



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



Planning Changes

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

About our department

Since our founding in 1940, this department has provided Houstonians with excellence in planning and regulatory services. 2014 was no different. Our four divisions serve Houstonians in their specific ways.

The Development Services Division oversees many development-related regulations – including subdivision platting activity. This division is also home to our Transportation Planning section that looks at transportation issues including the City’s Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan, the Complete Streets and Transportation

Plan, and Livable Centers Studies. In FY 2015, Development Services will be working on the creation of a general plan for Houston, as well as an update to the City’s bicycle plan.

The Community Sustainability Division works with residents to preserve neighborhood character with programs such as Minimum Lot Size/Building Line and Historic Preservation. They are also responsible for annexation, changes in our Extra Territorial Jurisdiction boundary, special districts and demographics.

The Geographic Information Systems Services Division manages and maintains much of the City’s GIS information, provides mapping and analysis assistance, and is responsible for addressing property related to development.

Finally, the Management Services Division includes the Director’s Office and is responsible for operational support of the department including budgeting, purchasing, commission support, as well as public information and open records.



A new director, a new direction



Dear Houstonians,

I am pleased to present the Planning and Development Department's Annual Report for 2014, "Planning Changes." 2014 was indeed a year of change and transition in our department. Of course, one of the biggest changes was the retirement of long-time director Marlene Gafrick and my confirmation as director in March, 2014. While I am new to the department, I am a native Houstonian and have worked in the planning and engineering field in the Houston area for more than 18 years. I will use my expertise to continue the

successes of our department while launching new initiatives to support the long term sustainability of Houston. 2014 was a year of new opportunities and one of our busiest on record. We have taken on new challenges and are moving full speed ahead. The Department experienced increased activity in some of the regulatory functions; with platting activity up 24% and special minimum lot size applications more than doubling the number of the last three years combined.

We have set out to create Houston's first general plan. The department, along with numerous community members and technical experts, launched the process in May. It will continue through 2015. The plan will be transformative for Houston. It will consolidate and coordinate a vision and strategies to address neighborhood enhancement and development in the coming years. It will create opportunities for increased coordination among city departments and related agencies. As a result, it will help guide our community's planning efforts for years to come.

Our talented, creative employees in the Development Services, Community Sustainability, Geographic Information Systems and Management Services Divisions are by far some of the best and brightest our city has to offer. With their help and support, I have no doubt we will be successful in our endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patrick Walsh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "W".

Patrick Walsh, P.E.



Big plans for the future

PLAN HOUSTON

In 2014, the City of Houston embarked on its first ever general planning process. A general plan will enable the City to take a fresh look at enhancing services to current residents and will help the City prepare for the anticipated growth. The plan, called Plan Houston, will be based on existing visions, goals, and strategies already created by the City and organizations representing all aspects of the community. Plan Houston will define successful outcomes for the City and develop strategies to enhance neighborhoods and support growth and development. This effort will improve coordination between government agencies and ensure efforts of the City and its partners are as effective as possible.

Complete Streets

In 2013, Mayor Annise Parker signed an Executive Order to implement a Complete Streets and Transportation Plan that encourages safe, accessible and convenient use of our streets by motorists, public transit riders, pedestrians, people of all abilities and bicyclists. The Plan will build upon and utilize tools such as the city's mobility planning. It will create new definitions found in the city's Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan Policy Statement and the Infrastructure Design Manual.

The City's Planning and Development Department and the Department Public Works and Engineering will be responsible for administration of the plan in coordination with METRO and other departments/entities.

Keeping our city moving

Planning and Development is responsible for Houston's transportation systems planning. We develop and refine plans that have long-term effect on how Houstonians develop land and move around our region. This is done through 3 major processes:

Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP)

The MTFP identifies right-of-way needs and proposes roadway alignments within the city limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). It is amended every year according to applications submitted by property owners and public agencies. Planning and Development staff review and recommend proposed amendments, develop recommendations and shepherd the amendments through Planning Commission and City Council. In 2014, the Planning staff reviewed 58 applications.

Mobility Plans

As part of the MTFP process, transportation planners develop small area mobility studies. The findings of these studies are used by

the Planning Commission, committees and development agencies.

In 2014, staff continued work on the following:

- Heights-Northside Mobility Study
- Houston-Northwest Mobility Study
- Downtown & Midtown Thoroughfare Analysis
- Greater West Houston Subregional Planning Study

Bike Plan

Houston's latest Bike Plan was created in 1994. In 2014, the Planning Department began the process to update the plan. Once complete the Bicycle Master Plan that will address the City's current and future bicycling needs. The plan will develop a comprehensive policy framework necessary to guide the City's bicycle-related efforts. This may include creating new bicycle lanes, facilities and other amenities that safely connect neighborhoods and destinations. Both on-street and off-street bicycle facilities will include the Bayou Greenways Plan to ensure an inter-connected bicycle system.

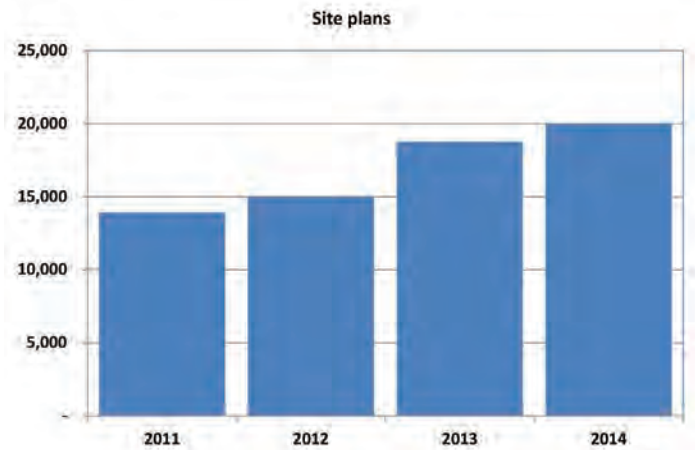
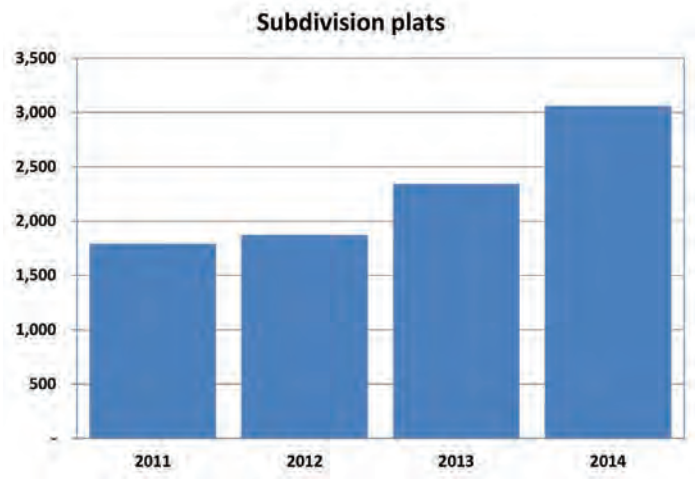
Keeping up with development activity

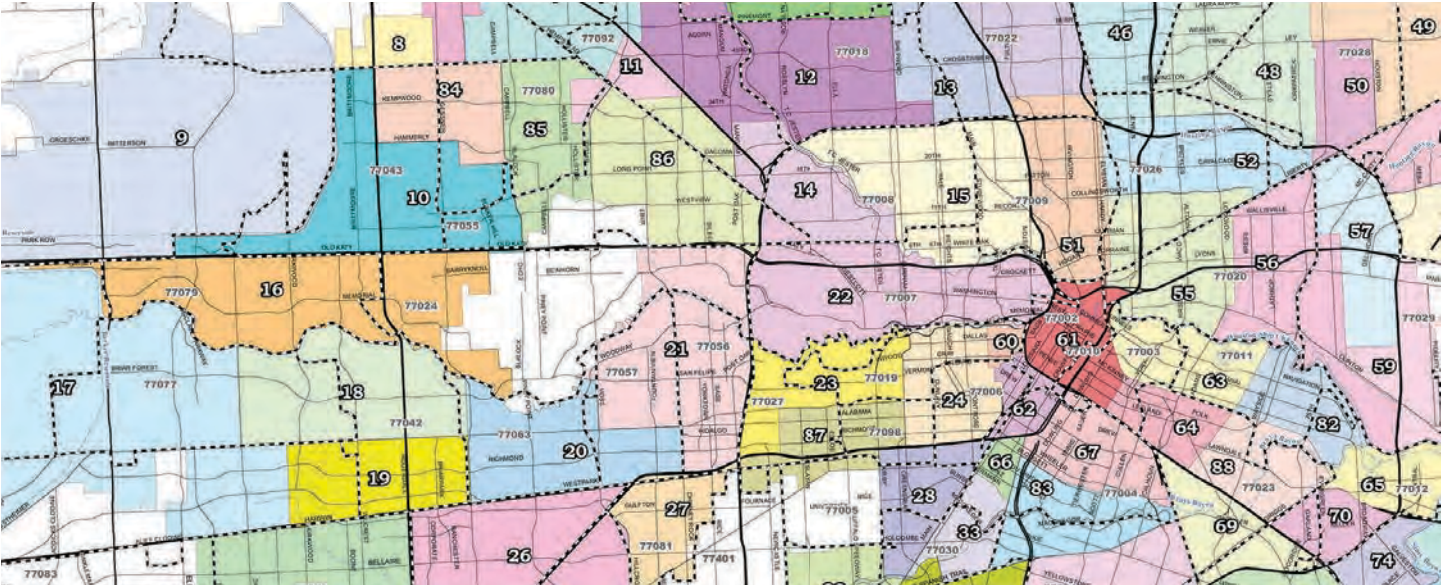
2014 was a year for the record books. Coming out of the economic slump of the early teens, Houston has rebounded. Subdivision platting showed a dramatic increase over the previous year.

We also improved our customer service by increasing the self-service functionality to Plat Tracker.

Development activity indicators:

- Reviewed 3,058 Subdivision Plats, up 25%
- Recorded 1,147 Plats, down 15%
- Reviewed 858 Development plats, down 6%
- Reviewed 19,983 site plans, up 6%





Mapping our way with Geographic Information Systems

The Planning Department has become the official provider of all street names and addresses within the city limits.

An addressing ordinance was adopted by the City to codify property addressing and street naming regulations. The amendments will centralize property addressing and street naming database services within the Department. Centralizing

these services will reduce addressing errors and provide real time addressing information to emergency responders.

The GIS staff:

- Created over 12,758 addresses and 1,921 new roads in the systems and
- Completed 407 map and data requests.

Helping communities maintain their character



The Planning Department administers programs that protect a neighborhood's character. There was increased interest in these programs in 2014 because of the phased changes to Chapter 42, allowing a denser style of housing development outside the 610 loop. Staff reviewed a record number of applications:

- 21 Minimum Lot Size Area Applications
- 104 Minimum Lot Size Block Applications
- 17 Minimum Building Line Block Applications

Staff reviewed five new Prohibited Yard Parking applications areas.

A committee of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and Houston Planning Commission was established to work on amendments to correct and clarify targeted items and create greater consistency for the applicants

and for the Commission. The amendments will provide applicants with additional options for a streamlined approval, provide the Commission with improved guidance on which to base their decision and create a more efficient process.

- Staff and the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission reviewed 16 Landmarks or Protected Landmark applications. There are 382 total landmarked properties: 273 Historic Landmarks and 109 Protected Historic Landmarks.
- Staff and the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission reviewed 364 Certificate of Appropriateness applications.
- City Council designated two historic districts – Starkweather and High First Ward for a total 22 districts.

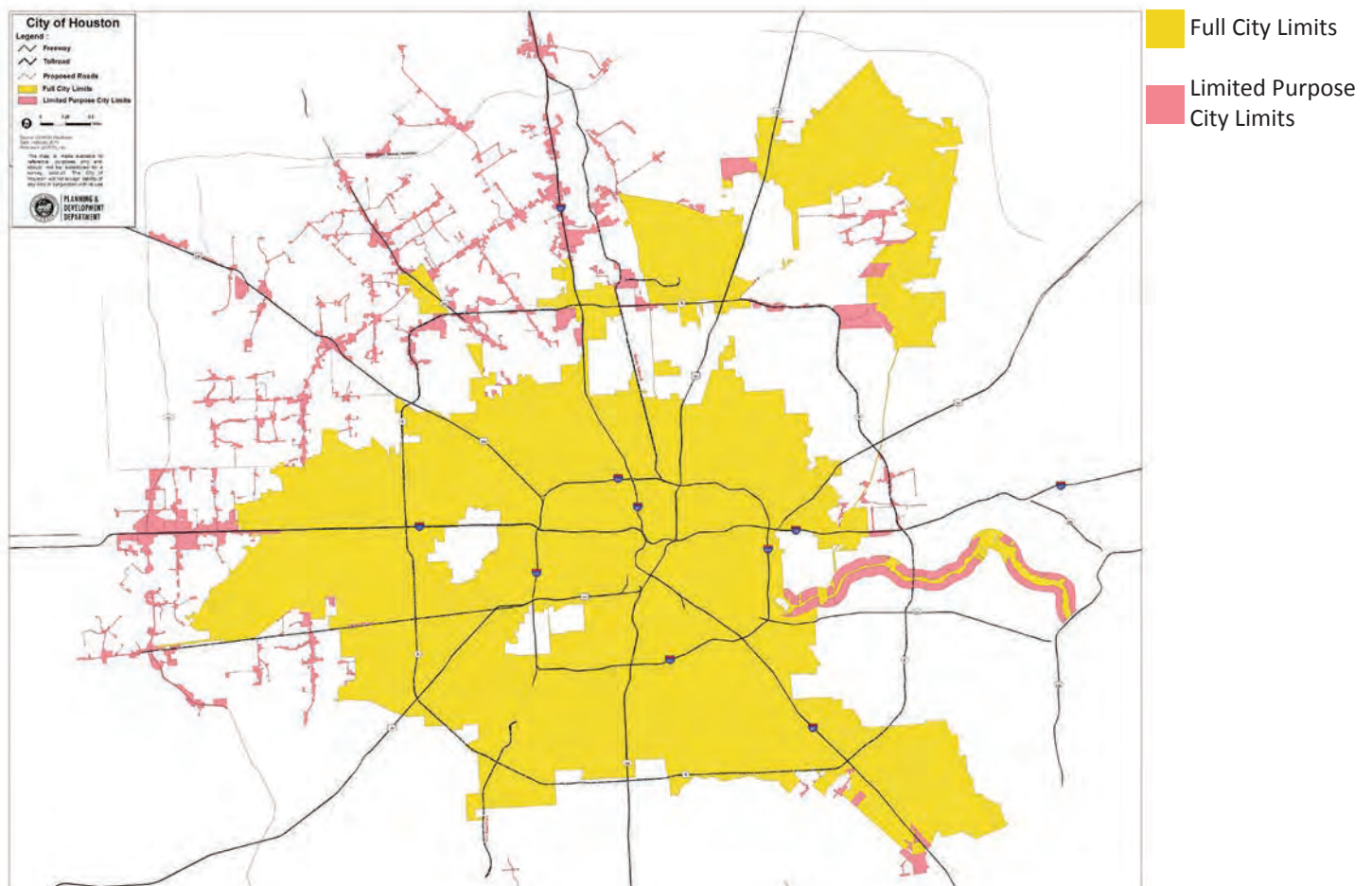
Tracking our growth

The City conducted three rounds of limited purpose annexations of 22 utility districts since July 1, 2013. Currently the City has 338 Strategic Partnership Agreements with 234 utility districts. These agreements generate more than \$303 million for the city representing 7.6% of all sales taxes collected.

The City completed one full purpose annexation (Sicom tract) adding 5 acres to the full purpose city boundary.

The City worked to enable three new Management Districts in the extra territorial jurisdiction: Fort Bend County Municipal Management District No. 1, Generation Park and Waller County Improvement District No. 2.

Staff obtained consent for the second amendment to the Regional Participation Agreement between the City of Houston and The Woodlands Township adding land to the Woodlands boundary.

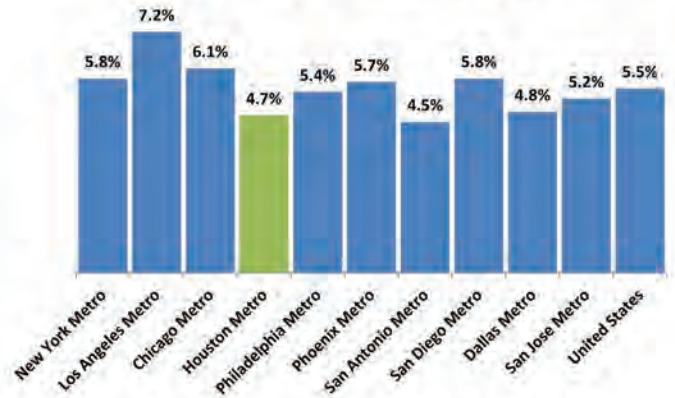


Understanding who we are

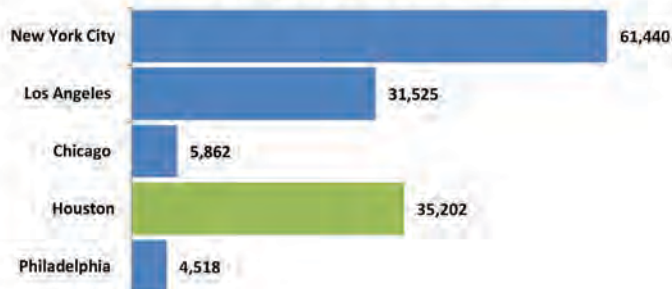
Staff compiled and updated 88 Super neighborhood profiles for the Department of Neighborhoods. Staff provides ongoing demographic and analytical support that includes the:

- Language Access Plan,
- How We Compare (10 City comparison),
- Building Permit and Plat Analysis, and
- Council District Demographics updates.

Unemployment Rate
Bureau of Labor Statistics: October 2014



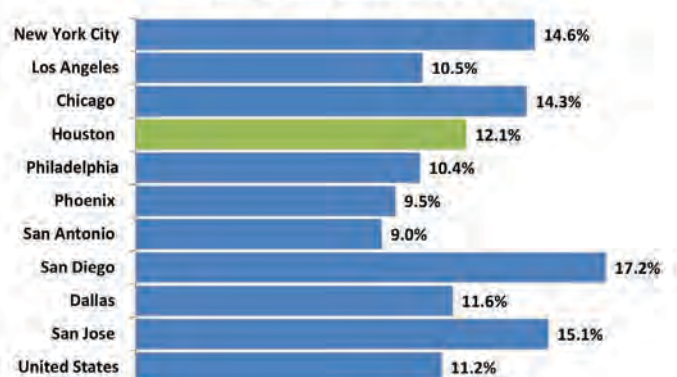
Population Numerical Change: 2012-2013
Five Largest Cities in the US



18 to 34 years: Millennial Generation
City of Houston



Graduate or Professional
Ten Largest Cities in the US





Houston Planning Commission

Pictured left to right: (top row) Planning Director Patrick Walsh, P.E.; Eileen Subinsky; Raymond Anderson, P.E.; Shaukat Zakaria; Jim Jard; Clay Forister, P.E.; Lisa Clark; Truman C. Edminster, III; Keiji Asakura; Mark Sikes; Mark J. Mooney, P.E.; (bottom row) Marty Stein; Algenita Davis; Vice Chair Sonny Garza; Chair Mark Kilkeny; Linda Porrás-Pirtle and Paul R. Nelson. Not pictured are: Susan Alleman, Kenneth J. Bohan, Fernando L. Brave, Antoine Bryant and Blake Tartt III

Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission

Pictured left to right: (back row) Mayor's Assistant for Cultural Affairs Minnette Boesel, Rob D. Hellyer, Anna Mod, Charles Stava, Edie Archer, David Bucek. (front row) Jorge Garcia-Herreros, Planning Director Patrick Walsh, P.E.; Chairman R. Maverick Welsh III and Debra Blacklock-Sloan. Not pictured are Douglas Elliot, John Cosgrove, Romulo Tim Cisneros, Ann Collum and Paul Homeyer



Tower Commission

Pictured left to right: Rodney Louis Jones, John R. Melcher, Chair Rob Todd, Christy B. Smidt and Dr. Shin-Shem Steven Pei. Not pictured is Antonio M. Salinas and Ignacio Osorio.



Planning and Development Department

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