

Special Minimum Building Line Block Renewal

Section 42-170 of Chapter 42 of the Code of Ordinances



**PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

This packet provides the information and forms needed to apply for the renewal of a Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB). Staff from the Planning and Development Department will check whether your application meets the renewal requirements and can help you through the process.

This packet includes:

- A Special Minimum Building Line Block (SMBLB) Renewal Application
- A Step-By-Step Guide for Applicants
- Example of boundary description and notification sign
- Frequently asked questions and helpful tips

Before you submit the application, you must meet with a staff member for a preliminary review. This meeting helps confirm whether your application meets the approval criteria which are:

1. The proposed area has an identifiable building line character, considering the age of the neighborhood, the age of structures in the neighborhood, existing evidence of a common plan and scheme of development, and other relevant factors;
2. The establishment of the proposed special minimum building line requirement will further the goal of preserving the building line character of the proposed special minimum building line block; and
3. The application complies with the application requirements of section 42-171 of this Code and the eligibility requirements of section 42-170 of this Code.

Renewal applications can only be submitted starting two years before the current ordinance expires.

A completed application package, after you have had a successful preliminary meeting, may be mailed or delivered in person during regular business hours to:

Planning and Development Department
Attn: Community and Regional Planning
611 Walker Street, 6th Floor
Houston, TX 77002

If you have questions or would like to schedule your required preliminary meeting, please contact the Community and Regional Planning Division at (832) 393-6637. More information is also available at www.houstonplanning.com.

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

Application for Special Minimum Building Line Block Renewal



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PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

Application Information (Required)

Describe the location of the application area.

Example: 1600-1700 block of Planning St, north and south sides, between Renew St and Welcome Ave.

Date and name of Planner at your Preliminary Meeting: _____

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Does the boundary have active deed restrictions that establish a lot size? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

If yes, are your deed restrictions attached to this application ☐

If not, how do you know that you don't have deed restrictions

Main Applicant (Required)

Applicant's Name: _____

If not a property owner within the boundary, what is your role? _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail address: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

****By signing this application, I certify that the information provided is true and correct.****

Co - Applicant (Optional)

Applicant's Name: _____

If not a property owner within the boundary, what is your role? _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail address: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

****By signing this application, I certify that the information provided is true and correct.****

STAFF USE ONLY

File Number: _____

Super Neighborhood: _____

Council District: _____

Planner Assigned: _____

Historic District: _____

Restricted ☐

Planner Notes:

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Step-By-Step Guide For Applicants



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STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

☐ **Step 1: Preliminary Meeting with the Planning Department**

To schedule, call Community and Regional Planning at (832) 393-6637.

☐ **Step 2: Submit a complete renewal application to the Planning Department**

Mail or hand-deliver the full application to the Planning and Development Department. If anything is missing, the application will be returned with instructions. Within two business days, staff will notify you whether the application is accepted or needs revisions. If it is accepted it will be added to the City's website and will notify the District Council Member.

☐ **Step 3: Planning Application Review**

Staff will begin to review the application and determine eligibility within 30 business days. If your application is ineligible, you will be contacted by staff.

☐ **Step 4: Posting of Signs and 30-Day Protest Period**

If your application is eligible, staff will deem your application complete and will send you instructions for posting notification signs. Signs must be posted within 10 days of the date of the letter. Simultaneously, staff will send notifications to property owners within the proposed boundaries. The notifications will include instructions on how property owners may support or protest the application. Any protest must be made in writing within 30 days of the date of the letter.

☐ **Step 5: After 30-Day Protest Period**

After the 30-day period:

- If there is no protest, the application is forwarded to City Council.
- If there is a protest, the application goes to the Planning Commission for a public hearing.

☐ **Step 6: Planning Commission - Public Hearing (if applicable)**

All property owners will receive a letter with the hearing date, time, and location. The public may provide comments. After the hearing, the Commission will decide whether to recommend renewal to City Council. If the Commission denies the request, the decision is final.

☐ **Step 7: City Council Action**

City Council will consider renewal applications recommended by the Planning Commission. Their decision to approve or deny the renewal is final. To speak during the public comment session, contact the City Secretary at (832) 393-1100 or citysecretary@houstontx.gov.

☐ **Step 8: Recordation**

After City Council approval, the Planning Department will file the ordinance with Harris County Property Records for recordation.

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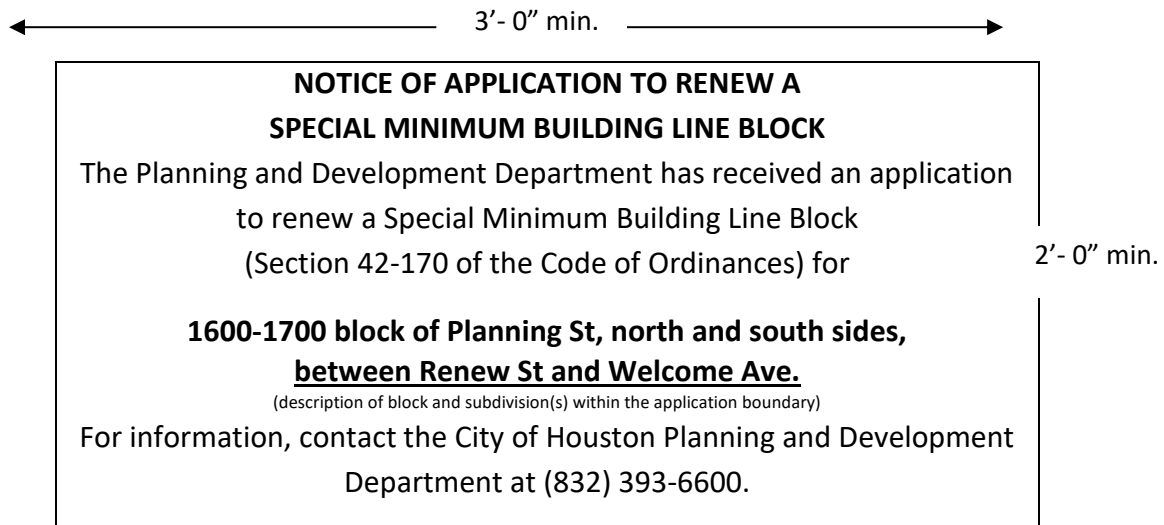
Example of Boundary Description and Notification Signs



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EXAMPLE OF A NOTIFCATION SIGN

The applicant must post at least two signs per blockface within the SMLB boundary within 10 days of receiving written notice. Staff may approve a different number of signs if appropriate. Signs must be at least 2' x 3', face the street, and be easy to read. After posting, the applicant must notify Planning staff and keep the signs in place until the application is approved. Each sign must list the subdivision name(s).



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Frequently Asked Questions



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Frequently Asked Questions

What is an SMLB renewal application?

It lets property owners extend the existing Special Minimum Building Line Ordinance for their block. This means any new structure must follow the established building line. A property owner or neighborhood representative may submit the renewal application.

Can the building line change during the renewal process?

No. Renewals will only extend the existing building line for another 20 years. For example, a SMLB that is 15-feet will remain 15 feet.

What can I build on my lot?

The SMLB only controls how far a structure must sit from the front property line. It does not regulate land use or building design. If deed restrictions require a deeper setback, the stricter rule applies.

Can I rebuild or add to my property?

Yes. Homes, commercial buildings, and multifamily buildings can be rebuilt or improved. Any new building or addition must meet the SMLB. Porches that can be occupied or furnished must also meet the SMLB.

What happens during the application process?

An applicant will submit a complete renewal application. Staff reviews it and notifies property owners within the boundary area once it's completed.

What if I support or disagree with the application?

Owners will receive notice of a 30-day protest period. Any owner within the boundary may file a written protest. If a protest is received, the application will go to Planning Commission.

What happens at Planning Commission?

If a protest was filed, Planning Commission will hold a public hearing, comments and concerns will be heard, and commissioners will vote to approve or deny renewal. If approved, the case goes to City Council. If denied, the decision is final.

What happens if there's no protest or it's approved and it goes to City Council?

If City Council approves the renewal, the SMLB is extended for 20 years.

**If you have questions or need assistance at any time,
please call the Planning and Development Department at
(832) 393-6600 or visit the department's website at www.houstonplanning.com.**

**Si tiene preguntas o necesita ayuda en cualquier momento,
llame al Departamento de Planificación y Desarrollo al
(832) 393-6600 o visite el sitio web del departamento en www.houstonplanning.com.**