

Sunnyside Landfill. Houston

Belfort Avenue. Houston

The proposed site is a former landfill of approximately 240 acres near downtown Houston, Texas. The landfill was closed in the 1970s, and was subsequently capped.

With an interesting location in a low rise area surrounded by greenfields, the site is located between central and suburban areas. It is adjacent to Interstate Highway 610, and directly connected to downtown area by Highway 288 and by several Metro bus routes. It is also only two miles from the City of Houston Metro Rail station.

The City of Houston believes this site can be an optimal location for development to improve environmental quality locally and regionally. It will welcome projects that highlight the sustainability effort of the city with co benefits, such as a

contribution to local economic development, social cohesion, heritage preservation, etc

The site is not subject to any specific zoning rule and the city of Houston is open to creative proposals. However, the bidder teams will have to include in their project all necessary precautions to not disrupt the existing landfill cap.

Having recently suffered from floodwaters, pounding rains, and landfalls during hurricane Harvey, the City sees this competition as an excellent opportunity for private actors to help the city develop environmental innovation, specifically in the field of storms and flood resilient infrastructures and buildings.



Expected program:

No specific recommendation, but constraints due to the landfill cap need to be considered. Developments such as a solar farm or a sustainability education park have been explored by the city, but the City is open for other innovative proposals.

Owner:

The Municipality of Houston.

Plot area:

Approximately 240 acres located south of Houston (approximately 7 miles). The Site is bounded to the north by Belfort Avenue, to the east by Comal Street, to the south by Reed Road, and to the west by Texas Route 288

Type of property transfer intended:

Lease or possibility of other types of agreements.

Presentation of the site and expectations for its redevelopment

The proposed location is an approximately 240 acre parcel known as Sunnyside Landfill located between Bellfort Street and Reed Road, east of Highway 288 and west of Comal Street, approximately 10 minutes from downtown Houston, Harris County, Texas.

The landfill was closed in the 1970s, and was subsequently capped. Over the past 30 years, developers and contractors proposed a variety of plans for the property, including a golf course, office space or solar farm.

The City of Houston believes the site to be an optimal location for development to improve environmental quality locally and regionally, improve residents' safety, promote the site's heritage, and highlight the city's sustainability and resiliency efforts at a highly visible location. Redeveloping the site will support local economic development objectives.

The landfill is only visible on three sides from the road, has overgrowth that prevents walking the site, and is mostly inaccessible by foot. Developers must use extreme caution to not disrupt the landfill cap, especially when clearing and grading the site. Developers must consider the differential settlement of the landfill surface.

The site is bordered on the north by Bellfort Street, on the west by Comal Street, on the

south by Reed Road, and on the east by Highway 288. There is a police station and library near the corner of Comal Street and Reed Road, and Sunnyside Park is on the corner of Comal Street and Bellfort Avenue. While utility distribution lines are adjacent to the site on three sides, the north and west sides had significantly smaller distribution lines which were estimated to have a lower carrying capacity than the larger line on the south side of the site running along Reed Road. Further investigations will be necessary to determine both the load carrying capacity of the line on the southern side of the parcel, as well as the available capacity on the line.

The property is managed by the City of Houston General Services Department. The property is vacant and unused.

The City of Houston decided not to define specific recommendation regarding the redevelopment of the site, but constraints due to the landfill cap need to be considered. Finally, interesting developments such as a solar farm or a sustainability education park have been explored by the city, but the City is open for other innovative proposals.

Specific planning rules and regulations regarding the development of the sites

The area is not subject to any specific zoning rule, which means that the redevelopment of this site does not have any limitation in term of activities, height or density. The bidder teams are invited to propose creative projects.

However, the use of land over closed municipal solid waste landfills in Texas is regulated under the following specific rules.

RCRA Subtitle D addresses non-hazardous solid wastes, including municipal solid waste. Under Subtitle D, the state and local governments are the primary planning, permitting, regulating, implementing, and enforcement agencies for management and disposal of household and industrial or commercial non-hazardous solid wastes.

At a local level, the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is the state designated planning agency for solid waste management issues in the region. The H-GAC Solid Waste Program reviews applications for landfill permits and solid waste grants. H-GAC provides technical assistance to local governments on solid waste issues, and provides continuing education opportunities for local governments and solid waste professionals. In 1993, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 2537, which required Councils of Governments (COGs) to develop an inventory of closed municipal solid waste landfills for their regional solid waste management plans. The bill was in response to concerns and incidents involving public health and safety when development occurred over property once used for waste disposal. More information concerning the H-

GAC can be found online at: <http://www.h-gac.com/community/waste/default.aspx>.

At a state level, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) Municipal Solid Waste program is the regulating agency, and TCEQ's "facilities, applications, and correspondence" online database indicates that the Sunnyside Landfill has been closed since the mid-1970s.

Use of land over closed municipal solid waste landfills in Texas (including permitted municipal solid waste landfills that are no longer in post-closure care, closed landfills that were developed before permitting requirements, and

closed unauthorized landfills) is regulated under the rules for persons owning, leasing, or developing property or structures overlying a closed municipal solid waste landfill, in **30 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 330, Subchapter T**.

In addition, note that within the City of Houston, the requests for Proposals are managed by the Finance Department's Strategic Procurement Division. Please visit <http://purchasing.houstontx.gov/guide.html> for more information.

Specific climate or environmental issues regarding the development of the site

The site is a former landfill that contains toxic materials in certain areas. Although the toxic materials are secured by a landfill cap, they may be released into the environment due to disturbances caused by human activity.

The City of Houston has conducted various environmental site investigations of the Sunnyside Landfill, including a recent study (September 2006), when Terracon, on behalf of the city, conducted a limited Environmental Site Investigation (ESI) of the landfill. The bidder teams will also find in the data room a detailed environmental assessment report of the site that has been carried out in 2010 by Stell Environmental Enterprises. The bidder teams will have to carefully take this into account while they are defining their projects

With respect to site preparation, it will be necessary to clear and grade the site. Clearing the site of trees and brush must be done in a manner that does not significantly disturb the landfill cap, particularly in areas with minimal soil cover over the landfill waste. Most importantly, the landfill cap should not be penetrated to expose the waste material. This may require, for example, that tree roots extending into the subsurface landfill waste be left in place and covered. Once the site is cleared of the wood, brush, and other associated waste materials, the site will require grading to provide a level surface.

Besides, the City expects innovative proposals to improve sustainability, and resiliency of the site to climate events, and specifically storms and flood risk.

