



# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**

**April 2021**

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An honest understanding of current conditions and the efforts undertaken to move forward.

Conceptualizing solutions that can help the East Aldine community realize its full economic potential. Brainstorming envisions physical enhancements, programmatic changes, partnerships, new ideas, and new approaches to established ideas.

A series of action items designed to bring concepts into reality. Each recommendation can be completed through funding, leveraging, advocating or informing. Recommendations are not ideas - they are practical and implementable tasks.

A prioritized program of action items including a general concept of cost, partners that mutually benefit, and potential funding sources.



# INTRODUCING



## About the East Aldine Management District

The East Aldine Management District was established in 2001 by the Texas Legislature as a municipal management district. Through annexations that have occurred through the years, the District has grown to approximately 20.3 square miles. The area is located very largely in unincorporated Harris County with the exceptions of Aldine Westfield Road and Keith-Wiess Park which are extensions of the City of Houston as it stretches north to Bush Intercontinental Airport. The District is bounded generally by the City of Houston municipal limits to the south, Hirsch Road to the East, the Sam Houston Tollway to the north and the Hardy Toll Road to the West.

The East Aldine Management District is funded through a 1-cent sales tax within the boundaries of the District that has steadily grown in part as a result of the efforts by the District to improve the area.

# Purpose

The East Aldine community is for all purposes a community of its own with its own unique character and culture. It is an unapologetically blue-collar and gritty place where industry and neighborhoods meet. It is largely Hispanic as proven by the various businesses and restaurants advertising in Spanish.

Those are the obvious traits.

Dig deeper and East Aldine is a community brimming with pride and energy. It is a place where community and family are words that are almost interchangeable. East Aldine takes care of its own.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan is designed to bring economic prosperity to East Aldine - on its terms. It is designed to take an honest look at conditions and trends, seek out opportunities available to the community, and create a path toward success that can be practically implemented by the East Aldine Management District and its various partners.

## THE KEYS TO EAST ALDINE'S ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

1

### BE TRUE TO ALDINE

Growth is certainly desirable, but it should not come at a cost of losing the identity of East Aldine. As East Aldine continues to see success it will become a community of interest for a variety of investors. It will be critical that the community is able to collaborate with investors to ensure that new development does not spur unwanted gentrification or other impacts that result in an erosion of local identity and prosperity.

2

### GREATEST ISSUES = GREATEST STRENGTHS

Flooding has forced many East Aldine residents from their homes on more than one occasion. At the same time, efforts to alleviate flooding have provided the community with a growing number of detention basins and channels that provide a natural connection to the community and the region. Similarly, it is a regular occurrence to bemoan the lack of national brand retailers and restaurants, but that gap has been filled by locally owned shops.

3

### MAINTAIN & GROW PARTNERSHIPS

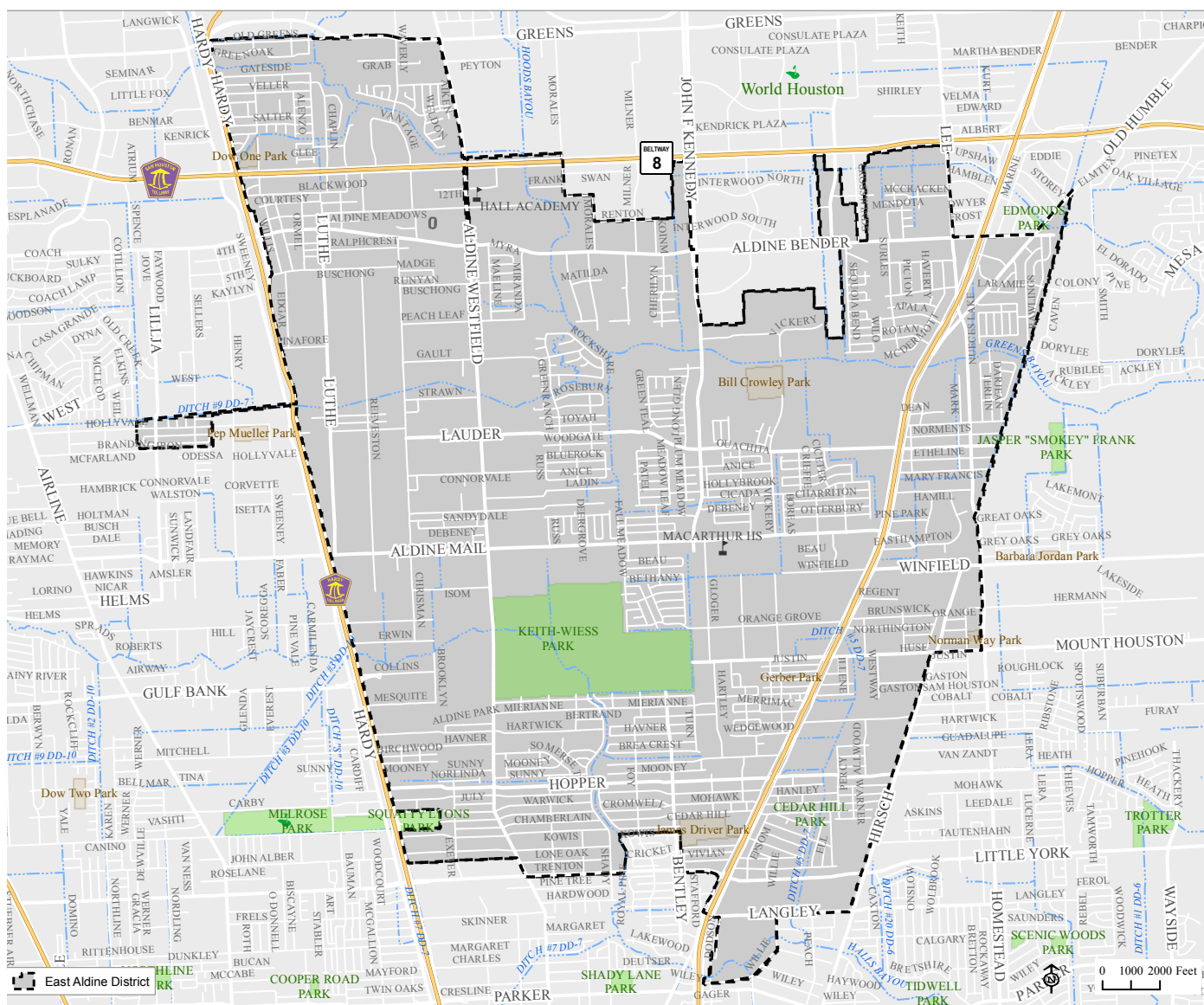
East Aldine should celebrate its successful ability to partner and leverage resources. Crime has been addressed in collaboration with the Harris County Sheriff's Office. Flooding improvements are underway in coordination with Harris County Flood Control. The Town Center is a success in part because of partnerships with Lone Star College and BakerRipley. Those and new partnerships will be important for continued success.

4

### BE PATIENT... AND PUSHY

In the world of baseball, every fan hopes to see a home run; however, most games are won by singles, doubles and the occasional stolen base. Building a strong and vibrant economy is similar. It requires the patience to remain focused on the long term vision. At the same time, East Aldine deserves to see the same improvements and consideration offered to other areas of the Houston Region. Being patient does not require being bashful.





## Boundaries of the East Aldine Management District, 2021

# Types of Economic Development

The East Aldine Management District can be involved in every facet of economic development. To date, the district has placed the majority of its economic development focus into Community Development and Capacity Building, such as infrastructure, public safety, street lighting and construction of the Town Center as well as effort applied to Information Delivery and Brand Identity. The District has added landscape enhancements and identification markers to a series of medians throughout the district. Those improvements have been made largely in an effort to make the area more attractive for investment by addressing some of the community's most glaring needs. While more work certainly remains, the District's efforts have been successful, as seen by the steady growth of industrial and heavy commercial activity that has taken place in recent years.



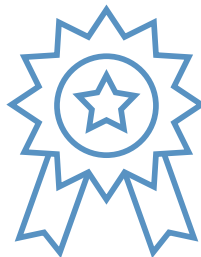
**ENTREPRENEURSHIP &  
SMALL BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT**



**BUSINESS  
RECRUITMENT &  
ATTRACTION**



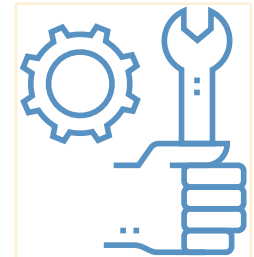
**EXISTING BUSINESS  
RETENTION &  
EXPANSION**



**COMMUNITY MARKETING &  
BRAND IDENTITY**



**INFORMATION DELIVERY &  
ECONOMIC GARDENING**



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &  
CAPACITY BUILDING**



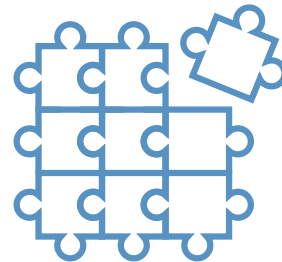
# Roles for the District

The East Aldine Management District does not have the full fiscal capacity of a municipality that allows for substantial incentives to promote economic development, nor does it have the ability to craft regulations that prohibit undesirable activity. That is not to say that the District cannot pursue economic development. In fact, the District has the very unique ability to impact economic development in a variety of ways. Whether through direct financing, leveraging a variety of resources, advocating for projects or other improvements, or by providing invaluable marketing and information, the District has the full capacity to impact and spur economic activity.



## FINANCE

Directly fund specific projects or programs that EAMD has determined will directly or indirectly spur the type of reinvestment desired in the community.



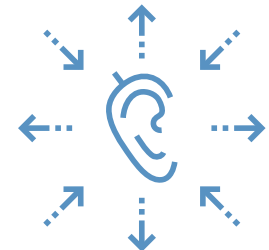
## LEVERAGE

Provide a portion of the funding or effort necessary to spur investment by others, kick start a program, move investment along at a faster pace, or nudge design, direction or location in a manner that best benefits the community.



## ADVOCATE

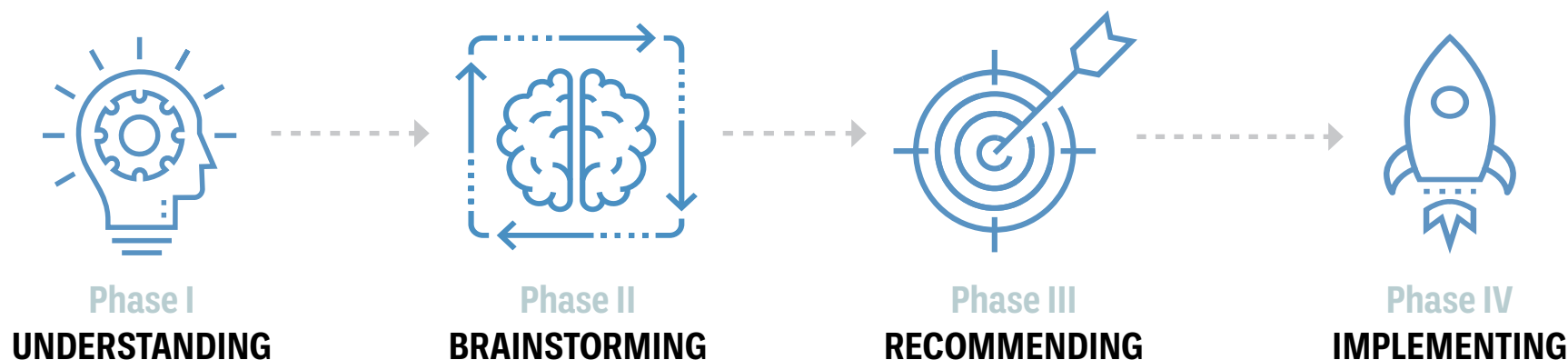
Promote or pursue the development, direction, location or magnitude of specific policies, programs or projects that would be created and implemented by others.



## INFORM

Deliver information to existing or potential investors or partners regarding the district, aspects or benefits of the district, or specific facets or locations of the district or promote the community brand and image.

# The Planning Process



The planning process begins with an honest understanding of current conditions and the efforts undertaken to move forward. How did the community evolve to where it is today? What makes the East Aldine community unique in comparison to other areas of the Houston region? What is getting in the way? How is the EAMD making economic development happen? Is the community on the right track?

Phase II involves conceptualizing solutions that can help the East Aldine community realize its full economic potential. Built upon the results of the first phase, Brainstorming envisions physical enhancements, programmatic changes, partnerships, new ideas, and new approaches to established ideas. This phase creates new possibilities for the district while discarding elements that could be getting in the way of success.

Phase III introduces a series of action items designed to bring the concepts from the previous phase into reality. Each action recommended as part of the Economic Development Strategic Plan is directly tied to one or more type of economic development and can be completed by the EAMD through funding, leveraging, advocating or informing as previously described. Recommendations are not ideas - they are practical and implementable tasks.

Finally, the planning process concludes with an Implementation program of the action items recommended in the previous phase. Phase IV prioritizes recommendations and adds a level of detail including a general concept of cost, partners that mutually benefit, and potential funding sources.

# UNDERSTANDING



The planning process begins with an honest understanding and assessment of the community, its current conditions and the various efforts undertaken to move forward. How did the community evolve to where it is today? What makes East Aldine unique in comparison to other areas of the Houston region? What is getting in the way? How is the EAMD making economic development happen? Is the community on the right track?

Understanding East Aldine requires looking at the community holistically through a variety of lenses. Through data collection, review of prior studies, stakeholder interviews, and professional observations, a comprehensive and complete picture of the East Aldine District is revealed.

This section includes the following:

- **What We Heard** - An overview of perceptions, challenges and opportunities as experienced and expressed by residents, businesses and stakeholders in the community.
- **Demographic & Market Overview** - A snapshot of the current demographic, socioeconomic and market conditions in East Aldine.
- **Previous Plans & Studies** - A review of planning and economic development efforts previously undertaken by the community.
- **Observations** - Professional observations made by the consultant team with regards to challenges and opportunities in the community.

# What We Heard



## Community Assets

- Location near the City and Airport
- Residents are family focused and centered
- Incredible amount of community involvement and pride
- A community of entrepreneurs, small businesses and mom and pop shops
- Strong partner in the School District
- Keith Weiss Park
- Rural flavor next to the big city
- Local food and restaurants



## Opportunities

- Social & cultural activities
- Entertainment venues
- Public events that attract people to the area/Destination Drivers
- Performing arts/Outdoor events/movie nights
- Festivals
- Farmers Market

# What We Heard



## Infrastructure

- Lack of multi-modal connectivity to parks and destinations including sidewalks and bike trails
- Improvements needed along Aldine West Field Rd
- Flooding/drainage is a major issue
- There is a need for Infrastructure for housing development including water, sewer and drainage



## Image, Marketing & Brand

- Market and brand the area by using assets more effectively to attract investment
- Partner with other organizations and entities
- Communicate what is going on in the District and what is being planned, market vacant land
- Advertise what the community is doing in terms of crime, flood control and beautification
- Beautify the area, clean up image and perception. Enhance nuisance abatement, need for heavy trash pick up
- Enhance safety



# What We Heard



## Businesses

- Invest in the existing businesses
- Support food trucks in vacant strip centers
- Industrial development is thriving and should be marketed, creates jobs locally, and then there will be a need for restaurants and other retail
- 59 corridor needs to be built to its fullest potential (water and sewer will be a catalyst)
- Attract restaurants to Aldine West Field area
- Need for grocery store/banks/food options/entertainment



## Entrepreneurship

- Lots of creativity and talent (arts and crafts, cake decorating etc.) Within the community
- Need to provide access to capital and classes
- Opportunity to partner with other entities including Lone Star, SBA, in supporting small businesses and entrepreneurship
- Work with financial institutions and leaders
- Create internships and apprenticeship opportunities



# What We Heard



## Housing

- Need affordable options, including workforce housing options
- Need for more varied housing options for people who live here
- Ideal product for East Aldine would be homes between 1200 sf to 1500 sf priced at around \$150,000
- Housing stock is competing with \$700 to \$900 rent payment
- A lot of the current housing stock is older, abandoned and/or not being maintained
- Strong desire/need for a new stock of homes
- Potential for senior housing options

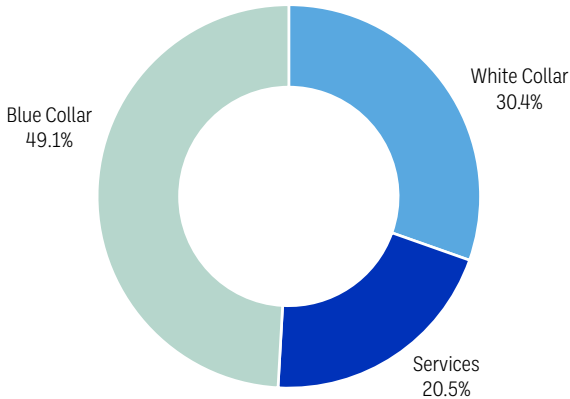
# Demographic & Economic Overview

East Aldine MD	63,615	65,396	3.78	\$36,182	28.2	80.2%	55.5%	13.2%
	Population	Day Time Population	Average Household Size	Household Income	Median Age	Hispanic Origin	Households with Children	Multi-generational Households
Houston	2,414,978	3,212,048	2.63	\$52,144	33.7	43.6%	35%	6%

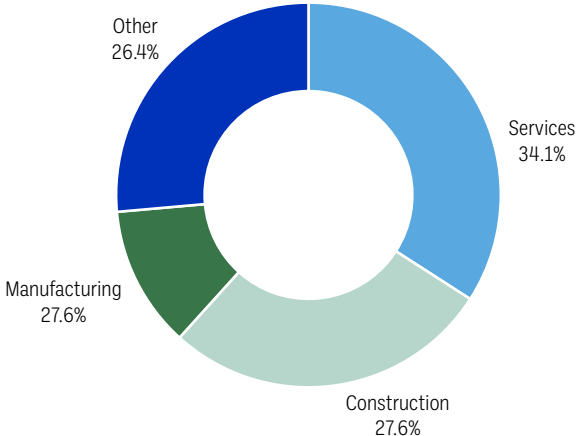
## Population

East Aldine’s population primarily consists of young Hispanic families. Households are generally larger, with children and are multi-generational in nature meaning at least one grand parent resides within the household. Median Household income in the District is \$36,182, which is significantly lower than the City of Houston’s average.

Employment Population 16+ by Occupation

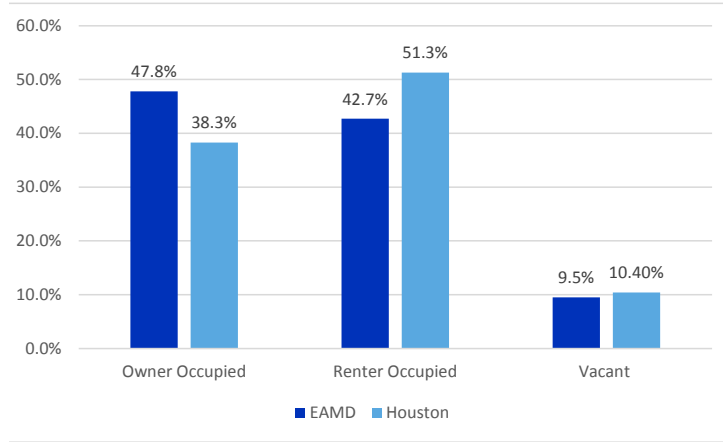


Employment Population 16+ by Industry



The majority of the population is employed in blue collar occupations in the Manufacturing, Construction and Services Industries. Approximately 27% of the population 25 years + has a high school diploma as their highest level of education, while only 5% have a college degree, which is lower than the City of Houston’s average of 34%, for completion of a Bachelor’s or Graduate Degree.

Owner Occupied Housing Units by Value



**\$128,134 Average Home Value**  
**\$92,315 Median Home Value**

Multi Family

	East Aldine	Houston
Multi Family		
Vacancy Rate	7.7%	9.4%
12 Month Absorption	0.8%	1.40%
Rent (1 Bedroom)	\$781	\$964
Existing Units	4,009	
Existing Buildings	28	

Housing

Majority of the housing stock consists of single family homes, with approximately 48% being owner occupied, and 43% being renter occupied. Data indicates a trend towards increasing renter occupied units. The housing stock is older with the majority built pre 1975.

There are just over 4,000 multi-family units in the District, with the majority of buildings being classified as “C” class. There hasn’t been any construction of new multi family units until 2019, with the construction of the first “A” class units in the District. Vacancy rates have been increasing over the years

## Tapestry Segments

ESRI's tapestry segmentation provides an accurate, detailed description of America's neighborhoods—U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinctive segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition. This information provides a snapshot of the different households that dominate a neighborhood or community and allows for a better understanding of a household's demographic and socioeconomic characteristics including information on their lifestyle, habits, interests, spending patterns and skill sets.

Often this information is used by retailers and businesses in providing insights on potential customers and their behavior/spending patterns as well as an understanding of underserved markets.

In East Aldine the following three segments dominate the area and comprise 88% percent of households:

- Barios Urbanos - 67.9%
- New West Residents - 9.5%
- City Commons - 9.1%

A more detailed description of each of these segments is provided on the next page.

## Tapestry Segments



### Overview

Family oriented communities with Hispanics making up the majority of this group.

Young Hispanic Market, with the majority being new to America and new to their careers. Majority of households consist of families with young children.

A young market, primarily consisting of single-parent, single person female headed households.

### Socioeconomic Traits

More than one in four are foreign born and primarily consist of younger families with children or single-parent households and multiple generations households. Most are employed in the manufacturing, construction or retail trade sectors.

Men typically work in blue collar jobs, primarily in the service industry. Skilled workers steer toward construction and manufacturing sectors. Female labor force participation is low perhaps due to the language barrier, but also because of their parenting responsibilities.

A third of this group have a college degree or have spent some time in college, however a quarter of this group has not finished high school. Unemployment is high, with nearly one in four households receiving contributions from social security and public assistance.

### Housing & Income

Median HH Income: \$38,000  
Median Net Worth: \$26,100

Typical Housing: Single Family  
Median Value: \$92,200

Income: Median Income: \$30,200,  
Median Net Worth: \$10,700

Typical Housing: Multi Family  
Average Rent: \$887

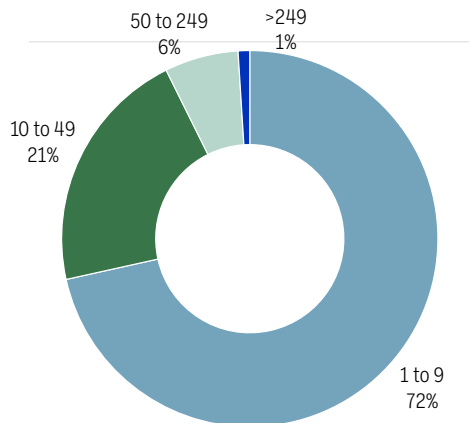
Income: Median Income: \$18,300  
Median Net Worth: \$9,800

Typical Housing: Multi Family  
Average Rent: \$658

**Total Businesses = 2,121**

**Total Employees = 28,048**

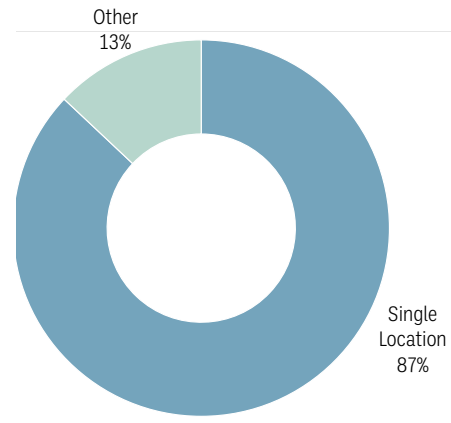
#### Businesses by Employee Size



#### Top Industries by Number of Businesses:

- Retail Trade (15.5%)
- Other Services (12.4%)
- Accommodation and Food Services (7%)

#### Businesses by Type of Business



#### Top Industries by Number of Employees:

- Construction (23.3%)
- Manufacturing (18.4%)
- Wholesale Trade (11.6%)

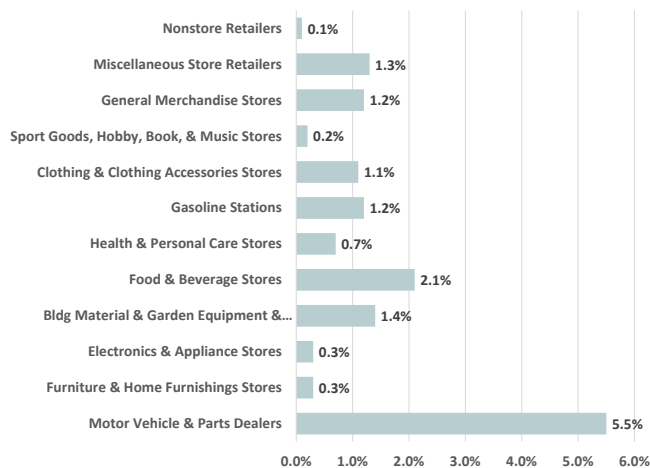
## Businesses & Industry

They are approximately 2,100 businesses in East Aldine employing just over 28,000 individuals. The majority of businesses in the community are small businesses with approximately 72% employing less than 10 employees. Many of these small businesses are unique to East Aldine with a single location.

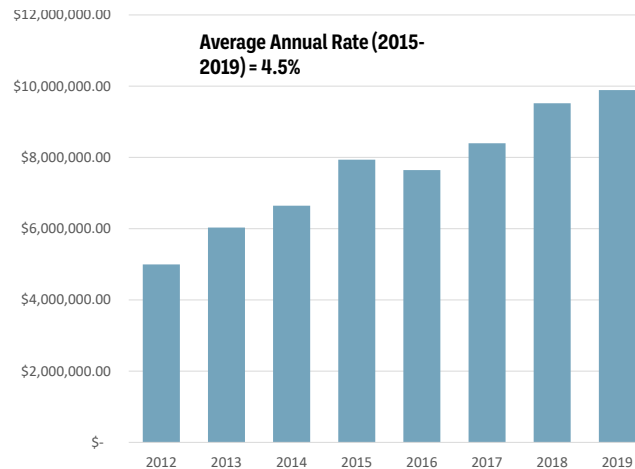
The construction, manufacturing and wholesale trade industries comprise the top three industries in the district employing 53.6% of employees working in the District. With regards to number of businesses Retail Trade dominates, with 15.5% of businesses followed by Other Services and Accommodation and Food Services industries.



### Retail Trade Industry



### Sales Tax Revenues



### Retail Industry

The Retail Trade and Food Services and Drinking Places Industries comprise 22% of all businesses in East Aldine and employs over 3,300 individuals. Within these industries restaurants and automotive related businesses dominant with regards to the number of businesses.

Overall the retail industry is performing strong with low vacancy rates and growth in retail sales. Over the past five years sales tax activity has grown by 4.5%.

### Retail Trade & Food Services and Drinking Places

	Businesses		Employees	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Retail Trade	329	15.50%	1936	6.90%
Food Services & Drinking Places	133	6.30%	1463	5.20%

## Retail Market Potential

Esri's Retail MarketPlace data compares retail sales and consumer spending by industry and measures the gap between supply and demand. This data provides a glimpse into the amount of retail potential that "leaks" into other communities, as well as market segments where the study area takes in more than its share.

Leakage in an area represents a condition where demand exceeds supply. In other words, retailers outside the market area are fulfilling the demand for retail products; therefore, demand is "leaking" out of the trade area. Such a condition highlights an opportunity for new retailers to enter the trade area or for existing retailers to extend their marketing outreach to accommodate the excess demand.

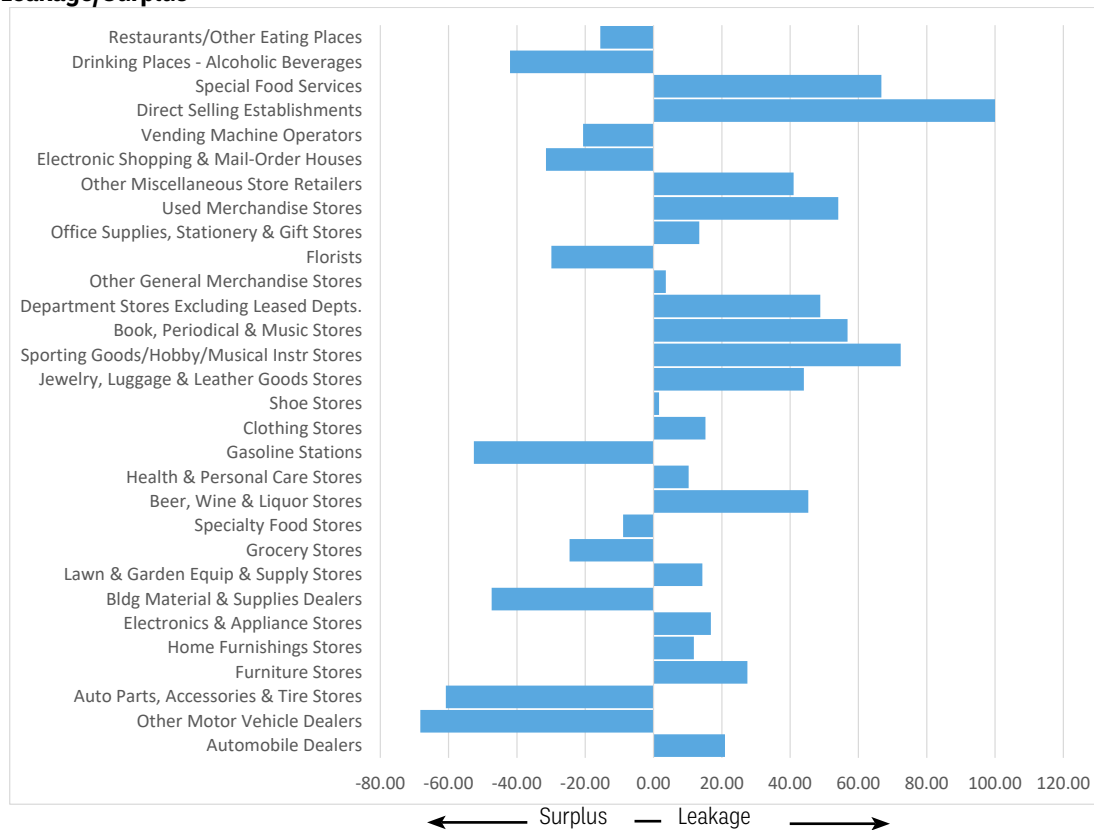
Surplus in an area represents a condition where supply exceeds the area's demand. Retailers are attracting shoppers that reside outside the trade area.

In East Aldine, overall for the retail and food & drink industries, retail sales exceed the retail demand of the households living within the district. This indicates that retailers are selling to customers who live outside the district. The adjacent chart breaks down retail trade into sub-categories showing where demand is leaking out.

## Retail Market Potential

Industry Summary	NAICS	"Demand (Retail Potential)"	"Supply (Retail Sales)"	Retail Gap
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$403,136,224	\$553,352,770	-\$150,216,546
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$363,607,240	\$498,316,771	-\$134,709,531
Total Food & Drink	722	\$39,528,984	\$55,035,999	-\$15,507,015

## Leakage/Surplus



## Commercial Development



### Office

	East Aldine	Houston
Market Rent Per SF	\$20.28	\$28.01
Vacancy Rate	22.7%	18.7%
12 Month Absorption	2.5%	-0.2%

### Inventory

56 Buildings  
2 Million Square Feet



### Retail

	East Aldine	Houston
NNN Rent Per SF	\$15.25	\$17.81
Vacancy Rate	3.8%	5.6%
12 Month Absorption	-1.9%	0.8%

### Inventory

254 Buildings  
2.3 Million Square Feet



### Industrial

	East Aldine	Houston
Vacancy Rate	8.4%	7.1%
Market Rent/SF	\$6.81	\$6.67
Absorption	0.2%	0.7%

### Inventory

568 Buildings  
16.6 Million Square Feet  
Under Construction 481,000 square feet

On overview of commercial real estate within the District indicates that the community is competitive when compared to the Houston region. Overall rents are generally lower or in line with the Houston market. Vacancy rates for retail are low when compared to the Houston area, while office vacancy rates remain high. Overall industrial real estate dominates the area with over 16 million square feet and another 500,000 sf under construction.

## **What's Been Studied: 20 Years of Planning and Plan Implementation**

The East Aldine community has been the focus of a number of plans. However, unlike many communities, East Aldine has actively utilized its various plans. In fact, many of the most critical successes of the community are the results of plans for the area, including:

- Creation of the East Aldine Management District (initially known as the Aldine Improvement District)
- Water and wastewater improvements for numerous community neighborhoods and residents
- Street lights throughout the community
- The community logo and system of signage and gateways, along with landscaped medians
- Development of the Aldine Town Center

2000

TOPICS

Governance  
Mobility & Connectivity  
Infrastructure & Stormwater Management  
Housing & Neighborhoods  
Economic Development  
Public Health & Safety  
Urban Design & Enhancements

2002

TOPICS

Governance  
Mobility & Connectivity  
Infrastructure & Stormwater Management  
Economic Development  
Public Health & Safety  
Urban Design & Enhancements

## Aldine Community Development Plan

### About

The Aldine Community Development Plan represented the first true study of Aldine. The plan followed the first effort to create a “special improvement district” failed. The Sheriff Storefront had recently been established to address criminal activity in the area. Keith Weiss Park lacked many of its improvements. Businesses were faltering and the community struggled with a lack of water, wastewater and stormwater improvements.

The wide range of topics highlighted by the plan is testament to the significant level of need that existed prior to creation of the East Aldine Management District. Through an extensive public engagement process and data analysis, the plan recognized a variety of issues and offered a series of strategies.

### Major Outcomes

- Creation of the Aldine Improvement District (now the East Aldine Management District)
- Subsequent studies and projects by the District and its partners including the District’s street light program, substantial water and sewer improvements, stormwater management improvements, education and community services, gateways and landscaping along major entryways into the city, the mosquito spray program, and heavy trash pickup.
- The partnership between the East Aldine Management District and the Harris County Sheriff’s Office and resulting impact on area criminal activity.

## AID Service & Action Plan

### About

In 2001, the Texas Legislature created the Aldine Improvement District and voters in the community approved a one-cent sales tax. The Service and Action Plan established the “vision, goals, and services to be rendered, and improvements to be made” by the District. The Plan categorizes action items into categories such as Water/Sewer Infrastructure, Transportation and Mobility, Security and Public Safety, Environmental and Urban Design, Neighborhood Clean-Up, Economic Development and Public Relations, and more. The plan was broad to allow flexibility in adapting to needs and opportunities in the community. Actions proposed in the plan were based on recommendations of the Aldine Community Development Plan.

### Major Outcomes

- Successful application to the Texas Water Development Board and subsequent partners substantially increasing the number of residents with water and sewer service.
- Development of a website and information available to brokers and business/property owners.
- Installation of 307 new street lights in East Aldine and an additional 51 recently approved.
- A graffiti abatement program, a mosquito spray program, and regular heavy trash service.
- Subsequent study and implementation of gateway and landscaping improvements.
- Financial support and partnership with the Harris County Sheriff’s Office to address criminal activity.



# 2004

TOPICS

Governance  
Infrastructure & Stormwater Management

# 2007

TOPICS

Mobility & Connectivity  
Urban Design & Enhancements

## AID Water & Wastewater Planning Study

### About

In May, 2002, the newly created District successfully applied for a grant through TWDB, including “matching funds of \$25,000 to develop a planning study for water supply and wastewater treatment facilities throughout the district.” The study clearly stated the need and solutions for water supply and wastewater collection and treatment improvements. Among findings, 1,385 of 4,619 individual septic systems were failing and an additional 2,401 of the systems were on lots too small or otherwise unsuitable for onsite septic systems. Most of the residences with unsuitable systems had shallow, improperly constructed water wells contaminated by failed septic systems.

### Major Outcomes

- The District created and supported the Aldine Water & Sewer Authority as the Local Government Corporation suggested by the study and required by Harris County for use of Community Development Block Grant funds for infrastructure improvement.
- The District, in partnership with Harris County, has since successfully implemented approximately \$43 million in water and wastewater improvements in the community with more than \$3 million in additional improvements in progress.
- The majority of projects have been completed with the assistance of grant funds through Harris County or the Texas Water Development Board.

## Mobility, Signage, and Landscaping Master Plan

### About

In 2007, the renamed East Aldine Management District turned its focus on improving transportation, attractiveness and recognition of the District. The subsequent plan examined all aspects of mobility ranging from the poor performance of Aldine Westfield for vehicular traffic to the lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Among proposed improvements was an extension of West Mount Houston through Keith Weiss Park and extension of JFK Boulevard to create a major roundabout amenity. The plan also identified opportunities to address the community’s lack of identity and overall visual clutter. The quality of the mobility network and community identity were recognized as important to local economic development efforts.

### Major Outcomes

- Recognition of the need for a “downtown civic center” initiated the concept of the Aldine Town Center.
- Creation of the East Aldine Management District logo and branding program.
- Major gateway signage in medians throughout the District.
- Stylized blade signs atop street signs and at major intersections.
- Landscape enhancements throughout the district, including major gateways and along the medians of JFK Boulevard.

2009

TOPICS

Economic Development

## Market Analysis & Economic Development Strategy

### About

The 2009 report served as a successor to a similar study completed in 2005. The study provided an economic development strategy and provided input in marketing and business targeting efforts. The study proposed:

- Focusing attraction efforts along JFK Boulevard as well as US 59 between Little York and West Mount Houston.
- Attracting light industrial and service industries interested in the local workforce and its skill sets.
- Supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs with access to information and direct assistance.
- Implementing marketing activities such as a brochure, a site list, and talking with developers/brokers.

### Major Outcomes

- Robust light industrial and warehousing activity has occurred along JFK Boulevard as anticipated, coupled with new activity along Beltway 8; however, redevelopment along US 59 (or substantial interest) has not materialized.
- Creation of a maker space as part of the BakerRipley facility in the East Aldine Town Center to support local small businesses and potential entrepreneurs.

2013

TOPICS

Infrastructure & Stormwater Management  
Economic Development  
Urban Design & Enhancements

## East Aldine District Town Center Park Master Plan

### About

By 2013 the East Aldine Management District had acquired 61 acres along Aldine Mail Route and adjacent to Keith Wiess Park for purposes of creating a “town center” for the East Aldine community. The design team coordinated with local leaders and presented a series of site plans culminating in a design that is generally reflective of today’s final design.

The campus format was crafted to “incorporate generous landscape elements that blur the lines between the Town Center/Park and loop trails that connect into the existing and future park trail system. Pedestrian and bicycle access to the surrounding neighborhoods will be included to enhance community accessibility.”

### Major Outcomes

- The Town Center is near complete and incorporates many of the features considered in the master plan while adding BakerRipley as an additional campus partner.
- Transactions for sale of the commercial sites for the mid-size grocery and retail space represent the final components in the Town Center.
- Design standards developed in collaboration with original Town Center tenants require sites and architecture to reflect many of the traits discussed in the master plan.

2015

TOPICS

Mobility & Connectivity  
Public Health & Safety

2017

TOPICS

Governance  
Mobility & Connectivity  
Infrastructure & Stormwater Management  
Economic Development  
Public Health & Safety  
Urban Design & Enhancements

## East Aldine District's Town Center Development: A Health Impact Assessment in Harris County, Texas

### About

The HIA was initiated following final design of the Town Center. The intent was to examine the roles that the Town Center could have on local public health. The study offered recommendations to alleviate potential issues resulting from the Town Center and methods for enhancing the area's value to the community. The study noted the District's efforts to create "meaningful and strategic mixed land use projects, such as the Town Center, may help improve health outcomes for EAD residents." It also gave options for enhancing the role of the Town Center, including pedestrian and bicycle connectivity with area schools, neighborhoods, trails and park spaces.

### Major Outcomes

- Trails noted in the HIA and designed to be an important part of the Town Center's master plan have proven to be actively used by the community.

## EAMD Board Retreat Results

### About

The EAMD Board of Directors and staff attended a retreat for purposes of refining the direction of the organization. When requested to rank the Service Plan categories, Board responded as follows:

- Water and sewer projects
- Economic development/marketing
- Mobility, including street/intersection improvements and sidewalks
- Public safety patrols, graffiti abatement, and security cameras
- Beautification such as monuments, signage, mowing, trash and bandit sign removal
- Public health and welfare
- Community development support activities

### Major Outcomes

- A local developer has initiated a series of single family and multifamily projects in East Aldine in response to the Board's desire for new housing options.
- The retreat spurred creation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

## East Aldine Resiliency Plan

### About

East Aldine was one of four communities along the Greens and Halls Bayous to receive a resiliency study from the Greater Houston Flood Mitigation Consortium as part of a larger study of the Greens Bayou watershed, largely in response to the devastation resulting from Hurricane Harvey. The focus on overall resiliency resulted in a plan that addressed a range of topics aimed at addressing vulnerabilities throughout the community but with particular emphasis on flooding and stormwater management. Of particular note, the study states that “over half of all land area in the neighborhood is in either the floodway, the 100-year floodplain, or the 500-year floodplain. FEMA notes that nearly half of all properties in the neighborhood flooded during Hurricane Harvey.”

### Major Outcomes

- Projects noted as “ongoing” are now either still ongoing or complete.

## Remaining Identified Actions from Studies

Following are major items recommended by one or more prior studies for East Aldine that have not been fully implemented:

- The majority of proposed mobility improvements, including major roadway improvements
- Sidewalk enhancements and connectivity. Pedestrian and bicycle amenities continue to be a major weakness in the mobility network, particularly the ability to safely travel from neighborhoods to community destinations
- Opportunities for “Green Links” throughout the District
- Multi-modal improvements including bus routes/stops, sidewalks and trails
- Accessibility and connectivity to Keith Wiess Park along with additional park improvements
- The focus of infrastructure improvements has been in residential areas, leaving substantial commercial and industrial areas (and harder to reach residential areas) with a need for improved service
- Expanded water and sewer service to Hamill Road and other commercially viable or underperforming areas
- Continued stormwater management improvement and recreation opportunities
- Comprehensive flood buyout program
- Strategic continued acquisition of property for stormwater storage and subsequent construction
- Additional signage and branding opportunities
- Marketing materials and information that tell the story of East Aldine to prospective brokers and investors
- Business growth and retention efforts
- Land assembly opportunities, such as along US 59 or for purposes of residential development
- Development of incentives to spur desired growth and development patterns, including both development and redevelopment
- Urban farming opportunities on consolidated buyout lots
- Tool lending library and re-use warehouse
- Pop-Up shop infrastructure, kiosks and small business support
- Infill and new housing
- Expansion of affordable housing options
- Opportunities to expand outreach and services available at the Town Center
- Increased activities and programming in the District

## What we Saw: Observations

Statistics and studies are critical to an understanding of any community, including East Aldine. However, nothing replaces the art of observation - looking at the community from the sidewalk, observing leaders from the front row, or talking with residents and business owners in casual conversation.

The following are observations collected during site visits and in conversations as part of gaining a full understanding of the community of East Aldine.

### East Aldine is the Small Town next to the Big City.

East Aldine has the unique small town feel and attitude that so many communities desire but seldom actually possess. East Aldine may be nestled in the major metropolitan area of Houston but once off of the interstate and into the community it truly feels, and, in many ways functions, like a rural small town. Despite its size, from the limited water and sewer service, condition of roads, and lack of sidewalks to the small lots, small homes, “mom and pop” businesses, the community has the physical feel and limitations of a small town. More, East Aldine has small town culture. It is family and community focused. Children may leave the nest but they return to East Aldine and remain a part of the community.



### **East Aldine should be proud. It's well earned.**

East Aldine has struggled with a variety of major issues ranging from failing (and sometimes nonexistent) infrastructure and flooding to crime, a struggling economy and lack of identity. Any one of the issues faced by this community could have resulted in continued disinvestment. Not in East Aldine. The community has maintained its worth and has aggressively sought to address its issues. The community persevered in creating the East Aldine Management District (then called the Aldine Improvement District) and formed partnerships with a variety of local, county, state, nonprofit, and private entities to transform the area and directly address many of the most pressing issues. East Aldine is a community that is succeeding on its own terms and becoming increasingly attractive to investment. There remains much to be done, but this community has proven to be up to the task.



### **Getting from Here to There is not easy.**

East Aldine has long recognized that it has a connectivity issue, particularly for pedestrian and cycling access. Given the demographics of the community, getting around and having options to get around without a car is a matter of necessity more than recreation. Unfortunately, traveling to destinations within the community – including neighborhoods, schools, parks, shops, restaurants, and transit stops – by foot or bike can be difficult, unsafe and highly inconvenient due to a lack of adequate sidewalks, trails, crosswalks and more. Adding to this are roadway issues, including connectivity issues and improvements to major roadways such as Aldine Westfield.





## Infrastructure remains a major Work in Progress.

While not a visible success, major improvements to water and sewer service may be among the biggest achievements in East Aldine. Unfortunately, more is necessary and the most difficult and expensive areas remain. Improvements have almost exclusively benefited neighborhoods, leaving commercial and industrial areas with continued need for service.



## Flood Improvements are an Opportunity as well as a Necessity.

Any discussion of the need for continued flood improvement in East Aldine would be understated. The community continues to address the impacts of Hurricane Harvey. However, while flooding has severely impacted this area, all of the improvements both needed and underway offer a tremendous opportunity not only from a drainage standpoint but also from a recreational, economic development and marketability standpoint. Stormwater detention basins and drainage channels also create opportunities for recreation activities, trails, increased connectivity, destinations, and an image of “making Aldine green”.



### **Industry and a strong industrial sales base are critical to East Aldine.**

Industry and “heavy commercial” have long been a part of East Aldine. Older industrial activities have long sat adjacent to the neighborhoods and commercial areas of the community. Visually, elements of the community’s industrial heritage are a regular site. Industry has been a source of employment for area residents and pulled people into East Aldine from outside of the area. Equally important, sales from the activities of local industry and heavy commercial activity directly and significantly contribute to EAMD’s revenue stream. Indirectly, the community benefits from the purchasing power of industrial businesses as well as any purchases made by employees while in the area. While some communities seek to push industrial activity out, the East Aldine community chooses to build partnerships and find ways to grow together.



### **East Aldine is a haven for Entrepreneurs.**

East Aldine is a community full of homegrown, blue-collar entrepreneurs, including a number of residents with strong trades and craftsmen skills. This is reflected in the number of local “mom and pop” storefronts, restaurants, repair shops, and various other businesses throughout the District. The entrepreneurial spirit of the community spurred BakerRipley to establish the Fab Lab makerspace in the Town Center. While some in the community have taken full advantage of their skills to establish active businesses, others see it as a hobby or a source of supplemental income. Regardless, the level of entrepreneurship is further reflection of the “can do” spirit of the community.



## The Charmful and Harmful of Clutter.

The East Aldine Management District has aggressively enhanced gateways into the community with landscaping and entry signage. However, once beyond the points of entry, the view along the community's corridors can regularly take on a cluttered/crowded feeling, where cars, spare tires, outdoor storage, and heavy trash and other materials that can dominate the landscape. In some commercial areas the clutter adds an eclectic character to the corridor. In other areas it becomes a distraction that may limit investment and diminish an otherwise inviting community atmosphere.



## The Town Center gives East Aldine a destination and a platform.

The East Aldine community has long lacked a “center” of activity. The 61-acre East Aldine Town Center is a direct response to that need. Located along Aldine Mail Route, the Town Center has the potential to be accessible to the entire community, including immediate proximity to Keith Weiss Park and Aldine ISD facilities. The campus meets a variety of community needs, including a focus on continuing education and access to the Fab Lab makerspace, as well as health and financial services. The green space and amphitheater in the center of the Town Center provide a gathering and celebration space. Commercial space in the Town Center will add to the local retail mix, including a much needed grocery store. Equally important, the campus sets a new standard for development in the community and an economic catalyst for the surrounding area.





### **East Aldine Offers a Unique and Marketable Set of Resources.**

Consider the following: A growing number of green spaces – many of which are connected by one of two bayous that traverse the area. A community that is rich in culture, family, and history – deep enough to draw its youth back. A location that is highly attractive to industrial and warehouse activity thanks in part to proximity to the Bush Intercontinental Airport as well as immediate interstate access. A new town center that serves as the community's first catalytic, large scale destination. Available property for continued new development. A management district and numerous active community redevelopment partners. While other areas may offer some of these features, the combination – coupled with the “can do” spirit of the community, place East Aldine in a unique position for success.



# Summary SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Built Environment</b>			
Proximity to major thoroughfares & Bush Intercontinental Airport	Limited bicycle and pedestrian connectivity	Bayous & detention areas as natural and amenitized green spaces, connections & attractions	Flood prone
Ample undeveloped property	Poor conditions of roadways, particularly Aldine Westfield	Activation of the Town Center for events and entertainment	Expense of delivering water & sewer improvements to remaining areas
Property and structures are affordable compared to the region	Visual clutter throughout the community	Connectivity between the Town Center and Keith-Wiess Park	
East Aldine Town Center, including Lone Star College & BakerRipley	Limited transit service	Housing rehabilitation and new development	
Adjacent to the City of Houston			
<b>Demographics</b>			
Strong sense of community and culture	Limited disposable income	Increased community wealth through skills development and local investment	Gentrification
Children return to East Aldine to live and raise a family	Limited white collar labor pool		
Strong blue-collar labor pool			

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Business Environment</b>			
Solid and growing industrial & heavy commercial presence	Continued misperception of community outside of East Aldine	Continued industrial & heavy commercial growth	Aging and underperforming structures
Entrepreneurial and small business presence and mindset	Access to capital and resources	BakerRipley business focus including Makerspace, Farmers Market and Commercial Kitchen	
Substantial small business presence provides higher circulation of money within the community	Majority of commercial activity is stretched out along commercial corridors	Agritourism on vacant, particularly flood prone land	
<b>Economic Infrastructure</b>			
East Aldine Management District Revenue & Capabilities	No Municipal Resources	Economic Development Specialist expands EAMD capabilities	Limited revenue stream prevents EAMD from incentivizing large scale development
Limited development regulations allows for flexibility	Limited development regulation allows some incompatibilities	Livable Centers study to provide additional guidance	
Strong positive impact of EAMD and partners			





# BRAINSTORMING



Brainstorming represents the discovery of ideas and solutions that will lead to a future of prosperity and wealth for East Aldine and those residents, business owners and property owners that choose to invest in the community. The concepts that are developed as part of this process capture those elements that make East Aldine truly unique and uniquely marketable in comparison to other communities. They build on the natural strengths and opportunities of the community and address weaknesses and threats.

The Brainstorming section represents a transition from understanding the community to establishing the basis for a fully implementable economic development program.

## CONCEPT 1:

### **Own Entrepreneurship and Small Business Ownership as a part of the Community Brand**

In East Aldine, the concept of small business and entrepreneurship comes naturally. It is prevalent throughout the community. It is represented in the local work ethic. For many, it is not only a chance to make a living, but it is also an opportunity to thrive, be successful and to play a role in the success of the community.

East Aldine Management District should pursue and promote locally owned small business and franchises while also continuing to support local national chains. Methods could include

- “Shark Tank” business concepts with local students alongside private/private partners
- Develop an ongoing Buy Local/Shop Local campaign that celebrates and emphasizes the drive to increase Community Wealth

- Establish Economic Gardening as a program to assist local entrepreneurs in getting started or moving to the next phase in business
- Promote and enhance the Farmers Market to allow locals to showcase/sell their product in a cost effective manner.

## CONCEPT 2:

### **Provide Options for Local Business Growth beyond Home**

The days that required moving directly from a home-based business to “brick and mortar” ownership are over. Today, business owners can take advantage of a variety of methods to gradually grow, including options such as kiosks, containers, food trucks, pop-up shops, shared space, online activity, delivery services and more. Business “graduation” is the ability for a business to grow into the next opportunity. Doing so, however, requires both local supply and demand. Critical to East Aldine is the ability to not only foster growth, but to help ensure that options are available for a business seeking to graduate. Ideas to allow businesses to expand include:

- Create an opportunity for shared retail space
- Establish opportunities for pop up retail to complement existing retail/service locations, particularly in existing commercial “villages”
- Promote temporary/affordable retail containers, trucks, or new space (preferably developed locally)
- Consider need for blue collar start up spaces such as facilities for repair services, assembly, wood/metal work and more

### **CONCEPT 3: Embrace and Become a Partner to Local Industry**

Industry is a critical part of the local employment base. The products produced by local industry and the disposable income of employees shopping and dining in the area contribute to the local economy and sales revenues. Ensuring that the area remains attractive to both existing and potential industrial investors is a role that is shared by the East Aldine Management District and major partners, including the City of Houston, Harris County and the Greater Houston Partnership. Options could include:

- Conduct a Business Retention & Expansion program focused exclusively on local industry and heavy commercial to determine needs and opportunities

- Coordinate with local industry and heavy commercial about opportunities to shop/sell local
- Ensure that local residents have the necessary skills to provide the desired labor pool for local industry
- Promote local food delivery/trucks in proximity to local industry

### **CONCEPT 4: Become a Community of Local Developers**

East Aldine should not need to wait for outside developers to bring develop and redevelopment to the community. While there are opportunities in the community for large scale development, East Aldine is also in need of investors interested in small scale redevelopment and infill development that keeps the existing neighborhoods and commercial areas both interesting and prosperous. A focus on creating a local development community builds local prosperity several-fold by developing with local people and making improvements through local firms thereby increasing the prosperity and disposable income of locals. Additionally, small scale, incremental development requires less capital and resources. Methods for promoting local development include:

- Partner with the Incremental Development Alliance to become a resource to encourage residents to become local incremental developers
- Promote training at all aspects of incremental development
- Prioritize support for projects that are locally developed
- Develop a Site/Facade Grant/Loan Program

## CONCEPT 5:

### **Transform EAMD into an Active Economic Development Resource and Partner**

The East Aldine Management District has not historically placed tremendous emphasis on its role as an economic development resource in the past – and for good reason. As noted by various studies, much of the District’s attention has been devoted to stabilizing the community and addressing issues such as water, wastewater, stormwater, beautification, and public safety. Placing emphasis on becoming a resource and partner to the business community requires a different approach to identity, customer service, programming and community engagement. Considerations include:

- Conduct an annual/regular survey (or series of surveys) to find retail and service gaps that could be filled locally

- Consider a retail/service challenge
- Partner with SBA, BakerRipley, AISD and other resources to build an entrepreneurship and small business support program in the Town Center including training, mentorship, access to resources/services, B2B networking and more
- Acquire land and potentially be a development partner to meet needs that will not be met by the private sector

## CONCEPT 6:

### **Treat Housing as Economic Development**

Housing is oftentimes considered a quality of life issue when it is just as important to see housing development and redevelopment as a local economic development opportunity. With certainty, new and redeveloped housing is needed in East Aldine; however, consideration of housing as an economic development function allows EAMD to see it also as an opportunity for job and value creation. In this regard, housing development complements the proposed incremental development program. At the same time, housing also provides an opportunity for development at a larger scale. Opportunities include:

- Keep money local! Incremental development opportunity
- Consider sponsoring a Buy Back the Block Crowdfunding Program
- Land bank property for redevelopment

- Promote development of diversified housing options, including accessory dwelling units.
- Establish a development incentive program for appropriate, quality housing development

## **CONCEPT 7: Create a Local Agritourism Industry**

East Aldine has an established history with agriculture that is a natural fit for the community and a golden opportunity for growth. Urban agriculture and agritourism are growing industries that will see continued expansion as the United States continues trends toward locally sourced food, farmers markets, food trucks and more. It is an opportunity to create an experience that is unique, highly marketable and fitting to the character of the community. It also offers numerous avenues for local households, businesses and investors to get involved and prosper. Imagine a program that allows for locally sourced food, flowers, and more to be integrated into local food stalls, food trucks or nurseries. It can be coupled with school culinary and agronomy programs to create a new “crop” of restaurateurs, entrepreneurs, and more. Additionally, agritourism has the added benefit of connecting the community in ways that most industries cannot. Ideas include:

- In the event of buyouts from flood damage, coordinate with partners to use acquired property for urban farming tied to an overall urban agriculture/agritourism program alongside a farmer’s market and the kitchen incubator
- Build on agritourism that was and can continue to be a special part of this community. Share the history and character of the area (historical/story telling, attractions) while creating local wealth and addressing community health issues. Perhaps capture the history with rail carts and the community’s history in fruits and other goods.
- Partner with AISD, BakerRipley, the restaurant industry and others to build a communitywide program for entrepreneurship related to agribusiness that extends from “farm” to “table”

## **CONCEPT 8: Fill the Financing Gap**

Investors, developers and business owners of any size will all attest that financing is as important as the best business plan or business opportunity. Most will also note that financing needs can be dramatically different depending upon the business venture. East Aldine has a number of avenues available through partnership and internally to help address financing for purposes of economic development.

- Coordinate with partners to set up a microloan program for local businesses
- Investigate creating a crowdsourcing solution that establishes a community of local investors for local projects
- Acquire funding and partnership with local banks to establish a local revolving loan fund
- Consider creation of a community bank

## **CONCEPT 9:**

### **Celebrate and Share the Uniqueness of East Aldine**

- Celebrate the flavors of East Aldine through a series events, festivals, food events, and more that focus on/derive from local culture and character to reinforce the image of pride in heritage and share it with others throughout the area
  - Make local art an integral part of the fabric of the community at all levels
    - public spaces, green spaces, commercial areas, corridors, trails and more
  - Regularly program the Town Center with events and activities that provide local interest or meet local needs
  - Promote one or two large, well promoted, regionally recognizable events designed to draw visitors (and their money) to East Aldine and to reframe the community brand/image
- Host monthly or quarterly “trade days” at the Town Center
  - Be creative! Ask for ideas from the community through social media for activities or events

## **CONCEPT 10:**

### **Enhance Image to Enhance Community Health and Wealth**

The East Aldine Management District can tout a number of successes in the area of reframing public image and perception, including the adoption of an initial brand, landscape and gateway improvements, branded signage, and the addition of street lights. However, image requires constant improvement and evaluation, particularly now that the community is prepared to place a greater focus economic development and building local prosperity. Thoughts include:

- Conduct an aggressive, professionally designed, image/marketing and clean up campaign
- Host communitywide clean-up events
- Establish a regular heavy trash program



## CONCEPT 11:

### Promote Well-Connected Places & Attractions

The Town Center is a tremendous step forward for East Aldine regarding creation of a gathering space and an overall heart for the community that is intentionally designed for people to gather and socialize. There are also a limited number of businesses that individually serve as major attractions that draw people from the surrounding area. Most businesses are located in commercial strip centers or stand-alone retail spaces along the roadway that are sufficiently spread out that they cannot create the necessary critical mass to serve as a walkable destination. In truth, East Aldine is relatively devoid of destinations to shop, gather, enjoy entertainment, and simply “hang-out”. Methods to create places and attractions could include:

- Prioritize clustering commercial activity where appropriate (to promote walkable places that have typically offer greater return on investment)
- Prioritize connectivity improvements to designated/developed commercial “villages”
- Celebrate East Aldine through events and other efforts of programming the Town Center

## CONCEPT 12:

### Continue Expansion of Infrastructure Services

The East Aldine Management District has successfully planned for and implemented infrastructure improvements nearly since the inception of the organization. While a number of improvements remain necessary, many of the most pressing residential needs that could affordably be reached, have been met. Remaining improvements will include a shift to more difficult to reach areas as well as those with more focus on commercial and industrial activity. Ideas for expansion include:

- Seek out partners and programs with an interest in growing the market viability of industrial areas for service expansion
- Prioritize strategic extension of water and wastewater services with the intent to reach industrial and heavy commercial areas



### CONCEPT 13:

#### **Make Connectivity and Mobility Improvements a Necessary Priority**

East Aldine Management District established a plan for transportation improvements but has had little opportunity to directly implement those recommendations or acquire the necessary partners or financing to make them possible. Connectivity remains one of the most critical infrastructure issues in East Aldine with the potential to have a direct impact on economic development as well as quality of life. Methods of moving forward include:

- Partner with Harris County and other entities for purposes of improving pedestrian/cycling connectivity, including installation of sidewalks, trails, shared paths, crosswalks, intersection enhancements, and other features with a focus on major destinations, including schools and the Town Center

- Coordinate with area utilities, HCF-CD, and other entities for purposes of utilizing easements, drainage channels and other access routes for trails
- Continue to emphasize improvement to Aldine Westfield and other major corridors for purposes of improved mobility, including the possibility of the corridor as a complete street in coordination between the City of Houston and Harris County

### CONCEPT 14:

#### **Amenitize and Expand Stormwater Management Improvements**

Flooding is an ongoing issue for East Aldine, possibly even after substantial improvements are completed by the Harris County Flood Control District. On the other hand, the substantial improvements previously made and that are underway also pose an opportunity for beautification, connectivity and recreational activities that add value to the community and indirectly increase local value. Ideas include:

- Partner with Harris County, Harris County Flood Control District and other agencies to continue amenitize detention facilities as they are constructed, including opportunities for additional gathering/programming spaces

- Coordinate with partners in continued enhancement of Greens and Halls Bayous, particularly as connectivity corridors as well as stormwater management networks
- Coordinate with stormwater management entities and seek partners for purposes of actively integrating stormwater management techniques into the community where practical and purposeful

# RECOMMENDING



The East Aldine community is brimming with potential for reinvestment and new investment. The Recommending section of the Economic Development Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for the East Aldine Management District to bring that potential into reality. It is a series of actions based on previously discussed concepts - projects to undertake, programs to create, partnerships to build, and more. Each recommendation is one more step toward greater economic prosperity for the community and its residents.

Like all aspects of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, every proposed action is designed to be undertaken alone or in partnership by the East Aldine Management District. They put into plan a program that builds upon the district's strengths while leaving other aspects of economic development, such as pursuit of major new industrial activity, to partners for which those actions are better suited.

# Embrace, Facilitate & Celebrate Entrepreneurship & Small Business

## 1

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Conduct a Buy Local/Shop Local Campaign

A Buy Local/Shop Local campaign celebrates and emphasizes the drive to support local businesses and build local prosperity. Buy Local/Shop Local campaigns offer a cost-effective way to build a relationship between local small business and EAMD while also building awareness of the importance of buying and shopping locally.

- Organizations such as AMIBA (American Independent Business Alliance) and Main Street America offer materials and guides for operating a Buy Local/Shop Local program. Materials can be used as a foundation for a design that is representative of East Aldine, including use of both English and Spanish. They also provide a physical opportunity to make the EAMD brand more prominent.

- Start small, perhaps with a focus on a Buy Local/Shop Local campaign during the holiday season. The program can be strategically expanded as appropriate. Note that while the focus of many shop local programs is locally owned small businesses, it can also be expanded to include area franchises and national brands.



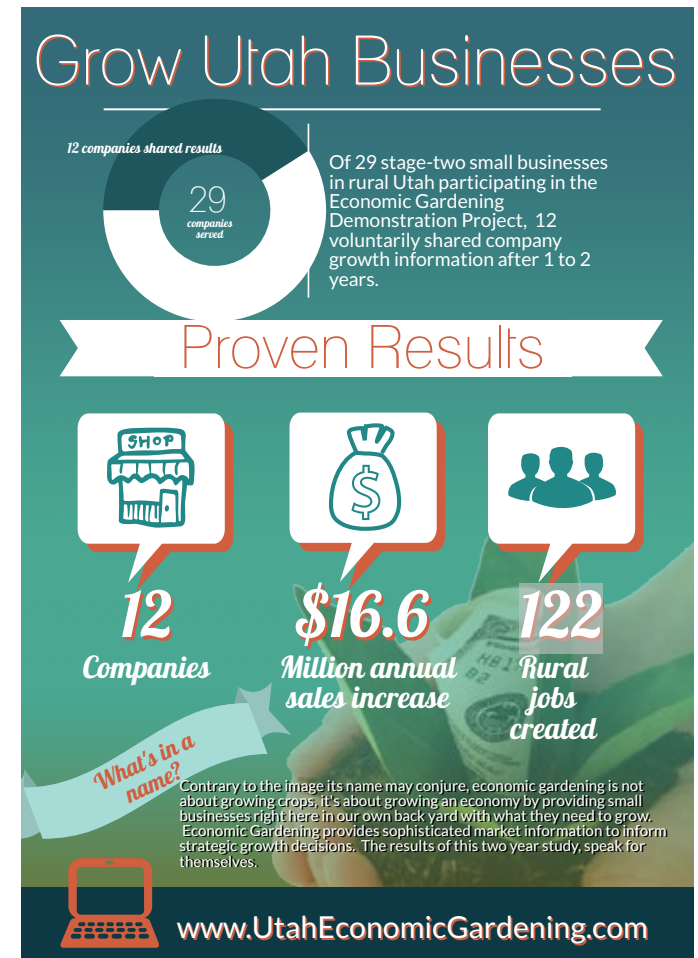
## 2

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Become a Resource for “Economic Gardening”

Economic Gardening is a program that provides business data and findings to small businesses seeking to expand services, attempt a new product, or otherwise try something different. By offering access to data and technical support resource, EAMD is providing access to information that allows local businesses to make better educated decisions about expansion.

- Partner with entities such as SBA and local universities that offer economic gardening services. In this manner, EAMD serves as the resource but utilizes the expertise and strength of partner organizations.
- While particularly valuable to small business, an economic gardening program can be beneficial to any local businesses regardless of size and service.
- Studies show strong loyalty to a community that is supportive as a business grows.





# 3

## RECOMMENDATION

### Develop a “Small Business Makeover” Program

A “small business makeover” can be a local business competition in which one business receives a physical, financial, and marketing makeover provided by EAMD and its partners. The concept has seen growing popularity as a result of communities such as River Heights, organizations such as Square (Storefront Makeover), and the television series Small Business Revolution. The program is very well suited to the economic development services that a management district can provide and particularly well suited to East Aldine. The intent is several-fold. The competition is a fun and highly-marketable way to improve local small businesses, create interest in East Aldine, and provide valuable information to the business community at-large.

- Budget a specific amount and coordinate with partners such as local lending institutions, foundations, and major businesses to add to the

amount available. Partners get the added benefit of publicity and potential additional business.

- Promote a highly visible marketing campaign inviting local small businesses to apply for the program and utilize an interview process to select the awarded business.
- Utilize experts in various fields to work with the local business to make recommendations and physical improvements to improve the competitiveness of the business.
- Develop a complementary small business bootcamp that corresponds with the work underway for the business, allowing other local businesses to benefit from expertise brought in to address issues such as signage, curb appeal, marketing (physical and online), finances/budgeting/business basics, and more.



# 4

## RECOMMENDATION

### Establish a Business “Pitch” Competition

Establish a business “pitch competition” that promotes local entrepreneurship and grows the small business community. Other organizations conduct similar pitch programs, most notably the City of Houston’s Liffott Business Plan Competition. This program is intended to be specific to East Aldine and to benefit the local community. Similar to the proposed “small business make-over” program, the “pitch competition” is highly marketable and serves the additional purpose of garnering excitement about local business, promote local shopping for goods and services, and building the reputation of EAMD as a partner to the local business community.

- Budget a specific amount and coordinate with partners such as local lending institutions, foundations, and major businesses to add to the amount available. Support could also include reduced cost for space

through coordination with local property owners or reduced rent for a booth at the proposed farmer’s market (noted below).

- Utilize partners and experts to provide support and training in the process of assembling a business plan and business startup.
- Tie the pitch competition into a larger training program available to all local entrepreneurs and business owners that are seeking to start or grow a business and do so in coordination with partner entities to provide complementary and value-added services.
- Consider developing a version of the pitch competition for area students intended to promote entrepreneurship at an early age.





## BUSINESS PITCH COMPETITION

There will be two pitch competitions  
Startup Businesses & Existing Businesses

**March 14, 2020 - 8050 Paradise Road**

**What Funders Want  
To See Workshop**  
9:00 AM to 10:00 AM

**Business Pitch  
Competitions**  
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM















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# Provide Options for Local Businesses to “Graduate” in East Aldine

5

## RECOMMENDATION

### Build an Inventory of Graduation Options

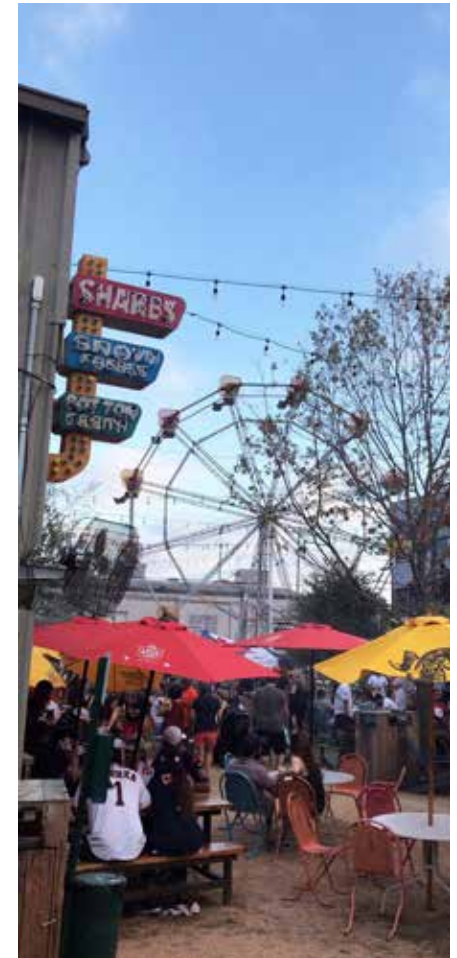
Maintain an inventory of various graduation options available in East Aldine and define market gaps. Currently many of the options for graduation don’t exist in East Aldine. For example, the area is only beginning to offer a local marketplace and has no access to pop-up retail, food trucks, containers, or shared spaces. The absence of those entry level opportunities may well be hindering business growth in the community. Many of these projects are low-cost, limited risk ventures that can be added to existing commercial or industrial areas or can be clustered at a single site such as a space that may include trucks and market tents as truly temporary spaces and shipping containers as more permanent, but movable space.

6

## RECOMMENDATION

### Develop a Courtyard for Food Trucks and More

Partner with local developers and property owners to establish an initial, open air site for trucks, kiosks and shipping containers that is located outside of the Town Center. The intention is to create a destination-style space in East Aldine with space for food, beverages, entertainment and complementary shopping that can be open and active both in the daytime and evening hours. (Consider the possibility that trucks and containers could be modified locally, further promoting local economic development).





# 7

## RECOMMENDATION

### Introduce Shared Retail Space

Coordinate with a local storefront owner/developer to create a shared retail space in which local entrepreneurs can lease a portion for purposes of a small shop or kiosk. The shared space allows for entrepreneurs to enter the market at very low cost and the presence of multiple vendors creates critical mass. The shared space creates an interesting shopping environment if cultivated properly.



# 8

## RECOMMENDATION

### Develop Commercial “Pop-Up” Opportunities

Coordinate with local property owners and developers to seek out opportunities for pop-up retail to complement existing retail/service locations, particularly in areas considered to be commercial “villages” (pop-up retail can be added in parking areas and vacant spaces).



## 9

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Develop “Blue Collar” Business Spaces

Coordinate with local property owners and developers to ensure the availability of blue collar start up spaces such as facilities for repair services, assembly, wood/metal work, craft space and more.



## 10

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Make Business Training Local & Locally Relevant

Establish local training and mentorship services for local business ranging from general business management to more specific programs relevant to specific industries.

- Survey local business owners to determine the types of training that would be beneficial in the area.
- Establish training and connections necessary to enter other critical retail/dining/service pipelines such as online activity and delivery.
- Create a Develop and market a series of training, seminars and workshops led by area experts as well as regional experts that focus on the needs of blue-collar entrepreneurs and business owners. In doing so, take full advantage of the FabLab as a business incubator.
- Develop a small business networking program for those that take advantage of the full program (as well as others) that allows businesses to share stories and build upon lessons learned. The networking program may also allow for opportunities of mentorship and support where appropriate.

# Promote Blue Collar Entrepreneurship and Business Growth

## 11

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Localize Skills Training to Area Industry

Coordinate with Lone Star College, Aldine ISD, BakerRipley and other organizations to continuously adapt and respond to the needs of local industry in terms of labor skills, including those necessarily to allow local residents to excel and transition into more prominent, higher skilled positions. Coordination efforts seamlessly complement a well-constructed and focused Business Retention and Expansion program (recommended separately).

## 12

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Develop Tool Lending Library

Consider the proposal in the Resiliency Plan to partner with a property owner and repurpose an existing site for use as a tool lending library, re-use warehouse and workshop in tandem with BakerRipley and other partners, particularly as a complement to the Fab Lab.



# Create a Local Agritourism Industry

## 13

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Establish a Local Garden/Farm Program

Develop a robust community garden and urban farm program. Unlike the prior community garden operated by EAMD, this program is intended to be one facet of an economic development program that encourages residents to consider food, flowers and more as a business.

- Begin with a single site as a test scenario and to build momentum for the program, but plan to expand to multiple sites in the community where appropriate. Some spaces can be temporary sites, such as property land banked for future development but some effort should be taken to find sites that can be permanent locations for community gardens. In the event of buyouts resulting from flood damage, property could be integrated back into the community as one or more urban farms or community gardens.
- Each community garden should be more than a space to grow plants. Incorporate public art, public green spaces/social spaces, other sustainable practices, or outdoor classrooms to regularly draw people in. Each garden could have its own unique identity and some could be used to help tell the story of the community and its history with agriculture.
- Community gardens and urban farming allow for opportunities for classes, seminars and other methods for drawing people into the community and encouraging them to stay in the area and spend money on goods, dining and entertainment.
- Urban farming can be managed locally for public purposes or leased for private purposes. Urban farms can also be directly tied to educational programs through Aldine ISD or Lone Star College. Urban farms can also be used for seasonal events such as pumpkin patches and/or designed for “u-pick” services.
- EAMD can pursue partnerships with other entities to assist with maintenance and management.





# 14

## RECOMMENDATION

### Support Aldine-Centric Farmer's Market

BakerRipley has established a farmer's market at the East Aldine Town Center. The level of local entrepreneurship, opportunities for associated with local agritourism, and the historic association between East Aldine and the agriculture industry make a farmer's market a particularly strong fit for the area. A booth at a farmer's market is an extremely cost-effective, low-risk way for local food or agritourism entrepreneurs to take the next, incremental step in business development

- Consider reserving space within the farmer's market for local entrepreneurs.
- Make the market uniquely East Aldine by tapping into the agricultural roots of the community, local arts/artists, music, and more. For example, if the market were to be located on the drill site at the Town Center (or grow to a permanent off-site location) then one or more of the

market spaces or regular vendor spaces could be located in refurbished rail cars. A space could also utilize shipping containers as alternatives to a number of tents that would yearn to both the rail and industrial history.

- The farmer's market can be regularly programmed to include activities such as cooking or food preparation classes, flower bouquet arrangement, history/storytelling, children's activities, and an opportunity to promote healthy eating habits. The farmer's market could also be used as a forum for special events such as a culinary market supporting local restaurateurs/entrepreneurs or students. A special evening market could include music and other activities.



## 15

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **Enhance the Role of the Kitchen Incubator**

Coordinate with BakerRipley to take full advantage of the facility's commercial kitchen and kitchen incubator concept. Most communities have numerous individuals with an interest in cooking, baking or preparing food that exceeds the capacity of their home. However, few communities have access to a commercial kitchen. Through strategic partnership with BakerRipley, EAMD can promote the active use of the commercial kitchen to encourage individuals to take that next step toward food as a primary or secondary income stream.

## 16

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **Localize a “Farm to Table” Program**

Coordinate with local grocers, nurseries and restaurants/food trucks about the opportunity for shelf space to market local produce/products and to establish a local “farm to table” experience that both benefits/supports local entrepreneurs and adds an additional unique and marketable reason for individuals to “shop local” or visit local restaurants.

# Local People Making Local Decisions ~ One Building at a Time: Promoting Incremental Development

## 17

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Build an Incremental Development Program

Partner with the Incremental Development Alliance to encourage and assist local entrepreneurs seeking to become small scale developers. East Aldine has the opportunity to become the state-wide model for a management district that uses incremental development as a tool to build local prosperity.

- Coordinate with IDA to bring the full training program to East Aldine including a local workshop to determine the level of local interest and, if warranted, a “bootcamp” that offers more aggressive training.
- While local “investors” are being trained, the program can also be used to train EAMD staff and prepare them for managing the center. While IDA is a valuable resource, they cannot offer the “hands-on” resources that can be available through the management district.

Following training, IDA could remain available to staff/developers on a limited basis.

- Create an “design studio” in the EAMD offices where staff and the local “development” community can come together to brainstorm make small scale development ideas happen!
- Staff can use the studio as a means of introducing local developers to the the financial, legal, and administrative expertise needed to a local incremental development network.
- EAMD may want to seek out a partner to help seed or sponsor the program (lenders, foundations, Home Depot, etc.).
- The program has the potential to turn into an income stream in which East Aldine is also providing

services to other management districts, local governments and more (similar to manner in which most graffiti abatement services are provided by the East End District).

- To strengthen the likelihood of initial success, staff could consider recruiting/auditioning/strategically selecting the first group to be trained in order to increase the likelihood of initial success and to allow for lessons learned at the outset.
- Establish a local training program that is available regularly in East Aldine and design it in a way that allows opportunities to address:
  - Needs in East Aldine (discussion of opportunities and gaps) – this is more for awareness than to require specific types of development to be part of the program.
- The specific needs/considerations when developing different types of development, including the opportunity to bring in guest speakers or individuals with an expertise (perhaps others in the Inc. Dev. world) in a particular area or with a particular type of development.
- Set up a network and regular meetings where developers (and others if appropriate) can come together and share experiences and, in the process of doing so, teach each other. The entire community and staff grow in the project together.



# Housing as Economic Development (new development and redevelopment)

18

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## RECOMMENDATION

### **Learn from Home Industry Experts**

Develop a live or digital work session with area developers to discuss alternatives and ideas with leaders in architecture, land planning, landscape architecture and development to discuss alternatives that improve site and building design and introduce needed alternatives to traditional development.

19

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## RECOMMENDATION

### **Incentivize Housing to Set a High Standard**

Establish a development incentive program for appropriate, quality housing development and/or redevelopment. The EAMD has an opportunity to promote a diversified housing stock, promote specific development patterns, or request a higher level of quality/experience by offering an incentive to residential developers.

## 20

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **Partner to Acquire Land to Maintain Affordability**

Consider methods for local redevelopment and support for long-term quality affordable housing.

- A housing trust could serve as a partner in acquisition of property and development, redevelopment or rehabilitation for purposes of ensuring quality affordable housing in East Aldine for the long term.
- A Buy the Block Crowdfunding platform allows the local community to become public investors for purposes of improving property and ensuring that the property remain in local hands.



# Embrace and Become a Partner To Local Industry

21

## RECOMMENDATION

### Succeed through Industry Partnerships

Continue to cultivate a working relationship with the Greater Houston Partnership, City of Houston and Harris County to be responsive as those entities pursue attraction of major industrial activities into the area.

22

## RECOMMENDATION

### Pursue Industry Focused Business Retention & Expansion

Conduct a TRUE Business Retention & Expansion program to be conducted annually and focused exclusively on local industry and heavy commercial to determine needs and opportunities, including improvements needed to grow the local presence of industrial businesses.



## 23

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **Enhance Industry Business to Business Network**

Coordinate with local industry and heavy commercial about opportunities to shop/sell local, including business-to-business transactions as well as provision of goods and services from local commercial businesses.

## 24

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **Bring the Goods to Industry Employees**

Promote local food delivery/trucks as well as complementary shopping in proximity to local industry, including the possibility of a designated green-space/open space that is intentionally located to draw industrial employees.



# Become the Community's Economic Development Resource, Partner and Greatest Cheerleader

## 25

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Make Space for a Resource Center in the New EAMD Facility

Create the physical spaces necessary for various types of economic development support activities. The EAMD offices and the Town Center are already generally designed for the adjustment to the role as an economic development resource center. Staff and customers will require four types of readily available spaces depending upon the specific type of activity:

- Gathering and Training Space that may include the spaces available within the EAMD's new facilities at the Town Center. A number of recommendations of the Economic Development Strategic Plan include seminars, training sessions, and other large scale gatherings for purposes of learning, sharing information and celebration. Some instances, including certain types of training, may be more appropriately held in partner facilities within the Town Center or elsewhere in the community.
- Group Meeting and Networking Space. Some programs require substantial interaction between small business owners, small scale developers or other investors with common interests. EAMD should have ready access to space that will allow individuals with common economic development interests to gather, share information and generally learn from experts and each other in a setting that is scaled appropriately.
- One-on-One Meeting Space for purposes of meeting with staff or with other experts in economic development or entities that can assist with projects.
- An Idea/Design Studio/Space. Economic development is a “hands-on” interactive process that includes research, discussion over materials and numbers, drawing ideas, and brainstorming solutions. To do that, at least one meeting space sufficiently large for groups to meet should offer the technology and amenities needed for activities. This is the “war room” where thoughts become realities and should have the appearance and materials necessarily to reflect that.

## 26

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **Build an Economic Development Friendly Staff Culture**

East Aldine has recently employed an individual with specific focus on local economic development. It is critical that the economic development specialist have the opportunity to be available and to bring along partners to be available to local business.

- Establish opportunities for specific experts such lenders, legal representatives, SBA administrators, economic gardening support, marketing, and more to be regularly available physically or digitally to advise local business owners, local developers and entrepreneurs.
- Ensure that the specialist in economic development is regularly available at the Town Center as appropriate and train staff that are not experts with the necessary skills to provide general support.

## 27

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **Use Surveys to Find Local Retail Gaps**

Conduct an annual/regular survey (or series of surveys) to find retail and service gaps that could be filled locally. To meet the top needs raised by the survey, the community could modify the “business pitch program” to focus specifically on businesses that meet retail/service needs defined by the survey.



## RECOMMENDATION

### Update the EAMD Website with an Economic Focus

Amend the EAMD website and marketing efforts. It is up to the East Aldine Management District to sell the story of East Aldine – at minimum and most particularly the ED section - to ensure that the image and availability of information is reflective of a local economic development resource. In the field of economic development, Aldinedistrict.org is often the first impression that an investor will have of both the community and EAMD. It is critical that the website offers the image and information necessary to build a positive first impression.

- Establish an online “community profile” that provides typically requested, consistently updated information and markets the best aspects of the district.
- Allow investors to easily understand the interests of the district and the opportunities available for investment in the area.
- Provide easy access to various economic development programs that are offered as well as any pertinent information specific to each program.
- Potentially include a portal for research on large scale sites available for development in coordination with local brokers.
- Celebrate the community and local success stories, particularly those that reinforce the image and brand that the community wishes to portray.



## 29

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **Become a Property Investor**

Acquire land and become a development partner to meet needs that are not being met by the private sector. The East Aldine Management District has already proven an understanding of the value of property management in development of the Town Center. Strategic acquisition of property for purposes of economic development is a natural next step that would allow the District the ability to nudge activity in a direction recommended by the Economic Development Strategic Plan. As examples, the District could acquire land for purposes of promoting specific development types such as townhomes, residential development with accessory dwelling units, or clustered retail development. It could also acquire land for purposes of urban farming and development of an agritourism industry.

## 30

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **Provide Strategic Financial Support**

Establish a pool of funds for purposes of easing local business' transition into the next step of the "graduation" program. For example, the EAMD could support discounted space for a limited number of booths at the farmer's market or for lease costs associated with space in a pop-up retail establishment or container facility. The program could be conducted in coordination with property owners to share in supporting the transition of small business owners.

# Fill the Larger Financing Gap

31

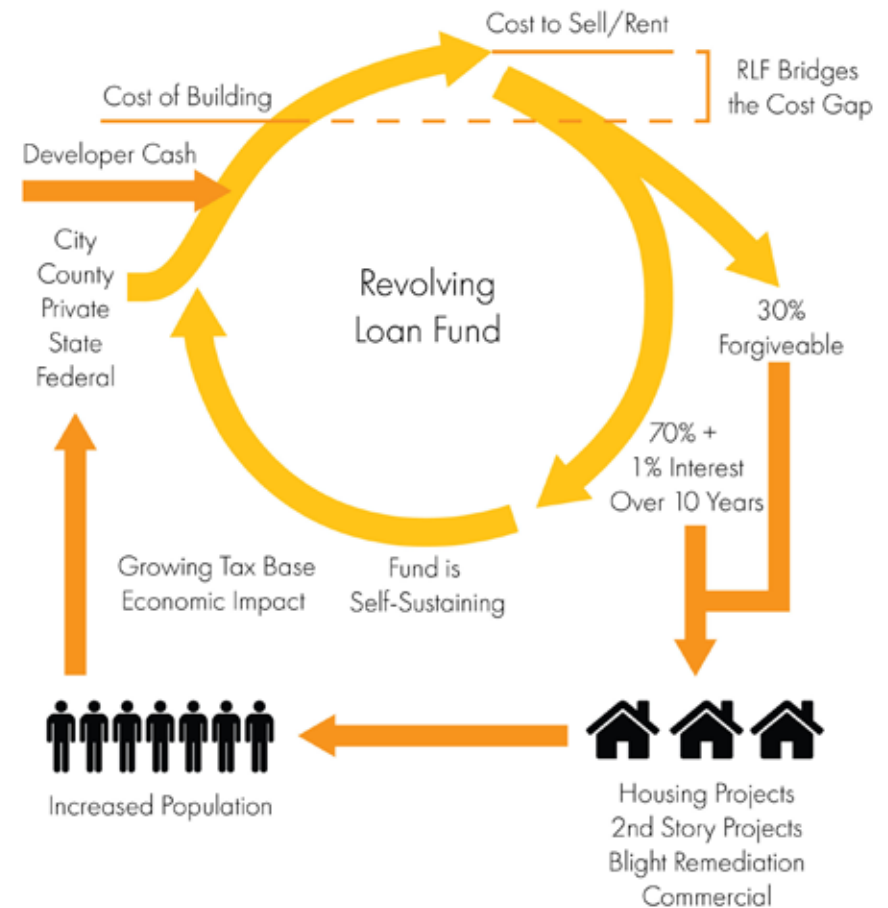
## RECOMMENDATION

### Create a Local Revolving Loan Fund

Establish a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) in partnership with local lenders and possibly with the Harris County Community Services Department. A revolving loan fund would allow for businesses to borrow funds locally for development, redevelopment or improvements at a competitive rate. The fund grows as interest as well as principal is collected and returned to the fund.

- Participation in a Revolving Loan Fund is an eligible use of Community Development Block Grant funds under the appropriate circumstances. Other programs also offer capital for an RLF including the Economic Development Administration.
- The combination of multiple revenue streams would allow for ample resources to make loans to multiple investors and of a size that might not otherwise be available.

- The management structure of a Revolving Loan Fund can vary, but may be best if under the direction of a financial institution that offers an understanding of lending and loan administration.



# 32

## RECOMMENDATION

### Allow Local Funds to Invest Locally

Establish or partner with a Community Investment Fund. A cooperative private equity fund is designed to allow local residents to pool together resources for purposes of making investments in projects in the local community. When pooled together, the funds provided by area residents, no matter how small, allow for investment in activities such as land acquisition, housing development or redevelopment, small business development, and more. As funds are repaid, each investor sees a level of return on investment. A number of different types of Community Investment Funds make local investment easier than in years past.

- Cooperative Capital Private Equity Fund is an example of a cooperative private equity fund that is being used to spur growth in areas dealing with many of the same issues as East Aldine. Cooperative Capital

allows investments as low as \$1,000 and investors are allowed to invest in their own community.

- Boston Ujima Fund is an example of a democratically governed investment fund that was created specifically to promote a “community-controlled” local economy. In addition to funding, Boston Ujima Fund has also expanded to offer support in areas such as marketing and legal services.
- Crowdfunding as a means of community investment is also a viable option. Investment-Based Crowdfunding can focus on a specific community such as East Aldine or it can allow local investors to spread their investment across multiple projects, thereby still helping local projects but also providing reduced risk through diversity.

cooperative  
capital

Get Involved



## Continue to Improve the Image and Impression of East Aldine

33

## RECOMMENDATION

## Eliminate Litter & Visual Clutter

Increase the focus on eliminating litter and debris throughout the community and eliminate visual clutter, particularly within the public rights-of-way.

- Host regular communitywide clean-up events in partnership with entities such as Harris County and waste management companies that service the area. Events should have an innovative twist sufficient to gain participation, at least at the outset until the community can begin to see the results.
- Establish and manage a regular heavy trash program to reduce the amount of debris seen in area ditches and rights-of-way.





## 34

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Enhance Curb Appeal of Local Businesses

Establish a workshop that focuses on the return on investment by reducing visual clutter and improving the curb appeal of local homes, businesses, and industrial sites.

- Consider establishing a Site/Façade Improvement Grant/Loan Program as part of expansion of financial services and as a means to entice businesses to reduce visual clutter and improve curb appeal.
- Provide online or in-person workshops, events or activities with experts in fields that can assist in building the curb appeal of local businesses.
- Celebrate and showcase the successes online or otherwise.



## 35

### RECOMMENDATION

#### Extend and Maintain Streetscape Improvements

Evaluate expansion of the lighting, landscaping and signage programs to extend efforts to reinforce the desired image and brand of the community, including increased maintenance of blade signs that are in disrepair.





## RECOMMENDATION

### Assess and Consider Rebranding EAMD

Conduct an overall brand and marketing assessment to ensure that the brand remains relevant to the image desired of the district, particularly from the perspective of establishing a unique identity for the community and encouraging private investment.

- Employ the expertise of a community branding firm to assess the continued appropriateness of the current brand, particularly in reference to economic development and community character
- If appropriate, establish a program for purposes of rebranding the community in a practical manner.
- Establish an initial marketing program designed to tell the story of East Aldine, particularly in a manner that is attractive to current and potential investors.



# 37

## RECOMMENDATION

### Build the Community Brand through Art

Coordinate with the East Aldine Arts Council to expand the presence of art throughout the community, particularly in its ability to spark interest, draw people to the area, portray the unique culture and history of East Aldine, and continue to reframe the community's image.

- Make local art an integral part of the fabric of the community at all levels – public spaces, green spaces, commercial areas, corridors, trails and more.
- Consider hosting an event focused on pop-up, temporary art or a similar activity designed to build appreciation for art and draw artists into the community.
- Host a physical or digital workshop that reinforces the positive impacts that art can have on community image, property value and regional tourism.



# Create Destinations and Attractions that Regularly Draw Local and Regional Interest

38

## RECOMMENDATION

### Promote Commercial Retail Clusters

Promote methods of transforming commercial areas into walkable “centers” where possible with a focus on establishing critical mass within a walkable area (walkable places typically offer greater return on investment to businesses)

- Partner with entities such as Harris County to enhance connectivity, pedestrian safety and shared parking opportunities in areas where commercial clustering is possible.
- Coordinate with property owners and local developers/investors to insert pop-up retail/service and food truck opportunities into underutilized parking areas to further expand critical mass and interest.
- Consider pop-up places and amenities such as art, music spaces, recreational/play areas and more to add interest and vibrancy and to keep customers on site for an extended period of time.

39

## RECOMMENDATION

### Grow & Amenitize Parks & Trails

Expand and enhance amenities available in local parks and open spaces, as well as along trails to continue to make those areas interesting and valuable to local residents as well as individuals from outside of the area.

- Actively coordinate with the City of Houston in efforts to connect Keith Wiess Park and the Town Center to take full advantage of both amenities.
- Coordinate with Harris County to establish additional amenities and interest in parks and in the growing number of detention areas.
- Create additional amenities that can capture the attention of area youth and potentially be programmed for events such as a skate park or additional soccer fields.





# 40

## RECOMMENDATION

### Make the Town Center an Events Destination

Strategically program the Town Center as the space to celebrate East Aldine through festivals, events and activities, some of which should be sufficiently large to draw a regional crowd into the area.

- Celebrate the unique character, culture and history of East Aldine through a series events, festivals, food events, and more that reinforce the image of pride in heritage and share it with others throughout the area
- Regularly program the Town Center with events and activities that provide local interest or meet local needs
- Promote one or two large, well promoted, regionally recognizable events designed to draw visitors (and their money) to East Aldine

and to reframe the community brand/image. Examples could include music-focused events and art/craft-focused events.

- Host monthly or quarterly “trade days” at the Town Center that allow local craftspeople to share wares with the community and each other.
- Be creative! Ask for ideas from the community through social media for activities or events.



# Introduce “Tactical Urbanism” and “Pop-Up” Places into East Aldine

41

## RECOMMENDATION

### Create a Minor Mobility Improvement Program

Determine proposed transportation improvements that can be tested with temporary, cost effective solutions and implement short term improvements with the intent of measuring effectiveness.

- Coordinate with Harris County Precinct 2 as the entity responsible for roadway maintenance in the area to ensure improvements are acceptable and can be maintained
- Set aside an annual amount for purposes of small, tactical mobility enhancements.
- Improvements could support walking, biking, vehicular movement or transit.
- Publicize the event in a way designed to bring attention to it and to invite feedback.
- Invite the community to offer suggestions for consideration as a means of building public support

and create an increased level of coordination that focuses on solutions.

- Implement temporary (if appropriate) improvements by using paint, traffic cones or other means.
- If successful, make improvements permanent and celebrate a community success.



# 42

## RECOMMENDATION

### Implement Pop-Up Places Regularly

Coordinate with the East Aldine Arts Council and experts in pop-up places such as Team Better Block or the Better Block Foundation to create a program that places temporary improvements in parking areas, parks, crosswalks, school sites and more to both measure the impact but also to regularly introduce new and interesting places throughout East Aldine.

- Youth groups such as students from Aldine ISD could assist in the development of pop-up improvements.
- Similar to Tactical Urbanism activities, pop-up places should be publicized to encourage visiting and testing the site and offering feedback. They also offer an opportunity to invite suggestions of locations and ideas.
- Consider coordinating with Aldine ISD or area colleges to further use the pop-up concept to artistical-

ly introduce social experiments to gauge a response. As an example, Volkswagen, through a program called The Fun Theory, introduced a “bottomless” trash can – complete with noise – in a heavily littered environment to see if it encouraged people to use the trash (it did).





# Continue Expansion & Enhancement of Infrastructure Services

43

## RECOMMENDATION

### Invest in Remaining Expansion Areas

Reassess the remaining areas without water and sewer service and prioritize those for strategic expansion based upon need, the ability to improve economic conditions in the community, expense and the ability to obtain partner support.

- Seek out partners and programs as in the past, but expand the scope if needed to include entities with an interest in growing the market viability of industrial areas for service expansion.
- To the extent possible, prioritize strategic extension of water and sewer services within reach of industrial and heavy commercial areas.



# Make Connectivity and Mobility Improvements a Necessary Priority

44

## RECOMMENDATION

### Build Major Bike/Ped Improvement through Partnerships

In the same manner as EAMD has successfully done in areas of infrastructure, partner with other entities for purposes of improving pedestrian/cycling connectivity, including installation of sidewalks, trails, shared paths, crosswalks, intersection enhancements, and other features with a focus on major destinations, including schools and the Town Center.

- Utilize the Livable Centers study as well as previous studies as a beginning benchmark for improvements.
- Coordinate with Harris County and various Harris County departments for purposes of sidewalk, shared path, crosswalk and intersection enhancements.
- Continue to partner with Harris County Flood Control and area utilities for purposes of using easements and drainage channels

45

## RECOMMENDATION

### Improve Vehicular Mobility through Partnerships

Continue to emphasize improvement to Aldine Westfield and other major corridors for purposes of improved mobility, including the possibility of the corridor as a complete street in coordination between the City of Houston and Harris County.

- Utilize the Livable Centers study as well as previous studies as a beginning benchmark for improvements.
- Continue coordination with the City of Houston, Harris County, Houston-Galveston Area Council and others to place Aldine Westfield in the active Transportation Improvement Program.



# IMPLEMENTING



The East Aldine Management District Economic Development Strategic Plan is a comprehensive document. It would be impossible to implement each recommendation immediately. Rather, implementation of the recommendations identified in this plan is expected to occur incrementally over time and through close collaboration and cooperation among a number of partners utilizing a variety of funds and resources.

Recommendations have been prioritized by leadership of EAMD and placed into one of three categories of time: immediate, mid-term and long-term. Additionally, each recommendation includes implementation guidance in terms of potential partners, anticipated cost, and possible funding sources. Each is intended to be general in nature. For example, funding sources and partners for activating the Town Center or

minor mobility improvements can vary widely based upon theme, magnitude, activities, location, and more.

The Implementation Program is intended to be highly flexible. Changes occur. Opportunities arise. Funds or partners may appear or become available sooner than anticipated.

## Priority

Immediate	Within 2 Years
Mid-Term	2 to 5 Years
Long-Term	More than 5 Years

## Cost

\$	\$50K or Less
\$\$	\$50K to \$250K
\$\$\$	More than \$250K

## Immediate Term Actions: 0 to 2 Years

Recommendation	Funding Level	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
Conduct a Buy Local/Shop Local Campaign	\$	Local Businesses, AMIBA	EAMD
Develop a “Small Business Makeover” Program	\$\$	Construction Businesses, Consultants, Trade Unions, Lone Star College	EAMD, Harris County CDBG, Foundations, Grants
Introduce Shared Retail Space	\$\$	Private Developer/Property Owner	EAMD, Property Owner, Private Investment
Localize Skills Training to Area Industry	\$\$	Lone Star College, BakerRipley, Harris County, Local Business	EAMD, Grants, Colleges & Universities, Private Industry
Support Aldine-Centric Farmer’s Market	\$\$	BakerRipley	EAMD, Grants, Foundations, Donations, Sponsorships
Build an Incremental Development Program	\$\$	Incremental Development Alliance, Harris County, Lone Star College	EAMD, Harris County, H-GAC, Local Lenders
Incentivize Housing to Set a High Standard	\$\$	Harris County	EAMD
Pursue Industry Focused Business Retention & Expansion	\$	Greater Houston Partnership, Ambassadors, Harris County, BakerRipley, Lone Star College	EAMD

## Immediate Term Actions: *(continued)*

Recommendation	Funding Level	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
Make Space for a Resource Center in the New EAMD Facility	\$	N/A	EAMD, Sponsorships
Build an Economic Development Friendly Staff Culture	\$	H-GAC/EDA, SBA, Local Lenders, Lone Star College	EAMD
Update the EAMD Website with an Economic Focus	\$	Consultant	EAMD
Eliminate Litter & Visual Clutter	\$	Harris County, Social Service Organizations	EAMD, Harris County, Grants
Assess and Consider Rebranding EAMD	\$	Consultant	EAMD
Make the Town Center an Events Destination	\$	BakerRipley, Lone Star College, Nonprofits, Local Business, Arts/Entertainment entities	EAMD, Grants, Foundations, Sponsorships, Fees
Create a Minor Mobility Improvement Program	\$	Harris County	EAMD, Harris County, Grants



## Mid-Term Actions: 2 to 5 Years

Recommendation	Funding Level	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
Become a Resource for “Economic Gardening”	\$	Lone Star College, SBA, Major Houston Universities	EAMD, SBA, Colleges & Universities
Establish a Business “Pitch” Competition	\$\$	BakerRipley, Lone Star College, Business Oriented Nonprofits	EAMD, Foundations, Local Lenders
Build an Inventory of Graduation Options	\$	Brokers, H-GAC, Property Owners	EAMD
Develop a Courtyard for Food Trucks and More	\$\$	Private Developer/Property Owner	EAMD, Crowdfunding, Local Lenders
Develop Commercial “Pop-Up” Opportunities	\$\$	Private Developer/Property Owner	EAMD, Property Owner, Private Investment
Develop “Blue Collar” Business Spaces	\$\$\$	Private Developer/Property Owner	EAMD, Property Owner, Private Investment
Make Business Training Local & Locally Relevant	\$\$	Lone Star College, BakerRipley, Harris County	EAMD, Grants, Colleges & Universities
Establish a Local Garden/Farm Program	\$\$	Urban Harvest & Other Nonprofits, Aldine ISD, Lone Star College, Harris County	EAMD, Grants, Foundations, Sponsorships, Local Business
Enhance the Role of the Kitchen Incubator	\$\$	BakerRipley	EAMD, Harris County, Grants, Foundations, Donations
Learn from Home Industry Experts	\$	Lone Star College, BakerRipley, Harris County, Houston Area Builders Association, Urban Land Institute	EAMD, Registrations, Sponsorships

## Mid-Term Actions: *(continued)*

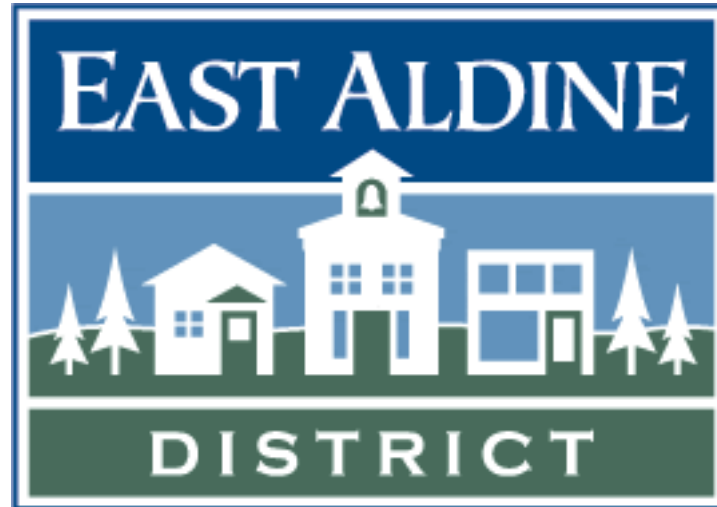
Recommendation	Funding Level	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
Succeed through Industry Partnerships	\$	Greater Houston Partnership	EAMD, Harris County
Enhance Industry Business to Business Network	\$\$	Harris County	EAMD
Bring the Goods to Industry Employees	\$\$	Local Businesses, Property Owners	EAMD, Crowdfunding, H-GAC/EDA, Grants
Use Surveys to Find Local Retail Gaps	\$	Consultant, Colleges & Universities	EAMD, Grants
Create a Local Revolving Loan Fund	\$\$\$	H-GAC/EDA, Harris County, Local Lenders	EAMD, EDA Grant, Local Lenders
Enhance Curb Appeal of Local Businesses	\$\$	Harris County, H-GAC/EDA	EAMD, H-GAC/EDA, Harris County, Grants, Foundations, Local Lenders
Build the Community Brand through Art	\$\$	East Aldine Arts Council, Art related nonprofits	EAMD, Crowdfunding, Grants, Sponsorships, Foundations, Donations
Grow & Amenitize Parks & Trails	\$\$\$	Harris County, Greens Bayou Coalition, Houston Parks Board, City of Houston	EAMD, Harris County, City of Houston, Grants, Foundations, Donations, Crowdfunding
Build Major Bike/Ped Improvement through Partnerships	\$\$\$	Harris County	EAMD, Harris County

## Long Term Actions: More than 5 Years

Recommendation	Funding Level	Partners	Potential Funding Sources
Develop Tool Lending Library	\$\$	Hardware/Construction Businesses, Harris County, Nonprofits, Lone Star College	EAMD, Foundations, Federal & Local Grants, Donations, Membership, Tool Sales, Sponsorships
Localize a “Farm to Table” Program	\$\$	Urban Harvest & Other Nonprofits, Aldine ISD, Lone Star College, Harris County	EAMD, Grants, Foundations, Sponsorships, Local Business
Partner to Acquire Land to Maintain Affordability	\$\$\$	Harris County, Nonprofits, Local Brokers, Property Owners	EAMD, Grants, Land Trust, Local Lenders, Community Equity
Become a Property Investor	\$\$\$	Area Brokers, Property Owners	EAMD, Local Lenders
Provide Strategic Financial Support	\$\$	N/A	EAMD
Allow Local Funds to Invest Locally	\$	Community Equity Firm, Community Investors	EAMD, Crowdfunding, H-GAC/EDA, Grants
Extend and Maintain Streetscape Improvements	\$\$\$	Consultant	EAMD, Harris County
Promote Commercial Retail Clusters	\$\$	Harris County, H-GAC/EDA, Local Businesses, Property Owners	EAMD, H-GAC/EDA, Local Lenders, Private Investment
Implement Pop-Up Places Regularly	\$\$	Harris County, H-GAC, nonprofits	EAMD, Grants, Foundations, Sponsorships, Local Business
Invest in Remaining Expansion Areas	\$\$\$	Consultant, Harris County	EAMD, Harris County, TWDB, Grants
Improve Vehicular Mobility through Partnerships	\$\$\$	Harris County, City of Houston	EAMD, Harris County, H-GAC, City of Houston



Completed for



By

