

**City of Houston Planning and Development Department
Fiscal Year 2010 Annual Report**



Dear Houstonians,

I'm pleased to present the Houston Planning and Development Department's Fiscal Year 2010 Report, "Shaping My City." Our work included helping our neighborhoods, exploring changes to development codes and increasing the available data needed for analysis. Let me highlight several major projects that will shape our city in the years to come.

The City is just now starting to benefit from the development of the Enterprise Geographic Information System and the launch of the My City website. Its interdepartmental use is becoming widespread and helping create efficiency within the city. The public has only just begun to realize the potential for utilizing this enormous data tool.

I was very proud of the effort the Department made this year in helping promote the 2010 Census. We worked hard to ensure a complete count of Houstonians. Millions of dollars and vital demographic information used for many purposes is at stake. This detailed view of Houstonians that we will receive in 2011 will show how and where our city has changed and grown. This information can have a huge impact on decisions made about transportation, infrastructure, city services and so much more.

And last but not least, the passage of the transit corridors rules help promote walkable, transit support development in key parts of the city. The recognition that one size does not fit all for the purposes of development woven with the critical need to address mobility will help sustain our growth and viability for the future.

Budget Numbers:

General Fund	<i>FY 2009</i>	<i>FY 2010</i>
Expenditures	\$8,829,462	\$9,087,268
Revenues	\$4,967,600	\$2,013,750
GIS Revolving Fund	<i>FY 2009</i>	<i>FY 2010</i>
Expenditures	\$1,772,212	\$1,930,949
Revenues	\$1,772,212	\$1,930,949



I hope you enjoy learning about our accomplishments and tasks. We look forward to exciting new projects in the coming year and building on actions from this past year. Throughout it all, the Planning and Development is "Shaping My City."

Sincerely,

Marlene L. Gafrick
Director

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

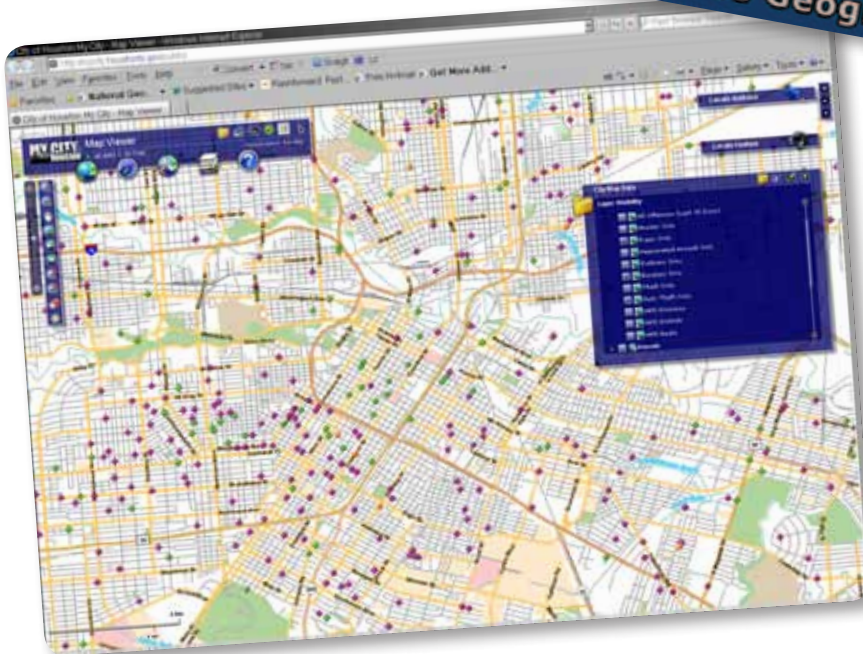
My City

The Department produced one of the single most important tools that will have profound effects for planning in Houston with the launch of the My City website. My City connects users to more than 200 layers of real time data.

My City provides citizens access to mapped information about where activities and projects are occurring. It provides insight into patterns of development, planned improvements, building permits, land use, flood information, evacuation routes and patterns of crime. Citizens can access mapped information such as street maps, aerial imagery, utility services, permitting, parcel addresses, solid waste services, tax data, political boundaries, land use and much more.

Other GIS accomplishments for FY 2010 include:

- Began work on an ordinance to establish a regional standard for addressing through GIS services.
- Trained nearly 170 users on ArcGIS I or II saving the City more than \$150,000.
- Created the online Address Validation Service that resulted in significant additional tax revenue accruing to the City. The service enables the State Comptroller and City's Finance Department to accurately identify businesses that should be paying sales tax to the City, but were previously thought to be outside the city limits.
- Created applications for the Houston Airport System to enable citizens to get land use information for properties near airport facilities and to determine structure height limitations in areas affected by flight paths.



<http://mycity.houstontx.gov/public>

PUBLIC POLICY

This year, the Planning Department led local outreach and marketing efforts for the 2010 Census. Through this local effort known as



the City of Houston's official mail-back participation rate of 70% shattered its 2000 Census participation rate of 64 percent. Compared to the nation's top 10 cities, Houston had one of the highest rates of change and mail in participation. As each person counted represents access to \$1,500 in federal funding, this translates to potentially an additional \$2 billion federal dollars coming to Houston over the next ten years.

Chaired by Council Member James Rodriguez, Houston Counts was a highly collaborative process. This phenomenal effort included grassroots events across the city; thousands of volunteer hours; support from businesses, community and faith-based leaders; educational institutions, thousands of dollars in cash and donated media time; and distribution of educational materials in numerous neighborhoods. Praised by The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Houston was called a "national leader in terms of our community-based infrastructure."

Other Public Policy accomplishments for FY 2010 include:

- Created 12 new Strategic Partnership Agreements (SPAs) for Limited Purpose Annexation areas and amended 13 existing agreements. Public Policy administers a total of 209 SPAs. The City received approximately \$141.3 million in total revenue as of spring 2010 from all SPAs.
- Produced 88 updated super neighborhood demographic profiles.



The outcome, the final numbers that will arrive in 2011, will shape Houston's future for the next ten years.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Early in Fiscal Year 2010, the City adopted a Transit Corridor ordinance that established new regulations designed to foster transit-supportive development and enhance pedestrian mobility along transit corridors.

The new standards create both mandatory rules to improve pedestrian infrastructure and “opt-in” rules developers can choose to use in exchange for certain incentives.

These changes can shape the quality, character, and connectivity in Houston’s neighborhoods. It is change that makes sense for Houston by guiding both public and private investment in the urban transit corridors while preserving the market-driven flexibility that is the City’s hallmark.

Other Development Services accomplishments for FY 2010 include:

- Amended the notification requirement of Chapter 42 to increase the number of citizens notified of replats requiring public hearings, variances and special exception requests.
- Began review of the City’s off street parking rules in Chapter 26 of the Code of Ordinances. Amendments will be considered by Council in FY 2011.
- Completed work on a livable center study for the area around 3300 Main and continued work on 3 other studies.
- Reviewed 1,659 subdivision plats and 138 subdivision plat variances.
- Recorded 649 subdivision plats.
- Reviewed 714 development plats and 48 development site plan variances.
- Reviewed 9 cellular tower applications.
- Reviewed 9 hotel/motel applications.
- Reviewed 4 Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan amendments.



NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

With the inauguration of Mayor Annise Parker in January, the administration began a renewed focus on neighborhoods. This included strengthening the rules that govern the city's historic districts.

Houston City Council approved major changes to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, which now gives permanent protection to historic properties within historic districts and sets out a new application process for the designation of future historic districts. City Council has also adopted an ordinance that provides a one time process for property owners in existing historic districts to petition for reconsideration of their designation.

Matching Grant recipient Stella Link Beautification Project before (below) and after (bottom).



Other Neighborhood Services accomplishments for FY 2010 include:

- Trained 53 emerging neighborhood leaders at the Neighborhood Leadership Institute.
- Awarded 14 Neighborhood Matching Grant Applications totaling \$36,019 in grants for a total investment in the neighborhoods of \$96,858.47.
- Recognized four new super neighborhoods, Briar Forest, Memorial, Eldridge/West Oaks, and Museum Park for a total of 51 recognized councils representing 56 super neighborhoods.
- Recognized the Montrose Commons Historic District and the Boulevard Oaks Historic District for a total of 16 recognized districts.
- Produced the Historic District Design Guide, easy to understand guidelines for compatible remodeling and new construction in a number of Houston's Historic Districts.
- Reviewed 142 Certificates of Appropriateness for properties with historic designation or properties in an historic district of which 105 were approved by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission.
- Recommended 12 landmarks, 13 protected landmarks and one archaeological site for historic designation.
- Reviewed 2 special building line applications and 6 minimum lot size applications.
- Reviewed 70 Prohibited Yard Parking neighborhood applications.



COMMISSIONS

Houston Planning Commission



*Back row: Jackie Freeman, P.E. Harris Cnty;
James R. Jard; Honorable Grady Prestage
Front row: Jeff E. Ross; Algenita Segars; Keiji
Asakura*



*Back Row: J.D. Bartell; Mark A. Kilkenny, Chair;
Christopher Amandes
Front row: Susan Alleman; Beth Wolff; Linda Porras-
Pirtle*



*Back row: Shaukat Zakaria; Paul R. Nelson; Richard A. Rice
Front row: David Robinson; Blake Tartt III; Sonny Garza,
Vice Chair*

Not pictured:

Robin Reed
Talmadge Sharp, Sr.
Mark J. Mooney, P.E., Montgomery Cnty

Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission

Back row: Phoebe Tudor, *Vice Chair*; Douglas Elliott; Fernando L. Brave; Charles Stava; Rob D. Hellyer; R. Maverick Welsh III

Front row: Faye B. Bryant; Paul Fruge, Jr.; Betty Trapp Chapman, *Chair*; Marlene L. Gafrick, *Secretary*; Sharie Beale

Not pictured:

Dr. Roger G. Moore
Debra Blacklock-Sloan
Venita Ray



Houston Tower Commission



Pictured left to right:

John Melcher; Rodney Louis Jones; Christy B. Smidt; Ignacio Osorio; Michael Schaffer, *Secretary*

Not pictured:

Todd C. Litton, *Chair*
Dr. Shin-Shem Steven Pei
Antonio M. Salinas