Annexations in Houston

Or

How we grew to 667 square miles in 175 years

Presented by the City of Houston
Planning & Development Department
1836. The Allen brothers founded a new city at the confluence of Buffalo and White Oak Bayous.
147 swampy acres. In the middle of nowhere.
The following slides illustrate how the city has grown into the fourth largest city in America.
But first, a note about the roadway network as shown on these maps. It is there for reference purposes only. Obviously, none of these roads existed at this time.
In 60 years, the city had grown to approximately 9 square miles and had a population of 44,000.
The population expanded to 77,000 and in 1913, in its first expansion beyond the central core, the city annexed area along the ship channel.
This area includes 2,500 feet on either side of the ship channel for the purposes of controlling navigation and wharfage.
The city also annexed the former municipality called The Heights – named that because it stood more than 23 feet higher than the rest of Houston.
1920s

Entering its first boom years, the city annexed more territory to serve the ship channel and the port.
That included the former cities of Magnolia Park and Harrisburg, the birthplace of Texas.
It also annexed the former city of Independence Heights – the first African-American incorporated city in Texas.
During the 30s, the city didn’t annex much land at all.
But, even so, the population swelled to nearly 400,000 people.
The 40s were a different story.
1940s
This decade kicks off three decades of expansion through annexation.
Within 25 years, the City will annex enough territory to double its size – twice!
1940s

Including:

- the Houston Municipal Airport
1940s

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• Houston Gardens and Kashmere Gardens
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• the Houston Municipal Airport
• Pleasantville
• Houston Gardens and Kashmere Gardens
• Oak Forest and eastern Spring Branch.
The population of Houston at the end of this decade is nearly 600,000.
And, in the 50s:
- Sunnyside and Central Southwest
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- Sunnyside and Central Southwest
- Northshore and East Houston
And, in the 50s:

- Sunnyside and Central Southwest
- Northshore and East Houston
- the rest of Spring Branch
In 1956, the city conducted its largest single annexation.
That year, the city annexed 108 square miles – much of it city-owned property that would be flooded to create Lake Houston.
By the end of the decade, Houston was 350 square miles with nearly 1 million residents.
Several important annexations took place in the 1960s.
1960s

- a new international airport north of town.
1960s

- a new international airport north of town.
- Ellington Air Force Base south of town.
And, to protect the water supply, it annexed land around Lake Houston – including much of the new Kingwood and Atascocita developments.
1960s

Area that it would dis-annex less than 15 years later (and then re-annex Kingwood in the 1990s.)
1970s
In the 70s, the city annexed:

- Addicks and Barker reservoirs
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- Addicks and Barker reservoirs
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- and the Clear Lake area
As Houston entered the 1980s, the population exceeded 1.5 million and its size was 557 sq. miles.
Throughout the 80s, annexation was considerably more limited than it had been in the past.
That didn’t stop people from moving here. By the 1990 Census, the city’s population had grown to 1.6 million residents.
In 1995 and 1996, the city conducted its most controversial annexation when it re-annexed the Kingwood area.
1990s

That annexation brought the city’s size to 579 square miles and nearly 1.7 million residents.
Since 2000

In 1999, Texas law governing annexations changed (partly as a result of the Kingwood annexation) and general purpose annexation became more difficult.
Since then, the city has only conducted two general purpose annexations – both were requested by the property owners.
Since 2000

Instead, it has completed 196 “limited purpose” annexations.
Since 2000

A Limited Purpose Annexation is one in which the city annexes territory through an agreement with the utility district that provides water and sewer service to that territory.
Since 2000

A limited array of services are provided by the city and no property taxes are collected.
Since 2000

Instead, a sales tax is levied, the revenue from which the city typically splits with the district. The annexation usually only includes commercial property.
Since 2000

By the end of 2012, the city has grown to 662 square miles.
Since 2000

But, despite slower growth in size, the city’s population continues to grow. In 2012, more than 2.1 million people called Houston home.
For further information on annexation
Visit our website at www.houstonplanning.com