

# City of Houston rebuilds



**PRODUCTS:** IQ Quattro 44” scanner and Nextimage 5 software

## CHALLENGE

Devastated by Hurricane Harvey, the City of Houston is rebuilding. Hundreds of blueprints flow daily into its Houston Permitting Center, each one needing to be scanned with speed and accuracy. Any oversight could result in an unsafe build.

## SOLUTION

The City of Houston implemented a Contex IQ Quattro large format scanner, which produces fast scans with exceptional accuracy. The scanner gives staffers the confidence to easily process the high volume of documents they receive on a daily basis.

## RESULTS

Disaster recovery takes resilience and the proper tools to get the job done right. Accurate scans and an efficient scanning workflow make the Contex scanner an essential tool to facilitate the speedy recovery of the nation’s 4th largest city.



**We receive massive volumes of documents daily, and it’s important that we process them in a timely fashion.**

*Elizabeth Orton, Assistant Director  
City of Houston*

## Background

2017’s Hurricane Harvey was one of the costliest tropical storms ever to hit the U.S. But the City of Houston is rebuilding, and like every city and small town across the U.S., the Houston Permitting Center plays an important role in building safety and infrastructure planning. With each new rebuild or remodel, City staff reviews the project drawings and maps — submitted by landowners, architects, engineers, and contractors — to ensure the projects meet the City’s building code regulations and infrastructure design requirements.

## CHALLENGE

### Speeding disaster recovery

What makes the City of Houston different from most cities is its sheer size, scope, and diversity. Houston is the 4th largest city in the United States by population, the eighth largest in miles, and the most culturally rich with more than 140 spoken languages. The City’s Permitting Center was already one of the busiest in the nation. Now in disaster recovery, the City is processing building permits at rates never before imagined.



As the City of Houston rebuilds, homeowners and developers must get their plans approved before commencing any new project, large or small.

On average, the Permitting Center's imaging team receives around 40-50 building construction projects per day and about 30 infrastructure projects per week, each of which can include anywhere from 2 to more than 1500 drawings and maps, depending on the size and scope of the build. Unlike the building projects, which are on paper, the infrastructure projects are on mylar.

#### **SOLUTION**

##### **Consistent quality in a high-volume workflow**

The City of Houston implemented a Contex IQ Quattro large format scanner to scan maps and drawings up to 44" wide. Its speed, quality,

and reliability enable the staffers to process the high volume of documents that come into the Center. Expedited projects are easily facilitated thanks to the IQ Quattro's four-second scanning, and CIS technologies, which deliver high-quality results. The Nextimage scanning software also gives a boost to productivity by automatically removing shadows caused by creases and folds. If a document is old or faded, the Center staffers can easily manipulate settings as needed to further improve imaging results.

The Center processes mostly 24"x36" documents. Occasionally, staffers

may receive documents that are 18"x24" or 36"x40". These plans are easily accommodated, simply by changing the orientation of the documents.

#### **RESULTS**

##### **Paper versus digital**

Although the City of Houston accepts online plan submissions, most customers submit hard-copy plans to the Permitting Center. Two sets of plans are required for the review process. Once the plans are approved and stamped, one set is kept by the City to be archived and the other set is returned to the customer to be kept on the job site for inspections.

##### **A vital tool for rebuilding**

As the City of Houston rebuilds itself, the Contex scanner is a vital tool to speeding the recovery. The Contex IQ Quattro large format scanner is an investment that the City of Houston can benefit from for years to come. From speed and reliability to image quality and performance, the IQ Quattro exceeds expectations.



**The quality of the Contex scanner is consistent,  
and that saves us valuable time.**

*Kevin Fritz, Management Analyst,  
City of Houston.*

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WHEN IMAGING MATTERS