



HOUSTON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT: ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT

NOVEMBER 2018



Rain continues to fall in Houston for several days after Hurricane Harvey hits.

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**TO ENGAGE THE
COMMUNITY AND
EDUCATE THE GENERAL
PUBLIC ABOUT DISASTER
RECOVERY**

May 28, 2018: Community members listen to Houston's Housing and Community Development Department's presentation on Harvey's impact and CDBG-DR funds during a community engagement meeting in the Acres Home neighborhood in Houston, Texas.



Streets and structures quickly filled with water from early rainfall as Hurricane Harvey approached Houston.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT

In response to the destruction that Hurricane Harvey caused, Congress allocated \$5.024 billion to the State of Texas in September 2017. In March 2018, the State of Texas announced that the City of Houston would have local control over \$1.15 billion of these funds. When the State of Texas released their State Action Plan in April, the City of Houston had a short window of time in which to develop an Action Plan for its portion of the allocated funds. In an effort to increase transparency in the process and support community efforts that promote the "right to stay, right to choose" framework promoted by housing advocates locally, the City of Houston's Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD) initiated their largest community engagement effort to date. Partners, organizations and consulting teams, including buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc]) and the Community Design Resource Center, were engaged to increase the success and reach of the engagement process. This report reflects the notes, observations, and reflections of HCDD and [bc].

"WITH THESE RECOVERY DOLLARS, OUR GOAL IS TO MAKE HISTORIC PROGRESS IN ENSURING THAT EVERY HOUSTONIAN HAS A SAFE, AFFORDABLE PLACE TO LIVE, AND THAT OUR NEIGHBORHOODS PROVIDE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOUSTONIANS TO THRIVE."

Mayor Sylvester Turner

WHO

Houston's Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD) has been at the center of Houston's housing recovery effort. To achieve this ambitious six-week engagement, HCDD partnered with a number of neighborhood organizations, nonprofits, and community development organizations to seek guidance and support in their engagement strategies and outreach.



Community Design Resource Center
Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture
University of Houston



HOW

To create a local housing recovery Action Plan that was representative of the needs and priorities of Houston residents, HCDD engaged more than 800 Houstonians through public meetings, 746 through an online survey, and more than 3,000 people through a tele-townhall co-hosted with AARP.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES SOUGHT TO:

- LEARN HOW RESIDENTS ARE RECOVERING FROM HARVEY
- UNDERSTAND RECOVERY SPENDING PRIORITIES
- EDUCATE AFFECTED RESIDENTS ON RECOVERY OPPORTUNITIES

KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS CAME FROM DIRECT COMMENTS OF PARTICIPANTS AT FOCUS GROUPS AND PLANNING MEETINGS.

HOUSTONIANS' RECOVERY PRIORITIES

- The way in which Houston recovers is of high priority to residents, community advocates, and City officials.
- Neighborhoods want a voice in the process of prioritizing where the money goes.
- Housing advocates want to ensure that Houston's low to moderate-income residents are prioritized in this recovery effort.
- Many residents are afraid that their homes will flood again and they will need to start all over.

LONG-TERM PLANNING

- Residents want to see the City do more long-term preparation and planning for natural disasters, with significant community input.
- Focus Group participants reinforced the importance of building upon the disaster recovery planning process to create a comprehensive housing plan, which also supports neighborhood economic development.

DESIRE FOR TRANSPARENCY

- Past recovery efforts had heightened the desire for transparency and community participation in the disaster recovery decision making process.
- Housing and neighborhood advocates affirm the right of residents to have a say in what happens in their neighborhoods.

SUSTAINING ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

- Residents want sustained community engagement and to have a voice in the City's housing and disaster recovery programs and policies.
- The City and community groups will need increased capacity and training to make ongoing engagement successful.
- A partnership approach between the City and community groups is a good model to pursue, even as it requires extra effort to balance the different organizations' needs and interests.



June 28, 2018: Notes and input from attendees at Baker Ripley's community engagement meeting focused on citywide housing and investment needs.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

The City of Houston, unlike other communities in the State, was approved to receive a direct allocation from HUD of \$1.2 billion. This allows the City to develop its own local recovery programs and Local Action Plan. For a City that has lived through five federally declared disasters in three years, it is critical to have the ability to create a Local Action Plan that represents the priorities, values, and needs of affected communities. To achieve this goal, HCDD launched an intensive community engagement and input process. The following represents the engagement process, players, and outcomes.

**"COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT PROVIDES
AN OPPORTUNITY
AFTER A CATASTROPHIC
EVENT TO BUILD
TRUST AND ADDRESS
ONGOING COMMUNITY
CHALLENGES."**

Enterprise Community Partners



June 7, 2018: Community members fill out a demographic and need assessment survey at a Community Engagement Meeting in Southwest Houston.

PARTNERS & ORGANIZATION OUTREACH

To bolster their community engagement and outreach capacity, HCDD reached out to local organizations including advocacy organizations, civic clubs, Super Neighborhoods, and City Council Members. These partnerships would play a critical role in expanding their reach and ensuring community participation. In May and June 2018, HCDD worked with partners to convene 17 public meetings, 8 focus groups, and give 7 presentations.

1. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Texas Organizing Project (TOP)
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
Familias Immigrantes y Estudiantes en la Lucha (FIEL)
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
Houston Housing Coalition

2. CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council Member Stardig - District A
Council Member Davis - District B
Council Member Boykins - District D
Council Member Martin - District - E
Council Member Travis - District G
Council Member Gallegos - District I
Council Member Castex-Tatum - District K

3. SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS

Super Neighborhood 52 - Kashmere Gardens
Super Neighborhood 57 - Pleasantville
Super Neighborhood 59 - Clinton Park

4. CIVIC CLUBS

East Houston Civic Association
Emancipation Economic Development Council

PRE-ENGAGEMENT FOCUS GROUPS

HCDD and consultants planned a set of meetings engaging different groups to understand current issues and expectations, receive recommendations about next steps, and identify potential partners.

TAKEAWAYS:

- While groups appreciated the City's ultimate efforts around engagement for Hurricane Ike DR Round 2 funding in 2010 and 2011, recent community engagement has not attracted wide participation and is viewed as ineffective in generating input from the community about affordable housing in Houston. Community groups expressed low levels of trust in the department at the beginning of the process.
- The City should be invited by local organizations into the neighborhoods, leveraging the trust these organizations have built in the community instead of conducting outreach independently, without including the groups that have worked in an area historically.
- Some participants recommended the creation of a community engagement plan that documents HCDD's strategy from the planning stage to implementation. They also requested higher transparency on the steps HCDD would take moving forward.
- Participants reinforced the importance of building on the efforts of the Disaster Recovery Planning process to create a comprehensive housing plan that includes the economic development of neighborhoods as a focus point.

ENGAGEMENT TEAM FORMATION

Following the focus groups, HCDD reached out to local and community organizations to build partnerships for a community engagement process that would inform Houston's Action Plan for the allocation of CDBG-DR funds. Mayor Turner had committed to speedy submission of the Action Plan to the General Land Office, leaving only a six-week period to form partnerships and execute the engagement.

TAKEAWAYS:

- Insight into what the community engagement process should entail at this stage:
 - *Establish your vision.* Where are we going with this? Why are we doing this? Do you have a strategy?
 - *Set clear expectations* and establish what your values and principles are.
 - *Co-host* events with local organizations and multi-sector partnerships for a citywide engagement.
 - *Educate communities* while soliciting information (multilingual)
 - *Acknowledge trade-offs* — \$1 billion is a limited amount of money. Activities should focus on prioritized needs and investment.
- Concerns about the engagement process:
 - *Co-hosting:* Balancing two organizations' overarching goals into a set of co-planned and co-advertised meetings can be challenging.
 - *Accelerated Timeline:* There's not enough time to develop a clear strategy on implementation, documentation, and analysis among all the organizations involved.
- Ensure the information gathered influences the Action Plan and future implementation of programs.
 - *Data sharing:* Data studies were still not ready at this point — factual information was not able to be leveraged in the design of the activities.

SETTING ENGAGEMENT GOALS

TAKEAWAYS:

- Initiate a phased engagement plan
 - Design a short-term (six weeks) engagement that feeds into a long-term engagement.
 - Determine a process that feeds both the Local Action Plan and a long-term comprehensive housing plan.
- Short-term engagement goals
 - Share what has happened to date.
 - Determine priorities for programing.
- Long-term engagement goals
 - Start a long-term visioning process.
 - Bring resilience to the Local Action Plan, program guidelines, and enforcement of programs.
 - Leverage current Disaster Recovery needs to address larger housing and neighborhood needs.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT

HCDD contracted [bc] and Community Design Resource Center (CDRC) to craft the engagement methodology, design interactive activities that engage diverse communities, facilitate the conversations, and build the department's capacity to facilitate and implement community engagement activities. HCDD contracted The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston to analyze and compile the data from these activities. [bc] and CDRC provided support to HCDD and other partner organizations by developing meeting materials, facilitator guides, and conducting facilitator training. Housing Director Tom McCasland led most meetings, with support from Sarah Labowitz, HCDD's Assistant Director for Policy and Communications, and Mayra Bontemps, Assistant Director of Disaster Recovery.

- [bc] and CDRC provided facilitation, support, infographics, long-term engagement planning and mapping documentation support.
- HCDD's master contractor for administration of Harvey funds, APTIM, provided a core group of facilitators and assisted with meetings, planning and setting-up.
- HCDD staff participated in all meetings.
- [bc] provided two training sessions for facilitation of meeting activities and documentation of gathered information during meetings—both note-taking and mapping strategies. [bc] also provided a brief overview of activities to facilitators that did not attend the training sessions.
- Texas Organizing Project (TOP) and other community organizations did not consider themselves facilitators and relied on coaching from [bc].
- CDRC developed a program spending priority graphic with which participants could engage.
- [bc], CDRC, and the UT Public Health Science Center provided feedback on an online survey that was designed and implemented by HCDD, and developed a demographic survey that would help track the engaged population against overall city demographics.
- During the engagement development period, HCDD and the support team convened a meeting to gather and share the challenges they are facing on the ground, potential challenges of future recovery programs, and capacity building needs.
- Dr. Sheryl McCurdy at UT Public Health Science Center conducted analysis of the dot voting exercise conducted at most meetings. Preliminary results were included in HCDD's summary of the community engagement presented to City Council on June 26, 2018
- In response to the focus group's recommendations, HCDD published a summary of the feedback it had received during the six-week period in a document submitted to City Council on June 26, 2018.



June 13, 2018: Adelle Main of the Community Design Resource Center assists as a lead facilitator at a community meeting in Southwest Houston.

ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

This six-week engagement around the Local Action Plan started to build trust with community groups at the beginning of a long period of significant disaster recovery across the city. To build on this momentum, HCDD should clarify how it will continue to engage communities throughout the recovery, regularly share information with community groups, invest in communications with the public and the media, and increase transparency across its work. Community groups expressed throughout the process that they want to be able to actively participate in decision-making about recovery. The next section provides an overarching view of the challenges, successes and lessons learned from this engagement process. These intend to serve as a reflection on the process and the basis for future engagement recommendations.

"I'M PROUD OF THE WORK THE CITY HAS DONE TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY THUS FAR AND THE WORK WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO TO LISTEN TO COMMUNITY VOICES THROUGHOUT THE RECOVERY!"

Mayor Sylvester Turner



June 20, 2018: Community members engaged in discussion and thought critically about Houston's disaster recovery housing and investing needs at a community meeting in District K.

WHAT WORKED

BIG REACH

- The six-week community engagement effort reached about 4,500 Houston residents through public meetings, focus groups, an online survey, and two tele-town halls. This was HCDD's largest community engagement effort to date.
- Using different strategies like the tele-town halls and the online survey increased participation.

CITY LEADERSHIP

- Strong commitments from the Mayor and Housing Director emphasized the importance of hearing from the community in disaster recovery
- Senior participation from HCDD at all events—especially the Director—reinforced this commitment

BUILDING TRUST

- Consulting with community groups in the design of the process helped to begin building trust in the department
- HCDD adopted many of the recommendations of focus groups participants, including reporting back to the public about what the department heard through engagement

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

- Partnering with community organizations made it possible to reach so many Houstonians
- Consulting with experts from the community to design the process increased buy-in and made the events more appropriate for the post-disaster context
- Building a team of local organizations and HCDD's master contractor created enough capacity to execute an aggressive event schedule in just six weeks

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

- The engagement was an opportunity to gather feedback and also to educate people about what's coming in disaster recovery

FLEXIBLE FORMAT

- Partners appreciated having a core format that could be adapted based on the needs of the specific event

CHALLENGES

IDENTIFYING AND COORDINATING MANY STAKEHOLDERS

- The partnership approach required balancing many different interests, timelines, priorities, and competencies while managing the success of the overall initiative
- Establishing partnerships largely relied on HCDD staff's existing relationships and may have missed some groups or areas where these relationships were missing
- A stakeholder analysis would have helped to be more comprehensive in reaching out to potential partners

CAPACITY

- Many facilitators were not experienced and needed training
- It took several meetings to establish a core group of trainers from [bc], CDRC, and APTIM to meet intensive schedule demands

INFORMATION-GATHERING

- It took several meetings to get the format for information-gathering right, and to train facilitators to record feedback in similar formats

NEED FOR SPEED

- The deadline for submitting the local action plan to City Council limited the time available for comprehensive planning and training
- There was a tension between the desire to get started more quickly and a desire for clarity about what the whole process would look like, especially when trust-building was at an early stage

EXPLAINING COMPLEX CONCEPTS

- Federal funding for disaster recovery comes with many restrictions that were difficult to explain in plain language
- More testing of presentations and handouts in advance would have been helpful

SPREADING THE WORD

- HCDD relied mostly on Facebook, Twitter, and its homepage to notify residents about the events. Partners also spread the word and flyers were distributed to city council.
- More diverse strategies for sharing information about the events could have increased reach.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNICATION

- **View the media as a partner:** Work with news outlets to inform residents about upcoming opportunities for engagement.
- **Expand online engagement:** Information sharing shouldn't be limited to websites and social media. The department should consider ways to expand multi-language online communication and modernize the user experience on its website.
- **Inform the community on a regular basis:** Recovery is difficult to understand. The department should seek to execute a transparent recovery with regularly updated statistics and other recovery information shared widely with the community.

- **Create an HCDD distribution list for organizations the department engages:** Streamline communication with partners such as community organizations, service providers, community development corporations (CDCs), civic clubs, super neighborhood councils, and housing advocates. Provide regular updates to this group so they can share information in the community.

ENGAGEMENT

- **Conduct a stakeholder analysis to properly scope engagement:** The first round of engagement may have missed key constituencies, such as those who don't speak English or those who have accessibility barriers. A stakeholder analysis can deepen the department's understanding of who it should engage.
- **Create ongoing opportunities for engagement during Harvey recovery:** High-level commitments from Mayor Turner and Director McCasland were a good start in demonstrating that the City wants to hear from residents about recovery. Residents want continued opportunities to learn about recovery and provide input about recovery programs. Build engagement strategies into the larger recovery effort and communicate about them clearly.

DATA

- **Consider how data will be collected, stored, and analyzed as part of the design process:** Ensure that data solicited from communities is consistent and meaningful to the decisions the department is facing.
- **Document strategies and develop partnerships so they can be leveraged in future disasters:** View community engagement as an ongoing process, with heightened needs around major disasters. Prepare for the future by documenting processes as they are developed and regularly communicating with partners so they are ready to work together.

FACILITATION

- **Ensure facilitators are well trained:** Develop a pool of facilitators including HCDD staff, partner organizations, and contractors and conduct trainings in advance of major engagements.



June 23, 2018: Community members listen to Marvin Odum, Houston's Chief Recovery Officer, at a public community meeting in District G.

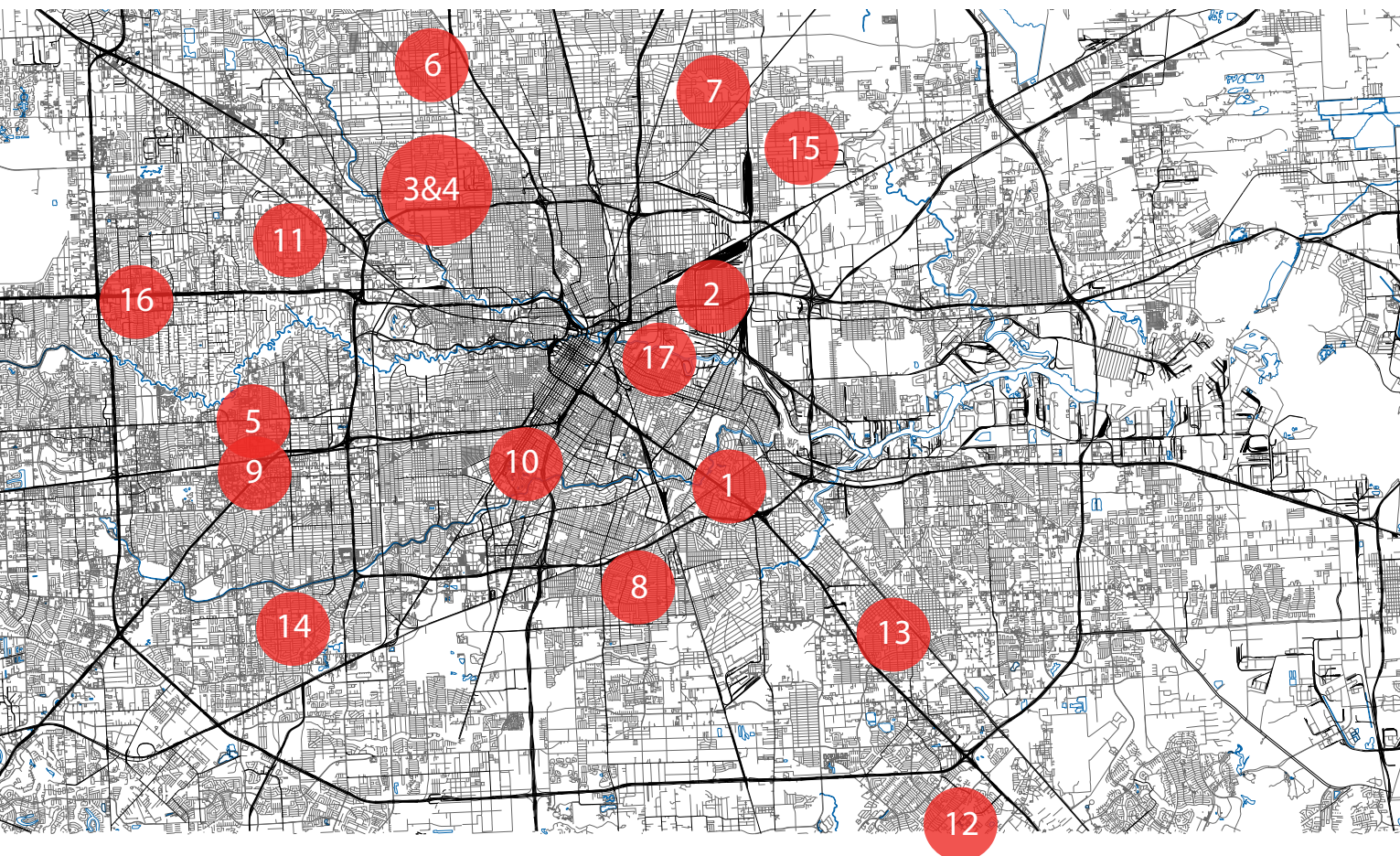


MEETING INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

June 23, 2018: Notes and discussions from a community meeting are transcribed on a map focused on neighborhoods of District G.

KEY DATES & EVENTS

17 COMMUNITY MEETINGS WERE HELD AROUND THE CITY WITH INTERMITTENT PRESENTATIONS AND FOCUS GROUPS



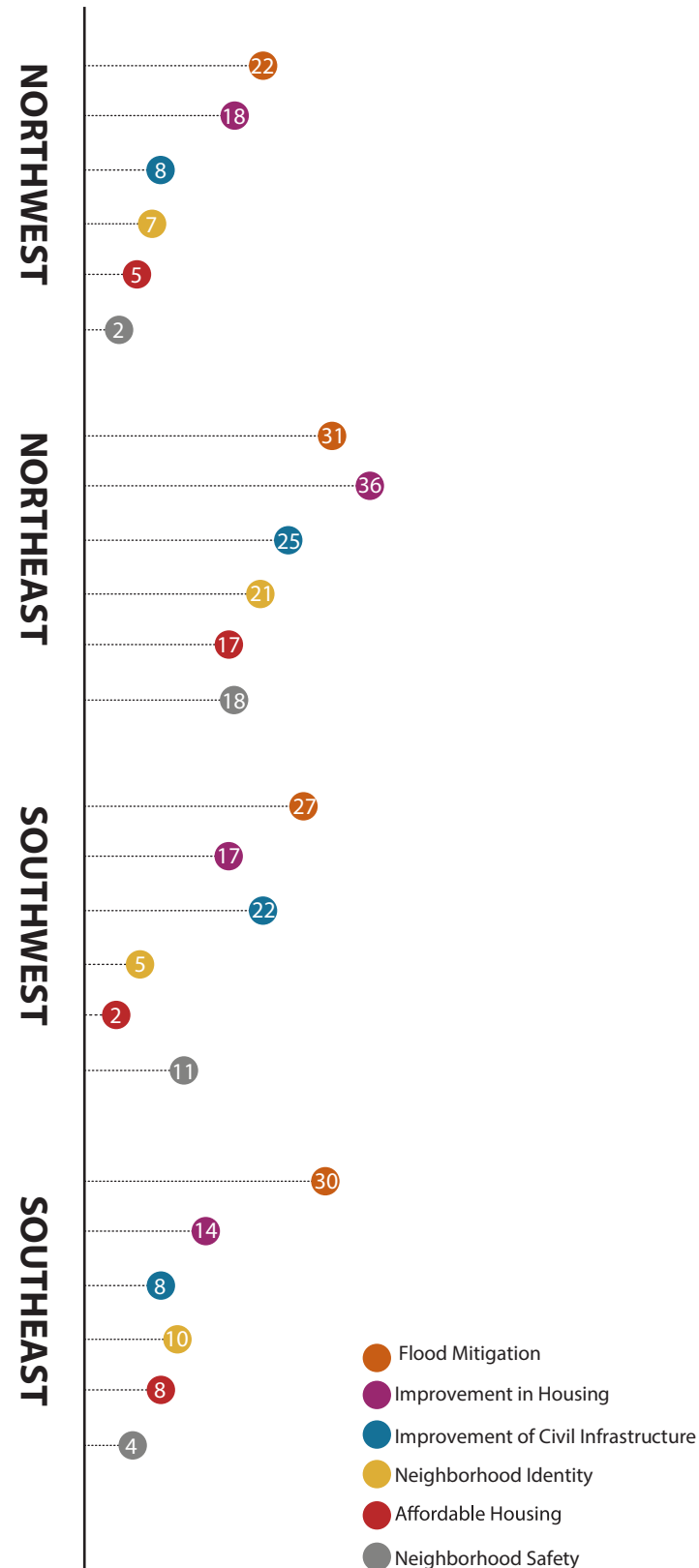
- 4.25.18
HCDD Focus group
- 5.2.18
HCDD Focus group
- 5.9.18
HCDD Focus group
- 5.16.18
HCDD Focus group
- 1** 5.19.2018
Host: HCDD + TOP
Where: Harris County AFL-CIO
Community Meeting: Eastside
Facilitation: [bc], CDRC, HCDD/APTIM, Translator/Interpreter contractor, TOP
- 5.20.18
HCDD Presentation
- 5.23.18
HCDD Focus Group
- 2** 5.23.2018
Host: HCDD + TOP
Where: Denver Harbor Multi-Service Center
Community Meeting: Denver Harbor
Facilitation: [bc], CDRC, HCDD/APTIM, TOP
- 5.24.18
HCDD Focus Group

- 3** 5.24.2018
Host: HCDD + LISC
Where: LISC Offices at 1111 N Loop W
Focus Group with nonprofit developers
Facilitation: LISC, HCDD/APTIM, Mercedes (consultant), [bc]
- 4** 5.25.2018
Host: HCDD + LISC
Where: LISC Offices at 1111 N Loop W
Focus Group with nonprofits
Facilitation: LISC, HCDD, APTIM, [bc]
- 5** 5.26.2018
Host: HCDD + FIEL
Where: FIEL Houston
Community Meeting: Southwest Houston
Facilitation: FIEL, HCDD
(APTIM didn't request help for this meeting)
- 6** 5.29.2018
Host: HCDD + TOP
Where: Acres Home Multi-Service Center
Community Meeting: Acres Homes
Facilitation: HCDD, TOP, [bc], CDRC
- 7** 6.2.2018
Host: HCDD + TOP
Where: Northeast Multi-Service Center
Community Meeting: Northeast Houston
Facilitation: HCDD, TOP, [bc], CDRC
- 8** 6.2.2018
Host: HCDD + TOP
Where: Greater St. Matthews Baptist Church
Community Meeting: Sunnyside and Southpark
Facilitation: HCDD, TOP, [bc], CDRC
- 6.2.18
HCDD Presentation
- 6.6.18
HCDD Community Meeting
- 6.6.18
Tele-town hall - Partnered with AARP (English)
- 6.7.18
Tele-town hall - Partnered with AARP and Univision (Spanish)
- 9** 6.7.2018
Host: HCDD + TOP
Where: SW Multiservice Center
Community Meeting: Southwest Houston
Facilitation: HCDD, TOP, [bc], CDRC
- 6.11.18
HCDD Presentation
- 6.12.18
HCDD Presentation
- 6.13.18
HCDD Presentation

- 10** 6.13.2018
Host: HCDD + Council Members Gallegos and Davis and Super Neighborhoods 57 and 59
Where: The Judson Robinson, Sr. Community Center
Community Meeting: Southwest Houston
Facilitation: HCDD, [bc], CDRC
- 6.14.18
HCDD Presentation
- 11** 6.14.2018
Host: HCDD + Council Member Stardig
Where: Trini Mendenhall Community Center
Community Meeting: District A
Facilitation: HCDD, [bc], CDRC
- 12** 6.16.2018
Host: HCDD + Council Member Boykins
Where: San Jacinto College - South
Community Meeting: District D
Facilitation: HCDD, [bc], CDRC + Translators
- 6.16.18
HCDD Presentation
- 6.18.18
HCDD Community Meeting
- 13** 6.19.2018
Host: HCDD + Council Member Martin at
Where: St. Stephen Presbyterian Church
Community Meeting: District E
Facilitation: HCDD, [bc], CDRC
- 14** 6.20.2018
Host: HCDD + Council Member Castex-Tatum
Where: Westbury High School
Community Meeting: District K
Facilitation: HCDD, [bc], Group of interpreters and translators
- 15** 6.21.2018
Host: HCD + East Houston Civic Association
Where: East Houston Civic Association
Community Meeting: East Houston
Facilitation: HCD, [bc], Group of interpreters and translators
- 16** 6.23.2018
Host: HCDD + Council Member Travis
Where: Tallowood Baptist Church
Community Meeting: District G
Facilitation: HCDD, [bc], CDRC, Group of interpreters and translators
- 6.25.18
End of the public comment period
- 6.26.18
Publication of the Community Feedback about Harvey Recovery
- 6.27.18
Vote at City Council
- 17** 6.28.2018
Host: HCDD + Baker Ripley
Where: Baker Ripley
Community Meeting: City Wide
Facilitation: HCDD, [bc], CDRC, Group of interpreters and translators

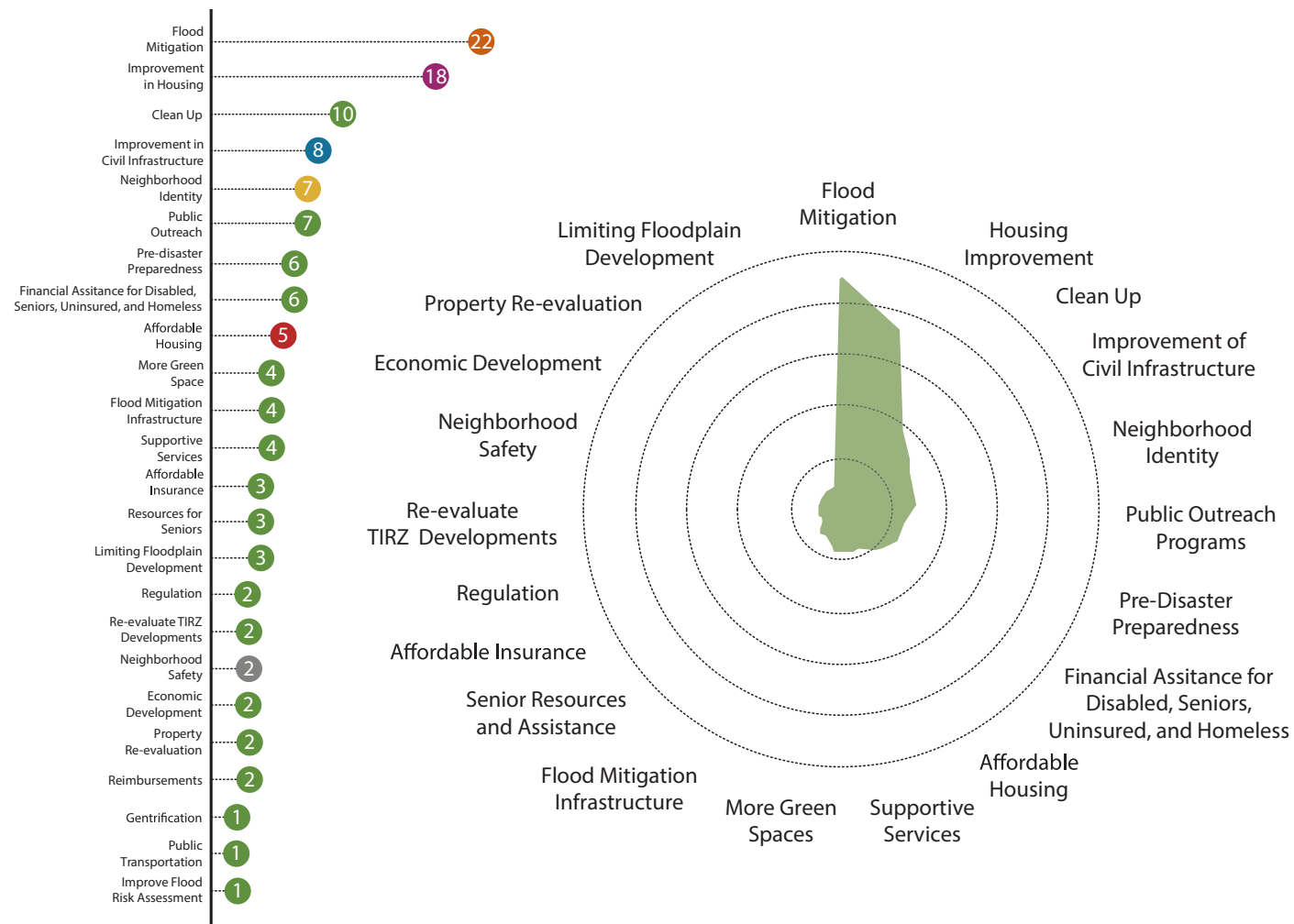
DATA DIAGRAMS

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMPILED DATA GATHERED AT THE COMMUNITY MEETINGS BY THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER.



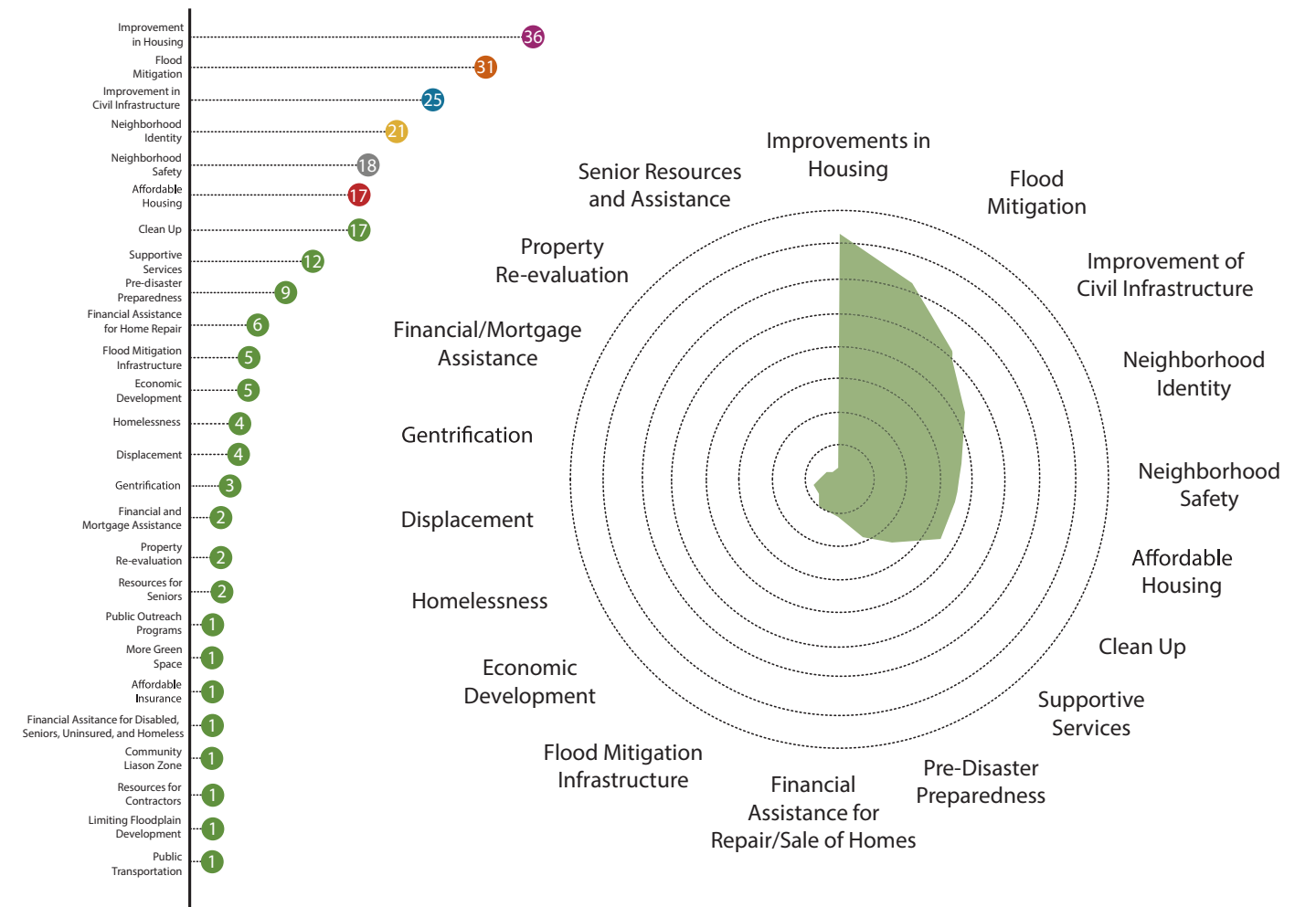
Residents were asked to share their vision priorities. From that, a list of 39 categories was created (e.g. Improvements in Civil Infrastructure - drains, ditches, potholes, sewers, trash receptacles, bayous, crosswalks, sidewalks, streetlights etc. and Public outreach – education & awareness programs), ultimately allowing for the information to be managed and interpreted in a more systematic manner. The order of the categories reflects their order of significance, which was determined by the number of times it was mentioned by participants.

Each graph reflects the community needs identified by attendees of community meeting in each quadrant. Differences in graphs illustrates how the different quadrants were affected by Harvey, and the varied experiences of those who attended the meetings. Meeting participants were varied in how they were affected by the hurricane, with some participants experiencing no flooding at all.



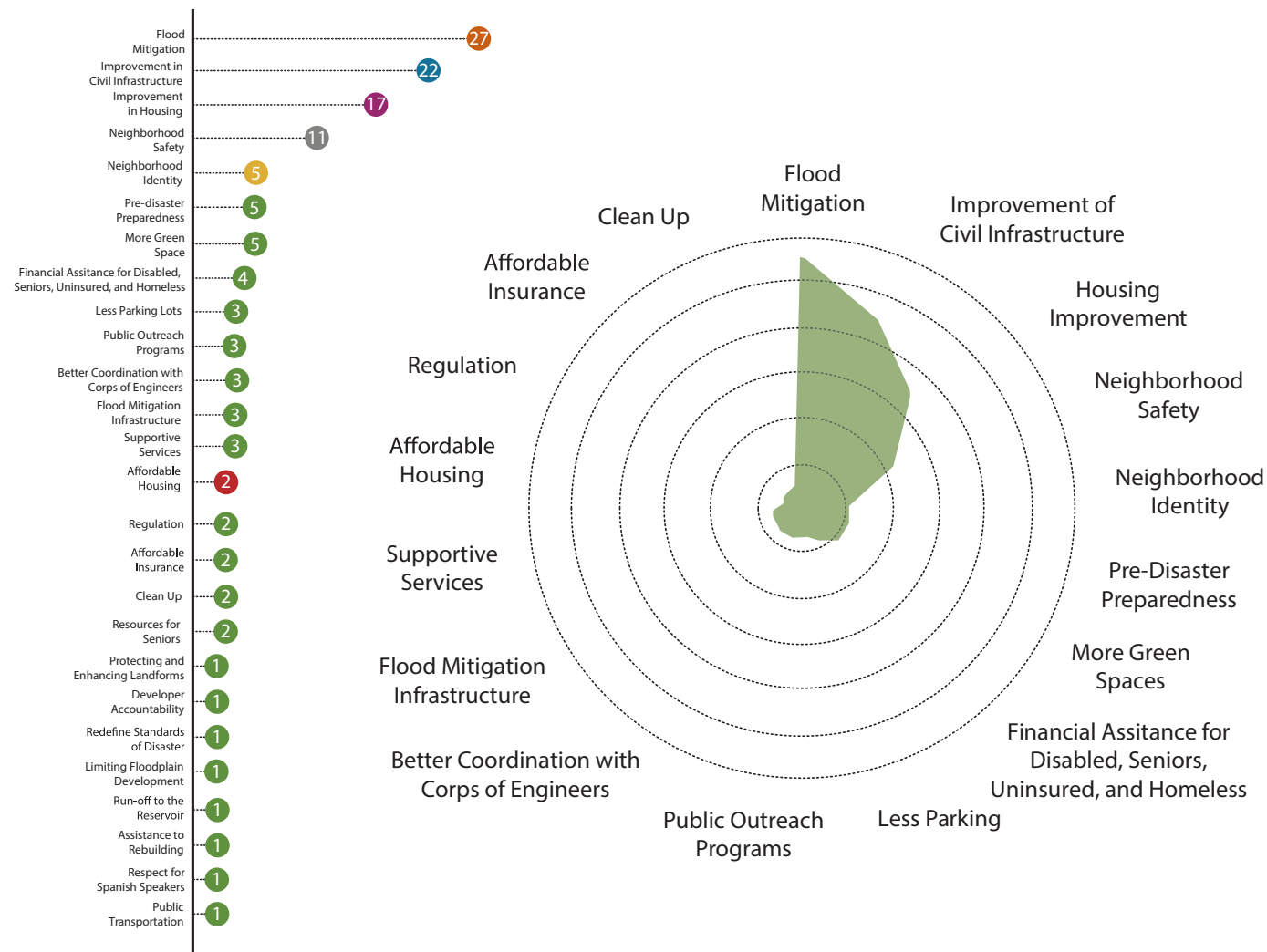
NORTHWEST QUADRANT

- The majority of the residents from the northwest discussed the need for more retention/detention strategies followed by need for improved housing infrastructure. People want sustainable damage reduction measures that are universal and equitable. Residents in this quadrant want the city administration to clean up the debris, plant more trees and revitalize the neighborhood. Suggestions such as reactivation of parks and beautification of the neighborhood by embedding more natural plants all across the sidewalks was cited.
- Better pre-disaster planning and management for emergency preparedness as well as public outreach campaigns was recommended.
- Areas covered under Northwest Quadrant:
 - District A
 - Korwood Briar Hills
 - Acres Home



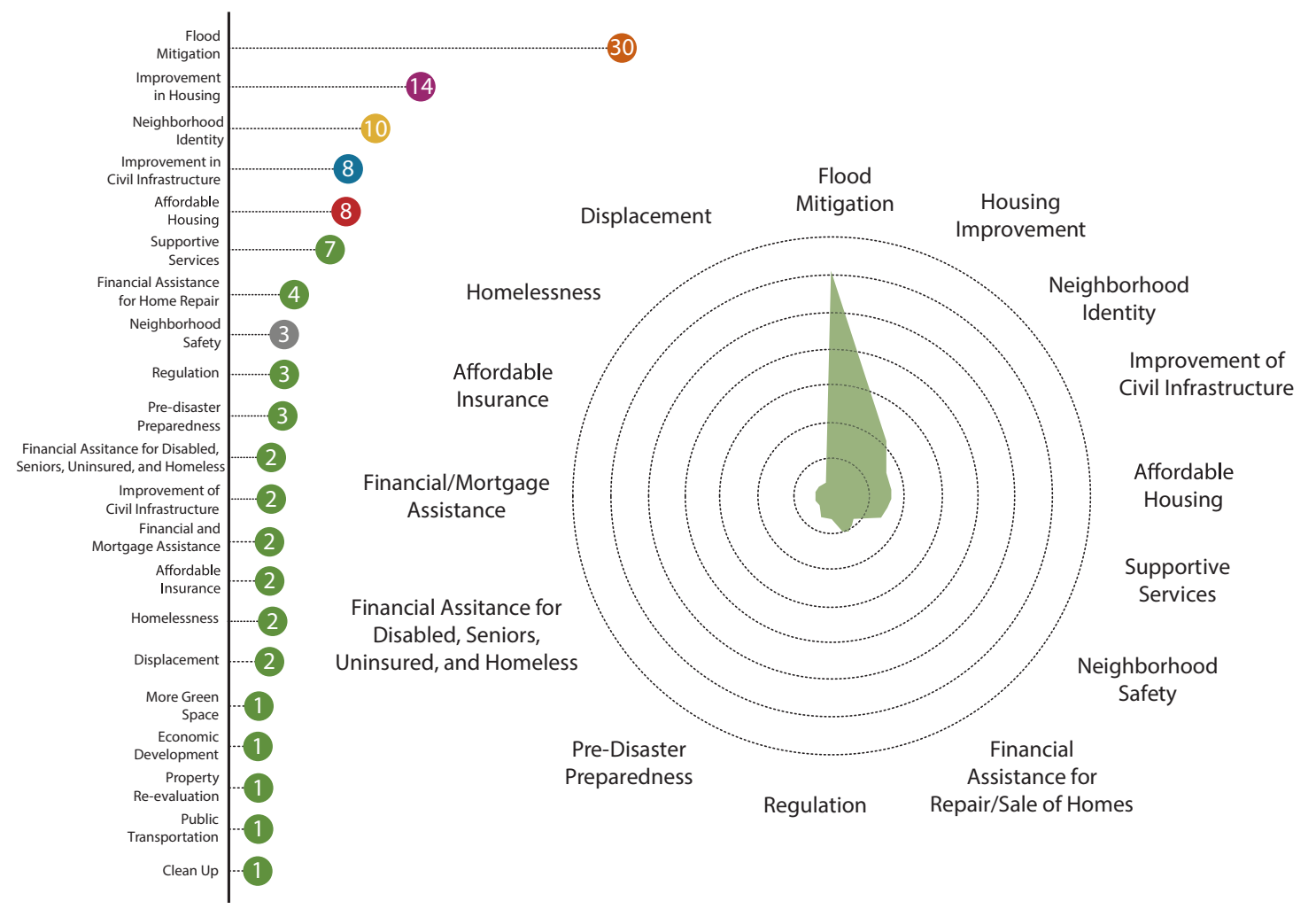
NORTHEAST QUADRANT

- The need for improved housing was the most often cited neighborhood challenge for the participants from Northeast Quadrant of Houston, followed by need for strategies that can help mitigate flood in the future. Residents wanted homes to be elevated to prepare for any flooding in the future.
- Implementing drainage reduction measures for existing infrastructure and maintenance of drainage-ways was identified as critical to mitigate floods in their neighborhood. Improvements civil infrastructure such as fixing potholes and bayous were consistently quoted by the residents.
- People envisage a neighborhood that is kid-friendly with play areas, parks, and libraries. They want a neighborhood with easy access to grocery and convenience stores. They wanted a safe and crime-free neighborhood with more police patrolling.
- Areas covered under Northeast Quadrant are:
 - Pleasantville/Groveland Terrace English
 - Houston Clinton Park Tri-community 77029
 - East Little York/Homestead
 - East Houston Civic Club 1
 - East Houston Civic Club 3
 - Kashmere - Trinity/Houston Gardens
 - Kashmere - East Little York/Homestead
 - Kashmere Garden - City of Houston Northeast
 - Denver Harbor
 - 5th Ward
 - 2nd Ward



SOUTHWEST QUADRANT

- The majority of residents representing the Southwest Quadrant of Houston want flood mitigation strategies such as home-buyout programs. People proposed raising homes and apartments as well as remodeling existing buildings.
- Residents complained about the lack of functioning sewers. Blocked sewers filled with sewage and waste was one of the main reasons why this area faced excessive flooding last year. Residents demanded improvements in sewers and street drainage repairs. They wanted streets that drained efficiently during heavy rainfall.
- Neighborhood safety came up again as one of the priorities. Residents wanted more secure neighborhoods and had less delinquency. They want more lighting and securing for their streets.
- Areas covered under Southwest Quadrant:
 - Sharpstown
 - Council District G
 - Gulfton



SOUTHEAST QUADRANT

- Participants wanted street improvements that included expanding drainage capacity. Upgraded drainage systems was cited most frequently by the residents of areas in this quadrant. Regular maintenance of bayous, developing permeable sidewalks, and building retention of ponds between Highway 3 and Railroad Track were some of the suggested flood mitigation strategies.
- People from this part of Houston sought affordable housing options, especially for working professionals and middle-income Americans. Participants noted the need to maintain and control the rental and sale value of housing to keep housing in the neighborhood affordable. They called for financial assistance for mortgage payments and programs for renters to remain in the neighborhood through affordable housing options.
- Participants frequently mentioned the need to upgrade and rebuild homes, especially those not up to code and those damaged by earlier floods.
- Many residents indicated that the neighborhood lacked grocery stores with healthier sections, better schools, and hobby and recreational stores. The streets lacked street lights and problems of crime and drugs were common. Participants discussed ways to revitalize neighborhoods and maintain safe environments.
- Areas covered under Southeast Quadrant are:
 - Edgebrook
 - SouthBelt Ellington
 - Sunnyside to Pleasantville
 - Sunny Side
 - Sunny Side South Park/Crestmont
 - South Park & Sunnyside I
 - Magnolia Park

COMMUNITY MEETING NOTES

THE FOLLOWING NOTES ARE A SUMMARY OF REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS TAKEN FROM EACH COMMUNITY MEETING.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #1



Community members point out areas for improvement in the eastside neighborhoods.

DATE:

May 19, 2018

LOCATION:

Harris County AFL-CIO

HOST:

Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Texas Organizing Project (TOP)

FACILITATION:

-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)
-HCDD
-APTIM
-Translator/Interpreter contractor
-TOP

FOCUS:

Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on the eastside

OBSERVATIONS:

- Roof damage is a significant problem.
- There are vulnerable populations in this neighborhood: people experiencing homelessness or housing instability, renters (there are not enough safe places to rent), and homeowners whose homes are in need of repairs or need to be reconstructed.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- The first meeting presented a handful of set-up and facilitation challenges. Following the first meeting, the team worked to clarify and simplify the meeting activities, questions, and facilitator instructions. This helped to reduce confusion and increase participation among attendees.
- The presentation of information about the national disaster recovery framework was difficult for participants to understand and connect with. Revisions were needed to make the presentation more accessible and engaging. Translators needed to be prepped in advance to be able to talk about new or complex topic areas.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #2



Facilitators help document observations and discussions at each table on a map of the focused area.

DATE:
May 23, 2018

WHERE:
Denver Harbor Multi-Service Center

HOST:
Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Texas Organizing Project (TOP)

FACILITATION:
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)
-HCDD
-APTIM
-TOP

FOCUS:
Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on neighborhoods near Denver Harbor

OBSERVATIONS:

- Residents identify incurring both roof and floor damage due to Harvey's heavy rains. The soil shift that came after the storm also led to structural foundation problems.
- The new homes that are quickly being built within the neighborhood are not at a price point accessible to residents.
- The street drainage (ditches) are not being maintained and are often filled with debris.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- Meeting introduction and presentation were split among TOP, HCDD, and the consultant, APTIM. While the presentation was similar to Meeting #1, small changes to the delivery seemed to improve the engagement of the audience.
- Consistency among how facilitators took notes or used the maps during the discussion continued to vary.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #3

DATE:
May 24, 2018

WHERE:
LISC Offices at 1111 North Loop

HOST:
Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Texas Organizing Project (TOP)

FACILITATION:
-LISC staff
-HCDD
-APTIM
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])

FOCUS:
Focus group with nonprofit developers

OBSERVATIONS:

- Participants asked about how the \$1.2 billion will be divided—how much would be used for administration, program allocation, etc?
- Participants expressed concerns about how community engagement will be used in shaping the recovery plans. "How are you going to balance/weigh input received through meetings and surveys from the community vs. data HCDD is receiving from Civis Analytics?"

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- This meeting focused on the nonprofit organizations and was an invite only meeting.
- LISC talked about the need for capacity building and opened a discussion about what the role of the city can be on building the capacity of the nonprofit sector.
- Conversation focused on timeline, next steps, and how the process works. Former HUD Assistant Secretary, Mercedes Marquez, provided necessary context of the CDBG-DR process, funding allocation and the role of the state vs. the role of Houston or county.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #4

DATE:
May 25, 2018

LOCATION:
LISC Offices at 1111 N Loop W.,
Houston, TX 77008

HOST:
Housing and Community Development
Department (HCDD)
+ Local Initiatives Support Corporation
(LISC)

FACILITATION:
-LISC staff
-HCDD
-APTIM
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])

FOCUS:
Focus group with nonprofit service
providers

OBSERVATIONS:

- There are concerns about the outreach and case management processes and the desire for support for applications in navigating the programs.
- Residents wonder how the money will be split between the recovery programs and what supports will be available to nonprofits (operating support, pre-development funding, technical assistance).
- There is a need for established standards for deferred maintenance, code-resiliency goals, flood protection, flood resistance, and what is healthy and safe.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- This was a regular bi-weekly meeting organized by LISC. HCDD was invited to join for a portion of the meeting.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #5

DATE:
May 26, 2018

LOCATION:
FIEL Houston

HOST:
Housing and Community Development
Department (HCDD)
+ Familias Immigrantes y Estudiantes
en la Lucha (FIEL)

FACILITATION:
-FIEL staff
-HCDD (additional HCDD staff were in
attendance)

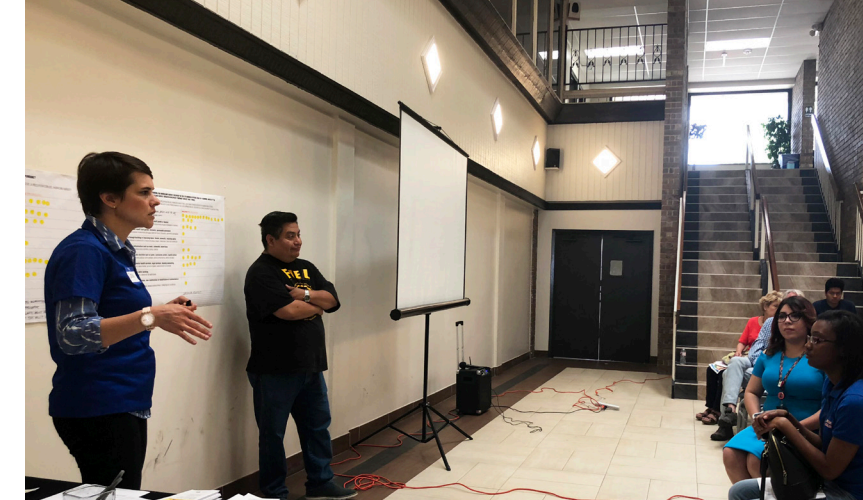
FOCUS:
Neighborhood assessment around
housing needs and investment
opportunities focused on
neighborhoods in southwest Houston,
particularly for renters and non-English
speakers

OBSERVATIONS:

- Concerns about services reaching communities that often do not express their housing problems arose.
- Code enforcement was brought up.
- Supporting renter relocation to safe housing and ensuring landlords who receive recovery funds use the money to improve the apartments was a top concern.
- The community desire greater clarity on how the new amendments to Chapter 19, regarding the floodplain ordinances, will be implemented, and how it will affect current homeowners.

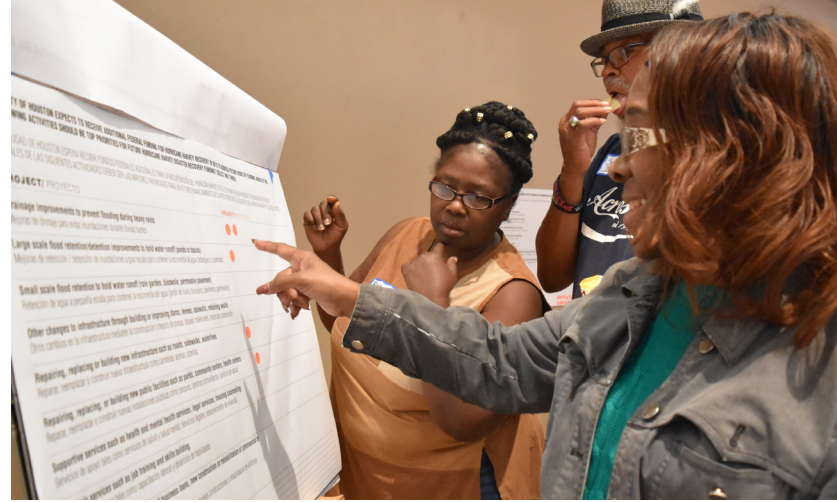
ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- The event was scheduled on Saturday of Memorial Day weekend, which resulted in lower attendance (around 20 individuals).
- Additional meetings were still being scheduled, and some residents from District G expressed frustration that this appeared to be the only meeting available to them. Additional meetings in the district were later scheduled.



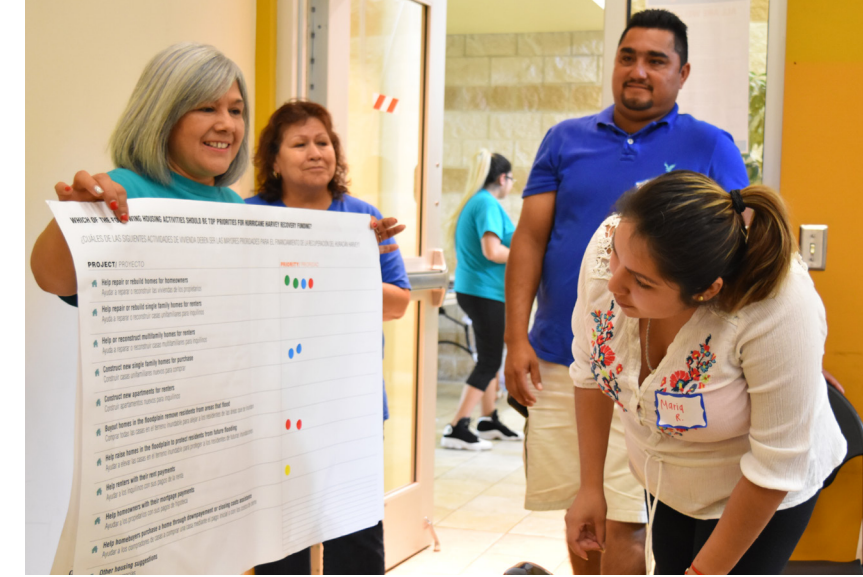
Sarah Labowitz (HCDD) leads the discussion about disaster recovery priorities of attendees.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #6



Community members evaluate and vote on which project they think takes most priority in their neighborhoods regarding disaster recovery.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #7



Community members are able to engage and interact with activities focused on disaster recovery funds allocation priorities.

DATE:
May 29, 2018

WHERE:
Acres Home Multi-Service Center

HOST:
Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Texas Organizing Project (TOP)

FACILITATION:
-HCDD
-TOP
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)

FOCUS:
Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on Acres Home

OBSERVATIONS:

- Assistance for seniors with tax exempt status was noted.
- Participants want legal assistance for clearing titles.
- There is a need for home repair assistance, even before Harvey.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- This meeting was very well attended.
- The high attendance triggered the need to identify additional facilitators - the mixture of trained and untrained facilitators resulted in inconsistencies in meeting notes.

DATE:
June 2, 2018

WHERE:
Northeast Multi-Service Center

HOST:
Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Texas Organizing Project (TOP)

FACILITATION:
-HCDD
-TOP
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)

FOCUS:
Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on neighborhoods in the Northeast

OBSERVATIONS:

- Repairs or reconstruction to roofs and foundations is needed.
- Desire to improve the drainage infrastructure, the capacity of the bayou around the area, and the street conditions are a concern.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- The meeting was very well attended.
- Material delivery and table set-up issues made it difficult to distribute participants among the tables. Without the maps residents didn't find their place.
- The high attendance triggered the need to identify additional facilitators - the mixture of trained and untrained facilitators resulted in inconsistencies in meeting notes and the late start of the meeting resulted in less time available for table activities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #8



Community members join in on making their mark on the maps to express issues and concerns in their neighborhoods.

DATE:

June 2, 2018

LOCATION:

Greater St. Matthews Baptist Church

HOST:

Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Texas Organizing Project (TOP)

FACILITATION:

-HCDD
-TOP
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)

FOCUS:

Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on Sunnyside and Southpark

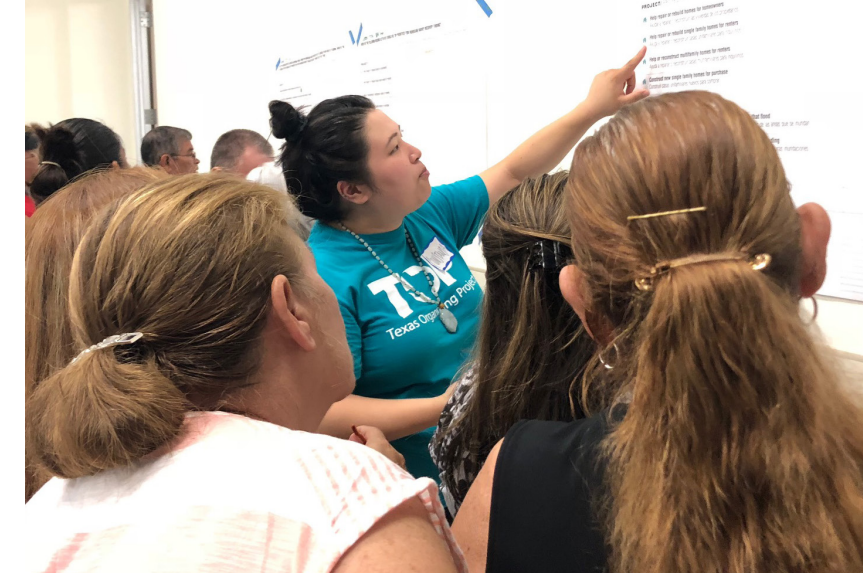
OBSERVATIONS:

- Repair or rebuild damaged old homes, including elevating the homes when needed.
- There is a need for safe, healthy, affordable rental housing.
- There is a need for infrastructure improvements (street, drainage and other infrastructure). New or improved drainage infrastructure is needed to prevent future flooding.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- After participating in multiple meetings, facilitators felt more at ease and meeting notes were more consistent.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #9



TOP facilitator guides and explains the prioritization activity to community meeting attendees.

DATE:

June 7, 2018

LOCATION:

SW Multi Service Center

HOST:

Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Texas Organizing Project (TOP)

FACILITATION:

-HCDD
-TOP
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)

FOCUS:

Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on neighborhoods in the southwest

OBSERVATIONS:

- Items addressing the needs of renters:
 - Need for safe, improved, affordable rental housing.
 - New rental options in areas that don't flood and buyouts for rental housing in areas that are unsafe.
 - Issues with landlord not rehabbing the units.
 - Additional regulations which would prevent apartments being built in unsafe areas.
- Mold is still a concern for many who were affected by the storm.
- Improving or repairing street and drainage is a top concern. Some street ditches were not cleaned up and are still in need of maintenance.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- HCDD staff joined experienced facilitators' tables to better understand how to balance table exercises and mapping documentation moving forward, as well as to hear directly from participants.
- The team received feedback from the UT Health Science Center on map note-taking and visualization from previous meetings and which strategies would work better for analysis and documentation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #10



Community members begin with filling out a demographic and need assessment survey.

DATE:
June 13, 2018

WHERE:
Judson Robinson, Sr. Community Center

HOST:
Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Council Member Gallegos, Council Member Davis, and Super Neighborhoods 57 and 59

FACILITATION:
-HCDD
-TOP
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)

FOCUS:
Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on neighborhoods in the Southwest

OBSERVATIONS:

- Residents' top housing priority was the repair/rebuilding and raising of homes. Many of the homes are viewed as substandard and in need of repairs or reconstruction to be brought up to current codes.
- Infrastructure was also a top priority, particularly improving street drainage infrastructure.
- There are concerns over the high levels of vacancy in the community. Residents proposed that the vacant homes should be rehabilitated and used for rental housing.
- There is a desire for greater case management counseling services, particularly providing navigation assistance for the elderly. Residents also shared that they were denied assistance from FEMA and U.S. Small Business Administration.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- Participating facilitators arrived an hour before the meeting's start, providing the opportunity for [bc] to do a run through of the activities.
- There were at least two facilitators per table during this meeting and activities ran more smoothly than previous meetings.
- Council Member Gallegos and Council Member Davis attended and engaged with residents throughout.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #11



Facilitators engage and listen to the community members' thoughts and insight.

DATE:
June 14, 2018

LOCATION:
Trini Mendenhall Community Center

HOST:
Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Council Member Stardig

FACILITATION:
-HCDD
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)

FOCUS:
Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on neighborhoods In District A

OBSERVATIONS:

- Participants expressed a desire to improve infrastructure rather than raising homes. They want flood control solutions that support all neighbors.
- Middle income families also need recovery assistance. Their concerns were focused around:
 - where support funds were going—they worry that funds are being allocated mostly to low income communities.
 - the amount of money they have to spend to repair their home to date, because most of their homes were not in a floodplain which would require flood insurance.
 - expressing support for a reimbursement program that would help them cover their repair costs.
- They have never flooded and feel the drainage work done on the neighborhood is unnecessary. However, houses next to the levee have flooded several times.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- This meeting focused on a higher income neighborhood where many residents hosted displaced residents from other areas.
- Council Member Stardig participated actively in the meeting.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #12

DATE:

June 16, 2018

WHERE:

San Jacinto College - South

HOST:

Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Council Member Boykins

FACILITATION:

-HCDD
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)
- Translators

FOCUS:

Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on neighborhoods on District D

OBSERVATIONS:

- The neighborhood requested the City do a detailed assessment on their neighborhood. They did not feel comfortable making decisions for their neighbors.
- Concern was expressed about the vacant lots in the neighborhood and their lack of maintenance. Some of these lots were a part of a buy-out program in the past, and residents would like a planning process to determine how they should be used or programmed in the future.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- Council Member Boykins attended the event
- The event was organized and marketed at the last minute, resulting in low attendance
- Facilitators identified a need to standardize document and materials storage

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #13

DATE:

June 19, 2018

LOCATION:

St. Stephen Presbyterian Church

HOST:

Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Council Member Martin

FACILITATION:

-HCDD
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)

FOCUS:

Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on neighborhoods in District E

OBSERVATIONS:

- Many of the homes in the area were damaged, particularly homes on corner lots whose streets acted as floodways during Harvey's rains.
 - Many residents shared that they or their neighbors are taking on the repairs themselves. They expressed challenges with contractors and mistrust of city-managed programs.
- Available rental units were described as overpriced and in bad condition.
- Debris goes into drainage and sewer system, increasing water management issues.
- Resident's priorities for investment:
 - Repair/rebuild single family homes
 - Cleanup and maintain drainage infrastructure
 - New or rebuild affordable rental units
 - New multifamily projects

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- Mixing English-speaking participants and Spanish-speaking participants at the same table was challenging for facilitators.
- For some facilitators, it was the first time they were participating in the meetings. These new facilitators didn't participate in previous trainings, which resulted in inconsistent information being provided and collected at each table.



[bc] and the CDRC lead the facilitation effort and the structure of activities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #14



Facilitators at each table lead the discussion at a community engagement meeting.

DATE:
June 20, 2018

WHERE:
Westbury High School

HOST:
Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Council Member Castex-Tatum

FACILITATION:
-HCDD
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Group of interpreters and translators

FOCUS:
Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on neighborhoods in District K

OBSERVATIONS:

- Many of the families in this area evacuated, leaving much of the neighborhood vacant. The increase in crime in the areas is believed to be a result.
- Residents expressed a desire to be a resilient community and to build back better. This included providing support for residents to raise their homes and, if possible, support to reconstruct homes with substantial damage.
- Concerns of high speculation, flipping, and affordability were expressed by community members. They want community improvements but fear gentrification and loss of affordability and neighborhood character. A need for affordable rental units was also shared.
- Improvements of water management by improving the capacity of the Bayou, and upgrading permeable areas was also expressed.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- The day before this meeting, [bc] provided training to HCDD staff on facilitation, and HCDD leadership noticed a difference in facilitation and documentation after the training.
- Each table had two facilitators (1 note taking and 1 documenting on the map), which also help improve the quality of the information documented.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #15



Sarah Labowitz, HCDD, leads the conversation and asks participants about the recovery needs in their communities.

DATE:
June 21, 2018

LOCATION:
East Houston Civic Association

HOST:
Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ East Houston Civic Association

FACILITATION:
-HCDD
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)
-Group of interpreters and translators

FOCUS:
Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on neighborhoods in east Houston

OBSERVATIONS:

- Vacancy in the area has increased as landlords and renters choose to not repair or are unable to afford to repair and have to leave their homes.
- There is a need for home repair and reconstruction assistance.
- Residents identified drainage improvements, system clean up, and improved maintenance as top priorities.
- Residents shared that they have struggled navigating the different assistance programs.
- Beyond storm recovery, the community seeks economic development, attracting community services and commercial businesses, street improvements, support services for children and elderly, and affordable single and multifamily housing.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- This meeting was part of the Civic Association monthly meeting.
- Some participants had already attended other TOP meetings. The meeting approach was changed to shorten the meeting time.
 - Participants were asked a series of questions, while two facilitators took notes.
 - Due to time, some tables were only able to complete one chart during the table activities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #16



Facilitators at each table explain the engagement activities and lead the discussion at each meeting.

DATE:

June 23, 2018

WHERE:

Tallowood Baptist Church

HOST:

Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Council Member Travis

FACILITATION:

-HCDD
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)
-Group of interpreters and translators

FOCUS:

Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on neighborhoods in District G

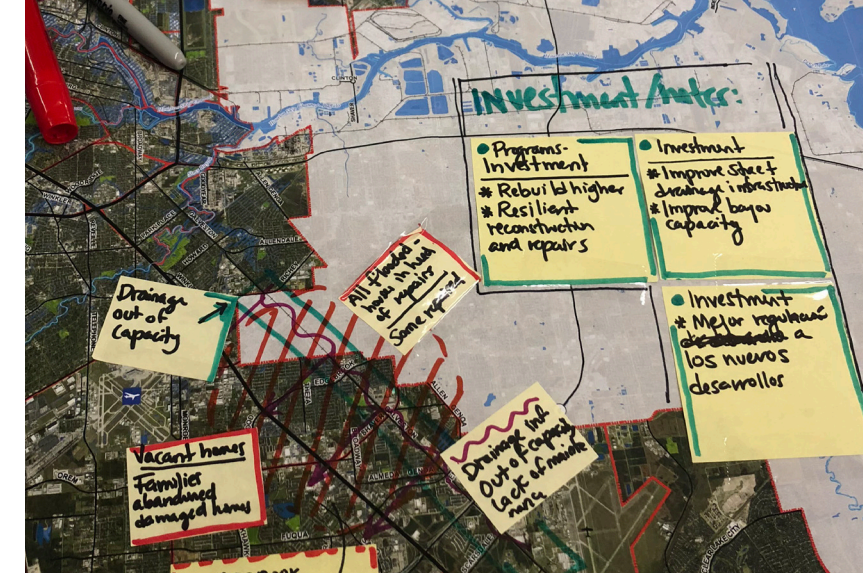
OBSERVATIONS:

- Due to the release of the Corps of Engineers, neighborhoods that had never flooded before flooded for the first time.
- Tax increment reinvestment zones (TIRZ) need better development regulation or enforcement.
- Investment priorities:
 - All new development to include green infrastructure, retention/detention, or conventional systems—whichever is most appropriate.
 - Many homeowners repaired on their own—need for reimbursement assistance.
 - Housing beyond repair needs reconstruction assistance.
 - Improve bayou and reservoir capacity
 - Some current drainage infrastructure needs upgrading.
 - Invest in affordable housing away from the bayou.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- This meeting was very organized. The presentation from HCDD and city officials was better than previous meetings. Facilitation was also better than in other meetings.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING #17



Notes and observations fill a map during a discussion of Houston's disaster recovery needs city wide.

DATE:

June 28, 2018

LOCATION:

Baker Ripley

HOST:

Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD)
+ Baker Ripley

FACILITATION:

-HCDD
-buildingcommunityWORKSHOP ([bc])
-Community Design Resource Center (CDRC)
-Group of interpreters and translators

FOCUS:

Neighborhood assessment around housing needs and investment opportunities focused on citywide

OBSERVATIONS:

- Participants identified a need to increase drainage capacity, at the street level and at bayous. (Edgebrook, Kashmere Gardens/Northeast Houston, surrounding areas of Beltway 8 Park, and West University Place).
- They expressed the need for home repair and reconstruction. Desire to rebuild higher, include risk mitigation and resilient construction strategies were noted. (Edgebrooke, Kashmere Gardens/Northeast Houston, West University Place, and Brays Bayou Overflow).
- Support is needed for displaced families and families that have been denied relief assistance.
- Investment priorities:
 - Rebuild higher.
 - Resilient reconstruction and repairs.
 - Improve street drainage infrastructure and overall maintenance strategy of street infrastructure.
 - Improve bayous' capacity.
 - More regulation or enforcement of regulations with new development.

ENGAGEMENT REFLECTIONS:

- This was a citywide meeting in which multiple neighborhoods participated.
- Spanish facilitation was provided.



June 20, 2018: Community members actively discuss and voice their thoughts with a facilitator over a map of District K.



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