

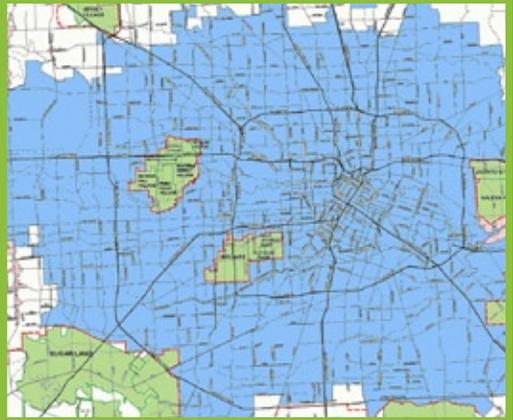


# ***PLANNING AHEAD***

***Fiscal Year 2006 Annual Report***

***City of Houston***

***Planning & Development Department***





Pictured above top, back row, left to right: Shirley Hyatt, Leah Hayes, Allen Parker, Paul Voltz, Debra Kirk, Truscenia Garrett, Donna Hill-Wiley; front row, l to r: Suzy Hartgrove, Yadhira Quiroz, Patricia Benavides, and Peggy Slater.

Pictured above bottom, left to right: Maribel Torres, Marcia Wilson, Roger Hamilton, Alex Garcia, Lydia King. Front row, left to right: Kathryn Morgan, Tracey Norman, and Lawrence Boyee.

## Managing and Directing the **Department**

Managing the day to day operations and providing administrative support of the Department is no small task. Handling purchasing, payroll, personnel services, accounting and budgeting falls under the auspices of the Management Services staff.

The Director's office works diligently to ensure the Department functions efficiently and effectively, providing program direction and support, handling communications, managing and creating web site content and community outreach.

### **Accomplishments** for FY 2006

- Trained on the Enterprise Resource Planning project that will allow the City to modernize and standardize its financial, payroll, materials management and human resource functions. Staff implemented the new financial and procurement systems.
- Communications staff won first place at 3CMA, a city/county marketing and communication organization, for efforts in the Stop Trashing Houston initiative.



Pictured above top, left to right: Li Hui Yang, Barbara Thomas, Michael Griffin, Vivian Hodges, Mei Neihouse, Chris Thomas, Alice Hung, and Max Samfield.

Pictured above bottom, left to right: Robert Isaac, Tommy Mah, Bill MacPherson, Sophia Chiang, and Russell Calhoun.

## Improving **Geographic information Systems**

The new work and priorities of the Department includes the development of an enterprise geospatial system for the City's geographic information system (GIS). The long term goal is to create a regional GIS environment that supports the sharing of data, GIS services and application resources among city departments, area governments, utilities and related agencies. GIS is a computer system capable of capturing, storing, analyzing, and displaying geographically referenced information or data.

### **Accomplishments** for FY 2006

- Updated the City's Core GIS database (COHGIS) for distribution to City departments, other governmental agencies and the private sector.
- Staff completed the migration of the COHGIS database layers to a geodatabase that will provide for common data access and a management framework for managing massive multi-user geographic databases. This geodatabase will allow the City of Houston to move to an enterprise GIS environment.



Above: Fardosht Amirpanahi and Larry Nierth

## Providing **Public Policy Analysis**

The Public Policy Analysis Section, a newly created section, is responsible for demographic, quantitative, trend, and policy analysis. The objective of this section is to provide decision makers with information to support policy issues and to identify ways to encourage growth in the city along with balancing and protecting neighborhoods. This group is also responsible for administration of the tax increment reinvestment zones.

### **Accomplishments** for FY 2006:

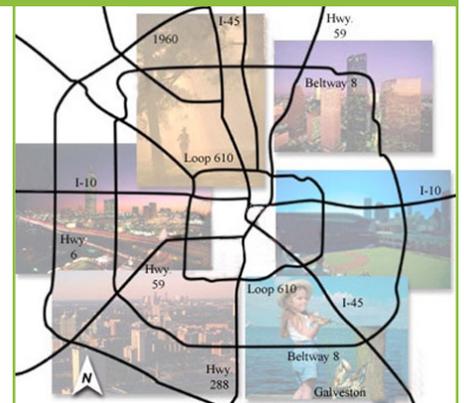
- The Department sent to city council for adoption 19 strategic partnership agreements. The City has agreements with 80 municipal utility districts in which portions are annexed for limited purpose. In FY 2006, the City received \$16.1 million from SPA agreements for a total of \$40.6 million.
- The Department managed 22 tax increment reinvestment zones (TIRZs). As of the most recent tax collection year, the TIRZs have a value of \$10 billion which is an 81% increase over their base value of \$5.5 billion. \$73.6 million in tax increment revenue was generated for the 2005 tax year from the City and other participating taxing entities (County and ISD). To date, \$30.7 million in affordable housing set-aside revenue has been deposited into the City's affordable housing fund.
- The Planning Department, along with other city departments, conducted an extensive review of the TIRZ program in preparation of the FY 2007 Budget. The review considered the maximum public value for public dollars, defined TIRZ mission and specific projects moving to completion, recovery of tax increment for increasing public safety costs and the effective and efficient administration of the program. Changes to the program in FY 2007 will result from this review.



Pictured above, left to right : Margaret Wallace, Bala Balachandran, Jason Jeffries, and Julia Gee.

## Analyzing **Transportation Plans**

The Department is adding a role in transportation planning and coordination. New staff will liaison with and coordinate mobility plans with other agencies to include Public Works and Engineering, METRO, Harris County, Texas Department of Transportation, the Harris County Toll Road Authority and other related entities. Responsibilities will also include the Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan and access management policy.





## Reviewing **Development**

The Development Services staff maintains their two week review cycle for plats submitted for consideration at upcoming Planning Commission meetings. Staff also reviews development site plans and applications for the locations of certain types of development such as hotel/motels, hazardous material storage facilities and cellular towers.



### **Accomplishments** for FY 2006:

- Staff reviewed 4,845 subdivision plats and 519 subdivision plat variances. Staff recorded 1,312 subdivision plats.
- Staff reviewed 1,284 development plats and 53 development site variances.
- Staff reviewed 21 cellular tower applications and nine hotel/motel applications.
- Staff reviewed 11 major thoroughfare and freeway plan amendments.



Pictured left column, first photo: Edwin Smith, David Dante, Debbie Gallegos and Robert Schindler.

Pictured left column, second photo, left to right: Loretta Olson and Hector Rodriguez.

Pictured left column, third photo, left to right: Tom Nguyen, Ernest Tobar, Wanda White, Carlos Perry.

Pictured left column, fourth photo, left to right: Virginia Rodriguez, Sam Vacanti and Johnny Raia.

Pictured left column, fifth photo, left to right: Shannon Teasley and Alfonso Watts.

Pictured above, left to right: Landell Ramagos, Yuhayna McCoy, Amar Mohite, and Michael Kramer.

## Reviewing **Land Development Policies**

The Department staffs the Houston Planning Commission. In FY 2006, Planning Commission produced six committee reports. The Committees included Development Impact, Parking, Suburban, Urban, Neighborhood Preservation and Long Range. They will meet further in FY 2007 to develop and research key issues and form several new committees to address additional issues. Some recommendations are expected to move quickly and staff will develop ordinances to forward to City Council for action. Other actions will require working groups to further define concepts and actions. Some of the key recommendations slated for action include:

- Improve public notification by including original plat names for each replat on the Subdivision Plat Summary Report and further expand e-mail notification to neighborhood representatives. This was completed in FY 2006.
- Amend Chapter 9 of the Public Works and Engineering Infrastructure Design Manual to address detention requirements for single family parcels currently excluded and to require detention for tracts being subdivided into less than an acre.
- Address aging infrastructure in older parts of town where development is occurring.
- Revise the prevailing building line and lot size regulations to improve the program.
- Revise the Decal Parking (permit only parking) program. This was completed in FY 2006.
- Create a Mixed Use Area (MUA) designation that will foster mixed use, high density development that reduces auto dependency and create a high-quality, pedestrian-friendly transit-supportive environment.
- Develop criteria for amenities plans when detention facilities are used to satisfy the compensating open space requirements.
- Develop a transit corridor pilot plan to address the needs of development centered on Main Street Corridor light rail stations with recommended rules reflecting the different corridor segments.
- Adopt policies for routine variances for street paving, widening and setbacks in the urban core.
- Develop a coordinated geographic information system (GIS) to identify quality of life and economic growth opportunities and utilizing GIS as a community marketing and information tool.
- Identify the priorities and strategy for a work plan that would lead to the creation of a general plan for the city of Houston.



Pictured above, left to right: Jesse Givens and Brian Crimmins.

Pictured above, middle, left to right: Teresa Geisheker, Dorianne Powe, Jennifer Ostlind, and Melanie Folkert.

Pictured above, bottom, left to right: Abel Nwabuoku, Jocelyn Kelly, Patricia Cotton and Gwen Parker.



Pictured above top, left to right: Stanley Ikpo, Lynn Henson, Jason Holoubek, and Mira Washington.

Pictured above second photo, left to right: Kevin Calfee, Diana Bernal and Luis Nunez.

## Strengthening **Neighborhoods**

The Department's Neighborhood Planning staff is committed to building the capacity of neighborhood organizations including super neighborhood councils and in finding community resources to implement projects.

Neighborhood Planning also administers the prevailing building line and lot size program and historic preservation program. These programs help to preserve the character of neighborhoods.

In addition, the Department is building a deed restriction registration database that will be mapped in our GIS system and made available on the Planning Department web site. That information will be helpful in checking plats against restrictions filed for that area and in compiling helpful data to identify common types of restrictions.

### **Accomplishments** for FY 2006:

- Recognized one new super neighborhood council: Greater OST/South Union, for a total of 43 super neighborhood councils representing 49 super neighborhood areas. Staff also provides assistance in tracking projects in the super neighborhoods' action plans.
- Held a neighborhood leadership institute in which 56 participants enrolled to learn valuable leadership skills that will make them more effective when addressing community issues and help them to increase the capacity of their organizations.
- Amended the Historic Preservation Ordinance to create a designation for "protected landmarks." The new protected landmark status would prevent those designated from being demolished or altered. Proposed amendments to shorten the processing time for applications have been reviewed by the HAHC and will be considered by City Council in early FY 2007.
- Worked with Public Works and Engineering to achieve a 50% reduction in permit fees for approved renovation work on historic buildings.
- Staff reviewed 75 certificates of appropriateness for properties in historic districts of which 68 were approved by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC).
- Staff referred four historic landmark designations and 21 protected landmark designations to City Council for approval. There are a total of 126 historical landmarks and 20 protected landmarks designated in the city.
- Provided community outreach and education to neighborhoods considering historic district designation, including the Houston Heights, Avondale, and Eastwood, of which the Houston Heights and Avondale are both proposing two new districts.
- Researched 736 sites noted by the Texas Historical Commission which led to the identification of 124 potential National Register sites that can be considered for historic designation. Property owners will be contacted in FY 2007.

- City Council approved 35 minimum lot size areas submitted from the Department for a total of 146 minimum lot size areas.
- City Council approved 12 prevailing building line areas submitted from the Department creating a total of 69 prevailing building line areas.
- Provided property research and analysis on 353 long-term tax delinquent lots acquired for the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority. One-hundred fifty-one of those lots were included in a request for proposal for bidders to purchase and build affordable housing. Surveyed additional 2,400 lots for possible inclusion in program.
- Researched and provided extensive census data, historical data, land use data, deed restriction data and existing conditions analysis for nine neighborhoods targeted for revitalization.
- Provided program assistance to other city departments and agencies regarding affordable housing and housing renovation efforts.
- Provided assistance to five neighborhoods seeking to enact or amend deed restrictions.
- Worked with community leaders to increase civic awareness and involvement in the Hispanic community.



Pictured, left to right: Randy Pace, Diana DuCroz, Gayatri Anoo, Mina Gerall, Anna Sedillo, and Mohdudul Huq.

## **Houston Planning Commission**

Commissioner Ed Chance  
Mark J. Mooney (alt. for Commissioner  
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David Collins  
Kay Crooker  
Algenita Scott-Davis  
Hon. Robert J. Eckels  
Jackie L. Freeman (alt for Judge Eckels)  
Sonny Garza  
James R. Jard  
Mark A. Kilkeny, Vice Chair  
Carol Lewis Ph.D., Chair  
D. Fred Martinez  
Etan M. Mirwis  
Com. Grady Prestage  
Jesse Hegemier (alt. for Commissioner Pre-  
stage)  
Robin Reed  
Richard A. Rice  
Jeff E. Ross  
Talmadge Sharp, Sr.  
Jon Strange  
Lee Schlanger  
Shaukat Zakaria  
B J Walter  
M. Marvin Katz (Ex. Officio)  
Michael Marcotte, Dir. PWE (Ex. Officio)  
Dawn Ullrich, Dir., CEF (Ex. Officio)

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Ray Bajarano  
Sharron B. Beale  
John R. Beltz  
Faye B. Bryant  
Gloria Carr  
Betty Trapp Chapman, Chair  
Paul Fruge Jr.  
Rafael Longoria  
Roger G. Moore  
C.K. Pang  
Suraiya Saleem  
Scott Slaney  
Phoebe Tudor

## **Tower Commission**

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Elaine Gaskamp  
Todd C. Litton, Chairperson  
John Melcher  
Virginia Parras  
Dr. Shin-Shem Steven Pei  
Bessie M.Swindle

