



midtown  
HOUSTON

# midtownbuzz

HOUSTON

LIVE.WORK.PLAY.

CHALK ON THE BLOCK IN BAGBY PARK (FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH)

## JOIN US IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY

Over the past 20 years, Midtown has experienced substantial changes. You have been an important part of our journey, as the Midtown Management District (MMD) Board of Directors and staff have consistently relied on the community to provide feedback and ideas as well as actively participate in building one of Houston's most successful communities.

As we move forward into another decade of change, it is worth acknowledging and taking in the enormity of success achieved to date.

In 2000 when this urban experiment began, there were only 365 homesteaded properties, and the certified-assessed value for the area was \$420 million. The community was absent of miles of sidewalks, trees, lighting, and residents. Today, you can see and feel its transformation. There are now 1,322 homesteaded properties in Midtown, and the uncertified-assessed value is \$2.8 billion. Statistics tell an amazing story that visionary founder, the late F. Charles LeBlanc, would be proud of, but Midtown is more than statistics. It is a collective of people who come together every day to build a community that is inclusive and thoughtful in its evolution.

### Your voice is important.

The day-to-day operations of this community's initiatives are all part of a bigger vision known as the 10-Year Service and Improvement Plan and Assessment Plan. These Plans work in tandem to guide the district's goals, objectives, and programs. Midtown meets with the community monthly to address the five committee areas that are funded by the Service and Improvement Plan, which are service and maintenance, cultural arts, marketing and economic development, public safety, and urban planning. Once every decade, Midtown makes a concerted effort to hold additional meetings, surveys, and focus groups to build a new Service and Improvement Plan that reflects potential new projects and programs. Midtown's current Plan (2015-2024), built with input from the community and approved by the Board of Directors in October 2014, is available at [midtownhouston.com](http://midtownhouston.com).

As we plan for the future, we will ask you to consider various aspects such as services, programs and improvements, public safety, urban planning, cultural arts and entertainment, and economic development. Above all, we are striving to create an outstanding place to live, work, and play.

There's no need to wait to share your voice. We welcome you to join us in our monthly meetings of the MMD board and committees. You can find the details of these meetings at [midtownhouston.com/events](http://midtownhouston.com/events). Thank you for being an essential part of this community.

**Sign up for the Midtown eNews newsletter and follow Midtown on Facebook to keep up and view plan updates!**



@midtownHOU



Visit [MidtownHouston.com/events](http://MidtownHouston.com/events) for additional planning meeting dates as well as informational videos, FAQs, timelines, and graphics.

# Chair's Letter

**trans-for-ma-tion; noun:** a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance.

I always love Midtown in the summer. It overflows with energy, movement, and excitement.



DARCY LEFSRUD

I've been a Midtown property owner and resident since 2008. I was appointed to the Board of Directors in July 2015 and since then, I have witnessed an abundance of positive changes in our community. Every week, I ride my bike or walk through Midtown and see greenspaces where there once were none. Who knows what the next 10 years will hold for us, but I do know we will continue to transform for the better.

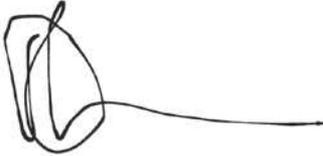
During the next 12-18 months, the Board and community, along with staff, will embark on the development of our next 10-Year Service and Improvement Plan and Assessment Plan. In support of these plans, I ask you to take advantage of the distinct opportunity to join one of the committees, participate in a focus group, or take the online survey. We need and want your input.

To be transparent, the real work of Midtown often happens at the committee level. That is where the community and staff evaluate programs and projects and participate in open-forum discussions to determine the best possible initiatives and outcomes. As a property owner, you play a key role in the ongoing success of the community. I encourage you to join a committee, not just to help build the next 10-Year Service and Improvement Plan and Assessment Plan, but to influence neighborhood decisions on an ongoing basis. Without your participation, perspective, and input, we could be missing the next big idea!

We are fortunate to have a dedicated staff in the district, who work closely with us daily, and more importantly, hear our concerns and advocate for us at the highest levels of city and county government. To my fellow Board of Director members, I thank you. This group of highly engaged volunteers are involved in making decisions both big and small that impact us all. In every choice we make, we put you and the overall community first.

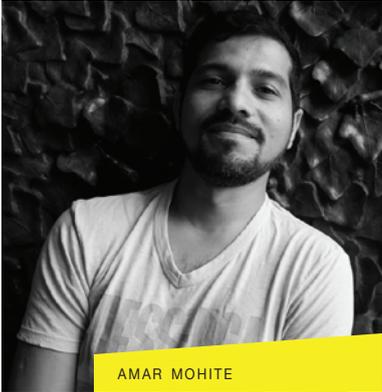
I'm truly excited for what is ahead, and I thank each of you for being a vital part of the Midtown community.

With gratitude,



**Darcy Lefsrud**  
Chair, Board of Directors, Midtown Management District

# MEET OUR BOARD



AMAR MOHITE



CHRISTOPHER JOHNSTON



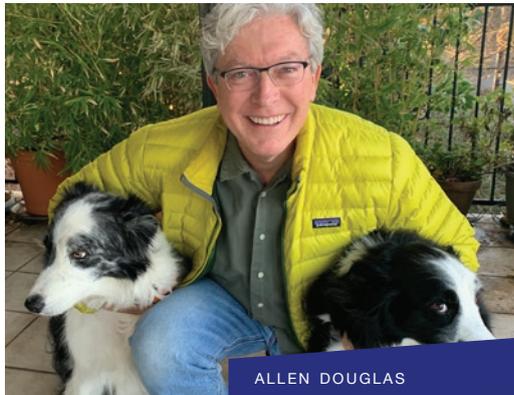
MUDDASSIR SIDDIQI, Ed.D.



GLORIA HANEY



DEBBIE DILLARD



ALLEN DOUGLAS



KELLY YOUNG



JAMES LLAMAS



MAGGIE SEGRICH



CHARLES WASHINGTON



DANIEL ARGUIJO



MARYLENE CHAN



RYAN LEVASSEUR



DESMOND BERTRAND-PITTS



LEWIS GOLDSTEIN



JEANETTE M. CRIGLAR, Ph.D.



## DISTRICT JOINS FORCES WITH THE HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS

**Houston as the fourth-largest city in the U.S. continues to be recognized and lauded nationally for its measurable progress on reducing homelessness.** In the past decade, the region has placed more than 25,000 homeless people directly into apartments and houses, according to a New York Times report. Here in Midtown, the district is also making strides to aid in housing the homeless population by partnering with organizations like SEARCH Homeless Services and the Houston Police Department's (HPD) Homeless Outreach Team, which was co-founded in 2011 by Jaime Giraldo, retired officer, and now Public Safety Coordinator for the Midtown Management District.

Since January, Midtown has been partnering with HPD's specialized task force on a pilot program to engage those who are severely mentally ill and experiencing homelessness. These task force agents are trained in community outreach, mental health, addiction, and finding solutions as part of HPD's Mental Health Division. They also work closely with the Harris Center for Mental Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disability.

"Everyone provides a piece of the puzzle, and it works. It is cost-effective and more favorable than incarceration. The Board of Directors believes it is the right thing to do," expressed Giraldo. "Midtown's approach of outreach combined with enforcement is unique. We're excited to continue testing and learning from the program."



## NEW BALDWIN PARK PLAYGROUND STIMULATES YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

**It's summer, and the kids are out of school and likely spending too much time indoors playing video games and scrolling on social media.** So, what is a parent to do? Midtown recommends packing a picnic, getting outdoors, and making plans to visit one of the thriving nearby greenspaces like the historic Elizabeth Baldwin Park. Now reopened to the public, the all-new playground equipment helps keep children occupied for hours and provides an inclusive, holistic play experience.

Compared to the park's previous playground, the new play experiences provide a 250% increase in physical and sensory development opportunities and expand play areas for cognitive, social, and language skills development by 300%, 180%, and 11%, respectively.

"We desired to create an environment where children can learn and grow outside of the home and school, so we used feedback received from a community survey to select play structures that encourage creativity and imagination for a broader age range of children," said Midtown Redevelopment Authority (MRA) Director of Engineering and Construction Marlon Marshall. "The bright colors, different textures, and sounds help develop the mind. The swings, slides, and climbing pieces stimulate the body. It all combines to increase the value of play by providing opportunities for the development of social, emotional, physical, and mental skills."

MRA took great care to ensure children of all ages and abilities would be able to use the park. New surfaces make it easier for individuals with disabilities to get around, while a sensory wall and ADA-compliant rocker allow for inclusivity and diversity of play opportunities.

The new playground is part of a strategic \$500,000 investment in improvements at the 4.8-acre park, funded in part by the Midtown Management District. The design team preserved the original fountain, one of the oldest in the city, and the stately oak trees planted in 1905 when the city of Houston built the park. The trees inspired the playground's design and colors selected for its rubber surface protection cushion. The project also includes new and restored lighting around the perimeter of the park to prioritize safety for visitors.

Changes aren't only happening at Baldwin Park. Find out more about MRA's capital improvement projects on the Midtown website, including continuing updates to the award-winning Midtown Park on Travis Street, which notably won the Development of Distinction award and the People's Choice award from the Houston District Council of the Urban Land Institute.



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— Marlon Marshall

Director of Engineering and Construction at Midtown Houston



LIVE.



## ART IN THE PARK RETURNS WITH 2,000 GUESTS!

**Underwritten and coordinated by the Midtown Cultural Arts District, Art in the Park returned in April with record attendance.** Hosted in the newly upgraded Elizabeth Baldwin Park under the sprawling oak trees, the festival united local artists, musicians, and performers alongside guests and furry friends alike under the dynamic theme “Let Art Inspire HOU!”

Lauded by the Houston Chronicle as a Top 20 springtime event, Art in the Park featured 36 local creators, including 11-year-old Sara Cunningham. A Houston native, Cunningham’s drawings focus on creatively capturing people and animals in ways that speak to her spirit. She’s the youngest artist ever to participate in the festival. The experience also included free ArtJam classes for both novices and crafty pros like DIY wreath designs and custom piñatas just in time for Mother’s Day, interactive photo booths, a “What inspires you?” reflection wall, live music, as well as a henna body art station.



I’m incredibly proud that Houston has been recognized as America’s new ‘Art City,’ further positioning the city as a leading place to live, work, play, and visit,” said Cynthia Alvarado, CPM®, Director of Operations and Strategic Planning for the Midtown Management District.

“Midtown is one of the seven Cultural Arts Districts in our city. As such, Art in the Park was created to spotlight, celebrate, and provide a platform where our very own talented artists and performers can share their inspirational work with the public in one of Midtown’s most breathtaking greenspaces.”



Join the next activity by visiting the Midtown events calendar at [midtownhouston.com/events](https://midtownhouston.com/events).

PLAY.

## ROSÉ ALL DAY: TOP 5 PLACES TO GRAB A GLASS OF WINE THIS SUMMER

The popularity of rosé continues to soar with its crisp, light, and refreshing profile. A chilled glass perfectly complements warmer weather and seafood, lamb, charcuterie spreads (cheeses and cured meats), salads, desserts, and much more. However you rosé this season, cheers to responsible consumption and exploring all Midtown has to offer!



1

### 13 Celsius

3000 Caroline St., Houston, TX 77004  
Open Daily  
[13celsius.com](http://13celsius.com)

2

### The Lyubar

4201 Main St., Houston, TX 77002  
Open Daily, Excluding Sunday  
[lyubar.com](http://lyubar.com)

3

### Oporto Fooding House & Wine

125 W. Gray St. #500, Houston, TX 77019  
Open Daily  
[oportomidtown.us](http://oportomidtown.us)

4

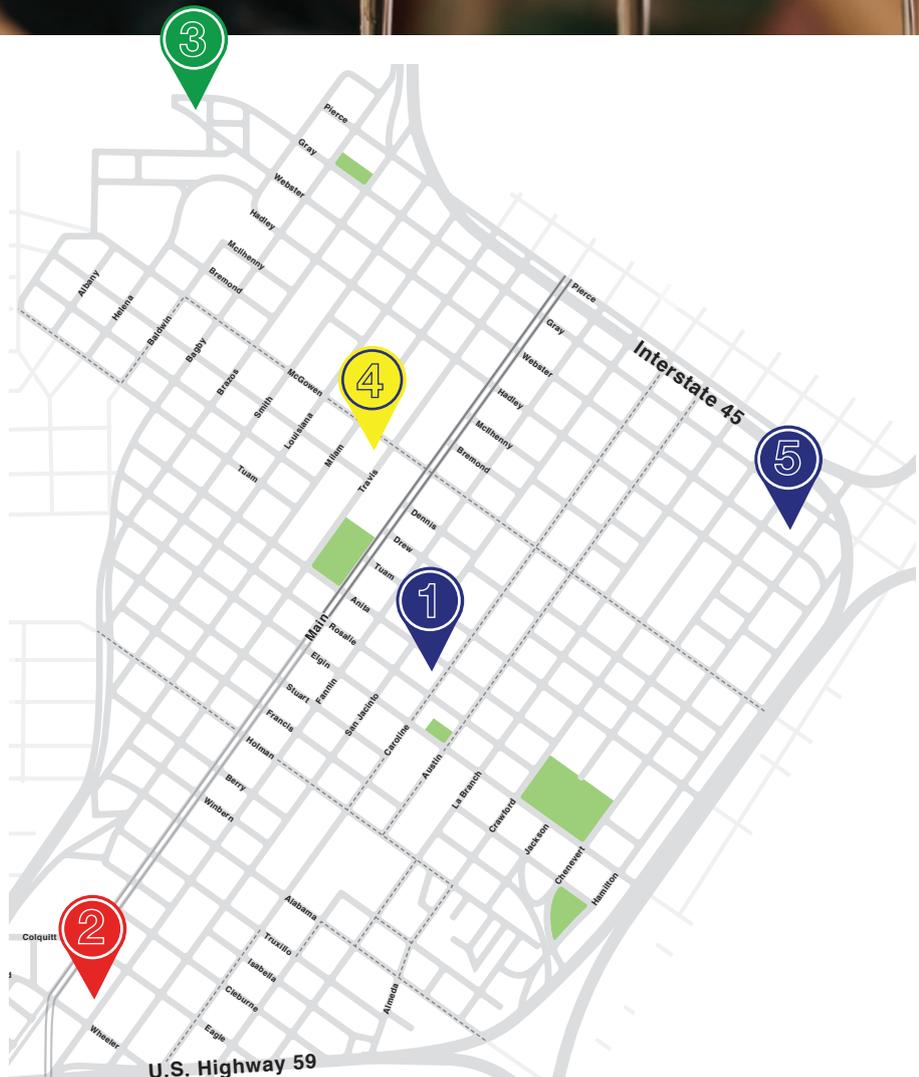
### Sable Gate Winery

2600 Travis St. #104, Houston, TX 77006  
Open Tuesday-Saturday  
[sablegatewinery.com](http://sablegatewinery.com)

5

### Phil & Derek's Restaurant and Jazz Lounge

1701 Webster St., Houston, TX 77003  
Open Daily  
[philanddereks.com](http://philanddereks.com)



## AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONSTRUCTION TAKES OFF IN HOUSTON'S GREATER THIRD WARD

**New affordable rooftops** are popping up all over Houston's Greater Third Ward and the OST/South Union area as the Midtown Redevelopment Authority/Center for Civic and Public Policy Improvement MRA/CCPPI affordable housing program expands and accelerates. As of the end of June, 12 builders had projects completed, underway, or planned for the near future.

Program participants include CR Design Build, Houston Habitat for Humanity, LIN Development, Park Street Homes, and Titanium Builders LLC. They join Agapè Homes, Cole Klein Builders, HBDi, HouProperties, Mayberry Homes, and ReWard Third Ward, all of which have been part of the MRA/CCPPI initiative for many years. Additionally, earlier this year, the MRA/CCPPI announced their partnership with Boynton Chapel Methodist Church to keep affordable housing a priority for their congregants and the surrounding communities.



### The Goals

The MRA/CCPPI affordable housing program aims to create affordable housing options that will preserve neighborhoods by allowing residents to stay where they grew up and build generational wealth. MRA provides the land to the builders for free or at a dramatically reduced cost, and the city subsidizes some of the infrastructure costs, allowing the builders to deliver an affordable price point with market-rate amenities.

There is a constant flow of potential buyers for these homes from qualifying individuals and families who might not otherwise be able to afford homeownership. The homes are available to buyers with a median household income below 120% of the area median income who complete the homebuyer education course offered by the Houston Area Urban League. Buyers must use the home as their primary residence for at least 20 years. If the owner does not live there for at least 20 years, there is a requirement to repay a portion of the land cost.

To learn more, connect with one of our builders, contact HAUL or read and watch our past blogs and videos at [midtownhouston.com/affordable-housing](http://midtownhouston.com/affordable-housing).

### Nearly 80 new homes

Here is what each builder is working on right now:  
Agapè Homes has four lots slated for development.

- **Cole Klein Builders** is working on six new homes.
- **CR Design Build** has three lots secured for construction.
- **HBDi** recently sold three homes and has two more on the market.
- **Houston Habitat for Humanity** will soon break ground on two homes.
- **LIN Development Group** is about to start work on two lots.
- **Mayberry Homes** is working on 45 new homes, most of which are part of the Southern Palm subdivision.
- **Park Street Homes** are constructing ten new homes.
- **Titanium Builders** has one home under construction.

Together, these projects total nearly 80 new affordable homes available now or in the months to come for qualifying homebuyers in the Greater Third Ward. The homes currently under construction are in addition to hundreds of single-family homes and rental units that have already been built.

LIVE.

## HEALTH IS THE NEW WEALTH: MIDTOWN'S TOP WELLNESS EXPERIENCES

**Self-care is no longer just a trending topic.** It's a way of life rooted in wellness that prioritizes mental, physical, and emotional well-being. No matter one's lifestyle, Midtown offers a selection of accessible experiences for the mind, body, and soul. From sound bath meditations to restorative yoga sessions, here are the top picks.

### Sound Bath Meditations

hosted by **Gongsia Sacred Sound Sessions**

Benefits can include relieving anxiety and supporting deep relaxation. Free to join, every second Wednesday of the month  
**Elizabeth Baldwin Park**



### Yoga

Benefits can include increasing strength, balance, and flexibility as well as improved mental clarity. Free to join, every second Saturday of the month  
**Midtown Park**



### Dance and Movement Therapy at Midtown Parks

**Samba, Zumba, Martial Arts, and General and Retro Fitness Classes**  
Benefits can include improved heart health, muscle conditioning, balance, flexibility, and boosted energy. Free to join, Ongoing  
**Midtown Park and Bagby Park**

### Nature Walk

Benefits can include working memory performance improvements, reduced stress, enhanced immune system, and positive social interactions. Free to join, Daily  
**Midtown Park**



VISIT [MIDTOWNHOUSTON.COM/EVENTS](https://www.midtownhouston.com/events) FOR MORE INFORMATION

LIVE.



## MIDTOWN TAPS ILLUSTRATOR AND CREATIVE DESIGNER CHRIS ROBINSON TO PRODUCE JUNETEENTH MURAL HONORING HOUSTON'S HISTORICALLY BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS

**Juneteenth represents a deeply significant moment in American history, especially here in Texas.**

On June 19, 1865 Union troops arrived in Galveston and announced the more than 250,000 then enslaved Black people in the state were now free, thereby marking the official end to slavery across the nation, despite the Emancipation Proclamation becoming effective in 1863, followed by the 13th Amendment.

Acknowledging that Midtown Houston was once part of the historic Third Ward and Fourth Ward communities, the Midtown Cultural Arts and Entertainment District was invited to join the citywide Juneteenth celebration led by the Third Ward Cultural Arts District and the Emancipation Park Conservancy.

In honor of this invitation and the newly designated federal holiday, Midtown hosted an open call and invited artists to submit their design ideas for a mural inspired by Houston's historically Black neighborhoods for public display at Bagby Park located at 415 Gray St, Houston, TX 77002.

Local illustrator and creative designer Chris Robinson was selected among the applicants and commissioned for the project. His original artwork titled "Juneteenth Houston" highlights the neighborhoods and their positive impact on Houston's dynamic and distinct culture.

To delve deeper into Robinson's artistry, visit [shopneverclosed.com](http://shopneverclosed.com).

“

I decided to tell a story of each neighborhood by acknowledging the past, present, and future of these beautiful Black communities. Overall, I wanted each neighborhood to stand on its own, and at the same time, tie into one another, representing the whole idea of celebrating Juneteenth. This was accomplished by using a color palette of red, green, black, and of course browns.”

– CHRIS ROBINSON

# Independence Heights



**CHRIS ROBINSON**

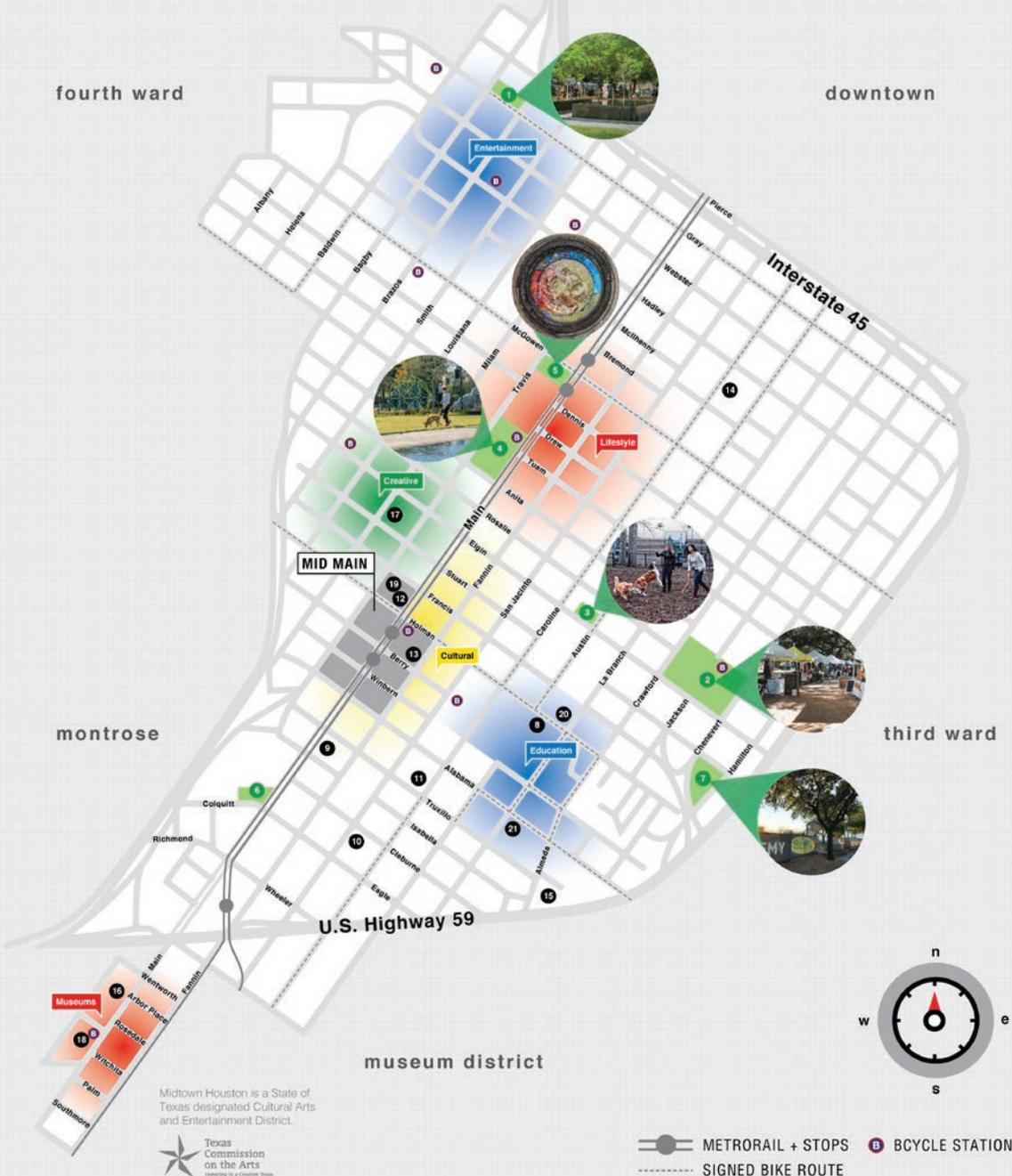
As part of Juneteenth commemoration, the Midtown letters at Bagby Park were transformed to represent the following:

- M - Freedman's Town (Fourth Ward)
- I - Fifth Ward
- D - Independence Heights
- T - Acres Homes
- O - Sunnyside
- W - South Park
- N - Third Ward



fourth ward

downtown



- parks**
- 1 Bagby Park 415 Gray St.
  - 2 Elizabeth Baldwin Park 1701 Elgin St.
  - 3 Elizabeth Glover Park 1300 Elgin St.
  - 4 Midtown Park 2811 Travis St.
  - 5 Midtown Park Plaza 900 McGowen St.
  - 6 Peggy's Point Plaza Park 4240 Main St.
  - 7 SPARK Park at Houston Academy for International Studies 1810 Stuart St.



- arts**
- 8 The Heinen Theatre  
central.hccs.edu/about-us/heinen-theatre  
3517 Austin St.
  - Houston Community College – Central Art Gallery  
central.hccs.edu/about-us/art-gallery  
3517 Austin St.
  - 9 Deasil Art  
www.deasil.art  
3913 Main St.
  - Inman Gallery  
inmangallery.com  
3901 Main St.
  - 10 Bermac Arts Center  
4101 San Jacinto St.
  - Community Artists' Collective  
thecollective.org  
4101 San Jacinto St.
  - 11 Buffalo Soldiers National Museum  
buffalosoldiermuseum.com  
3816 Caroline St.
  - 12 DiverseWorks  
diverseworks.org  
3400 Main St., Ste. 292
  - 13 The Ensemble Theatre  
ensemblehouston.com  
3535 Main St.
  - 14 Gallery Sonja Roesch  
gallerysonjaroesch.com  
2309 Caroline St.
  - 15 Harambee Art Gallery  
harambeeartgallery.com  
3903 Alameda Rd.
  - 16 Houston Center for Contemporary Craft  
crafthouston.org  
4848 Main St.
  - 17 Houston Fire Museum  
houstonfiremuseum.org  
2403 Milam St.  
(Under renovation, gift shop open only)
  - 18 Lawndale Art Center  
lawndaleartcenter.org  
4912 Main St.
  - 19 MATCH  
matchhouston.org  
3400 Main St.
  - 20 Midtown Art Center  
midtownartcenter.com  
3414 La Branch St.
  - 21 Station Museum of Contemporary Art  
stationmuseum.com  
1502 Alabama St.

## MUST HAVE PHONE NUMBERS

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

MIDTOWN PARK PHOTO: SLYWORKS PHOTOGRAPHY  
 BAGBY PARK PHOTO: RUNAWAY PRODUCTIONS  
 ELIZABETH GLOVER PARK PHOTO: JULIANA FRANCO



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