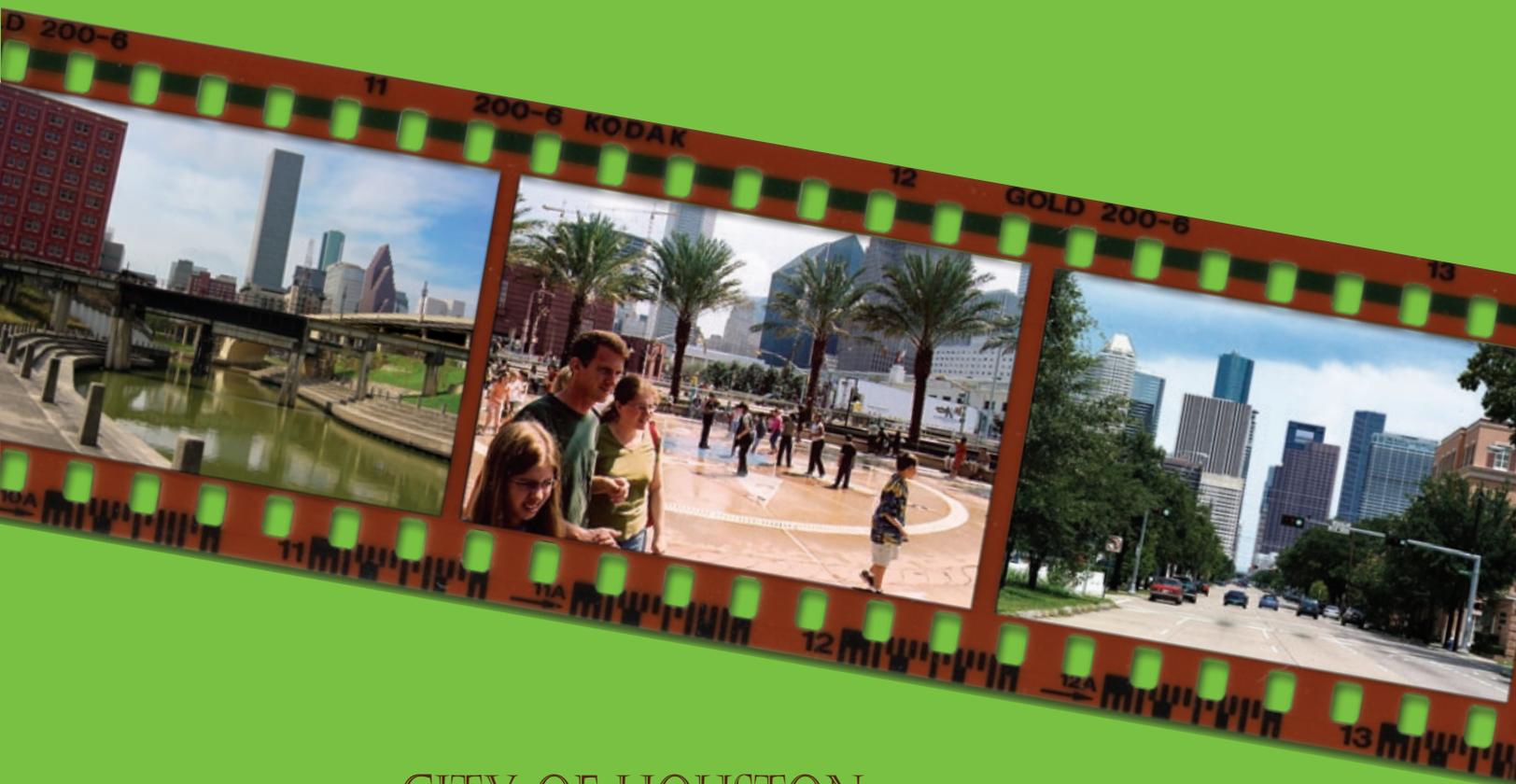


FOCUS ON OUR FUTURE



CITY OF HOUSTON
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
FISCAL YEAR 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission

J.D. Bartell
Sharie Beale
Fernando L. Brave
Faye B. Bryant
Betty Trapp Chapman, Chair
Paul Fruge Jr.
Marlene L. Gafrick, Secretary
Roger G. Moore
C.K. Pang
Venita Ray
Suraiya Saleem
Phoebe Tudor, Vice Chair

Houston Planning Commission

Honorable Commissioner
Ed Chance
John W.H. Chiang
David Collins
Kay Crooker
Honorable Ed Emmett
Marlene L. Gafrick, Secretary
Sonny Garza
Honorable Commissioner
Grady Prestage
James R. Jard
Carol Lewis Ph.D., Chair
Mark A. Kilkenny, Vice Chair
D. Fred Martinez
Robin Reed
Richard A. Rice
David Robinson

Jeff E. Ross
Lee Schlanger
Talmadge Sharp, Sr.
Algenita Scott-Segers
Jon Strange
Beth Wolff
Shaukat Zakaria

Alternate Members

Jackie Freeman, P.E.
Harris County
D. Jesse Hegemier, P.E.,
Fort Bend County
Mark J. Mooney, P.E.,
Montgomery County

Houston Tower Commission

Ray Bailey, FAIA
Marlene L. Gafrick, Secretary
Elaine Gaskamp
Todd C. Litton, Chair
Dr. Shin-Shem Steven Pei
John Melcher
Eva Garcia Ninman
Bessie M. Swindle



FOCUS ON OUR FUTURE



Dear Houstonian,

I'm proud to present the Planning and Development Department's Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report: "Focus on Our Future." This title reflects the many initiatives we focused on throughout this year that are shaping our city's future.

Many different forces - from development to changing demographics to economic situations - are shaping our city. We are growing - that is indisputable. Our city is a young city and has much to offer. This dynamic growth calls for planning that can respond to the changing needs of our community.

As planners we are often asked "what will Houston look like in the future" or "what's planned for my area in the next twenty years?" While we cannot predict the future, we can offer tools to help understand and respond as well as tools to guide that growth.

"Focus on Our Future" illustrates some of the key initiatives and core services we handle. Our future is your future - plan on it!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marlene L. Gafrick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marlene L. Gafrick
Director

FOCUS ON

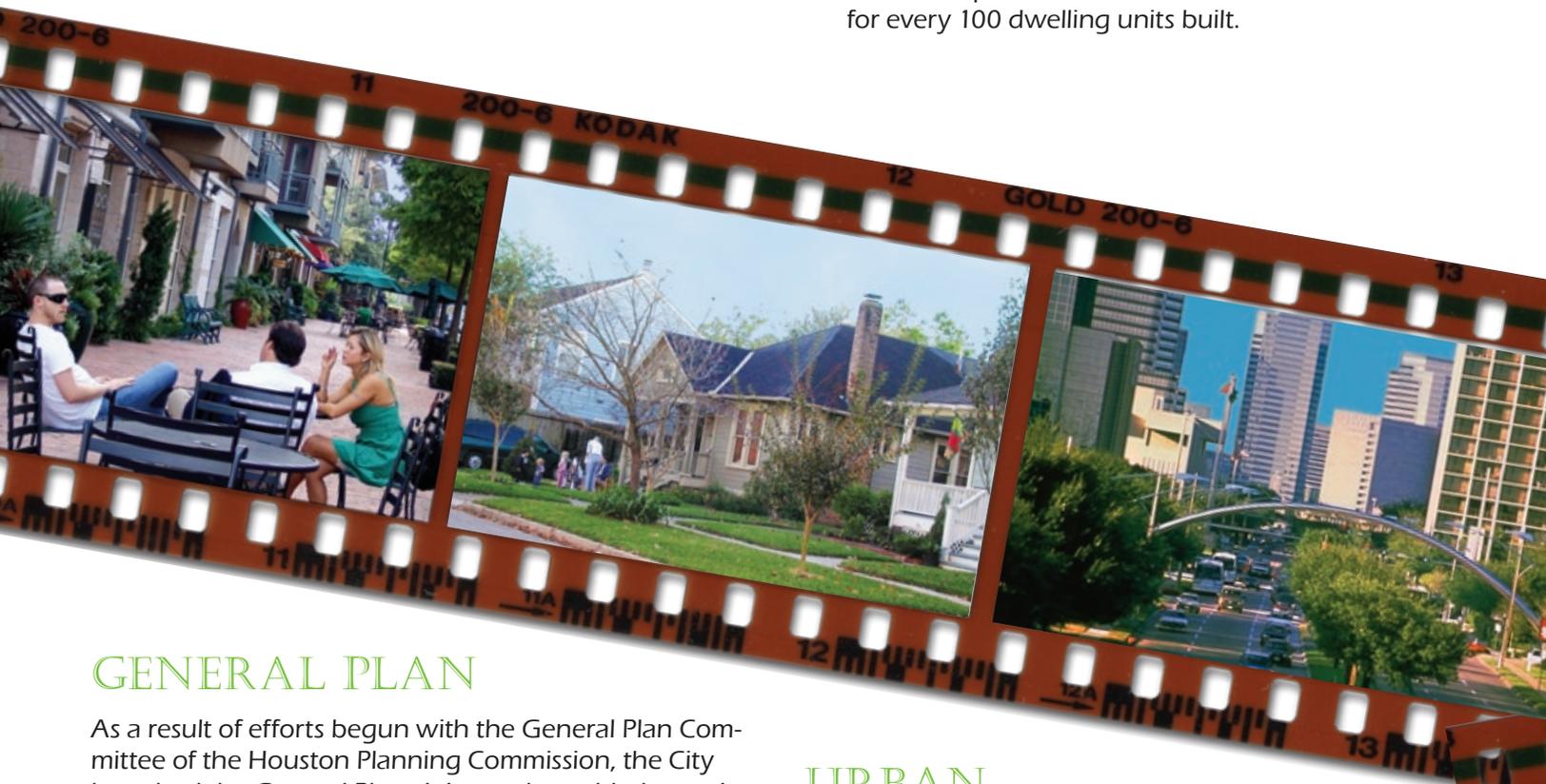


The Department worked in partnership with city departments, agencies and stakeholders to focus on the following key initiatives in Fiscal Year 2008:

UPDATED DEVELOPMENT RULES

In FY 2008, the City's land development ordinance, Chapter 42, was revised to:

- Provide better fire protection standards for multi-family projects;
- Protect residential areas by preventing certain stub streets from connecting to non-residential areas;
- Provide additional protections for minimum lot size areas by ensuring single family tracts are not used for non-single family uses; and
- Require more parks or open space to accompany residential development inside City limits where new development contributes \$700 per dwelling unit into a park fund or dedicates 1.8 acres of land for every 100 dwelling units built.



GENERAL PLAN

As a result of efforts begun with the General Plan Committee of the Houston Planning Commission, the City launched the General Plan. It is a web-enabled compilation of plans, regulations, and resources that provide guidance for Houston's growth and development. It provides a way to view and conduct planning efforts in a more cohesive, integrated manner. The site can be found on the Department's main web page.

URBAN CORRIDOR PLANS

The City of Houston moved into Phase III of its Urban Corridor Planning (UCP) initiative that focuses on METRO's light rail corridors. After receiving input from the consultant team, citizens, businesses and property owners, and the real estate and development community, the City is working to develop rules to enable and encourage transit supportive development along the light rail corridors.

FUTURE GROWTH

MOBILITY PLAN

The General Plan Committee of the Houston Planning Commission recommended the creation of a Mobility Plan as one of two highest unaddressed City priorities. This year, the City initiated Phase I which will create a mobility planning tool. The intent is to use this tool to evaluate individual projects for their mobility benefits and downstream impact.

The City Mobility Plan will become the primary tool for evaluating the City's transportation system infrastructure through 2035. This is a joint initiative of the Planning and Public Works and Engineering Departments.

AN EXPANDED GEOGRAPHIC DATABASE

In FY 2008, City Council approved a three-year enterprise license agreement merging separate City accounts and contracts into one agreement. In FY 2008, the Department launched the Enterprise GIS (geographic information system). Enhancements expected in FY 2009 will enable both City employees and the general public to display and analyze data from an enormous array of resources. Information such as crime data, aerial imagery, demographic data, and utility information can be interactively mapped and analyzed via the Internet.

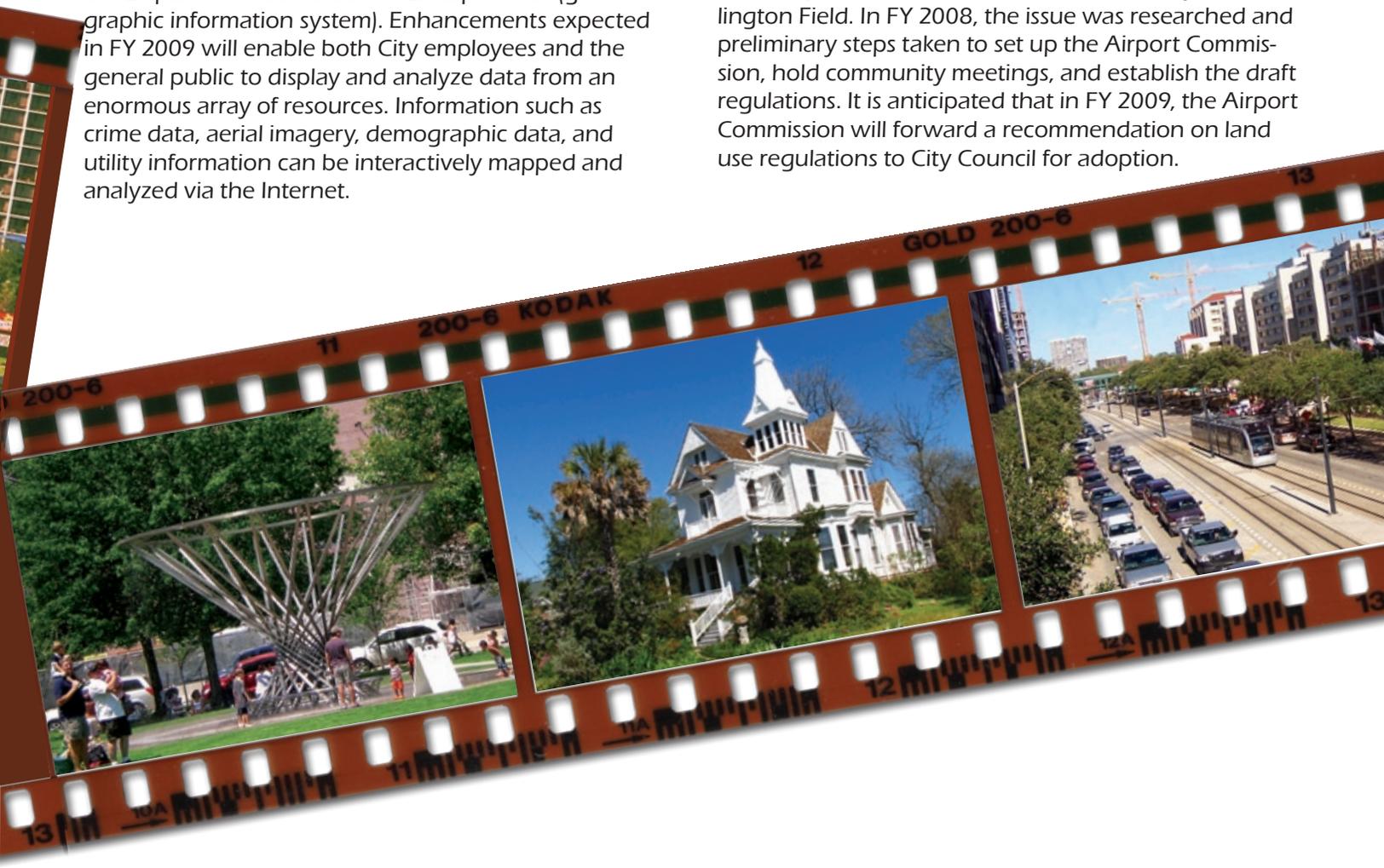
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In FY 2008, City Council adopted the first protected historic district, the Old Sixth Ward Protected Historic District, which disallows the demolition or inappropriate alteration of a historic structure or inappropriate new construction.

Three historic districts were designated in FY 2008: Houston Heights Historic District East, Houston Heights Historic District West and Avondale West. Two additional districts will be added in FY 2009 for a total of 13 historic districts.

COMPATIBLE AIRPORT LAND USE REGULATIONS

The Planning Department began working with the Houston Airport System to address a request from the Federal Aviation Administration to prevent the encroachment of incompatible land use around the City's three airports – Bush Intercontinental, Hobby and Ellington Field. In FY 2008, the issue was researched and preliminary steps taken to set up the Airport Commission, hold community meetings, and establish the draft regulations. It is anticipated that in FY 2009, the Airport Commission will forward a recommendation on land use regulations to City Council for adoption.



FOCUS ON



Department staff focused on programs and services that seek to accommodate growth while preserving and enhancing our neighborhood, cultural and historical assets. In FY 2008, the Department accomplished the following:

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- Reviewed 3,690 subdivision plats and 380 subdivision plat variances.
- Recorded 1,451 subdivision plats.
- Reviewed 1,182 development plats and 49 development site plan variances.
- Reviewed 41 cellular tower applications, of which 15 were referred to the Tower Commission and 8 were approved.
- Reviewed 22 hotel/motel applications.
- Reviewed 10 Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan amendments.

PUBLIC POLICY

- Successfully challenged the Census Bureau for the second year in a row for under-reporting Houston's population.
- Executed 23 strategic partnership agreements for a total of 142 agreements with utility districts for limited purpose annexations.
- Developed a process for analyzing the City's financial participation in development.
- Provided research towards the implementation of the newly created Parks and Open Space Ordinance
- Drafted a public improvement district creation policy.
- Developed a policy for release of extra territorial jurisdiction.
- Developed charts and maps showing activity related to area growth and population change for Houston's General Plan.



ACHIEVEMENTS

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING SERVICES

- Facilitated the development of two new super neighborhood councils: Braeburn and Second Ward, totaling 51 super neighborhood councils.
- Coordinated multiple programs that provided opportunities for 87 area youth to learn and participate in civic initiatives.
- Trained 65 community residents through the Neighborhood Leadership Institute.
- Teamed up with the Mayor's Office to provide a Grassroots Residential Energy Efficient Now (GREEN) training program with super neighborhoods to help reduce household carbon output resulting in environmental benefits and lower utility bills.
- Held two deed restrictions workshops with approximately 200 people in attendance.
- Reviewed 35 minimum lot size applications and 28 special building line applications.
- Reviewed 128 Certificates of Appropriateness of which 102 were approved by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission.
- Recommended 22 landmarks and 21 protected landmarks for designation.
- Recommended 5 historic districts for designation.
- Reviewed applications from four neighborhoods seeking designation and provided historical education and assistance to 17 neighborhoods.

MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- Focused on succession planning including a certification program for managers and administrative staff.
- Centralized the purchase and stocking of supplies for greater efficiency.
- Created a recruitment package used at conferences, conventions, job fairs, career days and when resumes are received from qualified applicants.
- Created the General Plan website.

GEOGRAPHIC AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

- Completed initial catalogue of City's data assets.
- Executed a three year citywide agreement with ESRI, Inc. for GIS software and support.
- Developed new address assignment applications to enable planners and permit staff to assign accurate, permanent addresses to property being developed.
- Reconciled City parcels with appraisal district tax data.
- Updated enterprise data model for comprehensive relational database.
- Developed a route/personnel management system for the Solid Waste Department.
- Developed CityMap web application for viewing, comparing and analyzing data from all departments.

Budget Numbers:	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual (Unaudited)	FY 2009 Budgeted
Expenditures	\$7,545,024	\$7,947,000	\$8,829,462
Revenues	\$5,181,928	\$4,116,952	\$4,967,600



www.houstonplanning.com