

# Special Minimum Lot Size Block Renewal Application

Section 42-197 of Chapter 42 of the Code of Ordinances



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DEPARTMENT

This packet provides the information and forms needed to apply for the renewal of a Special Minimum Lot Size Block (SMLSB). 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:**

- The SMLSB 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 submittal review. This meeting helps confirm whether your application meets the approval criteria which are:

1. Contains at least one blockface, but not more than two opposing blockfaces;
2. Have at least 60% of the lots developed for or restricted to single-family use (exclusive of land used for a park, library, place of worship, or school); and
3. The application complies with the application requirements of section 42-198 of this Code and the eligibility requirements of section 42-197 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 submittal 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 submittal meeting, please contact the Community and Regional Planning Division at (832) 393-6637. More information is also available 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.**

# Application for Special Minimum Lot Size 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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:

# Special Minimum Lot Size Block Renewal

## 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 are 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 the recommendation by the Planning Commission, if applicable. City Council's decision to approve or deny the application is final. To speak during the public comment session, contact the City Secretary at (832) 393-1100 or [citysecretary@houstontx.gov](mailto:citysecretary@houstontx.gov). Speaking and/or attending is not mandatory.

#### ☐ **Step 8: Recordation**

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

# Special Minimum Lot Size Block Renewal

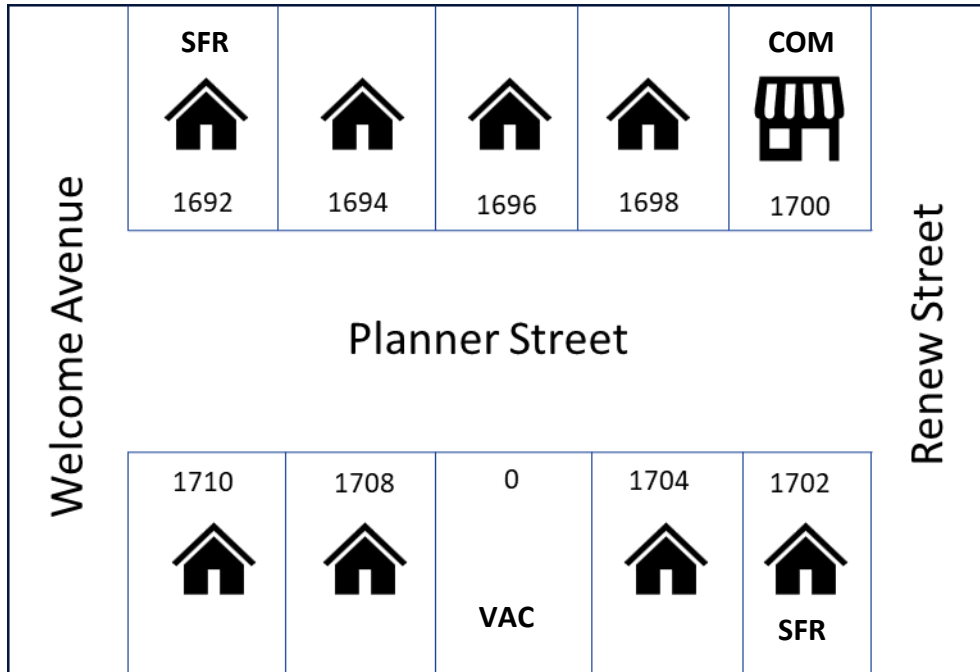
Example of Boundary Description and Notification Signs



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## EXAMPLE OF A BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

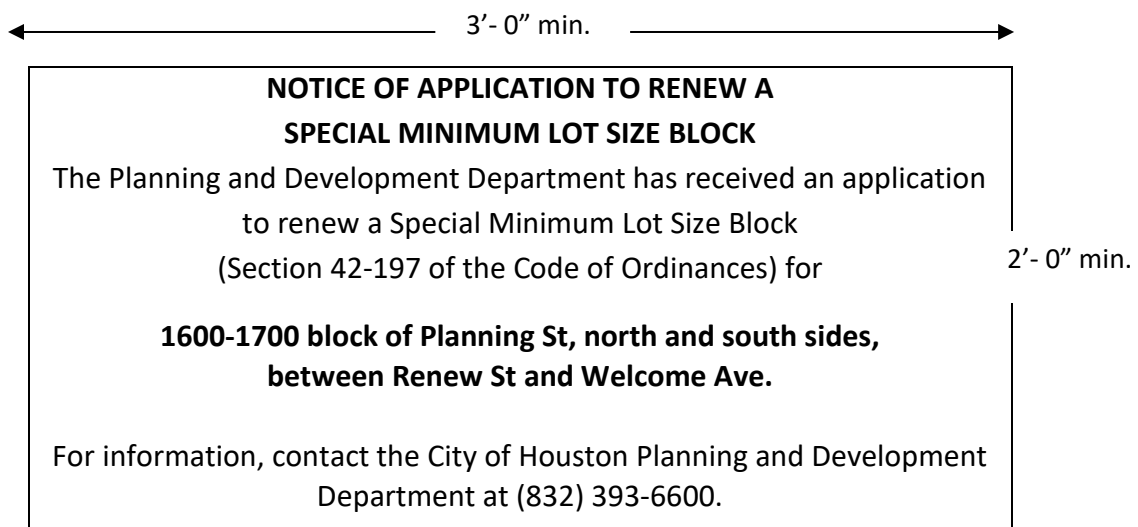
1600-1700 block of Planning St, north and south sides, between Renew St and Welcome Ave.



Your  
For Reference:  
**SFR** = Single Family  
**COM** = Commercial  
**VAC** = Vacant  
**MF** = Multifamily  
**EXC** = Church, Park, School

## EXAMPLE OF A NOTIFICATION SIGN

The applicant must post at least two signs per blockface within the SMLSB 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.



# Special Minimum Lot Size Block Renewal

## Frequently Asked Questions



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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a SMLSB renewal application?**

A SMLSB application allows property owners to preserve the existing lot sizes on one or two opposing blockfaces. A property owner within the application area, or a representative for the neighborhood, may submit the application. Once City Council approves the ordinance, any new lots created in the block must be at least as large as the established Special Minimum Lot Size. A property owner or neighborhood representative may submit the renewal application.

### **What if my lot is smaller than the designated Special Minimum Lot Size?**

For example, if your block has a 5,000-square-foot minimum lot size, no lot can be divided into anything smaller. If your current lot is smaller than 5,000 square feet, you cannot divide it. If your lot is 10,000 square feet, you could divide it into two 5,000-square-foot lots.

### **Can the lot size change during the renewal application process?**

No. Renewal applications will only extend the existing lot size line for another 20 years. For example, a SMLSB that is 5,000 sq. feet will remain 5,000 sq. feet.

### **What can I build on my lot?**

On a single-family lot, you may build a single-family home, a single-family home with a detached apartment up to **900** square feet, or a duplex. The Special Minimum Lot Size Ordinance does not control building design.

### **Can I add to or rebuild my single-family/multifamily/commercial property?**

Yes. If you have an existing single-family lot, you may rebuild, improve, or add to your home. If you have an existing commercial or multifamily lot, you may rebuild, improve, or add to that building. Any new building or addition must meet the SMLSB.

### **What will happen to my commercial/multifamily lot if the Special Minimum Lot Size Block application is approved?**

If you have a commercial or multifamily lot, it will stay that way. If you later choose to convert it to single-family use, you cannot switch it back to commercial or multifamily. If you subdivide the property, all new lots must meet the special minimum lot size.

### **What happens during the renewal application process?**

An applicant will submit a complete renewal application. Staff will conduct an application data analysis to determine eligibility. Once complete, staff will notify the applicant and property owners within the boundary area to start a 30-day protest period.

### **What if I support or disagree with the renewal application?**

If you receive notice of a 30-day protest and you support the renewal; no further action will be required. If you disagree, you may file a written protest, and the application will be forwarded to the Planning Commission.

# Special Minimum Lot Size Block Renewal

## Frequently Asked Questions



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### Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)

#### **What happens at Planning Commission?**

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 application, the SMLSB 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](http://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](http://www.houstonplanning.com).**