

MAJOR MILESTONES

**HISTORIC
DESIGN
MANUAL**



**NEW LAND
DEVELOPMENT
RULES**



**PLAT
TRACKER**



**MOBILITY
PLANS**



**NEW
OFF STREET
PARKING
RULES**

Dear Houstonians,

Our Fiscal Year 2013 Annual Report, “Major Milestones,” celebrates remarkable achievements of the Planning and Development Department. It was an active and successful year that not only brought about changes to our business practices, but also changes that will affect Houston.

Amendments to major ordinances were approved – *Chapter 26, the Off-Street Parking Ordinance* and *Chapter 42, the Land Subdivision Ordinance*. Both were updated to reflect new standards and development practices that support our growing community while ensuring adequate protections for our established neighborhoods.

The Department launched the long awaited update to our online plat submittal system named *Plat Tracker*. It is a game changer for how applicants submit plats and how review is handled along with increased transparency for the public to view the upcoming plats. This is a milestone we are particularly proud of as the work was done in house by a very dedicated team.

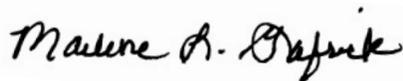
The Department’s increased focus on mobility meant the completion of some and the initiation of other *mobility plans* for specific areas in order to define both short-term and long-term projects. This is already having results and helping the City get ahead of transportation challenges related to growth.

The Department provided new products designed to provide extensive information on how to restore historic structures. These included the *Historic Preservation Fair* and the *Historic Design Manual*.

The Department also hit major milestones related to community education by producing 27 *Community U* events, covering information from deed restrictions to how to utilize new neighborhood lot character tools available with the adoption of Chapter 42 amendments.

The Planning and Development staff all contributed to creation and implementation of these and other accomplishments. This was an amazing year. I’m very proud of our staff and the work we do every day for Houstonians. We are pleased to have achieved these “Major Milestones.”

Sincerely,



Marlene L. Gafrick

Director



MILESTONES IN DEVELOPMENT

After six years of work, City Council approved the amendments to Chapter 42 and Chapter 10 of the Code of Ordinances.

These amendments provide additional resources for neighborhoods to manage their future, make the City more competitive with the suburbs outside the City limits, improve development standards that lead to a better quality built product, increase opportunity for single-family residential, and eliminate confusion/discrepancies contained within the existing code.

Changes were also approved to the City's Off-Street Parking Ordinance, found in Chapter 26 of the Code of Ordinances, largely untouched since it was first adopted in 1989.

The primary benefits includes rules that require and incentivize bike parking for new businesses, the ability for an area to establish a Special Parking Area with alternative standards to account for unique parking demands, reduced parking requirements for designated historic buildings and greater shared parking options between uses to reduce the total number of parking spaces needed. The Ordinance includes revised parking standards for many other uses to more accurately reflect today's needs.

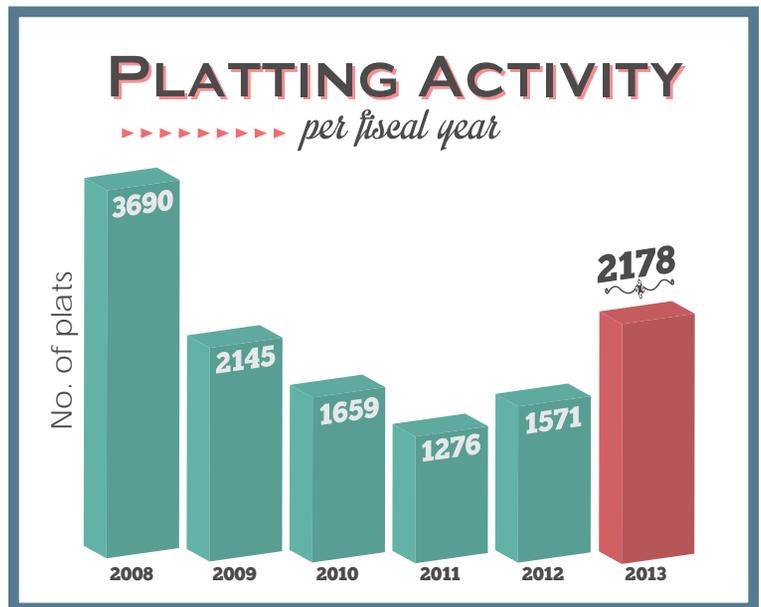
PLATTRACKER

The Planning and Development Department developed and launched a new online plat application and review system known as Plat Tracker. www.HoustonPlatTracker.org. It is a web based program that allows land planners, civil engineers, and surveyors to submit subdivision plat applications for review and presentation to the Houston Planning Commission.

The application tracks the status of a plat in real time which allows transparency with applicants, the public, and other stakeholders about the latest proposed developments throughout the city. Plat Tracker is also connected to the My City website.

In FY 2013, the Department:

- » Reviewed 879 Development plats
- » Reviewed 2,178 Subdivision plats
- » Reviewed 15,137 plans
- » Recorded 1,171 plats



MILESTONES IN MOBILITY

The Department continued its focus on mobility planning, much of which is done in conjunction with the Public Works and Engineering Department and the Houston-Galveston Area Council. A series of sub-regional mobility plans being developed that will identify short, medium and long range projects intended to promote better mobility, and to consider and develop a multi modal classification for streets within the study area.

The results have led to proposed changes in our major thoroughfare classifications and further amendments to our Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan.

Projects Completed in FY 2013:

- Washington Avenue Livable Center Grant Study
- Inner West Loop Mobility Study
- East End Mobility Study
- Urban Houston Framework Study
- Mobile application for Consolidated Transportation Plan
- Review of 55 proposed Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan amendments

Projects Started in FY 2013:

- Heights-Northside Mobility Study
- Northwest Mobility Study
- Greater West Houston Subregional Planning Initiative
- Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant
- Regional Transportation Plan in conjunction with H-GAC
- Texas Medical Center Study

MILESTONES IN GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

System developers in the Department's GIS division developed the Plat Tracker web based system. Plat Tracker includes GIS solutions that improve and quicken the planning business process, which is all made possible by requiring a computer aided design (CAD) standard file. Processing the CAD files into GIS makes proposed land development viewable by citizens quicker and more easily than ever before. It allows automation of other GIS data, which reduces human error and quickens the review process.

Plat Tracker was awarded a Public Technology Institute Solutions Award in the Technology Category for cities with population over 750,000.

Other GIS projects in FY 2013 included:

- » Integrated GIS personnel from the Houston Emergency Center (HEC) into Planning in order to improve efficiencies in 911 addressing and HEC GIS systems
- » The modification/creation of 53,540 addresses and 17,704 road segments

The Public Technology Institute Solutions award presented to the GIS staff for their work with Plat Tracker.



MILESTONES IN COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

Community Tools

With the adoption of Chapter 42, the provision allowing neighborhoods to apply for tools to establish a minimum lot size or special building line are now available citywide. The ordinance also established a provision to create a minimum lot size area that covers up to 400 homes, or 500 homes in a platted subdivision.

Staff conducted 23 Community U training sessions across Houston to help communities understand how to apply for the new protections.

In FY 2013:

- » The Department reviewed nine Minimum Lot Size applications and one Special Building Line application.
- » The Department processed 13 new Prohibited Yard Parking (PYP) applications.
- » The Department produced one city-wide Community U conference and two local deed restrictions training sessions.



Community U! Conference was half-day event where residents learned about ideas and resources to improve their community.

Growth, Trend Analysis and Special Projects

The Department completed a number of special projects that included the release of demographic profiles of 11 council districts and updated demographic information for 88 super neighborhood areas. The Department completed the Loop 610 study that provided a snapshot of the forty-two mile loop around the traditional inner city of Houston. The report included information on housing, ethnicity, age, jobs, education, income, land use, population and a few other points.

Projects related to growth in FY 2013:

- » The Department facilitated strategic partnership agreements (SPAs) for the limited purpose annexation of 24 utility districts. There are currently 310 SPAs with 226 utility districts that have generated more than \$214 million for the City of Houston. The SPAs represent 6.5% of all sales taxes collected for the city.
- » The Department facilitated one full purpose annexation (The Commons at Lake Houston) adding 148 acres to the full purpose city boundary.
- » The Department assisted in the execution of more than 93 Industrial District agreements for properties in the Houston Ship Channel with annual revenues of \$14 million.

Historic Preservation

The Germantown Historic District was designated as the City's 20th Historic District. Germantown is a small wedge of land located east of Woodland Heights to the west, I-45. Of the 71 structures in the district, 83 percent are over 50 years of age and classified as contributing to the district.

The Department published an online how-to guide for the renovation of historic properties.

The Historic Preservation Manual provides information on how to modify or maintain a landmark or property located within a historic district; navigate the Certificate of Appropriateness process and the criteria used to evaluate and approve your historic property enhancement project and learn about the City of Houston's Historic Districts.

The Department held its first Historic Preservation Fair. The Fair provided residents and professionals the opportunity to interact and discuss challenges related to caring for older structures.

Topics covered alterations and additions to historic properties, repairing historic windows, historic district and landmark designation process,

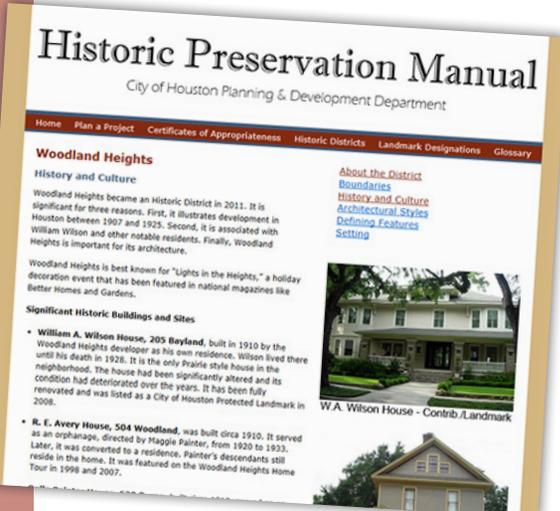
historic site tax exemptions, and appropriate new construction.

In FY 2013:

- » 19 new applications for Landmarks/Protected Landmarks were reviewed by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission. There are a total of 249 Historic Landmarks and 103 Protected Historic Landmarks designed by Ordinance.
- » The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission reviewed 395 Certificate of Appropriateness agenda items.

Planning & Development Department now has plaques available for purchase by owners of historic landmarks and protected landmarks.

Mayor Annise Parker holds the new plaque for historic protected landmarks.



HOUSTON PLANNING COMMISSION



Commissioners pictured left to right front row are Lisa Clark; Sonny Garza, Vice Chairman; Mark Kilkenny, Chairman; Marlene Gafrick, Planning Director and Susan Alleman. Back row: Linda Porras-Pirtle; Kenneth J. Bohan; Shaukat Zakaria; Eileen Subinsky; Raymond Anderson, P.E., Harris County representative; Truman C. Edminster III; Richard W. Stolleis, P.E., Fort Bend County representative; Antoine Bryant; Keiji Asakura; Paul Nelson; Mark Mooney, P.E. Montgomery County representative; James R. Jard; Marty Stein; Blake Tartt III and Algenita Davis. Not Pictured are Brandon Dudley and Fernando Brave

HOUSTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Commissioners pictured from left to right are Deputy Director Michael Schaffer, Secretary; Jorge Garcia-Herreros; Edie Archer; John Cosgrove; Phoebe Tudor, Chair; Minnette Boesel, Mayors Assistant for Cultural Affairs, Romulo Tim Cisneros; R. Maverick Welsh III; Vice Chairman, Ann Collum; Charles Stava; and David Bucek. Not pictured are Anna Mod, Debra Blacklock-Sloan, Rob D. Hellyer, Paul Homeyer and Douglas Elliott



HOUSTON TOWER COMMISSION



Commissioners pictured from left to right are Antonio M. Salinas; Christy B. Smidt; Rodney Louis Jones; Deputy Director Michael Schaffer; Rob Todd, Chair; John Melcher; Ignacio Osorio and Dr. Shin-Shem Steven Pei



PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT