



Sustainability Committee & Stakeholder Session

November 2025

Sustainability Committee Structure



Houston 2026 World Cup Host Committee



Sustainability Sub-Committee



Workstreams or Project Groups



Stakeholder Engagement

Cross-cutting themes



Sustainable event management



Environmental justice



Education & awareness



Measurement & reporting



Resilience



Innovation

Technical areas



Climate & Energy



Air, Water, & Nature



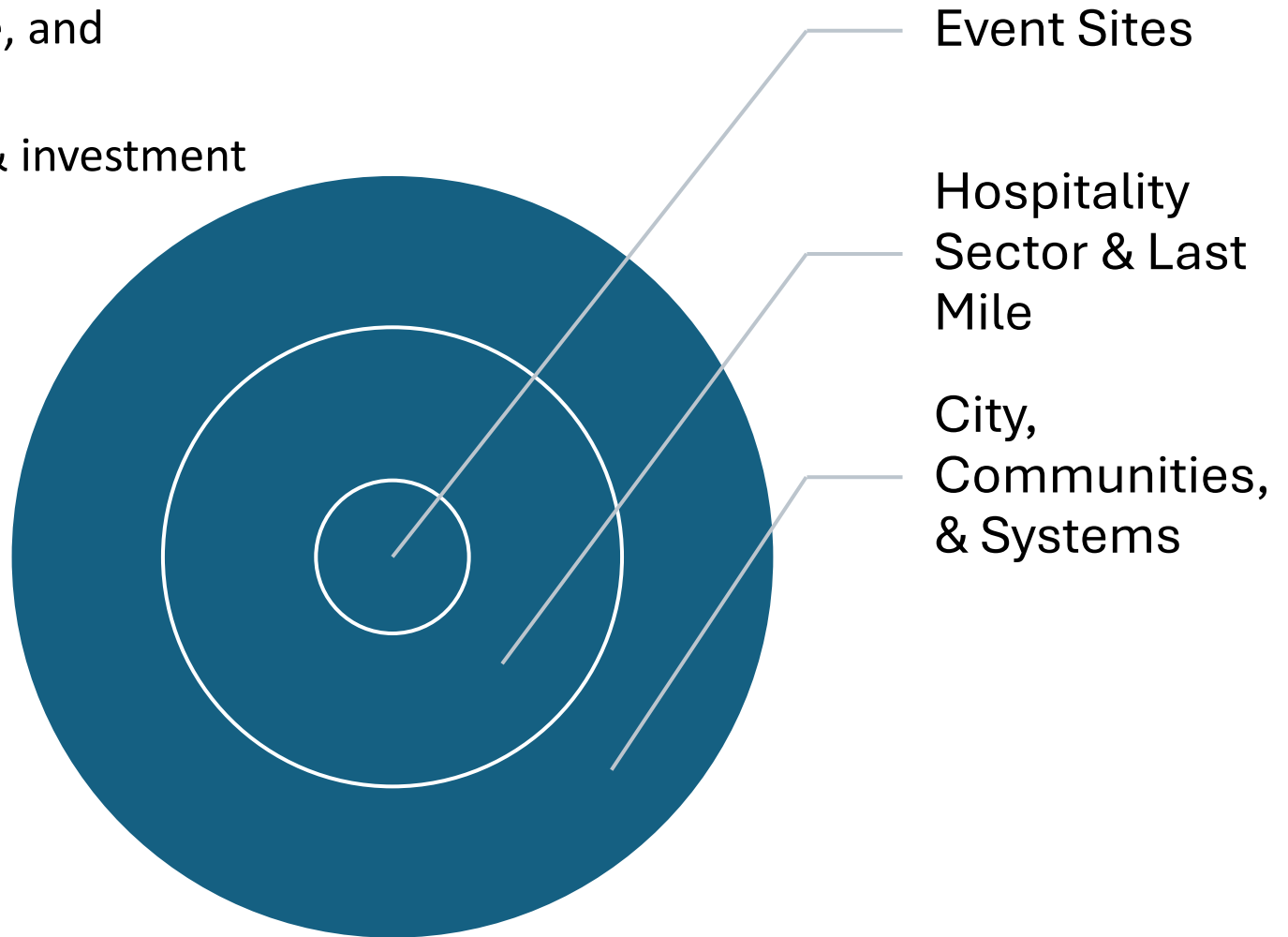
Waste & Circularity



Low Carbon Transportation

Impact Areas

- LEAD: Elevate Houston's global profile
- RALLY: Bring together public, private, and nonprofit partners
- MOBILIZE: Drive long-term impact & investment



Timeline Recap



Sustainability Plan - Projects



Initiative	Summary
Fan Festival & Last Mile Strategy	Integrating Sustainability into Operations
Sustainable Event Management System	Development of a risk matrix, event checklist, policies, data & reporting, and sustainable procurement as a legacy for public sector.
Green Corridor Development	Green corridor linking NRG Park, downtown, and EADO/East End with sustainable initiatives and connectivity
Coordinated Sustainability Messaging	Strategic culture-oriented communication across various sites in the lead-up and during World Cup
Sustainability Toolkits for Hospitality	Practical guides for restaurants and hotels to implement sustainability actions aligned to the Sustainability Plan and associated incentives.
Houston Reuse Collective	Beverage container reuse in event venues (“big idea”).
University Engagement	Internships, research, and other collaborations.
K-12 Sustainability Education Programs	Menu of sustainability options to connect needs and resources and engage youth in the sustainability plan.
Sustainable Soccer Fields	Technical guidelines on soil, water, heat mitigation, flood control, waste, and energy for local park and school field resilience.
Air Quality	Youth summit, fall summit, and air quality improvement actions with potential for baseline and event measurement.
Bayou Cleanup Volunteer Efforts	Volunteer bayou clean-ups with baseline and event measurement.
Resilience & Carbon Mitigation	Nature program addressing flood control, carbon mitigation, biodiversity, and species conservation with carbon removal equivalent to World Cup impact.
Environmental Justice Microgrant	Microgrants for community sustainability initiatives linked to the World Cup.

SUSTAINABILITY STARTS WITH HOU

Engage organizations and individuals in taking sustainability actions in the lead up to the World Cup!



Sustainable Event Management

- Objective
 - Seamlessly integrate sustainability into facets of event planning and execution.
 - Focus on social, economic, and environmental impacts for events that leave a lasting positive legacy.
 - Legacy playbook applicable to events of all types and sizes to improve institutional knowledge and community access to tools.
- Draft System Developed
- Ongoing Elements:
 - System Tools | Create practical content such as assessments, brochures, checklists, best practices, stakeholder lists, metrics, surveys, etc.



Resilient Soccer Fields

- Objective:
 - Transform fields in EJ communities into nature-based infrastructure to enhance resilience and demonstrate environmental leadership.
- Develop technical guidelines, covering
 - Soil and water management
 - Native planting and environmental education
 - Flood resilience and heat mitigation
 - Waste and energy
- Integrate into Grow the Game and local field improvements
 - Neighborhood park fields
 - School fields
- Expected Outcomes:
 - Youth and community engagement in sustainability
 - Replicable models for future sports infrastructure to contribute to local resilience
 - Improved environmental co-benefits from soccer fields



K-12 Engagement



- Objective:
 - Engage students in the World Cup Sustainability Plan
 - Help connect resources and needs
 - Demonstrate school-based projects across resiliency areas
- Menu Link:
 - [K-12 Menu for World Cup Sustainability Projects: Students Making Houston Green](#)

Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (L) • 3d

K-12 Menu for World Cup Student Action Projects

Engaging K-12 activities exploring sustainability initiatives for the 2026 Houston World Cup

Green Infrastructure & Nature-Based Solutions

- Urban Tree Canopy Expansion**

Description: Organize tree-planting events to improve air quality, provide shade, and combat heat islands for campuses.

Sponsorship: \$1,000-\$2,000
Corporate Volunteers: 40-60
Total Hours: 20-40 hours
Local Partners(s):
 - [Trees for Houston](#)
 - [TreeFolks](#)
 - [Houston Urban Forestry Program](#)
 - [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension](#)
 - [Green Building Resource Center](#)

- Pollinator Habitat / Pocket Prairie**

Description: Create a pollinator habitat and/or pocket prairie on school campuses or remediating corporate gardens. Restoring

Waste Reduction & Circular Economy

- Zero Waste Campus**

Description: Transform campus environments into sustainability leaders with the Zero Waste Program. This comprehensive initiative reduces landfill waste through strategic bin placement, educational workshops, and student-led recycling campaigns. Utilize a Southeast Texas-specific [Zero-Waste Action Toolkit](#) for local partners, programs, and field trip learning experiences.

Sponsorship: \$0
Corporate Volunteers: 20-30
Total Hours: 120 hours
Local Partners(s):
 - [Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation \(CELf\)](#)
- Lunchroom Share Table Programs**

Description: Establish a system for collecting and donating unopened

Water & Climate Resilience

- Resilient Schools and Communities (RISC) Campaign**

Description: Educate youth and schools about climate science and environmental justice. Complete a climate vulnerability assessment and listen to your community to identify natural solutions.

Sponsorship: \$1,000-\$5,000
Corporate Volunteers: 25 - 75
Total Hours: 200+ hours
Local Partners(s):
 - [NWF EcoSchools](#)
 - [U.S. Resilient Schools and Communities \(RISC\) Campaign](#)
- School-Based Water Smart Solutions**

Description: Install hydration stations to encourage reusable water bottles and track usage. Implement rainwater harvesting systems—such as barrels or cisterns—to support irrigation

Sustainable Mobility & Clean Energy

- Student-Led Air Quality Monitoring & Summit**

Description: Invest in local air quality student projects and take the annual Air Quality Summit, where students present their data, collaborate with industry experts, and advocate for long-term policy solutions to improve air quality in the region.

Sponsorship: \$3,500-\$6,000
Corporate Volunteers: 6-8
Total Hours: hours
Local Partners(s):
 - [HARC](#)
 - [HGAC](#)
 - [Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation \(CELf\)](#)
- Solar Energy Pilot Projects**

Description: Implement small-scale solar panel systems on school rooftops to promote renewable energy and reduce energy costs. Engage students in

Community Engagement & Storytelling

- Green Marketing & Public Awareness Campaign**

Description: Design promotional materials (posters, social media graphics, video ads) to be used on social media to support sustainability initiatives.

Sponsorship: \$100-\$300
Corporate Volunteers: 3 - 5 (speakers & draft evaluators)
Total Hours: 20 hours
Local Partner:
 - [Climate Communications Collective](#)
- Days of Service Campaign**

Description: Activate your school community for acts of service. Complete at least three days of service to support your school, as well as your local community and wildlife.

Sponsorship: \$100-\$500
Corporate Volunteers: 10 - 15
Total Hours: 100+ hours

Call To Action

Click, commit, change:
[Sign up now to champion student-led sustainability projects.](#)

Air Quality



+100 attendees



SEPTEMBER 24, 2025 | HOUSTON, TEXAS

9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. | The Cullen Auditorium at Baylor College of Medicine, 1 Baylor Plaza, Houston, TX 77030

www.h-gac.com/events/air-quality-summit

Planned Activities

- Green corridor map of existing air quality monitors with links to dashboards
- Community air monitoring network with “hosts” for new air quality monitors to fill gaps and create legacy
- Awareness materials on the importance of air quality and health
- Education and engagement via the City of Houston’s Air Quality Monitoring Van
- Monitoring/measuring changes in air quality during the event

Bayou Cleanups

- Sustainability Committee Cleanup – Friday, September 26
- Trainings
 - November 5, 12–1pm: [Register for virtual webinar](#)
 - November 6 & 7, 9-11am: [In Person STOP Training Registration](#)
- Organize or participate in a subsequent clean up
- Dates and locations for 2026 to be finalized by Dec 10
- Focus
 - Improve awareness on the pollution impacts of litter flowing from the city to the Bayous to Galveston Bay and the ocean
 - Measure collection before, during, and after the World Cup using the Texas Litter Database



Bayou Clean Up	Unit	9/26/2025
Volunteers #	Count	38
Volunteer Hours	Hours	76
Equivalent Time Cost	USD	\$2,644.04
Acres Covered	Acres	9.53
Trash Collected & Disposed	Pounds	1,134.96

Reuse Concept*

- Objective: Establish a scalable reuse system for beverage containers to reduce single-use waste during and beyond the World Cup.
- Key Actions:
 - Pilot reuse at NRG Park and FIFA Fan Festival
 - Develop procurement standards and vendor guidance
 - Spur investment on infrastructure for collection, cleaning, and storage
 - Engage institutions for long-term reuse integration
- Expected Outcomes:
 - Reduction in single-use waste (3 million + units / year)
 - Scalable model for reuse in events and institutions
 - Bring in economic development and job creation via reuse as a service investment

*Contingent on key stakeholder buy-in and investment decisions

HOSPITALITY TOOLKIT

Hospitality leaders have the chance to shine — through service and sustainability.

THE TOOLKIT HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO HELP YOU:

- Reduce waste & costs while improving efficiency
- Assess operations & find opportunities to improve
- Engage suppliers, staff & customers
- Track progress & share results
- Take action at low, medium, or high effort levels

Let's build a resilient, sustainable future for our city, our industry, and our planet.



Download via FWC26 site: <https://www.fwc26houston.com/environmentalsustainability>

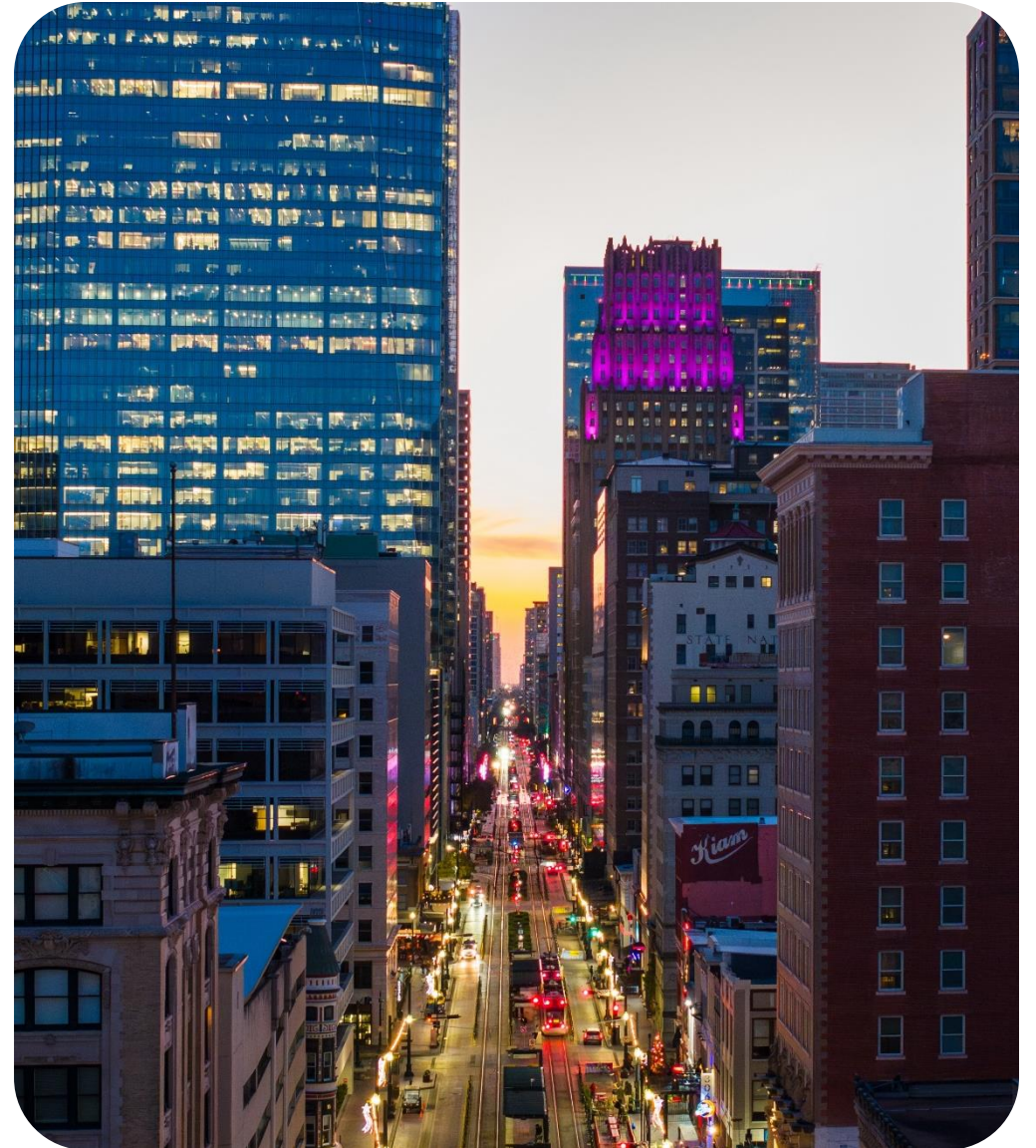


Photo courtesy of Houston First

RECOGNIZE YOUR PROGRESS, THEN RAISE THE BAR

ACTION	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	COST/EFFORT	LEARN MORE
Add customer opt-in requirement for plastic cutlery or similar “to go”	Reduce waste to landfill	\$	Opt-In Single-Use Items, like Cutlery and Straws, for Takeout
Eliminate Styrofoam containers	Reduce waste to landfill	\$	Replace Styrofoam Takeout with Recyclable Packaging
Implement a recycling program	Reduce waste to landfill	\$ — \$ \$ \$	Recycle - initiatives
Purchase/install renewable energy	Reduce emissions	\$ — \$ \$ \$	Renewable energy initiatives
Switch to LED bulbs	Reduce energy consumption	\$	Energy efficiency initiatives - Switch to LED lighting
Install bike-friendly infrastructure	Reduce emissions	\$	Encourage sustainable transport options
Provide information & incentives for use of public transport	Reduce emissions	\$	Encourage sustainable transport options
Plant trees on property or in the right of way	Resilience, heat mitigation	\$	Develop a tree canopy strategy
Add a small pollinator, rain garden, and/or native plant garden	Resilience, heat mitigation, species conservation	\$	Native landscaping and gardens
Donate surplus food	Support the community, reduce waste to landfill	\$ \$	Donate or resell surplus food in the community
Compost or divert kitchen waste single use items	Reduce waste to landfill, support local gardens	\$ \$	Composting Collection Services; Divert organic waste not fit for human consumption for other uses
Replace single use service items with reusables	Reduce waste to landfill	\$ \$ — \$ \$ \$	Reusable Cups, Serving Dishes, and Cutlery Bring Your Own Container Program
Develop a pocket prairie	Resilience, heat mitigation, species conservation	\$ \$	Develop a pocket prairie
Source from local farms	Reduce emissions, support local economy	\$ \$ \$	Source ingredients locally
Install EV chargers	Reduce emissions	\$ \$ \$	Install EV charging stations
Get a sustainability certification for restaurants or hotels	Resource efficiency	\$ \$ \$	Sustainability Certifications for Hotels and Restaurants
For hotels: Include in-room waste reduction, reuse, and recycling practices for amenities and service items	Resource efficiency, reduce waste to landfill	\$ \$ — \$ \$ \$	Reduce & Recycle - Additional Opportunities for Hotels

BEYOND STYROFOAM: RECYCLABLE SOLUTIONS

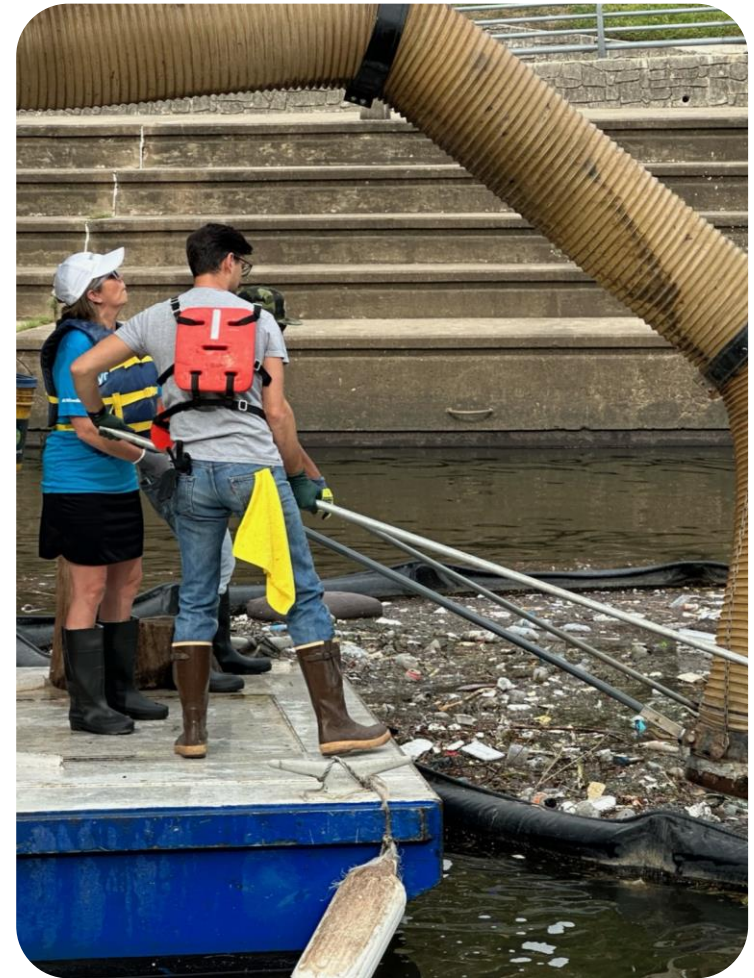
Replacing Styrofoam containers improves waste management, reduces landfill impact, and aligns with customer sustainability expectations.

HOW TO START:

- Review current packaging and identify Styrofoam items to replace
- Select alternatives (PET, PP, paper-fiber, bio-based, or compostable materials)
- Train staff on proper use and waste separation
- Highlight your sustainability efforts on menus and packaging

BENEFITS:

- Reduces non-recyclable waste in Houston's system
- Strengthens brand image with eco-conscious customers
- Slightly higher material costs offset by durability and customer goodwill



HOW THE TOOLKIT WORKS

The hospitality incentive program for sustainability works by recognizing and rewarding hospitality businesses that demonstrate measurable sustainability actions.




Who is Eligible?

- HGAC area, at site level
- Hotels, motels, restaurants, food trucks, caterers, event venues, and institutional cafeterias

How to Qualify?

- Complete the [participation survey](#)
- Tell us the actions you're already implementing + at least 1 new action
- Actions scored from 1 (low effort) to 4 (certification)
- Small business: 1) Restaurants and similar: Facility is uniquely owned/operated (i.e., not part of an ownership or operating group with multiple locations). 2) Hotels/motels: Less than 50 employees or contract employees.



LEVEL	OBJECTIVE	Incentives	TOOLKIT POINTS
YELLOW LEAF (small businesses only)	Get organizations started with minimal, easy-to-implement actions that build awareness of sustainability and demonstrate immediate impact.	Sticker and Digital Badge, Recognition Certificate, Included in the “Sustainable Dining / Lodging” page of the Houston 2026 World Cup, invitations to workshops	3-6 points 
BLUE LEAF	Scale up and expand sustainability actions for greater impact.	Sticker and Digital Badge, Recognition Certificate, Included in the “Sustainable Dining / Lodging” page of the Houston 2026 World Cup, invitations to workshops (Small Businesses receive Green Leaf)	7+ points 
GREEN LEAF	For larger organizations to showcase efforts, requires a sustainability certification from those listed in the toolkit (e.g. Dine Green, Green Key).	Previous PLUS mentions in stakeholder email update, recognition & call out on social media channels & Host Committee amplification.	7+ points & Certification 

“Green Corridor” Concept

Establish a Corridor connecting NRG Stadium, Downtown, and EaDo as a model of sustainable infrastructure, showcasing the best of Houston, and leveraging the 2026 World Cup to create lasting environmental and social benefits

Green Corridor Overview

- The Green Corridor initiatives center on enhancing visitor experience and demonstrating the city's resilience for residents
- Celebrate Houston's story!
 - From parks and green spaces to energy and innovation
 - Houston is the future – let's show it
- Connect people across key venues
 - With accessible routes and wayfinding
 - Safely and securely
- Mitigate heat and enhance public spaces
 - Shade, cooling features, and nature-based solutions
 - Coordinated programming
- Foster environmental awareness
 - Learning opportunities around Houston's unique natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and innovation.
 - Showcasing our culture, art, and history



The Experience

- Cooling and Heat Mitigation: Clearly marked areas offering shade, misting stations, and free access to water.
- Resilient Infrastructure: Native planting, species conservation, tree canopy, innovation, sustainable energy, and last mile waste and circularity strategies.
- Learning Moments: Engaging and accessible information about adjacent “green” projects, highlighting Houston’s parks, history and culture, innovation centers, local ecosystems, and multimodal transportation options. These moments help tell Houston’s story.
- Connectivity and Wayfinding: Clear and consistent signage guiding visitors along the corridor, to key venues, and to the various sustainability features.

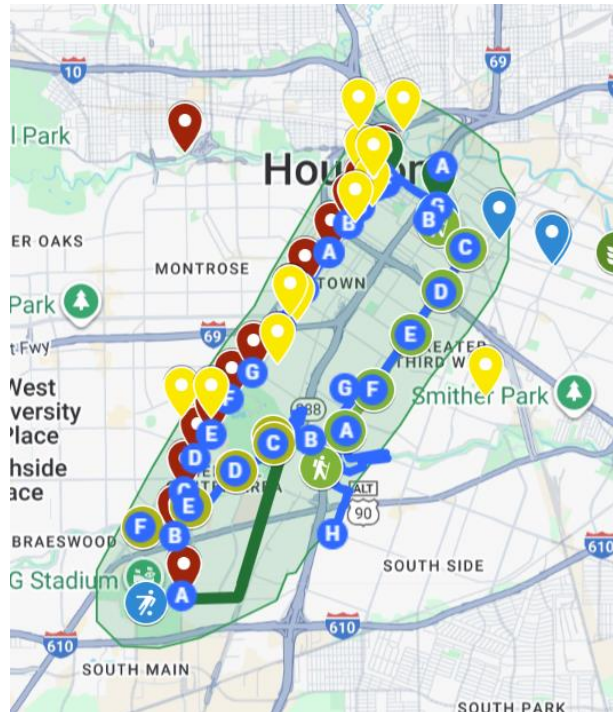


The Map

External-facing storytelling map, showcasing:

- FWC26 Sites
 - Event routes, venues
 - Critical healthcare, emergency, safety, and security points
- Sustainable Transit
 - Bike lanes and multiuse trails
 - Pedestrian corridors
 - Metro stops and key bus lines
- Resilience Demonstrations
 - Parks and green spaces
 - Prairies, wetlands, urban forests, and other ecosystem habitat and demonstration sites
- Innovation Demonstrations
 - Energy, circularity, and other innovation sites
 - University network (UHD, UH, TSU, Rice)

Map Boundaries: Red line from downtown to NRG Park, purple/green line + pedestrian corridors to Fan Festival, and Fan Festival to Columbia Tap Trail to Brays Bayou to TMC Transit Center



Google Maps [link](#)



Sustainability Assessment – Preliminary Findings

Good Practices:

- Tree cover and shelters in many places, good practice example: Museum District Northbound.
- All stops assessed had basic accessibility features in the immediate vicinity (1 block).
- Several good examples of art on the rail stop shelters.
- Waste bins available wherever there is a shelter. Most stops were clean

Gaps / Opportunities:

- Public water stations.
- Wayfinding, connection to surroundings, storytelling.
- Faded and unsafe cross-walks.
- Limited bike facilities.
- No innovation present.
- No recycling available and most waste bins had recyclables in them.

Next Steps in the Green Corridor

Improvement Implementation

- Tree planting & maintenance agreements
- Demonstrations of native planting, pollinator gardens, rain gardens
- Energy, heat, and/or circularity innovation demonstrations
- Air quality monitoring program
- Art, wayfinding, and learning moments

Communications and Engagement

- Map development
- Event calendar
- Sustainable tourism itinerary

Sustainability **ENGAGEMENT** World Cup **HOUSTON**

Elizabeth Carlson, Chair, Sustainability Sub-Committee
ecarlson@fwc26houston.com

