



Fifth Ward Voluntary Relocation Plan FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE FIFTH WARD VOLUNTARY RELOCATION PLAN (PLAN)?

The Plan is to provide options on acquisition and relocation assistance to property owners and renters who are living over the creosote plume and who wish to relocate to an area out of harms' way.

WHERE IS THE CREOSOTE PLUME LOCATED?



Outlined in purple, the boundaries are north of Liberty Road, west of Lockwood, east of Wipprecht and south of Jewel. The total area encompasses 110 parcels, however only 41 lots are residential properties. This program is focusing on relocating existing residents.

WHY HAS THIS AREA BEEN DEEMED A CANCER CLUSTER?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) define a cancer cluster as a greater than expected number of cancer cases that occurs within a group of people in a geographic area over a defined period of time. The census tract containing most of the properties over the creosote plume was found to have a greater than expected number (2.04 times higher) of liver cancer between the years of 2000 and 2016. Additionally, three other census tracts (CT) adjacent to the UPRR site were found to have greater than expected number of cancer cases: childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia (4.74 times higher than expected in CT 2111), larynx (3.26 times higher than expected in CT 2111), liver (2.14 times higher than expected in CT 2111); 1.85 times higher than expected in CT 2113; and 2.18 times higher than expected in CT 2116), and lung/bronchus (1.41 times higher than expected in CT 2113). In the four census tracts adjacent to the UPRR site, a total number of 185 cases of childhood leukemia, larynx, liver and lung and bronchus were identified during the same period. Since the formation of the Strike Team, residents continue to pass away from cancer prompting this urgency for action.

IS THE PLAN VOLUNTARY OR MANDATORY?

The Plan is voluntary for residents currently living in the immediate area over the creosote plume adjacent to the Union Pacific Rail Yard.

WHAT COMMUNICATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE TO RESIDENTS IN THE DESIGNATED AREA?

On August 3, 2023, a presentation was made to the Fifth Ward Gardens Community Advisory Board (CAB) regarding the creation and goals of the Strike Team. Interviews were conducted by HHD staff



on four separate days with area residents regarding their preferences for relocation. The interview process was successful as 76% of the residents completed the interview tool. A second CAB meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2023.

WHAT HOUSING OPTIONS WILL BE OFFERED FOR HOMEOWNERS?

The City will work with the Houston Land Bank (HLB) and Community Land Trust (CLT) to provide options to homeowners for a home outside of the contamination area. Agreements with HLB and CLT are currently being drafted.

WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT TO THE HOMEOWNERS?

The expectation is that homeowners who currently don't have a mortgage will also not have a mortgage in the new home. Homeowners who have lending balance will have a new mortgage approximate to their existing balance.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED COST OF A NEW HOME?

Current market conditions for the homebuilders used by HLB and CLT are \$250,000.00 for a three bedroom/two bath house with attached garage. Once the City appraises and purchases the existing home from the homeowner, those funds will be applied to the cost of the new home and the City will provide the balance of the construction costs. In addition, soft costs including appraisal, title searches, closing, demolition and administration are conservatively estimated to be approximately \$100,000.00.

WHAT OPTION WILL BE OFFERED TO RENTERS?

An amount up to \$10,000.00 will be offered to renters which will cover first and last months rent and moving expenses. Renters will be given \$5,000.00 upon evidence of a lease outside of the contamination area and the remaining \$5,000.00 upon evidence of a utility bill at the new location.

WHAT SUPPORT IS NEEDED FOR THIS PROGRAM?

Case management/navigator services will be outsourced to a local non-profit. Oversight of the program will be by the Office of Recovery.