



# City Ordinance Process Overview and Best Practices

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Sallie Alcorn, Council Member, At-Large Position 5

Mike VanDusen, Super Neighborhood Council 22

The Washington Avenue Coalition / Memorial Park

City of Houston  
Super Neighborhood Alliance (SNA)

**Background:** City of Houston ordinances contain forty-seven chapters that address a wide array of topics. Modifying an ordinance requires an understanding of the process, collaborating with others, presenting your recommendations to, and working with COH departments and elected officials to enact change.

### **SNA Pulse Survey Themes:**

-  Process overview.
-  Focus on advocacy and policy impact.
-  Best practices: Promote SNC leadership development.

### **Objectives:**

- Educate SNC leaders of the City of Houston ordinance process using real-world scenarios.
- Provide references to increase constituent knowledge of COH ordinances.
- Increase SNA effectiveness through collaboration and knowledge sharing.



# Find City of Houston Ordinances

Where to locate ordinance changes?

[CODE COMPARATIVE TABLE - ORDINANCES | Code of Ordinances | Houston, TX | Municode Library](#)

Houston, Texas - Code of Ordinances / CODE COMPARATIVE TABLE - ORDINANCES

VERSION: **JUL 6, 2022 (CURRENT)**

- Chapter 40 - STREETS AND SIDEWALKS
- Chapter 41 - STREET NAMES AND SITE ADDRESSES
- Chapter 42 - SUBDIVISIONS, DEVELOPMENTS AND PLATTING
- Chapter 43 - POOL AND SPA SAFETY
- Chapter 44 - TAXATION
- Chapter 45 - TRAFFIC
- Chapter 46 - VEHICLES FOR HIRE
- Chapter 47 - WATER AND SEWERS
- CODE COMPARATIVE TABLE - 1968 CODE
- CHARTER COMPARATIVE TABLE - SPECIAL ACTS
- CODE COMPARATIVE TABLE - ORDINANCES** (modified)
- MEMORANDUM HISTORY TABLE
- STATUTORY REFERENCE TABLE

Ordinance Number	Effective Date	Section	Action	Description
		4		<a href="#">26-761</a>
		5		<a href="#">26-772(a)</a>
		6		<a href="#">26-781(a)</a>
		7		<a href="#">26-782(a), (b)</a>
<a href="#">2022-267</a>	4-13-2022	2	Added	<a href="#">14-169</a>
		3	Added	<a href="#">34-35(i)–(k)</a>
		4	Added	<a href="#">34-59(k)–(m)</a>
<a href="#">2022-307</a>	4-20-2022	2	Added	<a href="#">Ch. 28, Art. XXI, 28-671</a> —28-673
		3	Added	<a href="#">28-411</a>
<a href="#">2022-341</a>	5- 4-2022	2		<a href="#">7-51</a>
		3	Added	<a href="#">7-63.1</a>
		4	Added	<a href="#">7-125(c)</a>
<a href="#">2022-344</a>	5- 4-2022	3		<a href="#">44-138</a>
		4		<a href="#">Ch. 44, Art. IV(note)</a>
<a href="#">2022-399</a>	5- 4-2022	2(Exh. A)		<a href="#">30-1</a> —30-18
<a href="#">2022-454</a>	6- 8-2022	2		<a href="#">44-4(a)</a>
<a href="#">2022-455</a>	6- 8-2022	2		<a href="#">2-3.1</a>

[< CHARTER COMPARATIVE TABLE - SPECIAL ACTS](#)
[CODE COMPARATIVE TABLE - ORDINANCES >](#)





## Minimum Lot Size Designations

Lot size designations have been available to residential property owners for several decades. They allow owners to help preserve the current character of their neighborhood.

Residents complete a formal application and submit it to the Planning and Development Department. If the application meets the criteria required by the city, the application will be forwarded to city council for final approval.

That approval is given by passing an ordinance on behalf of the applicants, creating the lot size designation.



### Learn How You Can Preserve the Character of Your Neighborhood

New land development rules in the City of Houston mean more Houstonians can maintain their neighborhood's established character.

- Preserve the existing lot sizes and prevent incompatible development.
- Ensure that future buildings conform to existing building lines.

To get an application for your neighborhood or to ask for more information, contact:

Planning and Development  
Department  
(832) 393-6600  
[www.houstonplanning.com](http://www.houstonplanning.com)

#### What is it?

A *Special Minimum Lot Size* designation prevents lots from being divided below a certain size, which in most cases, prevents redevelopment into townhomes. For example, if 5,000 square feet was established as the *Special Minimum Lot Size* for an area, no lots within that area could be subdivided into lots smaller than 5,000 square feet.

A *Special Minimum Building Line* designation prevents new buildings from being built closer to the street than a portion of the buildings that are already there. For example, if a block of homes has been constructed where the typical distance from the front of the building to the sidewalk is 20 feet, new construction must be placed no closer than 20 feet from the sidewalk.

#### How can your neighborhood get these designations?

Up until recently, these tools applied only to neighborhoods located inside the 610 Loop. Now, they are available to neighborhoods throughout Houston, depending on certain criteria. The Planning and Development Department staff can help you determine if your neighborhood qualifies. They can also help you complete the application process.

Training meetings are being held all over Houston throughout the summer. Go to [www.HoustonPlanning.com](http://www.HoustonPlanning.com) to see a schedule of meetings. Or, contact the Planning and Development Department at 832-393-6600.

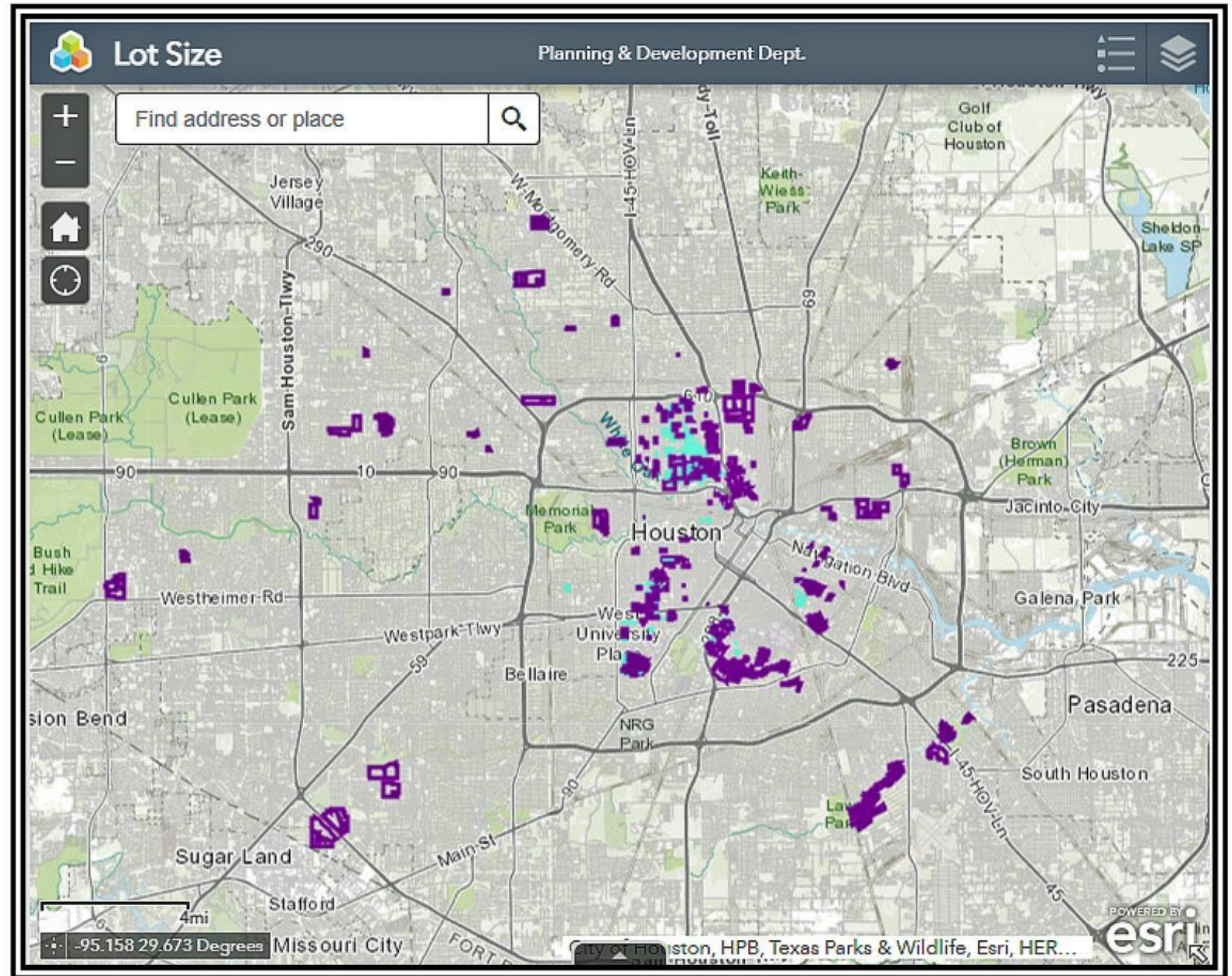


PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT



## Existing Designations

About 1,000 designations have been approved since 2002. This has resulted in about 25,000 residential properties residing in lot size restricted areas.





## What Can Super Neighborhoods Do?

- Learn what a minimum lot size designation can do for a community.
- Use information on the Planning and Development website to understand the basics of creating and submitting an application.
- Make constituent communities in a super neighborhood aware of the benefits of living in a designated area.
- Work with residents to ensure their properties will qualify for a designation, and that they have the information required to complete an application.
- Be available to answer questions as an application is being worked on by residents.