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**UPTOWN HOUSTON UNDERGOES MAJOR TRANSFORMATION  
TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY**

***West Loop, Westpark Tollway, \$235 million local street improvement program  
to provide Houston commuters with more lanes, more choices***

HOUSTON (January 30, 2002) – In an effort to address accessibility in Uptown Houston, the Uptown Houston District recently unveiled a new vision for the future that will make Uptown the most accessible and convenient location in the city. For the next five years, Uptown and its surrounding highways will undergo a vital transformation that ultimately will ease congestion and provide direct and exclusive access in and out of the area.

The District is working with local and state transportation agencies to tackle the challenge and improve accessibility on four fronts including: ***regional highway improvements, local street improvements and pedestrian and transit enhancements.***

“The most exciting news is that plans are in place, funding is secured and work is in progress to improve accessibility to, from and within Uptown,” said John Breeding, Uptown Houston District president. “Construction of the West Loop and the new Westpark Tollway as well as a \$235 million local street improvement program is already underway.”

**REGIONAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Regional improvements to the West Loop, Westpark Tollway, Katy Freeway, Fort Bend Parkway, Grand Parkway and the proposed Northwest Toll Road will have a direct and positive effect on Houston and commuters. The improvement projects that will have the most beneficial impact on Uptown are the reconstruction of the West Loop and the creation of the Westpark Tollway.

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“These projects have been carefully planned in that they will work together to fundamentally change the way we commute in Houston by dramatically increasing capacity and movement where we need it most,” said Janelle Gbur, public information officer for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

TxDOT’s reconstruction of the **West Loop** includes the renovation of the existing roadway, the addition of new entrances and exits, as well as the creation of **HOT LINKS**. These new **HOT LINKS** will provide direct and exclusive access into and out of Uptown, while removing traffic from the West Loop main lanes, helping to dramatically reduce congestion.

The Harris County Toll Road Authority’s new **Westpark Tollway**, when complete, will begin and end on Post Oak Boulevard and will provide direct access from Uptown to rapidly growing west Houston via the Grand Parkway, Highway 6 and Beltway 8. By utilizing the Westpark Tollway, inbound commuters on US 59 will quickly and conveniently enter Uptown Houston without being caught in US 59/610 congestion.

### **LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS**

To ease congestion and increase traffic flow, the Uptown Houston District is implementing a \$235 million local street improvement program that focuses on improving and connecting local streets, as well as on pedestrian and transit improvements.

The District is working to improve Uptown Houston’s major thoroughfares including Westheimer, Post Oak Boulevard, Sage, San Felipe, Richmond and Chimney Rock. In partnership with the City of Houston, it is already in the process of reconstructing San Felipe from Yorktown to the West Loop. The District also is working to improve, expand and interconnect some of Uptown’s less traveled roadways in order to provide alternate routes and additional traffic flow through the area. Some of these streets include McCue, Guilford and Ambassador Way.

### **PEDESTRIAN AND TRANSIT ENHANCEMENTS**

In addition to making it easy to drive in Uptown, the Uptown Houston District wants to make life easier for pedestrians. The goal is to encourage people to park once and walk to other destinations. In order to accomplish this goal and to make the area more pedestrian friendly, the District is looking at ways to add sidewalks and walkways to connect neighborhoods to office and retail locations.

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The District is also exploring a variety of alternatives to get to, from and around the area through public transportation such as trolleys, buses and HOV lanes. More than 50 miles of HOV lanes and Bus lines pass by, but are not connected to Uptown. The District is working to tap into this existing transit by creating the Uptown Transit Corridor. Via Post Oak Boulevard, the transit corridor will connect the Katy, Northwest, and Southwest Freeway HOV lanes to Uptown, providing a seamless approach to move people in and out of the area.

Created in 1987, The Uptown Houston District occupies 500 acres in the heart of the Uptown Houston/Galleria area and provides a variety of services and improvements for the area including traffic operations, public maintenance and beautification, infrastructure improvements, economic development and marketing. The mission of the District is to continually refine and enhance its unparalleled amenities and exceptional beauty by improving accessibility, enhancing identity and sustaining the vibrant community that is Uptown Houston.

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