



What We Heard Summary: Visioning Workshop Series

The City hosted a series of four visioning workshops to hear from residents, property owners, business owners, and others with an interest in the Harvey District. Participants were asked to identify the district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and concerns, share ideas on a map, and describe what they would like the Harvey District to become in the future. Across the four workshops, 252 written comments and 106 map comments were recorded. While participants brought different perspectives to the discussion, several themes appeared repeatedly across the workshop series.

Overall Message

Participants generally did not describe the Harvey District as a place that needs to be completely reinvented. Instead, input reflected a desire to build on the things that already make the district useful and valued while addressing aging properties, mobility challenges, safety concerns, and opportunities for reinvestment. Parks and trails, affordable housing, local businesses, restaurants, shopping, services, and the district's central location were frequently identified as assets. At the same time, participants saw opportunities to create a district that is safer, greener, better connected, more attractive, and more inviting as a place to spend time, not simply travel through.

Parks, Trails, and Green Space Are Major Assets

Wolf Pen Creek Park and Trail, Oaks Park, Merry Oaks Park, and other green spaces were among the most consistently identified strengths. Participants valued these places for recreation, community activity, and their environmental benefits. Many comments focused on leveraging these assets through better trail connections, additional trees and shade, green infrastructure, expanded or improved park spaces, and stronger connections between parks and nearby destinations. Participants also identified opportunities for more programming, gathering spaces, and recreational activities.

Keep the Mix of Businesses, Services, and Housing People Already Value

Participants frequently mentioned the district's variety of restaurants, locally owned businesses, entertainment options, stores, services, and everyday destinations as strengths. Several specific businesses were identified as places participants regularly use and want to see remain successful. Affordable housing was also repeatedly identified as an important asset. Participants expressed interest in improving the condition of aging



apartment properties while maintaining housing options that remain accessible to existing residents. Comments emphasized that reinvestment should strengthen the district without unnecessarily displacing residents, businesses, or customers. Participants also called attention to the district's diverse and international population and the importance of considering residents who may not typically participate in planning processes.

Make It Safer and Easier to Get Around

Mobility was one of the strongest recurring themes. Participants raised concerns about traffic, access to businesses, pedestrian and bicycle safety, crossings, disconnected trails, and connections between nearby destinations. Ideas included additional or improved crosswalks, safer midblock crossings, stronger bicycle connections, better trail connectivity, improved transit, and creating internal connections between shopping centers so that every short trip does not require returning to Harvey Road. At the same time, some participants identified convenient automobile access and ample parking as existing strengths they would like to maintain. The input suggests an interest in improving transportation choices without losing the convenience that currently attracts people to the area.

Reinvest in Aging and Underused Properties

Aging buildings, deteriorating apartment properties, dated facades, vacant storefronts, large parking lots, and underused commercial properties were frequently identified as weaknesses. The Post Oak Mall area, including the former Macy's space, emerged as both a significant concern and one of the district's largest opportunities. Participants suggested a wide variety of possibilities, including mixed-use development, entertainment and event space, new restaurants, hotels, community facilities, youth activities, and stronger connections to Wolf Pen Creek. Participants also recognized practical challenges, including property ownership, development feasibility, parking needs, and market conditions. Rather than pointing to one preferred redevelopment concept, the comments suggest strong interest in exploring how the mall and surrounding properties could evolve over time.

Create a Greener, Cooler, and More Attractive District

Participants repeatedly discussed trees, shade, landscaping, urban heat, and the large amount of paved surface throughout the district. Ideas included adding street trees and shade structures, reducing unnecessary asphalt, incorporating green infrastructure,



improving landscaping, and using parks and vegetation to help reduce heat. Participants also expressed interest in improving building facades, lighting, signage, and the overall appearance of the district. These comments connected environmental improvements with quality of life: a greener district was also described as one that would be more comfortable and inviting for walking, gathering, and spending time outdoors.

Create More Reasons to Stay, Gather, and Spend Time

Participants saw opportunities for the Harvey District to become more of a destination and community gathering place. Suggested amenities included community event spaces, youth facilities, arts and entertainment, live music, recreational activities, senior-friendly destinations, restaurants, and other places where people could gather. Participants also discussed branding, public spaces, and stronger connections between parks, businesses, neighborhoods, and other community destinations. Rather than a single large attraction, the input points toward creating a district with more places to meet, explore, recreate, shop, eat, and spend time throughout the day.

Reinvestment Should Improve Quality of Life

Participants expressed both enthusiasm about reinvestment and concern about its potential effects. Housing affordability and displacement were recurring topics, along with the possibility that existing businesses or customers could be priced out as the area changes. Participants emphasized that decisions about the district should consider community value in addition to economic value. Several comments focused specifically on improving aging affordable housing rather than simply replacing it and on finding ways to encourage or assist property owners in maintaining and upgrading existing properties.

A Future Harvey District: Safe, Affordable, Green, Connected, and Community-Oriented

When participants were asked to describe their vision for the future, several ideas appeared repeatedly. Safety and community were especially prominent, along with affordability, walkability, greenery, vibrancy, resilience, and creating a destination.

Taken together, the workshop input suggests a future Harvey District that:

- Builds on its parks, trails, businesses, services, housing, and existing community;
- Is safer and easier to navigate by foot, bicycle, transit, and automobile;
- Supports reinvestment in aging commercial and residential properties;
- Preserves opportunities for affordable housing and existing businesses;
- Provides more trees, shade, landscaping, and comfortable public spaces;



- Creates stronger connections between neighborhoods, parks, shopping areas, and community destinations; and
- Offers more places for people of different ages and backgrounds to gather, recreate, shop, eat, and spend time.

Location-Based Input

The mapping activity helped identify where many of the broader workshop themes are most visible within the district. Comments were especially concentrated around Post Oak Mall, Harvey Road and its major intersections, Wolf Pen Creek and nearby parks, older multifamily areas, and commercial centers along the corridor.

Post Oak Mall emerged as the most frequently identified opportunity area. Participants suggested reinvestment in the mall and surrounding properties, improved parking and circulation, additional retail and entertainment, community and recreational uses, more trees and landscaping, and stronger connections to Wolf Pen Creek and neighboring commercial areas. While participants offered many different ideas for what the mall could become, there was a consistent interest in seeing the area become more active, attractive, connected, and useful to the broader community.

Transportation comments focused heavily on access to businesses and destinations along Harvey Road. Participants identified concerns with medians, turning movements, traffic queues, and limited connections between adjacent properties. Walking and bicycling comments similarly identified gaps in sidewalks, crossings, bicycle facilities, shade, and connections between residential areas, commercial destinations, and parks.

Parks and trails were frequently marked as assets to retain and strengthen. Participants identified opportunities to improve lighting, maintenance, signage, programming, and connections to Wolf Pen Creek and neighborhood parks. In residential areas, comments emphasized improving aging multifamily properties while maintaining affordability and providing better access to shade, recreation, and safe walking routes.

Participants also identified existing places they would like to preserve, including local businesses, restaurants, transit connections, residential areas, sorority row, mature trees, and Wolf Pen Creek Park. Taken together, the map comments reinforce a broader workshop message: focus reinvestment where conditions are aging or connections are weak while protecting the places, businesses, housing options, and community assets people already value.