



midtown  
HOUSTON

# midtown**buzz**

HOUSTON

LIVE. WORK. PLAY.



## BAGBY PARK UNVEILS BIG CHANGES

Bagby Park at 415 Gray Street is a staple in Midtown Houston. Visitors capture snapshots with the iconic 10-foot Midtown letters and spectacular Downtown skyline. After months of renovation and construction by the Midtown Redevelopment Authority (MRA), you can enjoy new enhancements and upgrades like the addition of a canopy and lighting to the stage, improved drainage, and a revamped food kiosk. “The renovations at Bagby Park enhance the overall experience for park visitors,” said Marlon Marshall, MRA’s Director of Engineering and Construction. “Our partners at Walter P Moore... were vital in executing our vision, and we couldn’t be happier with the result.”

La Calle Tacos, a fast-casual concept specializing in food from Mexico City, will open their second Houston location in the kiosk. The menu is simple: Mexican-style tacos with corn tortillas or American-style tacos with flour tortillas and sides of Mexican street corn, beans and rice. “We are open from 7:00 am to 2:00 am so we can serve breakfast, lunch, happy hour, dinner, and of course late night tacos,” said Ramon Soriano, Owner of La Calle Tacos. “In addition to the new bar and expanded outdoor seating options, we’re adding a large screen to the side of the building. It will be the perfect spot to watch a movie or a game while enjoying some tacos and margaritas.”

The newly renovated park will also include favorite park programs such as Brunch and Books, Teach You Tuesday and Children’s Storytime. Visitors will also be able to enjoy a public reading library and game cart. Be on the lookout for new classes to help you get fit and exciting performances on the improved stage. “We are thrilled to bring new opportunities to connect, learn, and relax to Bagby Park,” said Amaris Salinas, Midtown Parks Conservancy Programming Manager. “We are confident that Bagby Park will be a center for fun for everyone in the community in 2021 and beyond.”



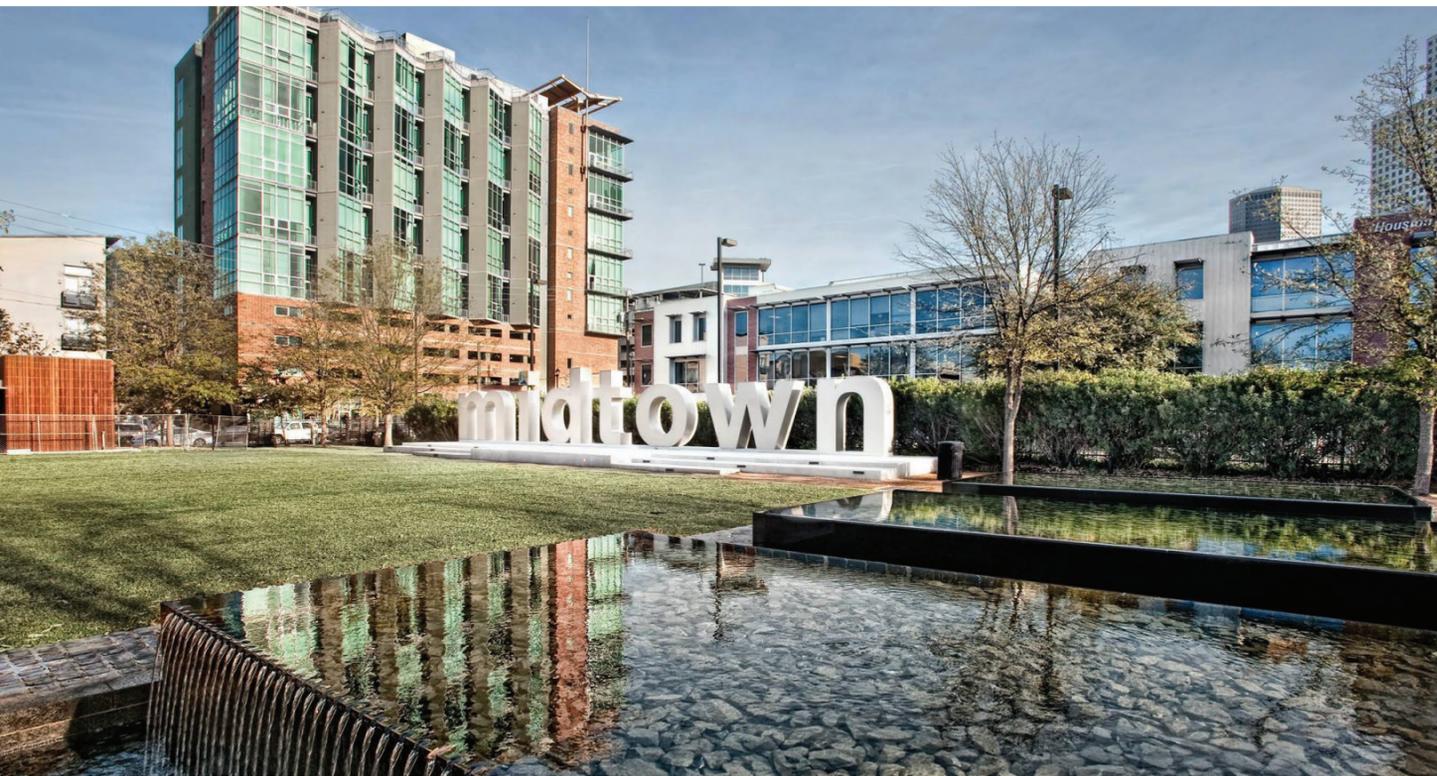


**Eileen Morris**  
Board Chair, Midtown Management District

2020 was one of the most turbulent years in our lifetime. Personally I've learned that time is precious, patience is indeed a virtue, family is even more important, and bringing people together is a daily goal. I am proud that Midtown Houston remains a community with determination, agility, and passion, we remain a community that moves forward with continuous reflection, gratitude, and hope.

One of the most rewarding outcomes from last year was the staff's ability to seamlessly bring Midtown Houston into the digital world. From hosting our Board and Committee meetings virtually to bringing our park events online, staff has shown their resilience and creativity during challenging times. Concurrently, community support has grown, demonstrating the importance of an engaged neighborhood.

We encourage you to find new ways to work together to make Houston the ideal place to live, work, and play. Attend a Committee meeting, share your ideas with us, and become involved with projects you are passionate about. The Midtown Management District Board is committed to learning more about your needs and how we can meet them.



AMAR MOHITE



CHRISTOPHER JOHNSTON



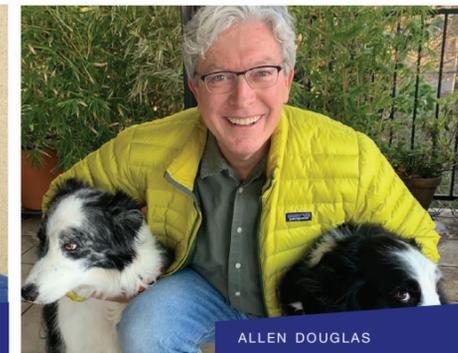
GLORIA HANEY



DEBBIE DILLARD



DARCY LEFSRUND



ALLEN DOUGLAS



KELLY YOUNG



JAMES LLAMAS



CHARLES WASHINGTON



DANA WOODRUFF



MARYLENE CHAN



NANCY DARST



EILEEN MORRIS



BERT BAKER

## A TRIBUTE TO MIDTOWN HOUSTON COLLEAGUE, MARK LEIJA



Mark Leija worked with dedication and honor for the Midtown Houston community. Drawing on his decades of service in the Houston Police Department, he acted as a liaison to area law enforcement agencies, playing a key role in developing and implementing public safety and crime prevention programs.

Mark embodied selfless dedication to his beloved family, friends, and community. Mark loved to spend time with his family and on his motorcycle on the weekends.

During his early years, Mark enjoyed working on cars, cruising with his buddies, and hanging out at car shows. He later joined a motorcycle club where he was given the road name, Mopar. For several years, he rode with his brothers Los Carnales/La Familia. He then moved on to become the Founder and El Presidente of La Placa LEMC.

When Mark wasn't out riding his bike, he loved spending time with family, going on road trips, softball games, volleyball games, fishing, hosting crawfish boils, watching movies, and spending hours listening to his favorite music. Mark's love for his family, friends and his work was unconditional and it's the legacy he leaves behind.



## MIDTOWN DEVELOPS AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SOUTHEAST HOUSTON & THIRD WARD

LIVE.



Urban centers in cities like Houston, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Philadelphia are experiencing a trend: a lack of affordable housing. Home ownership and rental costs have escalated substantially, driving people to the suburbs or outside the city limits.

We are committed to providing affordable housing in Southeast Houston and Third Ward. Southeast Houston is the hub of education, the home to museums, and the heart of small business growth while the Third Ward has been designated as a historical neighborhood by the Texas Historical Commission.

Prior to the creation of Midtown Houston, the area was included in the historic Third Ward, and there remains a strong connection between the neighborhoods and the greater Southeast Houston community. The two share common streets that serve as connectors as well as community centers, museums, and opportunities for growth.

### So why did Midtown purchase land in Southeast Houston and Third Ward?



To address the lack of affordable housing in the area, Midtown was developed as a "petition TIRZ," which requires one third of the increment to be dedicated to affordable housing that can be purchased anywhere in the city. When Midtown first began acquiring land in 2005, the land value inside the boundaries of Midtown had risen to \$40 per square foot while land in Southeast Houston was selling for \$5-\$6 per square foot. In other words, the ability to acquire more land meant ultimately Midtown could serve more people.

We are now developing the purchases in collaboration with partner the Center for Civic and Public Policy Improvement (CCPPI). It is our goal to have homes that can be purchased by teachers, medical workers, public servants, firefighters, and more. We want to help people stay in the area where they grew up and where their extended families live, never to price people out. And while our focus is discouraging displacement, our development is open to all.

CCPPI, working in collaboration with the Urban League, the Tejano Center, and other local partners, will provide first-time home buyer seminars. These seminars help guide new homeowners through the process of purchasing and maintaining homes.

We have already developed more than 100 affordable homes with more slated. In addition to home construction, we are committed to infrastructure improvements to enhance the quality of life for all. We look forward to a future that shines brighter, and more affordable, for all of Houston.

LIVE.



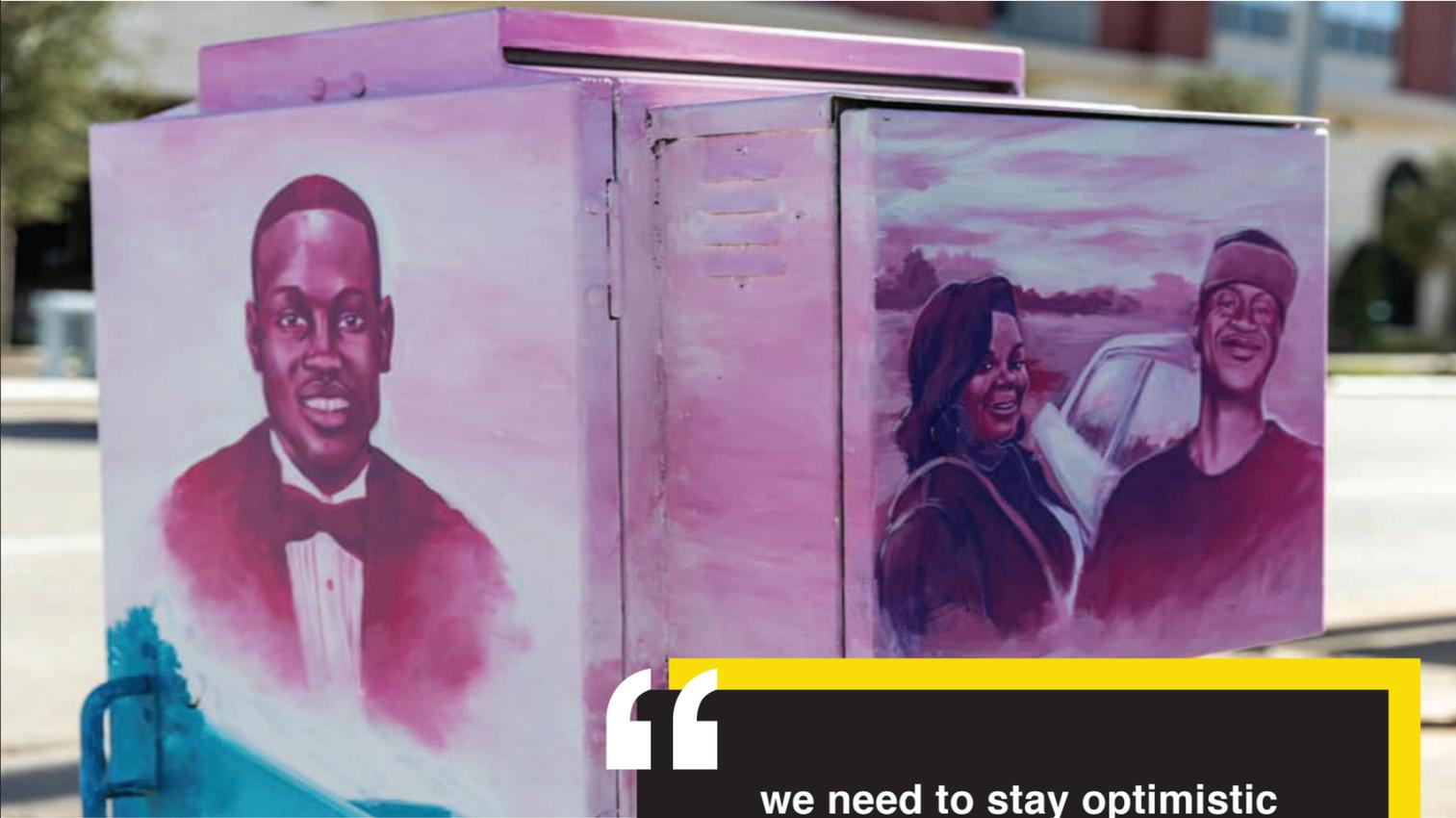
## MURALS WITH A MESSAGE SPARK CONVERSATION

Amidst a global pandemic and a national focus on racial justice, Midtown Houston partnered with UP Art Studio to create relevant, unconventional mini murals in the community. Local artists Renee Victor and Armando Castelan created works that confront current issues to spark conversations that inspire healing and change.

In usual UP Art fashion, the murals are displayed on traffic boxes, fusing the worlds of art and urban infrastructure to meet commuters and explorers wherever they are. Victor's work, titled "Not Today Corona" is on display at the corner of San Jacinto and Gray Streets. It signals that Houstonians are resilient, caring of others, and committed to pulling through these unprecedented times together.

"I chose yellow as the base color as we need to stay optimistic during this time and to add some visual cheer. It's meant to be a playful yet sobering reminder to follow health guidelines to beat COVID," said Victor.

Armando Castelan's mini mural at the corner of Austin Street and Gray Streets is titled BLM, an acronym for Black Lives Matter. He was inspired by the country's reckoning with racism and features paintings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Colin Kaepernick, and Breonna Taylor. It also includes representation of children from different backgrounds to capture what a truly inclusive community might look like.



“we need to stay optimistic during this time and to add some visual cheer.”

"I thought it was important that the artists selected had the opportunity to create work that was relevant and important to them," said Cynthia Alvarado, Operations Manager at the Midtown Management District. "I believe that art should bring joy and enhance the community in a meaningful way. I also believe that it should evoke change and inspire us all to reflect on how we can contribute to making the world a better place, starting with our own neighborhood."

UP Art Studio's award-winning Mini Murals project takes traffic signal control cabinets and converts them into works of art. They have more than 300 mini murals currently on display throughout the Houston area.



PLAY.

## ONGOING PARK EVENTS

While Midtown Houston's most popular parks are open to the public, there is no in-person scheduled programming. Please be mindful, continue to social distance, and wear a mask when visiting the parks.

**bagby**park

**glover**park

**midtown**park

**baldwin**park

**CATCH UP ON ALL VIRTUAL PROGRAMS ON OUR MIDTOWN HOUSTON FACEBOOK PAGE AND YOUTUBE CHANNEL**

## VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

### MIDTOWN HOUSTON YOUTUBE CHANNEL

#### VIRTUAL BEATS & EATS

##### ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

Second Friday 6:30pm

This virtual party will feature live performances from local entertainers. Guests are encouraged to support local restaurants during Beats & Eats by ordering takeout from the many restaurant selections in the neighborhood.

#### TEXT BREAKERS: A VIRTUAL GAME SHOW

##### ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

Second Friday 6:30pm

Play fun games on Zoom like trivia, guess the drawing, hum the tune, and others! Competition has never been this fun while sitting in the comfort of your home.

#### VIRTUAL ZUMBA FITNESS SERIES

Second Friday 6:30pm

A total workout combining all elements of fitness - cardio, muscle conditioning, balance, flexibility, and boosted energy.

#### VIRTUAL SAMBA DANCE SERIES

Second Friday 6:30pm

Samba is a partner dance from Rio de Janeiro that evolved as a ballroom dance to the Brazilian samba musical rhythms. The class is free and open to all skill levels. Instruction is provided by the Brazilian Cultural Institute.

#### VIRTUAL FAMILY CAPOEIRA

##### FITNESS SERIES

Second Friday 6:30pm

Learn a unique Afro-Brazilian martial art that develops discipline, coordination, strength, and rhythm. Instruction is provided by the Brazilian Cultural Institute and is open to all.

### MIDTOWN HOUSTON FACEBOOK PAGE

#### VIRTUAL BRUNCH AND BOOKS

##### ARTS & EDUCATION SERIES

First Tuesday 11:30am – 1:00pm

Join our book club and enjoy giveaways and prizes.

#### VIRTUAL TEACH YOU TUESDAY

##### ARTS & EDUCATION SERIES

First Tuesday 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Enjoy classes that will inspire, motivate, and teach you new skills.

#### VIRTUAL CHALK ON THE BLOCK

##### ARTS & EDUCATION SERIES

First Saturday 10:00am – 2:00pm

Watch local artists create pavement art that comes to life before your eyes.

#### VIRTUAL CHILDREN'S STORYTIME

##### LEARNING SERIES

Third Tuesday 11:30am

Children's Storytime features live music from AndyRoo & the AndyRooniverse along with special readings from popular children's books.

SPRING/SUMMER ISSUE,

## MUST HAVE PHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY	911
NON-EMERGENCY	311
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	713.526.7577
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT	713.526.7577
PUBLIC WORKS	832.395.2500
SOLID WASTE	832.393.0485
ILLEGAL DUMPING	713.525.2728
CODE VIOLATIONS	311
CENTERPOINT ENERGY	713.207.2222
MAYORS CITIZENS ASSISTANCE	713.697.9221
METRO	713.635.4000
HPD (NON-EMERGENCY)	713.884.3131
HPD CENTRAL STATION	713.247.4400
HPD SOUTH CENTRAL STATION	832.394.0200
HFD STATION 7	832.394.6700
CONSTABLES PRECINCT NO. 7	713.643.6602
S.E.A.L. SECURITY SOLUTIONS	832.900.7700
CRIMESTOPPERS	713.222.8477
POISON CONTROL	800.222.1222



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