vision for the character of your neighborhood. We want to know if there is community interest in discussing modifications to the development standards to maintain the existing character. No changes to the standards are being proposed at this time - we're looking to you to tell us if you want changes.

The Hill community may attend any one of the following sessions held at the Sugar Land Heritage Museum & Visitor Center (198 Kempner St, Building B – 2nd Floor) on:

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Thursday, Nov. 15, 5:30-7pm
Saturday, Nov. 17, 9:30-11:00am

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