

# Bellaire Comprehensive Plan

## *Joint Workshop 2:* PLAN DIRECTION

August 15, 2023



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C O L L A B O R A T I V E



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**Architect and**  
**Senior Urban Designer**



# PHASES and TIMELINE



May -  
June

## Early Engagement

- **WORKSHOP 1: Issues and Needs**
- Early round of outreach activities
- Forum on Bellaire's Future

July -  
Aug

## Bellaire Today / Plan Direction

- Community survey
- Bellaire Today Report
- Plan Direction presentation
- **WORKSHOP 2: Plan Direction**

Sep -  
Oct

## Bellaire Tomorrow

- P&Z work sessions, further outreach
- Drafts of updated plan content
- Results of regulatory evaluation
- **2<sup>nd</sup> round of outreach activities**

Nov -  
Feb  
2024

## Plan Implementation

- New Action Agenda portion of plan
- Open House and further outreach
- **WORKSHOP 3: Overall Draft Plan**
- Public hearings and adoption

Word of the Day

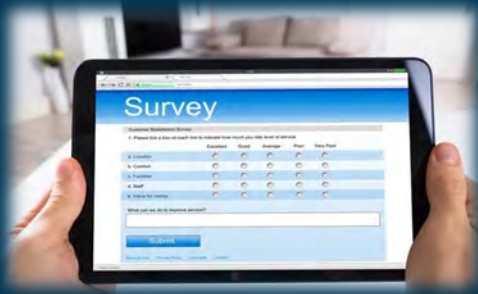
TRIAGE



# HIGHLIGHTS TONIGHT

WE  
ARE  
HERE

## Bellaire Today Report



## Community Survey Results



## Regulatory Evaluation

# Top Take-Aways

WE  
ARE  
HERE

**Is Bellaire destined to be a mostly middle-age demographic?**



**Where will the consensus be on preferred development character?**



**What extent of changes are needed in Chapter 24 to better sync with community desires?**



# Engagement So Far ...

## 2

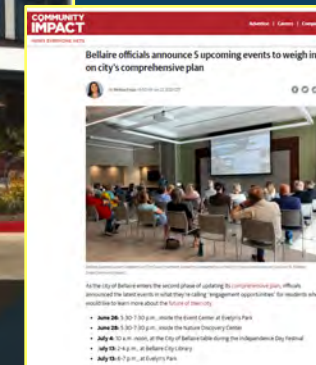
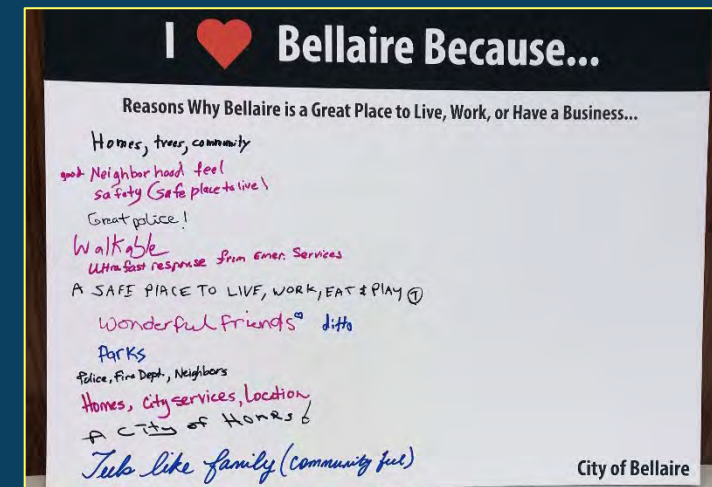
## Resident Listening Sessions

CenterPoint Community Center  
May 23-24

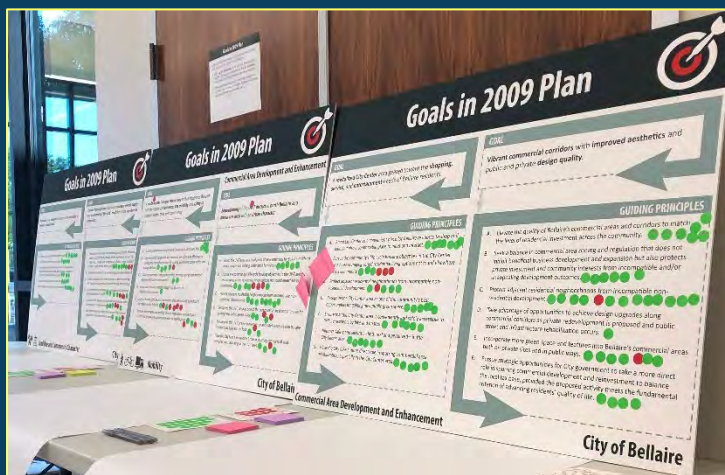




# Engagement So Far ...



June 13





# Engagement So Far ...

3

## Resident Meetings



EVELYN'S  
PARK

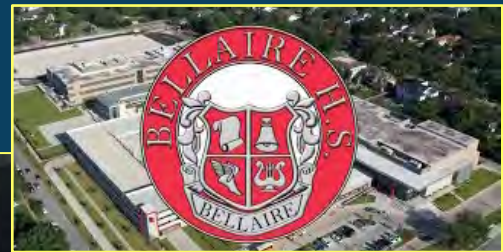


June 26

July 12



June 28





# Engagement So Far ...



July 13

## 2 Organization Events



July 13



# Engagement So Far ...

# 4

## Business Meetings



3 Listening Sessions  
May 23-24, June 14



Realtors Session  
June 14





# Engagement So Far ...

3

Out-and-About  
Interactions



July 13



July 13

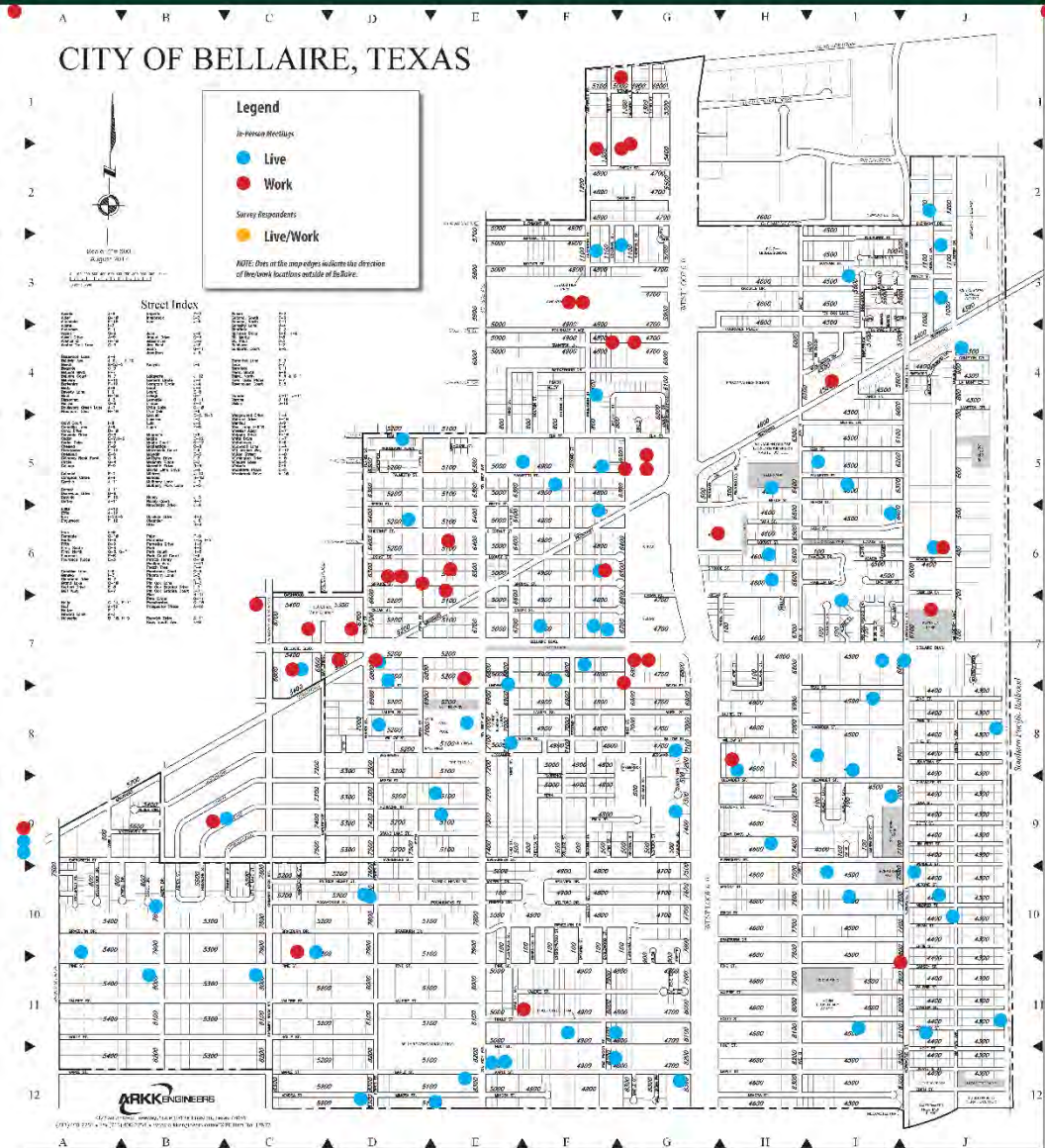


Betsy's





# Where You Live / Work



City of Bellaire

## Legend

*In-Person Meetings*

Live

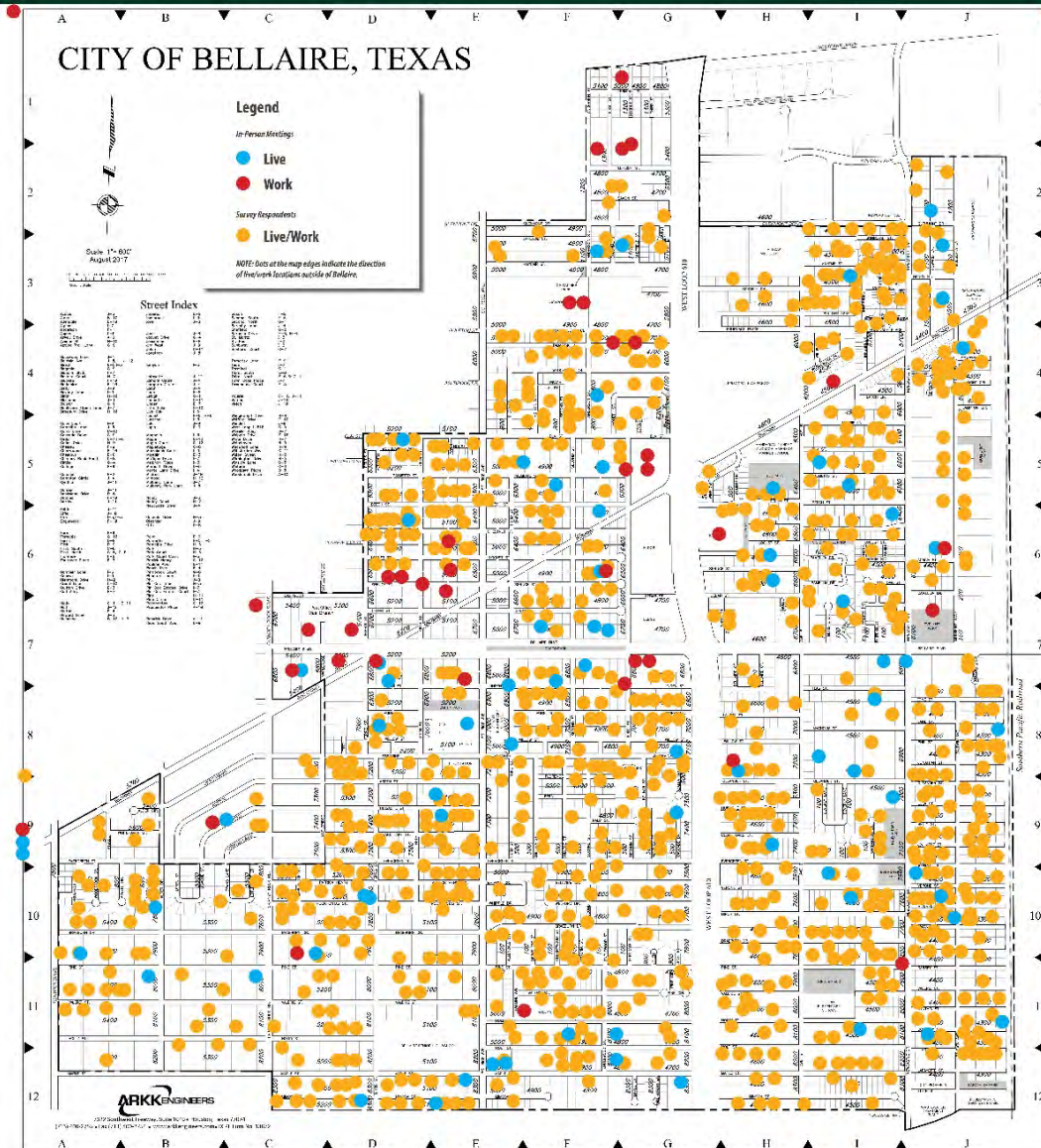
Work

*Survey Respondents*

Live/Work

**NOTE: Dots at the map edges indicate the direction of live/work locations outside of Bellaire.**

# Where You Live / Work



City of Bellaire

## Legend

*In-Person Meetings*

Live

Work

*Survey Respondents*

Live/Work

*NOTE: Dots at the map edges indicate the direction of live/work locations outside of Bellaire.*



## Bellaire Today Report

### 2023 Comprehensive Plan Review

#### INTRODUCTION

This report provides background information about Bellaire as it is today. This information is presented in topic areas relevant to Bellaire's ongoing focus on being a place that is attractive for living, working, investing and boosting one's quality of life.

The report is intended to avoid duplication of existing data profiles about Bellaire already available from other sources. Instead, the facts and figures in this report highlight specific indicators that tell a story about key planning issues facing the community and help put such issues in context. This will set the stage for the Bellaire Tomorrow portion of an updated Comprehensive Plan by capturing key community needs and desires for the next several decades. The content of this Bellaire Today report is based on initial background studies to date by the City's community planning consultant, Kendig Keast Collaborative (of Sugar Land, Texas) as well as leadership and community input to this point.

#### Existing City and Future City

Along with a first round of intensive leadership and community engagement, the comprehensive planning process focuses first on providing a snapshot of existing conditions, culminating in this Bellaire Today report. The report includes highlights of Bellaire's history, location and physical characteristics and summarizes current demographic composition and trends. A summary of key indicators, from the latest available U.S. Census data and other sources, illustrates historical and current conditions and provides context relevant to the rest of the planning effort.

#### Report Organization

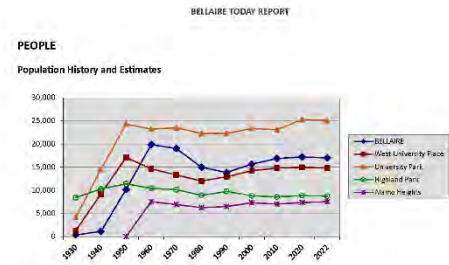
After an initial section on Community Milestones and Heritage, the information in this report is presented in the following topic areas relevant to the City's Comprehensive Plan for guiding Bellaire's future physical development, redevelopment and enhancement:

- People
- Housing
- Work Life
- Transportation
- Public Infrastructure, Facilities and Services

#### Comparison Communities

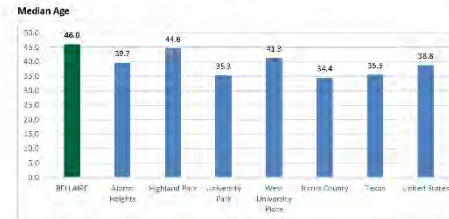
While the focus of this report is Bellaire's existing conditions, it can be helpful to benchmark local data points against other communities and geographies to provide additional context. In this report, a handful of other Texas "enclave" cities – relatively small, incorporated communities surrounded by other jurisdictions within a much larger metropolitan area – were used for comparison of certain data points, along with some comparisons to all of Harris County, the State of Texas and the nation:

- Alamo Heights in the San Antonio area;
- Highland Park and University Park in the Dallas area; and
- West University Place adjacent to Bellaire in the Houston area.



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau.

- 16,991 is the newest available population estimate for Bellaire, from July 2022.
- 17,202 was Bellaire's Census 2020 count, up from 16,855 in 2010 (2.1% growth) and 15,642 in 2000 (10% growth from 2000 to 2020).

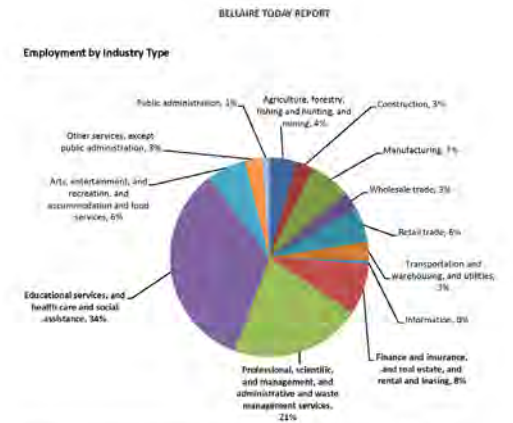


SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates (Table S0101).

- An estimated median age of 46 years in 2021 made Bellaire the highest among the comparison geographies.
- This was up from a median age of 41.6 years in Census 2010, when Texas had a median age of 33.6 years.

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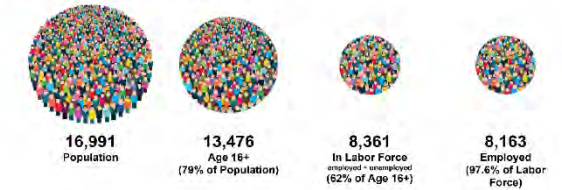
SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates (Table DP03).

- The chart above shows that, for Bellaire's civilian employed population 16 years and over in 2021, nearly two-thirds (63%) were working in the three industry sectors with bold labels on the chart.
- This was effectively unchanged from an estimated 62% share in 2012, although the Education/Health Care/Social Services category has increased its leading share from 28% to 34%.
- By comparison, for the employed population statewide, the Education/Health Care/Social Services category also employed the most workers but with a lower 21% share, followed by Professional/Scientific/Management at 12.5%. Next highest for all of Texas were Retail Trade (11.7%), Manufacturing (8.7%), Construction (8.5%) and Arts/Entertainment/Recreation (8.3%).

#### BELLAIRE TODAY REPORT

#### WORK LIFE

##### Labor Force Participation and Employment

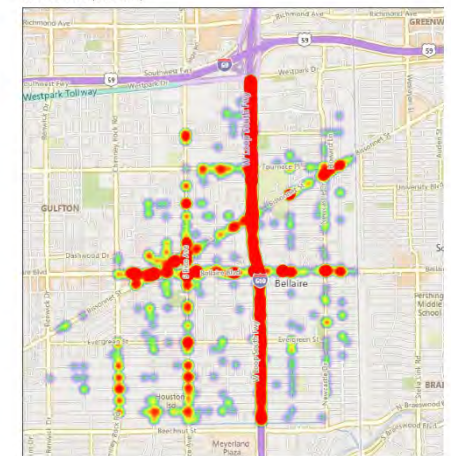


SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates (Table DP03).

- Of the estimated 2021 Bellaire population that was age 16 or over, 62% were participating in the labor force by working or actively seeking work – and nearly 98% of those were employed, indicating a very low unemployment rate at the time. Likely reflecting an aging population since, Bellaire's labor force number was higher in 2010 at 9,081 (from roughly the same total population size), with 8,747 of those individuals employed.
- Bellaire's 2021 labor force participation rate was nearly identical to 63% nationwide, but Harris County at the time had a higher participation rate of 67%, and statewide was 64.6%.

#### BELLAIRE TODAY REPORT

##### Crash Locations (2017-2022)



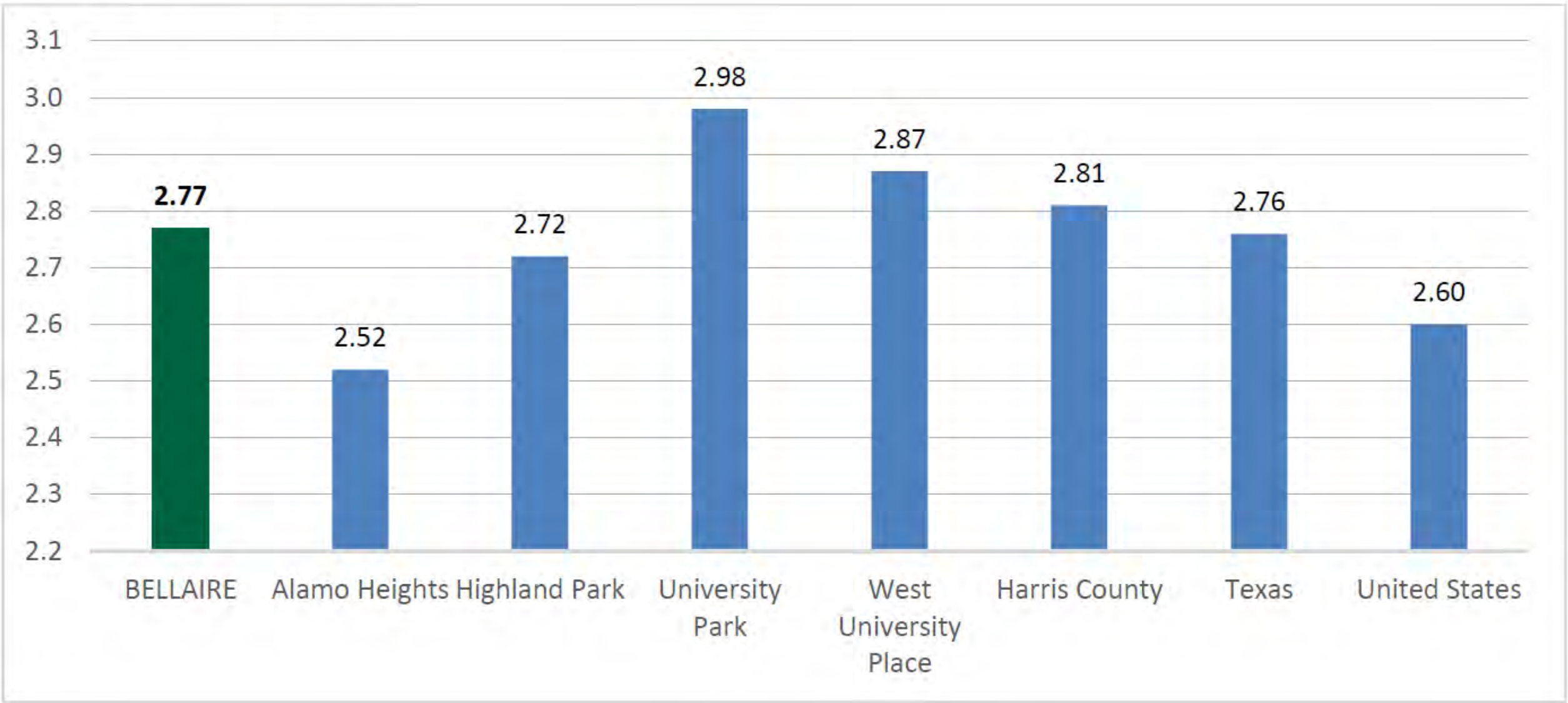
SOURCE: Texas Department of Transportation - Crash Records Information System.

- The "heat map" visualization above depicts concentrations of crashes between 2017 and 2022 on West Loop 610, along major roads and at other locations in Bellaire. The map reflects 3,748 crashes documented in the system during these years. The Bellaire Police Department reported responding to investigate 551 crash scenes in 2021 and 437 in 2020.
- Aside from the obvious crash risk and frequency on Loop 610, a next tier of "hot spot" locations were along Bellaire Boulevard and Bissonnet Street, especially where they intersect in Bellaire's west side City Center area. A third level of crash frequency was along S. Rice Avenue (including in the Bellaire High School vicinity), Fourmile just west of Loop 610, and along Chimney Rock in southwest Bellaire.

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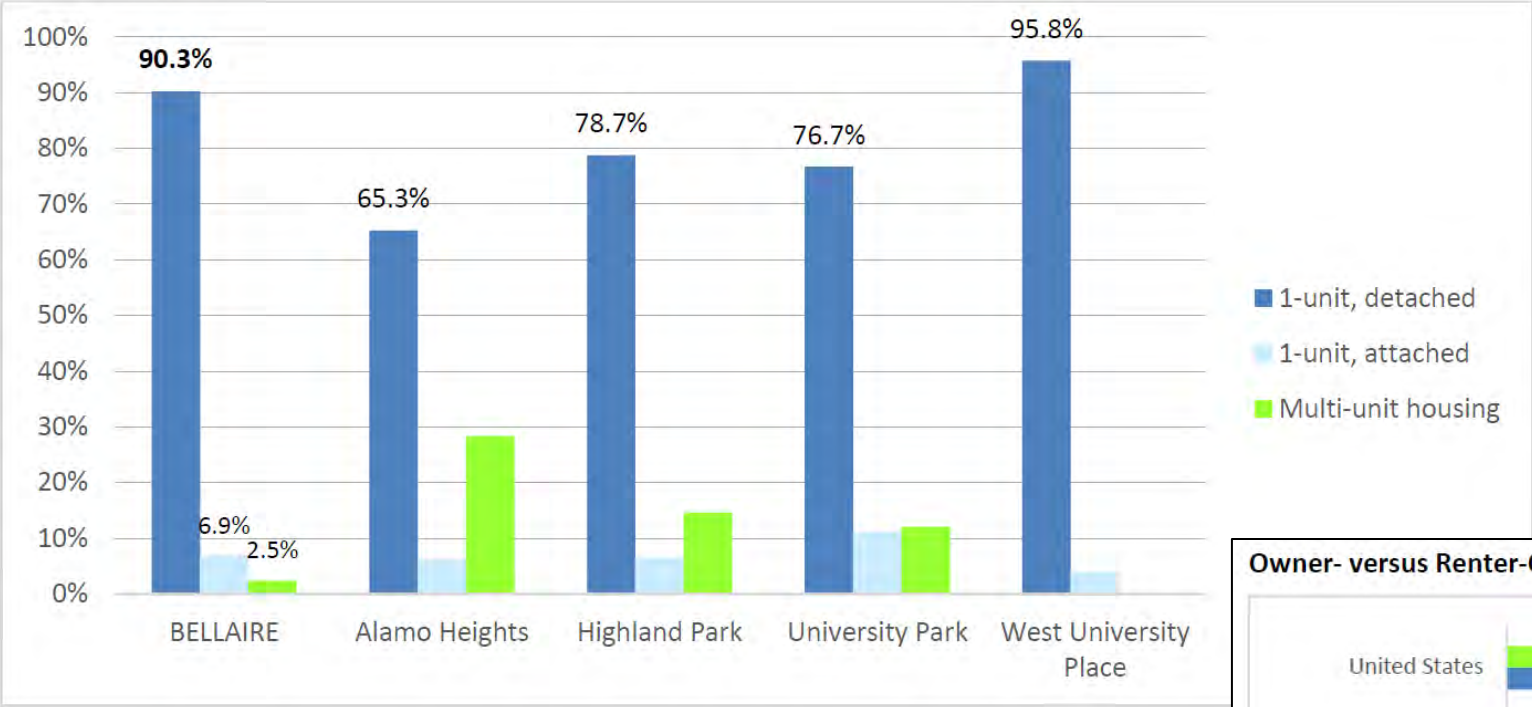
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# Average Household Size

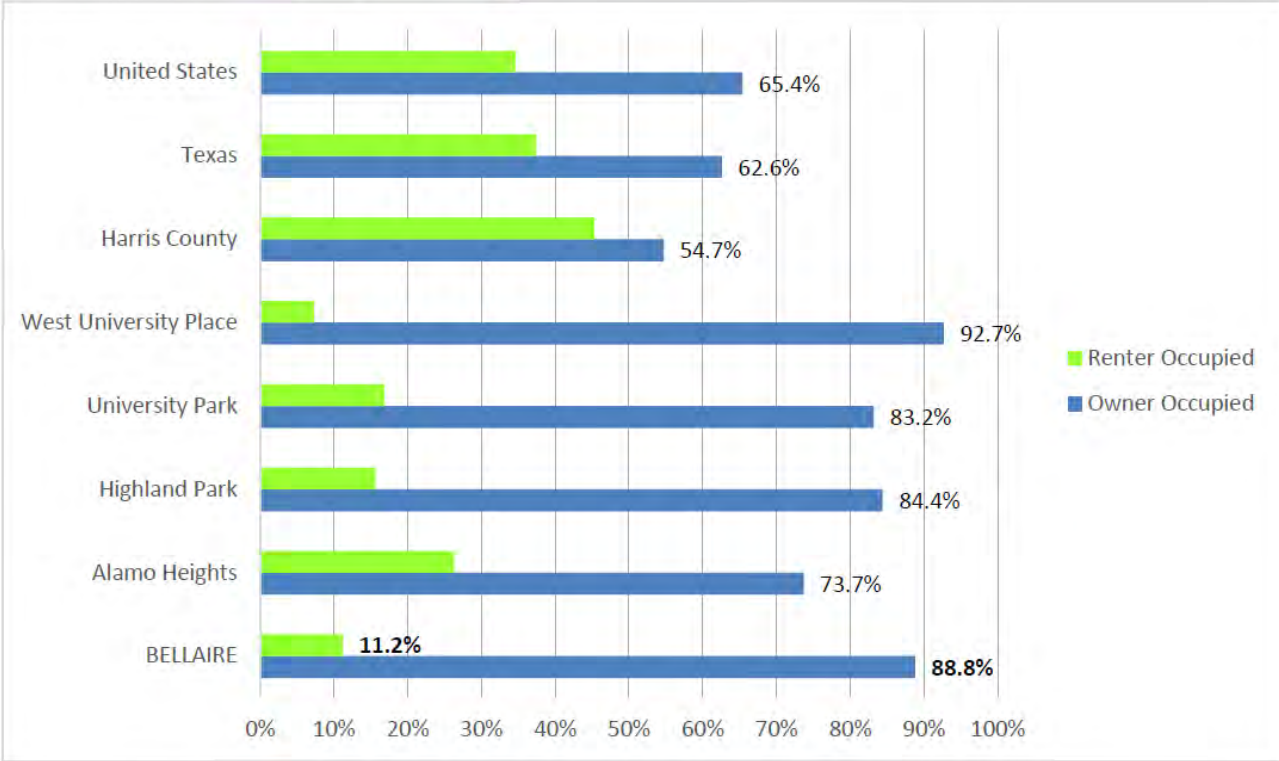




Housing Types



Owner- versus Renter-Occupied Housing



Commuting Patterns (2020)





## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Bellaire City departments report on a range of municipal functions and performance indicators, including the following statistics of interest from 2021:

### Public Safety

- 29,094 calls for service handled by Police Department dispatch.
- 203-second response time (3 minutes, 23 seconds) by Police Department to top-priority calls, from dispatch to arrival on scene.
- 1,834 emergency responses by Fire Department.
- 5:05 average response time by Fire Department (with a goal to arrive at 90% of all incidents, and at 95% of emergency medical services incidents, within four minutes).

### Utility Infrastructure

- 2.22 million gallons of average daily water consumption, with peak daily consumption of 4.21 million gallons – resulting in 809.7 million gallons of total annual consumption.
- 66% of water supply from surface water and 34% from well water – the highest share from surface water over the last decade amid an ongoing transition away from ground water reliance across the region to reduce land surface subsidence.
- 1.11 million gallons of average daily sewage treatment, with peak daily treatment of 2.75 million gallons (relative to wastewater treatment capacity of 4.5 million gallons per day) – resulting in 401.5 million gallons of total annual sewage treatment.

### Other City Services

- 21% of residential waste diverted to recycling.
- 22,885 visits to Bellaire City Library, with circulation of 110,976 for physical items from the library collection and 29,273 for digital media.

### Scale of Infrastructure and Facility Maintenance

- Police and fire stations, along with other municipal facilities.
- 67 miles of streets and 1,036 streetlights – with 83% of paved lane miles assessed in 2021 rated satisfactory by Public Works.
- 73 miles of water system mains.
- 3.23 million gallons of water storage capacity.
- 764 fire hydrants.
- 70 miles of sanitary sewer lines, leading to the City's wastewater treatment facility.
- 49 miles of storm sewer lines.
- 1.32 miles of open ditch/creek/canal drainage.
- 14 City parks, encompassing 121.3 acres of public parkland.
- Recreation Center and other facilities (e.g., aquatics, sports courts and fields, etc.).

The City's preliminary proposed budget for fiscal year 2024 (as of late July 2023) indicates potential maintenance expenditures of \$1.76 million from the General Fund across a variety of municipal functions, with park maintenance and building maintenance continuing to be the most significant costs. This figure would be an increase from \$1.5 million spent in fiscal year 2022 and a projected total of \$1.69 million for

the current fiscal year. For the new fiscal year, an additional \$647,800 in maintenance dollars would be allocated from a separate special Fund that covers the City's water, wastewater and solid waste services.

The proposed next annual budget also reconfirms the community's three highest service priorities in terms of potential General Fund allocations:

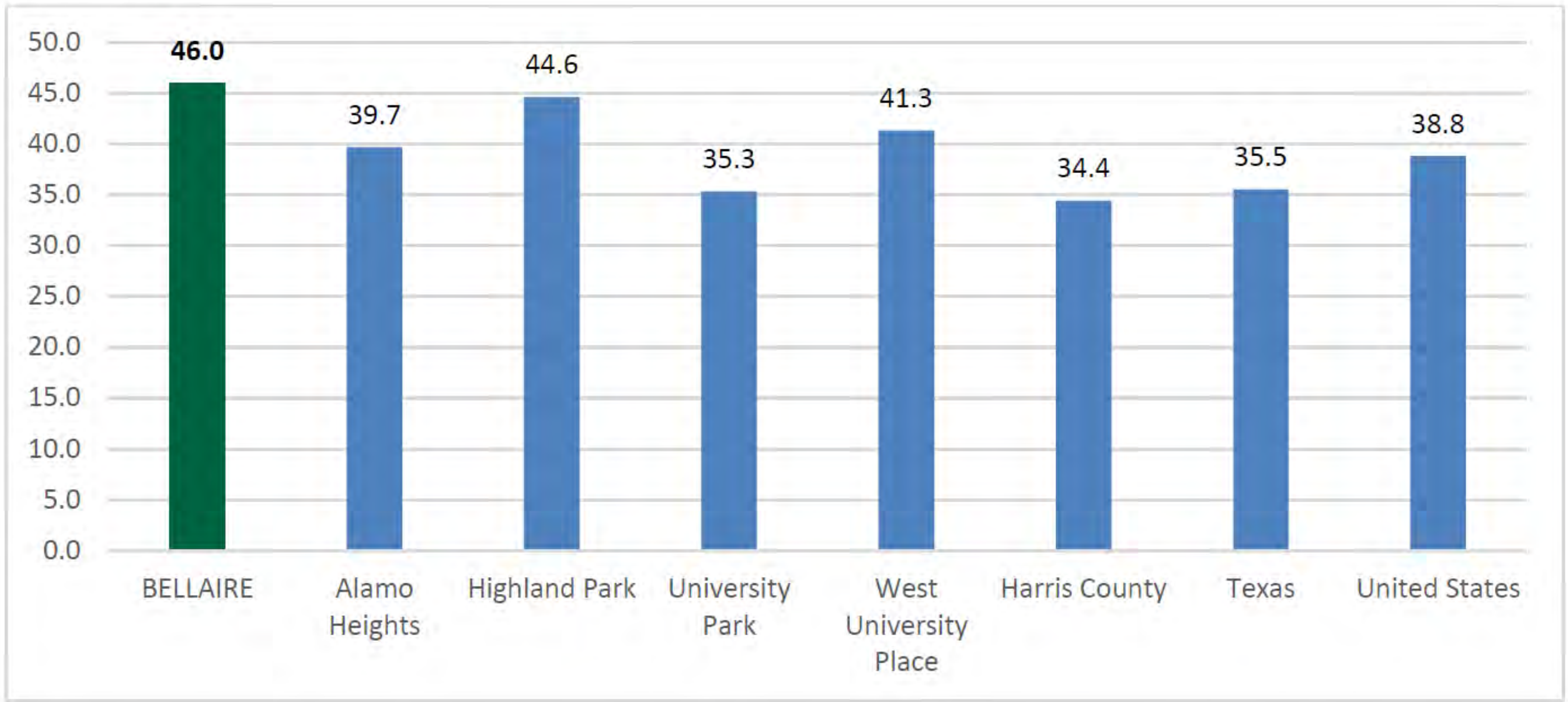
- \$7.94 million for police functions (30.6% of \$25.9 million total in General Fund recurring expenditures).
- \$4.52 million for parks, recreation and facilities (17.4%).
- \$4.12 million for fire functions (15.9%).

As noted above, other special "Funds" besides the General Fund are the primary support for the City's essential water, wastewater and solid waste services (including recycling). In the proposed budget, the City's Enterprise Fund includes potential annual operating expenses of \$4.2 million for water; \$1.75 million for solid waste; and \$1.71 million for wastewater. One of the City's highest costs on behalf of residents, businesses and other users is for water purchases, projected at \$2.68 million for the new fiscal year.

The proposed budget also shows total potential appropriations of \$11.68 million in capital funds for implementation of the 2024 portion of the City's five-year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). Projects covered would involve upgrades to parks, water and wastewater lines and other system components, storm drainage, fire hydrants, streets and sidewalks, traffic signals, various municipal/recreation buildings, and ADA accessibility improvements at parks, along with vehicle, equipment and technology purchases. The CIP is funded through allocations from the City's General Fund and Enterprise Fund, proceeds and interest earnings from past voter-approved bonds (for specific projects), grants received for certain projects, and through the City's METRO Fund. Along with other area cities, Bellaire continues to receive annual allocations of METRO Mobility funds – projected at \$1,737,000 for fiscal year 2024 – which the City then directs to local transportation improvements, along with interest earnings on its METRO Fund balances.

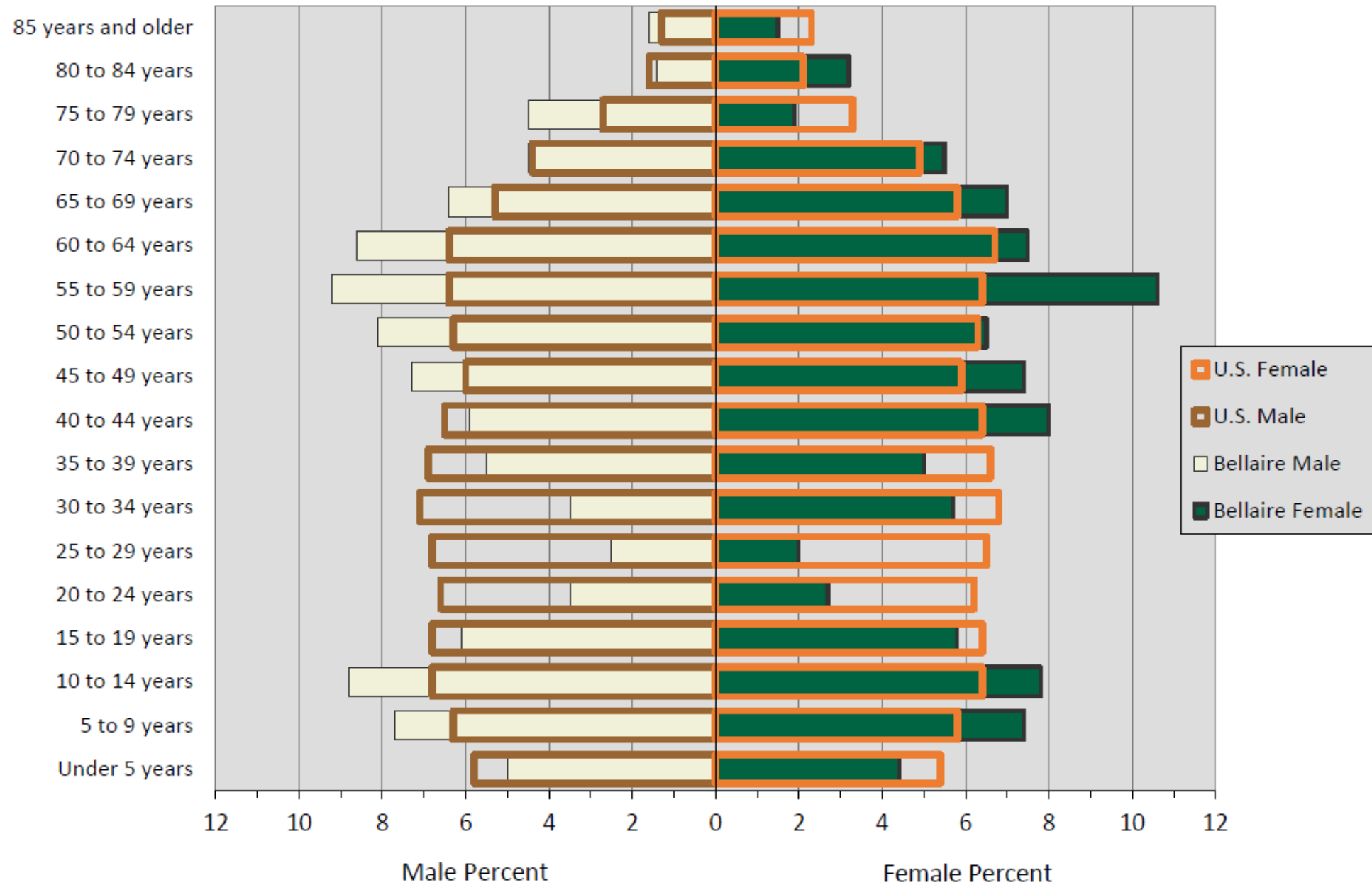
# Maintenance Burden of Mature Cities

# Median Age





## Age and Gender Distribution



## Bellaire Community Survey Highlights

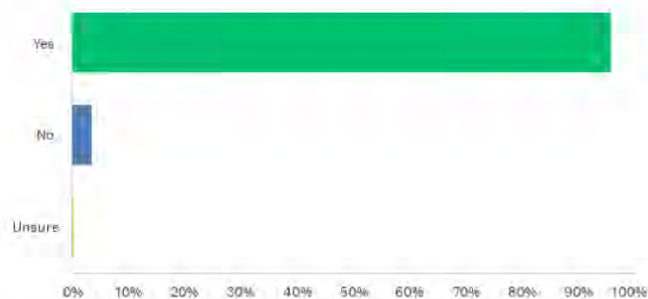
### 2023 Comprehensive Plan Review

As another way to obtain broad input to the City's Comprehensive Plan review process from Bellaire residents, business community and others, a survey was made available online. The City promoted the survey first at the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration of Independence Parade and Festival, then by disseminating it via the City website and other usual public notification means, at City facilities, and through local news media outlets. The survey closed on July 28 and **received 1,169 total responses**.

As the City's Comprehensive Plan adviser, we noted that the survey had more questions (33) and much more depth than typical surveys for this purpose, along with multiple opportunities to provide typed comments. Despite the longer time to complete, the survey response rate was excellent for Bellaire's size (approximately 17,000 population). Respondents were not required to answer every question to proceed through the survey. The response rate for each question is provided in this summary report.

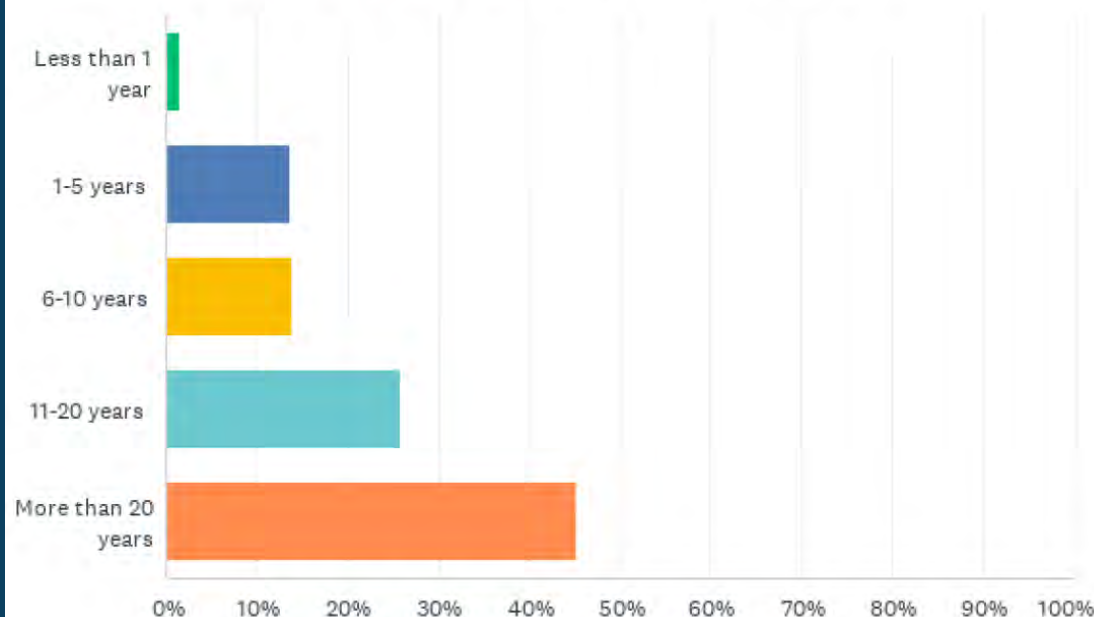
As it was an open online survey, the first question was whether the respondent was a Bellaire resident, and all respondents were asked for their location (street and block number, or location if outside Bellaire). If a respondent answered "No" or "Unsure," they were able to answer only questions 1, 7, 8 and 9 – with 8 and 9 the same as questions 10 and 11 for residents.

#### QUESTION 1: Do you live in Bellaire?

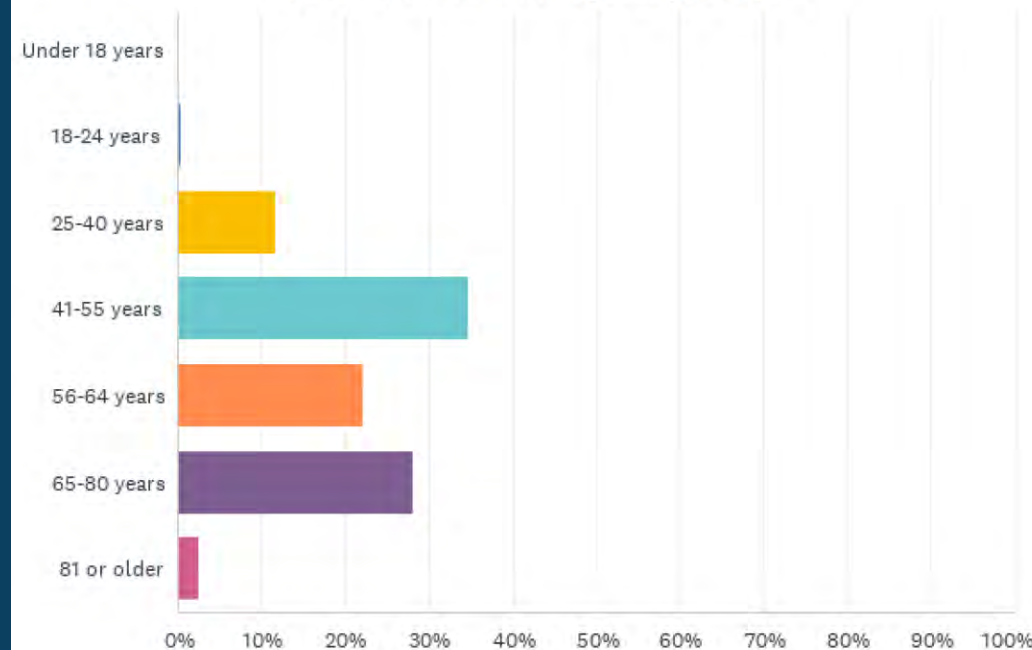


- 1,166 of the 1,169 survey participants answered this question – only 3 did not.
- 96% answered Yes, 3.7% answered No, and 0.3% were unsure.

#### QUESTION 3: How long have you lived in Bellaire?



#### QUESTION 5: In which age range are you?





## QUESTION 12:

Top 5 priorities from a list of 17 items frequently mentioned in early meetings for Bellaire's current Comprehensive Plan review process, many of which were also heard during previous plan reviews and updates back to 2009.

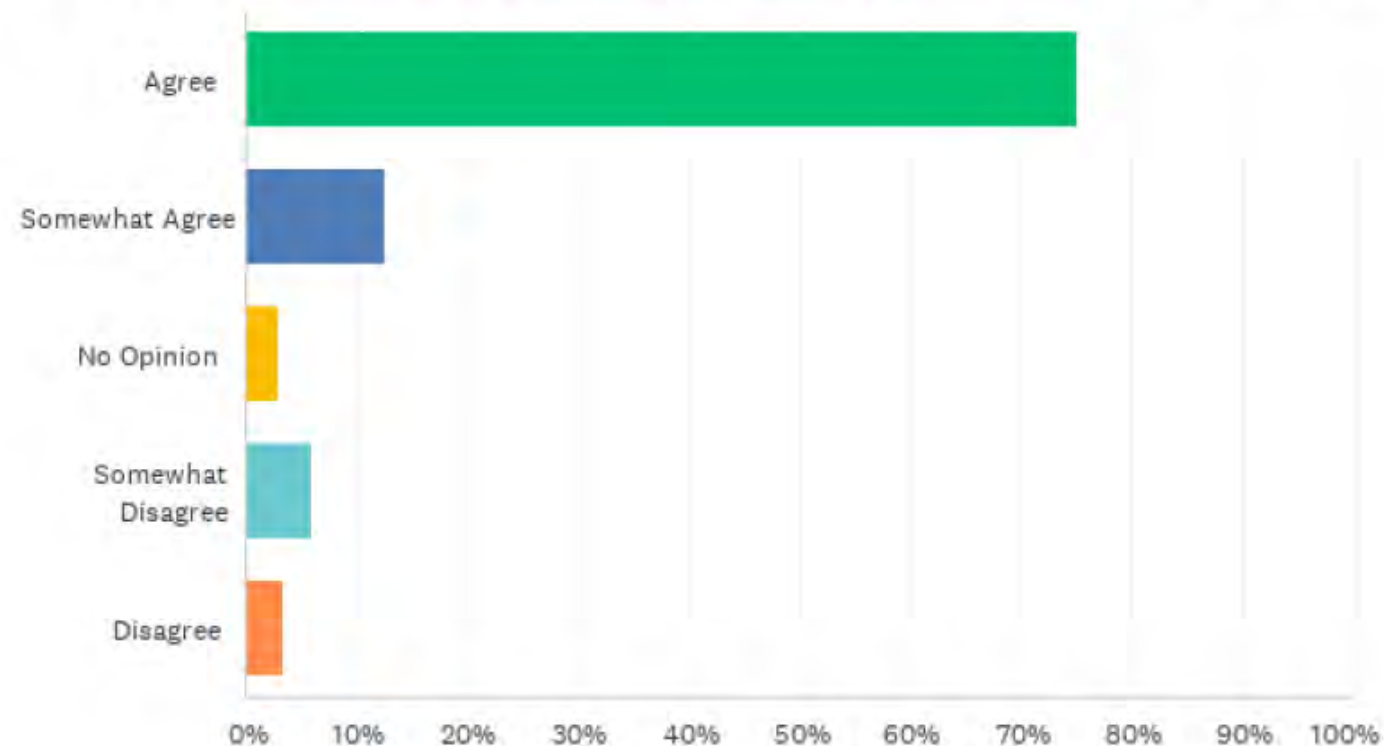
For this ranking question, 854 (76%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered. The following items were ranked among the top five most often, in this order:

- Safe community and City public safety services (police, fire, emergency medical service).
- Storm water management, mitigation of flooding risks and readiness to deal with and recover from natural hazards.
- Infrastructure condition and capacity (streets, water, sanitary sewer).
- Protect the integrity of Bellaire's residential neighborhoods from incompatible development or redevelopment.
- Increased safety for residents when walking or biking in areas with significant vehicle traffic.

It also notable that two items above were ranked #1 by the most respondents, by far. The storm water management item was ranked #1 by 39.6% of the 854 respondents, followed by the safe community item at 33.7%. The next item ranked #1 most often, but by only 6.4% of respondents, was the neighborhood integrity item. The remaining #1 rankings were scattered across many of the other listed items.

### QUESTION 19:

Bellaire is situated within one of the largest metropolitan areas in the nation, which offers wide-ranging housing options and lifestyle settings. As the “City of Homes,” Bellaire should remain a community of predominately single-family detached housing on individually-owned lots, with previously-developed townhome and smaller-lot options already available in multiple locations.

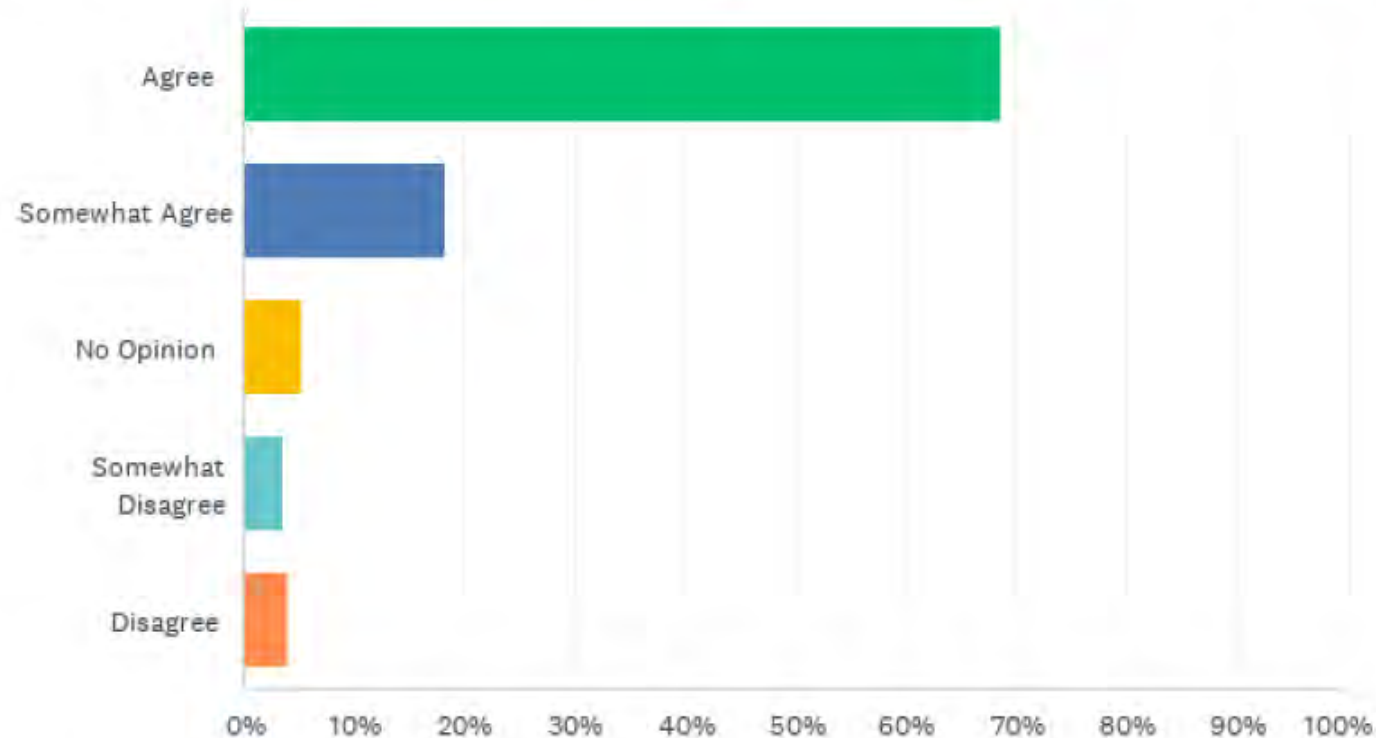


- 798 (71%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 87.6% agree or somewhat agree.
- 9.5% disagree or somewhat disagree.
- 2.9% have no opinion.



### QUESTION 18:

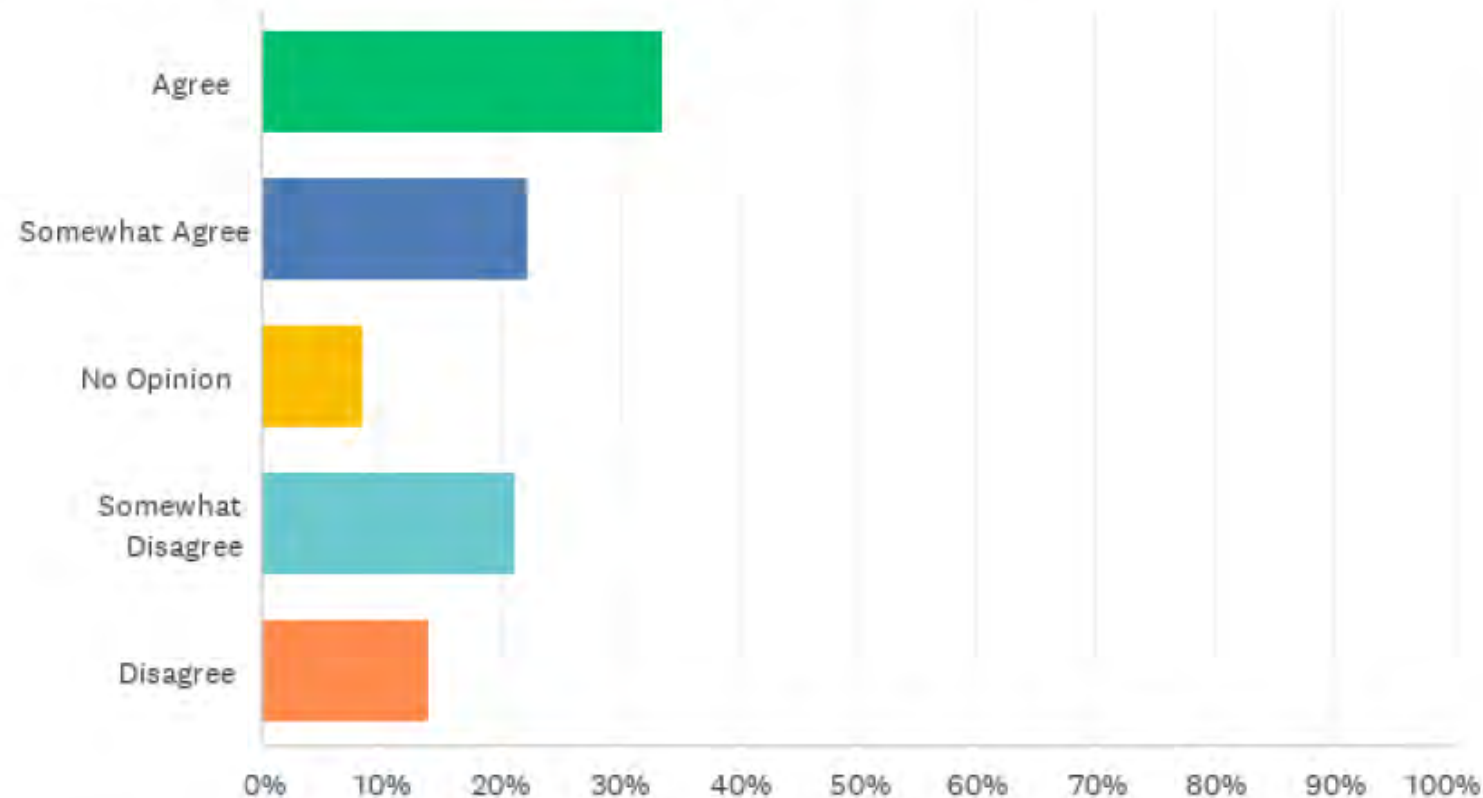
As recommended in the current Comprehensive Plan, the City should continue to seek ways to enhance the appearance of streets and public areas in Bellaire's commercial districts to encourage – and complement – ongoing private investments in upgrading commercial properties and bringing new restaurants, shopping and services that benefit Bellaire residents.



- 833 (74%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 86.9% agree or somewhat agree.
- 7.7% disagree or somewhat disagree.
- 5.4% have no opinion.

#### QUESTION 15:

Bellaire has enough non-residential development today and should not allow any additional land to be developed or redeveloped for non-residential uses beyond the properties that are already zoned for such purposes.



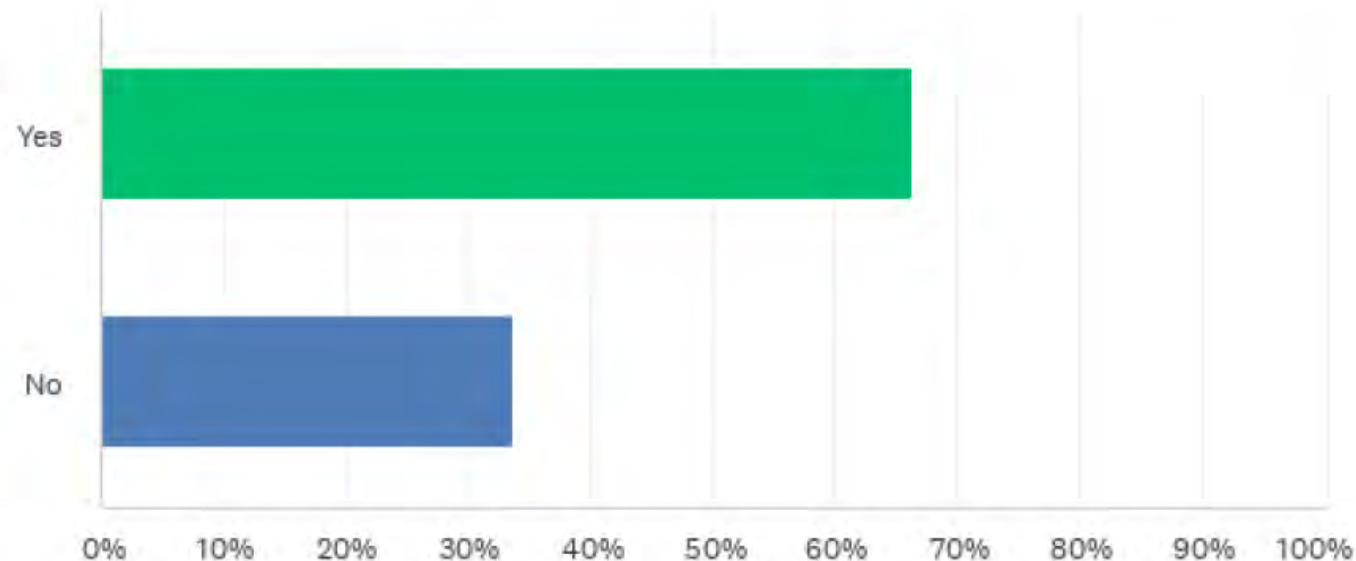
- 835 (74%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 56.2% agree or somewhat agree.
- 35.3% disagree or somewhat disagree.
- 8.5% have no opinion.



# Most Surprising

## QUESTION 23:

Whether you live directly adjacent to a commercial or other non-residential property (e.g., school, place of worship, public facility, etc.) or elsewhere in Bellaire, do you feel adequately protected by current zoning and other City regulations on such non-residential land uses?



- 785 (70%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 66.2% answered Yes.
- 33.8% answered No.

## QUESTION 24:

**Which of the following factors do you believe negatively impacts your residential quality of life?**

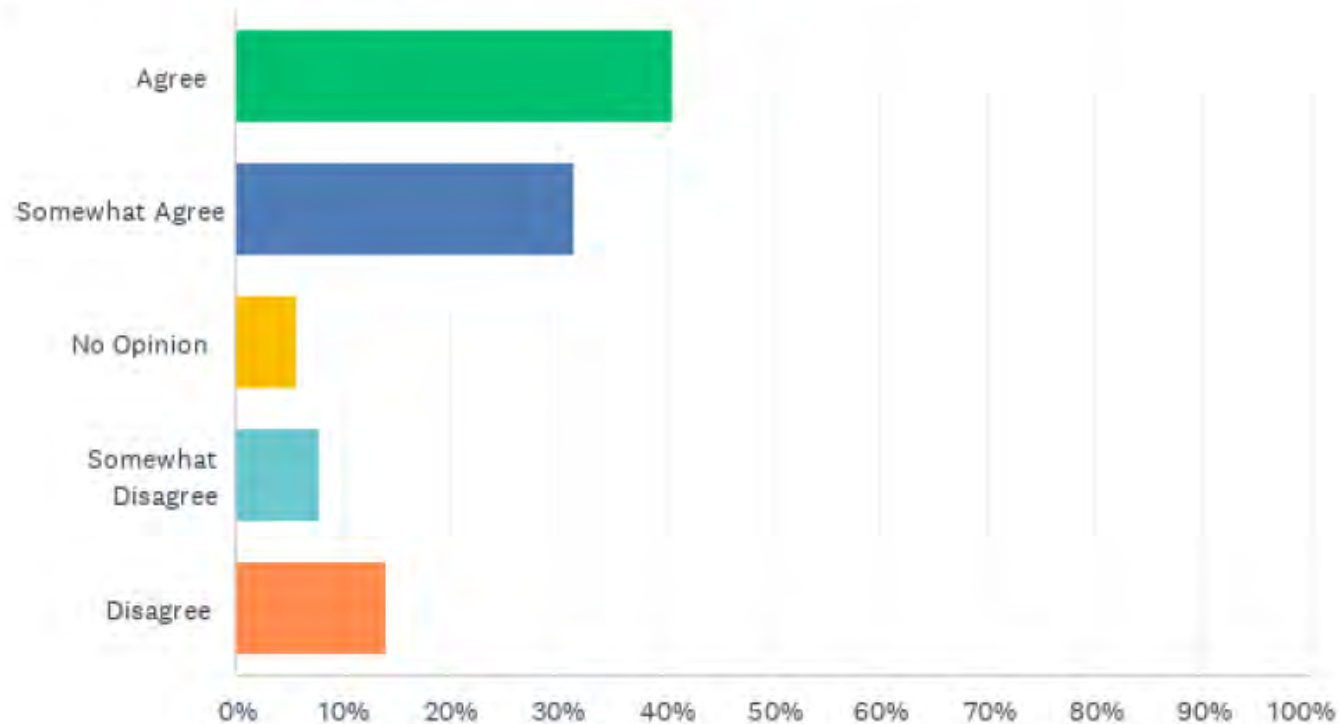
Those who responded No to Question 23 were invited to choose all options under this question that apply, from 10 factors listed, and 273 individuals (24% of eligible resident respondents) did so. An opportunity to type in other factors was also provided. Below are the 10 factors in order based on which were selected most often:

1. Drainage across residential property lines from non-residential properties during storms (64.1%)
2. Noise (60.1%)
3. Height of the building(s) (58.2%)
4. (Tie) Overall size of non-residential building(s) (54.2%)  
(Tie) Setback of the building(s) from residential property lines (54.2%)
6. Inadequate screening/buffering along residential property lines (53.9%)
7. Privacy concerns due to visibility into residential property from non-residential building(s) (51.7%)
8. Hours of operation of businesses/activities (possibly including late-night or early-morning deliveries, trash pickup, etc.) (50.6%)
9. Glare from outdoor lighting and/or vehicle headlights (40.7%)
10. Blocking of sunlight by the building(s) (33.3%)



#### QUESTION 16:

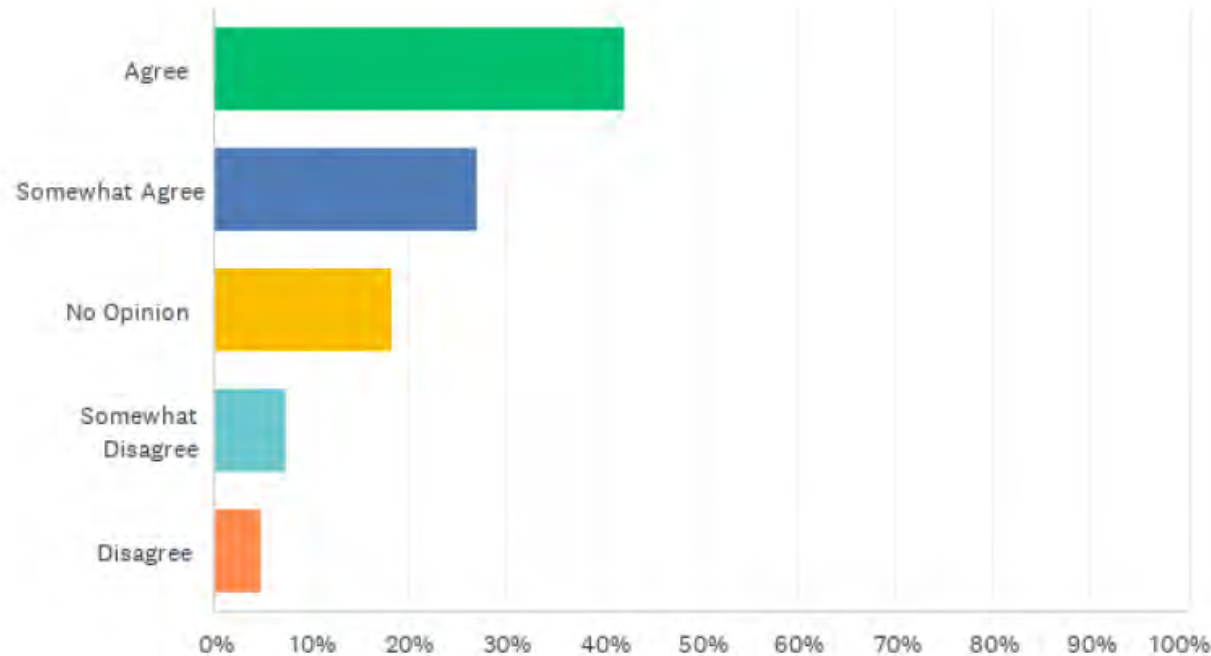
As recommended in the current Comprehensive Plan, Bellaire should be strategic and potentially allow rezoning of key properties from residential to commercial where appropriate and community-supported (e.g., current church property at corner of S. Rice Boulevard and Bellaire Boulevard that has been for sale for multiple years and is at a boundary between residential and commercial zoning).



- 833 (74%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 72.3% agree or somewhat agree.
- 21.9% disagree or somewhat disagree.
- 5.8% have no opinion.

#### QUESTION 17:

Bellaire has a few properties currently zoned for light industrial use (e.g., CenterPoint property at east city limits on Bissonnet Street, car wash at east city limits on Beechnut Street). As recommended in the current Comprehensive Plan, these zoning designations should be changed to allow only less intensive uses than light industrial if the properties are sold or otherwise become unavailable for redevelopment. (The current Comprehensive Plan shows the car wash property in a commercial designation and the CenterPoint property mostly in single-family residential with commercial only along Bissonnet Street as on adjacent properties.)

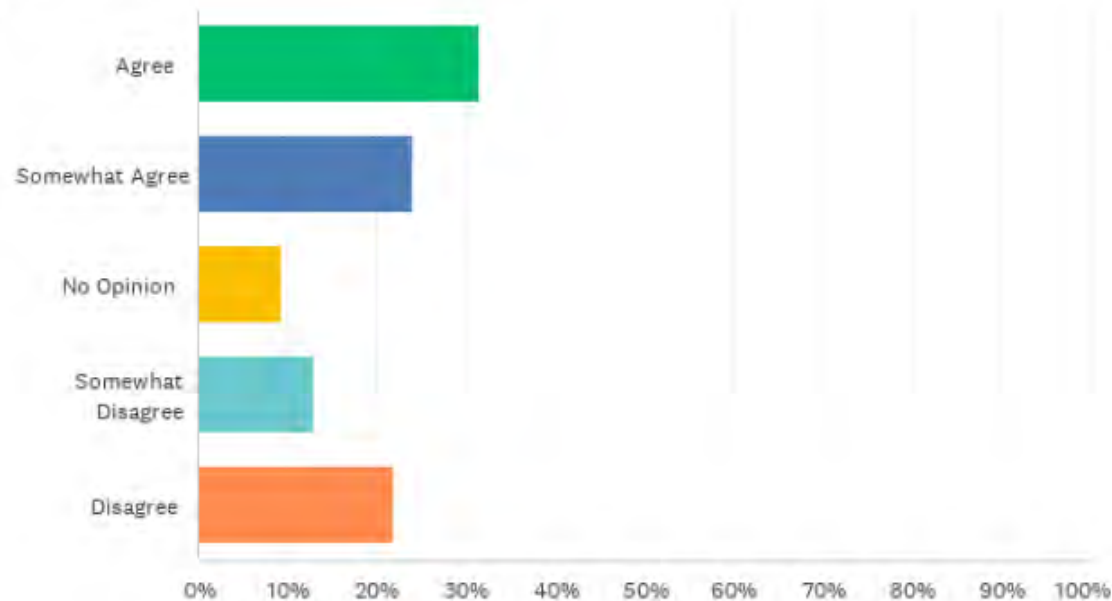


- 824 (73%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 69.3% agree or somewhat agree.
- 12.4% disagree or somewhat disagree.
- 18.3% have no opinion.



#### QUESTION 20:

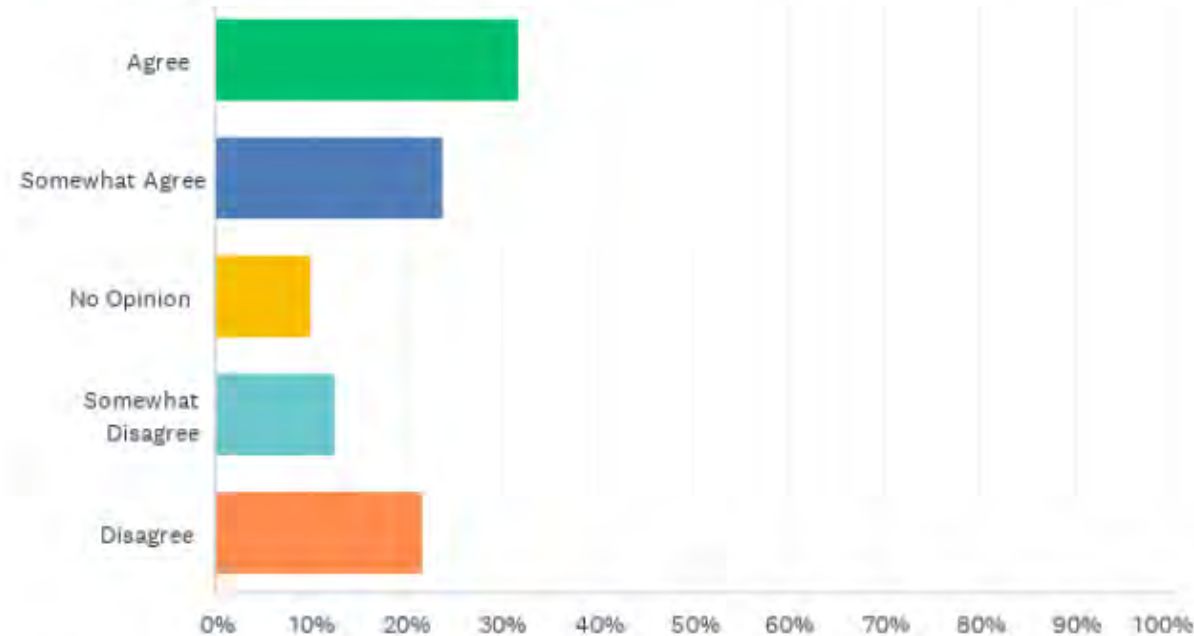
The City's current Comprehensive Plan emphasizes some consideration of "life-cycle housing" needs – the ability for those born in or now living in Bellaire to reside comfortably and affordably at different stages of life, from young adulthood to one's advanced senior years, through the availability of varied housing types and sizes. Based on this plan focus, the City should consider the appropriateness of development applications to build additional ownership housing such as townhomes or smaller-lot detached homes in locations already zoned to allow such life-cycle housing options and with limits on their allowable density, height and setback from streets and property lines (e.g., currently allowed in the mixed-use zoning districts along portions of Bellaire Boulevard and Bissonnet Street and in the vicinity of where these two major roadways intersect on Bellaire's west side).



- 798 (71%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 55.7% agree or somewhat agree.
- 34.9% disagree or somewhat disagree.
- 9.4% have no opinion.

#### QUESTION 21:

Based on the City's 2009 Comprehensive Plan, several current zoning districts in Bellaire include the prospect of attached, multi-unit housing (whether for ownership or rental), but only as part of a "mixed-use" development that includes other uses such as retail or office, and with limitations on the extent, density and design of the residential component. This should continue to be an option in areas zoned for commercial or mixed-use development along Bissonnet Street and Bellaire Boulevard, and in the west-side commercial area around the intersection of Bissonnet and Bellaire Boulevard, subject to appropriate standards to protect nearby areas of single-family detached homes.



- 794 (71%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 55.7% agree or somewhat agree.
- 34.3% disagree or somewhat disagree.
- 10% have no opinion.



## QUESTION 22:

For many years, Bellaire has had one property at the eastern city limits along Bissonnet Street that is zoned to allow – and has accommodated – “multi-family dwellings” by right, meaning no further zoning approvals are required as long as the development and structures meet all building codes and other regulations. Given increased property values and real estate trends, it is possible this property will someday be redeveloped. Which of the following options do you prefer?

791 (70%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered this question as follows:

- 23.8%** I am not satisfied with any of the options above and would prefer the City explore other ways to balance resident concerns about denser housing with the prospect that overly strict regulations could make revitalization of an older apartment property economically impractical.
- 22.9%** Follow the direction of the City’s current Comprehensive Plan and consider rezoning the property to a more flexible zoning category already along other nearby portions of Bissonnet Street, which allows commercial uses or, as described in the previous question, allows attached, multi-unit housing (whether for ownership or rental) only as part of a “mixed-use” development and with other limitations.
- 21.9%** Maintain the current zoning for this property so attached multi-unit housing remains available at this location in Bellaire, but revisit the zoning standards for such housing to determine whether the allowable density and/or building height should be reduced.
- 11.0%** Maintain the current zoning for this property that is designed to accommodate attached, multi-unit housing (whether for ownership or rental) versus any commercial uses, recognizing that redevelopment of the property could mean a larger and taller development as the existing two-story apartments are less than the permitted building height (53 feet in the Residential Multi-Family zoning district).
- 10.2%** Rezone the property to another designation that allows commercial uses only in case the property is ever redeveloped.
- 10.2%** No opinion.

## QUESTION 28:

Top 5 priorities from a list of 20 “walkability” factors that often contribute to more pedestrian-friendly areas.

For this ranking question, 705 (63%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered. The following items were ranked among the top five most often, in this order:

- Providing highly visible crosswalks.
- Minimizing the number of times that an individual walking has to cross paths with vehicles (e.g., street crossings, driveways across sidewalks, within parking areas, etc.).
- Installing signage to make drivers aware of areas with higher pedestrian activity and street crossings.
- Providing shade over sidewalks and walking paths.
- Designing streets with “traffic calming” measures that reduce vehicle speeds – or retrofitting existing streets with such speed-reduction techniques.

The factor ranked #1 by the most respondents was the “Minimizing” item above at 24.1%. Ranked #1 next most was the first bullet item above involving highly visible crosswalks at 12.8%, followed closely at 12.2% by an item not in the top 5: “Ensuring continuity of sidewalks or walking paths between commercial areas and nearby neighborhoods.”





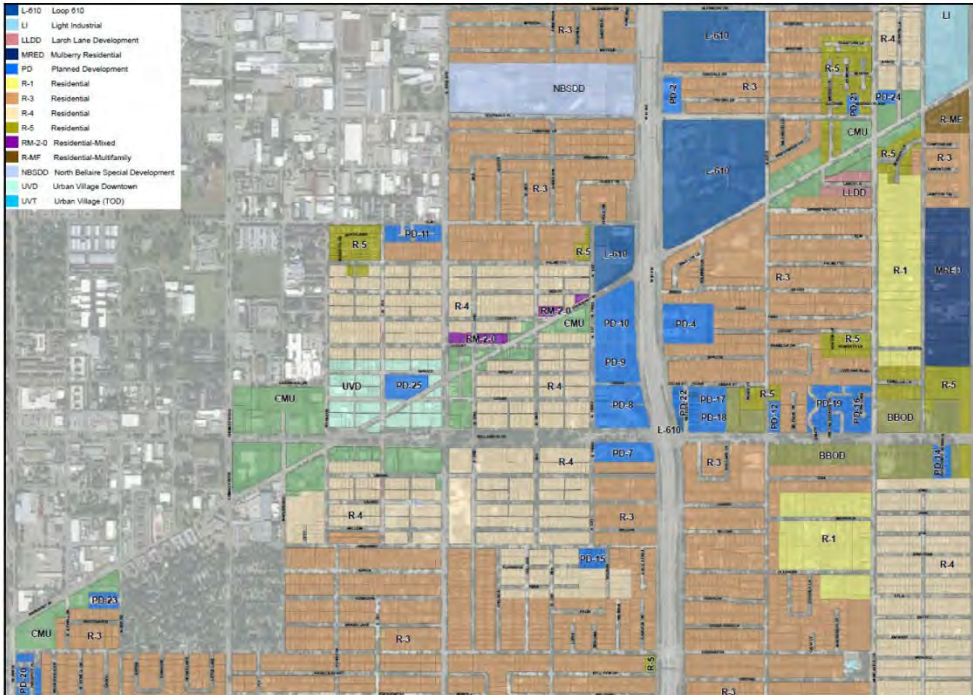


## Bellaire Development Regulations Evaluation 2023 Comprehensive Plan Review

Kendig Keast Collaborative (KKC) is currently assisting the City of Bellaire to review and update its Comprehensive Plan. As stated in our scope of services:

The current Plan update process is intended to focus especially on Chapters 2, 5 and 6 (Land Use & Community Character, Commercial Area Development & Enhancement, and Implementation) as they relate to Bellaire's commercial areas and zoning districts ..."

As part of the plan review process, KKC was also charged with reviewing the City's existing zoning regulations and standards – likewise, with a focus on several key zoning districts for nonresidential and mixed-use development that were created based on policy direction and action items in the City's 2009 Comprehensive Plan. These are:



- The Urban Village-Downtown (UV-D) zoning district, which is found on the City's Zoning District Map in Bellaire's "City Center" area north of Bellaire Boulevard between S. Rice Avenue and Ferris Drive, north to the properties along the north side of Spruce Street.

UV-D: [https://library.municode.com/tx/bellaire/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOR\\_CH24PLZO\\_ARTVZORE\\_DIV2ZODIRE\\_S24-S37URVWINDI](https://library.municode.com/tx/bellaire/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOR_CH24PLZO_ARTVZORE_DIV2ZODIRE_S24-S37URVWINDI)

# Key Points

Nothing inherently “wrong” with the UV-D and CMU districts and standards.

Reflect 2009 Plan goals and previous policy intentions.

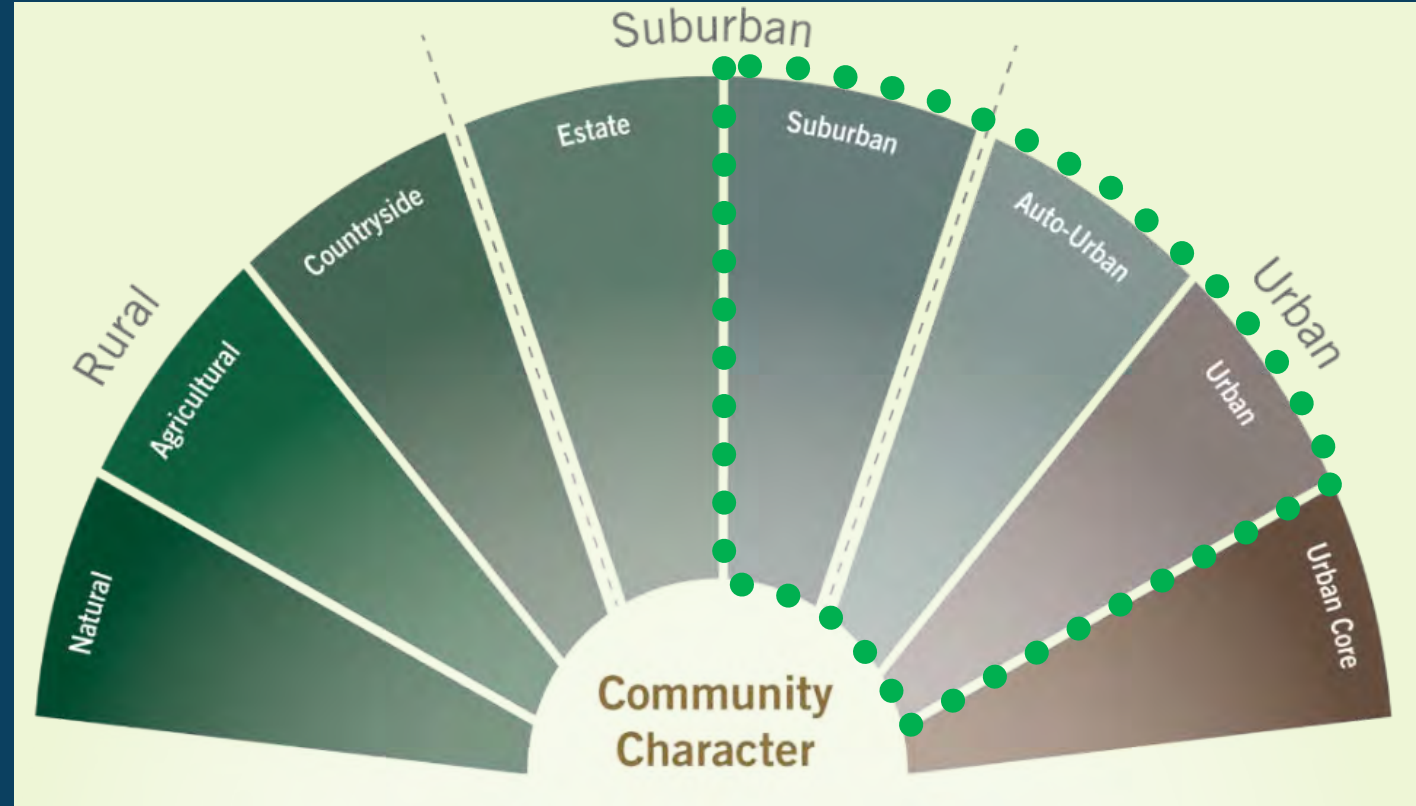
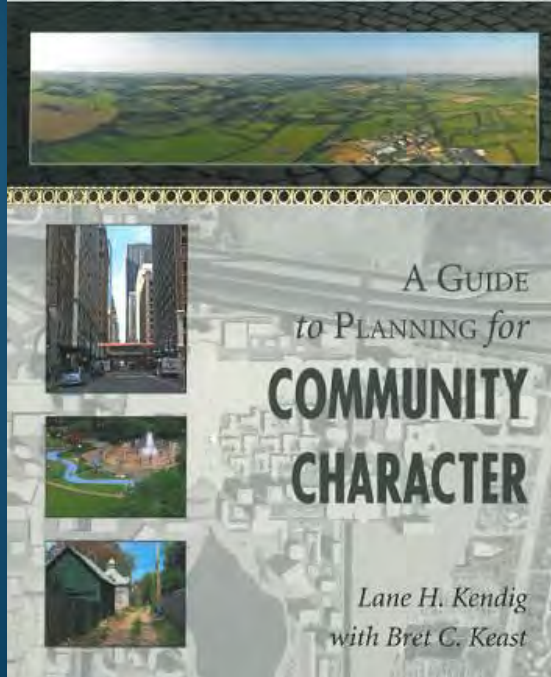
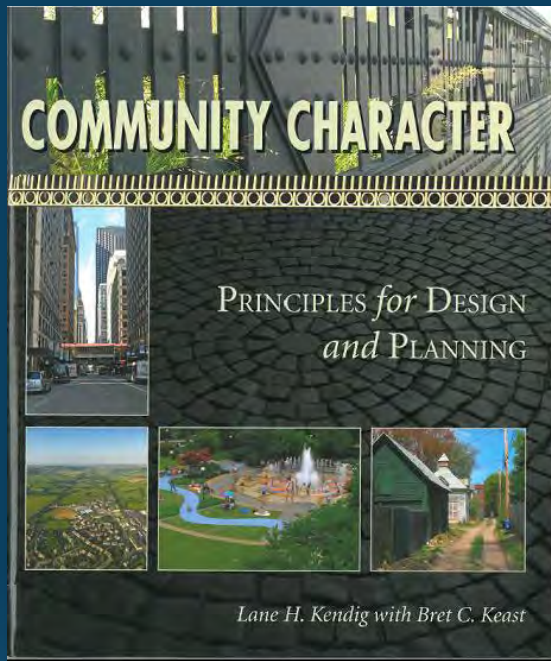
Zoning methods used by other cities.

BUT, clearly concerns for some regarding:

- Those Plan goals and policies – and/or how they were framed and worded.
- Provisions to incent reinvestment and provide relief to constrained sites.
- On-the-ground results since.

Recent redevelopment application also spurred further debate.





**Suburban Character**

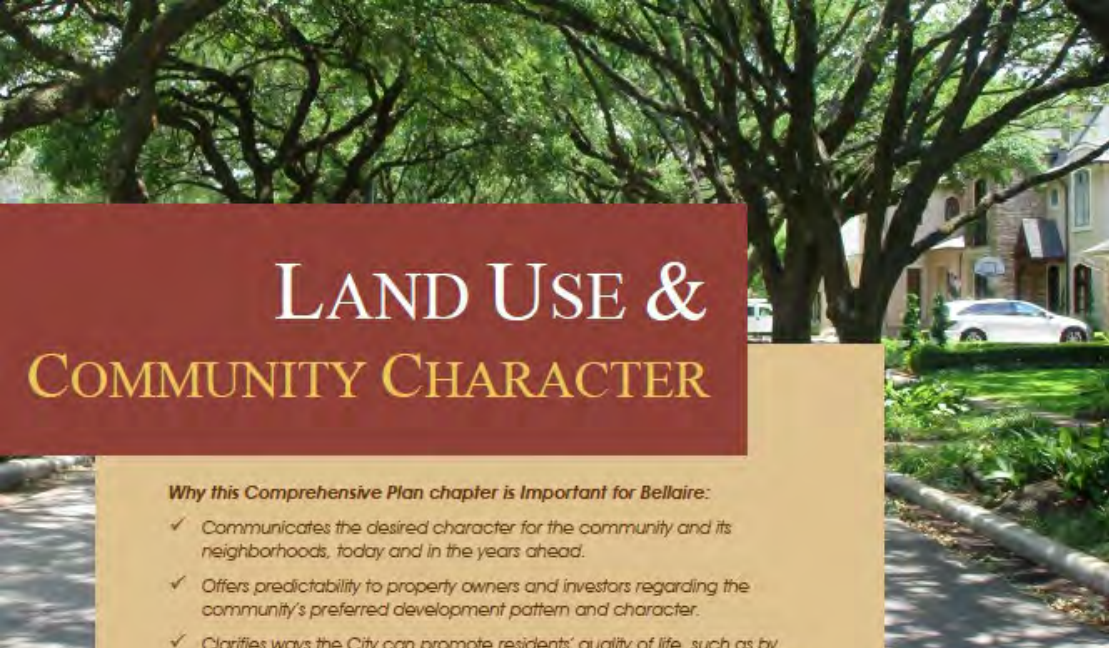


**"Auto Urban" Character**



**Urban Character**





# LAND USE & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- Why this Comprehensive Plan chapter is important for Bellaire:**
- ✓ Communicates the desired character for the community and its neighborhoods, today and in the years ahead.
  - ✓ Offers predictability to property owners and investors regarding the community's preferred development pattern and character.
  - ✓ Clarifies ways the City can promote residents' quality of life, such as by providing attractive parks and trails and promoting greater housing variety.
  - ✓ Establishes priorities for City programs and capital investments to support the desired development pattern and quality.
  - ✓ Provides the public policy basis for the City's development regulations.

## CHAPTER 2

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the necessary policy guidance to enable the City of Bellaire to plan effectively for future land development and redevelopment. Sound planning is essential to ensure that the community is prepared for anticipated land use transitions and new development, can serve it adequately with public services, and can manage its impacts to maintain compatibility of land uses and preserve community character.

### KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The following facts, assumptions, and considerations provide the context for the goals and action strategies presented in this chapter:

**City of Homes.** Bellaire is primarily a community of single-family detached residences.

**Non-Residential Compatibility.** Retail, service, office, institutional, and employment land uses are welcome in certain areas of Bellaire, but non-residential compatibility is a fundamental community priority.




# Classic Suburban Character





SOURCE: google.com/maps

“Within the Urban class, **Auto Urban character** areas are a particular planning challenge as they are designed mainly to accommodate automobile circulation and parking. **Land cover by buildings and paved surfaces is similar to Urban areas, but without the walkability emphasis.**”



## COMMERCIAL AREA DEVELOPMENT & ENHANCEMENT

**CHAPTER 5**


*Why this Comprehensive Plan chapter is important for Bellaire:*

- ✓ Highlights particular areas of the community that are likely candidates for commercial redevelopment activity and where the City, therefore, should concentrate its revitalization efforts to ensure outcomes desired by Bellaire residents.
- ✓ Anticipates the potential construction of a new METRO transit center along Westbank, just outside of Bellaire, and the implications for redevelopment opportunities of Bellaire's north City limits closest to I-10 and Houston.
- ✓ Emphasizes the importance of both commercial development quality and attractive design of public infrastructure and streetcar along Bellaire's major corridors as this is where first and lasting impressions of the community are formed.
- ✓ In conjunction with Chapter 2, Land Use & Community Character, provides the basis for potential adjustments to the City's zoning strategy for its prime commercial areas and corridors.

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the outlook for commercial development and redevelopment activity in Bellaire, both in terms of local community-serving needs, as well as in the context of broader Houston-area development trends. This includes consideration of strategic locations such as the "City Center" area (within new zoning districts CMU and UN-D) and the new "U-T" zoning district in north Bellaire, plus key corridors where the City's non-residential development has traditionally been focused. This chapter serves to reinforce Chapter 2, Land Use & Community Character, by documenting the types of commercial development residents anticipate and would like to see in their community in the future—and where such development and redevelopment activity should be focused to ensure compatibility and protect the character of the "City of Homes."

This chapter also addresses the City's role in encouraging and guiding desired development types and forms, in terms of preferred location, scale

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 21, 2015



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## Pedestrian Pathways

A Planning Guide for the Houston-Galveston Region

### Comfort and Convenience

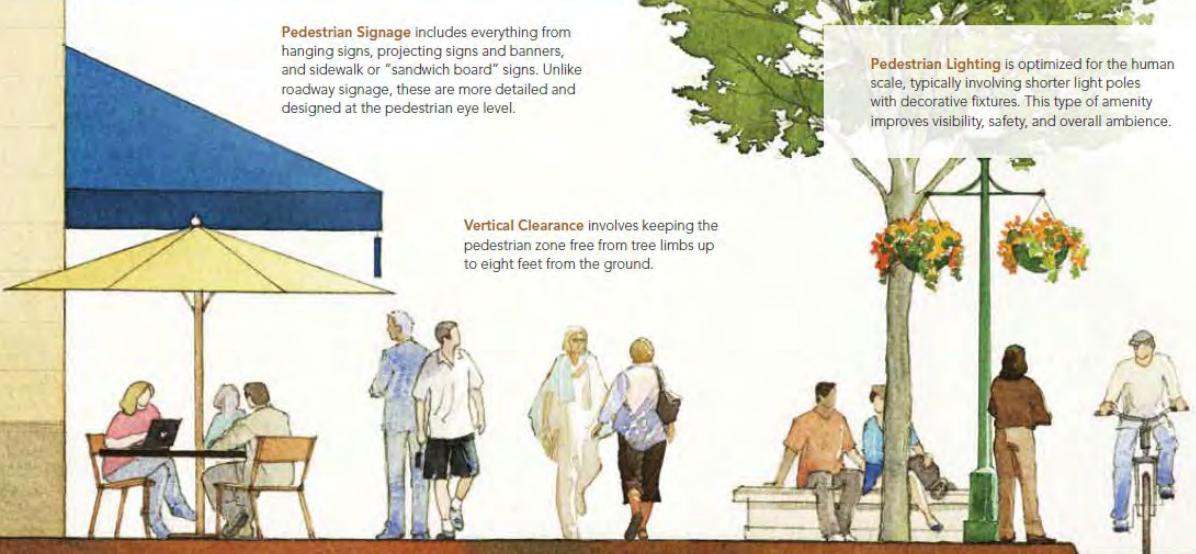
The physical dimensions, amenities, and materials of pedestrian access routes directly influence how much time we spend outdoors. Given the up front installation and maintenance costs, each enhancement should be strategically located in areas with the highest pedestrian traffic counts - or the greatest potential to attract more walking.

**Pedestrian Signage** includes everything from hanging signs, projecting signs and banners, and sidewalk or "sandwich board" signs. Unlike roadway signage, these are more detailed and designed at the pedestrian eye level.

**Vertical Clearance** involves keeping the pedestrian zone free from tree limbs up to eight feet from the ground.

**Street Trees** come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors, depending on the microclimate and design aesthetic. They can contribute to character or theme (e.g., palm trees); offer shade and protection from the elements; reduce vehicle speeds; or represent a combination of all three.

**Pedestrian Lighting** is optimized for the human scale, typically involving shorter light poles with decorative fixtures. This type of amenity improves visibility, safety, and overall ambience.



**Building Zone**  
0 to 5 Feet

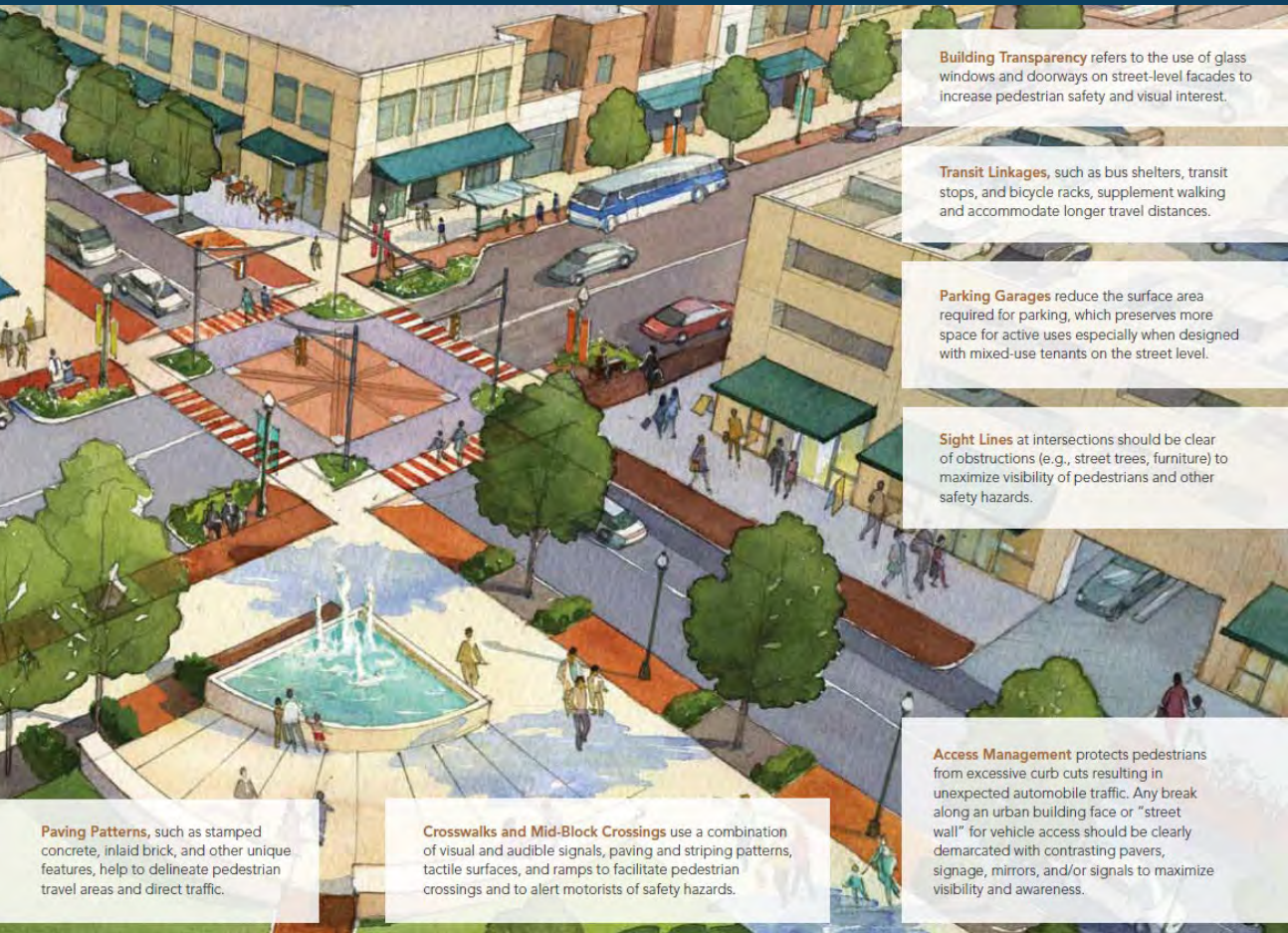
Includes building amenities such as outdoor dining, merchandise display, or awnings.

**Pedestrian Zone**  
Minimum 5 Feet

Clear and unobstructed for pedestrian movement.

**Curb Zone**  
5 to 10 Feet

Includes utilities, street trees, furnishings, and lighting.



**Building Transparency** refers to the use of glass windows and doorways on street-level facades to increase pedestrian safety and visual interest.

**Transit Linkages**, such as bus shelters, transit stops, and bicycle racks, supplement walking and accommodate longer travel distances.

**Parking Garages** reduce the surface area required for parking, which preserves more space for active uses especially when designed with mixed-use tenants on the street level.

**Sight Lines** at intersections should be clear of obstructions (e.g., street trees, furniture) to maximize visibility of pedestrians and other safety hazards.

**Access Management** protects pedestrians from excessive curb cuts resulting in unexpected automobile traffic. Any break along an urban building face or "street wall" for vehicle access should be clearly demarcated with contrasting pavers, signage, mirrors, and/or signals to maximize visibility and awareness.

**Paving Patterns**, such as stamped concrete, inlaid brick, and other unique features, help to delineate pedestrian travel areas and direct traffic.

**Crosswalks and Mid-Block Crossings** use a combination of visual and audible signals, paving and striping patterns, tactile surfaces, and ramps to facilitate pedestrian crossings and to alert motorists of safety hazards.



# Designed to be Walkable

Livable Centers provide safe, convenient, and engaging experiences for pedestrians. A quality pedestrian environment has appropriately oriented and scaled buildings, good separation of persons on foot from vehicle circulation and parking, design elements that create a sense of identity, and places to interact with others such as plazas and parks.

## Building Zone 0 to 5 Feet

Includes building amenities such as outdoor dining, merchandise display, or awnings.

## Pedestrian Zone Minimum 5 Feet

Clear and unobstructed for pedestrian movement.

## Curb Zone 5 to 10 Feet

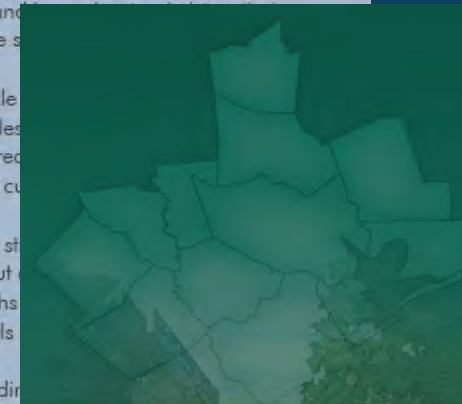
Includes utilities, street trees, furnishings, lighting, and benches.



## Checklist for Policies and Standards

Livable Centers should:

- ☐ Promote appropriate street widths (24-36 feet) that help to slow down traffic and encourage pedestrian activity.
- ☐ Meet minimum sidewalk standards, allowing for streetscape amenities such as benches, shade trees, and street lighting that illuminates the sidewalk.
- ☐ Remove vehicle storage and clutter that separates pedestrians from the street, emphasizing residential streets, parking garages, and curbside pickup/drop-off.
- ☐ Have primary street frontage for pedestrian circulation, but also provide secondary paths and clear paths for wheelchair users and individuals with disabilities.
- ☐ Minimize building setbacks and entrances facing the street.
- ☐ Limit blank walls and building setbacks through building setbacks, to maintain a clear path for pedestrian movement.
- ☐ Provide public spaces that are comfortable, inviting, and accessible to all.



more choices,  
great places

# LIVABLE CENTERS







**W. Gray near Bagby St**





SOURCE: google.com/maps

## Urban Village-Downtown (UV-D) Purpose Statement

This district provides for a mix of uses and style of development intended to reinforce the "small town" downtown feel desired by Bellaire residents, including opportunities for shopping, services, dining and entertainment.





# Downtown Nacogdoches, Texas

SOURCE: Nacogdoches County Chamber





## Downtown Bastrop, Texas





## Downtown McKinney, Texas





## Downtown Boerne, Texas



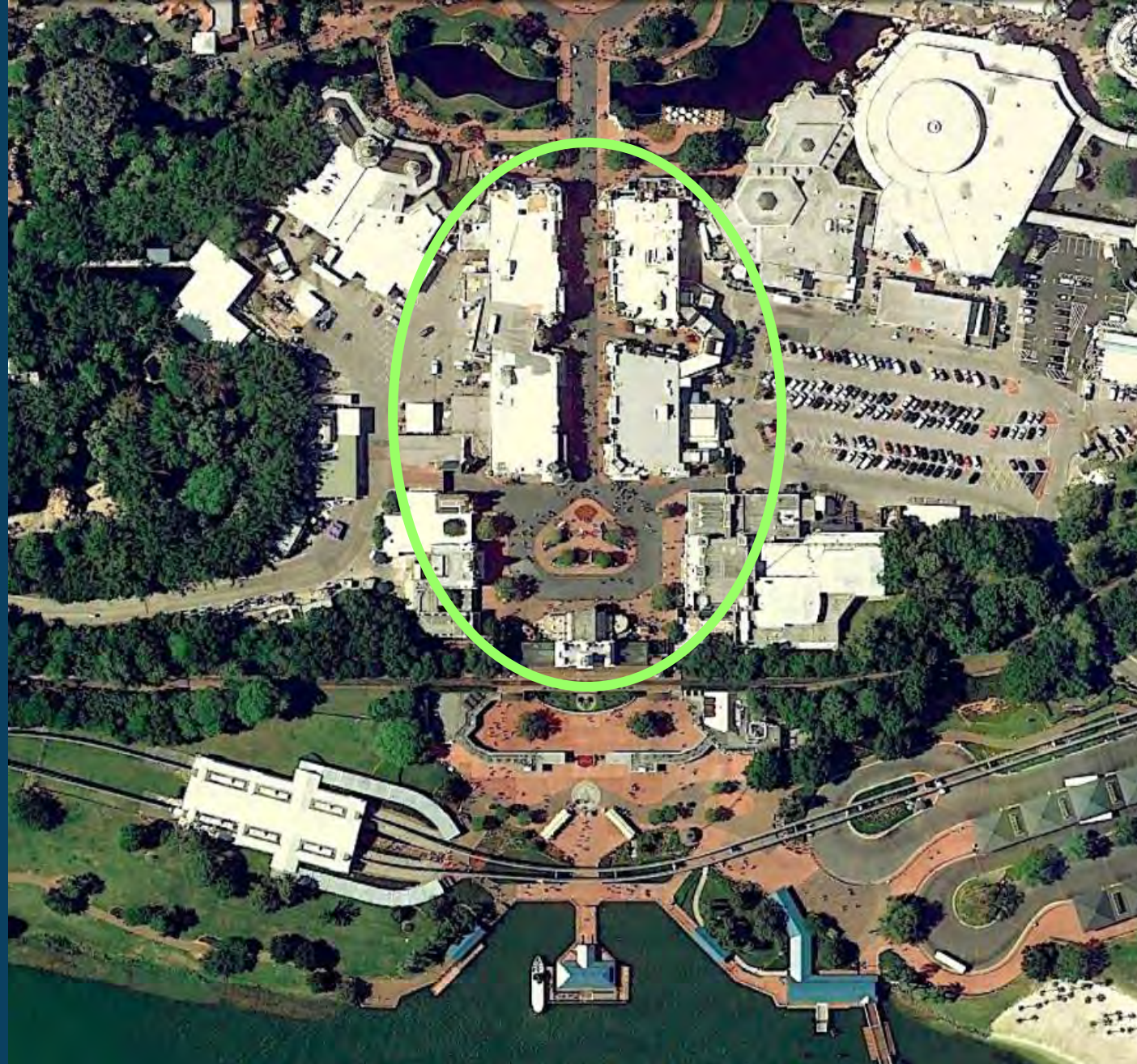


# Downtown Georgetown, Texas





**Main Street - Walt Disney World**



**Main Street - Walt Disney World**





## Highland Park, Texas

SOURCE: [compass.com/neighborhood-guides](https://compass.com/neighborhood-guides)



west university place tx city limits



3700 University Blvd

West University Place, Texas

Google Street View

Nov 2018



# West University Place, Texas

SOURCE: [google.com/maps](https://www.google.com/maps)





## Urban Village-Downtown (UV-D) Purpose Statement

This district provides for a mix of uses and style of development intended to reinforce the "small town" downtown feel desired by Bellaire residents, including opportunities for shopping, services, dining and entertainment.



| District Purpose Excerpt for Urban Village-Downtown (UV-D)  | Specific Regulatory Parameters   | Pertinent Chapter 24 Content          |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Character Portion of Purpose Statement</b>   |  |                                       |
| ... transition to a <b>more Urban development character</b> through redevelopment ... provide the <b>critical mass</b> the area has always lacked to <b>spur greater foot traffic</b> and extended visits that are essential to a vibrant mix of retail, service and hospitality businesses | • Mixed use permitted, including for "small-scale" (<one-acre) developments.   | Sec. 24-537 B(1)g                     |
|   | • Reduced lot area and width, setbacks, greater height (base 40 ft), minimum 30-foot height with 2+ working stories at front building line, and minimum floor area for single-family attached dwellings.   | Sec. 24-537 C(2)a                     |
|   | • <b>Similar reduced/increased parameters for commercial uses and small-scale (&lt;1-acre) mixed use, including minimum 30-foot height with 2+ working stories at front building line, and greater height (base 40 ft).</b>  | Sec. 24-537 C(2)b                     |
|   | • <b>Similar reduced/increased parameters for larger-scale mixed use, including minimum 30-foot height with 2+ working stories at front building line, and greater height (base 53 ft).</b>  | Sec. 24-537 C(2)c                     |
|   | • <b>Maximum gross residential density of 30 units per acre for multi-family dwellings within a mixed-use development.</b>   | Sec. 24-537 C(2)b)8)b) and C(2)c)6)b) |
|   | • Base 1.0 floor area to site area ratio (FAR) for commercial, mixed-use and Planned Development projects with only surface parking, with potential FAR bonuses for providing certain development features.  | Table 24-537.A                        |
|   | • FAR bonus for commercial, mixed-use and Planned Development projects if no off-street parking (surface, drive-under or garage) abuts a public street or sidewalk.  | Table 24-537.A                        |
|   | <b>Landscaping Requirements</b>  |                                       |
|   | • Required openings through perimeter parking area landscaping approximately every 50 feet, "for pedestrian and bicycle circulation to and from public sidewalks or other circulation routes."   | Sec. 24-513 E(2)a                     |
|   | • Waiver of parking structure screening when the structure is "wrapped with liner buildings that accommodate active uses other than parking."  | Sec. 24-513G                          |
|   | <b>Design Standards</b>  |                                       |
|   | • Purpose statement includes: "For the Urban Village-Downtown (UV-D) and Urban Village-Transit-Oriented Development (UV-T) districts, certain standards within this Section, together with the use regulations and physical development standards for each district, are especially intended to promote and maintain an Urban development character as described in the respective district purpose statements." | Sec. 24-513a A(1)                     |
|   | • Placement of buildings on same or adjacent sites to "appear as a group of attached buildings to the extent practical."   | Table 24-513a.A                       |
|   | • Encouraged use of canopies and awnings on building and parking structure façades adjacent to and above public sidewalks and other public spaces to provide shade and weather protection and to add visual interest to structures.  | Table 24-513a.A                       |

# MOST CONCERNING

Allowable height

Minimum height

Zero or minimal setback

Lot/site coverage

Multi-family use and/or density

| District Purpose Excerpt for Urban Village-Downtown (UV-D)  | Specific Regulatory Parameters   | Pertinent Chapter 24 Content            |
|---|--|---|
|   | • Site area credit for larger-scale mixed use and Planned Developments where site abuts an alley or vehicular access easement.                                   | Sec. 24-537 C(2)c)1)(b) and C(2)d)1)(a) |
|   | • <b>Maximum base 79-foot building height for Planned Developments.</b>  | Sec. 24-537 C(2)d)3)                    |
|   | • <b>Maximum site coverage for Planned Development established by approved site plan.</b>  | Sec. 24-537 C(2)d)5)                    |
|   | <b>Off-Street Parking and Loading</b>  |   |
| ... <b>reduced reliance on off-street surface parking</b> ...   | • Applicability to UV-D of the allowance for up to 50% of required parking to be provided off-site, subject to maximum distance and other conditions.            | Sec. 24-514 C(2)                        |
|   | • Commercial surface parking lots not permitted (commercial parking garages require specific use approval).  | Sec. 24-537 B(2)c)1)                    |
|   | • Potential FAR bonuses for mixed-use and Planned Development projects that provide some or all parking as garage or drive-under parking versus surface parking. | Table 24-537.A                          |
|   | <b>Off-Street Parking and Loading</b>  |   |
|   | • Allowance for on-street, over-the-curb (versus off-street) loading in UV-D from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.  | Sec. 24-514 G(5)                        |
|   | • Shared parking provisions for mixed-use developments to enable reduction of usual required parking for individual uses, subject to conditions.                 | Sec. 24-514a (b)                        |
| (continued from last item) ... and <b>greater architectural enclosure</b> of public streets and spaces to support a pedestrian orientation, | • Shared parking provisions for adjoining developments under different ownership, subject to conditions.   | Sec. 24-514a (c)                        |
|   | • <b>Minimum 30-foot height with 2+ working stories at front building line for single-family attached dwellings.</b>   | Sec. 24-537 C(2)a)4)                    |
|   | • <b>Maximum zero setback for at least 50% of front façade of single-family attached dwellings.</b>  | Sec. 24-537 C(2)a)7)(a)i                |
|   | • <b>Minimum 30-foot height with 2+ working stories at front building line for commercial uses and small-scale (&lt;1-acre) mixed use.</b>                       | Sec. 24-537 C(2)b)4)                    |
|   | • <b>Maximum zero setback for at least 75% of front façade of commercial uses and small-scale (&lt;1-acre) mixed use.</b>  | Sec. 24-537 C(2)b)6)(a)i                |
|   | • <b>Minimum 30-foot height with 2+ working stories at front building line for larger-scale mixed use.</b>   | Sec. 24-537 C(2)c)2)                    |
|   | • <b>Maximum zero setback for at least 75% of front façade of larger-scale mixed use.</b>  | Sec. 24-537 C(2)c)4)(a)l                |
|   | • Minimum height for Planned Developments established by the approved site plan.   | Sec. 24-537 C(2)d)2)                    |
|   | <b>Design Standards</b>  |   |
|   | • Clustering of buildings on same or adjacent sites to "create pedestrian-oriented precincts and walkable connections."  | Table 24-513a.A                         |





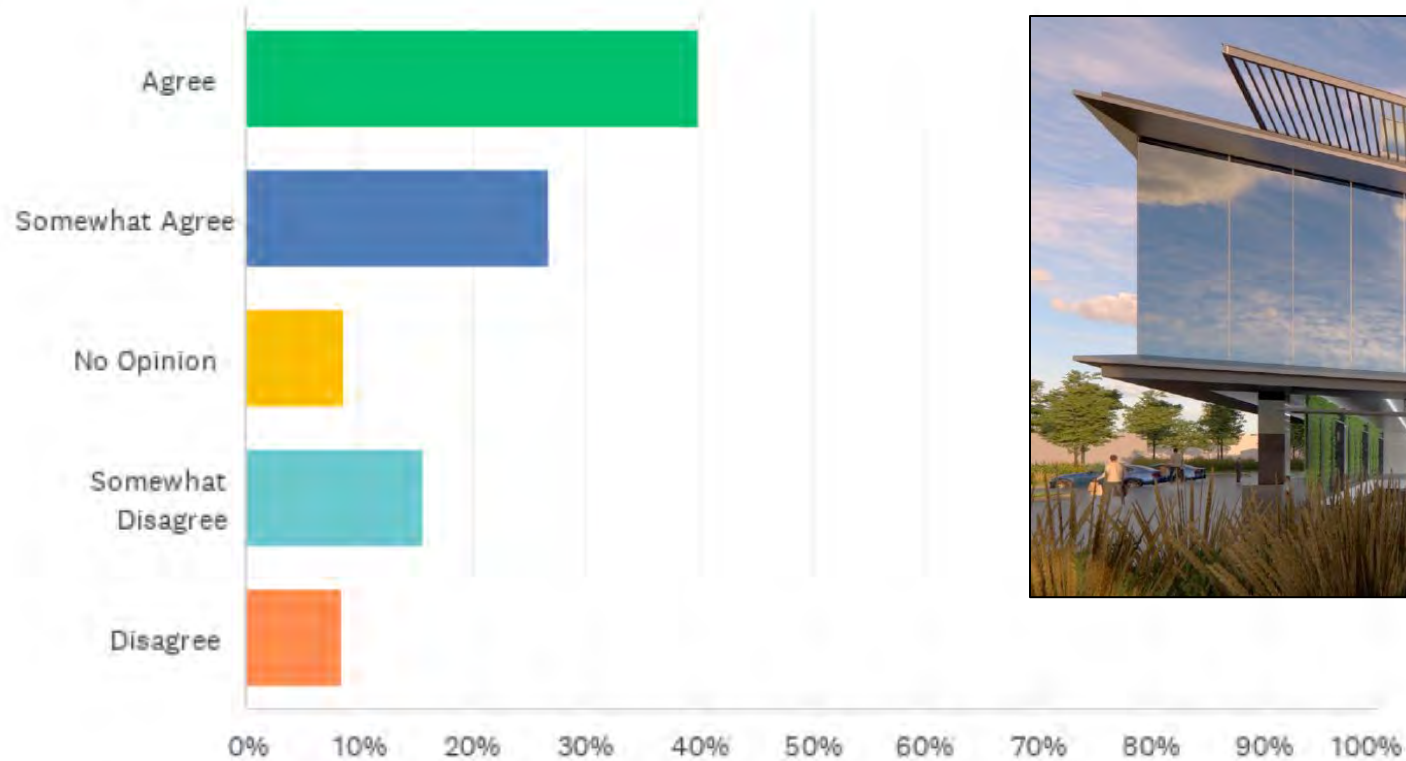
# Bellaire Town Center: Universal Praise

SOURCE: [sdirealty.com](https://www.sdirealty.com)



#### QUESTION 14:

The City should focus on establishing appropriate zoning parameters for where and how commercial development or redevelopment occurs and is designed in Bellaire. The City should not get involved in trying to “recruit” or encourage certain commercial uses or mix of uses in such areas.



SOURCE: Page

- 829 (74%) of the 1,122 eligible resident respondents answered this question.
- 67.1% agree or somewhat agree.
- 24.2% disagree or somewhat disagree.
- 8.7% have no opinion.

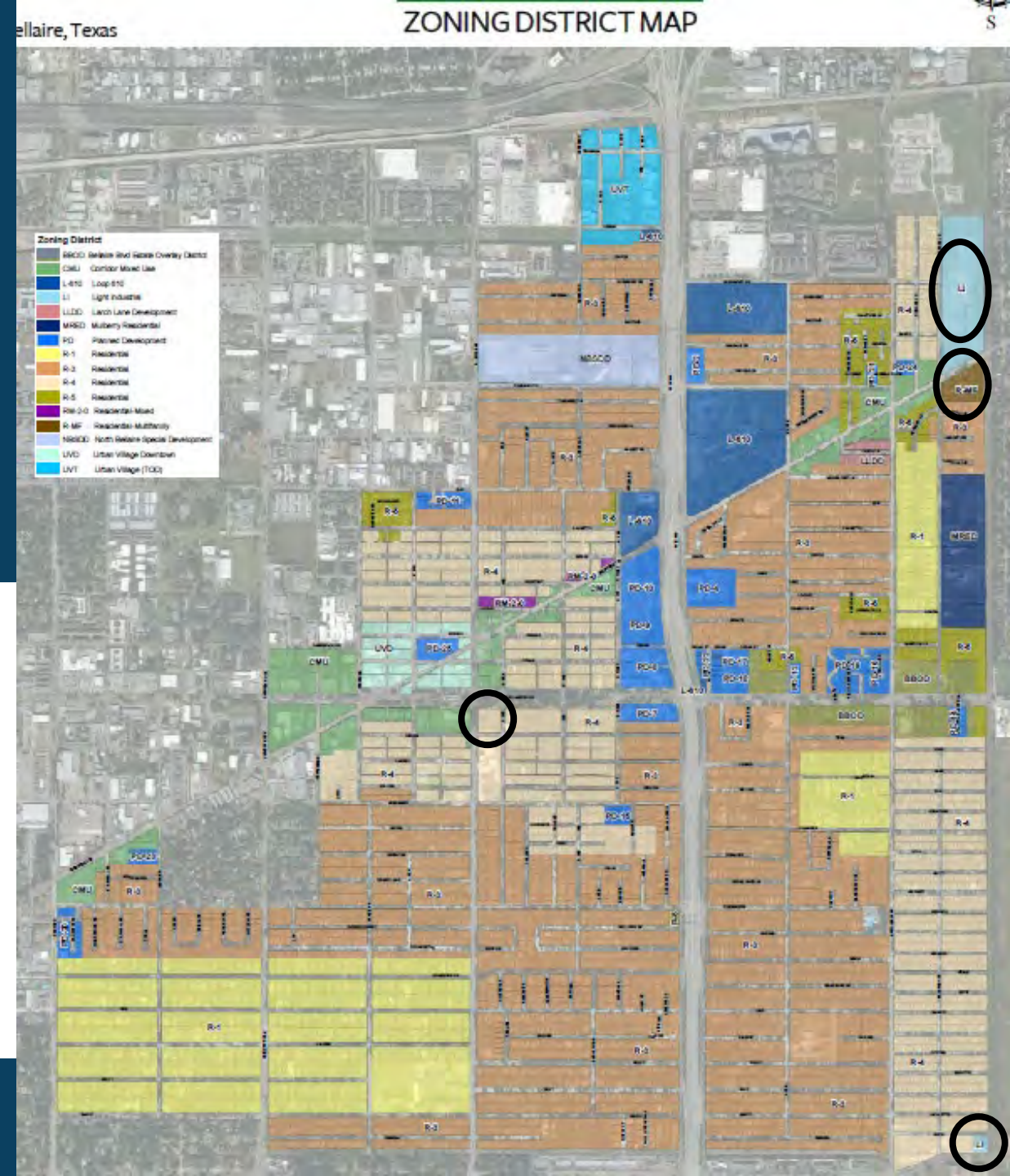


# Consistency Between Future Land Use & Character Map and Zoning District Map

## ZONING MAP CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLAN REVIEW

To conclude this interim briefing paper, we note the handful of properties in Bellaire that are currently zoned differently from what was anticipated when the Future Land Use and Character (FLUC) map within the Comprehensive Plan was last updated and adopted in 2015, then 2017. These locations include:

- The current church property at the southeast corner of Bellaire Boulevard and S. Rice Avenue, which is zoned R-4 Residential but is designated on the FLUC map as Corridor Mixed Use.
- The current Pont Alba apartments property, which is zoned Residential Multi-Family (R-MF) but is designated on the FLUC map as Corridor Mixed Use.
- The current CenterPoint property, which is zoned Light Industrial (LI) but is designated on the FLUC map for Corridor Mixed Use along its Bissonnet Street frontage and General Residential on the balance of the property to the rear.
- The current car wash property on Beechnut at the southeast corner of Bellaire, which is also zoned Light Industrial (LI) but designated on the FLUC map as Corridor Mixed Use.





# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BELLAIRE

TEXAS



ADOPTED  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

AMENDED  
APRIL 3, 2017



Bellaire, TX  
Comprehensive Plan  
Next Stop 2040



# PHASES and TIMELINE



May -  
June

## Early Engagement

- **WORKSHOP 1: Issues and Needs**
- Early round of outreach activities
- Forum on Bellaire's Future

July -  
Aug

## Bellaire Today / Plan Direction

- Community survey
- Bellaire Today Report
- Plan Direction presentation
- **WORKSHOP 2: Plan Direction**

Sep -  
Oct

## Bellaire Tomorrow

- P&Z work sessions, further outreach
- Drafts of updated plan content
- Results of regulatory evaluation
- **2<sup>nd</sup> round of outreach activities**

Nov -  
Feb  
2024

## Plan Implementation

- New Action Agenda portion of plan
- Open House and further outreach
- **WORKSHOP 3: Overall Draft Plan**
- Public hearings and adoption