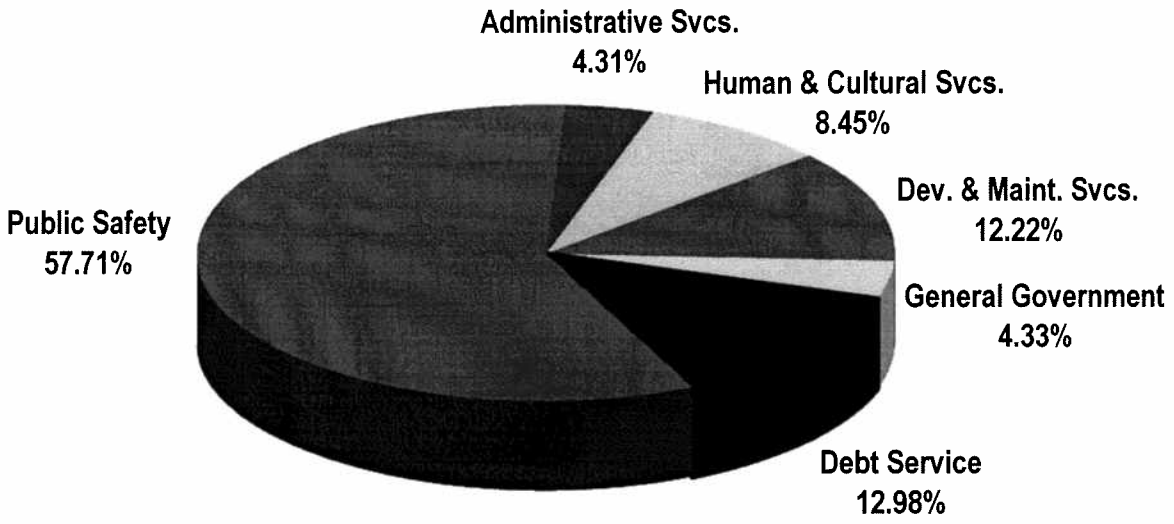
GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURE/OTHER USES SUMMARY

General Fund expenditures and other uses make up the largest portion of the City's FY2008 Budget. These expenditures and other uses are funded by revenues and other sources from property and sales taxes, franchise fees, licenses and permits, charges for services, grants, miscellaneous and other sources. (For a detailed explanation, see the General Fund Resources Summary).

FY2008 General Fund expenditures and other uses are allocated among twenty-three (23) departments and five (5) functional areas. The functional areas include Public Safety and Justice, Development and Maintenance Services, Human and Cultural Services, Administrative Services, and General Government. The following graph illustrates the allocation of these expenditures and other uses.

GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES/OTHER USES FY2008 BUDGET



Total = $1,768,473,439

OVERVIEW

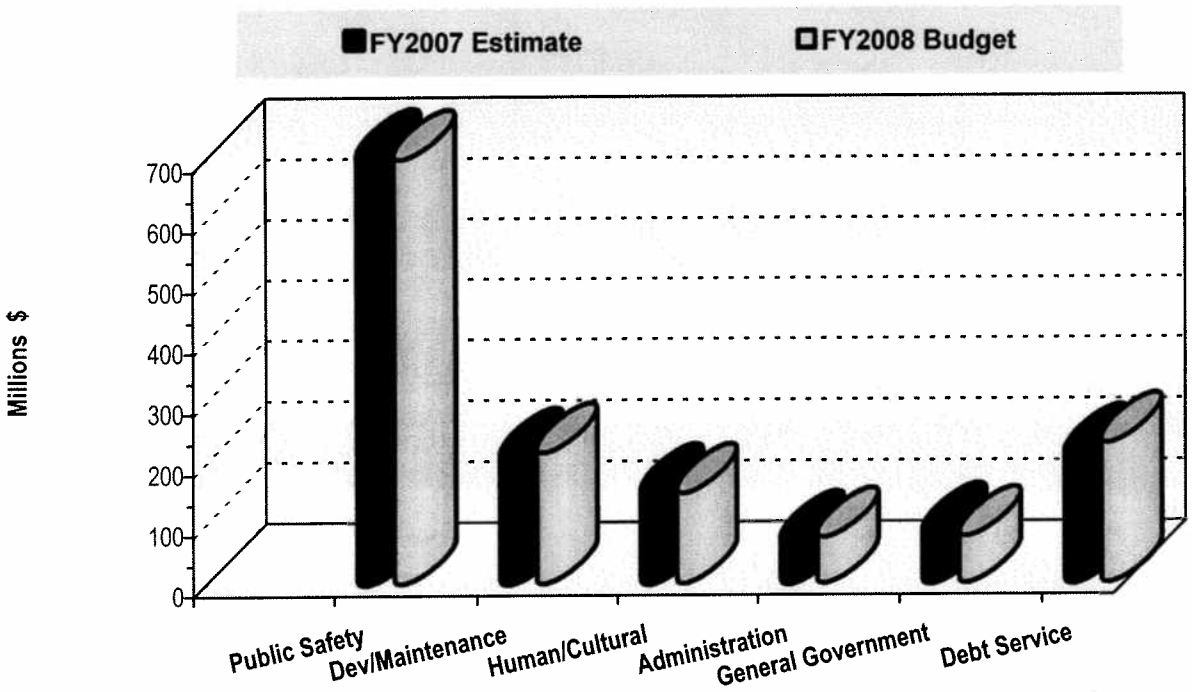
The largest single category of expenditures and other uses in FY2008 is Public Safety with 57.76 percent of the total, followed by Debt Service, Development and Maintenance Services, Human and Cultural Services, General Government and Administrative Services with 12.91, 12.23, 8.46, 4.33, and 4.31 percent, respectively.

General Fund expenditures will continue most current service levels; annualize programs begun in FY2005, and meet federal mandates.

The City will continue to comply with federally mandated regulations resulting from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), rules governing underground storage tanks and the discharge of storm water. The City is subject to increased costs for some contractual services, garbage disposal services, as well as increases for Fire staffing, health benefits and classified compensation.

The following graph compares the FY2007 Estimate and FY2008 Budget by functional category. Please refer to the tables at the end of this section for comparisons among departments.

General Fund Expenditures/Other Uses
FY2007 Estimate vs FY2008 Budget



The FY2007 Estimate for General Fund expenditures/other uses totals $1,686.9 million with the FY2008 Budget increasing by $81.5 million to $1,768.4 million.

The following section provides highlights of FY2008 General Fund expenditures/other uses by functional category and department.

Public Safety and Justice

The Public Safety and Justice functional category includes the departments of Fire, Houston Emergency Center, Municipal Courts - Administration and Municipal Courts – Justice, and Police.

- The Fire Department's FY2008 Budget provides: 1) classified pay increase of 5.5%; 2) staffing for new Fire Station #105 (Summerwood and Lakeside Terrace), which will open in December 2008; 3) four new cadet classes at 60 cadets per class.

- The Houston Emergency Center (HEC) Department will continue its mission of providing the citizens of Houston with the most efficient, accurate, and professional service when processing their life-threatening calls. The FY2008 includes infrastructure improvement programs to support greater call volumes and training programs to provide ongoing professional growth opportunities for HEC employees. The goal of the improvement and training programs is to increase overall service levels.

- Municipal Courts will continue services at the current level as well as an expansion of services at West Side and North Command Station.

- The Police Department's FY2008 Budget includes annualized funding for classified pay raises approved in the 2001 Meet and Confer Agreement and as modified in FY2003, and in FY2004 also ordinanced step and longevity increases. Increase for pension cost for both classified and civilian personnel. Funding is also included for six new cadet classes, Crime Lab Issues and funding for contract jailers.

Development and Maintenance Services

The Development and Maintenance Services functional category includes the Building Services, Planning and Development, Public Works and Engineering, and Solid Waste Management Departments.

- The Building Services Department (BSD) will support effective building management practices, design, and construction methodology to minimize life cycle costs and optimize the useful life of City buildings. BSD will perform as the City's in-house developer, providing a full range of services including project, property, real estate, energy, environmental and security management.

- The Planning and Development Department mission is to support neighborhoods, development, and the City's GIS. The department plays a critical role in the Houston Hope program by developing community revitalization plans for Houston Hope Neighborhoods; developing a comprehensive reinvestment strategy for city neighborhoods; and developing comprehensive studies for large sections of the city.

- Public Works and Engineering Department goals for the FY2008 Budget include: funding for improving and promoting mobility through the Metro light rail integration, applying additional resources to the Mayor's initiative related to traffic signal optimizations and modifications and continuing to implement the Capital Improvement Plan by providing engineering/construction services, and initiating performance standards to ensure the division is in compliance with the Clean Air Act.

- The Solid Waste Management Department's core mission is to provide the citizens of Houston with cost-effective, environmentally sound and safe solid waste management services.

Human and Cultural Services

The Human and Cultural Services functional category includes the departments of Convention and Entertainment Facilities, Health and Human Services, Housing & Community Development, Library and Parks and Recreation.

- The Parking Management Division of the Convention and Entertainment Facilities Department is responsible for managing and providing on-street parking alternatives to the citizens of the greater Houston area. The Operating Fund will become an Enterprise Fund in FY2008. Parking Management Division will continue sharing a portion of its revenue with the General Fund.

- The Health and Human Services Department goals include: improving communicable/infectious disease control, improving the environment and environmental outcomes within the City of Houston, improving departmental capacity to provide effective and efficient services to the community, improving community capacity to address health disparities and gaps in services through improved health information and dissemination, technical support and partnership development.

- The Housing & Community Development provides services to single-family, multi-family, and homeless programs. The Department provides services to assist the elderly, individuals and families with special needs, the physically challenged, students through the Mayor's After School Program, and persons with HIV or AIDS.

- The Houston Public Library (HPL) Department will complete its renovation of the Jesse H. Jones Building where the Central Library is located in FY2007. The Southwest Multi-Service Center HPL Express will open and the Discovery Green HPL Express is planned to open before the end of FY2008. These new libraries will provide wireless services in a café retail strip environment with lower cost of construction and operation compared to more traditional libraries.

- The Parks and Recreation Department will continue to play a vital role in building a sustainable community and enhance the quality of life in Houston through parks, programs and partnerships. The department will continue to streamline their organization and operations to focus on the optimum delivery of three core services: 1) park development, enhancement, and expansion; 2) recreational programming; and 3) maintenance and security.

Administrative Services

The Administrative Services functional category includes the departments of City Council, City Secretary, Office of the City Controller, Finance and Administration, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legal, and Office of the Mayor.

- The Controller's Office will continue to protect the financial integrity of Houston's City government. In FY2008, the department will continue to maintain internal audit coverage and manage the investment portfolio.

- The Finance and Administration Department serves the citizens of the community and provides support to the City departments through sound management of the City's financial activities. It implements and monitors policies and procedures concerning the financial, administrative, insurance management, procurement, and regulatory affairs of the City of Houston.

- The Information Technology Department will continue to improve the organization of information technology throughout the City by leveraging emerging technologies, reducing cost, limiting growth in the workforce and improving services to citizens and employees. The department's main focus is providing the most innovative and cost effective technological services for managing the City of Houston.

- The Legal Department will continue to review the department's computer technology and support services. The department will also continue to seek opportunities for the City to recover funds. In FY2008, the department increased resources for the Forfeiture Abatement Support Team (FAST) Unit, dangerous buildings and deed restriction enforcement.

General Government

General Government expenditures/other uses include costs shared citywide, where costs cannot be attributable to any single department. The FY2008 Budget includes funding for the first general and run-off elections, limited purpose annexation sales tax payments, civilian retiree health benefit rate increases, claims and judgments, interest on short-term borrowing and certain citywide membership fees.