TEDC 2026 CEDA APPLICATION

All Applications Must Be Received by August 28, 2026

The 2026 CEDA nominations will be judged in each of the five categories that have made the most significant contribution to economic development in their community and the State of Texas.

AWARD CATEGORIES

The CEDA will be awarded to one community from each of the following five population categories: (as currently marketed). Mark the population category for which you are applying. In addition to CEDA by population, applicants will be considered for five criteria awards such as: Innovativeness, Transferability, Community Commitment & Leverage, Measured Objectives and Secondary Benefits.

- Population less than 10,000 ☐
- Population 10,001 to 20,000 ☐
- Population 20,001 to 50,000 ☐
- Population 50,001 to 100,000 ☐
- Population 100,001 to 250,000 ☐
- Population 250,001 and above ☑

NOMINATION:

Name of Community: Houston - Greater Houston Partnership (GHP)

TEDC Member Name: Craig Rhodes, GHP (individual member, organization)

Telephone #: (713) 844-3609

Email Address: crhodes@houston.org

Community Population (as currently marketed): 2,419,191

Community/Organization Linked-In Profile: linkedin.com/company/ghpartnership/

Application Submitted By: Danielle Scheiner

Email Address: dscheiner@houston.org

Media Contacts: [optional]

Organization: _____ Contact Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Organization: _____ Contact Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Eli Lilly Chooses Houston
for New $6.5B Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Facility

In April 2024, the Partnership's economic development team began working on "Project Savannah," a confidential site search for a new Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) manufacturing facility. National site selection firm Biggins Lacy Shapiro & Company (BLS & Co.) oversaw the site search process for Eli Lilly & Co. The review process highlighted the Houston region and Generation Park as a potential location for this new facility.

The Partnership's team led the regional site search process and worked closely with key stakeholders throughout the due diligence phase. The regional project team hosted several rounds of executive site visits, conference calls and data requests examining the strength of Houston's workforce, site infrastructure, timelines for development, and numerous site needs to make the project a success in Houston. The Partnership's team led the work supporting BLS & Co. on the overall incentives outline for the project. The regional project team included strong collaboration from McCord Development, Generation Park Management District, Sheldon ISD, San Jacinto College, Harris County Precinct 1, CenterPoint Energy and the Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office. This project team provided an in-depth projection of incentives, infrastructure investments, permitting timelines, and other key factors to meet the company's needs for the new manufacturing facility.

The project was formally announced on September 23, 2025, in Generation Park, with Texas Governor Greg Abbott, Eli Lilly CEO David Ricks, and numerous local industry leaders and elected officials in attendance.

"Texas is proud to welcome Lilly to Houston as they make one of the largest pharmaceutical manufacturing investments in our nation's history and provide good, high-paying jobs to hardworking Texans," said Governor Greg Abbott. "With our highly skilled workforce, low taxes, and world-class, business-friendly climate, Texas is the best place for companies like Lilly to grow. This $6.5 billion facility will not only bolster Houston's economy – it will boost our life sciences sector and help cement Texas as a global leader in health care innovation."

"This significant U.S. investment and onshoring of our API production capabilities will ensure faster, more secure access to orforglipron and to other life-changing medicines of the future," said David A. Ricks, Lilly chairman and CEO.

In truth, the story of Houston winning Eli Lilly's $6.5 billion pharmaceutical manufacturing facility began years before the first meeting with site selectors on "Project Savannah."

Innovativeness

The region's economic development strategy has evolved in recent years, with regional leaders doubling down on partnerships, long-term planning, and industry diversification. Yet in 2021, a leading pharmaceutical company's decision to choose North Carolina over Houston underscored a critical gap in Houston's competitiveness — the need for a stronger biotech workforce and key programs to support this sector.

Narrowly missing out on a big project was tough, but Houston responded with action — addressing workforce, policy, and collaboration across the ecosystem. In 2022, the Greater Houston Partnership led a regional strategy effort with Newmark to evaluate the life science industry sector in Houston. This strategy was supported and funded by numerous stakeholders in the region and helped serve as a catalyst to begin identifying key opportunities to enhance the region's life sciences and biotech sector.

One of the key opportunities was workforce and in 2022 San Jacinto College (SJC) and McCord Development launched a bold partnership to build a biotech talent pipeline, ensuring the region is ready for the next big opportunity. Together, they launched the Center for Biotechnology at Generation Park, a workforce-first solution to close the talent gap and make Houston a top destination for biotech companies. The licensed curriculum offered is through the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBRT), one of the world's top biopharmaceutical training institutions. As one of the seven Global Partners, San Jacinto College is the only technical college partner offering the NIBRT curriculum and associated certifications. San Jacinto College holds the exclusive license for 11 states in the United States.

The new Center for Biotechnology's facility formally opened September 26, 2025, three days after Eli Lilly's announcement and is located less than 2 miles from where the new Lilly facility will be in Generation Park.

Transferability

In 2023, the leadership at Houston's Texas Medical Center supported by the Partnership's public policy team, advocated the State legislature for passage of Texas Proposition 10, which provided property tax exemptions for pharmaceutical and medical device inventory and equipment. The statewide ballot initiative was passed by voters in November 2023, leveling the playing field for Texas and clearing the way for future development in biotech manufacturing and Houston as a landing spot for Lilly.

That same year, the Partnership also worked with TEDC and partners across the state to advocate for the new Jobs, Energy, Technology, and Innovation Act (JETI), that allows local school districts to provide temporary property tax incentives for large capital investment projects. Both economic development programs were critical tools to be able to attract a large-scale pharma manufacturing facility.

Additionally, the collaboration among TCEQ, Eli Lilly, and regional economic development partners helped address potential permitting challenges during the process. Since the proposed facility was to be located in a non-attainment area, initial emissions calculations raised concerns; however, those

calculations were based largely on assumptions associated with petrochemical manufacturing rather than the distinct emissions profile of pharmaceutical active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) manufacturing. Close collaboration with TCEQ and support from the Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism allowed the project team to refine the emissions analysis, and work through permitting considerations before they became barriers to the project. Following the official announcement, the project completed the TCEQ air permitting process in record time with zero public comments.

Community Commitment and Leverage

Governor Abbott announced Eli Lilly was approved for a JETI incentive program through Sheldon ISD for $146 million. Lilly was also awarded a $5.5 million Texas Enterprise Fund grant and received local tax abatements through the Generation Park Management District. Harris County Precinct 1 established a new TIRZ district for this site location that will help fund the project's infrastructure needs. Lilly has already begun construction on the site and has a formal groundbreaking slated for this fall. The facility is expected to be fully operational by 2030.

"Generation Park already has much of the necessary infrastructure, but McCord Development expects to invest about $100 million for site-specific upgrades, such as roads and distribution lines", said Ryan McCord, President of McCord Development. The project site is large enough to accommodate the potential for future expansions.

Measured Objectives

In addition to the $6.5 billion investment, the project will create 615 high-quality jobs with average wages over $100,000 and over 4,000 construction jobs in the Houston area for the next four years. The total economic impact on the State of Texas is estimated to be an output of $14 billion.

"Lilly's decision to invest more than $6.5 billion in Harris County is a powerful testament to the strength of our community and its ability to support lifesaving work in the life sciences and create living wage jobs and equitable economic opportunities for working families in Harris County," said Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis. "Harris County is unmatched for its speed to market, world-class infrastructure, and exceptional workforce. Harris County, along with partners at McCord Development in Generation Park and San Jacinto College, have built an ecosystem that is purposefully designed for life science projects—offering best-in-class infrastructure, workforce training, and a community environment that connects innovation with quality of life."

Secondary Benefits

In addition to the long-term benefits of the new Center for Biotechnology, Eli Lilly has already gotten involved in the community through elementary classroom programs in the local school district, Sheldon ISD, long before the project completes construction. It is believed that this effort will help build the future talent pipeline for the facility by introducing students to the possibilities of STEM careers at the earliest opportunity.

"We are committed to sustainability, being a responsible steward of natural resources, and strengthening the communities where our employees live and work", said Edgardo Hernandez, executive vice president and president of Lilly Manufacturing Operations.

The project is filling a piece of Houston's unique life science ecosystem that was missing, which lends credibility to the region for future pharma projects and companies in Lilly's supply chain.

Conclusion

"This is a transformative moment for the Houston region and our life sciences industry," Greater Houston Partnership President and CEO Steve Kean said. "The Lilly project represents one of the largest for-profit life sciences investments in Texas history and is a powerful endorsement of Houston's growing position as a global hub for innovation, advanced manufacturing, and biomedical excellence. This win reflects years of strategic work by partners across the public and private sectors to build the talent, infrastructure, and business environment needed to attract world-class companies like Eli Lilly."

This significant investment firmly establishes Houston as a premier destination for life sciences and advanced manufacturing. The facility is the first of its size and scale in Texas and represents one of the single largest investments in the Houston region. Lilly's CEO described it as one of the company's most technologically advanced sites, designed to leverage cutting-edge digital automation. Through regional collaboration, strategic workforce initiatives, incentive alignment, and strong policy advocacy, Houston secured one of the largest pharmaceutical projects in U.S. history.




Lilly
EDICINE COMPANY




Lilly
A MEDIC E COMPANY
CREATING JOBS