

## PUBLIC MEETING NOTES & COMMENTS

Project: Velasco Incinerator Cleanup Grant  
Purpose: Public meeting to fulfill requirements of EPA Cleanup Grant application  
Attendees: **Houston Land Bank Staff:** Christa Stoneham (CS), Lindsey Williams (LW), Donesha Albrow, Jen Allison, Isai Mendez  
**Community Lattice:** Danielle Getsinger (DG), Deshara Goss, Treasa Antony, Eduardo Hernandez, Carolyn Fahey  
**City of Houston (Spanish Translators):** Sofia Font, Jacqueline Brown, Jose Mendoza  
Date & Time: October 26, 2023 @ 6:30-8PM  
Location: Houston Community College | Felix Fraga Academic Campus + HLB Live Stream

### 1 MEETING NOTES

**SF:** Sofia Font makes an announcement that if anyone would like live Spanish interpretation, dedicated staff are available at a designated table to provide this support.

**LW:** (Lindsay Williams from HLB kicks off meeting, goes over meeting agenda). Currently in open comment period for the EPA grant, Sept 23 to Oct 30 at 5PM. Comment cards have been sent out; fill out a comment card and send or fill out tonight to make it an official comment; there is [www.bankingvelasco.org](http://www.bankingvelasco.org) is taking comments online as well. (Provides background on HLB) Who is the HLB? Overview of HLB, governed by SB1679, etc.

**DG:** (Discusses brownfield overview. What is a brownfield? This is not a Superfund, they are two different things. Brownfields is an incentive program and Superfund is an enforcement action; Reviews purpose and benefits of grant application. Velasco site as priority site; incinerator ash from city-wide household trash left on site Environmental site conditions; 4 to 35-feet of ash on-site; heavy metals, Polychlorinated biphenyls, VOC, sVOC, dioxins. Ash is not structurally sound so housing cannot be built on. Site is currently fenced but there is illegal dumping. Ash is not exposed on site; it is not a current threat to neighbors.)

**CS:** (Discusses the cleanup project sought under the EPA grant. What is the plan? The plan is to working closely with you all as residents. That is true of HLB mission in all projects. HLB is working to heal wounds of environmental injustices; how can we co-create a solution for 2nd Ward. Our process is site control, cleanup planning, site cleanup, implementation. None of the potential amenities have been determined; we will determine that with you in the future. We are currently in the cleanup planning stage; grant submitted on Nov 13th. Looking for a partner in parks for future maintenance. Grant dollars are only for cleanup; any amenities will require additional separate dollars. Overview of ABCA options 1-3; capping site; cap with limited soil remediation to support future amenities; removal of waste for unrestricted development. Reviews what a cap is; its benefits and limitations. Project site cleanup timeline: due diligence and property transaction, remedial investigation and engineering design, cleanup, closure and exist strategy. Comments HLB has so far are to save the chimneys; connect the trails; what happens with ball street connection; how does this relate to 800 Middle Street? Please ensure comments are written down on cards or submitted online; public comments close on Monday, October 30 for this grant application.)

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

1. They are building on sites immediately adjacent, are they cleaning up on those sites?

*CS: Can't comment on that but can share your comment with the developer.*

2. There are 1000 residents close to the property and the ash has been found close to the property including the HHA property. In terms of Ball Street, there is a simpler solution. The road is there today, so you don't have to go thru the incinerator site; for some reason the HHA decided block the road.

*CS: If that's what the community would like to see we would coordinate to make that happen*

3. I am a direct homeowner next to 800 Middle Street, what does it look like for you to get the information for us about that project? Because you are moving in human beings onto a piece of property that is contaminated; that's not right. How do we know our question is heard.

*CS: In terms of transparency, that's why we have the website, we will publicly post the comments. I will also do my best to coordinate with the HHA but I can't guarantee that they will respond. I will make sure that I respond and follow up, because I am a person of my word.*

*CS: Any questions received will be posted by Nov 5 will be posted with an answer. If you leave your email we will make sure that everyone is getting that information so you get that update. Really encourage you to write these down and make it public record.*

4. If there is limited soil remediation would allow for trees?

*DG: It depends. You cannot put a tree onto the cap, you might be able to put plants in buckets of sorts.*

5. What other options are there for funding?

*CS: I would love if there were a public partner or a philanthropic partner. We want to make sure we leverage the unprecedented federal dollars. We are researching 'Plan B' but I don't have specifics to share.*

6. With erosion will there be other vegetation?

*DG: Preventing erosion, we need to monitor the site for erosion, so whatever topsoil and grass we put down is choice for erosion, if there is any erosion detected you are out there replanting*

7. Does that cleanup site include toward the bayou and paths?

*CS: (Shows ball street connection; and shows area that is not part of the project site adjacent to bayou)*

8. If you don't get the grant is this not going to happen?

*CS: I would need to coordinate with the HLB board, but I would hope that the board would be willing for us to work on finding another solution. (Clarifies location of silos and chimneys.)*

9. Have you considered an armored cap with rock?

*CS: Not yet; we are leaving that up to engineers.*

10. Phase I talks about limited to no reuse; what reuse are you thinking about?

*DG: It would just be capping the site with no additional amenities or landscape features.*

*Ian Rosenberg of Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP): We own the property to the north, we are in the process of cleaning that site up; it will be capped in the next year. The gravel silos basically just have gravel in them from when they were used for concrete.*

11. Is there any ground water cleanup?

*DG: I don't know if the contaminated site water runs into the bayous, but there will be an assessment of the ecological risks. That will be assessed.*

12. How much involvement or if Velasco Street is included in the development? I would like to see more connection, it would be great to not just have one way to get to the bayou. The ball street connection would be great. I would also like to see improved walkability along navigation and toward esplanade.

*CS: That would be part of the community visioning and redevelopment process so we can discuss what is the best design solution.*

13. The air quality control with all of the construction occurring with the contamination ash flowing around is blowing into our homes and air filters, are you going to be monitoring the air quality and reporting to us?

*DG: There will be a risk mitigation plan, consultants will speak to that but air monitoring is a common tactic to use. Truck movement is managed and when we get to that stage these comments will be critical.*

14. How did you get involved in this cleanup? Because for 20 years we have been begging for the City to do something with the land.

*CS: HLB has special powers, and my personal mission is about building and breaking systems that are environmental injustices. When I heard about this I volunteered, but I didn't know they would give me this whole site. The City was in support and gladly worked with us so we can apply for grant dollars. This is the first time that there is \$5M available in grant funding. There is a lot of*

*money coming out the Biden admin. The city can't apply for fed dollars and it's a complex cleanup project.*

*IR: BBP received a grant from HGAC to study Velasco that includes a master plan, hopefully around the new year we will have major and significant planning around that corridor.*

*CS: We are not seeking to start from scratch; we want to work from what the community has said for the last 20 years.*

15. There is a processing plant is that included in the site? It is still going to be active, it's a lead processing plant, so how does that impact?

*CS: We will coordinate on that.*

16. As you are looking for funding, when will the announcement be made so that the community understands? Is this something where engagement occurs every month and website and? What is the process for identifying the needs and wants of the community.

*DG: The award notification is in May and money is awarded in Oct.*

*CS: In terms of CE, the website will remain open, we are seeking pre-award dollars so we can continue to have the conversation. In the draft outline, we do outline the CE with quarterly check-ins. We are looking for partners.*

*LW: Quarterly meetings that we have been doing; juice and justice a brownfields meeting and workshop series to talk about these things; my goal is to make you sick of us.*

17. Are these meetings being held with other neighborhoods?

*LW: Yes; adjacent neighborhoods such as 5<sup>th</sup> Ward. We also recently spoke at the National Brownfields Conference about our CE efforts and tactics. We are excited for this opportunity.*

18. Your application requires letters from elected officials?

*DG: Not formally.*

19. Just wondering if our elected officials are involved.

*CS: There is another meeting tonight, but we have been reaching out to elected officials and I welcome letters of support although it's not a requirement.*

20. Would that help the application?

*CS: I think we should; yes, it will help.*

21. How are you going to develop relationships with newly elected officials?

*CS: It is a process and that's something I will proactively do.*

*CS: Please submit letters by the 8<sup>th</sup>!*

## 2 ACTION ITEMS

- HLB Bring public comments to HHA regarding construction activities on contaminated property at 800 Middle Street
- HLB To continue researching a 'Plan B' and share with public  
To continue seeking additional funds to pay for potential future site improvements
- HLB Conduct environmental assessment of the project site
- HLB Project team to conduct community visioning meetings with public
- HLB A risk mitigation plan will be conducted
- HLB To coordinate on cement plant activities  
To follow-up with public regarding comments made at meeting and through the Banking Velasco website

## 3 ATTACHMENTS

- A Public attendees
- B Comment Cards (from meeting)
- C Additional Comments Received via [www.bankingvelasco.org](http://www.bankingvelasco.org) or by mail

**A PUBLIC ATTENDEES**

*Twenty-four (24) total members of the public were recorded in physical attendance; two (2) additional attendees participated via livestream. No personal information was requested as part of the livestream.*

NAME	EMAIL	PHONE	ORGANIZATION	*
Ricky Cardenas	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		X
Juan Sorto		[REDACTED]		
Veronica Xiloj		[REDACTED]		
Kimesha Sonnier	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	PCS	
Jay Maxon	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	HHA	
Francisco Castillo			HC PCT 2	
Janet Green	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	SXG Capital Group	
Sophia Martinez	[REDACTED]		Resident	X
Tony Padua	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Padia Realty	X
Jessica Hulsey	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	SWSNC63	
Trina	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	HLB Board Member	
Rachel Hooper				
Don Hopper				
Alan [illegible]				
Elena Penso	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Resident	X
Bolivar Fraga	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	2 <sup>nd</sup> Ward Resident	X
Tracie Hall	[REDACTED]			X
Shantay Saulsberry	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	BR	
Rosemary Perez	[REDACTED]		Resident	
Hayden Smith	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Anchor GEA	
Sharon Yasin	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Community Advocate	
Blake Jarmon	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Boy Scouts	
Roselyn Franis	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Settegast Heights CDC	
Roy Lira	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	2 <sup>nd</sup> Ward Super Neighborhood	X

\* "X" indicates these participants completed a comment card at the meeting (see Attachment B for transcribed comment cards).

## B COMMENT CARDS

*Eight (8) total comment cards (9 separate comments) were collected at the in-person meeting. Those comment cards are transcribed below. Personal information has been redacted for privacy protection. HLB responses in blue.*

1. "Residents want transparency and community involvement thru the process. Ball Street should be built on the designed [sic right-of-way] by 800 Middle and not thru other homeowners"

The location of Ball Street extension will be informed through a public discussion prior to the final design and construction of the cap.

2. "Would you consider totally cleaning the site up in order to sell the property for an acceptable commercial use? Example solar production site. This could cover the cost (or a %) of remediation."

HLB intends to clean up the site for green space only and will not sell the property to a commercial developer per our agreement with the City of Houston. However, if there is enough public support for a solar production site that could benefit the community, future plans to convert the park into this function could be considered by future property owners.

3. "-keep chimney stacks, if possible; - connect to trails and overall improvements to greenspace along Buffalo Bayou; -thank you for pursuing cleaning this property!"

HLB's intention is to keep the chimney stacks and connect the greenspace into the Buffalo Bayou Park trail system.

4. "How will partner to the commercial lead processing plant adjacent to the site to cease or "cleanup" their operations?"

HLB has no affiliation with the Lead Products site to the south of the property. However, according to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), this adjacent site is being cleaned up in the TCEQ Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP).

5. "Ball Street ROW already runs from Velasco St to the 800 Middle St property and it doesn't go through Incinerator site or lead product's site. Ball Street needs to be extended in this location as the ROW is already there."

The location of Ball Street extension will be informed through a public discussion prior to the final design and construction of the cap.

6. "Love the forward looking project that can create community engagement opportunities and improve quality of life by repurposing 4+ acres back to the larger community."

Thank you for your comment!

7. "I would like to see Velasco and Ball Street developed so that new residents are able to bike/walk/drive into Second Ward and to be able to walk and bike safely to and from the new bayou trails."

The location of Ball Street extension will be informed through a public discussion prior to the final design and construction of the cap. Connection with Velasco Street will also be included in site reuse discussions.

8. "Tired of the rabbit hole of emails with all departments of city officials and affiliates. Citizens, homeowners need transparency. What is the cleanup plans for 800 Middle Street before allowing any human to move into the complex? And should use Ball Street. As a collective 800 Middle Street should be torn down and cleaned correctly."

HLB is not affiliated with the 800 Middle Street property and, therefore, does not have control over redevelopment decisions for that property.

9. "Air quality is a concern, how are we as a collective, going to check the air quality and homeowners air quality inside our homes? The construction is blowing this toxic ash into our homes, inside and outside, blown onto our homes and properties. Also potential our drinking and/or use of water."

Mitigation of potential off-site hazards is a priority for the HLB. We will ensure that construction activities are conducted by qualified and reputable professionals who will use industry best practices to reduce dust, dirt from tracking off-site, and stormwater runoff during construction. Additionally, air monitoring and stop-work policies will be put in place to detect and mitigate hazardous levels of particulates around the perimeter of the site. Furthermore, HLB will partner with Air Alliance Houston and the Houston Health Department to ensure quality control of best practices. Future meetings will provide opportunities for residents to voice their concerns and for HLB to present mitigation strategies and construction plans prior to remediation.



**C ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RECEIVED VIA [WWW.BANKINGVELASCO.ORG](http://WWW.BANKINGVELASCO.ORG) OR BY MAIL.**

1. Per my spoken comments at the public meeting on October 26, the plan to propose to extend Ball St to Velasco in alignment the Houston Housing Authority and the City of Houston aligned instead of utilization the existing Ball St ROW that allows for access today is unconscionable. I am emailing to [brownfields@houstonlandbank.org](mailto:brownfields@houstonlandbank.org) the Houston Housing Authority plat showing how the Houston Housing Authority arbitrarily misaligned the new Ball St ROW from the existing Ball St ROW from 800 Middle St to Velasco by 50' in violation of City of Houston intersection spacing requirements. I am also attaching the deed whereby the City of Houston accepted the 50' Ball Street Row over thirty (30) years ago to provide the 800 Middle Street property direct access to Velasco and disregarded public comments that I submitted to the City of Houston planning department when they were considering a variance to approve this plat (although they never approved a variance to disregard the intersection spacing requirements). There was a lawsuit by the HOA about this issue, but the courts didn't even hear the case because the Houston Housing Authority inappropriately claimed governmental immunity, even though NRP, a private for-profit company, is part of the ownership of the joint venture that is developing 800 Middle Street. Instead of utilizing the existing Ball Street ROW, your plan to extend Ball St under its current alignment forces it to pass through property owned by Lead Products Inc which is under very environmental stringent protection protocols and it must also pass through the City of Houston Incinerator site. On the Contrary, the existing Ball St ROW between 800 Middle St and Velasco St is already owned by the City of Houston and it would not have to go through the Incinerator site.

[The location of Ball Street extension will be informed through a public discussion prior to the final design and construction of the cap.](#)

2. Besides Ball Street issue, there are other problems with the information presented in the public meeting and I will briefly discuss. The biggest problem is that it is known that the incinerator ash extends surrounding areas, including but definitely not limited to, two tracts that the Houston Housing Authority purchased using housing dollars, including the 21 acre tract the Houston Housing Authority is currently building 400 units in Phase I of up to 800 total affordable housing units (+/-) as evidenced by environmental violations that the TCEQ tagged the Houston Housing Authority recently . This information should have been known by the environmental consultants hired by the Houston Housing Authority and there should not be a single resident allowed to move in until the cleanup is completed. Secondly, there is incinerator ash in contact with Buffalo Bayou either physically or by storm water sheet flowing or by groundwater, despite many efforts to claim otherwise.

[HLB has not yet evaluated the off-site extent of potential waste from the Velasco Incinerator site; however, based on the recent Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, we understand there is a potential for waste to extend off-site and will be working with adjacent property owners to assess conditions further. This work will be done under the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality \(TCEQ\) Voluntary Cleanup Program \(VCP\) site no. VCP 3308 and documented in an Affected Property Assessment Report, which will be uploaded to the \[www.bankingvelasco.org\]\(http://www.bankingvelasco.org\) website upon completion.](#)

3. This condition must be addressed. Lastly, even despite clarification that there is no Superfund site in the area, you have to address the adjoining Lead Products site which has an active Lead Smelter that shows up on the Superfund Registry as having been a superfund candidate but it ultimately did not qualify because there was no intention of cleaning it up and the current owner is obligated to have controls in place to contain the contamination.

Based on publicly available information with the TCEQ, evaluation of the Lead Products site reportedly began in 1985 based on the lead reclamation processes performed at the site from the 1930s to the mid-1960s. By an apparent agreement in 1990 with the lead state agency, the Texas Water Commission (now the TCEQ), Lead Products agreed to fully assess and take any necessary corrective actions to remedy any environmental concerns discovered in soil and/or groundwater related to historical activities at the site. In addition, the USEPA apparently contacted Lead Products in 1989 requesting information concerning lead concentrations discovered in area soil samples. This contact resulted in a U.S. EPA Site Discovery listing for the site (SDA1804). The USEPA apparently concluded the site did not meet the criteria for addition to the Superfund Active site inventory and closed the Site Discovery case in June 1995. However, the site was referred to the TCEQ for further assessment and any necessary corrective actions.

Consequently, the facility was enrolled in the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) in September 1996 under VCP No. 334 and remains active to the present day. Lead-related soil waste related to the facility has reportedly been remediated and contained within a capped and fenced waste management unit on the north part of the facility that prevents human or other environmental exposure to any lead contamination. Specific information regarding the Lead Products VCP site can be obtained from the TCEQ under VCP No. 334.

Finally, the Lead Products site was identified as a Recognized Environmental Condition (REC) in the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report by ESE Partners dated September 20, 2023. Therefore, if any additional evaluations for the Velasco Incinerator site that may be related to the adjacent Lead Products site are required by the TCEQ and/or U.S. EPA, these actions will be performed as part of the VCP site assessment processes

4. Having said all of this, an environmental impact study that thoroughly examines the environmental conditions as well as the traffic impact of the neighborhood and all proposed development needs to be conducted prior to any residents moving into 800 Middle St and prior to any final plans to cleanup or build any roads or anything else on the incinerator site.

Houston Land Bank will comply with all appropriate environmental requirements per TCEQ and U.S. EPA regulations.

5. This area is a hot spot for illegal dumpers. Homeless have also begun to populate the area with tent camps. I would like to know if there is anything this project can do to help mitigate these issues if/when the development of the green space is complete.

Yes. Houston Land Bank will work with the Mayor's Office for Homeless Initiatives (MOHI) to rehome individuals living on the Velasco Incinerator site. We will also monitor the property on a frequent basis to prevent and report illegal dumping. We anticipate that increased site activity will deter illegal activities and the redevelopment of greenspace will reduce crime and increase public safety.

6. I personally would like an indoor gym or a place where people can play freely. We need a place that is new and clean.

The property will not be suitable for a commercial structure such as a gym. However, future site use could accommodate community fitness classes.

7. I would like to see a connection between Ball Street and Velasco Street to help lead residents in the area, especially the new neighbors at 800 Middle Street, to and from Navigation Blvd. I would also like to see a high importance placed on those outside of an automobile. We need more walkability, bike-ability, and traffic calming measures in place to slow speeding, aggressive, and inattentive drivers. A shared-use-path with a minimum of 13 feet and/or a protected bike lane is essential to the success of this development.

Thanks for your comment! The location of Ball Street and other mobility features will be discussed at future public meetings.

8. They can modernize the hood a little bit. Make things like the parks on Allen Parkway.

Our intention is to enhance the area with greenspace to benefit the community in a similar way Allen Parkway does.

9. I would like a dog park, or more regular parks, and like a youth center with different plants. Like a park used for educational purposes.

Thanks for your comment! We will incorporate this idea into considerations for park features and discuss at future public planning meetings.

10. To safeguard both humanity and the well-being of our planet, as well as to secure a healthy present and future environment, I recommend the demolition of 800 Middle Street along with a comprehensive land remediation effort, encompassing the Velasco area.

Houston Land Bank is not affiliated with 800 Middle Street.

11. Subsequently, the implementation of Xeriscaping gardening is proposed, incorporating the cultivation of Citronella plants and Lemon Grass to naturally combat mosquitoes and other insects. This not only promotes clean air and water but also involves the planting of various species such as Lavender, Mexican Bush Sage, Aloe aristata, 'Lace Aloe,' Juniperus conferta, 'Shore Juniper,' Rohdea japonica, 'Japanese Sacred Lily,' Muhlenbergia capillaris, 'Pink Muhlygrass,' and more.

Thanks for your comment! We will incorporate this idea into considerations for park features and discuss at future public planning meetings.

12. A community center, like a YMCA but for the public, would be cool. I like the farmer's markets around here but if they could be more organized.

The property will not be suitable for a commercial structure such as a YMCA. However, future site use could accommodate community fitness classes, youth events, and other social/health gatherings, including farmers markets.

13. This Superfund site needs to be fully cleaned up and all toxic lead containing ash removed from site. This is future cancer cluster that will affect mostly low income minority children. I doubt the city leaders and the Turner administration wants this to be their legacy. If this is just a scheme to make politically connected companies and the like money, then shame on you. You're doing this at the expense of peoples health and tax payers.

HLB volunteered to take ownership of the Velasco Incinerator site, which is considered a "brownfield" site and is not and has never been a federal or state "Superfund" site. HLB is committed to the principles of environmental justice and will work together with the community, Harris County Pollution Control, Houston Health Department, TCEQ, and the U.S. EPA to ensure cleanup standards are appropriate and protective of human and ecological health.

14. Whatever comes in, they need to make a spot where businesses can come in, and give plenty of space so people can walk.

We will incorporate this into considerations for the park design and discuss it further at future public meetings.

15. We need a place that is clean and secure, and let it be for the people and small Mexican businesses that are protected from being abused.

We will incorporate this into considerations for the park design and discuss it further at future public meetings.

16. We need a public park that has more light, more security, and a public gym where people can play basketball, work out, and so that moms can walk. More trees would be nice and plenty of security.

We will incorporate this into considerations for the park design and discuss it further at future public meetings.

17. I'd like an arcade facility like cidercade but for the public.

Thank you for your comment, but the property will not be suitable for a commercial structure. However, future use of the greenspace could accommodate family fun days, pop-up games, and other social events.

18. I would like the HLB to use the funds to properly clean and to use nature, i.e. plants and sustainable materials, to clean (arcela palms) the air; to curtail erosion(bamboo, whipperalls (sp), low maintenance vegetation/ground covering (lavender, st. johns wart)); to control pests (citronella, lemongrass etc); to create environmental friendly paths ( coconut shells, activated charcoal) etc. I think the focus should be to clean, restore and build again using nature with minimal attractions for human use due to the high industrial use in the area and the nearby lead processing/dixie plating. This area is due a time to environmentally treated and given what it needs to restore and rebuild.

We will incorporate this into considerations for the park design and discuss it further at future public meetings. HLB will encourage ecological restoration and the use of native plants wherever possible to c biodiversity.

19. This area does contain some wildlife. I have seen coyotes and rabbits in the area. Can anything be done to protect these animals?

Care will be taken during site activities to not harm wildlife on site.

20. For the last four years, my clients, Alan Atkinson and Tony Padua, have fought for transparency and honest dealing in relation to the City of Houston (“City”) and the Houston Housing Authority (“HHA”) and 28.5 acres of environmentally impacted land adjacent to the Velasco Incinerator property. The City and HHA, posing as EaDo 800 Ltd. (“EaDo 800”) have deliberately schemed to purchase contaminated land with federally protected funds, remove this land from the tax rolls, and build so-called “affordable” housing on environmentally hazardous land known as 800 Middle Street (the “Contaminated Property”). Houstonians are gravely concerned about the impact of the environmental hazards to the future residents of 860 family apartment units (400 now under construction) on the Contaminated Property.

Of the 28.5 acres of environmentally impacted land (Tracts One, Two, and Three), the largest, Tract One (21.7 acres), shares a fence with an active lead smelting plant and Texas Superfund site (Lead Products) and lies adjacent to a severely contaminated, non-remediated trash incinerator owned by the City (Velasco). Development of Tract One is impacted by a recognized fall hazard from an adjacent radio tower. Additionally, Tract One cannot meet access standards through a substandard street grid as it is located on a dead end and landlocked on three sides by Buffalo Bayou and contaminated industrial properties.

The City and HHA used \$55 million of federally managed housing funds to purchase the Contaminated Property for tax-exempt, low-income apartments. The contaminated land is impacted by historical environmental hazards including City-owned garbage disposal facilities

(Velasco) and an active lead smelting plant and Texas Superfund site (Lead Products). The continued presence of ash and nearby production of lead presents an environmental hazard that undoubtedly “affect[s] the health and safety of occupants” in the East End. Importantly, the HHA not only concealed these ash landfills from HUD, but actively denied the scheme to pay \$13 million of HUD managed housing dollars. Importantly, the HHA not only concealed \$13 million of HUD funding used to purchase ash landfills, but continues to deny the scheme after the community put the City on notice of these facts.

On September 13, 2023, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality issued four violations to HHA related to the Tract One contaminated property. On October 5, 2023, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (“TDHCA”) raised skepticism that the environmental assessment for the Contaminated Property is accurate (“The factual development calls into question whether the Development Site is or has recently been exposed to hazardous materials or conditions that affect the accuracy of the conclusions of the ESA.”). The environmental assessment provided by the City (via the HHA) clearly misrepresents the actual environmental conditions of the property and the adjoining neighborhood.

The City and HHA submitted two separate bond applications to TDHCA with false representations. One application for \$48 million claimed that no litigation was pending, which was a false statement. The other application for \$32 million falsely claimed that no contamination was within 300 feet of the property.

Now, after years of blocking Mr. Atkinson’s transparency efforts, the City now admits that the Velasco incinerator site has “environmental issues” that require “environmental remediation.” The City has now transferred 4.5574 acres of land – the Velasco incinerator site at 800 North Velasco Street (the “Velasco Incinerator Site”) – to the Houston Land Bank. They had to do this shell game because the City caused the environmental hazard on the land; so, the City cannot apply to the Environmental Protection Agency for environmental remediation costs. While the East End/Second Ward community wants these sites cleaned up, the Houston Land Bank simply cannot remediate the Velasco Incinerator site for \$5 million.

This title transfer does not correct the false representations made in construction bond applications and documents, nor does it explain how and when remediation will be completed before 400 low income families with children will be moved into the non-conforming apartments. All properties that are used for HUD programs must “be free of hazardous materials, contamination, toxic chemicals and gases . . . where a hazard could affect the health and safety of occupants or conflict with the intended utilization of the property.” 24 CFR §58(i)(2)(i). A proposed public housing site “shall be free from adverse environmental conditions, natural or manmade, such as: Toxic or contaminated soils and substances.” 24 CFR §905.602(d). An environmental impact statement must be required to protect the public. The haste of this “project” is concerning, suspicious, and not in the best interest of Houstonians.

HLB is not affiliated with the 800 Middle Street property and, therefore, does not have control over redevelopment decisions for that property. HLB will work with adjacent property owners to understand the nature and extent of contamination that may have originated from the Velasco Incinerator site. This work will be done under the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) Site No. 3308 and documented in an Affected Property

Assessment Report, which will be uploaded to the [www.bankingvelasco.org](http://www.bankingvelasco.org) website upon completion.

21. An indoor sports complex would be cool there.

Thank you for your comment, but the property will not be suitable for an indoor sports complex. However, future use of the greenspace could accommodate community fitness activities.

22. I attended the presentation on Thursday, October 26, 2023. I prefer option A, or the first option to allow needed clean-up, encapsulation, minimum growing vegetation to curtail air and water erosion while attracting animal life such as bats to eat the mosquitos from the bayou). I don't want to see any attractions (playgrounds, bark benches, basketball, tennis courts) to encourage the public to visit because of the lead processing facility next door that will be detrimental to humans. I would like to see low maintenance indigenous vegetation such as wild flowers, natural pesticides herbs etc.

Thank you for your comment. Further discussion about park design will be included in future public meetings.

23. I'd like an indoor basketball facility with a wood court and a workout station. I'd like for it to be East End inspired, like community designed with art.

Thank you for your comment. Further discussion about park design will be included in future public meetings.

24. As a Houstonian, I embrace banking the Velasco Site with the Houston Land Bank (HLB). In fact, given the principle of the HLB to act in accordance with principles of environmental justice, community involvement, and transparency, the group seems to be ideal with whom to partner. In close proximity to this area, another project is ongoing that did not have the kind of stewardship this group advocates for. This project has, and continues to be, the source of concerns by Second Ward citizens and currently has multiple sanctions for violating environmental standards. This need not happen again.

The Velasco parcel has sat vacant since the 1960's given the challenges and costs of clean up. Arguably the area, on the banks of Buffalo Bayou in the Second Ward, is one of the most picturesque in the city. The Second Ward or Segundo Barrio, is also one of the most historic and culturally significant in Houston. Proactively rejuvenating this plot, using this advocate organization, is a step towards correcting environmental inequity which is the legacy of racial segregation in this city.

Thank you for your comment and support.

25. We need a park with water fountains and bigger sports fields, where they have shade. And more playgrounds for the kids.

Thank you for your comment. Further discussion about park design will be included in future public meetings.

26. An indoor basketball gym with seating for families would be cool. There's not much around and if there is, it's expensive. More parks to hang out would be nice, spots to chill.

Thank you for your comment. Further discussion about park design and amenities will be included in future public meetings.

27. We need more basketball courts, with stadium seats, like the boys and girls club but free for the people, and you do not need to be a member.

Thank you for your comment. Further discussion about park design and amenities will be included in future public meetings.

28. An area for recreational sports, with spots for vendors and street food vendors. And more water fountains, more trash cans, and natural green space. We also need public transportation ride share systems.

Thank you for your comment. Further discussion about park design and amenities will be included in future public meetings.