



# Houston Historic Black Communities

Chrystal L. Beasley, native Houstonian, graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, raised in church in Pleasantville, and Third Ward Resident.

April 16, 2025

# Agenda

## **Black Diaspora into Houston** **Historic Black Communities**

- Freedman's Town
- Wards
  - Third
  - Fourth
  - Fifth
- Independence Heights
- Sunnyside
- Acres Homes
- Pleasantville



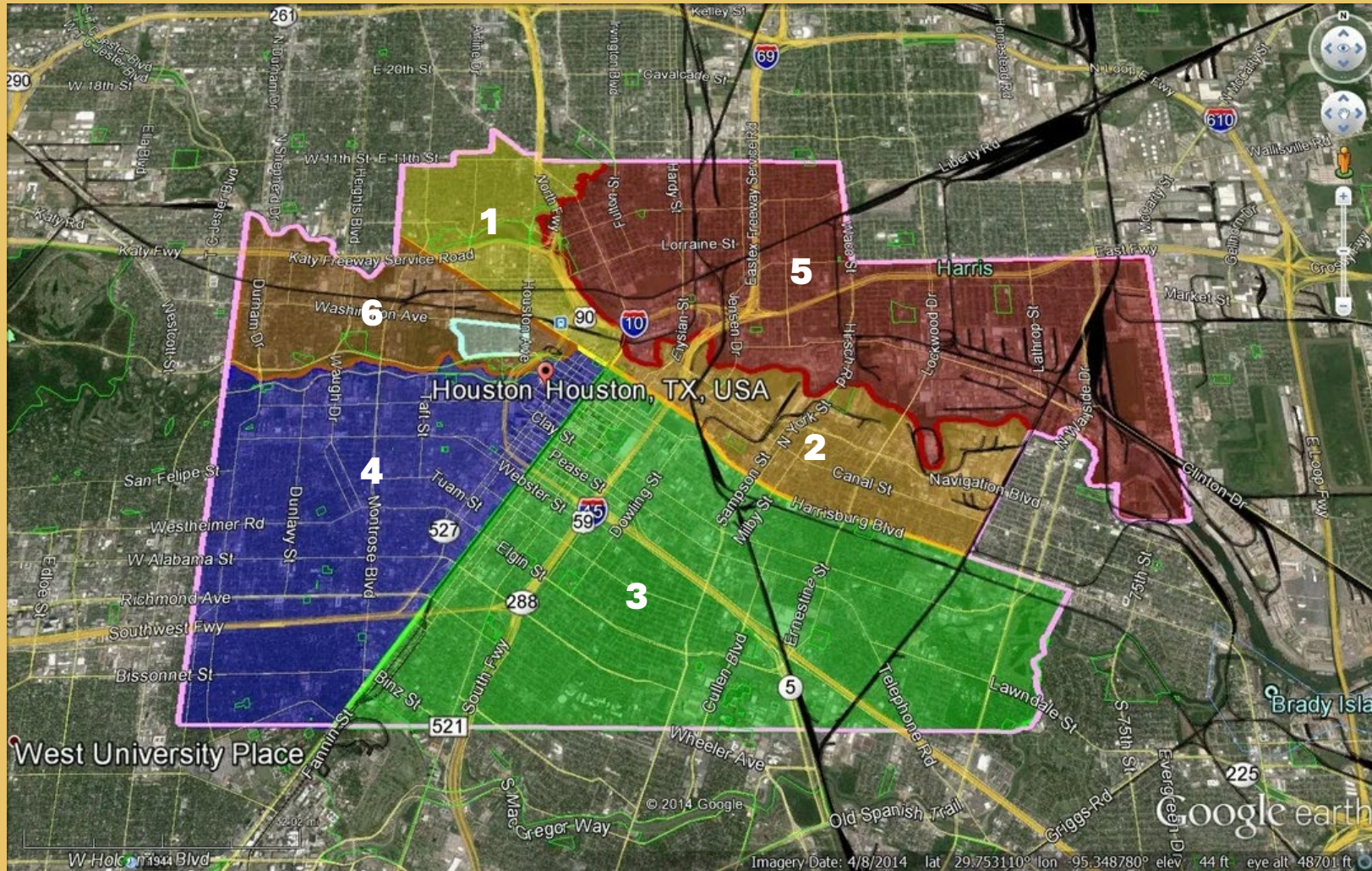
# Black Diaspora into Houston Post-Emancipation

After emancipation in 1865, Houston became a major destination for formerly enslaved African Americans seeking freedom, safety, and opportunity. This migration fundamentally shaped the city's demographics, neighborhoods, and cultural landscape.

The wards in Houston, Texas, were created as a system of local government to organize the city into manageable political and administrative districts. This system was established shortly after Houston's incorporation in 1837, with the city charter of 1839 formally dividing Houston into four wards and later six.



# Wards in the 1920



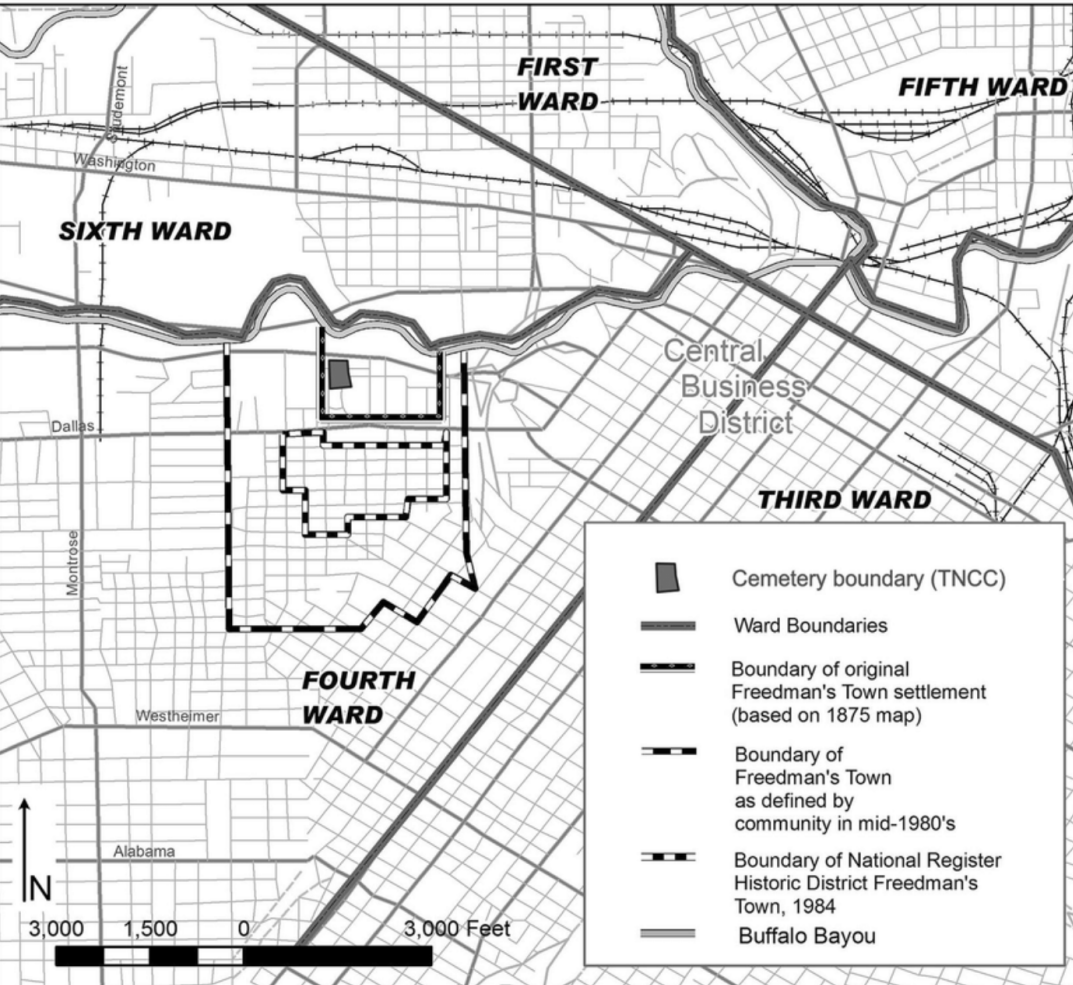
# Key Black Neighborhoods

Historical origins, economic success, culture and educational advancement that shaped the development of these historical black communities.

FREEDMEN'S TOWN	THIRD WARD	FIFTH WARD	SUNNYSIDE	Independence HEIGHTS	ACRES HOMES	PLEASANTVILLE
1865	LATE 1800'S	LATE 1800'S	1912	1905	EARLY 1900S	1948
First major Black community, cultural and economic hub.	Educational and cultural center. Home to TSU and Jack Yates High.	Vibrant social and economic life, historic churches. Home of Wheatley High	Unincorporated ,later annexed, and strong community ties. 1 <sup>st</sup> Black airport	First all-Black city in Texas. Home of Booker T. Washington High	Large, semi-rural Black community, annexed 1970s.	Post World War II, Jewish and African American Servicemen and families







# Freedman's Town

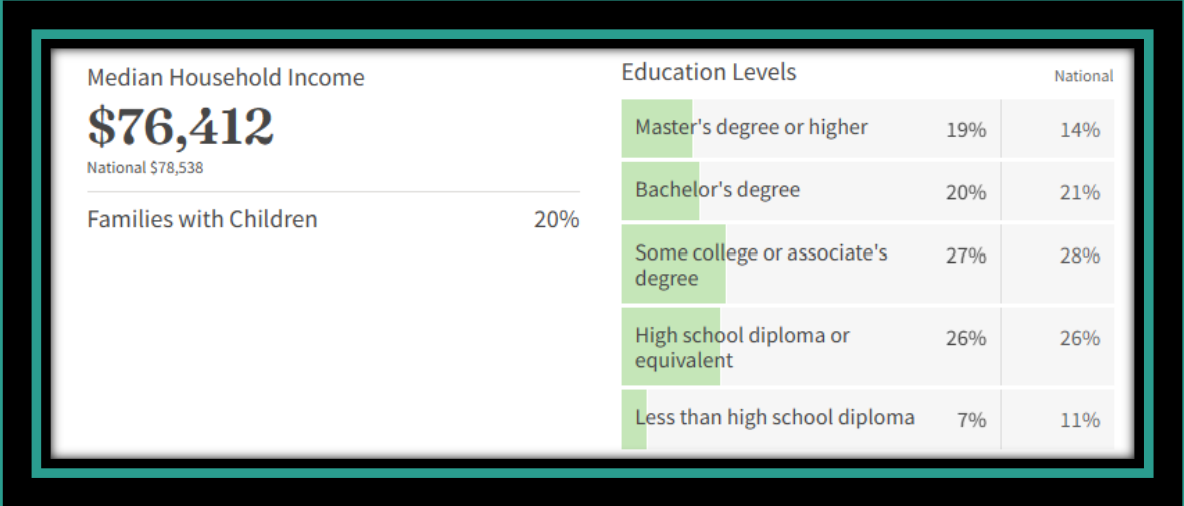
## Today the Neighborhood Faces:

- West of Interstate 45 and south of Buffalo Bayou and surrounding Fourth Ward
- Andrews St. was home to historical Black Leaders
- History Preservation through Texas Historical Markers and Gregory School.
- Local nightlife and entertainment
- Need for Resources to Restore Historical Homes and Landscapes



# THIRD WARD or the “Tre”

Intersection of I-69 (SH 59), Hwy 288, and I-45. Community churches lead organization coordination. Population 14,790. Median Home Value \$306K and Rent \$815/month. Niche List it as one of the Best Places to Live in Harris County



**EDUCATION:** Home to Texas Southern University, Jack Yates, Energy High, University of Houston, and Baylor Medicine Middle School



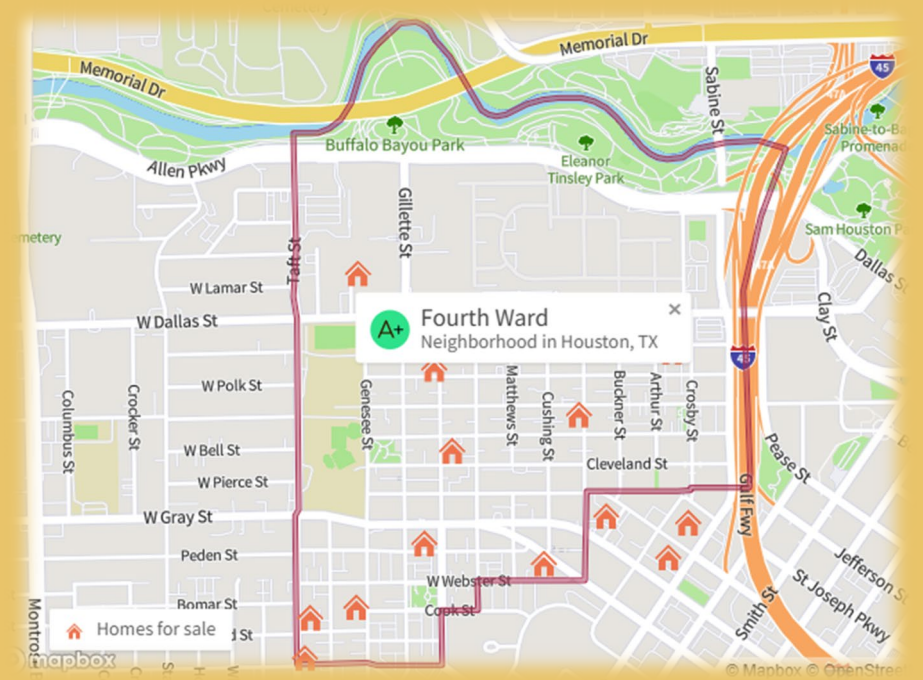
**CULTURE:** Emancipation Park host local cultural events and provide historic context of the park establishment. Art exhibits throughout the community and strategic culture urban planning. El Dorado Ballroom



**ECONOMIC:** Advancement as a walkable community, entertainment, and restaurants. Vacant lots and absentee homeowners. Affordable housing and property tax challenges.

# Fourth Ward

- Population 6,037
- Median Home Value \$375K and Rent \$1800
- Urban and Most Residents are Renters
- Young Professionals and Liberal
- Antioch Baptist Church
- Texas Historical Markers
- Walkable Community



Median Household Income

**\$73,927**

National \$78,538

Families with Children

12%

Education Levels

National

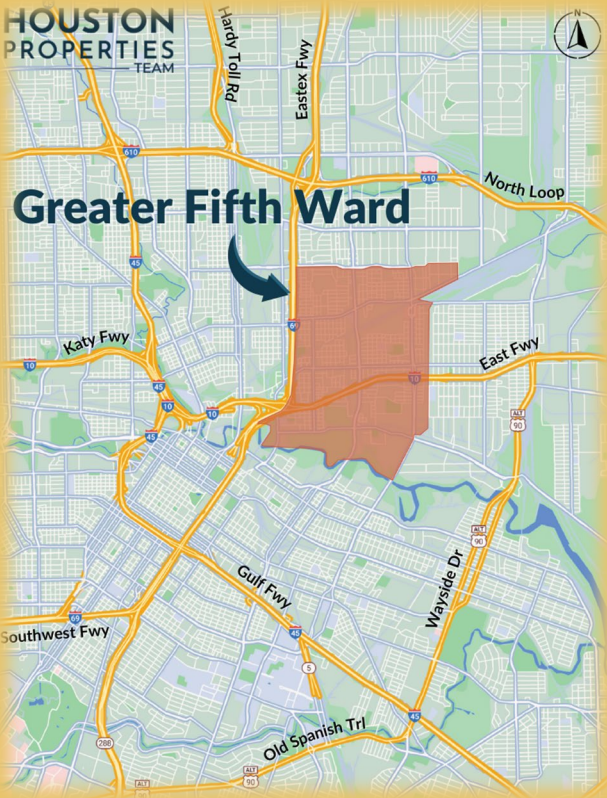
Master's degree or higher	28%	14%
Bachelor's degree	40%	21%
Some college or associate's degree	20%	28%
High school diploma or equivalent	11%	26%
Less than high school diploma	1%	11%



# FIFTH Ward or “The Nickel”

Adjacent to the Bayou and I-69 (SH 59) and west of Denver Harbor, and Collingsworth Rd. Population 19,076

- Wheatley High School
- DeLuxe Theatre
- Median Home Value \$188K and Rent \$1050
- Metro Transit Center
- Slower Gentrification
- Union Pacific Lawsuit
- Musical and Political Alumni
- New Construction with More Average Price Homes

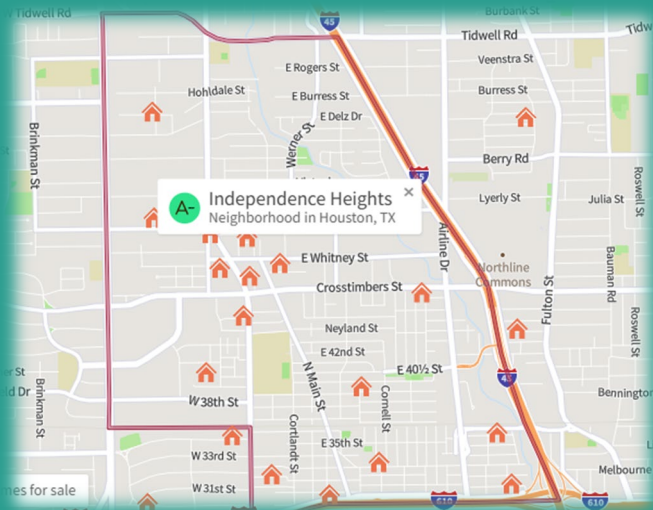


Median Household Income		Education Levels		National
\$51,070		Master's degree or higher	5%	14%
National \$78,538		Bachelor's degree	12%	21%
Families with Children	27%	Some college or associate's degree	22%	28%
		High school diploma or equivalent	32%	26%
		Less than high school diploma	29%	11%

# Independence Heights

North of I-610, west of I-45, Shepherd/Yale Street  
Adjacent and South of Tidwell Rd. Population 12,623.

- Independence Park
- Home of Booker T. Washington High School and the High School for Engineering Professions
- Median Home Value \$255K and Rent \$1200.00
- Access to Public Transportation (Bus and Rail)
- Historic Churches and Businesses
- Need More Affordable Housing
- Niche List it as one of the Best Places to Live in Harris County



Median Household Income

**\$73,439**

National \$78,538

Families with Children

29%

Education Levels

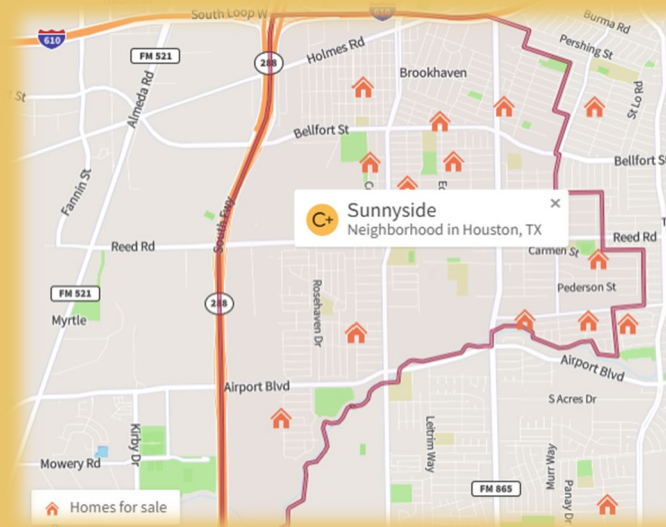
National

Master's degree or higher	9%	14%
Bachelor's degree	17%	21%
Some college or associate's degree	27%	28%
High school diploma or equivalent	22%	26%
Less than high school diploma	24%	11%

# SunnySide

South of I-610 South, Adjacent to Hwy 288,  
and North of Beltway 8. Population of 23,862

- Theme: "Sunnyside Pride"
- Waste disposal (landfills, incineration, and salvage yards)
- Home of Worthing High School
- Revitalization: Solar Farms
- Hands On Agriculture in the City
- Cowboy Culture
- Median Home Value \$156K and Rent \$1200/month



Median Household Income

**\$44,513**

National \$78,538

Families with Children

26%

Education Levels

National

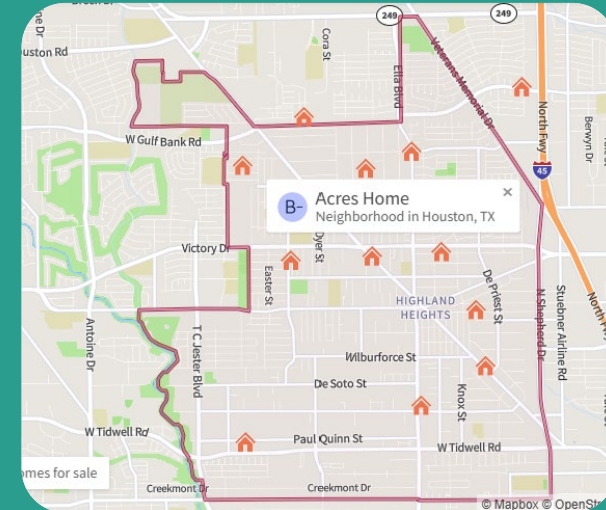
Master's degree or higher	4%	14%
Bachelor's degree	9%	21%
Some college or associate's degree	28%	28%
High school diploma or equivalent	37%	26%
Less than high school diploma	23%	11%



# Acres Homes or “44”

9 square miles, West Gulf Bank Rd., Pinemont Dr. to the south, N. Shepherd Dr. to the East and Alabonson Dr. to the West. Population 33,651.

- Rural Retreat with Large Plots
- Wooded Areas and Undeveloped Land
- Cowboy Culture
- Infrastructure Challenges
- Home of Eisenhower High School
- Median Home Value \$181K and \$1270 monthly rent. Median Listing Value \$329K



Median Household Income		Education Levels		National
<b>\$50,743</b>		Master's degree or higher	5%	14%
National \$78,538		Bachelor's degree	10%	21%
Families with Children	32%	Some college or associate's degree	25%	28%
		High school diploma or equivalent	32%	26%
		Less than high school diploma	27%	11%



# Pleasantville

East Houston and adjacent to I-610 and I-10.  
Population 3,077. Median Home Value \$115K and  
Rent \$700/month.

- Center of industrial activity, ship channel, and railroad traffic
- Nearby Brownfield Site Location
- Notable schools: Pleasantville Elementary, Holland Middle School, and Furr High School.
- High Voter Turnout and political influence
- Civic Engagement (Garden Club, Quilting, and Environmental Awareness)
- Generational Homeownership



Median Household Income

**\$51,837**

National \$78,538

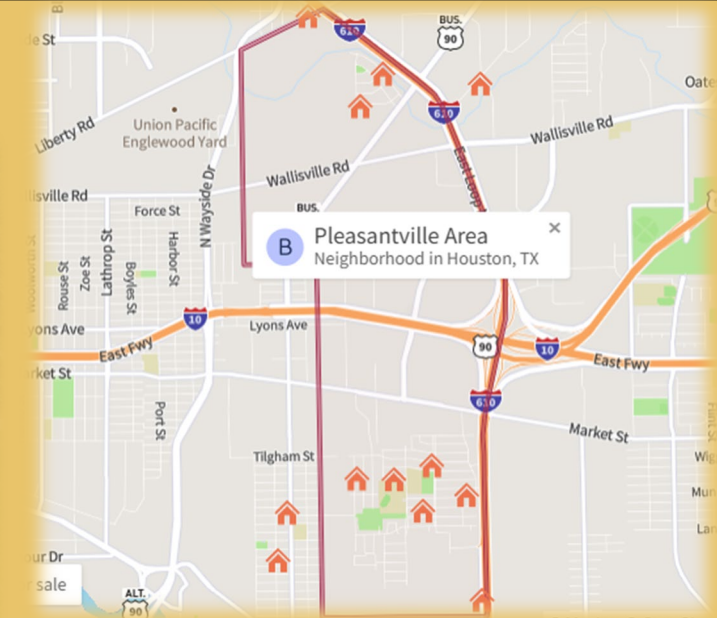
Families with Children

23%

Education Levels

National

Master's degree or higher	3%	14%
Bachelor's degree	10%	21%
Some college or associate's degree	34%	28%
High school diploma or equivalent	29%	26%
Less than high school diploma	24%	11%



# What is Houston Historic Black Communities Facing that could impact the ability to sustain?

High Influx of Gentrification, Exposure to Historical Environmental Pollution, Lack of Affordable Housing, Education on Transitioning Real Estate, Lack of Families to preserve history and culture, Reduction in students attending black schools, Expired Infrastructure, Impact of Non-Zoning, Location Identity, and Non-local church leaders without historical context.



# Questions & answers





# Resources

- African American Library at the Gregory School
- Niche Neighborhood Data
- Will Clayton Library
- Washington Terrace Civic Association