

Downtown Houston Market Report

Central Houston, Inc. and Houston Downtown Management District



The Houston economy continues to expand at a good pace. Supported by high oil prices and hurricane rebuilding activity, the Houston MSA led in job growth among the major metros in the first half of the year, with an unemployment rate of 4.2%, down from 5.4% in 2017. While energy continues its push forward, trading in the \$70–\$80 per barrel range, the direction of prices in the short to medium term is uncertain. Although oil prices are at their highest levels since 2014, and energy companies have begun hiring again (year-over-year energy employment is up 2.7%), this has not significantly bolstered office occupancy. According to JLL's 2018 North America Energy Outlook, over a third of tenants with active office space requirements in Houston are energy-related. Concerned with real estate exposure however, energy companies are taking a conservative and efficient approach to office leasing—taking on shorter, more flexible leases to mitigate risk, with greater reliance on flexible or co-working space as they cautiously emerge from the downturn. More, but smaller size deals, are being made.

SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

The Houston and Downtown office markets are likely to see a boost as upstream activity picks up, including recently announced offshore expansion projects. Job creation opportunities and space expansions by the energy industry will follow closely. Bankruptcies have leveled off, but Downtown continues to feel the lingering impacts of the energy downturn (mergers, acquisitions and consolidations). Following its acquisition by Vistra Energy in April 2018, Dynegy listed its 103,000-SF Houston headquarters space in 601 Travis on the sublease market, cutting 308 jobs. Linn Energy Inc. listed 64,319-SF of sublease space in 600 Travis, following bankruptcy and restructuring. Together, these increased downtown's sublease space by over 150,000-SF.

Notwithstanding, the Downtown office market and development activity have not slowed down, demonstrative of its resilient economy. In the second quarter, Downtown saw major footprint expansions for both energy and non-energy tenants, an influx of local and global law firms, and exponential growth of existing law firms. Enable Midstream Partners took down 48,000-SF of Shell's sublease space in One Shell Plaza. Lionstone Investments is relocating its headquarters Downtown to The Jones on Main from the Washington Heights area. Oil and gas consulting firm EAG Services, is relocating from Uptown to 1415 Louisiana. 609 Main added a new tenant and is now 64 percent leased: energy investment bank Simmons & Company International will be relocating from Bank of America Center to 31,000-SF in 609 Main. Shearman & Sterling LLP just opened its second Texas office on the 33rd floor of 1100 Louisiana, occupying 22,986-SF. Private equity firm Orion Energy Partners LP just opened its first Houston office in Bank of America Center. Law firm, Sidley Austin, LLP signed a long-term

lease renewal and expanded its offices in Wells Fargo Plaza by 60 percent, adding 30,000-SF to its existing 50,000-SF to accommodate its exceptional growth. Law firm Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr PC expanded its office space by about 40 percent to keep up with its growth, adding 8,800-SF to its existing 21,200-SF in Pennzoil Place-North Tower; since 2014, the firm has doubled its Downtown lawyers, and intends to more than double again. Holland & Knight LLP, a law firm that opened its Downtown office less than three years ago at 1000 Louisiana, with three lawyers, has again expanded its employee count (a 500 percent increase in just three years). Law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP's opened Downtown in February 2017 with just two partners, and now has 20 staff. White & Case LLP, which opened its office Downtown in February 2018, announced plans to quadruple its staff within two years. Downtown's largest employer, Chevron, reported first quarter earnings of \$3.64 billion, up 35.6 percent from \$2.68 billion a year earlier.

For the second time this year, Downtown was named one of the top residential neighborhoods in Houston. Commercial real estate firm Berkadia named Downtown the second of the top five Houston neighborhoods with the biggest gains in occupancy year-over-year for the first quarter – an 11 percent gain to 70 percent occupancy. Over 8,000 people now live in the Downtown core, with the apartment inventory continuing to rise. DLC Residential announced a \$54 million, 229-unit mid-rise residential project, the Regalia at the Park, at 100 Crawford with delivery in about 26 months. On the hotel front, Choice Hotels International, Inc. has begun construction on the redevelopment of the Great Southwest building into a 21-story Cambria hotel. The former 30-story, 600-room Days Inn hotel at 801 St. Joseph's Parkway is now listed for sale.

Tagged as one of the nation's fastest growing tech hubs, attracting significant investments from Silicon Valley companies and major local investors, the Downtown Houston innovation ecosystem continues to thrive. Just over two months of its soft opening, WeWork Downtown's leasing is exceeding expectations. The New York-based Flatiron School, an accelerated programming school, officially opened its fourth global campus in WeWork Downtown, with \$250,000 in full scholarships from Facebook for the inaugural class. Chevron Technology Ventures LLC (CTV), the Houston-based venture capital arm of Chevron Corp., also just created its sixth fund, a \$100 million fund called "Future Energy Fund" to invest in research and innovation of new, alternative energy technologies (including from more Houston companies).

Sources: ([Bureau of Labor Statistics](#); [New York Times](#); [The Washington Post](#); [The Washington Post](#); [CNBC](#); [Wall Street Journal](#); [CNN](#); [JLL](#))



WeWork at 708 Main

Market Overview

RESIDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

5,992

residential units

600

under construction

1,179

proposed

OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS

775,000 sf

under construction

RESIDENTIAL

Downtown now has **more than 8,000 residents**, a big leap from 3,800 in 2012 when the Downtown Living Initiative first tackled the need for more residential in Downtown, and that number is increasing monthly. "Plan Downtown" called for 12,000 additional units with the goal of reaching 30,000 residents in the next 20 years. Downtown has become more vibrant as residents have increased due to the diversity of residential options (including six buildings in the last 15 months). Downtown's overall residential market was 75.4 percent occupied at the end of Q2. ([Bisnow](#))

Fat Property, the new owner of the **Peacock & Plaza Apartments** at 1414 Austin St., a 2-building, 32-unit pre-war apartment complex a block west of the Toyota Center, plans to heavily upgrade units in one of the two buildings. Renovations will include new plumbing, electrical, HVAC systems, kitchens, appliances, and bathrooms. Units in the other building will be spruced up, but will be left somewhat original. Designed by Houston architect Lenard Gabert, its first building went up in 1926; the second followed 14 years later. ([Swamplot](#))

Florida-based developer, DLC Residential, has broken ground on **Regalia at the Park**, a \$54 million, 229-unit new apartment project at 100 Crawford. This market-driven development is evidence of the success of the Downtown Living Initiative, set up to kickstart multifamily projects Downtown. The property will include studios to two-bedroom units, a pool, yoga studio, fitness center and parking. The building will occupy the entire block bounded by Crawford, Commerce, North Jackson and Ruiz Streets, with delivery in around 26 months. ([HBJ](#))

OFFICE

1010 Lamar office tower (also known as Younan Square) and its adjacent 550-car garage at 1111 Main (the former Sakowitz building) have been listed for sale. The 20-story, 277,991-SF office building built in 1981, is located on nearly a full city block next to GreenStreet. Younan Properties recently spent over \$4.5 million on renovations. The building is 55 percent leased and is being marketed by HFF. ([CoStar](#), [RNR](#), [Chronicle](#), [HBJ](#))

Historic and LEED Gold-certified office tower, **1001 McKinney**, which was listed on the market in early January, has been sold. The building's owners, Cameron Management and Silverpeak Real Estate Partners sold the 373,000-SF Art Deco tower building to a partnership between Houston-based TRC Capital Partners LLC and Denver-based Amstar America LLC. HFF represented the owners. Built in 1947, the property underwent a \$3 million renovation in 2014. A Morton's Steakhouse was also added to the building. The property is 75 percent occupied. ([HBJ](#))

Just over a year after its acquisition by Spear Street Capital, the 581,000-SF **5 Houston Center** office tower located at 1401 McKinney is undergoing a \$6 million renovation that will remodel its fitness center, office lounge and sky lobby, in-line with Spear Street's broad plans to reposition its acquired properties to remain competitive. ([HBJ](#))



Regalia at the Park

Market Overview

HOTEL HIGHLIGHTS

7,803

hotel rooms

564

under construction

400

proposed

OFFICE (CONTINUED)



Flatiron School

The **Flatiron School**, an accelerated coding bootcamp that started in New York, officially opened its Houston school at WeWork's 708 Main St. location on June 12. The Houston Area Urban League helped recruit candidates from over 400 applicants. Facebook provided \$250,000 to fund full scholarships for all students in the inaugural class of Flatiron's flagship 15-week Immersive Full Stack Web Development Course, which starts July 16. Facebook also pledged to train 1 million people and small business owners nationwide by 2020 to help close the skills gap. ([HBJ](#), [Flatiron School](#), [Flatiron Houston](#))

The Zimmerman family, behind the Montrose hotel La Colombe d'Or, has completed the \$5 million renovation of the historic Raphael and Dorrance buildings at 110 and 114 Main St., rebranded as **Main & Co.**, into a 5-story mixed-use redevelopment. Main & Co. now includes creative office space, contemporary arts and retail space. The redesign preserved and restored much of the original interior character, while incorporating modern, sustainable and creative conveniences. The Cottonmouth Club and Lilly & Bloom cocktail lounges and LCD Art Gallery are already open. Almost 17,000-SF of office space and 5,000-SF of street-level retail space are available for lease. ([Chronicle](#), [HBJ](#))

Three companies headquartered in Downtown were named to **Forbes' 2018 America's Best Employers**. NRG Energy Inc., which has dual headquarters in Houston and New Jersey, topped the list of Houston companies at No. 7. TOTAL was ranked No. 107 while CenterPoint Energy was ranked No. 387. NRG Energy was also No. 262 on Forbes' first-ever "Global 2000: World's Best Employers," an annual list of the world's biggest public companies. ([HBJ](#))

Downtown-based companies, Plains All American Pipeline, L.P., EOG Resources, Kinder Morgan, Waste Management, LyondellBasell Industries NV and Enterprise Products Partners LP, were ranked among the London-based *Brand Finance 500 Most Valuable American Brands for 2018*. ([HBJ](#))

Downtown-based energy firm, Cheniere, made the **Fortune 500 List** for the first time, following a 336.5 percent boost in its revenues from 2016. Seventy percent of Downtown companies climbed in ranks from 2017 to 2018: Enterprise Products Partners moved from #122 to #105; Plains GP Holdings, LP moved from #141 to #115; EOG Resources made the largest leap, climbing up 86 levels from #356 to #270; Targa Resources moved from #402 to #307; CenterPoint Energy moved from #362 to #308; Calpine moved from #400 to #336; and Cheniere

HOTEL

Purchased last year by the Shinn family, **Lancaster Hotel**, is undergoing a multimillion-dollar renovation after flooding significantly during Hurricane Harvey. Located at 701 Texas, the renovated hotel will include a redesigned lobby and guest rooms, a new restaurant and bar, an outdoor mezzanine, an espresso bar and a new cardio fitness studio. Over 40 pieces of contemporary art and the work of over 60 artists will be on display in the hotel. Renovations are expected to be completed in October. The hotel underwent a \$10 million renovation in 2013. Before Hurricane Harvey, the hotel's average occupancy was around 80 to 85 percent. ([HBJ](#))



Lancaster Hotel

Market Overview

RETAIL HIGHLIGHTS



6 new retailers



Grit Grocery

RETAIL

Grit Grocery, an innovative mobile farm-to-table grocery concept that provides local, natural, and unprocessed food to urban communities, is now in the Historic Market Square neighborhood. Grit Grocery is located on the 900 block of Preston (between Main and Travis), from 4 to 9 pm every Tuesday and Thursday. ([Website](#), [Video](#))

La Colombe d'Or (LCD) Art Gallery, Downtown's newest contemporary art gallery is open at 114 Main. LCD specializes in representing contemporary and emerging artists, with exhibits displaying everything from artistic reinterpretations of cash and coins to pieces that explore luminosity. Exhibitions are open Thursdays to Saturdays from noon to 6 pm and Sundays from noon to 4 pm. ([LCD Gallery](#))

No Lines Barber Studio is open in the Warehouse District at 1401 Sterrett Street, Suite 202, Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10 am to 6 pm. ([Barber Studio](#))

The popular, next-generation, and Houston's original premium indoor cycling studio **RYDE** has opened Downtown in a street-front contemporary studio on the ground floor of the Esperson Building. Located on the corner of Milam and Rusk, the studio boasts top-of-the-line fitness equipment and a proprietary myRYDE performance tracking and analysis system. RYDE clients get performance results of their 45-minute full-body workout emailed to them after each session. ([Culturemap](#))

Whitney Andrew and two fellow Houston music veterans have opened a new performance venue dubbed **Spruce Goose: Social Flyers Club**, a nod to Howard Hughes' famed aircraft. Located on the top floor of the Henke & Pillot building at 811 Congress, Spruce Goose will bring a steady live music presence to Historic Market Square. All three have major ties to Houston's music and arts scenes. ([Houston Press](#))

Tru Essence Cosmetic & Med Spa is now open on the ground floor of SkyHouse Main at 1725 Main Suite 2 (corner of Jefferson and Fannin). A luxury cosmetic and medical spa, Tru Essence is owned and operated by medical and pharmaceutical doctors. ([Website](#))

Oxbow7 located on the ground floor of the new Le Méridien hotel has been rebranded as **Zutro Restaurant & Bar**, serving innovative regional Southern cuisine created from the freshest ingredients. The 23rd floor rooftop lounge, Hoggbirds, has also been rebranded as **Z on 23 Rooftop Lounge** and features a light menu, craft cocktails, specialty beers, a wine selection and 360-degree views of Downtown. ([Website](#))

RETAIL—COMING SOON

Charles Lusk and restaurateur Sean Marshall are opening a new restaurant—**Coterie**—this summer on the ground floor of Market Square Tower at 777 Preston. Described as "deliberately personal and uniquely Houston," the 1,500-SF space restaurant will "mirror the energy of downtown's resurgence," and include Italian handmade furniture, locally sourced fixtures, and a wine cellar where guests can walk in and select a bottle with their server. The menu will offer breakfast to late-night dishes that will include seasonal items. ([HBJ](#), [Bisnow](#), [RNR](#), [Chronicle](#))

Etro Lounge nightclub is moving Downtown from its Montrose location at 1424 Westheimer to the recently completed Main & Co. mixed-use project at 114 Main St. in August. ([HBJ](#))

RETAIL—COMING SOON

(CONTINUED)

Bravery Chef Hall has announced its first cocktail concept, **Indie Bar**, inside its Aris Market Square street-level space at 409 Travis St. The concept will feature a rotating bartender, and act as an incubator for local bar professionals to grow and learn. Candidates will pitch their ideas to Bravery's partners similar to ABC's TV show "Shark Tank." The selected bartender will build a team and menu, and operate the bar. ([HBJ](#))

Finn Hall has secured its final four restaurants and two bar concepts before its fall opening in The Jones on Main at 712 Main St. The restaurants include: **Craft Burger**, started by Shannen Tune, who won the Food Network TV show "Chopped" in 2016; **Oddball Eats**, a falafel-focused Mediterranean concept owned by siblings Rani and Rene Francis; **Sit Lo**, a new concept from the team behind the Bowl'D Up food truck, showcasing 'Little Saigon' food culture with Vietnamese street food; and **Yong**, a fast-casual Korean concept by former La Grange and Cottonwood chef, Daniel Aitai. The bar concepts include: **St. Jac's**, in the main hall, offering craft beer, wine and cocktails and **Swallow's Nest**, on a mezzanine level, serving cocktails. Max Gonzalez, owner of Catalina Coffee and Amaya Roasting Co., will debut **Amaya Coffee**, a new local coffee concept offering pastries, beverages, and a new addition—affogato. Finn Hall is expected to open in September. ([HBJ](#), [HBJ](#), [HBJ](#))

A new concept tagged as "a reimagined fine dining experience" will be opening to replace Artista restaurant at the Hobby Center, which has closed. The new concept will be launched with a new restaurant name in mid-September. The Hobby Center's Grand Lobby Bistro will still serve food before performances. ([HBJ](#))

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Design and planning has begun on the \$22 million **Bagby Street Corridor redevelopment project**. The redesign will reduce the 4-to-5 lane street to between 3-to-4 vehicular lanes, add wider pedestrian walkways, bicycle lanes, beautification elements and signature lighting and update the storm sewer system. The project kicked off in July 2017 and is expected to last through June 2021, with design taking one year and construction taking two. ([HBJ](#), [Bisnow](#))

The design phase of the \$5 million second phase of renovations to the Downtown **Barbara Bush Literacy Plaza** has begun, led by Lauren Griffith Associates. The 0.75-acre plaza is located at 550 McKinney, between the Julia Ideson Building and the Central Library. Construction on the second phase is expected to run from early 2019 to the end of 2019. Phase 2 will include a library lounge, children's reading area and a café with indoor and outdoor seating, a water feature, video display, landscaping, and a "panel of lawn for casual seating or rotating art exhibits." The \$1.6 million first phase of the plaza's renovation project was completed in 2017. ([HBJ](#))

The **BBVA Compass Stadium** is one of the 15 venues across 13 U.S. cities to host the 2019 CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer matches next summer. This is the fourth consecutive edition of the prestigious continental soccer tournament in which BBVA Stadium will serve as a host venue. ([BBVA Compass Stadium](#), [HBJ](#))

The former Holiday Inn turned **Day's Inn Hotel** at 801 St. Joseph Pkwy. is now listed for sale by SFK Development, following a 2-week site cleanup. The 30-story, 477,981-SF property was once the largest and tallest Holiday Inn in the country with 600 guest rooms. CBRE is marketing the building, which sits on a half-block, with 24 levels of space atop a six-story parking structure, and six elevator shafts. It is one block from the Pierce Elevated, which is scheduled to be removed as TxDOT re-routes the freeway, opening up green space and removing the barrier between Midtown and Downtown. ([Swamplot](#), [RNR](#), [Bisnow](#))

Houston is among three finalists to host the **2020 Democratic National Convention** along with Milwaukee

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

(CONTINUED)

and Miami Beach. Mayor Sylvester Turner highlighted Houston's proven excellence in hosting high-profile national events such as the Super Bowl. Houston's bid proposes the Toyota Center and the George R. Brown Convention Center as the official convention sites, with around 24,000 hotel rooms available within 14 miles. ([HBJ](#), [Chronicle](#))

Part of Brookfield Properties' renovation plans to upgrade **Houston Center**, the company unveiled a series of six new, colorful murals on the 4 Houston Center wall facing McKinney to brighten up the area and encourage biking and walking. Pandr Design Co. created the murals, designed by artists Roxy Prima and Phoebe Cornog, who also installed two tunnel murals at The Court at Allen Center, another Brookfield property. Since the murals were installed, the #madeinhou hashtag has proved popular on Instagram. ([Chronicle](#), [Brookfield Twitter](#))

Houston's First Baptist Church Downtown unveiled the completed new facility at 1730 Jefferson on May 20, 2018. The former Communication Workers of America/Local 6222 Union building was redeveloped into a 3-story multi-purpose campus able to hold between 600 and 700 worshippers. ([Website](#))

Part of the Theater District's 2025 Master Plan to activate the west side of Downtown, the 1.5-acre **Jones Plaza** will undergo a \$25 million redevelopment. Rios Clementi Hale Studios is leading the "Urban Choreography" concept redesign that celebrates the plaza's dual role of a green oasis and cultural programming and special events space. Led by Houston First, the renovated plaza will be a vibrant, programmable day-and-night venue with easy access to theater facilities, art installations, performance space and a 4,000-SF dining facility. Jim Crane and the Astros' Foundation are leading the \$20 million fundraising campaign efforts. ([HBJ](#))

METRO is in the final phase of a mobility plan to address public transit needs in the Greater Houston area set to be released this summer. The main goals of the plan involve improving safety, accessibility, speed and connectivity, including forming more connections between major activity centers and airports. ([CommunityImpact](#))

Four Downtown real estate projects were winners of **2018 Landmark Awards**. The Main and Commerce Exchange won the Renovation and Rehabilitation



Houston's First Baptist Church

category; NRG sublease at One Shell Plaza won the Project Lease category. 609 Main at Texas won the Office Building or campus category; and Aris Market Square won the Multifamily category. ([HBJ](#))

An eight-foot bronze statue and monument to honor **President Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ)** is to be built in (little) Tranquility Park. Led by Charles Foster and the George Bush Presidential Library Foundation's David Jones, the monument will include LBJ quotes, a timeline of his career, recordings of his voice, and his ties to Houston, including his influence in securing the NASA Johnson Space Center for Houston. The LBJ monument will complement the nearby monuments of President George H.W. Bush and James A. Baker, III. The Brown Foundation of Houston has kicked off the fundraising campaign with a \$250,000 grant. ([Bisnow](#), [RNR](#))

Lyric Centre Garage, A 800-car new parking garage, opened in April at 411 Smith. The garage has a fresh and modern design aesthetic plus enhanced exterior lighting. Lyric Market, a 30,000-SF food hall located in its street-level space, is expected to open in early 2019.

Q2 2018 Overview

MAJOR OFFICE LEASES AND SALES

OFFICE LEASES

TENANT	TYPE	TO	FROM	SF
Harris County Veterans Services	Relocation	500 Jefferson	9418 Jensen Dr.	118,896
Carrizo Oil & Gas	Renewal	500 Dallas	-	83,109
Sidley Austin, LLP	Renewal/ Expansion	Wells Fargo Plaza (1000 Louisiana)	-	80,000 (Expansion: 30,000)
Haynes & Boone	Renewal	1221 McKinney	-	70,000
Constellation Energy	n/a	Kinder Morgan Tower (1001 Louisiana)	-	62,000
Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)	New to Downtown	609 Main	Williams Tower and Five Post Oak Park	54,000
Energy XXI	Renewal	One City Center (1021 Main)	-	50,000
Enable Midstream Partners	Relocation	One Shell Plaza (910 Louisiana)	1111 Louisiana	48,000
Simmons & Company International Energy Specialists	Relocation	609 Main at Texas	Bank of America Center (700 Louisiana)	31,045
Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr PC	Renewal / Expansion	Pennzoil Place	-	30,000 (Expansion: 8,800)
Goldman Sachs	Relocation	609 Main	1000 Louisiana	29,763
Polsinelli	Renewal (Q1)	Wells Fargo Plaza (1000 Louisiana)	-	25,580
Shearman & Sterling LLP	New to Downtown	1100 Louisiana	-	22,986
Lionstone Investments	New to Downtown	The Jones on Main (712 Main)	100 Waugh Dr Houston	22,145
Zarvona Energy	Expansion	1010 Lamar	-	17,750 (Expansion: 3,400)
EAG Services	New to Downtown	1415 Louisiana	19 Briar Hollow Ln	7,035
Essentia Advisors	New to Downtown	Three Allen Center	-	5,000
Orion Energy Partners LP	New to Downtown	Bank of America Center (700 Louisiana)	-	n/a

REAL ESTATE SALES

PROPERTY NAME	SELLER	BUYER	ADDRESS	SIZE/SALE PRICE
1001 McKinney	Cameron Management & Silverpeak Real Estate Partners	TRC Capital Partners & Amstar America LLC	1001 McKinney	375,440/n/a

Sources: Houston Office Q2 2018 – Quarterly Market Reports (Colvill, CBRE, Cushman & Wakefield, HFF, JLL, NAI Partners, Newmark Grubb Knight Frank, PMRG, Transwestern); CoStar; Houston Business Journal (HBJ); Houston Chronicle; Realty News Report; Bisnow; Central Houston, Inc.

CO-WORKING/INNOVATION SPACES/ INCUBATORS DOWNTOWN

PROPERTY NAME	ADDRESS
WeWork	708 Main
Accenture Innovation Hub	1301 Fannin
Station Houston	1301 Fannin
Regus	700 Milam, 2 Allen Center (1200 Smith)
Level Office	720 Rusk, 405 Main

Sources: HBJ; Central Houston, Inc.

RETAIL OPENINGS

Opened Q2 2018

Grit Grocery (mobile grocery truck)	Historic Market Square (900 block of Preston)
LCD Gallery	114 Main
No Lines Barber Studio	1401 Sterrett, Suite 202
RYDE	Esperson Building (808 Travis)
Spruce Goose: Social Flyers Club	811 Congress
Tru Essence Cosmetic & Med Spa	1725 Main, Suite 2

Spotlight on Downtown Houston

LOCAL MEDIA

June 13, 2018

WORLD CUP COMING TO U.S.; HOUSTON COULD HOST GAMES

The World Cup is returning to North America, moving Houston a lot closer to hosting one of the world's biggest soccer matches. FIFA Congress has awarded the 2026 World Cup to a united bid consisting of the United States, Canada and Mexico, beating out Morocco. Houston is one of 23 cities as potential host cities for World Cup matches; that list is expected to be trimmed to the final 16 cities by June 2020. NRG Stadium is the venue Houston has put up to host World Cup games. Hosting the 2026 World Cup could generate more than \$5 billion in short-term economic activity across North America, with an overall net benefit of \$3 to \$4 billion, according to Boston Consulting Group. Incremental economic activity could total between \$160 and \$620 million in each host city, creating a net benefit of \$90 million to \$480 million per city after accounting for potential public costs. —HBJ

June 11, 2018

HOUSTON NO. 7 BEST CITY IN AMERICA, NO. 31 IN THE WORLD

"Houston is one of the best cities in America and the world, ranked as the No. 7 best city in the U.S. and the No. 31 best city in the world by Vancouver, British Columbia-based Resonance Consultancy Ltd. In the 2018 "America's Best Cities" report, the Bayou City earned high marks for its key institutions, economic climate, infrastructure, attractions, programming, entertainment and culture. Houston almost made the top 10 cut out of all global cities in the economic climate category, coming in at No. 11 worldwide. "Smart, skilled and soulful, Houston is the American city of the future," highlighting the city's diversity and affordability. "Among many other things, you get a food scene to rival any in the country." Resonance also lauded Houston's upcoming spaceport, high-speed rail project, and the Innovation District coming to Midtown. In particular, Resonance had high praise for the recently released "Plan Downtown: Converging Culture, Lifestyle & Commerce," a comprehensive plan to re-energize downtown Houston and improve upon its residential developments, green space, walkability and public transit. —HBJ

June 6, 2018

ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME HOUSTON EXHIBIT OFFERS RARE GLIMPSE INSIDE THE SISTINE CHAPEL

Starting on June 8, "Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel: The Exhibition" will be unveiled for a two-month run at event space The Corinthian. Expect full-sized, photographed replicas of the artist's vault frescoes, along with his 40-foot-high The Last Judgment, from the altar wall. The works have been on display around the country and the world, including at the Oculus mall in Westfield World Trade Center in New York, and The Women's Museum in Dallas. After this Houston exhibit, it will run in Hangzhou, China. Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel runs June 8 through July 31. For more information, visit the official site." —Culturemap

May 4, 2018

NEW YORK LAW FIRM OPENS HOUSTON OFFICE LED BY FORMER BAKER BOTTS PARTNER

New York-based law firm Shearman & Sterling LLP has opened its second Texas office in Houston with six partners, on May 3, at 1100 Louisiana St., in a 22,986-SF office. Shearman & Sterling will significantly expand its existing global energy capabilities with a focus on oil and gas transactions and projects to complement the firm's existing global energy group. "Our new Houston team's tremendous reputation, particularly in upstream, midstream and downstream oil and gas transactions, provides great synergies with our existing global energy offering and bolsters our client offering on the ground in one of the world's leading, and extremely active, energy markets," said David Beveridge, Shearman & Sterling's senior partner. "The launch of our Houston office advances our growth plans in the United States while furthering the firm's industry group strategy." —HBJ

LOCAL MEDIA (CONTINUED)

April 19, 2018

FRESH FOOD TRUCK ROLLS OUT NEW HEALTHY WAY FOR HOUSTONIANS TO SHOP FOR THEIR MEALS

"The grocery business is in a period of major changes. At the same time, the farm to table movement has made diners more aware than ever of where their food comes from. Grit Grocery is a food truck that sells fresh produce, meat, seafood, dry goods, and more. Founded by two men with Rice MBAs, Dustin Windham and Jamal Ansari, and a third, Michael Powell, who has a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology, Grit aims to be a convenient way for people to purchase fresh, healthy food. "It's mostly local product. We don't do processed food." The truck operates on a set schedule that takes it to a different neighborhood each weekday from 3 pm to 9 pm. Shoppers can either purchase raw ingredients or "meal bundles" that offer all the ingredients needed to prepare a specific dish. Customers have responded so favorably that Grit leased a 3,000-square-foot warehouse to store more product and has begun construction on a second truck that will allow it to reach more people." —[Culturemap](#)

April 17, 2018

NEW YORK PRIVATE EQUITY FIRM ESTABLISHES FIRST HOUSTON OFFICE

"New York-based private equity firm Orion Energy Partners LP announced the opening of its first Houston office in the Bank of America Center at 700 Louisiana St. on April 17. The new office implants Orion closer to where it has tended to make investments, and will augment its ability to find new investments and serve those it has secured. "Houston is a phenomenal place to live and work, and the ideal market to anchor Orion Energy's strategy in the region," said Ethan Shoemaker, the firm's managing director. Shoemaker expects Orion's participation in the region to accelerate going forward." —[HBJ](#)

April 15, 2018

DISCOVERY GREEN MARKS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

"Discovery Green opened a decade ago this weekend, and the downtown green space has hosted more than 12 million visitors so far and has spurred more than a billion dollars in economic development. Skeptics said the 12-acre green space would become a homeless encampment, that no suburbanite would drive all the way downtown to see a park. They were wrong. Visitor counts immediately outstripped consultants' projections, more than 1.2 million people visit the park's 1-acre lake, its playground and interactive water feature, its restaurants, amphitheater, dog runs and public art installations, its summer winter ice rink. Many visitors are drawn by the 600-some free activities the park hosts annually — from yoga, Zumba and salsa classes to film, beer and margarita festivals, 5K runs and even a contemporary circus. Others are out-of-towners, or organizers of events that see it as a key part of the pitch for conventions, Final Fours, All-Star games and Super Bowls. "I'm a native Houstonian and I'm a son of a native Houstonian, and as children we were told, 'Never go downtown,' that nothing good happened downtown outside of the Theater District," said Discovery Green's president, Barry Mandel. "So, watching children in the thousands recreate downtown on a daily basis is sometimes kind of hard to comprehend, and it is also joyful on a daily basis." —[Chronicle](#)

Spotlight on Downtown Houston

REGIONAL & GLOBAL MEDIA



June 2018

HOUSTON'S NEW KINDER HIGH SCHOOL FOR PERFORMING, VISUAL ARTS BLENDS CLASSROOMS, CREATIVITY

"Occupying a full city block in downtown Houston, the new Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts is nearing completion. The new flagship facility for Houston Independent School District (HISD) replaces, upgrades and expands the existing HSPVA, a magnet school for music, theater, writing, dance and art. The Kinder Foundation contributed a lead gift of \$7.5 million for the \$88.3 million arts school project in 2016 as part of that organization's \$10 million campaign to further support the HISD project and program. The new five-story 168,000 SF building has two levels of underground parking, a central 800-seat theater, a 300-seat black box theater, rehearsal rooms, an arts gallery, academic classrooms and commons, a recording studio, a roof terrace and a cafeteria, plus all the administration and faculty spaces. Founded in 1971 as HISD's cutting-edge arts and academics specialty program, HSPVA is one of the oldest such schools in the country. It's projected to open for students in January 2019. "Thanks to the inspiring commitments from both HISD and the Kinder Foundation, Houston will continue to lead the nation in accessible arts education."

Please contact Central Houston or the District with any questions you may have:

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