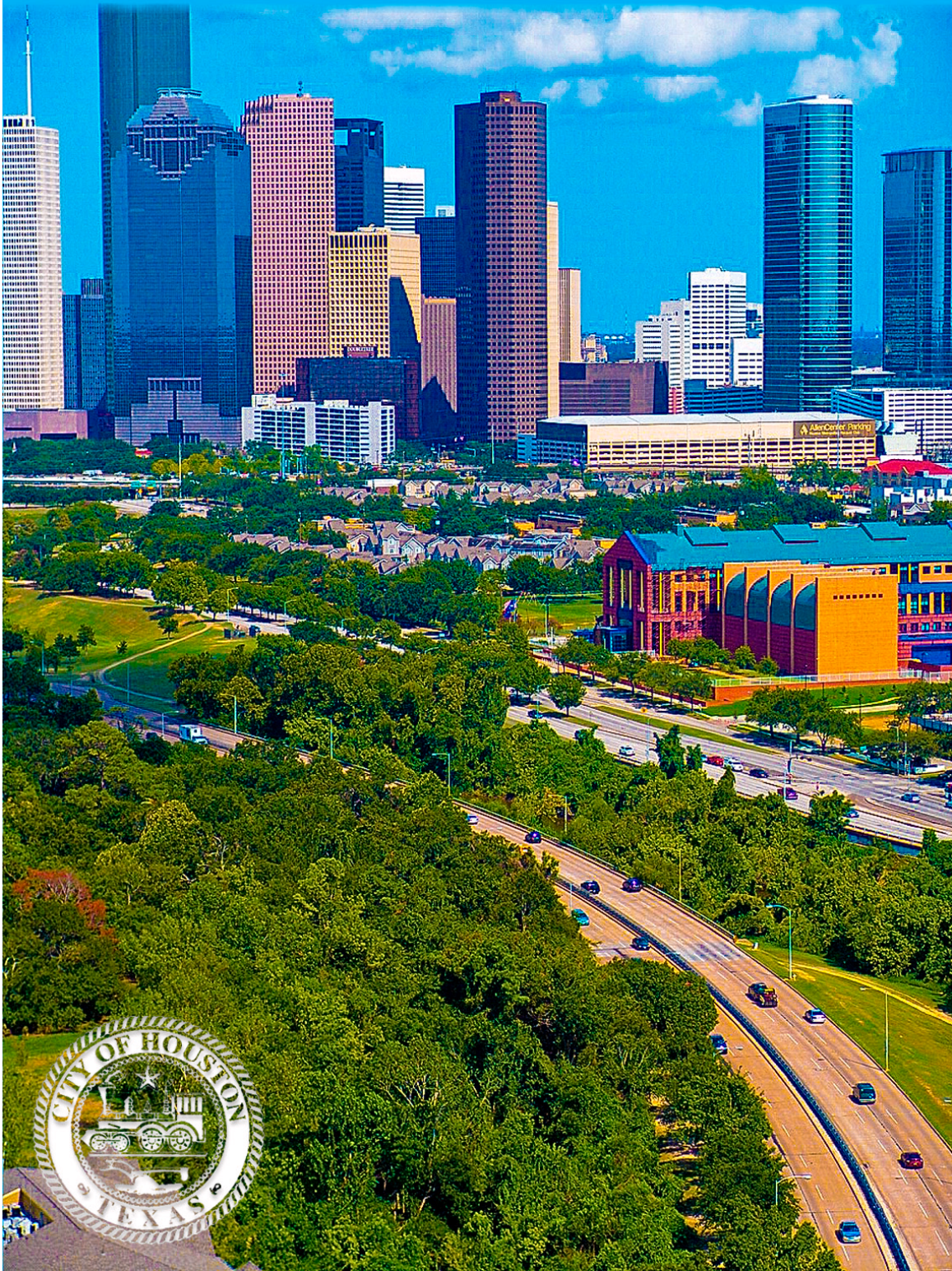


GROWTH AND STABILITY

Planning and Development Department
ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2009



Dear Houstonian,

I am pleased to present the Department of Planning and Development's Annual Report, Growth and Stability. We chose this name because every day, we seek to build a city that supports growth yet supports the stability of neighborhoods across Houston. We partner with many different agencies, communities, individuals and organizations to make this happen. This report provides an overview of what we have done throughout the year to meet that goal.



Houston is a growing city, a young city. With any growth, comes growing pains and change that some view as positive and others are not so sure. To address these changes, the Planning Department must determine what programs and policies are needed; what skills our employees must have; and what tools, services and resources we should provide to foster growth and enhance stability.

Fiscal Year 2009 was especially challenging. Like many across the nation, the City felt the effects of the economy. Plat submittals dropped to an all time low causing a decline of 59.4% in platting revenues from FY 2009 to FY 2010.

Early in the fall of 2008, the City was struck by Hurricane Ike, the third most destructive hurricane to hit the United States. Our employees worked hard to help our city recover whether it was through nearly round the clock mapping services or by helping at shelters and distribution centers.

Despite these hardships, many of the Department's major accomplishments provide a path to increase the growth and stability of Houston, our neighborhoods and our government. Achievements that included finalizing the draft transit corridor ordinance, the completion of the Mobility Plan Phase I, further strengthening of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the launch of the Enterprise GIS "My City" application will have an impact on our future.

Throughout fiscal year 2009, the Department worked tirelessly to improve our services and bring exciting new projects to realization. Our goals in FY 2010 are no less. The Planning Department staff is committed to providing quality service that helps Houston remain a strong and prosperous city.

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

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ➔ Drafted a transit corridor ordinance completing a three-year Urban Corridor Planning effort to set new transit supportive development standards along METRO's light rail corridors with adoption expected early in FY 2010.
- ➔ Completed the Mobility Plan Phase I and began work on Phase II in partnership with Public Works and Engineering.
- ➔ Completed changes to the Tree and Shrub ordinance to increase the fees and increase cost per caliper inch of replacement trees.
- ➔ Worked with the Houston Airport System to pass and implement Airport Compatible Land Use regulations.
- ➔ Developed MyCity – EGIS online application being used internally and at Council public session to geographically display information. Public launch of the site set for early FY 2010.
- ➔ Developed online applications for the Houston Police Department for crime statistics and for Solid Waste for routing and service information.
- ➔ Produced an ESRI certified GIS trainer in the department (ranked No. 2 nationally in his first year) and saved the City approximately \$200,000, while enhancing the technical skills of more than 100 staff members from a dozen departments.
- ➔ Produced How We Compare: Ten City Comparison – a comparison of the ten largest cities in the U.S. in terms of demographic, socio-economic and other characteristics.
- ➔ Completed changes to the Historic Preservation ordinance, to include the addition of HAHC board members and elimination of concurrent certificates of appropriateness for demolition and new construction
- ➔ Produced the Heights Design Guide which provides easy to understand guidelines for compatible remodeling and new construction in the Heights historic districts.
- ➔ Initiated the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program and approved 8 neighborhood applications awarding \$21,186.09 in grants.
- ➔ Recognized 3 historic districts for a total of 14 historic districts.
- ➔ Recognized two new super neighborhood councils, Midwest and Westwood for a total of 47 recognized councils representing 53 super neighborhoods.

KEY TASKS

Development Services – Working to improve the standards of development and ensure compliance with land development and related ordinances.

- ➔ Reviewed 2,145 subdivision plats and 203 subdivision plat variances.
- ➔ Recorded 998 subdivision plats.
- ➔ Reviewed 842 development plats and 48 development site plan variances.
- ➔ Reviewed 23 cellular tower applications. The Tower Commission reviewed five of the applications and approved three.
- ➔ Reviewed 22 hotel/motel applications.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – creating a regional GIS environment that supports the sharing of data, GIS services and application resources.

- ➔ Developed the Address Info web tool for address validation.
- ➔ Assisted in the Hurricane Ike recovery by mapping damage assessment field data, using GIS to optimize Points of Distribution (PODS), mapping information on power restoration progress by zip code and providing map data at the Houston Emergency Center.
- ➔ Partnered with Greater Harris County 911 to merge address data.
- ➔ Developed a desktop application for assigning new addresses to infill development to allow permanent address assignment to permit applicants in a while-you-wait environment.
- ➔ Improved address matching ability from approximately 40% to a current 97%.

Transportation Planning – Analyzing plans, supporting projects, and developing tools to support multi-modal transportation and mobility in Houston.

- ➔ Initiated five specific livable center projects with area organizations and city departments and sought funding for an additional livable centers project to build wider sidewalks along transit streets.
- ➔ Reviewed 7 major thoroughfare and freeway plan amendments.
- ➔ Reviewed and commented on Houston-Galveston Area Council's 2040 Regional Transportation Plan.

***Neighborhood Planning** - Working to strengthen and increase the long-term stability of neighborhoods through tools and resources.*

- ➔ Implemented the Prohibited Yard Parking program. Processed 30 applications.
- ➔ Reviewed 134 Certificates of Appropriateness (CoAs). The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission approved 110 CoAs.
- ➔ Recommended 15 landmarks and 14 protected landmarks for historic designation.
- ➔ Trained 30 emerging leaders at the Neighborhood Leadership Institute.
- ➔ Conducted a Project Institute for the Glenbrook Valley and Woodland Heights neighborhoods on how to apply for historic designation.
- ➔ Reviewed 11 special building line applications and 17 minimum lot size applications. There are 250 minimum lot size areas and 121 special building line areas established by Council.
- ➔ Selected Austin High as a Community Bridges project partner from which Mason Park was selected as their community improvement project.

***Public Policy** – Facilitate decision-making by providing recommendations through data collection, research and analysis in a variety of disciplines.*

- ➔ Compiled extensive demographic and market data for the lower Fifth Ward area to demonstrate its potential to support economic development initiatives. The analysis includes education and public safety statistics, economic and land use factors, development activity, and infrastructure and transportation data.
- ➔ Executed 12 new strategic partnership agreements and two amendments. There are more than 150 strategic partnership agreements approved by the City.
- ➔ Aggregated super neighborhood demographic and socio-economic characteristics.
- ➔ Updated building permit maps and data by super neighborhoods, council districts, census tracts, block groups and zip codes.
- ➔ Initiated planning and preparation for Census 2010 to reduce the potential undercount through outreach and marketing.
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HOUSTON PLANNING COMMISSION

Left to right:

Top row:

John W.H. Chiang

David Collins

Kay Crooker

Second row:

Honorable Ed Emmett

Sonny Garza

James R. Jard

Mark A. Kilkenny,
Vice Chair

Third row:

Carol Lewis Ph.D, Chair

D. Fred Martinez

Honorable Grady Prestage

Robin Reed

Fourth row:

Richard A. Rice

David Robinson

Jeff E. Ross

Lee Schlanger

Fifth row:

Algenita Segars

Talmadge Sharp, Sr.

Jon Strange

Beth Wolff

Sixth row:

Shaukat Zakaria

Alternate Members

Jackie Freeman, P.E.

Harris County
Mark J. Mooney, P.E.,
Montgomery County

Not pictured:

Honorable Ed Chance

D. Jesse Hegemier, P.E.,

Fort Bend County



GROWTH AND STABILITY

HOUSTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Top to bottom:

J.D. Bartell
Betty Trapp Chapman, Chair
Dr. Roger G. Moore
Phoebe Tudor, Vice Chair
Sharie Beale
Paul Fruge, Jr.
Venita Ray

Not pictured:

Fernando L. Brave
Faye B. Bryant
Douglas Elliott
C.K. Pang



TOWER COMMISSION

Top to bottom:

Ray Bailey, FAIA
Todd C. Litton, Chair
John Melcher
Bessie M. Swindle

Not pictured:

Eva Garcia Ninman
Dr. Shin-Shem Steven Pei

BUDGET

General Fund	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Budgeted
Expenditures	\$7,557,295	\$8,829,462
Revenues	\$4,116,952	\$4,967,600
GIS Revolving Fund	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Budgeted
Expenditures	\$856,237	\$1,772,212
Revenues	\$856,462	\$1,772,212

MISSION STATEMENT

The Planning and Development Department works to ensure a vibrant and sustainable Houston by partnering with decision makers and the community to balance a spectrum of needs and interests while addressing the dynamics of growth and change.



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