

## Direction and Outline

### Nassau Bay Comprehensive Plan

The purpose of this briefing paper is to frame the discussion for a second joint workshop with City Council, Planning Commission and Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee members (on March 9, 2020). We are at the point of transitioning from background study and considerations about Nassau Bay as it is today – the Existing City – to what it can and will be in the decades ahead – the Future City. This paper highlights: (1) leadership and community input; (2) related information and key assumptions for the Future City phase, especially with regard to Nassau Bay’s population outlook; and (3) a working outline of the Future City portion of the Comprehensive Plan document to guide the remaining plan development process.

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#### Leadership and Community Input

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Community and leadership engagement activities during the Existing City phase included:

- Initial joint workshop with City Council and Planning Commission (January 2020).
- Background information from City departments (December/January).
- Three informal listening sessions with 10-15 person groups from the community and with City Department heads (January and February).
- Town Hall Meeting on Nassau Bay’s Future (February). See photos below from event, which drew overflow attendance at the Nassau Bay Council Chambers.
- A survey administered at the Town Hall Meeting on Nassau Bay’s Future received 146 responses. The input from the survey and the group exercises conducted during the Town Hall is summarized in the Town Hall Input Highlights paper.
- Initial meeting with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (February).



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**Top Strategic Items within each Focus Area**

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**Proposed List of Top Strategic Items within each Focus Area (Neighborhood of Dreams, Recharge Our Corridor, Safe and Peaceful Community, Renewed Infrastructure, Vibrant Environments)**

The list below was compiled, in no particular priority order, based on the Existing City findings, input from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, joint workshop with City elected and appointed officials, results of varied public engagement activities to date, and the consultant team's own input.

**1. Neighborhood of Dreams**

- Implications of any new growth for the City, including impacts to infrastructure and City revenues.
- Revitalization and upkeep of older housing stock and preservation of neighborhoods.
- Potential redevelopment of older multifamily complexes.
- Diversity of housing types, including housing for seniors and for various life-cycle stages, in appropriate locations.
- Coordination between City and Homeowners Associations, especially regarding role in property maintenance standards and enforcement.
- Maintain Nassau Bay's cherished "small town feel" even while evolving.

**2. Recharge Our Corridor**

- Revitalization of aged commercial properties.
- Support, retain, and recruit retail and dining establishments to address residents' desires and bolster the City's tax base.
- Continued leasing of vacant commercial space in Town Square project.
- Potential for unique Nassau Bay assets, including waterfront, to act as economic drivers.
- Continue to strengthen Nassau Bay's tourism industry, focusing on elements where Nassau Bay can differentiate itself from the competition.
- Reinforce Nassau Bay's small-town identity while also highlighting its links to the Bay Area and proximity to both Galveston and Houston.

**3. Safe and Peaceful Community**

- Manage the potential effects of rental activity in neighborhoods.
- Code enforcement of derelict or unsafe properties.
- Safety at high-crash locations and traffic enforcement, including speeding.
- Ongoing focus on public safety services and maintaining a low crime rate.
- Involvement of residents in keeping the community safe, through efforts such as National Night Out and neighborhood watches.
- Address evolving safety and security needs, such as evacuation, elderly services, financial scams, etc.

**4. Renewed Infrastructure**

- Continued investment in City-owned utility infrastructure through both maintenance and upgrades.

- Strategies for reducing flooding risk and impacts, including storm water management, low-impact development, and multi-purpose open space.
- Fiber and other technology upgrades to ensure the area's economic competitiveness.
- Greater focus on multi-modal circulation and safety, including pedestrians, cyclists, golf carts and boating.
- Involvement of residents in upkeep and clean-ups of the community as well as keeping residents up to date on infrastructure projects.
- City facility needs and use, including the former City Hall building and the potential for a community center.
- Identify sustainable funding for replacing aging infrastructure.
- Ensuring City's resiliency and emergency preparedness through redundancy/back-up systems of essential City facilities and services.

#### **5. Vibrant Environments**

- A healthy and active community through continued support for existing and new park and recreation amenities.
- Enhance Nassau Bay's physical appearance, including at gateways to the City and along major corridors through landscaping, lighting, and other beautification measures.
- Continued focus on community events and the potential for creation of additional public gathering spaces.
- Maintain and enhance Nassau Bay's waterfront, natural areas and amenities, including the marina, boardwalk, boating areas, park areas, and the peninsula.
- Protection of natural resources to maintain scenic views, enhance wildlife, and improve resiliency.

#### **6. New and Improved Implementation Tools to Advance Plan Priorities**

- Updated development regulations and standards, including flood protection measures.
- Updated master plans (for utilities, public facilities, etc.).
- Mechanisms for promoting economic development and facilitating redevelopment.
- Continued emphasis on partnerships (public/public, public/private, public/non-profit).
- Potential fee mechanisms to fund improvements.

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### **Population Outlook for Nassau Bay**

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Population projections are an important component of a long-range planning process. They help determine and quantify the demands that will be placed on public facilities and services based on the potential pace and scale of the community's physical growth. Projections reflect local, regional, national and international trends and offer a basis to prepare for the future. However, forecasting population changes can be challenging, particularly for the long term, because it is often difficult to account for all circumstances that may arise. Therefore, it will be important for the City to monitor population and economic growth continually to account for both short- and longer-term shifts that can influence development activity and trends in the community and larger region.

## Alternative Growth Scenarios

Demographers caution that population projections become trickier as the geographic area gets smaller, making city-level population the most difficult to forecast. This is because local population change is strongly influenced by less predictable factors such as housing prices, availability of vacant land to develop, housing preferences, and other factors.

Due to the small population size of Nassau Bay (less than 5,000), the variability in the City's population over time (growth some years, decline in others), and the limited amount of potential future development sites, some traditional population projection methods that rely on trends do not appear as valid in Nassau Bay. Given this context, this section provides a comparison of several potential scenarios for future population change in Nassau Bay, for discussion purposes only.

### *Varying Quantities and Rates of Growth*

Linear growth forecasts are "straight line" projections that result in the same absolute number of new persons being added to the population in each period. This produces a declining rate of growth over time as the same amount is being added to an ever-expanding base (in the case of Nassau Bay, adding 101 residents per decade). Exponential growth projections produce higher numbers than linear by assuming a constant rate of growth over time. This is similar to the power of compound growth in a savings account over time; the interest (i.e., growth) rate may not change, but it is being applied to an ever-expanding balance, resulting in larger and larger interest earnings over time. In the case of Nassau Bay, the Exponential and Linear Growth scenarios only result in a population difference of only 8 since they are based on the small growth that occurred between 2010 and 2018.

The Exponential Growth line, labeled as "Steady Growth Rate" in the Nassau Bay scenarios chart, is based on the 0.3 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) the city had from 2010 to 2018. The Exponential Growth line leads to a 2040 population of 4,314 while the Linear Growth line, labeled as "Steady Numeric Growth" on the chart, leads to a 2040 population of 4,306. Both of these scenarios are a lower population level than the City had in either 1980 (4,526) or 1990 (4,320).

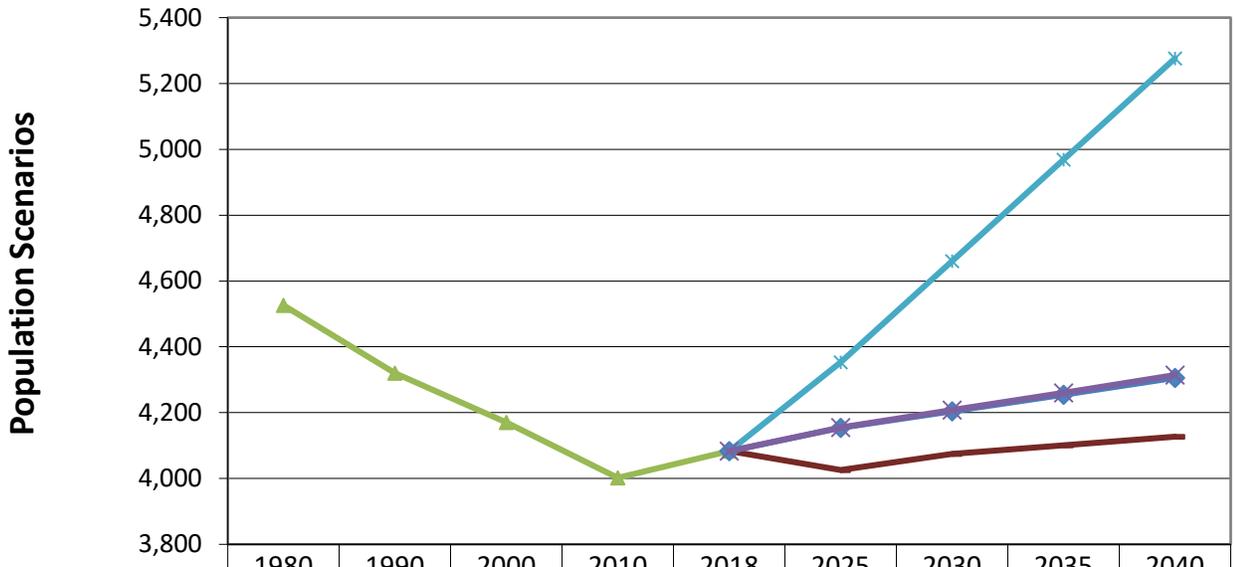
The Houston-Galveston Area Council runs socio-economic models within the 8-county Houston region. However, H-GAC does not perform population projections for entities under 5,000 in population. Projections by the Texas Water Development Board provide another basis for comparison, with Nassau Bay shown at 4,127 residents in 2040.

With limited developable land, population growth in Nassau Bay could come about in three ways:

(1) through higher density housing, (2) replacement of former commercial sites with residential development, and/or (3) a higher rate of family formation or increase in average household size. As stated in previous Comprehensive Plans, the community does not desire greater residential density beyond what the City's current zoning allows, and no significant conversion of current non-residential property is foreseen.

If Nassau Bay were to experience an increase in average household size (for example through growth in the number of families living in Nassau Bay) the population could increase even if the number of households (and housing units) remained the same. For example, the Household Size Growth scenario extrapolates what the population of Nassau Bay would be in 2040 if the average household size steadily rose from its current size of 2.14 persons per household in 2018 to 2.88 persons per household, which is the 2018 average household size in Harris County. In this scenario the number of households was held

constant through 2040 at the 2018 level (1,908 households), resulting in a 2040 population of 5,276. Note that this scenario is not suggesting that this is likely to happen but rather to provide food for thought.



	1980	1990	2000	2010	2018	2025	2030	2035	2040
Historical Data	4,526	4,320	4,170	4,002	4,083				
Household Size Growth					4,083	4,353	4,661	4,968	5,276
Texas Water Development Board					4,083	4,026	4,075	4,101	4,127
Steady Numeric Growth (101 per decade)					4,083	4,154	4,205	4,255	4,306
Steady Growth Rate (0.3%)					4,083	4,155	4,208	4,261	4,314

**Bottom Line**

It is wise for cities to think in terms of a range of potential growth rather than an absolute number given the uncertainty of any small-area forecast that extends beyond a few years. **It is assumed for this Comprehensive Plan that Nassau Bay’s 2040 population will stay within a range that remains below the City’s 1980 level of 4,520 and that can be accommodated without a significant increase in housing units.**

In the end, all of the information presented here is just a numbers exercise on paper at this point. The next essential step in the Future City phase of the comprehensive planning process will involve:

- More in-depth consideration of available, developable land in Nassau Bay where growth could potentially occur – and the extent and timing of development activity that is already anticipated;
- The projected capacity of the City’s infrastructure and public services to accommodate growth in future years; and
- Community values and preferences regarding growth, which would ultimately translate into capital projects and public services planning.

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### Guiding Principles

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This section identifies an initial set of guiding principles for the Comprehensive Plan that will be refined in conjunction with each of the major planning topics considered through the remainder of the plan development process.

- GP1:** Nassau Bay will be **BALANCED** in its approach to development, encouraging revitalization of older housing stock and commercial areas, while seeking to both maintain the character of the residential community and create more amenities for existing and future residents (restaurants, retail, arts/culture, etc.).
- GP2:** Nassau Bay will be **ACTIVE** by encouraging a healthy community and lifestyles through support for the City's parks and natural assets, including the waterfront, and by involving residents and businesses to help ensure safe and secure neighborhoods and well-supported public safety services.
- GP3:** Nassau Bay will be **COMMUNITY-MINDED** by listening and responding to resident's concerns, maintaining high customer service, encouraging civic participation, and by preserving the "small town feel" of the community.
- GP4:** Nassau Bay will be **RESILIENT** as it prepares for the future, pro-actively investing in infrastructure, public safety, emergency preparedness and elements that will make the community stronger while working to ensure the City remains fiscally sustainable through a diverse economy, revitalized commercial corridors, and a bolstered tax base.
- GP5:** Nassau Bay will be **COLLABORATIVE** in addressing opportunities and challenges, seeking local and regional partnerships to effectively address transportation, economic development, tourism, infrastructure, security, resiliency, and quality of life needs.

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### Working Outline for Future City Portion of Comprehensive Plan

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This section provides a working outline of the Future City portion of the eventual Comprehensive Plan document to guide work efforts during the upcoming Future City phase of the planning process.

#### Standard Elements in All Sections

After an Introduction section that summarizes the purpose of the plan, how it is used, the authority under which the City prepares and adopts it, and an overview of its content, each of the topical plan sections that follow will include these standard elements:

- Introduction:
  - › Focus of section.
  - › Links to other plan sections.
- Legacy of Past Planning:
  - › Previous relevant plans/studies.
  - › Accomplishments.
  - › Ongoing issues/items still needing attention.

- Key Issues and Considerations.
- Framework for Action:
  - › Goals for this topic.
  - › Strategic Action Priorities for this topic.
  - › Other Actions, presented in five categories that are the main ways these plans are implemented:
    - 1) Capital investments.
    - 2) Programs and initiatives.
    - 3) Regulations and standards.
    - 4) Partnerships and coordination.
    - 5) More targeted planning/study.

### **Neighborhood of Dreams**

Considerations in this section for completing the standard elements above, along with a Future Land Use Map, will include:

- Development opportunities and redevelopment/infill needs.
- Barriers to desired local housing development.
- Site and building design practices that contribute to quality development and other community objectives.
- Urban design and beautification considerations primarily involving the “public realm” (i.e., key roadway corridors, community entries/gateways, other public lands/facilities, etc.).

### **Recharge Our Corridor**

Considerations in this section for completing the standard elements above will include:

- Areas where Nassau Bay can differentiate itself from the competition and leverage local advantages.
- Linkages to other plan sections in areas that influence or support economic development objectives (e.g., infrastructure and public services, mobility, housing, land use, recreation and amenities, community appearance, etc.).
- Decision guidance for the use of available economic development tools.
- Considerations for the support, retention, and recruitment of retail elements desired by residents.
- Ways to measure progress on economic development objectives.

### **Safe and Peaceful Community**

Considerations in this section for completing the standard elements above will include:

- Specific safety concerns of residents and public safety responders.
- Multi-modal safety considerations, including for golf carts and boats.

### **Renewed Infrastructure**

Considerations in this section for completing the standard elements above will include:

- Projected infrastructure concerns based on land use assumptions.
- Implications for utility infrastructure, public safety services, and community facilities of future development.

- Major trip generators and vehicular and multi-modal circulation needs.
- Transportation planning of other entities (Harris County, Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments, Texas Department of Transportation, etc.).

### **Vibrant Environments**

Considerations in this section for completing the standard elements above will include:

- Ongoing and new park and recreation needs (park/facility rehabilitation, recreational programming, etc.).
- Resource protection (natural, historic/cultural, scenic).
- Community best practices to promote healthy living opportunities for residents.

### **Implementation**

The Implementation section will address:

- Prioritization of actions as:
  - › Immediate (0 months to 1 year).
  - › Short Term (1-5 years).
  - › Medium Term (6-10 years).
  - › Long Term (10+ years).
- Step-by-step approaches to implementing plan actions.
- Implementation roles of City Council, Planning Commission, and City staff.
- Opportunities for the City to coordinate implementation efforts with other key agencies and entities, with other jurisdictions as appropriate, and with other private and non-profit partners.
- Procedures for annual plan review and progress reporting and periodic plan updates.