



# Sunnyside Workshop

## Understanding Development and Preservation Tools

July 24, 2025



PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

## Purpose of the Workshop

To help residents understand how development works and how they can use the Minimum Lot Size (MLS) Program and tools like MapViewer to protect their neighborhood's character, stay informed about land use changes, and actively participate in planning decisions.

To assist residents in understanding development processes and utilizing the Minimum Lot Size (MLS) Program, as well as MapViewer, and other tools to preserve their neighborhood's character, stay informed about land use changes, and engage actively in planning decisions.

## Foundation of Development

## What is Chapter 42?

Regulates development of private property within the City of Houston city limits and some surrounding counties.

Subdivisions and Platting

Streets and Driveways

Building Lines and Lot Sizes

Land Use

Chapter 42 is one of the City of Houston's key development ordinances. It regulates how private property can be developed within Houston's city limits and in some cases, just beyond into surrounding areas.

This ordinance helps ensure that growth and development happen in a way that is orderly, safe, and consistent with the city's overall planning goals.

There are four main areas that Chapter 42 covers:

**Subdivisions and Platting** – This oversees how land is divided into lots and blocks, especially before new homes or businesses are built.

**Streets and Driveways** – This section ensures that access points, street widths, and street connections are planned properly.

**Building Lines and Lot Sizes** – This sets the rules for how close buildings can be to property lines and how large or small lots can be.

**Land Use** – While Houston doesn't have traditional zoning, this part still helps guide the types of development that can occur on a property.

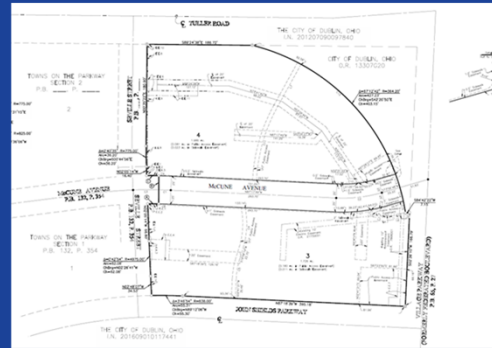
Throughout this presentation, we'll go into more detail on each of these topics so you can understand how they may apply to your property or neighborhood.

# What is a Plat?

A plat is a map based on a land survey that shows:

- How land is divided
- The classification or use of the land
- Changes to property boundaries

A plat is required before receiving building permits.



A plat is basically a map that's created from a land survey. It shows how a piece of land is divided and used.

When we talk about platting, we're referring to the process that determines:

How land is split up, for example, into lots for homes or businesses

What the land is intended to be used for, like residential, commercial, or public space

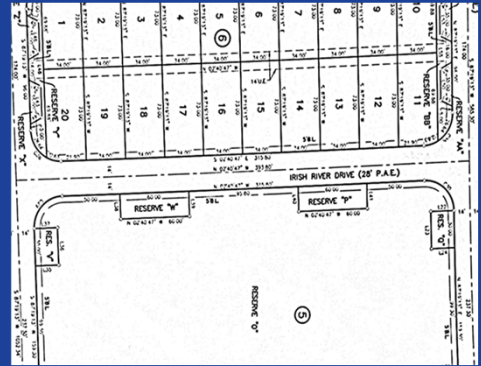
Any changes to property boundaries: This is an essential step in the development process.

Before you can get a building permit in Houston, you need an approved plat. So, whether someone is building a new house or redeveloping an area, platting is usually the first step to make it official and legal.

## Subdivision Plat

**Lot:** A tract of land designated for Single Family Residential (Ch. 42-180-189)

**Reserve:** A tract of land that is not restricted to Single Family Residential (Ch. 42-190)



This slide helps explain two important terms you'll often see on a subdivision plat: lot and reserve.

A lot is a piece of land that's designated specifically for Single-Family Residential use. These are typically the standard home sites you see in most neighborhoods. Chapter 42 lays out specific rules for these lots, including size, width, and building line requirements.

On the other hand, a reserve is a tract of land that is not limited to single-family use. This means it can be used for a variety of purposes, like commercial buildings, multifamily units, parks, or even stormwater detention, depending on how it's designated later.

The image to the right, you can see the smaller, numbered pieces labeled as lots, and the larger areas labeled as 'Reserve A' or 'Reserve B.' These reserves give flexibility in development, which is especially useful in mixed-use neighborhoods.

Understanding the difference between lots and reserves helps explain how a community is planned and what types of development can happen on different lots.

## When is Platting Required?

Platting is required when you:

- Subdivide a lot into multiple lots
- Add land to an existing lot or reserve
- Change the land use
- Improve land in acreage (original survey)



See Ch. 42-20 & 42-21 for details

Now let's talk about when platting is required.

Platting is needed when you're making changes to the property that affect how it's divided, used, or developed. Some of the most common examples include:

**Subdividing** a lot into multiple lots, for instance, if you're turning one large lot into four smaller ones.

**Adding land** to an existing lot or reserve, maybe you're combining properties or extending a boundary.

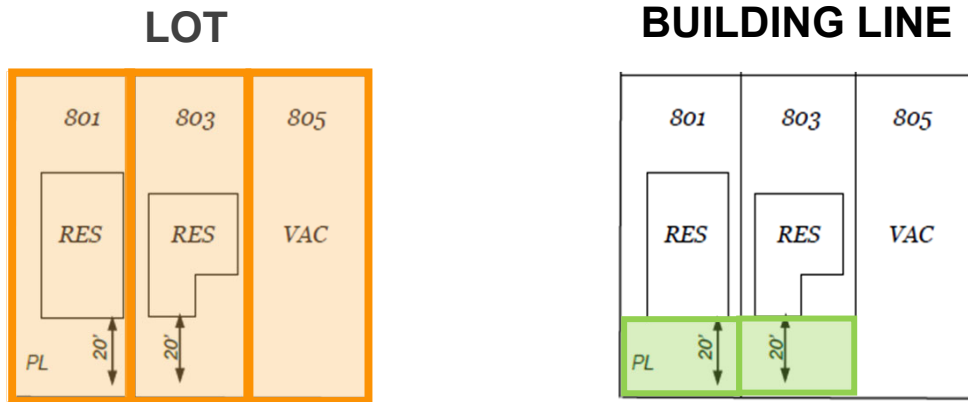
**Changing the land use**, like going from residential to commercial.

Or when you plan to **make improvements** to raw or undeveloped land that's still considered acreage, based on its original survey.

The image you see here shows the Houston Planning Commission, which reviews and approves plats in public meetings. So, when you submit a plat, it goes through a formal review process.

If you want more of the technical detail, you can look at Chapter 42, Sections 20 and 21, which lay out these requirements in more depth.

## Definitions



### Lot:

A residential lot refers to a piece of land designated for the construction of a single-family home or multiple residential units. It may vary in size, shape, and location.

Example: If a neighborhood has a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet, no new lot can be created smaller than this size, ensuring consistency in the neighborhood's layout

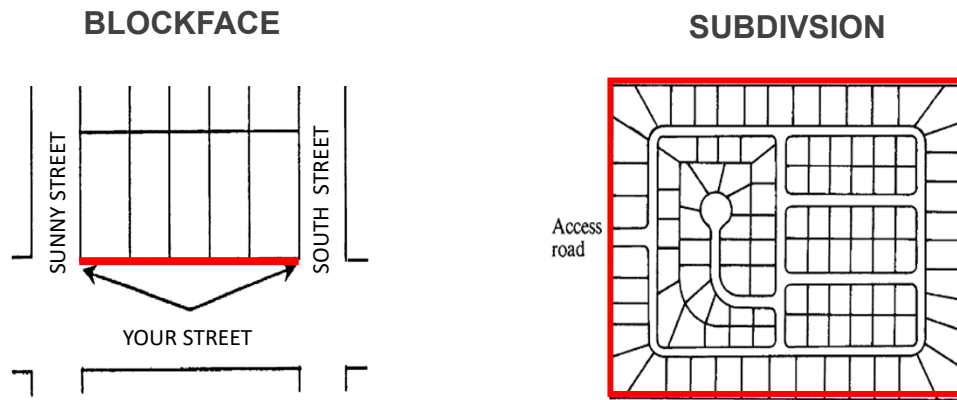
### Building Line:

The required minimum distance a building must be set back from the front property line, often referred to as the front setback.

Example: If most homes on a street are set back 20 feet from the sidewalk, a minimum building line of 20 feet would require new constructions to adhere to this alignment, maintaining the street's uniform appearance.



## Definitions



**Blockface:** One side of a street bounded by two consecutive intersections - effectively one edge of a city block. For instance, the north side of Elm Street between South Street and Sunny Street constitutes a single block face.

**Subdivision:** A subdivision is a larger parcel, tract, or lot of land into two or more smaller lots, plats, or sites, typically including new streets, blocks, easements, and infrastructure.

## Definitions

### SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL



A single family home



A home with a  
garage apartment



A duplex

A single-family home is a residential structure designed and occupied by a single household or family unit. It consists of one dwelling unit, stands alone.

Home with garage apartment: A single family detached dwelling as the main residence with a separately accessed, self-contained living unit built on the same parcel of land... called an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

A duplex is a residential building designed to contain two distinct dwelling units within a single structure; all located on a single lot or parcel. Each unit has its own private entrance, kitchen, bathroom(s), and living spaces.

## Deed Restrictions

Active deed restrictions in your neighborhood factors in the review of development.

Deed restrictions (also known as restrictive covenants) are **private agreements** placed on a property that limit how it can be used. These can include:

Minimum lot sizes or building setbacks

Prohibitions on certain land uses (e.g., no duplexes or commercial businesses)

Requirements for architectural style or fencing

Limits on subdivision of lots

## Class 3 (C3N Public Hearing)



The Houston Planning Commission has received an application to allow the partial replatting of [REDACTED] as recorded under Film Code [REDACTED] of the Harris County Map Records for the purpose of modifying the building line and restricted [REDACTED]

The new subdivision name is [REDACTED]

This is the written notice of a public hearing the City send to all owners of property within 300' of the boundary of the plat.

The Houston Planning Commission will hold a public meeting and public hearing on this replat. The Commission is the non-legislative body authorized to review and render decisions on subdivision applications and requests. The meeting at which this item will first be considered is listed below. A sign with this information has also been posted on the project site.

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING INFORMATION:**  
Thursday, October 3, 2024, beginning at 2:30 p.m.  
City Hall Annex Building, 900 Bagby Street  
City Council Chamber, Public Level, Houston, Texas

Members of the public may make comments or express concerns about the proposed project by either attending the meeting at City Council Chamber listed above or submit comments to: [speakercomments.pc@houstontx.gov](mailto:speakercomments.pc@houstontx.gov) or call the Planning Department at 832-393-6624 at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to sign up to speak.

Contact the applicant at [REDACTED] or the City of Houston Planning Department at (832)393-6600 for any additional information.

[Planning.publichearing@houstontx.gov](mailto:Planning.publichearing@houstontx.gov)

15

A Class 3 Public Hearing, also known as a C3N Class 3 Plat typically involves a replat.

A public hearing at the City of Houston Planning and Development Department is an official meeting where the public is invited to give input on proposed changes to land development, such as:

Replats or subdivisions (e.g., dividing a lot or changing lot lines)

Requests to modify building lines or land use

Projects that may impact surrounding properties or neighborhoods

Because of these changes, the City is required to notify property owners within 300 feet of the site. That's what this sign in the photo is doing, letting the community know a hearing will be held.

Neighbors will also receive a written notice in the mail, like the one shown on the right side of the slide. This outlines what's being requested, where and when the public hearing will take place, and how people can submit comments or attend the Planning Commission meeting to speak.

If community members have concerns or questions, they can email the Planning Department at the address shown here: [Planning.publichearing@houstontx.gov](mailto:Planning.publichearing@houstontx.gov). This process gives the community a voice before any changes are approved.

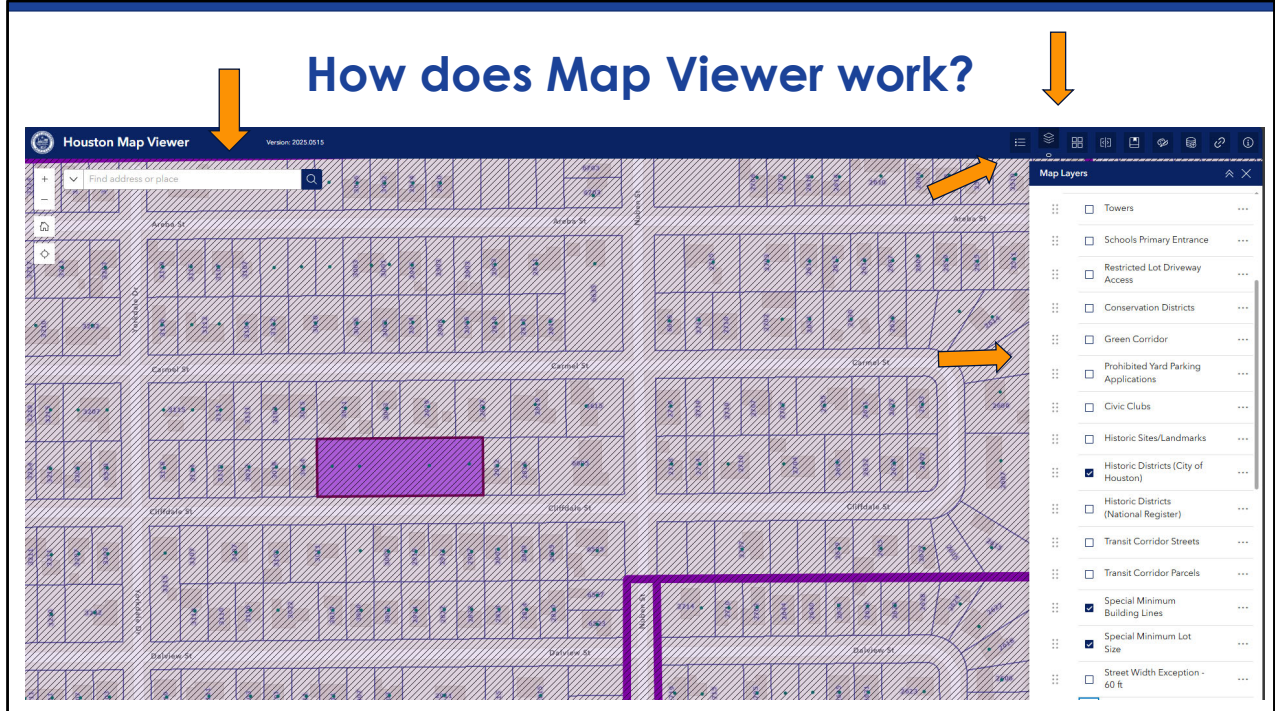
## **Introduction to MapViewer**

## What is Houston Map Viewer

**The City of Houston's online mapping tool that lets you find information about your neighborhood**

- Easily accessible online – [www.mycity.maps.arcgis.com](http://www.mycity.maps.arcgis.com)
- Available 24/7

## How does Map Viewer work?



The Houston Map Viewer is an online tool that helps residents, developers, and city staff view important planning and zoning information for properties across the city.

Here's how it works:

At the top left, there's a search bar where you can type in an address or place to zoom into a specific property.

On the right side, you'll see the Map Layers panel. This is where you can select the information you want to see, like Historic Districts, Minimum Lot Size protections, or Transit Corridor boundaries. Just check or uncheck the boxes to turn each layer on or off.

Along the top toolbar, there are tools that let you measure, print maps, draw, and identify parcel information.

In this example, you can see that several layers are turned on like 'Special Minimum Lot Size' and 'Historic Districts.' These shaded patterns and outlines show where those designations apply.

This is a powerful tool for understanding what rules and protections apply to a property, and it's available to the public, so anyone can use it to stay informed and involved in land use decisions.

## Map Viewer Exercise

---

**Houston Map Viewer**





## **Minimum Lot Size Example**

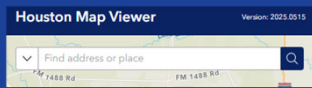
---

**707 Rutland St**

## How Do I Use Map Viewer?

1

Type in the  
property address



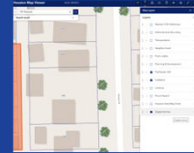
2

Turn on map layers



3

Look at the map



Who are you presenting to? Do you want to inform, persuade or both? Keep it simple.

## **Historic Preservation**

## What is Historic Preservation?

- Chapter 33. Code of Ordinances – adopted in 1995
- Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) created
- Designation of Landmarks and Historic Districts
- Certificates of Appropriateness required

The 'goal' of designation: to protect the historic character of the neighborhoods, to conserve historic materials, to ensure that new development is consistent with the historic character.

## Brief Timeline of Historic Preservation in Houston

**1853**

First nationwide historic group, the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, created to save George & Martha Washington's home in Mount Vernon, VA

**1966**

National Historic Preservation Act is passed by Congress to create the National Register of Historic Places and national landmarks

**1995**

Houston Councilwoman Eleanor Tinsley helps create Houston's first preservation ordinance and establishment of HAHC and landmark designations

**2005**

Houston City Council approves the creation of protected landmarks

**2007**

Houston Heights West is the first historic district designated

## Historic Preservation Process



Key steps in the City of Houston's Historic Preservation Process.

### Step 1: Designation

A property must first be officially designated by City Council as a Landmark or as part of a Historic District. This is what gives the property its preservation status and puts it under the review of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

### Step 2: Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

Once a property is designated, any changes to the exterior, whether it's repairs, additions, new construction, or even demolition, require a Certificate of Appropriateness. This is reviewed and approved by the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission, or HAHC. This step ensures changes align with the historic character of the building or district.

### Step 3: Permitting

After the COA is approved and signed, it becomes part of the permitting process. You can't get your building permits stamped without an approved COA if the project is in a historic district or involves a landmark.

So, in short: designation protects the property, the COA makes sure changes are appropriate, and permitting ensures compliance before construction begins.

## Landmarks



PLM – Kellum Noble House (1847)



LM – Birdsall P. Briscoe House (1936)



LM – St. Elizabeth Hospital (1947)



PLM – Reid Memorial Church (1941)



PLM – La Carafe (1860)

- Approximately 500 landmarks and protected landmarks currently protected
  - Range from structures built in 1800s to mid-century moderns
- Two types of landmark designations:
  - Landmark – ‘regular’ landmark; is not protected from demolition and 90-day waiver
  - Protected landmark – permanently protected; protected from demolition; no 90-day waiver
- Owners must give approval for designation
- Final decision made by City Council

## Historic Districts

- 23 Historic Districts designated by the City of Houston
- There are over 6,700 properties combined for all districts
- Districts only cover 2.7 square miles of 656 square miles in Houston
- The largest district contains 1,255 properties; and the smallest contains 8!

**Contributing:** building, structure, object or site that reinforces or that has conditions, which if reversed, would reinforce the cultural, architectural or historical significance of the historic district in which it is located, and that is identified as contributing upon the designation of the historic district in which it is located. The term also includes any structure that was identified as *potentially contributing* in any historic district designated prior to October 13, 2010.

**Noncontributing:** a building, structure, object or site that does not reinforce the cultural, architectural, or historical significance of the historic district in which it is located, and is identified as noncontributing upon the designation of the historic district in which it is located.



## **Honorary Street Markers**

## What are Honorary Street Markers?

**Honorary street markers** are placed **above** official street signs to recognize individuals or groups for a set time.

### Eligibility

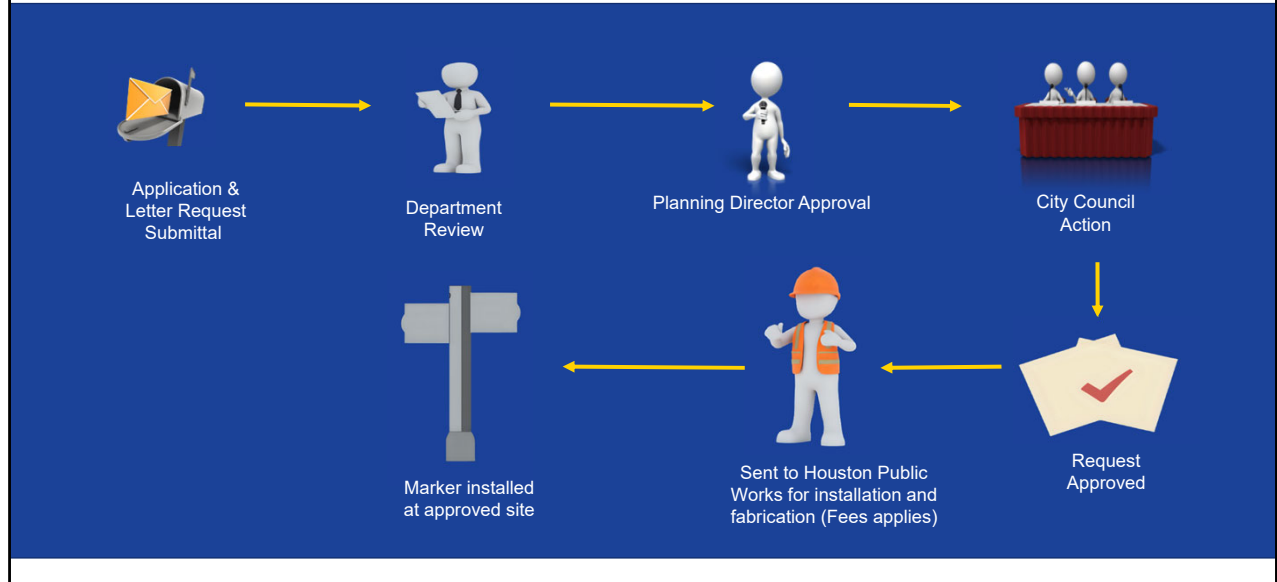
- Honoree must be deceased
- Notable contributions to the Houston community
- Support from residents and/or a Council Member



Today, I would like to briefly discuss another preservation tool, known as Honorary Street Markers. Honorary Street Markers are official street signs intended to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the community.

- The eligibility requirements are the honoree must be deceased. We will need a copy of the obituary, this can be sent with your application or emailed. The obituary can not be a digital link. We need to either receive a physical copy or the ability to download it from an email. Examples of these contributions could be individuals who gave back to the community by helping in programs, charities, or even volunteering their time.
- Support from residents can be in the form of letters or a petitions. A letter from the Council Members office is also accepted.

## Application Process



1. Complete application and letter of request, (look at slide 30 for application link)
  - a. accepted every 1st Wednesday of the month
  - b. mailed or submitted in person
2. Submit to:  
Director Vonn Tran, Planning & Development Dept.  
611 Walker St, 6th Floor, Houston, TX 77002
3. Department reviews submission
4. Sent to Director for recommendation
5. Sent to City Council for vote
6. If approved, resolution passed
7. Coordinate with Houston Public Works (fee applies)
  - A. a separate application for HPW must be filled out.
  - B. fee will also apply. Amounts depend on size, color, etc
8. Marker fabricated and installed at approved site

## Minimum Lot Size / Minimum Building Line

What is the MLS/MBL program and why does it exist?

Walkthrough of the application process from the applicant's perspective

- Examples of approved MLS/MBL areas

- Best practices for submission

Step-by-step explanation of the MLS/MBL process

What happens once MLS/MBL is approved:

- Permit holds

- How to view designations in MapViewer (including Historic overlays)

My name is Tonya Sawyer, with the Community and regional Planning Div. I'm here to talk about two smart planning tools administered by our department - Minimum Lot Size and Minimum Building Line – This ordinance / program helps preserve the character of our neighborhoods. Although Houston doesn't have zoning, these tools allow us to protect what makes our community unique.

## Neighborhood Preservation Tools

### Special Minimum Lot Size Block

Will prevent lots from  
being divided into  
smaller lots.

### Special Minimum Lot Size Area

Will maintain the look  
and feel of the  
neighborhood.

### Special Minimum Building Line Block

Will determine how  
close a building can be  
built to the front of a  
property line.

I'm going to talk about Lot Size and Building Line

#### Minimum Lot Size (MLS) -

Establishes a minimum square-footage threshold based on typical lot sizes in the area—usually aligning with at least 70% of surrounding parcels. This prevents further subdivision below that minimum, preserving lot size consistency.

#### Minimum Lot Size Area –

Establishes a minimum square-footage threshold based on typical lot sizes in the area—usually aligning with at least 80% of surrounding parcels. This prevents further subdivision below that minimum, preserving lot size consistency.

#### Minimum Building Line (MBL) -

Sets a minimum setback from the street, determined similarly by what most structures already adhere to—again, typically 70% or 60% in historic zones. New buildings must align with this established building line, maintaining the familiar streetscape.

#### Ordinances Dos and Don't

This Ordinance.....

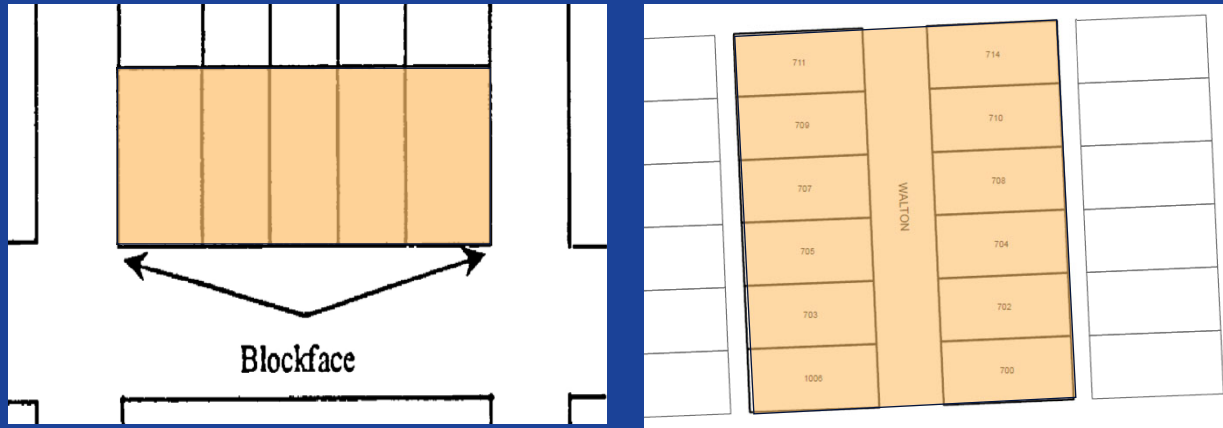
- **WILL** preserve lot size character
- **WILL** preserve single family use on lots (MLS ONLY)
- **WILL** determine how close buildings can be built to the front of property lines (MBL ONLY)

However, this ordinance...

- **WILL NOT** prevent new or larger homes from being built
- **WILL NOT** dictate a particular height, style of housing or building
- **WILL NOT** prevent existing commercial, multifamily or industrial uses from operating or rebuilding

**Special Minimum Lot Size Block  
(SMLSB)**

## Special Minimum Lot Size Block



This ordinance ensures that the lot sizes on one side of the street, or both sides, are consistent with the neighborhood's character. This rule helps maintain uniformity in lot sizes, preserving the block's original appearance.



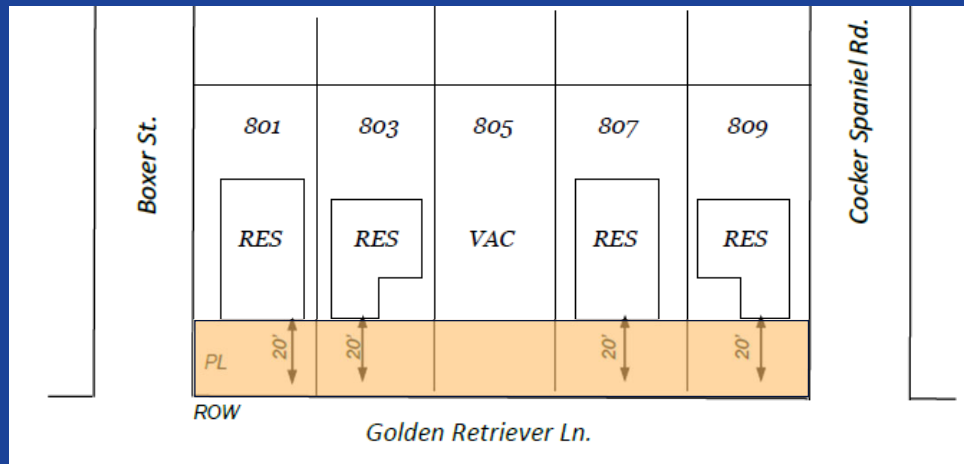
## Eligibility for a Special Minimum Lot Size Block

| Lot Size Block                   |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Number of blockfaces             | 1 – 2                   |
| Single Family Requirement        | 60% or more             |
| Initial Petition of Support      | 51% or more of the area |
|                                  |                         |
| Not covered by deed restrictions | 1 or more lots          |

To be eligible for a MLS Block, it will require the following:

**Special Minimum Building Line Block  
(SMBLB)**

## Special Minimum Building Line Block



This ordinance helps maintain the building line character on one side of the street or both sides to match the neighborhood's look and appeal.

## Eligibility for a Special Minimum Building Line Block


| Building Line Block              |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Number of blockfaces             | 1 – 2                   |
| Single Family Requirement        | 60% or more             |
| Initial Petition of Support      | 51% or more of the area |
| Support by Response Forms        | N/A                     |
| Not covered by deed restrictions | 1 or more lots          |

To be eligible for a MBL Block, it will require the following:

**Minimum Lot Size & Minimum Building Line  
Block Process**

# Application

Special Minimum Lot Size Block  
(SMLSb) Application

 **PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

---

**Main Applicant Information (required)**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a property owner within the application boundary? YES ☐ NO ☐ If no, what is your relation to the application boundary? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you have a preliminary meeting with the Planning and Development Department? YES ☐ NO ☐ If yes, what was the date of the meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the application boundary have deed restrictions? YES ☐ NO ☐ If yes, do they address a Minimum Lot Size? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the location of the application boundary. (Example: "North side of Golden Retriever Drive between Boxer and Schnauzer Streets" or "Block 15, Lots 1-5, in Cocker Spaniel Subdivision")  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Alternate Applicant Information (optional)**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of alternate applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Application Information (STAFF USE ONLY)**

File Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Super Neighborhood: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Council District: \_\_\_\_\_ Planner Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

5

Applications must be completed by a property owner. We encourage you to have a co-applicant / alternate applicant. If we need to reach you for any thing we have two sources of contact.

# Sample Notification Sign

## Special Minimum Lot Size Block (SMLSB) Application



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

| Submittal Requirements (Please check and complete)  |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Completed application form (page 5)   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sample of Notification Sign (page 6)  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Evidence of support signed by lot owners within the boundary area (page 7)                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Copy of deed restrictions, if applicable***   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Map or sketch showing the address, land use, and size of all lots within the boundary area (page 8) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

\*\*\*DISCLAIMER: The Planning Department reviewed the deed restrictions you submitted for your subdivision and noted no language addressing a minimum lot size or minimum building line requirement. As such, revisions to Chapter 42 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances extending the minimum lot size and minimum building line requirements to neighborhoods within the corporate boundaries of the City of Houston that do not have a minimum lot size or minimum building line established in their deed restrictions are applicable to your subdivision. It's important to understand, however, that Planning's review and decision regarding the eligibility of your subdivision to avail itself of the protections set forth in Chapter 42 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances is based solely on the instruments you have provided and which purport to be the most recent, valid version of your subdivision's deed restrictions. The City of Houston is making no assurances or representations regarding the actual validity of your deed restrictions. You should consult with a private attorney if you have any questions or concerns about your deed restrictions.

### Sample Notification Sign (Fill in the blank)

The applicant is responsible for obtaining and posting a minimum of two (2) signs per blockface within the boundary of the proposed Special Minimum Lot Size Block within ten (10) days of written notice from the Planning and Development Department. Planning and Development staff may approve an alternative number of signs for the application of a Special Minimum Lot Size Block upon determining that the signs will provide sufficient notice within the application area. Each sign shall be at least two feet by three feet (2' x 3'), face the street, and be legible from the street. Applicants are responsible for contacting Planning and Development Staff once the signs are posted. The applicant shall use reasonable efforts to maintain the signs until the Planning and Development Director or the Houston Planning Commission has approved an application. Applicants shall include the name of each subdivision in the application on the notification sign.

3'-0" min.

**NOTICE OF  
SPECIAL MINIMUM LOT SIZE BLOCK APPLICATION:**

The Planning and Development Department has received an application for the establishment of a Special Minimum Lot Size Block (Section 42-197 of the Code of Ordinances) for

(description of block and subdivisions) within the application boundary

For information, contact the City of Houston Planning and Development Department at (832) 393-6600.

2'-0" min.

Sample of notification signs. Signs must post within ten days of notification starting the protest period. Here is an example of what the signs should read.  
Talk about making parts of the process easy suppling the verbiage just fill in address block.

# Signature of Support

## Special Minimum Lot Size Block (SMLSBL) Application



PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

### Evidence of Support for a Special Minimum Lot Size Block

*Below are signatures of property owners within the proposed Special Minimum Lot Size Block boundary who support the request to preserve the character of the existing lot sizes and the creation of a Special Minimum Lot Size Block for the following area: (Example: "North and south side of Winter Lane between Spring Avenue and Summer Avenue" or "Block 15, Lots 1-5, in Four Seasons Subdivision")*

By signing this evidence of support, I hereby represent:

- (1) That I am the lot owner or representative of the property listed with my signature, and
- (2) I support the petition to create a Special Minimum Lot Size Block.

|                                     |          |            |
|-------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| Property Owner (Please Print Name): | Address: |            |
| Signature:<br>X                     | Date:    | Telephone: |
| Property Owner (Please Print Name): | Address: |            |
| Signature:<br>X                     | Date:    | Telephone: |
| Property Owner (Please Print Name): | Address: |            |
| Signature:<br>X                     | Date:    | Telephone: |
| Property Owner (Please Print Name): | Address: |            |
| Signature:<br>X                     | Date:    | Telephone: |
| Property Owner (Please Print Name): | Address: |            |
| Signature:<br>X                     | Date:    | Telephone: |

For any questions on the Special Minimum Lot Size Block, call the Planning and Development Department at (832) 393-6600 or visit the department's website at [www.houstontxplanning.com](http://www.houstontxplanning.com).

¡ATENCIÓN! Si necesita ayuda en español o gustaría recibir más información acerca de este asunto, comuníquese al número 832-393-6609.

Signatures from property owners are also required showing support of the application.  
(51% support)

As the applicant, you should reference HCAD to verify owners on your block before getting your signatures, we only count property owners.



# Map Sketch of Block

## Special Minimum Lot Size Block (SMLSB) Application

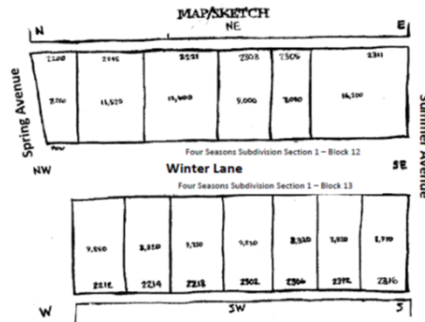


PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### Sample Map Sketch (Include Map Sketch in Application)

As part of the Special Minimum Lot Size Block application, applicants must provide a map sketch of the proposed application area. It should look similar to the drawing below. Information for each lot within the proposed Special Minimum Lot Size Block shall be shown on the drawing that includes the following:

- The land use of any lot that is **NOT** single-family residential. Example: multifamily, commercial, a park, or vacant land.
- Any lot that may have a minimum lot size previously established by deed restrictions.

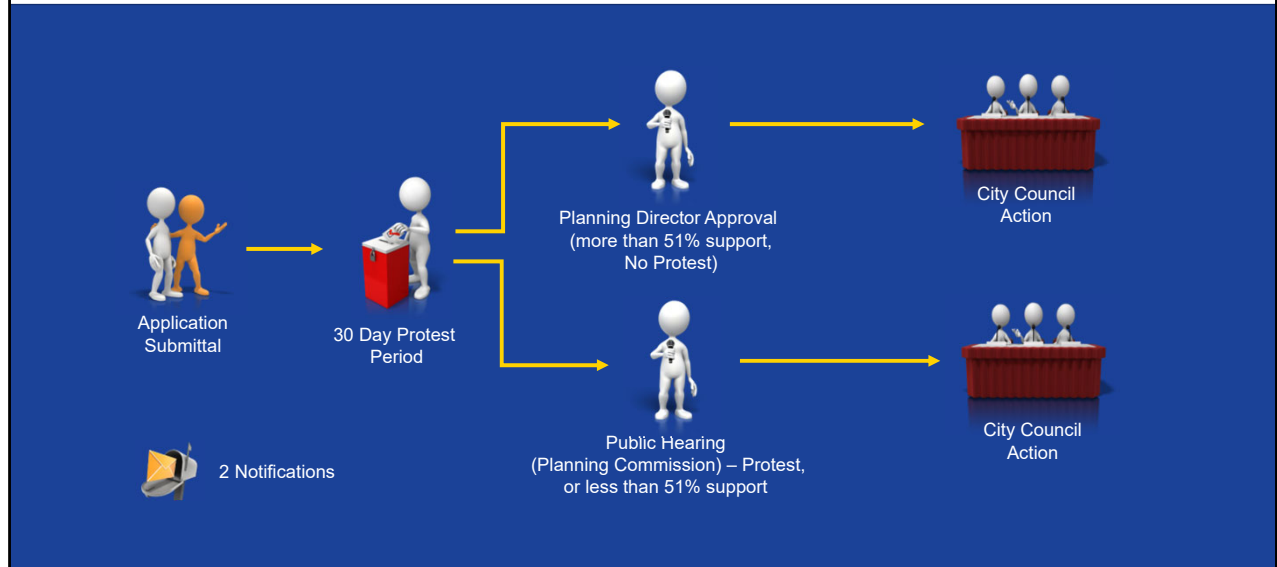


If at any time you need assistance, please call the Planning and Development Department at (832) 393-6600 or visit the department's website at [www.houstonplanning.com](http://www.houstonplanning.com).

¡ATENCIÓN! Si necesita ayuda en español o gustaría recibir más información acerca de este asunto, comuníquese al número 832-393-6659.

A drawing or sketch map of the proposed blockface area is needed. You can use Houston map viewer to get an outline of the proposed boundary to submit, or hand draw it as shown on the application.

## Lot Size/Building Line Block Process



They're 7 steps to the application process they are also included in the application packet:

### Step 1: Meet with Staff of the Planning and Development Department (Optional)

Applicants may choose to meet with Planning and Development staff before submitting an application. At the meeting, the applicant should bring a map with the proposed boundary and a copy of any existing deed restrictions. To schedule a pre-submittal meeting, contact Community and Regional Planning at (832) 393-6600.

### Step 2: Submit a Complete Application

A complete application package must be mailed through the US Postal Service or hand-delivered during standard business hours to the Planning and Development Department.

**WE DO NOT EXCEPT APPLICATIONS BY EMAIL OR FAX.** If the application is determined to be incomplete, it will be returned with an explanation of what is needed to make it complete. Within two (2) business days, Planning and Development staff will contact the applicant(s) regarding whether their application is accepted or rejected. If the application is rejected; staff will provide an explanation of any necessary revisions. It is important to note that any subdivision or development plats submitted within seven (7) days after a Special Minimum Lot Size Block application is accepted will NOT be subject to the lot size requirement.

### **Step 3: Application Review and Notification Signs**

Planning and Development staff will review the application, and within 30 business days, determine if the application meets eligibility requirements. After it has been determined that the application meets eligibility requirements staff will notify the applicant(s) and send an instruction letter for the posting of notification signs within the application boundary area. The applicant will have 10 days from when they receive the instruction letter to post the signs.

### **Step 4: 30-Day Protest Period**

Within 15 days of receiving a complete application, the Planning and Development Department will send a notification to property owners within the proposed boundaries, as well as the District Council Member. The notifications will include instructions on how property owners may object to this designation. Any objections must be made in writing within 30 days of the date of the notice.

### **Step 5: Department Review of Protest Responses**

At the end of the thirty days, one of the following actions will occur:

- the application will be sent to the City Council if it has at least 51% support with no protests; or
- the application will be sent to the Planning Commission for a public hearing if:
  - a) it has at least 51% support and has received protests, or
  - b) it has less than 51% support but has received no protests.

A notification letter will be sent to property owners no less than 15 days before the Planning Commission hearing date. Applications recommended for approval by the Commission will be forwarded to the City Council. Applications denied by the Commission will not be forwarded to the City Council.

### **Step 6: Attend the Planning Commission Public Hearing**

A letter indicating the time, date, and place of the Planning Commission meeting will be sent to all property owners within the proposed SMLSB. Members of the public may present comments about the SMLSB at the public hearing.

After the public hearing, the Commission will consider whether or not to recommend that the City Council establish the SMLSB. If the Commission recommends that the City Council establish the SMLSB, the Planning and Development Director will refer the application to the City Council. If the application is denied, the decision of the Commission will be final.

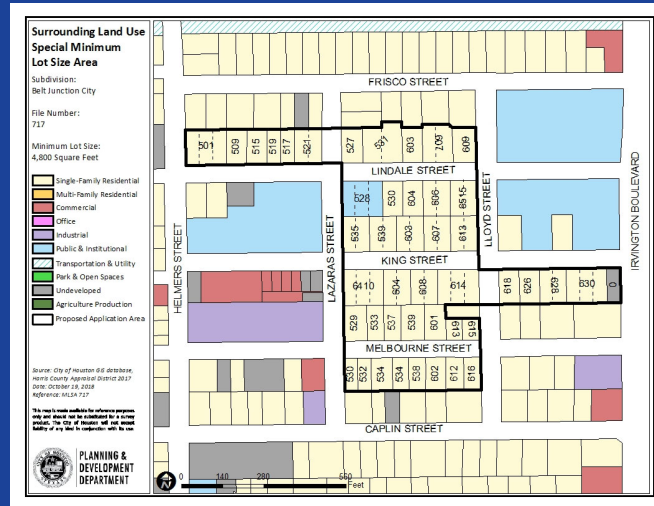
### **Step 7: City Council Action**

City Council will consider all Special Minimum Lot Size Block applications that are approved by the Planning Commission or forwarded by the Director of Planning and Development. The City Council's action to approve or deny the designation is final. Persons wanting to address the City Council during the public

comment session of the meeting should contact the City Secretary at (832) 393-1100 or [citysecretary@houstontx.gov](mailto:citysecretary@houstontx.gov).

**Special Minimum Lot Size Area**

## Minimum Lot Size Area Example



The lot size area must consist of a minimum of five contiguous blocks, including cross streets. This boundary applies specifically to single-family lots. There is a block face with a significant lot used for commercial purposes that is inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood, we will evaluate that block. Can they apply for a Minimum Lot Size Block application? No, therefore, we recommend modifying the boundary to exclude that block.

Explain the Map:

Original boundary vacant, commercial and industrial lots it did not meet the 80% threshold of SFR, so the boundary was modified

## Eligibility for a Special Minimum Lot Size Area

| Building Line Block              |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Number of blockfaces             | 5 or more blockfaces<br>(composed of 5 lots or more) |
| Single Family Requirement        | 80% or more  |
| Initial Petition of Support      | 10% or more of lots                                  |
| Support by Response Forms        | 55% of area  |
| Not covered by deed restrictions | 10% or more of lots                                  |

To be eligible for a MLS Area, it will require the following:

Applying for a Minimum Lot Size Area (MLSA) designation is a significant decision that involves a detailed and time-consuming process requiring patience and commitment. If you feel strongly, that is the best option for your protection, we can discuss further after the meeting.

# QUESTIONS?

Call us at **832-393-6600**, or visit us online at **[houstonplanning.com](http://houstonplanning.com)**



PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

## Next Steps:

- If interested, discuss this with your neighbors
- Call the Planning Department with questions



**Thank You!**



**PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

832-393-6600 | [www.houston.tx.gov/planning](http://www.houston.tx.gov/planning)