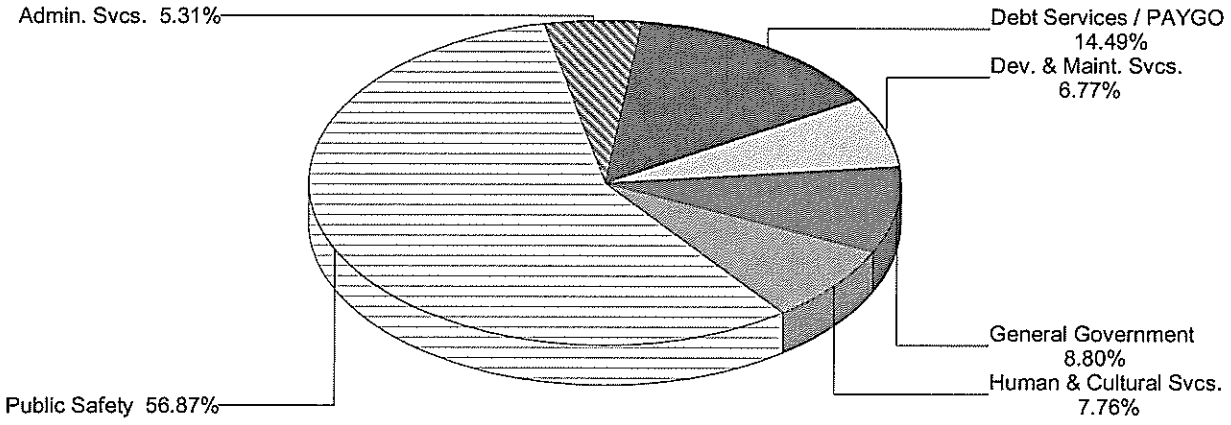
GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES/OTHER USER SUMMARY

General Fund Expenditures and other uses make up the largest portion of the City's FY2016 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).

FY2016 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 FY2016 BUDGET



Total=$2,388,653,131

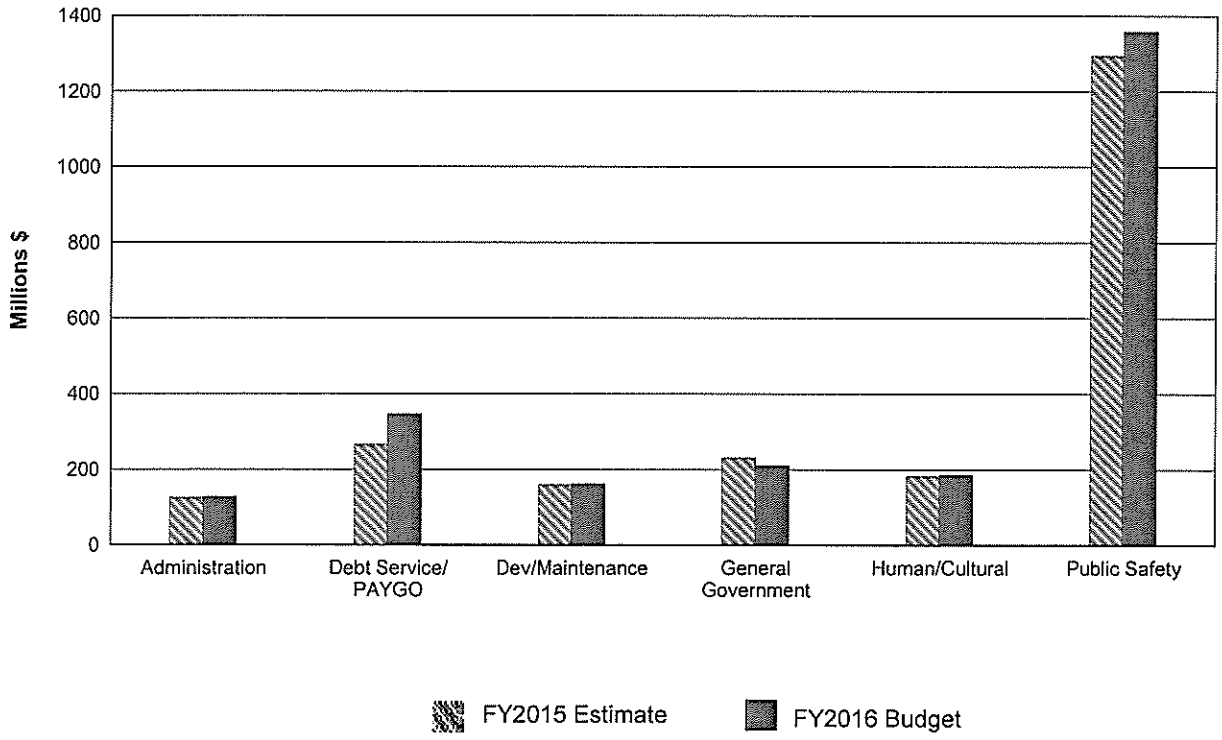
OVERVIEW

The largest single category of expenditures and other uses in FY2016 is Public Safety with (56.87%) of the total, followed by Debt Service (14.49%), Human and Cultural Services (7.76%), General Government (8.80%), Development and Maintenance Services(6.77%), and Administrative Services(5.31%).

The General Fund is dominated by public safety costs. While the public safety category makes up a majority of the total costs, it is important to note that other expenditure categories such as debt, general government, maintenance, and administrative services provide support for public safety activities. Those public safety activities could not operate without that support. Further, it is widely recognized that many of the human and cultural services the city provides indirectly reduce crime by actively engaging at-risk groups. In many ways those services are public safety costs as well.

The following graph compares the FY2015 Estimate and FY2016 Budget by functional category. Please refer to the tables at the end of this section for comparisons among departments.

General Fund Expenditures/Other Uses
FY2015 Estimate vs. FY2016 Budget



The FY2016 budget for General Fund expenditures/other uses of $2,389 million is $135 million higher than the FY2015 estimate of $2,254 million.

The following section provides highlights of FY2016 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 FY2016 budget provides for: (1) five new cadet classes that include two non-certified and three certified classes (2) three new paramedic training classes (3) hands on continuing education training and (4) the continuation of Fire Ground Survival Training.

- 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.

- Municipal Courts FY2016 budget includes staffing to support fifteen day courts and eight night courts, the continuation of fee-based weddings and alcohol and tobacco classes along with newly implemented fee-based initiatives such as Notary service and Driving Record printing services. Funding has also been provided to maintain and support the operations of the Court System for Management of Resources and Technology (CSMART).

- The Police Department's FY2016 Budget includes funding to meet the department's goals of enhancing safety throughout the city, continuing positive relations with the community, ensuring the department's accountability to the public, maintaining and increasing productivity, and increasing professionalism of department employees. It also includes funding for four 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. Funding for preventive and corrective maintenance costs for facilities managed by the department are being reported in Maintenance Renewal and Replacement Fund.

- The Department of Planning and Development provides leadership & support in making Houston a vibrant city in which to live, learn, work and play by: (1) administering regulatory and other tools affecting development and growth (2) developing plans to meet future citywide needs (3) administering tools that enhance and protect neighborhood character & stability (4) and providing reliable data, mapping and analysis to decision-makers.

- The Public Works and Engineering Department's FY2016 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 FY2016, the department will continue to refine its major work program performance measures.

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 FY2016 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. FY2016 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 FY2016 budget allows HPL to focus on our five customer-driven organizational priorities which are Lifelong Learning, Literacy Learning, Life Skills Learning, Laboratory Learning, and Lifestyle Learning.

- The Parks and Recreation Department continues to enhance urban life by providing safe, well-maintained parks and offering affordable programs for the community. The Department partners with other departments such as Library, Health, Planning and Development as well as Public Works and Engineering to offer the best family experience they City has to offer.

- The Department of Neighborhoods' FY2016 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 FY2016 the department will continue ensuring accurate and timely reporting on the City's current financial condition. Also, assessing the City's future financial condition, and certifying to City Council that funds are available for all appropriations.

- The Finance Department promotes fiscal responsibility, provides high-quality financial services and information to public officials and citizens, strives to improve process execution internally and citywide and assists managers and employees in professional development by providing the resources needed to get the job done. The FY2016 Budget includes the citywide Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) process to evaluate Internal Controls and Process Documentation for various departments in the City.

- 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 FY2016 budget includes funding for all citywide technology initiatives.

- The Legal Department continues to provide core legal services, bond issue representation, preparation of ordinances and resolutions, utility regulation, and revenue collection. The FY2016 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 of Houston by promoting the growth and success of local small businesses. The FY2016 budget includes funding for the continued implementation of the Department's program priorities, initiatives, and major core services which includes the Minority, Women, Small, and Persons with Disabilities Business Enterprises (MWSBE and PDBE) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Programs, the Hire Houston First Program, as well as a suite of services for small businesses and entrepreneurs through the Department's Business Solutions Center.

General Government

General Government includes citywide costs that are not attributable to any single Department. The FY2016 budget includes limited purpose annexation payments which are offset by revenues, general and run – off elections, health insurance for retired civilians and citywide membership fees.