The 2018 Kinder Houston Area Survey:
Tracking responses to income inequalities, demographic transformations, and threatening storms

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April 2018
Perspectives on Life in the Houston Area
Decline and Recovery in Assessments of the Local Economy (2014-2018)

Job opportunities in the Houston area are “excellent” or “good.”

During the last few years, personal financial situation has been “getting better.”

The quality of living conditions in the Houston area has been “getting better.”

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2014-18).
The Biggest Problem in the Houston Area, in Three Counties (2018)

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2018).
Party Differences in Beliefs about the American Future (2010-2018)

The country is headed for “better times.”

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2010-18).
Education and the Growing Inequalities
The Educational Prerequisites for Jobs in America (1973-2020)

By 2020, 65% of all American jobs will require education beyond high school.

The Perceived Necessity for Education Beyond High School, in Four Communities (2013-2018)

“Education beyond high school is necessary.”

“To be successful in today’s world, is it necessary to get an education beyond high school, or are there many ways to succeed with no more than a high school diploma?”

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2013-18).
The Requirements for a Good Job, the Need for More School Funding, and the Importance of Preschool

Which comes closer to your opinion about the public schools in the Houston area: “The schools have enough money, if it were used wisely, to provide a quality education”; or: “In order for the schools to provide a quality education, significantly more money will be needed.”

"In order to get a job that pays more than $35,000 a year, you need to have at least one or two years of education beyond high school."

(February 2009) (February 2018)

"What about increasing local taxes in order to provide universal preschool education for all children in Houston?"

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2009 and 2018).
Support for Government Programs to Reduce the Inequalities in America (2010-2018)

Favor: “Federal health insurance to cover the medical costs of all Americans.”
- 2010: 45%
- 2012: 68%
- 2014: 72%
- 2016: 72%
- 2018: 72%

Agree: “The government should take action to reduce income differences between rich and poor in America.”
- 2010: 31%
- 2012: 47%
- 2014: 47%
- 2016: 47%
- 2018: 47%

Percent saying, “Most people who receive welfare benefits are really in need of help,” rather than “taking advantage of the system.”
- 2010: 31%

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2010-18).
In the Midst of a Demographic Revolution
The Demographics of Harris County by Decade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population (in millions)</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Hispanics</th>
<th>Asians/Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1,243,158</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>1,741,912</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>2,818,199</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>3,400,578</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4,092,459</td>
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<td>2012-2016</td>
<td>4,434,257</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
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</table>

Source: U.S. Census data. Classifications based on Texas State Data Center Conventions.
Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Refugees Among Harris County Residents (2014-2018)

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2014-18).

Favor: Granting illegal immigrants a path to legal citizenship if speak English and no criminal record.

- 2014: 75%
- 2015: 73%
- 2016: 77%
- 2017: 81%
- 2018: 82%

Immigrants to the U.S. generally contribute more to the American economy than they take.

- 2014: 59%
- 2015: 63%
- 2016: 63%

Agree: Refugees who are in danger in their home countries because of their beliefs or their ethnicity should always be welcome in Houston.

- 2014: 64%
- 2015: 75%
Favorable Feelings Toward “Other” Groups (2010-2018)

We’d like to get your feelings about different groups in the Houston area, using a 10-point scale, with “10” being the most favorable feelings and “1” being least favorable:

- Ratings of 7-10, describing feelings about “gays and lesbians”
  - 2010: 43%
  - 2012: 47%
  - 2014: 48%
  - 2016: 50%
  - 2018: 50%

- Ratings of 7-10, describing feelings about “undocumented immigrants”
  - 2010: 24%
  - 2012: 35%
  - 2014: 47%
  - 2016: 48%
  - 2018: 50%

- Ratings of 7-10, describing feelings about “Muslims or followers of Islam”
  - 2010: 0%
  - 2012: 10%
  - 2014: 20%
  - 2016: 30%
  - 2018: 50%

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2010-18).
Assessing the Impact of Hurricane Harvey
Some “Wake-Up Calls” That Have Recently Gotten the Attention of Houston’s Business Community

(1) **October 1999.** Houston surpassed Los Angeles in the number of dangerously polluted days: “Houston, cough, cough … We’ve got a problem, cough, cough!”

(2) **January 2004.** Houston campaigned to be the American city to host the 2012 Olympics, but it did not receive a single vote: “Houston is Ugly!”

(3) **August 2017.** Will the after-effects of Hurricane Harvey turn out to be a wake-up call of equivalent consequence in shaping today’s “progrowth” agenda?

**The key insight.** “It is not a question of alternatives to growth, but of alternative ways of growing” (John McHale).
The Spread of Harvey’s Impact: FEMA Applications for Help from the 41 Counties Affected by the Storm

County Differences in Measures of the Impact of Hurricane Harvey on Homes and Vehicles (2018)

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2018).
Support for Government Initiatives to Mitigate Local Flooding, by the Degree of Home Damage (2018)

- Requiring all property owners to notify potential buyers or renters if the property they are considering has flooded in recent years: 90% (No home damage), 94% (Minor home damage), 87% (Major home damage).
- Using public money to protect the industries along the Houston Ship Channel from hurricane surge flooding: 72% (No home damage), 73% (Minor home damage), 69% (Major home damage).
- Prohibiting any additional construction in areas that have repeatedly flooded: 73% (No home damage), 70% (Minor home damage), 65% (Major home damage).
- Increasing local taxes to enable government agencies to buy out more of the homes that have repeatedly flooded: 54% (No home damage), 58% (Minor home damage), 55% (Major home damage).
- If local government had imposed more stringent regulations on development, this would have significantly reduced the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey: 68% (No home damage), 60% (Minor home damage), 71% (Major home damage).

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2018).
Changes Over Time in Beliefs about Climate Change (2010-2018)

The threat of climate change is a “very serious problem.”

- 2010: 39%
- 2012: 42%
- 2014: 40%
- 2016: 46%
- 2018: 52%

The primary cause of climate change is “human activities.”

- 2011: 48%
- 2013: 54%
- 2015: 58%
- 2016: 61%
- 2018: 64%

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2010-18).
Changes Over Time in Generalized Trust and in the Perceived Need for Better Land-Use Planning (2014-2018)

“Generally speaking, most people can be trusted.”

2014: 31%  
2015: 31%  
2016: 37%  
2018: 39%

“We need better land-use planning to guide development in the Houston area.”

2014: 68%  
2017: 64%  
2018: 70%

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2014-18).
County Differences in a Multi-Centered Metropolis
The Demographics of Fort Bend and Montgomery Counties

Fort Bend County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Hispanics</th>
<th>Asians/Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>225,421</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>354,452</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>585,375</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>683,756</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
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</table>

Montgomery County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Hispanics</th>
<th>Asians/Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>182,201</td>
<td>88</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>293,768</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>455,746</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>518,849</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census data. Classifications based on Texas State Data Center Conventions
County Differences in Income, Education, and Percent Foreign-Born

**Education**
- Harris: Bachelor's degree or more - 30%, Some college - 27%, High school or less - 43%
- Fort Bend: Bachelor's degree or more - 44%, Some college - 30%, High school or less - 29%
- Montgomery: Bachelor's degree or more - 33%, Some college - 30%, High school or less - 37%

**Household Income**
- Harris: Less than $25,000 - 22%, $25,000 to $74,999 - 41%, $75,000 or more - 37%
- Fort Bend: Less than $25,000 - 10%, $25,000 to $74,999 - 31%, $75,000 or more - 38%
- Montgomery: Less than $25,000 - 15%, $25,000 to $74,999 - 38%, $75,000 or more - 46%

**Place of Birth**
- Harris: Native-born - 74%, Foreign-born - 26%
- Fort Bend: Native-born - 73%, Foreign-born - 27%
- Montgomery: Native-born - 87%, Foreign-born - 13%

County Differences in Religiosity and Party Affiliation (2015-2018, Combined)

Religious affiliation

- Harris: Protestant 47%, Catholic 15%, Other religion 18%, No religion 8%
- Fort Bend: Protestant 44%, Catholic 15%, Other religion 26%, No religion 14%
- Montgomery: Protestant 54%, Catholic 12%, Other religion 52%, No religion 4%

Attended a religious service, other than a wedding or funeral, in the past thirty days

- Harris: Yes 51%, No 49%
- Fort Bend: Yes 60%, No 40%
- Montgomery: Yes 54%, No 46%

Declared or leaning toward which political party

- Harris: Republican 47%, Independent 14%, Democrat 29%
- Fort Bend: Republican 39%, Independent 14%, Democrat 42%
- Montgomery: Republican 32%, Independent 14%, Democrat 52%

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2015-18).
County Differences in Support for Government Programs to Address the Inequalities (2015-2018, Combined)

- **Agree: Government has a responsibility to help reduce the inequalities between rich and poor in America.**
  - Harris: 59%
  - Fort Bend: 60%
  - Montgomery: 44%

- **Favor: federal health insurance to cover the medical costs of all Americans.**
  - Harris: 71%
  - Fort Bend: 64%
  - Montgomery: 52%

- **Government should do more to solve our country's problems.**
  - Harris: 50%
  - Fort Bend: 50%
  - Montgomery: 36%

- **Most people who receive welfare benefits are really in need of help.**
  - Harris: 46%
  - Fort Bend: 49%
  - Montgomery: 34%

- **Welfare benefits generally give poor people a chance to get started again.**
  - Harris: 43%
  - Fort Bend: 42%
  - Montgomery: 29%

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2015-18).

- A much improved mass transit system is “very important” for the future success of Houston.
- Prefer a smaller home in a more urbanized area, over a larger home with the need to drive everywhere.
- Prefer an area with a mix of developments, over a single-family residential area.
- We need better land-use planning to guide development in the Houston area.

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2015-18).
Conclusion
The thirty-seven years of systematic interviews with successive representative samples of Harris County residents have emphasized three major new realities:

- The Epic Demographic Transformations
- The Rise of the Knowledge Economy
- The New Importance of Quality of Place
As the Surveys Have Shown:

- Hidden beneath the political divides, Houston-area residents are embracing the diversity and are increasingly in favor of policy initiatives to reduce the region's income inequalities, improve the public schools, and strengthen resiliency and urban amenities.

- They seem more prepared today than at any time in the past 37 years to support the many ongoing efforts by Houston's business and civic leadership to address the new realities and position the Houston region for competitive success in the years ahead.

Thank you so much for your support!