



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

# Moving Communities Ahead

**TABLE of CONTENTS**

Director’s Letter	4
Historic Preservation	5
Community	6
Census 2020	7
Growth	8
Mobility	10
Mapping Houston	12
Contact Us	13

# Director's Letter



Margaret Wallace Brown, AICP, CNU-A

The City's Planning and Development Department is moving communities ahead with major programs undertaken and underway. As Director, it's an honor to report on the incredible work being done by the Planning and Development team of over 80 talented, vitally engaged public servants.

Community initiatives such as the Mayor's Complete Communities program expanded significantly with the addition of five communities.

Mobility planning is critical as more people continue moving to Houston. We look for every opportunity to expand transportation options beyond the car, and to eliminate traffic-related injury and death. We've led the

community engagement for Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) I-45 program, North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP). We continue to examine how we can expand the Walkable Places and Transit-Oriented Development ordinances.

Increasing growth and development is a constant in Houston so we have to continually look for ways to do our jobs better. We will be assisting the educational campaign as we prepare for the 2020 Census.

We look forward to the challenges to come.

For 2019, we offer an abridged version of our traditionally comprehensive annual report. This publication came about in 2020 as the

pandemic called the world to adapt and refocus on the rapidly changing business environment and evolving daily operations. As we move forward, we continue to stand in collaboration with Mayor Sylvester Turner, City Council, our public and private partners in serving Houstonians by Moving Communities Ahead.



**Margaret Wallace Brown**, AICP, CNU-A  
Department Director

# Historic Preservation

The Houston Office of Preservation provides guidance for Houston's historic and cultural resources through policy and public outreach. Preservation staff review historic designation applications and provide community education for those that want to know more about city measures and guidelines.

The Planning and Development Department (PD) was among 19 agencies awarded the 2019 Preservation Texas Honor Award for their efforts to save irreplaceable and authentic historic places in Texas. The award recipients were honored on Feb. 27 at an awards ceremony and dinner in Austin TX. We were recognized for our work on the Houston Heights Historic Districts Design Guidelines for

three Houston Heights Historic Districts. We are extremely proud of the team's accomplishments as these guidelines will go a long way in protecting and preserving the cultural heritage in the Houston Heights.

PD and the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) are stewards to Houston's historical heritage. Together, we govern Houston's 22 historic districts, 292 landmarks, and 156 protected landmarks. This office also reviews requests for any new construction, demolition or alterations to structures in historic districts and historic landmarks, and makes recommendations to the HAHC and Historic Preservation Appeals Board.

## Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

- 421 COAs were reviewed in total
- 306 COA applications were reviewed by the Commission
- 115 were approved administratively

## Historic Preservation Appeals Board

- 8 COAs were reviewed
- 5 were upheld
- 2 were overturned
- 1 was partially upheld

## Landmark Applications

- 17 applications were reviewed by the HAHC
- 10 City of Houston Protected landmarks were approved by City Council
- 4 City of Houston landmarks were approved



Matt Kriegl displays his Preservation Planning Award for his work on the Houston Heights Design Guidelines

# Community

The Planning and Development Department (PD) works to sustain the long-term viability and character of communities while also seeking to ensure the long-term sustainability of the city through programs that seek to address growth as well as preserve the character of neighborhoods.

## Complete Communities

The Department leads the engagement portion of the Complete Communities Initiative, Mayor Turner's signature program to strengthen under-resourced neighborhoods to ensure equal access to services and amenities. In addition, PD manages programs such as Minimum Lot Size & Building Line, Prohibited Yard Parking, and Plan Houston.

- Phase 1 – Includes Acres Home, Gulfton, Near Northside, Second Ward, and Third Ward

- Phase 2 – Expanded to include Alief-Westwood, Fort Bend Houston, Kashmere Gardens, Magnolia Park – Manchester, and Sunnyside
- Phase 2 meetings held in 2019: 10 large public meetings and more than 50 Neighborhood Support Team meetings, including coffee clatch

## Minimum Lot Size & Building Line Approvals

- 1,234 total lots protected
- 5 SMLSA\* applications protecting 991 lots
- 12 SMLS\* applications protecting 234 lots
- 1 MBL\* application protecting 9 lots

## Prohibited Yard Parking (PYP)

- 2 PYP applications protecting 2,269 single-family lots



\* SMLSA - Special Minimum Lot Size Area | SMLS - Special Minimum Lot Size | MBL - Minimum Building Line

# Census 2020

On July 19, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, Mayor Sylvester Turner, along with Houston In Action, announced the 2020 Census Complete Count Committee and outlined steps to ensure every person is counted. This marks the first time Harris County and the City of Houston have worked together to support a coordinated effort and will share the responsibilities of a 'Houston-Harris County Joint Complete Count Committee'. The committee will focus on reaching populations that are hard-to-count and will provide outreach and messaging tailored to fit our diverse communities.

PD will head the City's public engagement effort for the upcoming 2020 Census. A complete census count is important because it determines congressional representation and federal funding for cities and states. It also provides crucial data about our neighborhoods and region that affect the creation of new businesses, schools, and services. A robust and accurate 2020 Census count for Houston and the state of Texas could result in two more congressional seats and more funding for



health, education, public safety, housing, and transportation.

Texas currently receives about \$43 billion annually in federal funds tied to census-provided numbers. The previous census also added four congressional seats to Texas. For each person not counted, the City of Houston will lose \$15,780 (or \$1,578 per person per year) for the decade. This translates into millions of dollars missed if thousands of residents are not accurately counted.



# Growth

PD reviews and facilitates the recordation of subdivision plats submitted for compliance with Houston's land development ordinance, Chapter 42. A plat must receive preliminary and final approval from the Planning Commission and be recorded with the county clerk's office prior to development of the property.

Development regulations with unique considerations such as hotel/motels, hazardous material enterprises, certificates of compliance, and cellular towers fall under the purview of the Department. PD makes recommendations on many of these applications to the Planning Commission and Tower Commission (PCTC).

The Walkable Places Committee is proposing changes to our development ordinances that will encourage high density, mixed-use development that is vibrant, walkable and supports alternative modes of transportation. There were six community meetings held to gather public input on the proposal. The Market-Based Parking ordinance approved in July 2019 encourages local businesses to reduce their parking requirements. This ordinance reduces the parking lot footprint, which opens up more square footage for commerce. It also helps to establish a more pedestrian friendly environment that is less car focused.

## Plat Reviews & Applications

### Plat Review

- 1,655 development plats reviewed
- 2,156 subdivision plats reviewed
- 669 plats recorded
- 16,819 plans reviewed
- 1,043 expedited reviews

### Applications

- 91 Certificates of Compliances
- 19 cellular tower applications
- 11 Hotel Motel applications
- 3 street name changes







## Site Plan Reviews

Within the city limits, PD reviews development plans to ensure compliance with ordinances such as off-street parking (Chapter 26) and trees and shrubs (Chapter 33), as applicable.

The Department also reviews site plans for multifamily review and development plat variances.

- 11,508 single-family plans
- 6,176 commercial & development plats
- 16 Parking Variances
- 2 Landscaping Variances
- 31 Development Plat Variances
- 2 Hazardous enterprises



## Public Policies

The Department helps manage boundary changes within the city limits and in the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction through the review of limited and general-purpose annexation requests.

These boundary changes are necessary because of a growing and changing region. The Department also reviews requests for the creation of management districts and other special districts.

## Strategic Partnership Agreements/Annexation

- 1 executed new SPA and added territory
- 1 amended existing SPA and added new territory
- 2 extended SPAs for an additional ten years
- 1 amended existing SPA to correct a typographical error
- 9 amended existing SPAs in the Atascocita area to modify a provision related to full-purpose annexation upon termination of the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)

## Management Districts

- 2 additions of land
- 2 consent petitions for creation

# Mobility



The Planning and Development Department leads the City's systems-level transportation planning, which includes management of the City's Complete Streets and Transportation Plan, Vision Zero Planning, Major Thoroughfare & Freeway Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, local area studies, and external transportation funding efforts. This includes leading the City's public engagement for the North Houston Highway Improvement Project (NHHIP) and recommend ways to improve the project.

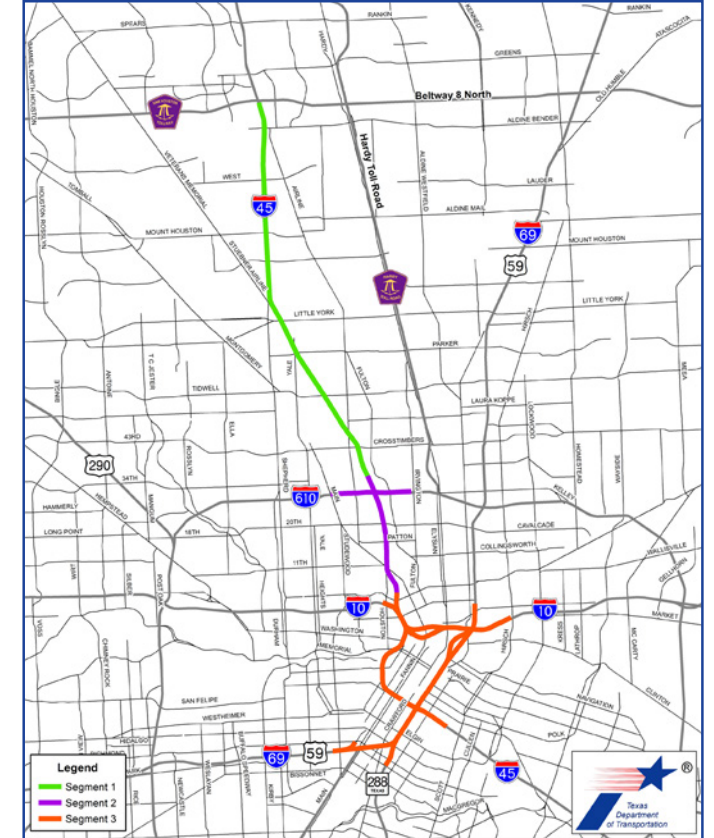
The Department also supports other departments, including Houston Public Works, as projects are developed at the corridor level for capital improvements. In this way, the City sustains a seamless process for mobility improvements from planning through implementation.

## Mobility Plans

- 11 amendments to the The Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP) approved
- 5 community meetings held for NHHIP public engagement coordination
- Southeast Houston Mobility Plan was completed

## Houston Bike Plan

- Roughly 42 miles of high comfort bike lanes were added by the City and its partners (Precinct 1, Houston Parks Board, TIRZ)
- Bicycle Advisory Committee was established to provide direction and input for the plan and implementation
- 8 community meetings held



NHHIP Area Map

## Bike to Work Day (BTWD)

BTWD is an opportunity to celebrate the bicycle as a mode of transportation. With 40% of all trips in the U.S. being less than two miles, bicycle commuting offers a healthy and sustainable way to get from one destination to the next. With Houston's continued expansion of bicycle infrastructure and Houston BCycle, there are many great reasons to hop on two wheels to get to where you need to go.

## Bike Plan Implementation Funding

On April 16, 2018, Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis and Mayor Turner formed a city-county partnership to connect neighborhoods and destinations with high-comfort bikeways, and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. Commissioner Ellis has committed \$10 million dollar towards this effort. The City of Houston will allocate \$1.1 million per year towards bicycle infrastructure for the next five years.

PD's Transportation Planning team is leading an extensive civic engagement campaign to hear the needs and wishes of the community regarding biking and safety before plans are brought to fruition. Implementation is then proposed with partners who share the vision. Below are highlights of some of the proposed bikeway projects and community engagement efforts that are being led by the team.



## Houston BCycle

- Recently celebrated the opening of the 100th BCycle station in Houston.
- 13 bike stations were added this past year.
- Currently evaluating options for expansion of the network beyond Loop 610.
- 100 bicycles were added to the system this year, including the testing of electric bikes.

## Vision Zero Engagement

- 2 Executive Committee meetings
- 2 Task Force meetings
- 3 Communications Subcommittee meetings
- 4 Data Subcommittee meetings
- Mayor's Executive Order signed in August

# Mapping Houston

The Department maintains the City's core Geographic Information System (GIS) and is the repository for data pertaining to streets, public facilities and services, special districts, population demographics, and housing.

It also collects and uses information from private entities and local, state and federal public agencies to provide street maps, aerial imagery and tabulated data for all aspects of the City. This data is displayed on My City, the City's primary GIS site.

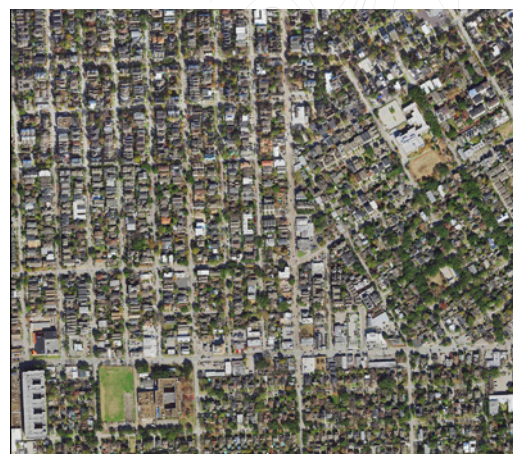
In addition, the GIS team provides detailed information and analysis on demographic data and trends.

## Addressing & Mapping

- 17,147 new addresses created
- 1,823 roads created or modified
- 854 Plat Tracker Plats submitted for review
- 406 mapping and data projects were conducted

## Houston Emergency Center:

- 31,174 road edits
- 5 data updates for the 9-1-1 call floor



# Contact Us

Thank you for your interest in the Planning and Development Department's Annual Report. Since its publication, content and location changes may mean that some information may have changed. Please refer to the latest annual report for any updated contact information.

You can contact us for more information at **832-393-6600**.

Visit our web site at **[www.houstonplanning.com](http://www.houstonplanning.com)**.

E-mail us at **[planningdepartment@houstontx.gov](mailto:planningdepartment@houstontx.gov)**.

## Key Contact Information

### Department General Assistance

(832) 393-6600

[planningdepartment@houstontx.gov](mailto:planningdepartment@houstontx.gov)

### Development Services – Planner of the Day

(832) 393-6624

### GIS Information Mapping & Analysis

(832) 393-6555

### Historic Preservation

(832) 393-6556

### Public Information/Media Requests

(832) 393-6600

### Special Minimum Lot Size/Building Line Program

(832) 393-6637

### Transportation Planning

(832) 393-6660





**PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

**THE CITY OF HOUSTON**

Planning and Development Department

611 Walker Street, 6th Floor,

Houston, TX 77002

[www.houstonplanning.com](http://www.houstonplanning.com)

[planningdepartment@houstontx.gov](mailto:planningdepartment@houstontx.gov)

832-393-6600