

HOUSTON HISTORICAL TIMELINE

relative to The Woodlands, TX

by Claude Hunter, May 11, 2008

2008 - May 10 The Woodlands Township voters elected the first five of a future total of seven at-large elected directors.

2007 - November 6 The Woodlands voters approved three propositions which result in formation of The Woodlands Township to include areas in Montgomery and Harris Counties and that will allow Township voters to determine their own future governance without fear of annexation. This historic event is the first time that a large community in the history of Texas has been allowed to escape from the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of a city (actually two cities - Houston and Conroe), and to be allowed to choose its own governance.

2007 - October 24 - Houston City Council unanimously approved an [agreement](#) with The Woodlands to eliminate the threat of annexation, subject to approval by voters of The Woodlands.

2007 - June 15 - Texas legislature approved [Senate Bill 1012](#) and [House Bill 4109](#) by State Sen. Tommy Williams and Rep. Rob Eissler. [SB 1012](#) and companion [HB 2197](#) allow The Woodlands to enter into binding regional participation agreements; [HB 4109](#) and companion [SB 2022](#) relate to the administration, powers, including taxing powers and the authority to issue bonds, boundaries, operations, financing, and dissolution of the Town Center Improvement District. All four bills were unanimously approved by legislators present and voting. HB 4109 allowed The Woodlands voters a one time opportunity to vote to expand TCID to include all areas of The Woodlands in Montgomery and Harris Counties and to transition to a fully elected Board of seven directors by the year 2010. By following steps in the agreement and in these bills, Houston agrees to release The Woodlands from its ETJ. Similar provisions were agreed to by Conroe. Provisions of SB 1022 and HB 4109 had to be validated by voters in the expanded district, to prevent annexation and allow The Woodlands residents to determine their own government in 2014.

2006 - On December 8, an historic agreement between Houston and The Woodlands was proposed and announced by State Senator Tommy Williams and Houston Mayor Bill White. The agreement addresses each of the common themes voiced by residents of The Woodlands:

- ✓ **Avoid Annexation**—Proposed agreement ensures Houston will not annex The Woodlands, if voters abide by the agreement.
- ✓ **Take Action Now**—Immediate action was initiated by Sen. Williams and Rep. Eissler.
- ✓ **Obtain the broadest scope of local control**—The proposal allows registered voters of The Woodlands to determine their governance structure, including the option to incorporate.
- ✓ **Work with, not against, Houston to create a positive working relationship**— In an agreement reached by the City and Sen. Williams, The Woodlands will contribute to important regional projects while maintaining its independence.

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2006 – In November, the Governance Steering Committee presented results of resident input and requested local legislators' assistance.

2006 – 5000 acre Lake Houston Park along Caney Creek in Montgomery County is transferred to Houston Parks & Recreation Dept. from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. This expands Houston's city limits to about 640 square miles in three counties. [Click here](#) for a map showing events described below and boundaries of Houston's ETJ. Houston's ETJ expanded to more than 1266 square miles in five counties. There are also more than 100 Municipal Utility Districts in the Houston area which have agreed to limited purpose annexation agreements, some of which are just south of The Woodlands.

2005 – Houston continues as fourth largest city in US with a population of 2.016 million. Houston Metropolitan area population is 7th in the US at 5.3 million in 10 counties.

2005 - HB 323 79(R) by Mowery, Eissler, et al. Failed. This bill was similar to earlier bills. It would have given residents of The Woodlands an opportunity to vote to avoid annexation. Continued failure of this approach indicated a better means appeared necessary for The Woodlands to avoid annexation.

2003 – Between 1999 and 2003 Houston entered into 43 Strategic Partnership agreements, all of which include some [limited purpose annexation](#). To view maps showing many of these areas [click here](#).

2002 – The Community Associations of The Woodlands initiated a study of governance options. Governance Steering Committee (GSC) formed comprised of members from eleven community stakeholder groups perceived to be key to future governance of The Woodlands.

1999 to 2003 - House Bill 2329 76(R), HB 2200 77(R), HB 568 78(R) and Senate Bill 595 78(R) all failed. Cities in Texas have unilateral authority to annex neighboring unincorporated areas without consent of those who live in the areas to be annexed. Because those being annexed have no say in the process or on taxes in existence, this results in taxation without representation. All of these bills were supported by the Community Associations of The Woodlands and by our local legislators, but failed without being brought to a vote in the House or Senate. All were opposed by essentially every city in Texas.

2001 – TCID creates a special Economic Development Zone (EDZ), to assist The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in expansion to nearly 17,000 capacity. Several additional EDZs have been created since that time for other economic developments. Each EDZ levies an additional one percent sales tax.

1999 - A group of community leaders of The Woodlands initiated a local governance dialogue which ultimately lead to an annexation moratorium agreement between the City of Houston and The Woodlands Municipal Utility Districts. In the [moratorium](#), Houston agreed to not annex The Woodlands for a period of 12 years. Although the moratorium expires in 2011 Senate Bill 89 effectively extended The Moratorium to prevent annexation of The Woodlands prior to 2014 - provided The Woodlands complied with agreement terms.

1999 – Texas legislature authorized cities to enter into strategic partnership agreements (SPA) with utility districts. These SPAs generally involve Limited Purpose annexation of areas involved. The annexations typically include

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commercial property only. Ad valorem property taxes are not levied, but the city may levy a sales tax on retail sales in this area. Houston began an aggressive limited purpose annexation program. For more information on limited purpose vs. general purpose annexations [click here](#). Typically Houston area SPAs **involve not more than 30 years before the area will be annexed and impose a one cent City sales tax**. During the limited agreement period, the City allows the district to use one half of one cent of the sales tax for specified purposes and one half of one cent for Houston's use.

1998 - Houston continues as fourth largest city in U.S. Houston; covers 581 square miles; their extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) contains 1,900 square miles - larger than the state of Rhode Island.

1996 - Kingwood residents strongly contest annexation by Houston but Houston annexed them anyway (15,000 acres). This hotly contested annexation was appealed to the [Texas Supreme Court](#) and led to the passage of Texas Senate Bill 89, which effectively adds three years between the time a city announces their plan to annex and when annexation can occur at the sole discretion of the annexing city.

1994 - Houston voters reject a zoning ordinance, as they have previously.

1993 - Town Center Improvement District (TCID) was created by the Legislature as a local government whose mission was to promote, develop, encourage and maintain economic development for the public benefit of The Woodlands downtown area. TCID was to be funded with a one cent sales tax in its jurisdiction. Funding by sales tax revenues is important. People who shop, dine and are entertained help pay for needed services; including fire, EMS, supplemental law enforcement streetscape maintenance, etc. The legislation also allowed creation of economic development zones within TCID's boundaries, which can levy up to one cent additional tax for a stated period. In 2007 TCID was expanded and changed it's name to The Woodlands Township.

1982 - Houston becomes the nation's fourth largest city.

1980 - Census population of 1,594,086 for Houston, fifth largest in US.

1979 - U.S. attorney rules that the City's annexations violate the Voting Rights Act by diluting minority voting strength. To meet this objection, voters approve a charter change that provides for nine City Council members elected from single-member districts, plus five elected at large.

1977 - A bill was passed that allowed Clear Lake to incorporate if Houston did not annex it. **Houston responds immediately by annexing the Clear Lake area (3174 acres)**.

1975 - Houston annexes Northwood Manor (1534 acres) and Inwood Forest (2125 acres).

1974 - Houston annexes 1469 acres in Acres Homes.

1971 - Houston annexes 1300 acres east of the City of Humble.

1967 - Houston annexes 725 acres in "Acres Homes" area.

1963 - Flight from center city continues. In 1940, 70 percent of the doctors, 76 % of the engineers, and 30 % of the architects worked in the central business district. In 1963 the percentages were 14 % for doctors, 24 % for engineers, and 10 % for architects.

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1962 - Houston voters reject proposed zoning ordinance.

1958 - Houston is dubbed "Murder town, USA" by Time Magazine for maintaining the highest murder rate in the nation at 15 per 100,000.

1956 - **Houston annexes Lake Houston area and a 22.5 mile canal.** The Census Bureau notes a trend in population movement toward the suburbs.

1950 - Houston's population reaches 596,000.

1948 - Houston voters reject proposed zoning ordinance. **Dec. 31 annexation expands Houston's area from 74.4 to 216 sq. mi.** Voters reject zoning. Houston is reportedly the only non-zoned major city in the U.S.

1947 - Oscar Holcombe elected mayor on a strong-mayor platform. A charter change eliminates the city manager.

1943 - Houston changes to a city-manager form of government with a part-time mayor and eight councilmen.

1936 - Houston's population was a little over 300,000

1929 - City Planning Commission recommends that Houston adopt a zoning ordinance, but finds little support. **Houston annexed the Houston Harbor and Denver areas, 885 acres total.**

1927 - **Houston annexed the River Oaks area (3,465 acres) and Harrisburg area (1,293 acres).**

1922 - **Houston annexed 1000 acre Hermann Hospital site.**

1921 - Oscar Holcombe is elected to the first of 11 intermittent terms as mayor. His last term ends in 1958.

1912 - **Texas Constitution home rule amendment allowed a Texas city to do anything not prohibited from doing.** This gave Texas cities the right to annex and took away the fundamental American right of government only by consent of the governed.

1900 - Houston's population reaches 44,600.

1870 - Houston's population up to 9,332.

1860 - Houston's population reaches 5,000.

1850 - First census after Texas joins the Union. Houston population was 2,397.

1839 - The city charter provides for a town of nine square miles.

1837 - General Sam Houston, first president of the Republic of Texas, signs an act authorizing Houston to incorporate. Houston was capitol of the Republic from 1837 until 1839, when it was moved to Austin. Houston incorporates and the first mayor is elected. Population: 1,000.

1836 - Later that year, Houston was founded by Augustus and John K. Allen, who paid about \$1.40 per acre for 6,642 acres of land near the headwaters of Buffalo Bayou. They named the site Houston after General Sam Houston.

1836 - [Frostown \(Frost Town\)](#), an early settlement in what is now Houston, named for the Frost family who arrived about July 1836. An 1838 map showed Frostown and noted where families lived, including the Allen brothers. **Frost Town at about 147 acres is believed to be the first platted neighborhood** in what is now Houston.

1836 - April 21, General Sam Houston's Texas army defeated Santa Anna, dictator of Mexico, and won independence from Mexico in the Battle of San Jacinto.

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1821 - Dr. Johnson Calhoun Hunter came to Spanish Texas, settling in what is now Harris Co. There were only about three families in present Houston area, not counting a few cannibalistic Indians.

See following page for references

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Compiled by Claude Hunter, from sources including the following:

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<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/> - Texas Legislature Online

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http://www.mudhatter.com/MUD_Folder/Annex.pdf

<http://www.houstonculture.org/resources/houstontime.html>

<http://www.houstonhistory.com/decades/history5w.htm>

http://www.census.gov/population/estimates/metro-city/placebyst/SC99T7_TX.txt

<http://home.earthlink.net/~huntercemetery/> - a timeline of Early Texas History

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Revised: November 7, 2007