

Urban Houston Framework Fact Sheet



What is an Urban Center?

- We will be asking you - stakeholders and the public - to weigh in on this definition, but generally speaking, an urban center is a place that has or potentially could have a combination of certain characteristics, such as transit options (bus, bike, rail, etc.), a mix of land uses (commercial, residential, civic, etc.) and diverse housing options (single family homes, condominiums, apartments, etc.).
- In other words, an Urban Center is any part of the City in which people from all walks of life can *live, work, and play*.

Are there different types of Urban Centers? How do Urban Centers relate to one another?

- Yes, urban centers may vary in size, scale, location in the city or function.
- A **Large Urban Center** caters to regional, national and international needs and may consist of tall buildings and a street grid that allows for pedestrian activity, retail activities and public transit access throughout. Examples of existing Major (or Large) Urban Centers in Houston might be the Medical District or The Galleria.
- A **Medium Urban Center** caters to city-wide needs and has a mix of mid to high-rise buildings, shopping centers, housing and transportation options. Examples of existing Regional (or Medium) Urban Centers in Houston might be the Upper Kirby area, Greenspoint district, or Rice University Village.
- A **Small Urban Center** caters to community needs and may have low-rise buildings (such as single-family houses, small apartment complexes or locally owned businesses) and a street grid that primarily encourages transit by personal automobile. Additionally, a Small Urban Center can be made up of multiple even smaller neighborhoods. Example of existing Community (or Small) Urban Centers in Houston could be the Second, Third or Fourth Ward neighborhoods.

Why plan for the development of Urban Centers in Houston, Texas? What are the goals and benefits?

- Explore the existing and potential connections between Urban Centers in Houston, and identify tools for better connecting these Centers throughout the future.
- Help integrate land use and transportation planning by coordinating land development standards with transportation investments and related regulations.
- Provide housing choices for everyone.
- Promote more walkable, bikeable areas with a balance of housing and jobs.
- Provide safe, reliable and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health.

How is this different from a livable centers plan or Transit Corridor Ordinance?

- This study encompasses a much larger area – the entire city of Houston.
- The study will develop a framework for “urban areas” that encompass regional sustainability principles.
- The study will include existing and future urban areas that are not on the currently planned Light Rail Transit Corridors.
- See http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/_urban/urban_cor.html for more detail.

What is the ultimate outcome of the Urban Houston Framework Case Study?

- A “toolbox” or “suite of incentives” the City of Houston can offer private developers to encourage better building practices in strategic areas of Houston.

Important Dates – Get Involved!

October 2012

- Project Kick Off (completed)

November 2012

- Needs Analysis (completed)

December 2012

- Values Workshop – Dec. 4th, 5th (completed)
- Online Poll Begins – Dec. 7th

January 2013

- Pilot Project Analysis
- Online Poll Ends – Jan. 30th

February/March 2013

- Vision Workshop – Feb. 13th, 14th
* *Vision Workshop time and location details to follow. Please check [website](#) prior to event!*
- Draft Urban Houston Framework Case Study Document

April 2013

- Implementation Workshop – April 11th, 12th
* *Implementation Workshop time and location details to follow. Please check [website](#) prior to event!*
- Final Urban Houston Framework Case Study Document

Important Links – Stay Connected!

[Houston-Galveston Area Council \(H-GAC\) Our Region Plan for Sustainable Development](#)
[City of Houston Planning & Development](#)
[City of Houston Public Works & Engineering](#)
[City of Houston Housing & Community Development](#)
[City of Houston Parks & Recreation](#)
[City of Houston Urban Corridor Planning/Transit Corridor Ordinance](#)
[Houston-Galveston Area Council \(H-GAC\)](#)
[Houston-Galveston Area Council \(H-GAC\) Facebook](#)
[Houston-Galveston Area Council \(H-GAC\) Livable Centers](#)
[Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County \(METRO\)](#)

Project Team

Clients: Houston-Galveston Area Council
City of Houston

Prime: Design Workshop

Sub Consultants: CobbFendley – Market analysis
Walter P Moore – Engineering
Urban Core Collaborative – Analysis/Urban planning
Petersgroup Consulting – Housing specialist

