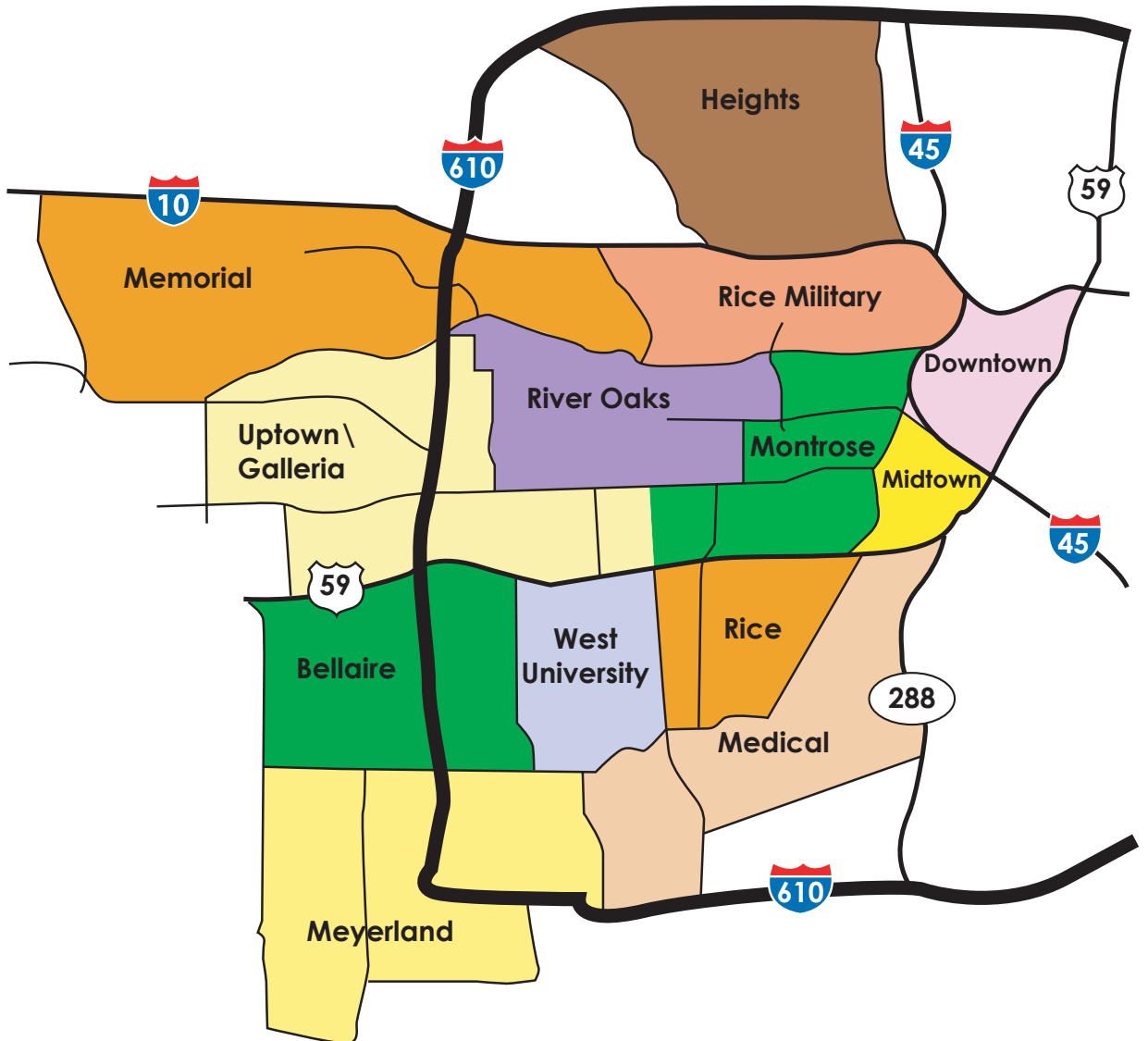


NEIGHBORHOODS OF HOUSTON

There is an extreme variety in housing costs and style within the loop. The area contains some of Houston's most desired neighborhoods because of their proximity to downtown, the Theater, Museum District and the Texas Medical Center to name a few. The variety of choices available in Houston neighborhoods may seem overwhelming at first glance. You may choose to live among the charm and character of older homes or the newer urban townhomes. High-rises may appeal to those who are seeking a hassle-free urban lifestyle. With all of the various choices, it's worth the time to explore Houston's different communities. Urban Living will help you in your search for the location that is right for you. The following summary of neighborhoods will help you in your search to discover the perfect neighborhood to call home.



Downtown

Houston's young professionals and "empty nesters" enjoy living in downtown for several reasons, including the close proximity to work and the Houston Theater District. Bustling and energized, downtown is a melting pot for business, residential development and entertainment. Downtown is a vital and evolving 90-block area in the historic district, offering several restaurants, clubs and shops. The theater district is a 17-block area in downtown that provides venues for opera, ballet, theater companies, symphony and Broadway performers. It is ranked second in the nation to New York in terms of sheer numbers of concentrated theater seats in a downtown area.

Midtown

Midtown is located south of downtown Houston. It is an emerging jewel, immersed in redevelopment since the mid-1990s. Once lined with Victorian mansions, it's now a mix of shops, restaurants, older homes and new apartments. With its bustling, urban feel, Midtown is quickly becoming one of Houston's hippest addresses.

Montrose

Home to the arts and artists, Montrose is well known for its pioneering spirit and eclectic persona with its special shops and architecture. Many restaurants, small galleries and eclectic boutiques maintain the unique atmosphere of this area. Mixed among quaint cottages and bungalows are duplexes, condominiums, and apartments. Many of the grand, 20th-century buildings in the neighborhood are actually apartments, attracting a diverse mixture of singles and families. Several old houses have been converted into shops and cafes, making Montrose one of the most walkable of Houston's neighborhoods. The northern boundary of Montrose is Buffalo Bayou, and the Museum District is located in its southern portion. Center to the Museum District is the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), the Contemporary Arts Museum, the Museum of Natural Science, and the Houston Zoo. The area is also home to the Miller Outdoor Theatre, which provides a number of free concerts and performances.

Medical Center

The Texas Medical Center lies to the southeast of Rice University, a straight shot down Main Street from downtown. The area has over 51,000 local citizens working in over 42 institutions. This bustling mini-tropolis is a vibrant part of Houston's economy and brings visitors from all over the world.

Rice

Rice University, founded in 1891, is a stone's throw from the Museum District. The university is ringed with oak trees and full of turn-of-the-century architecture. The neighborhoods surrounding Rice are marked by elegant two-story homes from the early part of the century. West of the university is a charming shopping district called Rice Village, one of Houston's first and most beloved shopping spots.

West University

The town of West University Place is right in the middle of metropolitan Houston, giving residents the best of both worlds. Its proximity to Rice University inspired the name West University. The tree-lined community has witnessed a recent boom of affluent families, and the area's vintage cottages have been replaced with larger, newer homes. All neighborhoods are sprinkled with parks, and streets are lined with trees. About 13,000 residents live in this area that spans 1,248 residential acres and nearly 20 acres of commercial property.

Bellaire

The West Loop of 610 cuts mid-way through another city called Bellaire. The 15,000 residents of Bellaire are predominantly professionals. The 6,000 homes in Bellaire are a mix of 1950s two- and three-bedroom ranch-style homes and newer Georgian mansions. The small-town feel of this neighborhood is helped by the large homes along Bellaire Boulevard, making it a grand entrance. Schools and parks are this neighborhood's pride and joy. Families flock to Bellaire for its suburban charm that is still near the city's urban advantages.

Meyerland

Meyerland sits at the outer southwest corner of Loop 610. This residential district was developed in the mid-1950s, and might be called Houston's first "planned community" due to the strict regulations and architectural controls the developers held. Covenants prohibited apartments and commercial enterprises. Homes in Meyerland are brick, contemporary-style homes, with three to four bedrooms and two baths.

Uptown/Galleria

This upscale business and residential district grew around the world-class shopping mall, The Galleria, but has grown into an area of several architectural wonders. The area exudes a cosmopolitan air with its high-rise skyline, four star hotels and global cuisine. Each year, thousands of international visitors convene for shopping, conventions and business.

Memorial

The Memorial area, known for the green foliage of Buffalo Bayou, is one of Houston's most prestigious neighborhoods. It is named for Memorial Drive, which twists and turns around the winding bayou. This area was developed during the energy boom of the 1970s and early 1980s. Subdivisions range from mass-produced homes to million dollar estates.

River Oaks

River Oaks is Houston's most exclusive neighborhood, replete with white-columned mansions, maids' quarters and manicured gardens. This neighborhood was developed in the 1930s along the south bank of Houston's central waterway, Buffalo Bayou. The sidewalks, lush landscaping and layout of this prestigious neighborhood make it feel cozy, and the elegant mansions that line River Oaks Boulevard are a sight to behold.

Rice Military

Rice Military has become increasingly popular over the last few years because of its close proximity to Memorial Park (a lush park with several hike and bike trails), downtown and the Galleria area. Small, older homes in Rice Military have been torn down and replaced by beautiful townhomes and contemporary metal buildings. This neighborhood is an exciting, energetic area full of avant-garde designs and a stimulating urban feel.

The Heights

Just north of Buffalo Bayou and east of Shephard is a neighborhood known as the Heights. The Heights features lush tree-lined streets, beautiful parks, acclaimed schools, and a great assortment of turn-of-the-century homes, Craftsman bungalows and new construction homes. The neighborhood is experiencing a dramatic revitalization with antique shops, bed and breakfast inns and art galleries lining Heights Boulevard and Yale Street, recapturing the Victorian charm that once characterized the neighborhood. The Houston Heights was its own city for 25 years, and has held on to its small-town feel. The popularity of this area is generated by its architectural character, mature vegetation, and close proximity to downtown. Houston Heights is becoming the neighborhood of choice for young professionals who are looking for the desirable combination of nostalgic charm and affordability, yet want to avoid the hectic traffic that Houston is known for. Less than five minutes from downtown, it seems to be a world away from the fast-paced city life.