



OVERVIEW

With an eclectic mix of historic and contemporary infrastructure, convenient transit options, convention and sports venues, an active cultural and arts scene, fine dining and shopping, and thriving residential communities, Downtown Houston is one of the region's most dynamic mixed-use urban centers.

Downtown Houston — bounded by I-10 on the north, US-69 on the east and I-45 on the south and west — was the original town center upon the city's founding in 1836. Though it retains its role as the economic engine of the city, today, Downtown's new entertainment, dining, nightlife and outdoor options are bringing new vitality to the formerly office-centric core. As a walkable, safe and vibrant urban neighborhood, Downtown truly stands out with an exciting energy all its own.

Over the past two decades, Downtown Houston experienced a major resurgence. More than \$9 billion has been invested in new parks and public spaces, as the neighborhood has welcomed new hotels, new multi-family residential developments, new and renovated office towers, renovations and expansions to convention and theater facilities and continued investments in infrastructure and transit. This revolutionary period of growth has made Downtown an even better place to live, work and play.

LIVE

Downtown's explosion of residential development is arguably the greatest shift to its urban core since the city began its renewal back in the mid 1990's. Currently, there are approximately 7,200 residents within the Downtown District's boundaries, but with the success of the city's Downtown Living Initiative — a program which awards \$15,000 per unit in tax rebates to developers who create homes or multifamily projects — that number will double over the next few years. In addition to the core, Downtown boasts 65,000 residents within greater Downtown and 360,000 within five miles of the City's center.

Recently opened residential properties include Market Square Tower (777 Preston), Aris Market Square (409 Travis Street), Eighteen25 (1825 San Jacinto Street) and Catalyst (1475 Texas Avenue). All feature luxury amenities, active street-level concepts and exclusive experiences, from swimming in a pool jutting out 30 stories over the sidewalk below at Market Square Tower to a residents-only takeout entrance into the forthcoming Irma's at Catalyst Houston and a vinyl listening room complete with in-house record collection at Aris Market Square.

The types of residents attracted to downtown living are young urban professionals working downtown, empty nesters, reverse commuters and, yes, even small families. A variety of living options are also available from penthouse apartments to cool and funky lofts-- and at all price points. What makes Downtown different from other areas of Houston is that it is the only place in the city where a resident has everything they need within walking distance. Not just bars and restaurants, theater, sports and award-winning parks... but medical, worship, fitness and transportation. Downtown also has an amazing specialty grocery store, Phoenicia Specialty Foods, not to mention a dozen more options from Whole Foods to Target, all within a mile of Downtown.

WORK

Downtown Houston is home to the largest concentration of *Fortune* 500 headquarters in the state, more than 3,000 businesses, 157,000 workers and some 50 million square feet of office space. The city's skyline has undergone more change in the past few years than it has in a generation. In addition to several mid-rise buildings and a number of major renovations, four new major office towers have opened: BG Group Place, 1111 Travis, Hess Tower and 609 Main at Texas. A highlight for a thus far very busy year is Brookfield Properties acquisition (projected to be complete in November) of the 4.2 million square foot Houston Center for a record-breaking \$875 million.

What sets Houston's latest wave of skyscrapers apart? Sustainability. Hess Tower became Houston's first LEED Platinum office tower in 2010, while BG Group Place, completed in 2011, boasts LEED platinum certification and a rooftop garden space. Overall Downtown leads green efforts in the region with almost 60 LEED certified projects totaling 46.62 million square feet and 42 Energy Star Certified buildings.

A new generation of workers are heading Downtown as a new wave of co-working spaces and tech startups move in. Soon-to-open WeWork (708 Main Street) boasts bike storage, soundproof phone booths and micro-roasted coffee, whereas Station Houston (1300 Fannin) emphasizes its role as a community for start-ups and entrepreneurs offering mentoring and other resources. Other co-work/innovation spaces include Level Office, Regus and Foundry, which is opening in the Historic Market Square neighborhood.

EXPLORE

Downtown is Houston's prime culinary and entertainment destination. Over 10 million people visit the area annually for conventions, meetings, baseball and basketball games, theater, concerts and Houston's massive civic events. Residents and employees are located at the epicenter of activity, with entertainment, dining and shopping just steps away.

- Major league sports: Minute Maid Park, home of the Houston Astros; the Toyota Center, home of the Houston Rockets; and BBVA Compass Stadium, home to the Houston Dynamo and Houston Dash, are all located within Downtown Houston.
- World-class performances: Houston is one of only five U.S. cities that has permanent professional resident companies in all of the major performing arts disciplines. The city's Theater District spans 17 blocks in Downtown Houston, where seven major resident companies, along with many smaller ones, perform in four main venues: Alley Theatre, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Jones Hall and Wortham Theater Center. It's also a top destination for live music, with venues including House of Blues, Revention Music Center and the Toyota Center playing host to both up-and-coming musical acts as well as some of the world's biggest pop stars.
- Nationally recognized food and beverage scene: Downtown is home to more than 300 restaurants and bars (and counting). Three James Beard Award-winning chefs have Downtown Houston concepts—Hugo Ortega's Xochi, Justin Yu's Theodore Rex (in the former Oxheart location) and Robert Del Grande's The Grove—plus three additional concepts by James Beard finalists Bryan Caswell (Oxbow 7 and Jackson Street Barbecue) and Michael Cordúa (Artista). Beloved dining options range from the casual burgers of Hubcap Grill to superlative steaks at Vic & Anthony's and Pappas Steakhouse, not to mention only-in-Houston options like Bombay Pizza Co. and specialty grocer and dining hotspot Phoenicia. Houston's buzziest coffee shop is Prelude Coffee & Tea, the latest concept from David Buehrer inside 609 Main at Texas. For something a little bit stronger, OKRA Charity Saloon, one of the only non-profit bars in the country, has donated over \$1 million to local charities since opening in 2012, and is located in Downtown's Historic District. Other watering holes of note include Public Services, located in the century-old Cotton Exchange building, wine and beer bar La Carafe located in Houston's oldest commercial building, margarita hotspot The Pastry War and the whiskey-centric Reserve 101.
- Events big and small: Downtown hosts thousands of events each year, from pop-up performances and outdoor film screenings to citywide celebrations including the Art Car Parade, Thanksgiving Day Parade and Freedom Over Texas.
- Architecture: Houston's skyline is one of the most recognizable in the country, thanks to the contributions of some of the nation's leading architects and firms. Among the historical edifices are the Niels Esperson Building, with its recognizable rooftop cupola; the art deco-era City Hall,

designed by Joseph Finger in 1939; the Harris County Courthouse, a domed Beaux-Arts building that dates to 1910; and the Julia Ideson Library, a stunning example of Spanish Renaissance Revival style built in 1926 and revamped by Gensler in 2011. More recent buildings of note include the 75-story J.P. Morgan Chase Tower, the tallest building in Houston and the tallest five-sided building in the world; the dramatically angled lines of Pennzoil Place, a tower duo designed by Philip Johnson in 1976; and 609 Main at Texas, a state-of-the-art office building completed by Hines in 2017.

- **Public Art:** In addition to longstanding public art pieces across Downtown, including David Adickes' lyrically inspired *Virtuoso* in the Theater District, John Runnels' *Dream.boats* and Joan Miró's *Personaje and Birds* at the J.P. Morgan Chase Building, Houston has inaugurated several new exciting art installations in recent years. Most prominent among them, Art Blocks strives to enliven Downtown Houston's Main Street Square with a series of site-specific semi-permanent and temporary art installations, public programming and other experiences. The George R. Brown Convention Center and Avenida Houston have also benefitted from a pair of large-scale artworks: Houston artist Ed Wilson's 67-foot mobile *Soaring in the Clouds* is made from perforated steel bird and cloud forms in the building's atrium, while outside Joe O'Connell's *Wings over Water* sculpture interacts with a fountain creating visual interest via color and light.
- **Outdoor:** New parks have emerged as some of Downtown's main attractions. Among the most notable green space additions and updates include Market Square Park, located in Downtown's Historic Market Square neighborhood and the original site of Houston's City Hall for 100 years; Discovery Green, an award-winning public space celebrating its 10 year anniversary in 2018; and Buffalo Bayou Park, which recently completed a \$58 million transformation. All three of these projects have been instrumental to Downtown's revitalization and have spurred additional private development making them catalytic economic development tools. They are joined by a new urban green space known as the Acre, formed out of the renovation of One Allen Center on the west side of Downtown. The small, privately owned park contains a wide-open plaza and a linear lawn that will seat up to 1,500 people for special events such as concerts.
- **Transit:** In addition to being named one of the most walkable neighborhoods in Houston, Downtown is served by a two Houston METRORail lines, connecting riders heading towards the north, east and south parts of the city. Downtown is also served by Greenlink, a free shuttle that connects the area's most popular destinations. Downtown also features the Lamar Cycletrak, Houston's first dedicated on-street bike lane, as well as over a dozen BCycle bike sharing stations, perfect for exercising, sightseeing or commuting. Residents, employees and visitors are well served with easy and convenient access to three major freeways.

STAY

Downtown offers a variety of hotel options including large convention hotels, luxurious five-star accommodations, beautiful historic options and more! Thanks to a burgeoning convention center and business community, Downtown's hospitality market has grown tremendously with 24 hotels including nine that have opened since September of 2014: JW Marriott, SpringHill Suites, Hampton Inn, Homewood Suites, Holiday Inn, Aloft Hotel Downtown, Marriott Marquis Houston Convention Center Hotel, Le Meridien and Hotel Alessandra. The area boasts 7,780 rooms, with more than 500 additional rooms planned between now and 2019.

MORE INFO

Downtownhouston.org not only boasts comprehensive guide listings, from restaurants to shops, and an exhaustive events calendar, but also a robust interactive map that assists with parking (where to park, how much and an option to reserve parking if available), while also letting visitors know what's nearby and what events are happening that day—a feature you cannot find on any parking app or by using Google Maps alone. The site features dynamic portraits of Downtown's unique neighborhoods as well as an editorial section with articles and videos highlighting the Downtown lifestyle and area business.

The content embraces the Downtown District's efforts to support the growth of the residential population, provide a premier work environment and attract locals and out-of-town visitors.

The Downtown Houston web portal is available at www.downtownhouston.org