

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

2013-11 to 2013-13

Mills Branch

APPLICANT: Montgomery County Engineering

KEY MAP: 297 J; 296 M

JURISDICTION: ETJ, Montgomery County

LAMBERT: 5771

DISTRICT/PRECINCT: County Pct. 4

PROPOSAL:

Montgomery County Engineering Department is requesting the following amendments to Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP):

- a) Reclassify Mills Branch as a Collector street between Lake Houston Parkway and Ford Road (north-south),
- b) Delete Mills Branch between Ford Road (north-south) and Woodland Hills Drive,
- c) Add Collector street Woodbridge Village Drive between Ford Road (north-south) and Woodland Hills Drive; and
- d) Classify Ford Road (north-south) as a Collector street between Mills Branch and Ford Road (east-west) / Ricewood Drive.

APPLICANTS JUSTIFICATION and HISTORY:

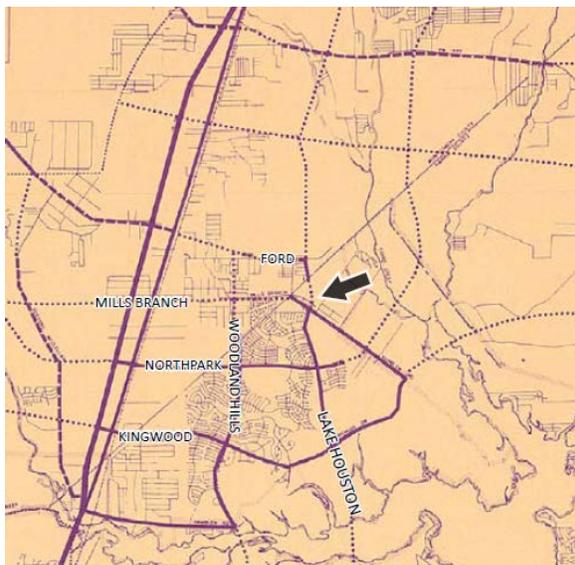
The proposed extension of Mills Branch Drive between West Lake Houston Parkway and US 59 is affected by existing residential properties that have developed in this area over many decades. There are a number of small subdivisions that were developed by plat or by deed and consist of larger, quarter-acre residential lots. Additionally, many of these subdivisions were developed prior to the implementation of a Major Thoroughfare Plan in this area. Therefore, the proposed alignment of Mills Branch will require extensive property acquisition to Woodland Hills Drive. Kingwood Drive and Northpark Drive are existing east-west Major Thoroughfares that provide direct access to US 59 and Loop 494 and will operate in conjunction with north-south Major Thoroughfares like Woodland Hills Drive and West Lake Houston Parkway. The proposed reclassification of a portion of Mills Branch Drive together with the addition of Woodbridge Village Drive and existing north-south Ford Road will provide for more viable and probable roadway network without affecting existing subdivisions.

Mills Branch Drive first appeared on the 1980 MTFP as “to be acquired” though the roadway alignment previously appeared on the 1976 MTFP as an unnamed Major Thoroughfare. The proposed right-of-way (ROW) formed an east-west running extension of Hamblen Road between West Lake Houston Parkway and the proposed extension of Kensington Drive.

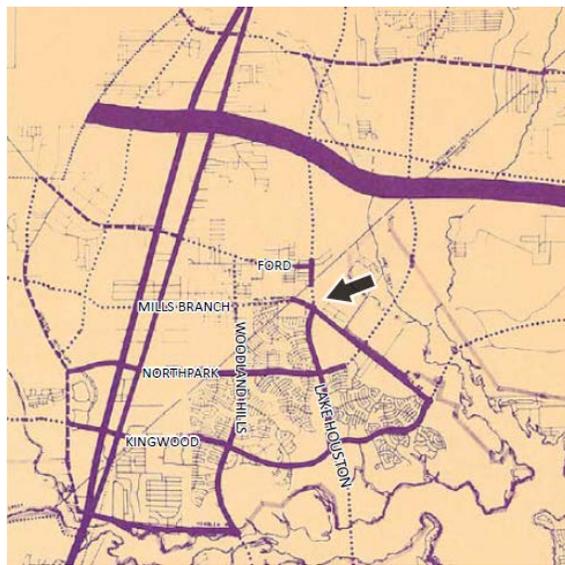
Ford Road was first named on the 1980 MTFP running roughly parallel and to the north of Mills Branch Drive. Ford Road was bound on the east by its intersection with an existing ROW which, in the 1983 MTFP, was first identified as West Lake Houston Parkway. West Lake Houston Parkway formed the boundary between the still “to be acquired” Mills Branch Drive on the west and the existing Hamblen Road on the east. However, the 1992 MTFP renamed Hamblen Road to Mills Branch Drive, such that the existing portion of the ROW fell entirely in Harris

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County, while the “to be acquired” section of Mills Branch Drive (to the west of Lake Houston Parkway) fell inside Montgomery County. The MTFPs of the 1990s showed an evolving West Lake Houston Parkway, with more sections of ROW being dedicated each year.



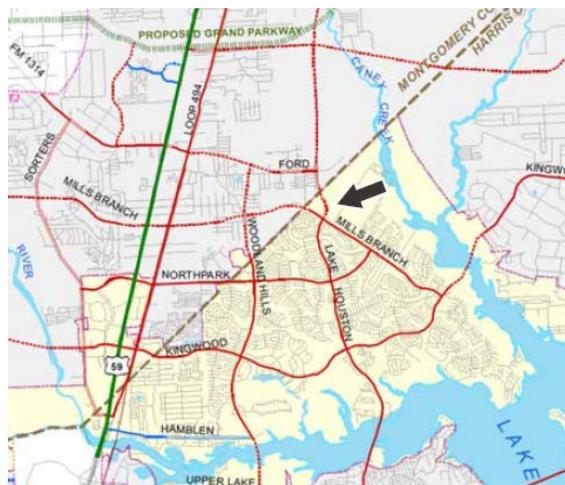
1980 MTFP



1984 MTFP



1992 MTFP



2012 MTFP

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Delete Major Thoroughfare Mills Branch Drive between Ford Road (north-south) and Woodland Hills Drive,
- Add 4-lane 80' ROW (east-west) Major Collector between Ford Road (north-south) and Woodland Hills Drive to align with Mace Drive,
- Reclassify Mills Branch Drive between West Lake Houston Parkway and Ford Road (north-south) as a 4-lane 80' ROW Major Collector (C-4-80), and
- Add Ford Road (north-south) as a 4-lane 80' ROW Major Collector street between Mills Branch Drive and Ford Road (east-west)/Ricewood Drive.

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Justification: The existing thoroughfare network in the study area is already over capacity. Kingwood Drive and Northpark Drive are 4-lane divided roadways that have an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of approximately 40,000 between US 59 and Woodland Hills Drive. Ford Road is a 2-lane roadway and has an ADT of approximately 12,000. As new residential subdivisions develop north of the Kingwood area, where much of the undeveloped acreage is available, it is critical to address the mobility needs in this area early since much of the traffic is going towards US 59. While it is critical to preserve east-west mobility in the area, solutions need to take into account the existing communities (i.e. Kingwood and Porter) in order to minimize negative impacts.

The current alignment of designated Mills Branch Drive would traverse several existing subdivisions that have developed in this area over many decades. The current alignment would require extensive property acquisition from the existing subdivision adjacent to Woodland Hills Drive and have a significant impact on the community. Realigning existing Mills Branch to Ford Road directs vehicular traffic towards US 59 and Loop 494 using Ford Road's existing segment. Additionally, the proposed east-west Major Collector will allow for the roadway to be designed in context to the proposed residential development of Woodbridge Village Subdivision and the existing subdivision along Mace Drive.

The proposed alignment of Mills Branch, west of Woodland Hills Drive, also impacts the existing residential subdivision. However, there are large undeveloped tracts that may begin developing in the near future. Those tracts, through submitting General Plans (a requirement for development per Chapter 42) will help the City more specifically determine the alignment of Mills Branch. As this area develops, staff will coordinate with Montgomery County Engineer's Office and Public Works and Engineering Department to identify a preferred alignment for Mills Branch Drive.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

- a) Delete Major Thoroughfare Mills Branch Drive between Ford Road (north-south) and Woodland Hills Drive,
- b) Add 4-lane 80' ROW (east-west) Major Collector between Ford Road (north-south) and Woodland Hills Drive to align with Mace Drive,
- c) Reclassify Mills Branch Drive between West Lake Houston Parkway and Ford Road (north-south) as a 4-lane 80' ROW Major Collector, and
- d) Add Ford Road (north-south) as a 4-lane 80' ROW Major Collector street between Mills Branch Drive and Ford Road (east-west)/Ricewood Drive.

Population & Employment Projections:

According to 2010 Census, Texas grew by 20% in ten years, to over 25 million people, recording about a quarter of the nation's overall growth. The rate of growth in Texas was twice the national average. Harris County is the most populous county (4 million) in Texas. Today, 2.1 million people live within the City of Houston and another 2 million live in the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Since 2000, the City of Houston added 146,000 people (8 %) to its population. Houston's ETJ however grew 35 % during the same time period.

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Houston and its ETJ's rich employment sector are home to more than 1.8 million jobs, making it the state's most populous and robust economic center. More than one million jobs are located within the City limits and are saturated within the City's eight major activity centers.

One of the greatest challenges to Houston's mobility is that by 2035 significant numbers of residents are projected to live outside the City limits in the ETJ; while the major employment growth is expected to occur within the City limits. These expanding imbalances increase distances between the population and employment centers and will result in more travel, greater travel time, and longer travel delays.

In addition to anticipated growth within the ETJ, an additional 550,000 new residents are expected within the current city limits. The most notable population growth is projected to occur inside Loop 610. It reflects efforts to create a dense urban core through mixed-use development strategies.

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) projects that over the next 25 years (2010 – 2035), the population within the study area* will increase from 21,089 to 47,993 (26,904 persons), or 128%. The number of persons per acre is projected to increase from approximately 1.5 to approximately 3.5. During the same period, H-GAC estimates that the total jobs in the subject area will increase from 3,763 to 5,292 (1,529 jobs), or 40%. The number of jobs per acre is projected to increase from approximately 0.3 to 0.4.

Expressed in percentages, the subject area's population growth is expected to be more than the Houston ETJ's (128% vs. 53%), and the area's job growth is less than the Houston ETJ's (41% vs. 85%).

Year	Population (Persons/Acre)	% Change	Households (Households/Acre)	% Change	Jobs (Jobs/Acre)	% Change
2010	1.5		0.5		0.3	
2015	1.8	18.5%	0.7	25.5%	0.3	0.9%
2020	2.1	18.1%	0.8	21.5%	0.3	-0.1%
2025	2.7	27.5%	1.1	33.8%	0.3	9.0%
2030	3.3	21.2%	1.4	29.7%	0.3	4.9%
2035	3.5	5.3%	1.5	9.1%	0.4	22.0%
Change (2010 to 2035)	1.9	127.6%	1.0	188.8%	0.1	40.6%
City of Houston Change (2010 to 2035)	1.6	30.4%	0.6	32.4%	1.3	32.9%
City of Houston ETJ Change (2010 to 2035)	1.3	53.4%	0.6	73.7%	0.6	85.6%

Source: H-GAC's 2035 Regional Growth Forecast

* Data represents population, jobs, and households in 4 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) encompassing approximately 13,839 acres around the proposed amendment. Population projections do not include projections for group housing.

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Land Use and Platting Activity:

The existing land use within the City Limits of Houston is predominantly single-family residential. Commercial and institutional uses are located along Northpark Drive and Woodland Hills Drive. The land use in Montgomery County ETJ is low density residential with non-residential uses along Ford Road, Loop 494 and US 59.

Platting activity for this area over the last five years has been predominantly single family residential in nature. The proposed single-family residential subdivision east of US 59 is Woodbridge Village, Woodridge Forest and Kings Mill subdivisions. Most of the commercial plats in the area have been proposed along US 59, Loop 494 and Northpark Drive.

Subdivision Plat Name	Action Date	Key Map	Land Use	Property Size (ac)	No. of Lots
Adams Oaks Sec 1 partial replat no 1	2-Feb-12	296M	SF Residential (public street)	4	2
Allestec Subdivision (DEF)	1-Dec-11	296Y	Commercial	1	
Auburn Trails at Oakhurst GP	11-Oct-12	296J	SF Residential (public street)	143	
Auburn Trails at Oakhurst Sec 10	3-Jan-13	296J	SF Residential (public street)	9	38
Auburn Trails at Oakhurst Sec 11	25-Oct-12	296J	SF Residential (public street)	8	39
Auburn Trails at Oakhurst Sec 2	17-Dec-09	296J	SF Residential (public street)	14	54
Auburn Trails at Oakhurst Sec 3	17-Dec-09	296J	SF Residential (public street)	11	48
Auburn Trails at Oakhurst Sec 4	21-Jul-11	296J	SF Residential (public street)	5	26
Auburn Trails at Oakhurst Sec 5	4-Aug-11	296J	SF Residential (public street)	17	55
Auburn Trails at Oakhurst Sec 6	19-Jan-12	296J	SF Residential (public street)	10	49
Auburn Trails at Oakhurst Sec 7	19-Jul-12	296J	SF Residential (public street)	6	24
Auburn Trails at Oakhurst Sec 8	19-Jul-12	296J	SF Residential (public street)	12	54
Auburn Trails Sec 9	12-Apr-12	296J	SF Residential (public street)	6	27
Greens at Oakhurst Sec 6 (2DEF)	17-Feb-11	296N	SF Residential (public street)	15	40
Gulf Coast Northpark Place Sec 1 replat no 1	28-May-09	296S	Unrestricted	23	
Insignia Kingwood Development	10-May-12	296W	Unrestricted	2	
Kings Mill GP	29-Mar-12	296X	General Plan	209	
Kings Mill Sec 5	1-Mar-12	296T	SF Residential (public street)	4	18
Kings Mill Sec 6	29-Mar-12	296X	SF Residential (public street)	15	76
Northpark Outlot Subdivision	14-Feb-13	296S	Commercial	3	
Northpark Place Reserve Subdivision	2-Aug-12	296S	Commercial	22	
Northpark Place Sec 3 partial replat no 1	3-Mar-11	296V		2	
Oakhurst Greens Sec 6	26-Apr-12	296J	SF Residential (public street)	15	40
Woodbridge Sec 1	9-Jun-11	296R	SF Residential (public street)	15	46
Woodbridge Village GP	9-Jun-11	296R	SF Residential (public street)	268	
Woodbridge Village Sec 4	16-Apr-09	296R	Unrestricted	3	
Woodridge Forest GP	21-Jun-12	296U	SF Residential (public street)	292	
Woodridge Forest Sec 1	19-Jul-12	296u	SF Residential (public street)	8	33

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Subdivision Plat Name	Action Date	Key Map	Land Use	Property Size (ac)	No. of Lots
Woodridge Forest Sec 2	15-Dec-11	296u	SF Residential (public street)	18	62
Woodridge Forest Sec 3	4-Aug-11	296U	SF Residential (public street)	20	70
Woodridge Forest Sec 6	16-Aug-12	296U	SF Residential (public street)	26	58

Right-Of-Way (ROW) Status:

Mills Branch Drive, within the City Limits of Houston, is a 4-lane Major Thoroughfare with 120' ROW. The current alignment is proposed to extend east-west between West Lake Houston and US 59. Existing Ford Road, between Loop 494 and Mills Branch, has an 80' ROW. Portions of the east-west Ford Road, west of Ricewood Drive, is classified as a Major Thoroughfare. Northpark Drive is a 4-lane Major Thoroughfare with a "sufficient width" status between Loop 494 and Woodland Hills Drive. Between US 59 and Loop 494, Northpark Drive is proposed to be 6-lanes. It currently functions as a 4-lane boulevard. Woodland Hills Drive is currently improved as a 4-lane thoroughfare approximately 0.45 mile north of Northpark Drive. Loop 494 is currently a 2-lane roadway, but is classified as 4-lane Major Thoroughfare with sufficient-width.

Street	From	To	Classification	Status	Direction
Mills Branch	Kingwood Drive	Houston City Limits	T-4-120	Sufficient width	NW-SE
Mills Branch	Houston City Limits	US 59	Major Thoroughfare	Proposed	N-S
Ford	Mills Branch	Ricewood	Local Street	80' ROW	N-S
Ford	Ricewood	Loop 494	Major Thoroughfare / Local Street	80' ROW - To be widened	E-W
Ricewood	Ford	W. Lake Houston	Major Thoroughfare	Sufficient width	E-W
Woodland Hills	Northpark	Houston City Limits	T-4-100	Sufficient width	N-S
Woodland Hills	Houston City Limits	Ford Road	Major Thoroughfare	Proposed	N-S
W. Lake Houston	Mills Branch	Ricewood	Major Thoroughfare	Proposed/ To be widened	N-S
Northpark	US 59	Loop 494	T-6-120	Sufficient width	E-W
Northpark	Loop 494	Woodland Hills	T-4-100	Sufficient width	E-W
Loop 494	Northpark	FM 1314	Major Thoroughfare	Sufficient width	N-S

Spacing:

The current alignment of Mills Branch Drive is located approximately mid-way between Ford Road/FM 1314 and Northpark Drive at an approximate spacing of one mile between east-west thoroughfares. North-south thoroughfares, which consist of Loop 494, Woodland Hills Drive and West Lake Houston Parkway, are also spaced evenly approximately 1.4 miles apart.

Street	From	To	Classification	Direction	Spacing
Mills Branch	Kingwood Drive	Northpark	T-4-120	NW-SE	1.5 mile
Mills Branch	Northpark	W. Lake Houston	T-4-120	NW-SE	1.0 mile
Mills Branch	W. Lake Houston	Woodland Hills	Major Thoroughfare	E-W	1.5 mile
Mills Branch	Woodland Hills	Loop 494	Major Thoroughfare	E-W	1.3 mile

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Street	From	To	Classification	Direction	Spacing
Mills Branch	Loop 494	US 59	Major Thoroughfare	E-W	0.35 mile
Ford/ Ricewood	W. Lake Houston	Woodland Hills	Major Thoroughfare	E-W	1.2 mile
Ford	Woodland Hills	Loop 494	Major Thoroughfare	E-W	1.1 mile
Northpark	US 59	Loop 494	T-6-120	E-W	0.3 mile
Northpark	Loop 494	Woodland Hills	T-4-100	E-W	1.8 mile
Northpark	Woodland Hills	W. Lake Houston	T-4-270	E-W	1.4 mile
Loop 494	Northpark	Mills Branch	Major Thoroughfare	Sufficient width	1.0 mile
Loop 494	Mills Branch	Ford Road	Major Thoroughfare	Sufficient width	1.0 mile
Loop 494	Ford Road	FM 1314	Major Thoroughfare	Sufficient width	0.3 mile
Woodland Hills	Northpark	Mills Branch	T-4-100	Sufficient width	1.5 mile
Woodland Hills	Mills Branch	Ford Road	Major Thoroughfare	N-S	0.8 mile
W. Lake Houston	Northpark	Mills Branch	Major Thoroughfare	N-S	1.2 mile
W. Lake Houston	Mills Branch	Ricewood/Ford	Major Thoroughfare	N-S	0.9 mile

Mobility:

Kingwood Drive, Northpark Drive and Ford Road are the primary east-west thoroughfare that currently exists in the general area. Kingwood Drive and Northpark Drive are 4-lane divided roadways that have an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of approximately 40,000. Ford Road is a 2-lane roadway and has an ADT of approximately 12,000 near Loop 494. As new residential subdivisions develop north of the Kingwood area, where much of the undeveloped acreage is available, it is critical to address the mobility needs in this area since much of the traffic is going towards US 59.

Currently an interchange does not exist at the proposed alignment of Mills Branch Drive at US 59. The alignment is spaced one mile north of Northpark Drive interchange at US 59. This spacing would allow for an interchange to be planned in the future at that location. Some other challenges to east-west mobility in the area include the Union Pacific Rail Road that runs along Loop 494 which allows for a small number of crossings, and existing subdivisions that have developed along the current alignment of Mills Branch Drive. While it is critical to preserve east-west mobility in the area, solutions need to take into account the existing communities (i.e. Kingwood and Porter) in order to minimize any negative impact.

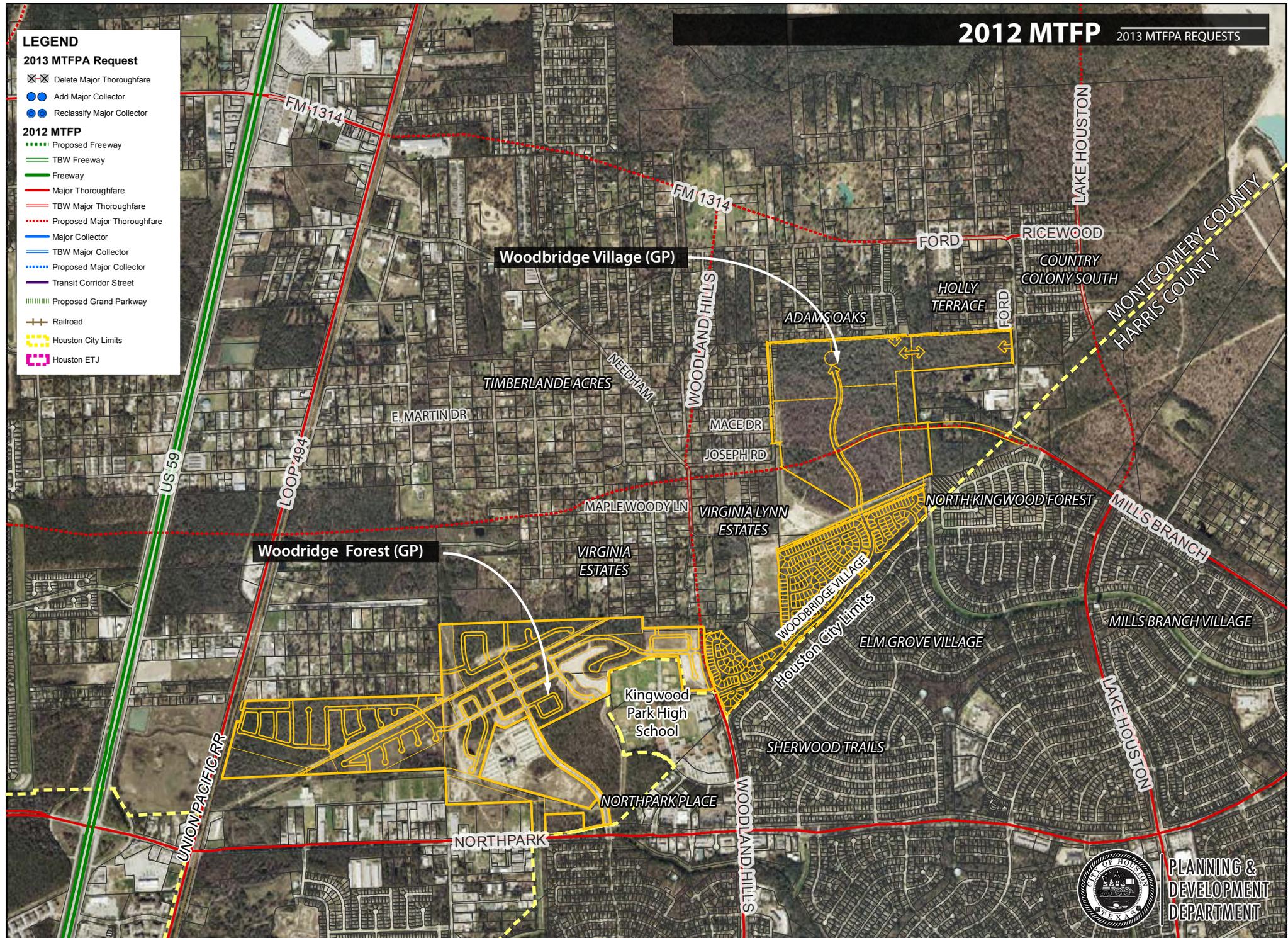
LEGEND

2013 MTFPA Request

- ✕ Delete Major Thoroughfare
- Add Major Collector
- Reclassify Major Collector

2012 MTFP

- Proposed Freeway
- TBW Freeway
- Freeway
- Major Thoroughfare
- TBW Major Thoroughfare
- Proposed Major Thoroughfare
- Major Collector
- TBW Major Collector
- Proposed Major Collector
- Transit Corridor Street
- Proposed Grand Parkway
- Railroad
- Houston City Limits
- Houston ETJ



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

2013 MTFPA REQUESTS

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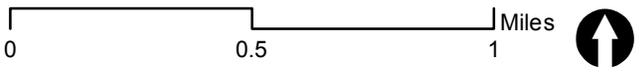
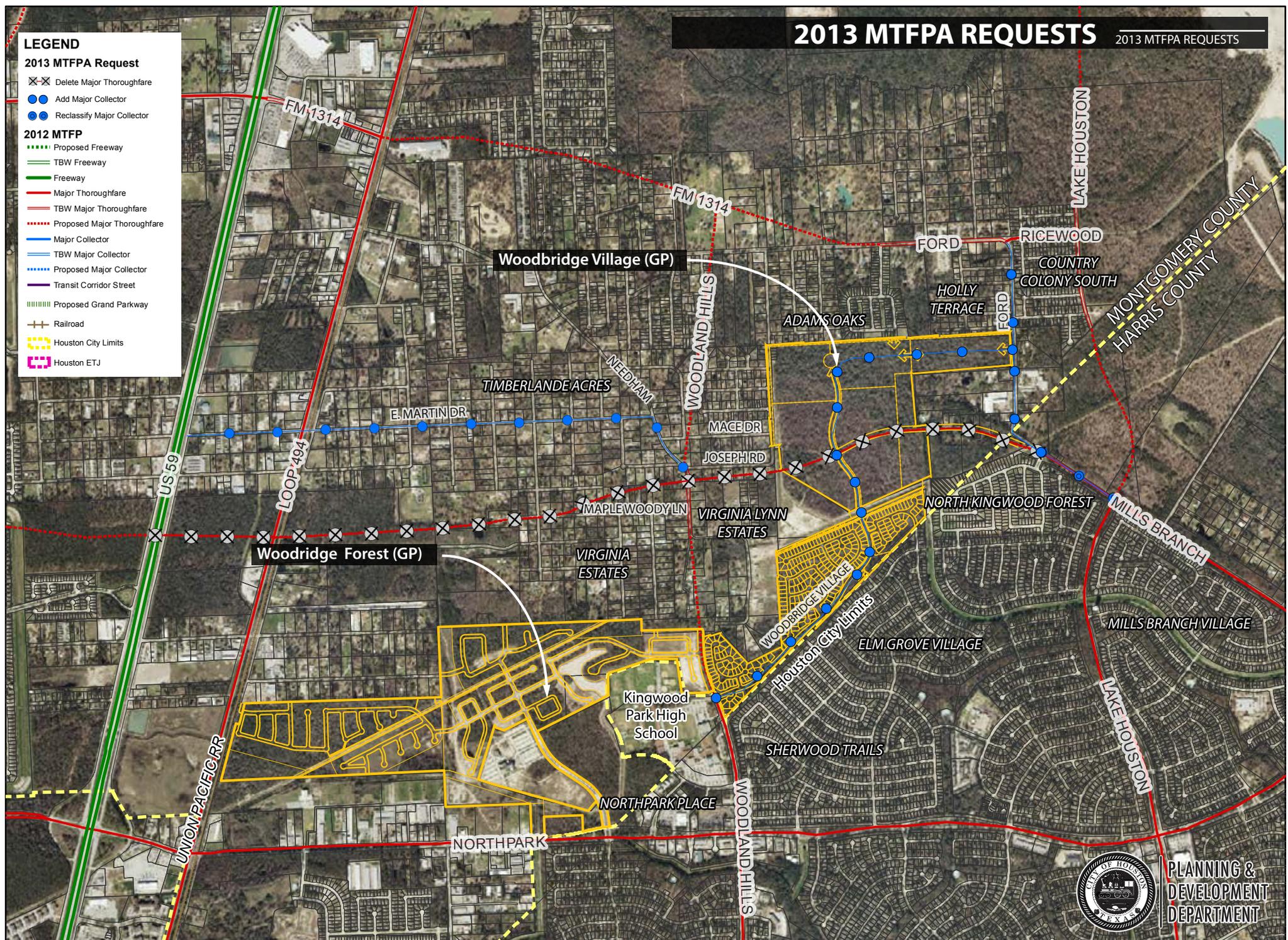
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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

2013 MTFPA RECOMMENDATION

2013 MTFPA REQUESTS

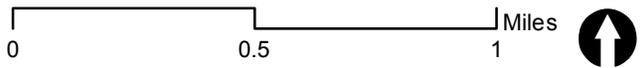
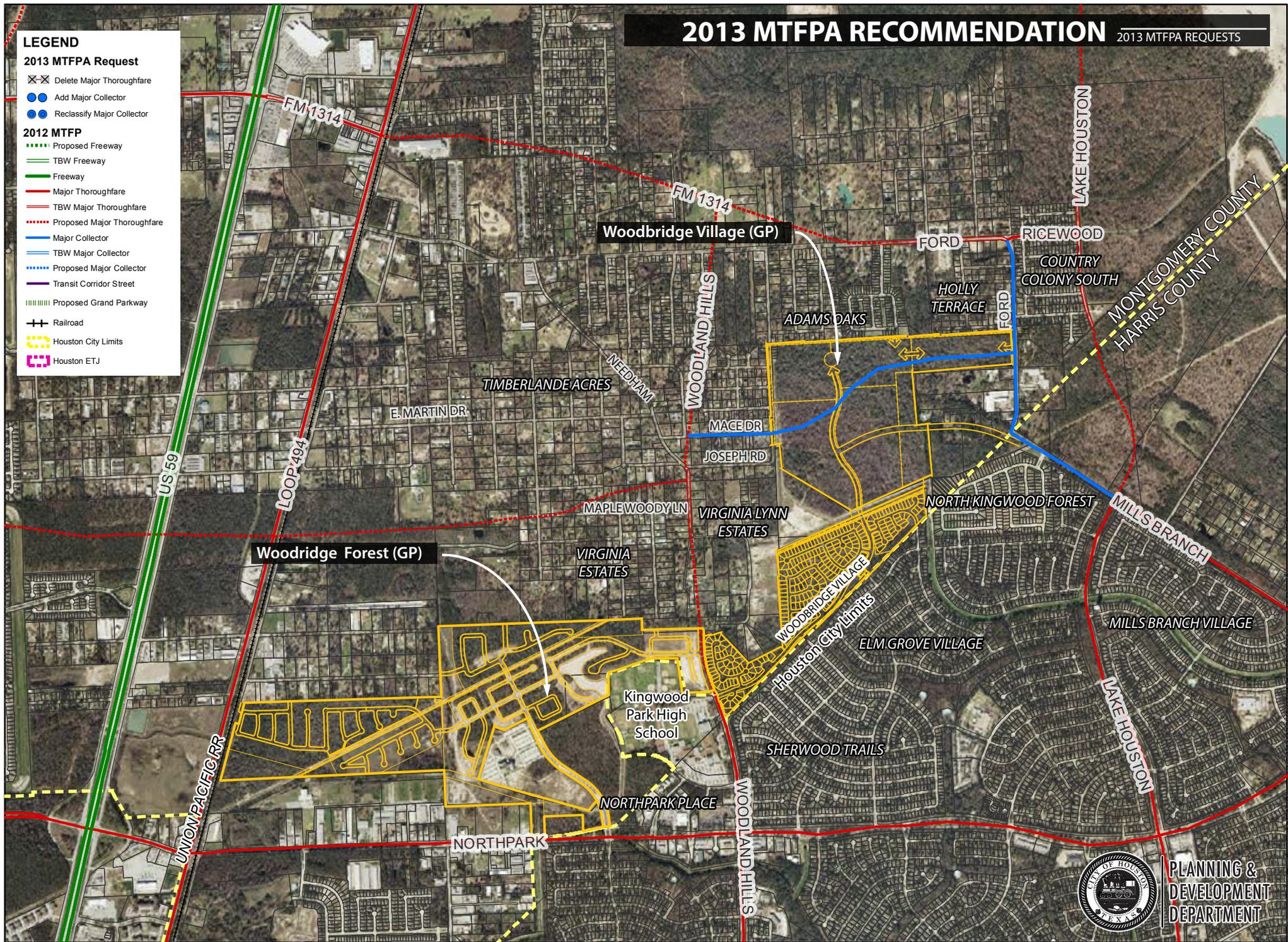
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