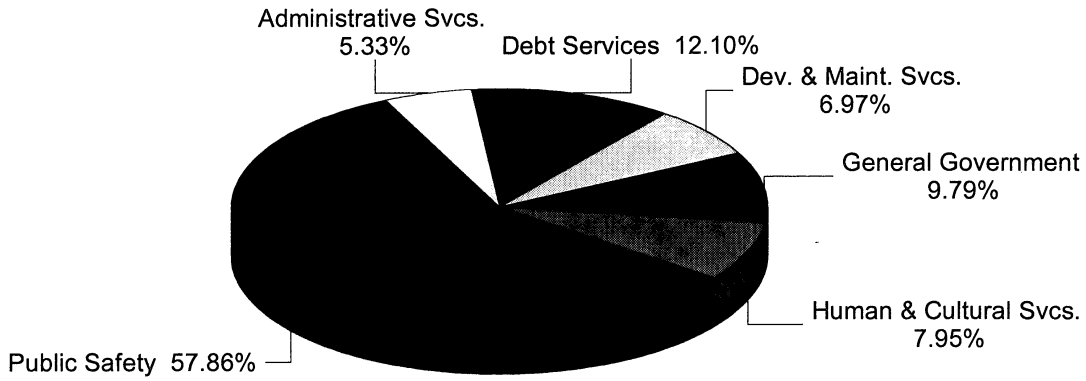
GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES/OTHER USES SUMMARY

General Fund Expenditures and other uses make up the largest portion of the City's FY2015 Budget. These expenditures and other uses are funded by revenues from property and sales taxes, franchise fees, licenses and permits, charges for services, miscellaneous categories and other sources. (For a detailed explanation, see the General Fund Resources Summary).

FY2015 General Fund expenditures and other uses are allocated among twenty-four (24) departments and five (5) functional areas, the functional areas include Public Safety, 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. Please note that the Public Safety and Human and Cultural Services categories are supported by expenditures in all other categories.

GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES/OTHER USES
FY2015 BUDGET



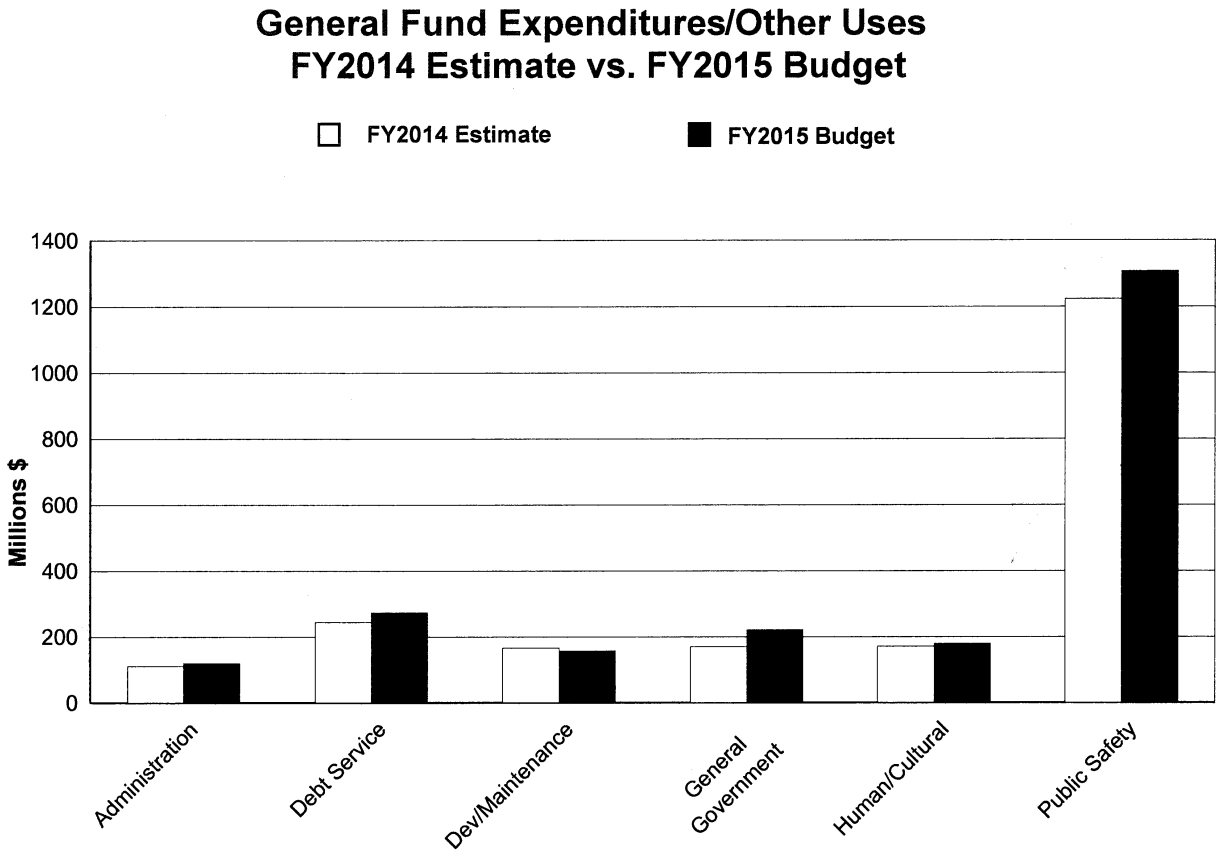
Total=$2,256,343,561

OVERVIEW

The largest single category of expenditures and other uses in FY2015 is Public Safety with (57.86%) percent of the total, followed by Debt Service (12.10%), Human and Cultural Services (7.95%), General Government (9.79%), Development and Maintenance Services (6.97%), and Administrative Services (5.33%).

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 obligational municipal and classified employee pay increases as well as pension, fuel, and service costs.

The following graph compares the FY2014 Estimate and FY2015 Budget by functional category. Please refer to the tables at the end of this section for comparisons among departments.



The FY2015 budget for General Fund expenditures/other uses of $2,256 million is $171 million higher than the FY2014 estimate of $2,085 million.

The following section provides highlights of FY2015 General Fund expenditures/other uses by functional category and department.

Public Safety

The Public Safety functional category includes Fire, Houston Emergency Center, Municipal Courts and Police Departments.

- The Fire Department's FY2015 budget provides funding for: (1) six new cadet classes that include two regular and four fast track classes, (2) the annualized cost of a 2% pay increase awarded to classified employee on March 1, 2014 (FY2014), (3) classified pension rate increase from 23.9% to 33.2% and (4) operating and maintenance cost for the opening of Fire Station #84 in January 2015.
- The Houston Emergency Center Department will continue its mission of providing the citizens of Houston with the most efficient, accurate, and professional service when processing life-threatening calls.
- The Municipal Courts' FY2015 Budget includes staffing to support 15 day courts and 8 night courts, funding to run, support and maintain the Court System Management and Resource Technology (CSMART), the implementation of fee-based alcohol and tobacco awareness classes and fee-based wedding ceremonies.
- The Police Department's FY2015 Budget includes funding to meet the department's goals of enhancing safety throughout the city, continue positive relations with the community, ensuring the department's accountability to the public, maintaining and increasing productivity, and increase professionalism of department employees. It also includes funding for three new cadet classes.

Development and Maintenance Services

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

- The General Services Department continues to provide best practices in managing facilities, design, construction, security and resource conservation in core civic buildings to optimize the life of City buildings. In FY2015, funding for preventive and corrective maintenance costs for facilities managed by the department will be reported in the newly created Maintenance Renewal and Replacement Fund.
- The Planning and Development Department continues to support an enterprise geospatial system for the City's Geographic Information System (EGIS) with focus on support of current applications and data.
- The Public Works and Engineering Department's FY2015 Budget includes the Resource Management, Traffic Operations and Planning Divisions. The Planning Division will continue to process Joint Referral Committee transaction activities assigned to the department timely. The Traffic Operations Division will continue to work to alleviate traffic congestion resulting from malfunctioning traffic signals, accidents and other mobility issues throughout the City during peak periods.
- The Solid Waste Management Department provides solid waste services to the citizens of Houston through the collection, disposal and recycling of discarded material in a manner that is safe, efficient, environmentally sound and cost-effective. In FY2015, the department will continue to refine its major work program performance measures during the 1st quarter of the new fiscal year.

Human and Cultural Services

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

- The Health and Human Services Department works with the community to promote and protect the health and social well-being of Houstonians. The FY2015 budget includes funding for the Texas Medicaid Transformation 1115 Waiver Intergovernmental Transfer.

- The Housing and Community Development Department continues to provide services principally to low and moderate income persons. The Department manages and administers both federal and non-federal funds that are earmarked for the development of viable urban communities. FY2015 General Fund budget includes funding to support personnel costs of individuals who have been assigned in part and/or whole to two citywide initiatives: (1) Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority (LARA) and (2) Service of the Emergency Aid Resource Center for the Homeless (SEARCH) Mobile Outreach Program.

- The Houston Public Library (HPL) remains committed to its role as a leader in the state and in the nation. The FY2015 budget allows HPL to remain focused on our five customer-driven organizational priorities which are Support for Student Success, Literacy Advancement, Technology Access and Instructional, Workforce Development and Serving as the Community's Meeting Place for Civic Engagement.

- The Parks and Recreation Department continues to enhance urban life by providing safe, well-maintained parks and offering affordable programs for the community. The FY2015 budget includes upkeep of White Oak Bayou funded through the Houston Parks Board, Inc. (HPB) as part of the Bayou Greenway 2020 initiative.

- The Department of Neighborhoods' FY2015 budget includes funding to continue the department's focus of increasing awareness of the City's blight ordinances, signs code enforcement activities and other activities such as citizens assistance, gang prevention outreach, addressing the concerns of people with disabilities, international communities, volunteerism, and education programs in an effort to improve neighborhoods and help make Houston a better place to live.

Administrative Services

The Administrative Services functional category includes the departments of Administration and Regulatory Affairs, City Controller's Office, City Council, City Secretary, Finance, Houston Information Technology Services, Human Resources, Legal, Mayor's Office and Office of Business Opportunity.

- The Administration and Regulatory Affairs (ARA) Department applies efficient and logical solutions to administrative and regulatory challenges. Our goal is to provide increasing value to Houston via a customer-driven team that pursues continual improvement in operational efficiency and service excellence. We employ these improvement principles in the administration of our various divisions, from our public-facing functions such as administering the City's 3-1-1 information line, animal control, on-street parking management, and business permitting; to our administrative and regulatory functions such as utility regulation, franchise administration, Citywide policy administration, and management of the City's risk and exposure through commercial insurance.

- The Controller's Office continues to protect the financial integrity of Houston's City government. In FY2015 the department will continue ensuring accurate and timely reporting on the City's current financial condition, assessing the City's future financial condition, and certifying to City Council that funds are available for all appropriations.

- The Finance Department continues to emphasize strategic financial planning and performance reporting while maximizing the effective and efficient use of public funds. The FY2015 Budget includes funding for training and performance improvement which remains a high priority. The department will continue to lead initiatives that reduce citywide costs and improve cash flow.

- The Houston Information Technology Services (HITS) continues to engage to become a partner of choice; to create a resilient, scalable and agile IT infrastructure; to transform our IT workforce; to improve the overall management of IT services; protect city information and data; and enhance citizen engagement. The FY2015 budget includes funding for maintenance and support of Health, Planning, and ARA departments resulting from consolidation of technology services. HITS will provide operating support for CSMART.

- The Legal Department continues to provide core legal services, bond issue representation, preparation of ordinances and resolutions, utility regulation, and revenue collection. The FY2015 budget will continue to focus on the citywide debt collection program, assisting civic groups and individuals in the protection of their neighborhoods, handling deed restriction violations, moving to demolish blighted multi-family complexes, closing unlawfully operated sexually oriented businesses, and evolve into a more technology oriented law office environment.

- The Office of Business Opportunity continues to create a competitive and diverse business environment in the City. The FY2015 budget includes funding to promote the Hire Houston First Program and the Minority, Women, Small, and Persons with Disabilities Business Enterprises (MWSBE and PDBE), as well as Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Programs.

General Government

The General Government Budget includes citywide costs that are not attributable to any single Department. The FY2015 Budget includes limited purpose annexation payments which are offset by revenues, health insurance for retired civilian employees, claims and judgments, tax appraisal fees and citywide membership fees.