The Velasco Incinerator Site is a former incinerator that operated in the 1930s to 1950s located East of downtown Houston and South of Buffalo Bayou. It is adjacent to Velasco Street and several Metro bus routes. It is located less than two miles from a City of Houston Metro Rail station, and approximately 10 minutes from downtown Houston, Harris County, Texas.

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:**
The City is open for innovative proposals. There are no specific zoning requirement relating to the development of this site. However, constraints due to the former use of the site as incinerator, landfill, contamination and possible pollution risk needs to be considered.

**Owner:** The City of Houston

**Plot area:**
Approximately 4.5 acres located at 800 block of North Velasco Street

**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 the Velasco Incinerator site, a municipal incineration facility, located at the 800 block of North Velasco. It is currently managed by the City of Houston General Services Department and Brownfields Redevelopment Program, but is vacant and unused.

Incinerator ash from municipal incinerators that operated in the 1930s to 1950s typically had high concentrations of lead. Information on ash handling operations at the property is not available. However, the potential exists for impact to the property from past incineration operations.

A lead reclamation facility is located immediately adjacent to the property to the south. The area immediately south of the incinerator site had been used for storage of lead-acid battery casings in the past, and runoff from this area may have impacted the site.

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

The site has overgrowth that prevents walking the site, and is mostly inaccessible by foot. Any affected soil or groundwater encountered should be properly handled and disposed in accordance with local state and federal regulations. Developers must consider the differential settlement of the landfill surface.

Specific planning rules and regulations regarding the development of the site

The City of Houston has no zoning requirements, and is open to creative residential, commercial, or recreational proposals.

However, the proposed location is the former Velasco Incinerator site; therefore, it is subject to specific regulations related to solid waste management.

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.

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. Regulation is handled on the
State level and interested parties would have to do more research on this.
https://www.sos.texas.gov/tac/index.shtml

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 incinerator site that contains toxic materials in certain areas. With respect to site preparation, arsenic and lead were detected in the soil (fill) samples at concentrations that exceed the TSBC and the health-based PCL.

Lead was detected in a groundwater sample at a concentration that exceeds the groundwater-ingestion PCL. It should be noted that in accordance with Chapter 26 of the Texas Water Code, upon confirmation of impact to groundwater, the owner/operator of the facility where impact was identified may have reporting requirements to the TCEQ and other agencies.

If the affected soil and/or groundwater are to be disturbed during future excavations, proper procedures should be followed with respect to worker health and safety, and any affected soil or groundwater encountered should be properly handled and disposed in accordance with local and state regulations.

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