

Houston Heights Design Guidelines:

A presentation to the
City Council Committee on Quality of Life
June 28, 2018

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Design Guidelines Purpose:

Illustrate how the City of Houston's historic preservation ordinance (**as amended in Fall 2015**) applies to resources in each historic district.

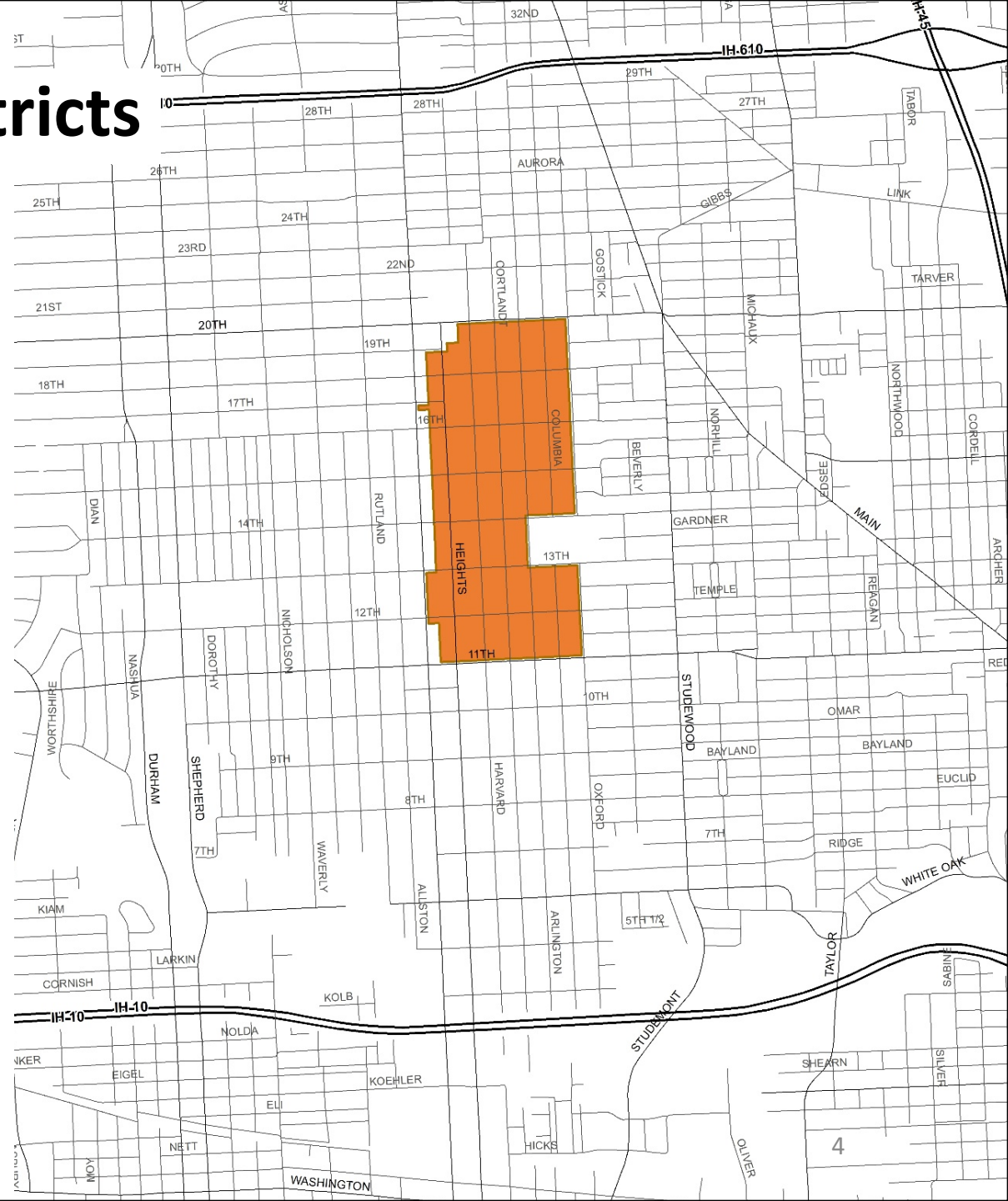
Design Guidelines Purpose:

Create a formula for more **predictability**
and certainty in the application process for:

- applicants
- staff
- the Commission

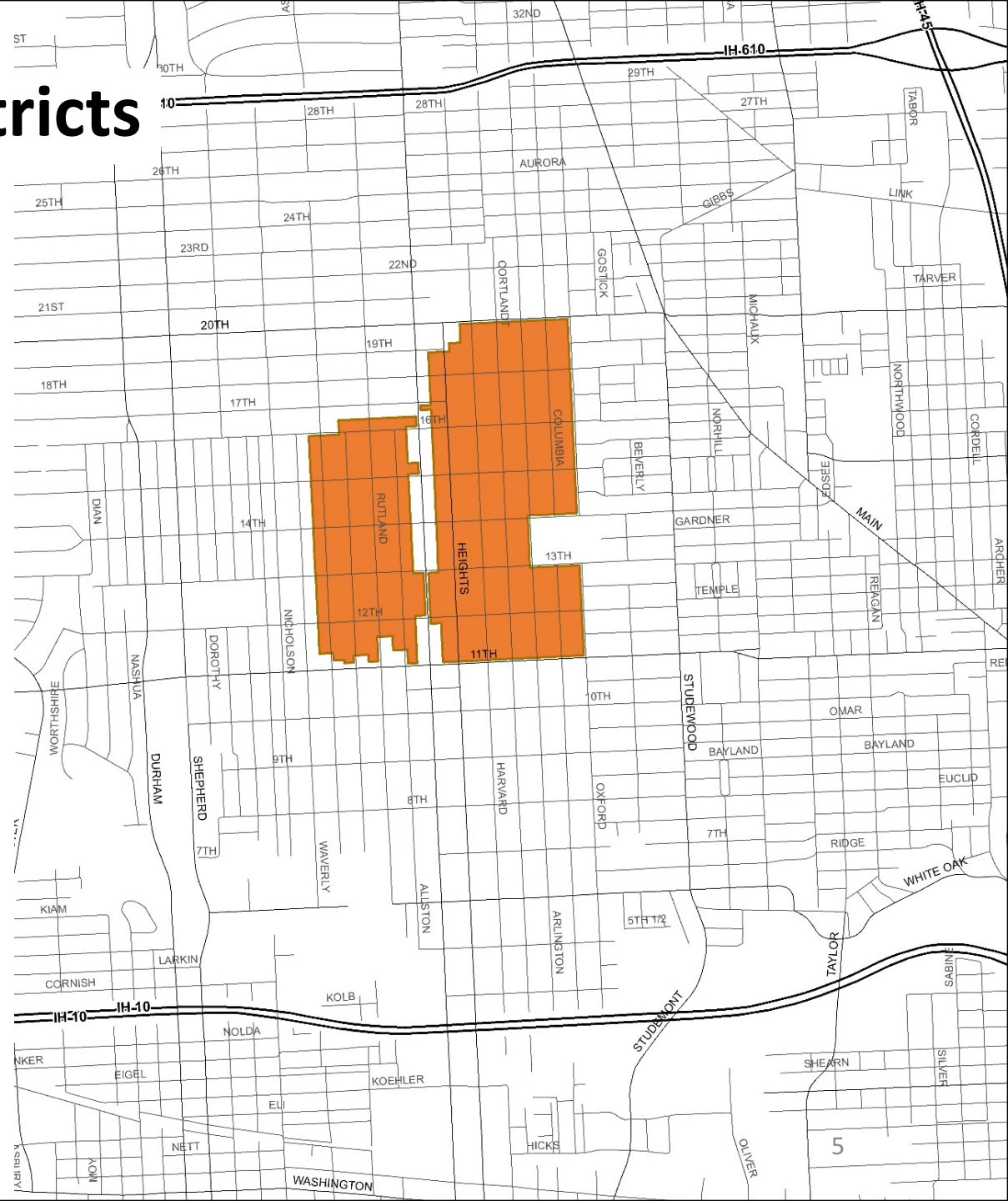
Houston Heights Historic Districts

Heights East



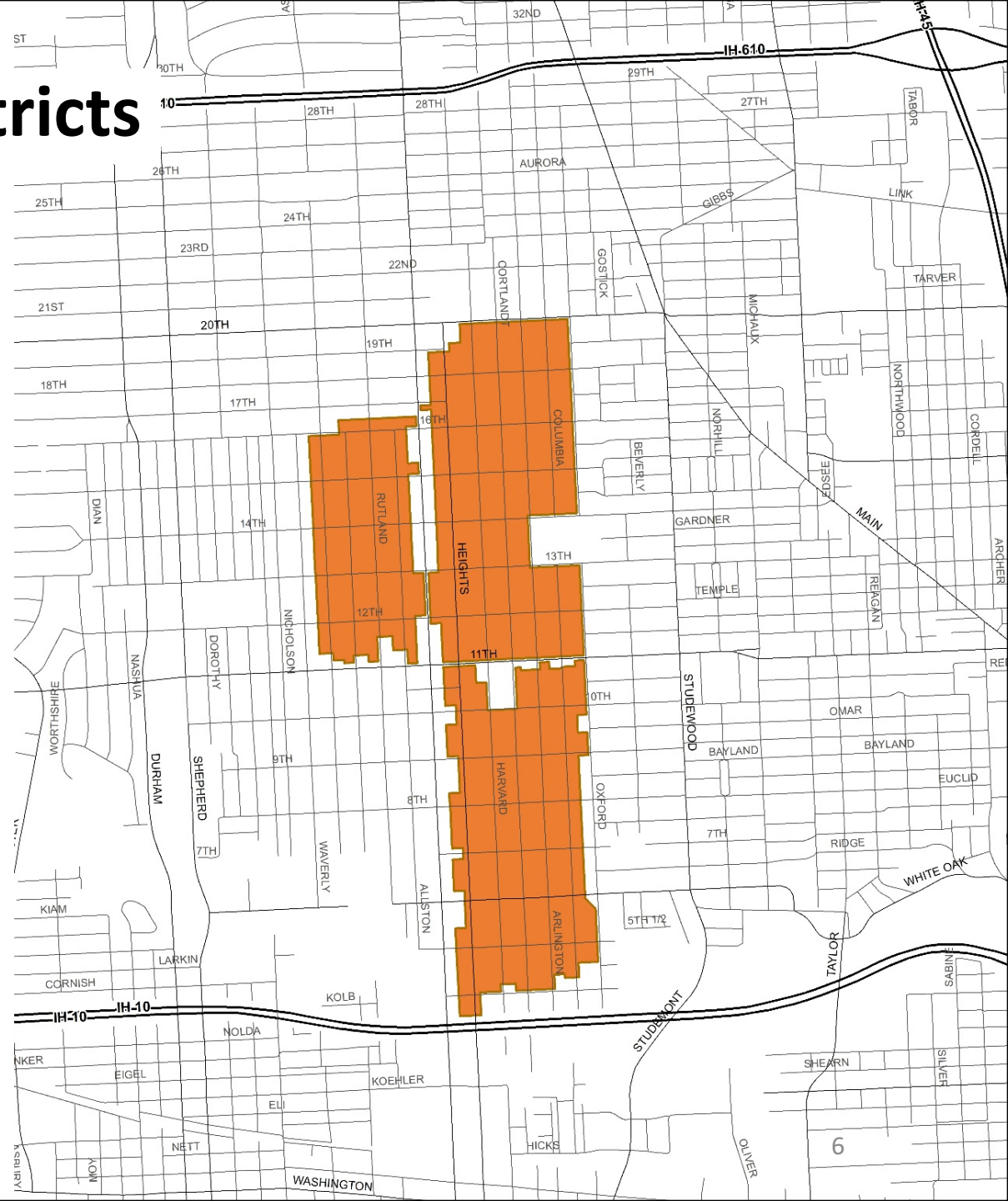
Houston Heights Historic Districts

Heights East
Heights West



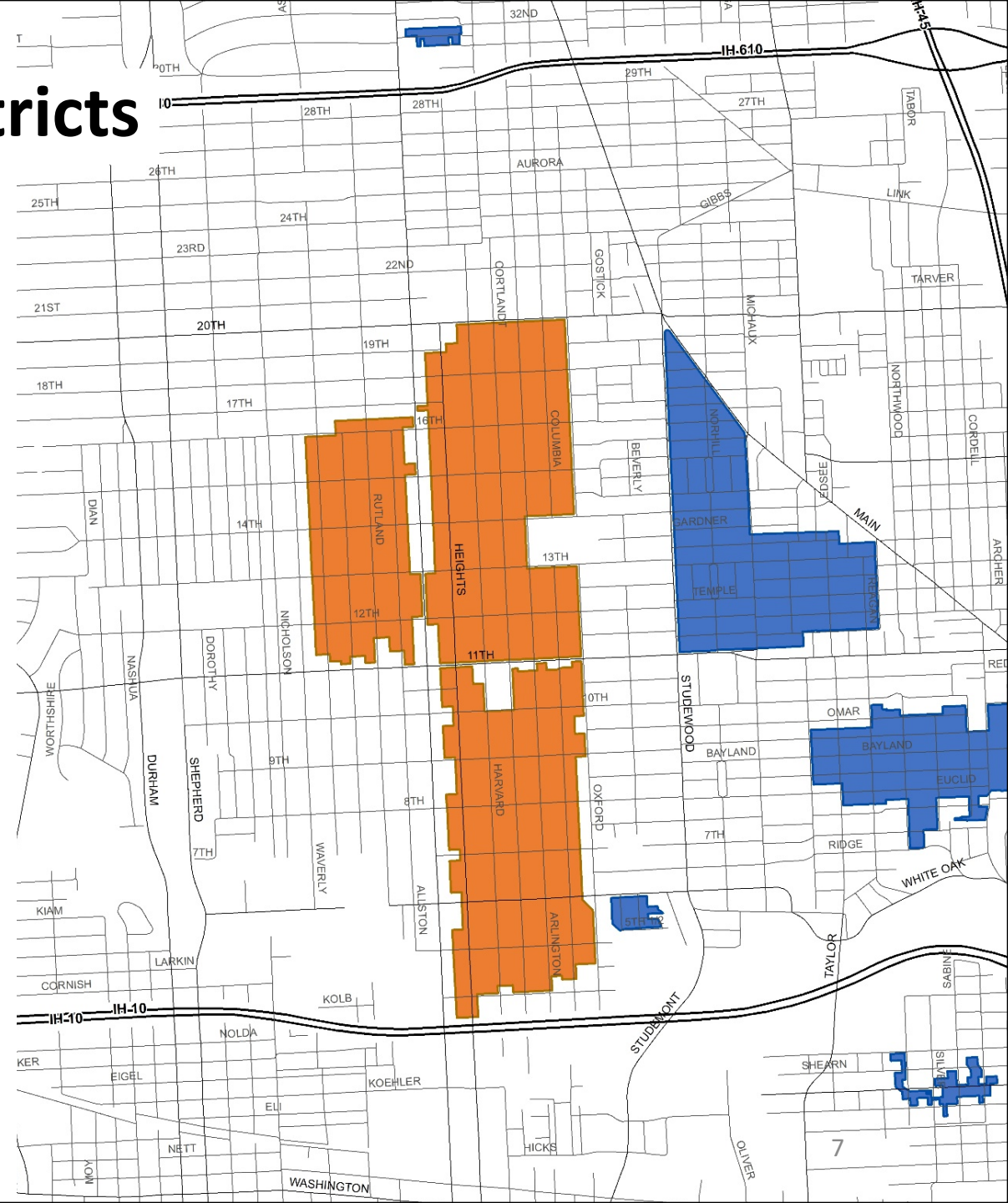
Houston Heights Historic Districts

Heights East
Heights West
Heights South



Houston Heights Historic Districts

Heights East
Heights West
Heights South
Other Heights-area
Historic districts



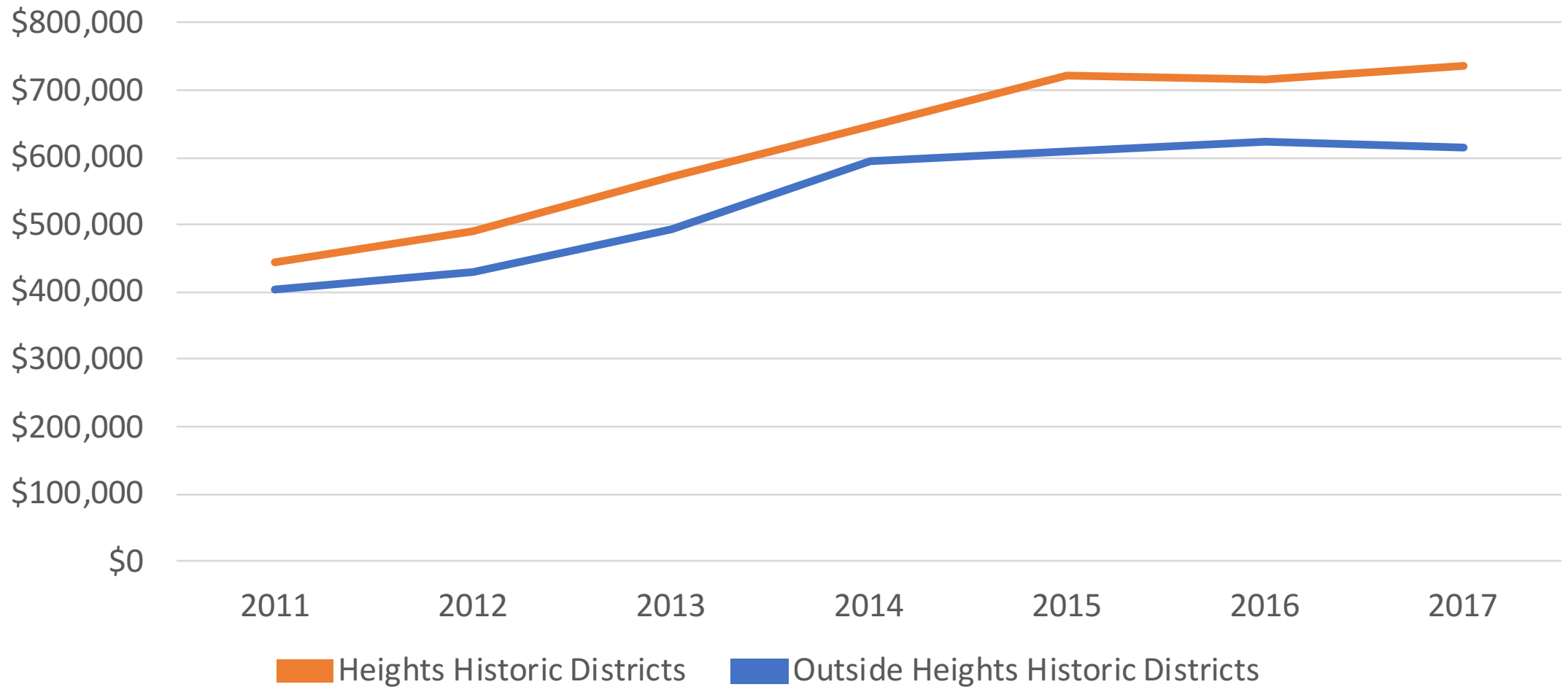
Houston Heights Historic Districts

There are **2273** properties in the three Heights districts. In 2017, the Heights districts comprised **38%** of all Certificate of Appropriateness applications.

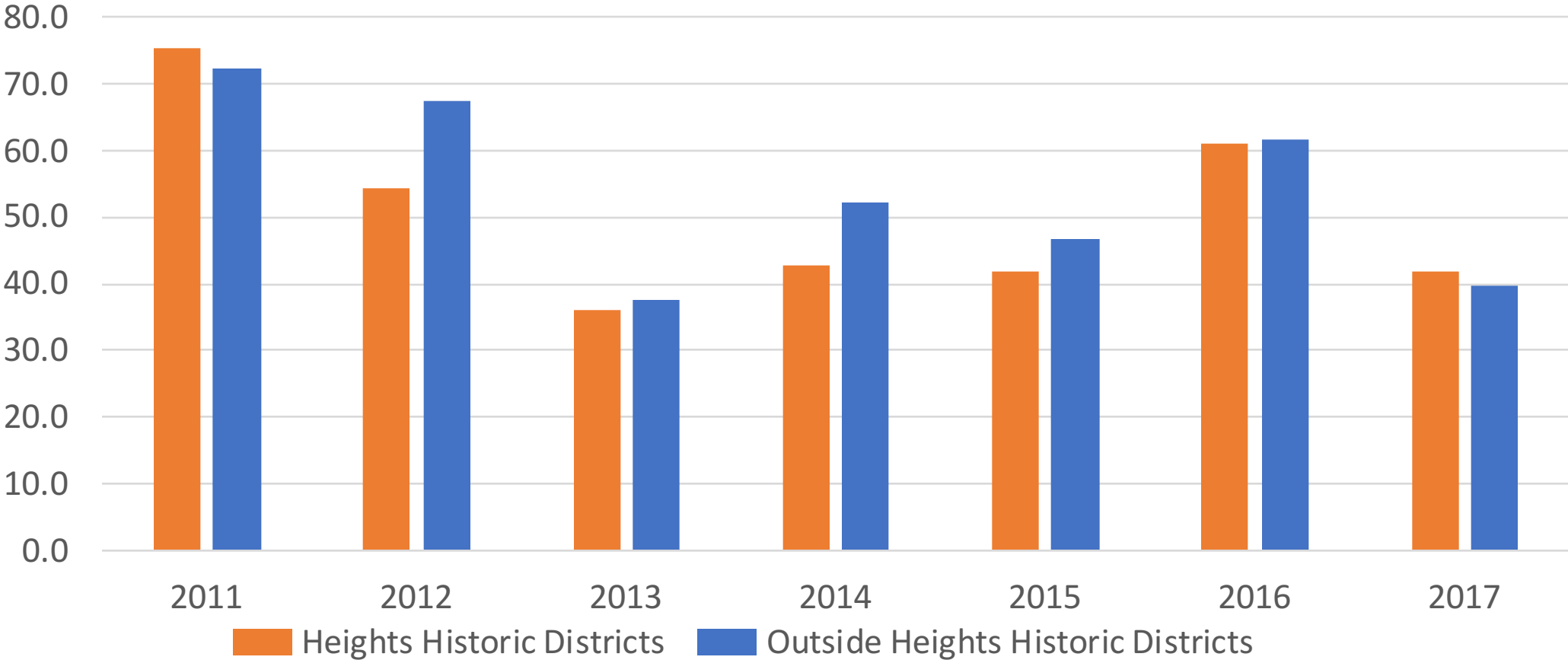
Houston Heights Historic Districts

In 2017, **88%** of all applications for Certificates of Appropriateness were approved. The four-year average is **89%**

Average Sales Prices



Days on Market



Public Process

Public Process

Consultants conducted an extensive data-collection period that included:

- Existing conditions analysis
- Site visits, photography
- GIS analysis of development patterns, building footprints

Public Process

A 2-1/2 year, inclusive and transparent process:

- Nine workshops with the general public;
- Four Advisory Committee meetings (comprised of property owners, builders, architects and realtors);
- Two community-wide meetings to explain, in detail, the contents of the draft documents;
- Four meetings with the HAHC; and
- Two public hearings in front of the HAHC.

Public Process

Additional engagement:

- Eight notification letters mailed through the USPS;
- Near-monthly emails sent to a distribution list of more than 200;
- 2 CitizensNet blasts; and
- All meeting recaps and written comments were posted on the project website at houstonplanning.com

Public Process

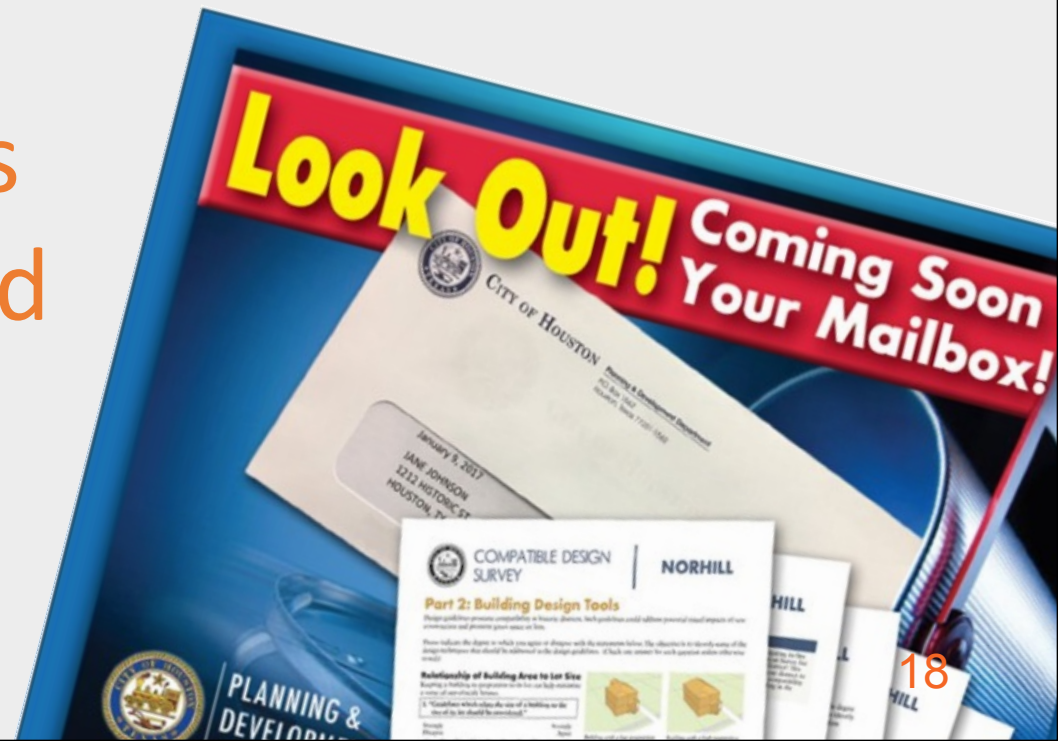
More than **576** individuals attended at least one of these events and the department received more than **267** written comments on the two drafts circulated.

Compatible Design Survey

Compatible Design Survey:

Only one survey response was allowed from each property located within the three historic districts.

Approximately 100 architects and builders were also invited to participate.



Compatible Design Survey

Extensive outreach conducted to encourage fair and comprehensive participation included:

- Letters mailed to each property owner included a unique identifying code;
- Followed by door hangers placed on each owner-occupied home; and
- Flyers placed in neighborhood shops, restaurants and at events.

Compatible Design Survey



4.1 Building coverage is compatible.

Strongly
Disagree

Strongly
Agree

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

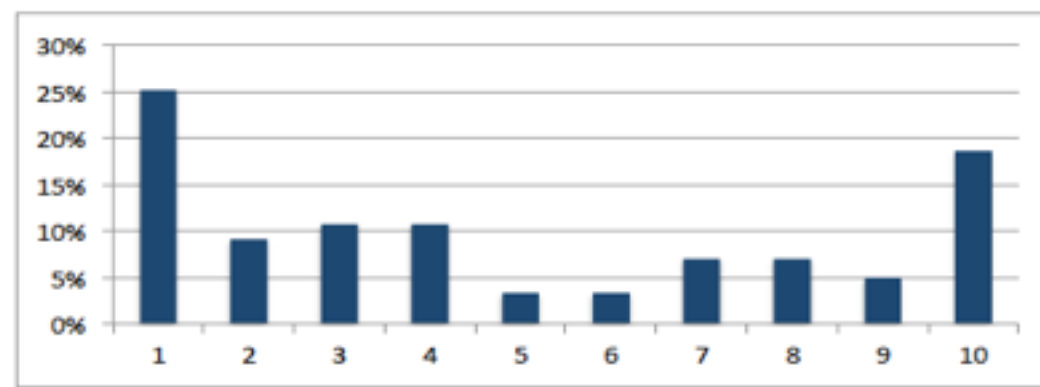
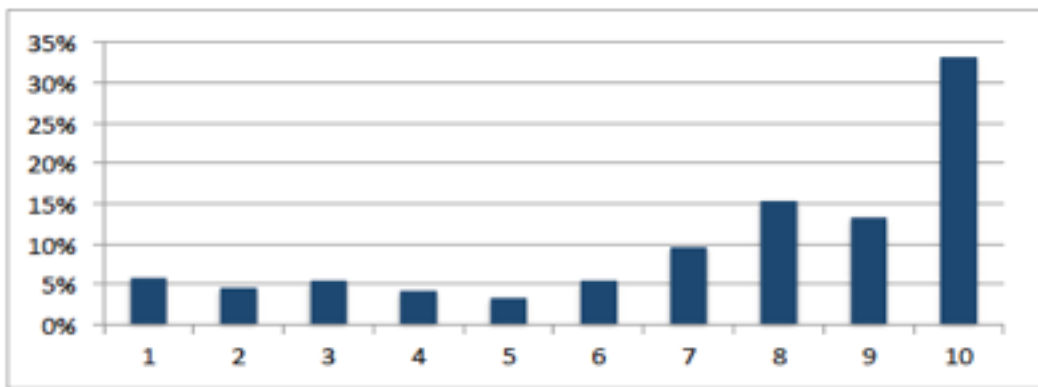
4.2 Overall mass (size) is compatible.

Strongly
Disagree

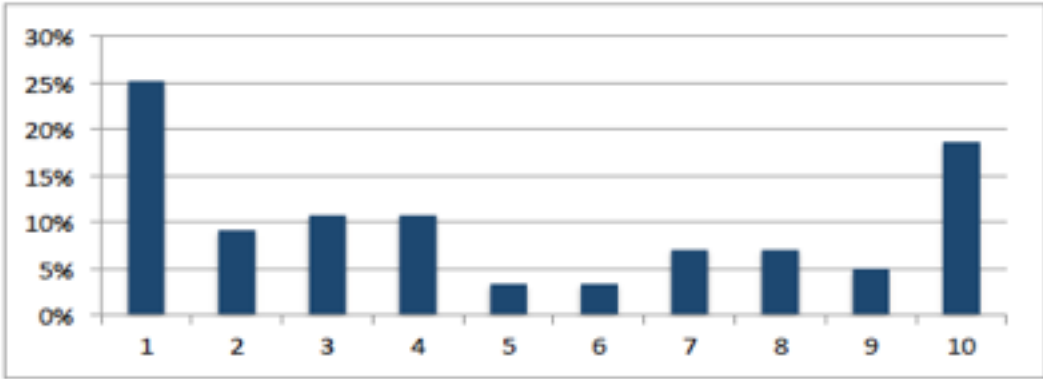
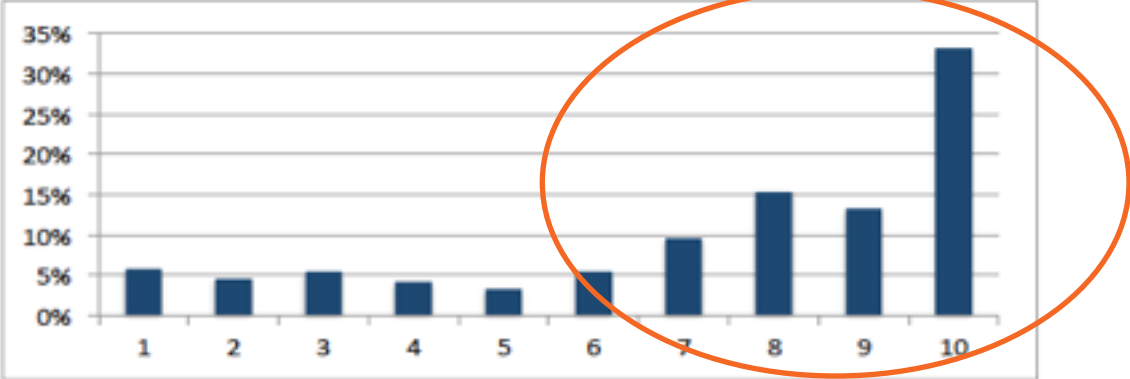
Strongly
Agree

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

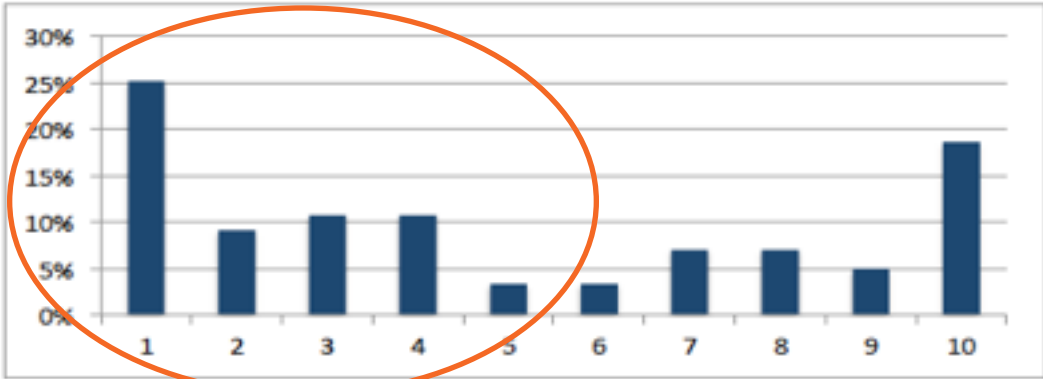
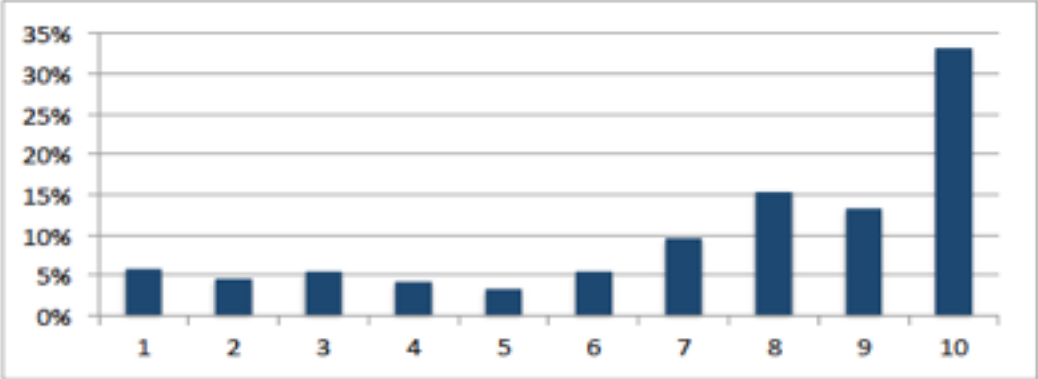
Compatible Design Survey



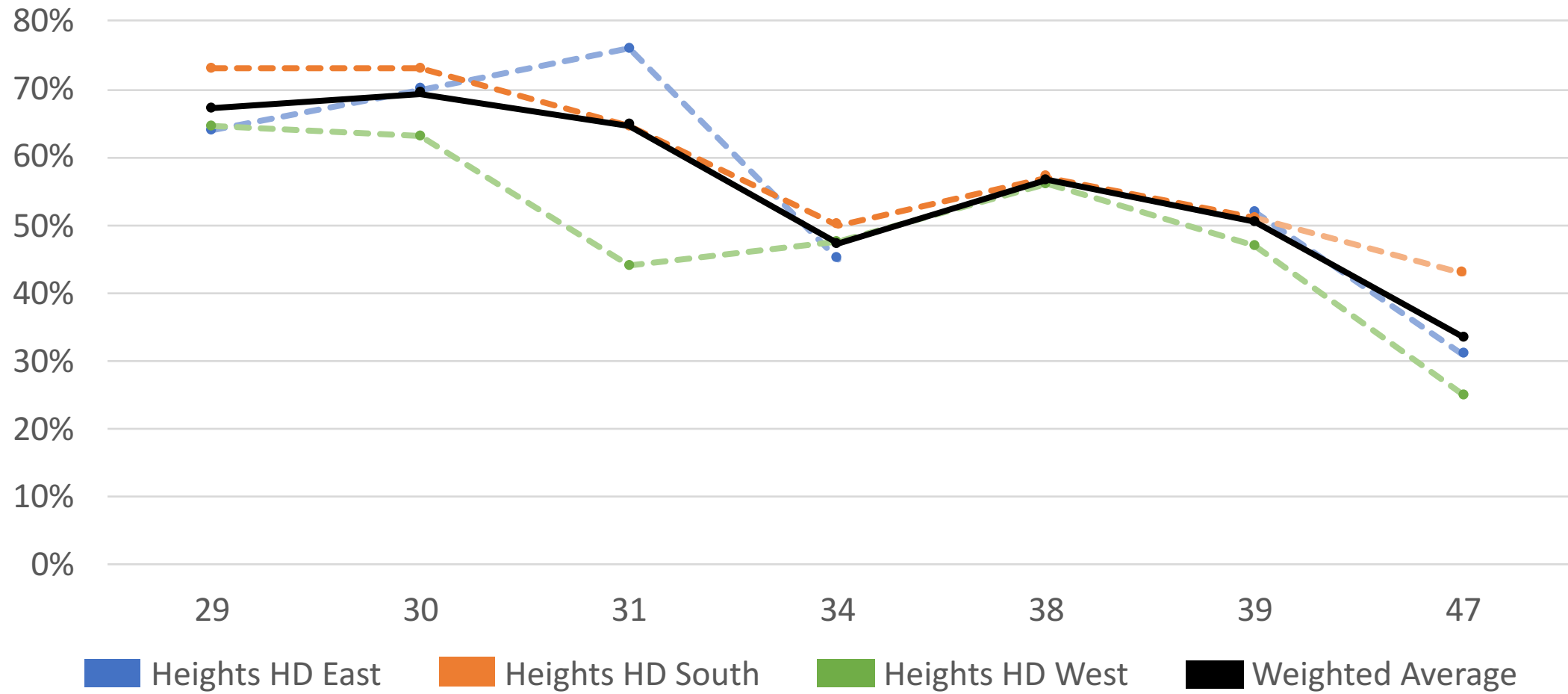
Compatible Design Survey



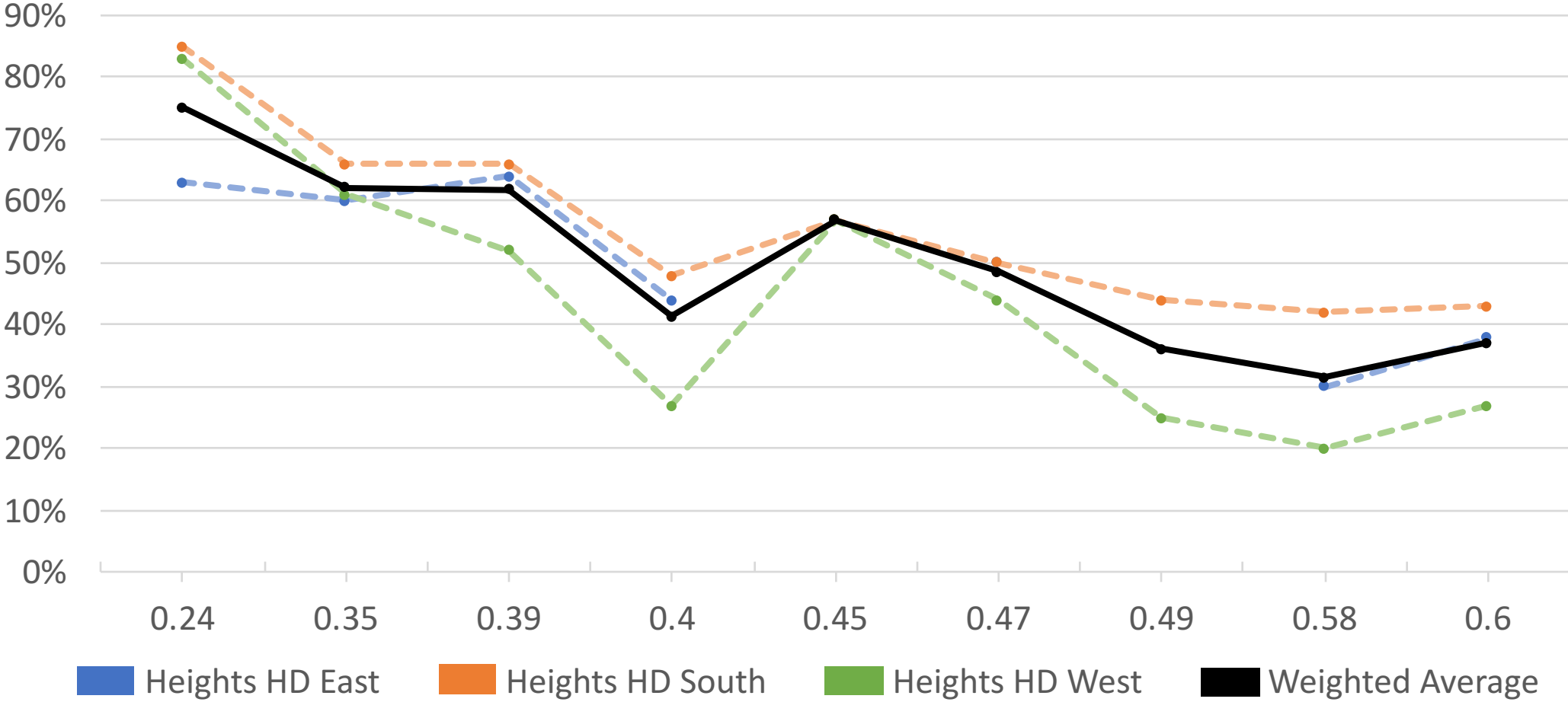
Compatible Design Survey



Lot Coverage



Floor Area Ratio



Compatible Design Survey

Property owners for **558** properties in the three districts responded.

This equates to a response rate of **25%** combined for the three districts.

Compatible Design Survey

“A 25% response rate is **strong**
and the sample is
representative of the
population studied.”

- Dr. Robert Stein

Document Drafts

Document Drafts

Strategy Document, released in February 2017

- Identified findings and initial recommendations

Document Drafts

Draft Document, released in June 2017

- Established measurable standards

Document Drafts

Second Draft Document, released in August 2017

- Reduced cumulative side setbacks for one-stories from 15' to 10'
- Increased exemptions to Lot Coverage and FAR
 - Exempt accessory buildings; open or screened porches
 - Increased detached garage and garage apartment exemption from 250 SF to 400 SF each

AND

Document Drafts

Second Draft Document, released in August 2017

- Increased Finished Floor Height from 30" to 32"
- Increased Plate Heights from 8' and 9' for first and second floors, to 9' and 10' for first and second floors
- Increased garage Ridge Heights from 25' to 26'

Document Drafts

Document Approved by Commission in June 2018

- Increase Finish Floor Height from 32" to 36"
- Reduce setback for garages placed at back of lot
- Reduce setback requirements for lots under 35' wide to 3 ' on each side

AND

Document Drafts

Document Approved by Commission in June 2018

- Increase exemptions from FAR and Lot Coverage
 - Exempt all attic space, with or without dormers
 - Increase exemption for detached garages and garage apartments to 528 SF for each (totaling 1,056 SF for 2 stories)
 - Exempt 264 SF of one-story garages on a one-story house

Conclusion

This document is the result of an inclusive and transparent process with:

- robust and engaged community participation;
- data-based standards;
- multiple revisions based on community feedback; and
- Consensus-driven results