



## *Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Application Renewal*

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:

- a Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Renewal Application
- 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.

Below are the five criteria that renewal applications and their proposed boundaries must meet:

1. contain at least one blockface, but not more than two opposing blockfaces;
2. contain all lots on each blockface;
3. form a contiguous area;
4. have at least 60% of the lots developed for or restricted to single-family use (exclusive of land used for a park, library, place of worship, or school); and
5. contain at least one lot that does not have a minimum building line established by deed restrictions

A complete application must include all items listed in the submittal requirements on page 6 of this packet. A complete application package must be mailed or hand-delivered during standard business hours to:

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

A step by step guide is provided in this packet. Contact the Community Sustainability division at (832) 393-6600 with any questions or to schedule a meeting prior to submitting an application. More information can be found on [www.houstonplanning.com](http://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: Frequently Asked Questions*

## **Special Minimum Building Line Block: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is a Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) application, what does it mean and who created the boundary?**

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

### **What if my building line is less than the Special Minimum Building Line that is designated?**

For example, if a 15foot Special Minimum Building Line is established for your block, no structures will be permitted to be built with a building line of less than 15 feet. If you currently own a lot with a structure that has a building line that is less than the Minimum Building Line there is no penalty, however, future building lines would need to meet the established Special Minimum Building Line.

### **What can I build on my lot?**

There are no land use restrictions with a Special Minimum Building Line ordinance. Also note that this application does not determine the physical design of buildings, aside from how far they are built from a front property line. 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 building line or deed restriction will be applied to the property.

### **Can I add a porch or rebuild my home/commercial/multifamily property?**

Yes, if you have an existing single family lot you are allowed to rebuild, improve or add to your home. If you have an existing commercial or multifamily lot you are allowed to rebuild, improve or add to the building. Please note that deed restrictions may already be imposed on your neighborhood. In those cases the more restrictive of either the proposed lot size or deed restrictions will be applied to the property.

### **What will happen to my commercial/multifamily lot if the minimum lot size application is approved?**

If you have a commercial/multifamily lot it will remain commercial/multifamily. If you decide to add to any building, any additions that are created would need to meet the Special Minimum Building Line.

### **What happens next in the application process?**

An applicant for the Special Minimum Building Line Block will submit a completed application packet. You may choose to support this application by signing the Evidence of Support page prior to its submittal. Planning and Development Department staff will review the application and 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 allowing property owners to file a written protest with the Planning and Development Department. If a SMBLB application receives less than 51% support when it is submitted to the Planning and Development Department, or if there is a protest from a property owner within the block, the application will be referred to the Houston Planning Commission.

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



# *Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Application: Frequently Asked Questions*

## **Special Minimum Building Line Block: Frequently Asked Questions (continued)**

### **What happens at Planning Commission?**

At Planning Commission, there will be a public hearing where you will have an opportunity to speak. The Planning Commission will approve or deny the application. If approved, the application will be forwarded to City Council. If the application is denied at Planning Commission or City Council, the application may not be resubmitted for one year.

To approve an application, Planning Commission must find that:

- The application area has an identifiable lot-size character;
- The identifiable lot-size character of the application area will be preserved;
- There is sufficient support by the property owners;
- The application meets all submittal requirements as defined by city ordinance;

### **What happens after City Council?**

If City Council approves the application, the Special Minimum Building Line Block designation will apply immediately. The ordinance shall be effective for up to 40 years.

### **How is the Special Minimum Building Line calculated?**

The City calculates the Special Minimum Building Line by using the following steps:

- 1) Listing the building lines in order of largest to smallest;
- 2) Express each lot's building line as a percentage of the total sum of the building lines within the proposed special minimum building line block by dividing the building line of each lot by the sum of the combined building lines of all lots within the entire special minimum building line block.
- 3) Add the areas expressed as a percentage in the order of the list until the cumulative sum of the percentages reaches 70 percent or greater, or in the case of a special minimum building line block within a historic district designated by city council, 60 percent or greater.
- 4) The building line of the lot at which the cumulative sum reaches the percentage required by item (3) of this section is the special minimum building line requirement; and
- 5) This building line is the special minimum building line.

<b>Building Line Rank</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Building Line in feet</b>	<b>% of all B.L.'s</b>	<b>Cumulative %</b>
1	1611 Dachshund	23	14.3%	14.3%
2	1603 Dachshund	20	14.3%	28.6%
3	1613 Dachshund	18	14.3%	42.9%
4	1607 Dachshund	18	14.3%	57.1%
<b>5</b>	<b>1609 Dachshund</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>
6	1601 Dachshund	15	14.3%	85.7%
7	1605 Dachshund	13	14.3%	100.0%
<b>The fifth largest building line in this example is 18 feet. This would be the new Special Building Line for this street.</b>				

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

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) Renewal 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. At the meeting the applicant should bring a map with the proposed renewal boundary and a copy of any existing deed restrictions. To schedule a pre-submittal meeting, contact Community Sustainability at (832) 393-6600.
- **Step 2: Submit a Complete Renewal Application**  
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. The application package can be mailed through US Postal Service or hand delivered to the Planning and Development Department. 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 provide an explanation of any necessary revisions.
- **Step 3: Application Review and Notification Signs**  
An accepted renewal application will be posted on the Planning and Development Department's website within two (2) business days. Planning and Development staff will review the application, and within 30 business days, determine if the application meets eligibility requirements. After it has been determined that the application meets eligibility requirements staff will notify the applicant(s) and send an instruction letter for the posting of notification signs within the renewal application boundary area. The applicant will have 10 days from when they receive the instruction letter to post the signs.
- **Step 4: 30-Day Protest Period**  
Within 15 days of receiving a complete renewal application, the Planning & Development Department will send 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 designation. 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 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 Commission will be forwarded on to City Council. Applications denied by the Commission will not be forwarded to City Council.
- **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. 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 that City Council renew the SMBLB. If the Commission recommends that City Council renew the SMBLB, the Planning and Development Director will refer the application to City Council. If the application is denied, the decision of the Commission will be final.
- **Step 7: City Council Action**  
City Council will consider all Special Minimum Building Line Block renewal applications that are recommended for approval by the Planning Commission. City Council action to approve or deny the designation renewal is final. Persons wanting to address City Council during the public comment session of the meeting should contact the City Secretary at (832) 393-1100 or [citysecretary@houstontx.gov](mailto:citysecretary@houstontx.gov).

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



# Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Renewal Application

## 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 Lot Size? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the location of the application boundary. (Example: "North side of Golden Retriever Drive between Boxer and Schnauzer Streets" or "Block 15, Lots 1-5, in Cocker Spaniel Subdivision")

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: \_\_\_\_\_



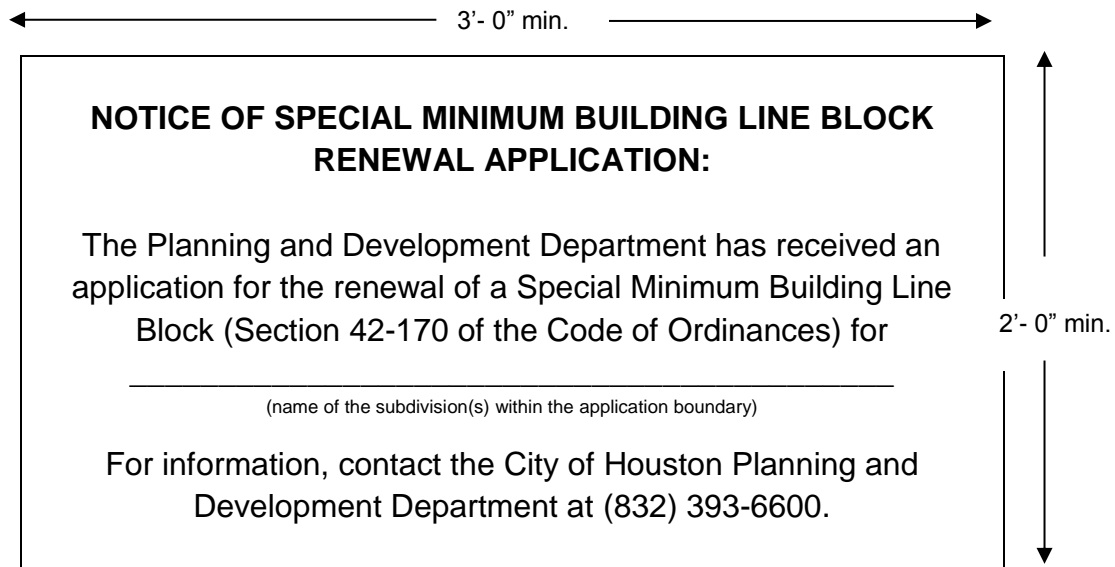
# Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Renewal Application: Submittal Requirements & Signs

Submittal Requirements (Please check and complete)	
Completed application form (page 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of deed restrictions, if applicable***	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sample of Notification Sign (page 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Map or sketch showing the address, land use and size of all lots within boundary area	<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 lot 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.

## 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 proposed 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 of 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 Renewal: 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 designation, as well as details related to the support of the application. Please see the page below to request this information from our department's Public Information Office. You can also find this form at www.houstonplanning.com/Forms/.



Planning & Development Department

Public Information Office
611 Walker Street / 6th Floor Houston, TX 77002

FAX (832) 393-6661

Email Patricia.Benavides-Foley@houstontx.gov

Public Information Request Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_, under the Public Information Act request

(Please Print Name Clearly)

the following documents:

Five horizontal lines for listing requested documents.

NOTE: The Planning and Development Department does not have records relating to building permits, code violations, flooding, property inspections or certificates of occupancy. Please direct those requests to the Public Works and Engineering Department.

REQUESTOR INFORMATION

Must be filled out completely

PLEASE PRINT

Customer/Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Requestor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: The Planning Department has 10 working days to respond to your request and will notify you in writing of the reasonable date and time when records will be available along with the estimated cost.