

ECONOMY



A thriving, resilient, and diverse economy

Assessment:

- Economic development and a thriving economy are at the forefront of many plans, as an aspiration of the city as a whole as well as for specific neighborhoods. Supporting the economy of Houston is paramount
- Greater Houston Partnership has been active in promoting economic development
- Tools available to implement economic development in the city include TIRZ and 380 Agreements, tax abatements, and the Downtown Living Initiative
- A gap exists in the ability to promote economic development in areas not covered by a TIRZ or 380 Agreement
- An overarching economic development and redevelopment strategy is needed for the city, including a range of tools to intervene in struggling markets to induce regeneration

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ECONOMY



A thriving, resilient, and diverse economy

Strategies:

- *Continue to implement UpSKILL Houston to develop skilled workforce*
- *Diversify innovation incubators*
- *Provide incentives to support environment for entrepreneurs and neighborhood, local businesses*
- *Identify and encourage emerging industries to ensure that Houston's economy is diversified and resilient to economic fluctuations*
- *Expand strategies for marketing Houston outside Texas and the U.S.*
- *Leverage management districts to drive economic development*
- *Examine neighborhoods' role as economic drivers*

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ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

ECONOMY

An exemplary climate for all businesses, with an entrepreneurial spirit and world-wide competitiveness



Assessment:

- Houston currently benefits from a thriving economy and is welcoming to a culture of entrepreneurialism
- The goal of expanding the city's competitive edge and encouraging further businesses development—both large and small—remains a goal throughout citywide and neighborhood-based plans
- City with No Limits (GHP) promotes image of Houston to attract talent and raise quality of life perceptions
- Few tools exist to support all levels of the economy including small, local, and minority-owned businesses.

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ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

ECONOMY

An exemplary climate for all businesses, with an entrepreneurial spirit and world-wide competitiveness



Strategies:

- *Create cooperative partnerships between government, education hubs, business and industry*
- *Provide financial incentives to small, local and minority businesses to encourage economic development in underserved or developing markets, and to encourage economic diversity*
- *Coordinate with and support the UH Small Business Development Center to connect businesses to SBA grants and programs, like the Microloan Program, facilitate a mentoring program for young entrepreneurs, and provide other business counseling services*
- *Support local incubators and R&D efforts at UH and other institutions to foster entrepreneurship and growth in technology related businesses*
- *Explore ways to expand access to capital for entrepreneurs*

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ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

ECONOMY

Job opportunities that support a good standard of living and financial stability



Assessment:

- Job creation and stability is a theme throughout both citywide and neighborhood specific planning involving economic development, education, and equity
- Jobs are envisioned to support self-sufficiency and quality of life and include the skills of a educated, skilled, competent workforce with long-term sustainability
- Several TIRZ plans include the development of high quality jobs as a goal
- UpSKILL Houston (Greater Houston Partnership) is preeminent program developed to provide “middle-skills” job training and match candidates with area employers
- More emphasis is needed on business retention

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ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

ECONOMY

Job opportunities that support a good standard of living and financial stability



Strategies:

- *Connect quality of life in development to ability to attract and retain creative workforce*
- *Continue to implement UpSKILL Houston to develop skilled workforce*
- *Centralize services available for people to up skill their workforce*
- *Create incentives and encourage to motivate business to engage in the social/aesthetic goals*
- *Leverage the presence of community colleges in workforce training*
- *Develop incentive programs to retain existing businesses*

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PUBLIC SERVICES

An affordable, multi-modal transportation network providing convenient access throughout the region for people and goods



Assessment:

- Transportation is a high-priority including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, port, freight, goods movement, transit, and improved roadways. Most funding and tools concentrated on vehicular thoroughfares
- Gap exists between true complete streets policy (current *Complete Streets Executive Order* is not binding policy) and citywide roadway improvements. *Rebuild Houston* is a start but interventions are focused on most dire and overlook at-risk communities
- TIRZs have been successful in improving roadways, but only when ample funding is generated
- The city needs to focus on proactive neighborhood-based mobility improvements and equitable distribution of funds

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ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

PUBLIC SERVICES

An affordable, multi-modal transportation network providing convenient access throughout the region for people and goods



Strategies:

- *Coordinated land use and transportation to link current and future centers with transit, future bikeways, and roadway improvements*
- *Neighborhood / Subarea planning including identification of needed transportation improvements and link to citywide plan for transit, bikeways and trails, and pedestrian (sidewalk) linkages.*
- *Synchronized traffic controlled system*
- *Use of federal grants and public/ private partnership*

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ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

PUBLIC SERVICES

Ample, efficient, and well-maintained infrastructure



Assessment:

- Providing ample and well-maintained infrastructure is stated as a goal throughout citywide and neighborhood plans
- Many tools are available to provide necessary infrastructure throughout the city but the majority are outdated
- New tools and techniques not included are green infrastructure, low impact development, standards and shift to proactive infrastructure planning that preserves resources, and is more fiscally beneficial to the city

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PUBLIC SERVICES

Ample, efficient, and well-maintained infrastructure



Strategies:

- *Adopt Complete Streets standards*
- *Revisit TOD planning to incorporate METRO System Reimagining Plan*
- *Strengthen Transit Corridor Ordinance to encourage improvements to the public realm and reduce deferred maintenance of sidewalks*
- *Update stormwater and drainage criteria to incorporate and require Low-Impact Development (LID) best management practices (BMPs).*
- *Conduct nexus study needed to determine appropriate developer exactions to pay for roads, parks, stormwater, affordable housing and other critical infrastructure*

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PUBLIC SERVICES

Fiscally responsible, accountable, and responsive public services and civic investments



Assessment:

- Ensuring fiscal responsibility and a strong tax base is important at city and neighborhood level. Many TIRZ plans are aimed at achieving a robust tax base to benefit its local community of interest
- Areas not benefited by a TIRZ or Management District are not sufficiently supported
- Currently no tools are available to support this vision aspiration. An overarching city policy is needed to guide Houston towards a fiscally-sound future driven by proactive infrastructure development and investing in existing communities

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ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

PUBLIC SERVICES

Fiscally responsible, accountable, and responsive public services and civic investments



Strategies:

- *Demonstrate fiscal impact of suburban sprawl, growth at fringes for city finances*
- *Conduct nexus study needed to determine appropriate developer exactions to pay for roads, parks, stormwater, affordable housing and other critical infrastructure*
- *Need an accountability system for 311/public service calls*
- *Incentive based budgeting based on response time*
- *Require fiscal sustainability plan for Public Works projects*

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ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

PUBLIC SERVICES

Active regional cooperation and collaboration among governments, community leaders, and residents



Assessment:

- Regional coordination is called for in numerous policy plans, primarily those created to guide the city and region as a whole. Coordination is imperative with infrastructure, and disaster preparedness
- H-GAC provides guiding policy but is not binding for Houston. Tools are needed to link regional initiatives and concerns with the development priorities of Houston, and throughout neighborhoods
- Greater Houston Partnership and Region 4 are strong entities in promoting regional coordination for economic development and education

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PUBLIC SERVICES

Active regional cooperation and collaboration among governments, community leaders, and residents



Strategies:

- *Encourage diversity and inclusivity in regional coordination and outreach*
- *Create clear policies for coordination and collaboration to withstand political fluctuations*
- *Update citywide and regional plans (i.e. Parks, Mobility, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Stormwater) every 5 to 10 years to ensure they adjust for the evolving city, region, and capture new best practices*

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