



BLUEPRINTHOUSTON
It's about your future



ENVISION HOUSTON REGION – HOUSTON WORKSHOP

Interim Report

WHAT HAPPENED?

On Saturday, September 17th, over 400 Houstonians interested in planning for the City's future, convened at the University of Houston Hilton. For four hours they used an innovative mapping exercise to explore alternative growth scenarios for Houston and identified land use transportation visions of the region in 2035 with 3 million more people.

WHO ATTENDED?

A diverse group of citizens from Super Neighborhoods, City Council, the Planning Commission, local universities, business and development groups, environmental communities, as well as planning experts from local and state agencies. Over fifty zip codes were represented.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Four additional workshops are being held in Conroe, West Harris County, Angleton and Baytown. The results will be compiled into four regional growth scenarios and evaluated in terms of their implications for air quality, mobility, cost and housing options. H-GAC will consider the results in development of the next Regional Transportation Plan. Other entities can use the results for their planning efforts.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Citizens produced forty maps of how the city could grow and develop. Twelve maps presented at the end of the workshop suggest four alternative growth scenarios. All reserved the bayou system and flood plains as open space.

- A radial pattern of development along freeways with new town centers.
- A concentric pattern of development concentrating growth inside Loop 610 and in town centers around Beltway 8.
- A series of satellite cities connected by rail to the airport and downtown.
- A continuation of growth along the edges with a scattering of more compact development within Beltway 8.

WHAT DID THE MAPS COMMUNICATE?

A preliminary survey of the maps indicates participants value green space, respect floodplains, seek cleaner air, and see the benefit of mixed use development. The maps reflect a preference for:

- A linear park system along bayous and no development in the flood plain.
- An improvement in home- to-work travel time.
- A combination of transportation services to maintain mobility.
- More town center development with housing close to commercial needs.

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS?

Groups of ten were asked to develop a growth plan for the Houston area to accommodate the 2-3 million people projected to move into the region over the next twenty years. Participants were given a map of the Houston area along with a set of chips that represent the amount of land required to support the increased number of households and jobs that follow the population forecast. Each group had the option of mapping new activity centers, town centers, and subdivisions as well as industrial and commercial areas. The chips could be traded in for different combinations of development. Cities like Los Angeles, Salt Lake City and Chicago have successfully used this exercise to create a common vision for future growth and development. John Fregonese, from Fregonese Calthorpe Associates, was the facilitator.

S P O N S O R S

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