

WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

A roadmap for the future of the city that is based on citizen values and vision

A General Plan is

- a citizen-based statement of long-term civic vision
- a guide or roadmap for setting short and long term goals, based on a vision and set of values deemed important by the community
- the official policy document that guides planning, public improvements, and development in a city
- a tool for coordinating existing and previous plans, reports, and studies
- a set of community values and priorities to set and guide goals, policies, and strategies necessary to deal effectively with the economic, social, and physical impact of existing and future development and growth

A general plan is a framework for translating a citizen-based statement of vision and values into strategies and policies to reach shared goals.

After adoption by City Council, The Houston General Plan will become the official policy guide for a coordinated approach to deal comprehensively with all issues. It becomes the primary decision-making tool for the City's Capital Improvements Program.

What does it cover?

A General Plan encompasses all geographic parts of the community and addresses interdependent quality of life issues simultaneously. It deals comprehensively with issues such as transportation, land development patterns, parks, streets and infrastructure, housing and neighborhoods, recreation and community facilities, downtown and other urban centers, the environment, public health and safety, education, and flooding.

How long does it last?

The General Plan would be a flexible document, updated annually, with major revisions at five-year intervals. A major purpose of the Plan is to formulate and institutionalize the process of public and private decision-making related to major issues confronting the city.



Why does Houston need a General Plan?

- It is required by law: Chapter 33, City of Houston Code of Ordinances.
 - A General Plan is the most effective mechanism for achieving the greatest leverage of taxpayer dollars.
 - A General Plan promotes more orderly, efficient, and attractive patterns of growth and urban revitalization.
 - It will maximize our competitiveness in the global economy by promoting a more attractive, vibrant metropolis, with diverse environments for living, working, and recreation.
- It will lead to improvement of the City's image and its ability to attract and keep intellectual capital in the 21st century global marketplace.
- It is the best approach to dealing with Houston's major problems – including congestion, air pollution, flooding, and beautification.
- It provides a framework to identify community goals and priorities for the future.
- The greatest benefit is the process, which brings citizens together to define a shared vision of the future.

Where did the Citizens' Vision come from?

Beginning in 2002, Blueprint Houston hosted a series of workshops for hundreds of City residents. That culminated in Citizens' Congress I in May, 2003, where 1,040 people discussed a set of goals and actions that had been developed at the earlier public workshops. They voted for the goals shown in this document, and for an action statement to ask City Council to adopt the vision and values as the basis for a general plan.

In 2007, 100 participants in the Leaders' Conference reviewed and discussed values that arose during the citizen processes, and agreed on this consensus statement of values and goals. The vision statements were derived from the values and will be presented for affirmation at a third Citizens' Congress in October, 2009.

Prepared by

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for



The mission of Blueprint Houston is to assure the creation of a General Plan for the City of Houston based on citizens' vision, values, and goals.