



COUNCIL MEMBER LETITIA PLUMMER DDS

Houston City Council At-Large Position 4

RE: FY 2022 Budget Amendments

Date: 2/27/2021

Apartment Inspection Reform (A.I.R.)

- 4.01 The City shall require an annual multi-family habitability registration fee for all multifamily residential buildings within the City of Houston. A fee of \$250 for shall be incurred annually.

This will generate an annual revenue of approximately \$1.1M and shall be used to fund the increase of Health Department apartment inspectors (Environmental Investigator I).

Complexes that are Blue Star certified or have an equivalent certification will be exempt upon annual inspection.

- 4.02 The City shall create an Apartment Inspection Reform Guidelines document. The guidelines shall be presented at the Regulatory Affairs Committee within 90 days from the passage of this amendment. The A.I.R. guidelines shall include but is not limited to the improvements below:

Improve Transparency and Education

1. Create a tenant advocacy center for Houston's renters.
2. Produce detailed and frequently updated online reports on problem properties.

Improve Efficiency

3. Consolidate, where feasible, HFD and Multifamily Habitability Divisions' apartment inspection programs.
4. Consolidate, where feasible, HPD and Multifamily Habitability Divisions' apartment registration programs.
5. Merge HPD's F.A.S.T. Team functions that pertain to apartments into HPD's Apartment Enforcement Unit.
6. The revenue generated from 4.01 shall be used to fund the increase of Health Department inspectors by nine. This would put the total number of



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interior health and safety inspectors at eleven. This increase in inspectors will improve 311 complaint response times, frequency of inspections and compliance check backs.

Improve Apartment Complex Accountability

7. Develop a risk assessment profile for multifamily properties in Houston and conduct more frequent and comprehensive inspections of the city's highest-risk properties.
8. Share apartment inspection findings across all city departments and government programs responsible for monitoring the health and safety of apartment complexes.
9. Shorten the time that landlords must respond to safety issues identified in a Multi-Family Rental Building inspection and require remediation plans.
10. Expedite issuing notices of violations and bringing enforcement actions against apartment complex owners who do not address violations
11. Create a repeat offender's program for a concentrated and collaborative intervention by city departments.
12. Create a High Impact landlord program

Enforce Policies and Generate Revenue to Support Inspection Improvements

13. Enforce the City's apartment registration Certificate of Occupancy requirements.
14. Adopt an annual fee for properties in a new repeat offender program
15. Increase the inspection fee for the City's Multi-Family Rental Building inspection program.
16. Assess re-inspection fees in the Multi-Family Habitability Division.
17. Assess an annual registration fee for all apartment complexes in the City.
18. Assess creating a fee to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy.



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19. Collaborate with the Houston Housing Authority on cracking down and barring problem properties from participating in the housing choice voucher program for new tenants.

Update Policies and Procedures

20. Amend and or create ordinances, procedures, and standards as necessary for the implementation of A.I.R.

Houston Department of Transportation (HOUDOT)

- 4.03 The City shall create a Department of Transportation. Transportation functions are split over five departments (HPD, HPW, ARA, Planning and DON) with an approximate FY22 budget of *\$656M related to such duties. By consolidating these monies into one department the City will be prepared to address the transportation challenges we currently face and will continue to face in the future.

Footnote:

**The City shall consolidate but is not limited to: Planning Department Transportation related duties and staff (700012, FTEs 5.3, \$578,816), Public Works Financial Management services (200005, \$20,745,554), Public Works Capital Projects (200007, FTEs 8.8, \$1,253,976), Houston Public Works (DDSRF 2312, FTEs 438.7, \$84,948,800), Houston Public Works (Traffic Operations Division 200002, FTEs 10, \$3,246, 484) HPD (extract traffic enforcement and other transportation duties from, Field & Support Operations 100004, FTEs 3,986.8, \$532,968,806) DON (All traffic and vehicle enforcement from Code Enforcement 110002, FTEs 57, \$6,817,702), ARA (extract transportation functions from regulatory permitting services 650003, FTEs 34.7, \$4,377,769) ARA (franchise administration 650004, FTEs 3.0, \$317,070) and all other transportation duties across all City departments.*



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- 4.04 The creation of the Department of Transportation based on 4.03 shall be determined and will be implemented through the TTI Committee within 90 days from the passage of this amendment.

Houston will continue to face increased traffic as the population increases at an exponential rate. Traffic stops and mobility issues are not being addressed but rather used as probable cause to search vehicles that have led to unnecessary arrests and at times deaths. It is in the best interest of the City to create a department of transportation.

ARPA Funded Police Reform Modification

- 4.05 The City shall increase the number of MCOT teams to twenty (20) and decrease the number of CIRT teams by two (2).

The MCOT teams will be better equipped to address non-violent social crisis issues as they do not have an armed officer within their response teams.

Vacancy reductions

- 4.06 The City shall eliminate non-critical vacancy positions from the FY22 Budget.

The General Fund total of 13,744.3 FTEs is an increase of 323.1 from last year and represents a \$19.4M cost increase.

It is imperative that the Administration takes steps to ensure the financial stability of the City as we recover economically from the devastation of COVID-19 with a looming budget deficit.

Narcotics Division Audit Implementation

- 4.07 The City shall freeze all Narcotics funds in the FY22 budget until all recommendations presented in the *Narcotics audit are implemented and codified in the City Code of Ordinances.

With crime on the rise it is important that the oversight needed to ensure the Narcotics division does not relive the issues of the past by developing a new operational plan that includes a checklist for warrant preparations, establish a schedule for annual classroom training to discuss policy updates, relevant laws



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and legal ramifications with a specific focus on supervisory awareness. Further, scenario-based training shall be implemented.

Vacant positions within HPD, such as the public affairs department, shall be eliminated to fund the implementation of the recommendations.

Footnote:

* Audit Conducted by HPD

Other Post-Employment Benefits (Coauthored with Council Member Alcorn)

- 4.08 Within six months, the administration shall present Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) reform recommendations to the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Committee. Recommendations to include benefit plan design changes aimed at reducing the city's \$2.233 billion unfunded OPEB liability.
- Further, the administration shall explore establishing a Section 115 OPEB Trust with potential seed funding from: (1) Health Benefits Fund (9000), any contingency reserve funds in excess of the maximum reserve funds (i.e. according to the City's Financial policies, the minimum is 10% of annual claims up to a maximum of 60 days average claims expense paid over the prior fiscal year for each self-insured program); (2) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fiscal Recovery Fund, to the extent permissible by the law; and (3) any unbudgeted one-time revenue sources, such as land sales.