ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

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
ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

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
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.
**ASSESSMENT/ GAPS**

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

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**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
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.
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
ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

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
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
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
ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

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
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.
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
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.
ASSESSMENT/ GAPS

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