
Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Application to Renew



**PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

Dear Applicant:

You are taking the first step toward continuing to preserve the building line character of your block. The Planning and Development Department staff will help you determine if your application qualifies for this renewal and can assist you in completing the renewal process. If approved, an ordinance will be created for your application that continues to preserve the building line character of your block.

This application packet includes:

- an Application to Renew a Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB)
- a list of Submittal Requirements and a sample of the notification signs
- a set of Frequently Asked Questions

It is recommended, but not required, that applicants meet with a staff person for a preliminary meeting before a renewal application is submitted, allowing staff to review the eligibility requirements for renewal applications. Renewal applications shall only be accepted by the Planning and Development Department no earlier than two years before the expiration of the ordinance establishing the special minimum building line requirement.

A complete application must include all items listed in the submittal requirements on page 5 of this packet. A complete application package must be mailed or hand-delivered during standard business hours to:

Planning and Development
Department Attn: Community and
Regional Planning 611 Walker
Street, 6th Floor
Houston, TX 77002

A step-by-step guide is provided in this packet. Contact the Community and Regional Planning Division at (832) 393-6600 with any questions or to schedule a meeting before submitting an application. More information can be found on www.houstonplanning.com. Thank you for your interest and we look forward to meeting with you soon.

¡ATENCIÓN! Si necesita ayuda en español o gustaría recibir más información acerca de este asunto, comuníquese al número 832-393-6659.

Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Application to Renew



PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT

Application to Renew a Special Minimum Building Line Block: Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) renewal application, what does it mean and where do they come from?

An SMBLB renewal application provides property owners an opportunity to continue preserving the building line character of a blockface, or two opposing blockfaces. This means any structures built in the application boundary must have building lines greater than or equal to the established Special Minimum Building Line. An application is submitted by a property owner within a block, or a representative of an entity in the neighborhood.

Can an existing Special Minimum Building Line change through the renewal application process?

The purpose of the SMBLB renewal application is to extend the duration of the Special Minimum Building Line designation. For example, if a 15-foot Special Minimum Building Line was previously established for your block, upon approval by the City Council, no structures will be permitted to be built with a building line of less than 15 feet for an additional 20 years.

What can I build on my lot?

There are no land use restrictions with a Special Minimum Building Line ordinance. This application does not determine the physical design of buildings, aside from how far they are built from the front property line subject to a Special Minimum Building Line designation. Please note that deed restrictions for building lines may already be imposed on some properties in your neighborhood. In those cases, the more restrictive of either the proposed minimum building line or deed restriction will be applied to the property.

Can I add to or rebuild my single-family/multifamily/commercial property?

Yes, if you have an existing single-family lot you are allowed to rebuild or improve your home. If you have an existing commercial or multifamily lot, you are allowed to rebuild or improve the building. Any new residence or addition on your property would need to meet the Special Minimum Building Line. If you decide to add a porch that is habitable or has enough space to add furniture, it must meet the Special Minimum Building Line.

What happens during the application process?

An applicant wishing to renew a Special Minimum Building Line Block will need to submit a completed application packet. Planning and Development Department staff will review the application. Once the application is deemed complete, staff will notify residents within the application area that a complete application was submitted.

What if I disagree with this application?

Notification sent to property owners will indicate a 30-day protest period when property owners may file a written protest with the Planning and Development Department. If an application to renew receives a protest from a property owner within the block(s), the application will be referred to the Houston Planning Commission for consideration.

What happens at the Planning Commission?

If a protest is received, interested parties will be given an opportunity to speak at the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will approve or deny the application to renew. If approved, the application will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

What happens after the City Council?

If the City Council approves the application to renew, the Special Minimum Building Line Block designation will be extended for 20 years.

If at any time you have questions or need assistance, please call the Planning and Development Department at (832) 393-6600 or visit the department's website at www.houstonplanning.com.

Si necesita ayuda en español o gustaría recibir más información acerca de este asunto, comuníquese al número 832-393-6659.

Commented [HLP1]: There needs to be a differentiation between rebuilding, adding or improving behind the building line. As is, it could be interpreted that they could "improve" inside the building line.

And, each of the applications will have this same language, right?

Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Application to Renew



**PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

Application to Renew a Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Steps

- **Step 1: Meet with Staff of the Planning and Development Department (Optional)**
Applicants may choose to meet with Planning and Development staff before submitting an application. The applicant should bring a map to the meeting with the proposed renewal boundary and a copy of any existing deed restrictions. To schedule a pre-submittal meeting, contact Community and Regional Planning at (832) 393-6600.
- **Step 2: Submit a Complete Application to Renew a Special Minimum Building Line Block**
A complete renewal application package must be mailed or hand-delivered during standard business hours to the Planning and Development Department. If the application is determined to be incomplete, it will be returned with an explanation of what is needed to make it complete. Within two (2) business days, Planning and Development staff will contact the applicant(s) regarding whether their application is accepted or rejected. If the application is rejected, staff will explain any necessary revisions.
- **Step 3: Application Review and Notification Signs**
A renewal application will be added to an updated list on the Planning and Development Department's website within two (2) business days after an application is accepted. Planning and Development staff will review the application, and within 30 business days, determine whether the application meets eligibility requirements. After it has been determined that the application meets eligibility requirements, staff will notify the applicant(s) with a letter providing instructions for the posting of notification signs within the renewal application boundary area. Signs are to be posted within 10 days of the date of the letter.
- **Step 4: 30-Day Protest Period**
Within 15 days of accepting a complete renewal application, the Planning and Development Department will send a notification to property owners within the proposed boundaries, as well as the District Council Member. The notifications will include instructions on how property owners may object to this renewal. Any objections must be made in writing within 30 days of the date of the notice.
- **Step 5: Department Review of Protest Responses**
At the end of the thirty days, one of the following actions will occur:
 - the application will be sent to the City Council if it has no objections, or
 - the application will be sent to the Planning Commission for a public hearing if it receives any objections

A notification letter will be sent to property owners no less than 15 days before the Planning Commission hearing date. Applications recommended for approval by the Planning Commission will be forwarded to the City Council. Applications denied by the Commission will not be forwarded to City Council and the existing Special Minimum Building Line ordinance will expire.
- **Step 6: Attend the Planning Commission Public Hearing**
A letter indicating the time, date, and place of the Planning Commission meeting will be sent to all property owners within the proposed SMBLB renewal application area. Members of the public may present comments about the SMBLB at the public hearing. After the public hearing, the Commission will consider whether or not to recommend the City Council renew the SMBLB. If the Commission recommends that the City Council renew the SMBLB, the Planning and Development Director will refer the application to the City Council. If the application is denied by the Planning Commission, the decision will be final.
- **Step 7: City Council Action**
The City Council will consider all Special Minimum Building Line Block renewal applications that are recommended for approval by the Planning Commission. The City Council's action to approve or deny the renewal is final. Persons wanting to address the City Council during the public comment session of the meeting should contact the City Secretary at (832) 393-1100 or citysecretary@houstontx.gov.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: WE WILL NOT ACCEPT APPLICATIONS THAT ARE SENT THROUGH EMAIL OR FAX

Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Application to Renew



**PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

Main Applicant Information (required)

Full Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____
Street Address *Apartment/Unit #*

City *State* *ZIP Code*

Phone: _____ Email _____

Are you a property owner within the application boundary? YES NO If no, what is your relation to the application boundary? _____

Did you have a preliminary meeting with the Planning & Development Department? YES NO If yes, what was the date of the meeting? _____

Does the application boundary have deed restrictions? YES NO If yes, do they address a Minimum Building Line? _____

Describe the location of the application boundary. (Example: "Houston Subdivision Section 1, Blocks 1 and 2, Lots 1-24" or "1600 Block of Planning and Development Street, north and south sides")

Signature of applicant: _____

Alternate Applicant Information (optional)

Full Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____
Street Address *Apartment/Unit #*

City *State* *ZIP Code*

Phone: _____ Email _____

Signature of alternate applicant: _____

Application Information (STAFF USE ONLY)

File Number: _____ Super Neighborhood: _____

File Number renewed: _____ Planner Assigned: _____

City Council District: _____

Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Application to Renew



**PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

Submittal Requirements (Please check and complete)

Completed application form (page 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of deed restrictions, if applicable***	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sample of Notification Sign (page 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>

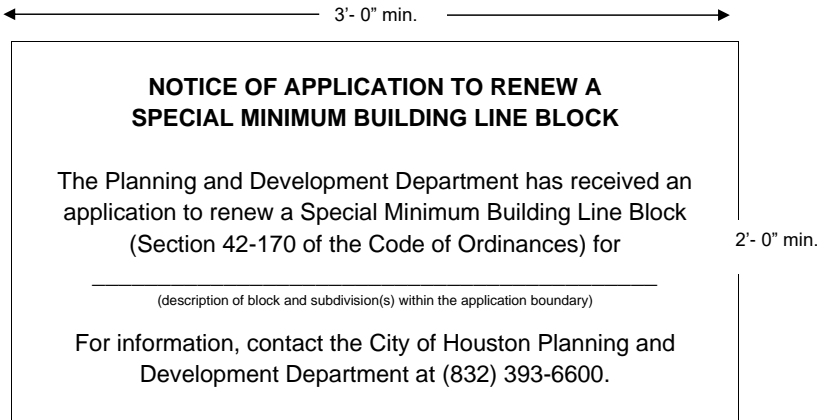
*****DISCLAIMER:** The Planning Department reviewed the deed restrictions you submitted for your subdivision and noted no language addressing a minimum lot size or minimum building line requirement. As such, revisions to Chapter 42 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances extending the minimum lot size and minimum building line requirements to neighborhoods within the corporate boundaries of the City of Houston that do not have a minimum lot size or minimum building line established in their deed restrictions are applicable to your subdivision. It's important to understand, however, Planning's review and decision regarding the eligibility of your subdivision to avail itself of the protections set forth in Chapter 42 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances is based solely on the instruments you have provided and which purport to be the most recent, valid version of your subdivision's deed restrictions. The City of Houston is making no assurances or representations regarding the actual validity of your deed restrictions. You should consult with a private attorney if you have any questions or concerns about your deed restrictions.

Supplemental Materials (Recommended)

A survey of at least one lot on each blockface that includes the location and dimensions of all buildings on the lot	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------

Sample Notification Sign (Fill in the blank)

The applicant is responsible for obtaining and posting a minimum of two (2) signs per blockface within the boundary of the Special Minimum Building Line Block within ten (10) days of written notice from the Planning and Development Department. Planning and Development staff may approve an alternative number of signs for the application to renew a Special Minimum Building Line Block upon determining that the signs will provide sufficient notice within the application area. Each sign shall be at least two feet by three feet (2' x 3'), face the street, and be legible from the street. Applicants are responsible for contacting Planning and Development Staff once the signs are posted. The applicant shall use reasonable efforts to maintain the signs until the Planning and Development Director or the Houston Planning Commission has approved an application. Applicants shall include the name of each subdivision in the application on the notification sign.



Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Application to Renew



PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT

Special Minimum Building Line Block: Public Information Request Form

How can applicants or property owners stay updated as to the status of an application?

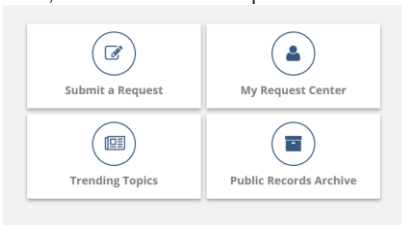
Applicants or property owners within a Special Minimum Building Line Block can receive information about an application, including who is applying for the renewal. Please follow the steps below to request information from our department's Public Information Office.

- First, go to Public Information Act Requests home page:
<https://www.houstontx.gov/pia.html>

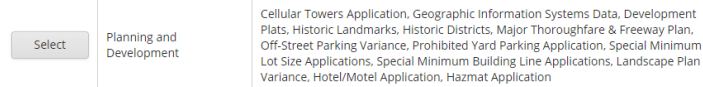
- Second, scroll down to click on "Please click here to access the portal"

Using the online portal, you may now request public records of most City departments. [Please click here to access the portal.](#)

- Third, click on "Submit a Request"



- Fourth, select Planning and Development Department



- Finally, create an account and then, fill out the request form

Login
If you have used this service previously, please log in. If this is your first online request, please create an account and provide as much contact information as possible. You will be able to track the progress of your request by logging in to your account.

Login and Submit

Email Address:*

Password:*

You can also find the steps to request information in the following [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qixeK59ohks&t=91s).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qixeK59ohks&t=91s>