

# **General Development Regulations**

## **ALLEYS**

**Code Location:** Chapter 40 (Streets & Sidewalks), ARTICLE XV.

**Infrastructure Design Manual Location:** Chapter 10.06 E

**Description:** Prescribes the rules and regulations governing the improvement of certain alleys in the city; and the minimum standards and criteria for the improvement, including paving, of alleys that are to be improved and maintained for motorized vehicular or pedestrian use by the public.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City Engineer)

## **AUTO WRECKERS AND STORAGE YARDS**

**Code Location:** Chapter 28, ARTICLE III.

**Description:** Requires that the location of auto storage lots, auto wrecking and salvage yards and lots used for open storage by junk dealers scrap metal processors and second hand dealers are prohibited within 300 feet of a school, church, or residence.

**Contact Department:** Houston Police Department

## **BUILDING CONSTRUCTION**

**Code Location:** 2006 International Building Code (IBC); Houston Amendments to the 2006 IBC.

**Description:** Covers all buildings except 3-story one- and two-family dwellings and townhomes. This comprehensive code features time-tested safety concepts, structural, and fire and life safety provisions covering means of egress, interior finish requirements, comprehensive roof provisions, innovative construction technology, occupancy classifications, and the latest industry standards in material design.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Code Enforcement)

## **BUILDING CONSTRUCTION, SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL**

**Code Location:** 2006 International Residential Code (IRC); Houston Amendments to the 2006 IRC.

**Description:** Establishes minimum regulations for one- and two-family dwellings of three stories or less. It brings together all building, plumbing, mechanical, fuel gas, energy and electrical provisions for one- and two-family residences.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Code Enforcement)

## **CELL TOWERS**

**Code Location:** Chapter 41, ARTICLE III.

**Description:** regulates the location of cellular towers in the city limits. The Tower Commission oversees the requests for cellular tower permits.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department

## **CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES**

**Code location:** Chapter 28, ARTICLE VI.

**Description:** Establishes the rules for the permitting and placement of correctional facilities in Houston.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department

## **DRAINAGE**

**Infrastructure Design Manual Location:** Chapter 9

**Description:** Establishes the engineering criteria and Level of Service standards for the design of public storm drainage improvements (Chapter 9).

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City Engineer)

## **EASEMENTS**

**Infrastructure Design Manual Location:** Chapter 5

**Description:** Establishes the requirements for allocating and recording easements for water, wastewater, and storm drainage facilities located outside of public rights-of-ways.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City Engineer)

## **ENERGY**

**Code location:** 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC); Houston Amendments to the 2009 IECC

**Description:** Establishes standards for energy efficiency in envelope design, mechanical systems and lighting systems as well as the use of new materials.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering

## **ELECTRICAL**

**Code location:** 2011 National Electrical Code (NEC); Houston Amendments to the 2011 NEC

**Description:** Establishes standards for the safe installation of electrical wiring and equipment.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Code Enforcement)

## **FIRE CODE**

**Code location:** 2006 International Fire Code (IFC); Houston Amendments to the 2006 IFC

**Description:** Contains regulations to safeguard life and property from fires and explosion hazards. Topics include general precautions, emergency planning and preparedness, fire department access and water supplies, automatic sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, special hazards, and the storage and use of hazardous materials.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Code Enforcement)

## **FLOOD PLAIN**

**Code Location:** Chapter 19 (Floodplain)

**Description:** Provides a regulatory system to monitor the issuance of plats and permits to reduce the likelihood that development within this city will increase the dangers of flooding.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City Engineer)

## **HAZARDOUS ENTERPRISES (HAZMAT)**

**Code Location:** Chapter 28, ARTICLE VII.

**Description:** Sets forth the requirements for the construction, expansion and use of certain premises that constitute hazardous occupancies under the Building Code.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS**

**Code Location:** Chapter 33, ARTICLE VII, DIVISION 4.

**Description:** Sets forth the requirement for obtaining approval to alter, rehabilitate, restore, construct, relocate or demolish any building, structure, object or site that is designated as a Landmark or Protected Landmark or that is located within an Historic District or an Archaeological site and to the excavation of any archaeological site.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department

## **HOTELS/MOTELS, THE LOCATION OF**

**Code Location:** Chapter 28, ARTICLE VI.

**Description:** Defines and regulates the location of hotels and motels within the city limits. Anyone building a hotel or motel must apply for a Hotel/Motel permit from the Planning Department in addition to a standard building permit. The Houston Planning Commission must approve any variances to the Hotel/Motel ordinance.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department

## **INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN**

**Code location:** Infrastructure Design Manual.

**Description:** Establishes requirements for easements, utilities, water lines, wastewater collection systems, storm water, street paving, street cuts, facilities, geotechnical and environmental, and traffic and signal designs.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City Engineer)

## **MINI-WAREHOUSES**

**Code Location:** Chapter 27, ARTICLE X.

**Description:** Regulates the licensure of any storage facility containing multiple storage units or rooms which do not exceed 40 feet in length and 20 feet in width and which are available to the general public for rental under circumstances where the tenant or lessee has sole control over the property that is stored in such units or rooms.

**Contact Department:** Administrative and Regulatory Affairs Department

## **MANUFACTURED HOMES**

**Code Location:** Chapter 29, ARTICLE X.

**Description:** Regulates the location of manufactured homes, which include mobile homes, and recreational vehicles within the City Limits. Mobile home parks and manufactured home subdivisions might be required to record a subdivision plat before developing the project.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department/Public Works & Engineering Department (Permits and Licenses)

## **MECHANICAL**

**Code location:** 2006 Uniform Mechanical Code (UMC); Houston Amendments to the 2006 UMC

**Description:** Establishes the rules that govern the installation, inspection and maintenance of mechanical (heating, ventilating, cooling (HVAC) and refrigeration) systems

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Code Enforcement)

## **PARKING REQUIREMENTS, OFF-STREET**

**Code Location:** Chapter 26, ARTICLE VIII.

**Description:** Determines the number of parking spaces required on the site of the business or residence.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department

## **PLUMBING**

**Code location:** 2006 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC); Houston Amendments to the 2006 UPC

**Description:** Establishes rules that govern the installation and inspection of plumbing systems as a means of promoting the public's health, safety and welfare.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Code Enforcement)

## **SIDEWALKS, DRIVEWAYS, CURBS AND GUTTERS, THE CONSTRUCTION OR REPAIR OF**

**Code Location:** Chapter 40 (Streets & Sidewalks), ARTICLE III

**Infrastructure Design Manual Location:** Chapter 10

**Description:** Establishes the minimum width of sidewalks and determines the requirements and permits required to construct, reconstruct, repair or regrade any sidewalks, curbs or gutters in the city.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City Engineer)

## **SIGNS, CONSTRUCTION AND LOCATION OF ADVERTISING**

**Code location:** Sign Code (City of Houston Building Code, Chapter 46)

**Description:** The Sign Code provides standards for the use, quality, construction and location of advertising signs throughout the city. The Code also regulates off-premise signs (also known as billboards) in the city, as well as extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Code Enforcement)

## **SOLID WASTE BULK CONTAINERS AND DUMPSTERS**

**Code Location:** Chapter 39, ARTICLE VI.

**Description:** Identifies the requirements for locating and screening bulk waste containers (dumpsters).

**Contact Department:** Solid Waste Management

## **STORMWATER**

**Infrastructure Design Manual Location:** Chapter 9 and Chapter 13

**Description:** Establishes the engineering criteria and Level of Service standards for the design of public storm drainage improvements (Chapter 9).

Establishes criteria for the design of storm water pollution prevention procedures and controls for construction activities, as well as criteria for the design of permanent storm water pollution prevention procedures and controls to minimize impacts for new development and decrease impacts for redevelopment on tracts of land of 5 acres or more (Chapter 13).

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City Engineer)

## **STREETS, PAVING DESIGN REQUIREMENTS FOR**

**Infrastructure Design Manual Location:** Chapter 10.

**Description:** Establishes the geometric design guidelines for streets, criteria for street paving, and standard paving notes for drawings.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City Engineer)

## **STREETS, RIGHT-OF WAY REQUIREMENTS FOR**

**Code location:** Chapter 42, ARTICLE III, DIVISION 2.

**Description:** Establishes the minimum right-of-way width required for public streets, private streets, and permanent access easements.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department

## **SUBDIVISIONS, DEVELOPMENTS AND PLATTING**

**Code Location:** Chapter 42, ARTICLE II.

**Description:** Establishes the general rules and regulations governing plats, subdivisions and development of land within the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction to promote the health, safety, morals and general welfare of the city and the safe, orderly and healthful development of the city.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department

## **TREES IN THE RIGHTS-OF-WAY, REMOVAL OF**

**Code Location:** Chapter 33, ARTICLE VI.

**Description:** Regulates the removal of any tree that is situated in whole or in substantial part within a street whether to perform any construction activity, including, without limitation, construction or repair of buildings or other structures, installation or repair of utilities, or installation or repair of streets or sidewalks within the drip line circle area of any tree that is situated in whole or in substantial part within a street. The determination of whether the tree is situated in whole or in substantial part in the street shall be based upon the location of the trunk of the tree at ground level. For purposes of the foregoing requirements, a tree shall be considered to be in substantial part within a street if one-half or more of the area of the trunk of the tree is situated in the street as determined at the point where the trunk intersects the ground.

**Contact Department:** Parks and Recreation Department

## **TREES, SHRUBS AND SCREENING FENCES**

**Code Location:** Chapter 33, ARTICLE V.

**Description:** Provides standards for planting trees, shrubs and landscape buffers to beautify the city and to enhance local property values. The ordinance further promotes the greening of Houston by offering incentives to property owners who preserve and protect existing trees on private property.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department

## **UTILITY LOCATIONS**

**Infrastructure Design Manual Location:** Chapter 6.

**Description:** Establishes the criteria for the location of utilities in rights-of-way and easements.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City Engineer)

## **WASTEWATER COLLECTION SYSTEMS**

***Infrastructure Design Manual Location:*** Chapter 8.

***Description:*** Establishes the criteria for the design of wastewater collection systems within the public right-of-way or a dedicated public easement.

***Contact Department:*** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City engineer)

## **WATER LINES**

***Infrastructure Design Manual Location:*** Chapter 7.

***Description:*** Establishes the criteria for the design of potable water lines within the public right-of-way or a dedicated public easement in conformance with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Regulations.

***Contact Department:*** Public Works & Engineering Department (Office of City Engineer)

## **Additional Neighborhood Tools**

### **BUILDING LINE REQUIREMENT AREA**

***Code location:*** Chapter 42, ARTICLE III, DIVISION 3.

***Description:*** Provides for the establishment of a minimum building line requirement for existing residential neighborhoods in the city that do not have minimum lot size established by deed restrictions.

***Contact Department:*** Planning & Development Department

### **HISTORIC LANDMARKS, PROTECTED LANDMARKS, HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES, THE DESIGNATION OF**

***Code location:*** Chapter 33, ARTICLE VII, DIVISION 3.

***Description:*** Provides for the process to designate a property or properties as landmarks, protected landmarks, historic districts and archaeological sites.

***Contact Department:*** Planning & Development Department

### **LOT SIZE REQUIREMENT AREA**

***Code location:*** Chapter 42, ARTICLE III, DIVISION 4.

***Description:*** Provides for the establishment of a minimum lot size requirement for existing residential neighborhoods in the city that do not have minimum lot size established by deed restrictions.

***Contact Department:*** Planning & Development Department

### **PARKING PERMITS FOR RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

***Code location:*** Chapter 26, ARTICLE VI.

***Description:*** The city council may designate residential areas within the city with chronic commuter parking problems as residential parking permit areas pursuant to the procedures of this division. For purposes of this division, a 'chronic commuter parking problem' means the occupancy of curbside

parking spaces by commuter vehicles at the same hours and on the same days, but shall not mean parking for events which by their nature are expected to occur on a frequency of less than once every two weeks.

**Contact Department:** Administration & Regulatory Affairs

#### **PARKING OF VEHICLES ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY**

**Code Location:** Chapter 28, ARTICLE X.

**Description:** Regulates the parking of vehicles or equipment on any surface that is not an improved surface in the front or side yard areas of an improved single-family residential lot to prevent damage to underground infrastructure that would be caused by the weight of vehicles parked over such infrastructure and which would also result in unsightly and permanent damage to such areas, thereby having a negative effect on the aesthetics of single-family residential areas affected by such practices and the property values of residences in those affected areas. This article shall not apply to the parking of any vehicle subject to article XIII of Chapter 10 of this Code or Chapter 683 of the Texas Transportation Code.

**Contact Department:** Planning & Development Department

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**

**Code location:** Chapter 45, ARTICLE XV.

**Description:** Establishes the procedures governing the application for and review, approval, financing and construction of projects to minimize or eliminate traffic congestion, cut-through traffic or other traffic-related problems in a neighborhood area. In accordance with the provisions of this article, the director shall prepare and make available to the public appropriate forms to request a project.

**Contact Department:** Public Works & Engineering Department (Traffic Operations Division)

***Over the course of the next few weeks this document will be refined and expanded upon.***

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