



BLUEPRINTHOUSTON
It's about your future

May 23, 2023

Ms. Margaret Wallace Brown
Director, City of Houston Planning Department
c/o Ms. Suvidha Bandi, Principal Planner, Livable Places
suvidha.band@houston.tx.gov

Dear Director Wallace Brown:

On behalf of Blueprint Houston, thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on proposed changes to Chapter 42 recommended through the Livable Places initiative. Our mission is to promote the evolution and implementation of Plan Houston as the basis for planning the City's future. We believe these changes will advance Plan Houston's vision for a healthy and prosperous future by orienting our growth around the plan's strategies and actions.

Adopted in 2015 as Houston's first general plan, Plan Houston identifies a community-driven vision and goals for Houston's long-term future and proposes core strategies and actions to achieve them. We have reviewed the proposed changes to Chapter 42 and have found the following areas of alignment:

Core Strategy: Spend Money Wisely

Action 6: Ensure that long-term growth supports the City's fiscal viability.

More dense housing should lead to a larger tax base on the same amount of land. By facilitating the development of more housing diversity and missing middle housing, the City is better able to permit more dense housing products and ways to subdivide land. More options mean developers and homeowners can be more creative about how they bring other housing products to market that will be financially viable.

Core Strategy: Grow Responsibly

Action 1: Engage with the community to identify local needs and pursue neighborhood goals.

Livable Places has been an iterative effort for the last two years with participation from community groups, developers, housers, and other local government partners. The Livable Places Committee has engaged in dialogue and debate and come to consensus on a series of recommendations for the City of Houston's Planning Commission to consider.



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Core Strategy: Grow Responsibly

Action 4: Adopt policies supporting existing and future activity centers that enable a combination of live, work, and play options.

Proposed regulatory reforms would allow for the development of more housing in high-demand areas, such as adjacent or near major activity centers, where land prices are higher due to the locational attributes of proximity to employment/office uses.

Core Strategy: Support our Global Economy

Action 5: Improve and promote Houston's Quality of Life to attract and retain talented and creative workers and business.

Enabling more "missing middle" housing options will inevitably allow our City of Houston a wider range of households with varying housing needs (i.e. less than half of all newly formed households in Houston are nuclear families, source: Kinder Institute State of Housing 2020 report). That means more smaller dwelling units will be developed which will play a pivotal role in housing service workers, gig economy workforce, and other creative industries that support our economic competitiveness.

Core Strategy: Foster an Affordable City

Action 4: Provide Options to make affordable, workforce, and mixed-income housing development more attractive to private investment.

Action 7: Leverage external funds and incentives to build additional affordable housing.

Flexibility in building more missing middle housing is expected to incentivize more private investment in cost-attainable housing.

Core Strategy: Foster an Affordable City

Action 8: Encourage mixed-income communities.

High-demand communities may take these incentives on and build multiplex or ADU housing options which would in turn lead to more social and economic integration of the population in Houston.



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Core Strategy: Foster an Affordable City

Action 10: Ensure regulatory policies support housing affordability.

Flexibility in building more missing middle housing is expected to incentivize more private investment in cost-attainable housing and offer greater variety in housing products for the population.

In conclusion, as a resource and catalyst for better long-term planning for Houston's future growth and development, Blueprint Houston sees these changes as a critical step towards implementing Plan Houston. On behalf of our board of directors, I express our appreciation of the City of Houston's focus on these issues to ensure Plan Houston's vision is realized.

Sincerely,

Rogene Gee Calvert, President
Board of Directors