

A Vision for the Houston Region

Our 21st-Century community reaches for the future without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs and desires. We are driven by the need to improve and balance our economy, community, and environment.

Our Economy

We are the crossroads of commerce for the Americas and much of the world, and we are the gateway to the stars. We possess knowledge, human capital, economic goods, and natural resources.

Challenges:

We are the world center for energy development and marketing and lead the world in developing non-polluting or low-polluting sources of energy.

Our port, road, and rail systems allow rapid, safe, efficient transport of goods and people in the region, on the continent, and around the world. We have the best transport system on earth.

There is enough work for everybody in the region, with adequate rewards to sustain us and our families. We all do something that benefits one community or another without harming any, and our work is among our passions.

Our technologies are efficient and increasingly benign and we move toward zero waste in all areas, including trash, toxics, excess heat, and other pollutants, which are now understood as symptoms of design failure.

Our most valuable assets are our new generations, who are the future, and our elderly, who possess our wisdom and are our champions and pioneers.

Our Community

We are one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse regions on the planet, and as a result our lives are incredibly rich, interesting, and creative.

Challenges:

Our 13-county region is based on a web of livable urban, suburban, and rural activity centers with diverse housing and employment opportunities. People move among these areas as their lives change.

We have many pockets of self-sufficient communities where we know our neighbors, and where most of us can work, shop, and go to school near our homes.

Our schools, colleges, and universities produce highly educated citizens who live and work in the region.

Our cultural resources and organizations are among the best and most exciting in the world, and they are accessible to everyone.

We live harmoniously, reducing disparities and working toward fairness in education, opportunity, and wealth.

We have fierce pride in the appearance of our communities and our region.

Sustainability, efficiency, sufficiency, justice, responsibility, equity, and community are high social values.

Our Environment

We live in a rich, vibrant environment on the beautiful Gulf of Mexico, at the convergence of the Coastal Plain, the Great Canadian Prairie, and the Northern Forest. We understand and protect the incredible complexity of our unusual ecosystem.

Challenges:

Our air and water are clean, we are healthier than we have ever been, and we have improved our ecosystem.

We protect the prairies, forests, waterways, marshlands, and the second most productive estuary system in America.

Our many waterways have been returned to a near-natural state and support a variety of recreation and wildlife.

Streams and ponds link all parts of the area, cooling and cleaning area air, and providing places to detain flood waters.

Bikeways and pathways link activity centers as well as waterways, parks, and historical areas.

There are many kinds of convenient green spaces within five minutes walk of our homes, schools, and jobs.

We have learned to use our resources for commerce, recreation, and spiritual regeneration in ways that will sustain them for future generations.

Note: This Vision for the Houston Region is a shortened version of one originally developed in 1998 as part of the Foresight project of the Center for Global Studies at the Houston Advanced Research Center. Original authors were David Crossley, Winnie Hamilton, Miriam Heller, Doug Lipka, Deborah Martin, Mary Jane Naquin, and Janet Redeker.