



# CITY OF HOUSTON NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNCIL MEMBER PETER BROWN

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**June 9, 2009** - Council Member Peter Brown today outlined several amendments to help the city meet its long-term financial obligations, cut crime, and grow the tax base without further burdening the taxpayers of Houston. Additionally, Council Member Brown will support a 2% cut of City Council office budgets. The Council Member said "It's my belief that we must use taxpayer dollars in the most responsible way possible. With innovative ideas and new technology we can build a foundation for a more effective and efficient city government."

The proposed 2010 budget will be presented to City Council on Wednesday, June 10. "The Mayor and City Council must consider my recommendations so we can better meet the financial challenges we face," said Council Member Brown:

- 1. Appoint a stakeholder committee to evaluate long-term solution for the funding of retiree health benefits, including the creation of a 115 Trust or similar fund.**
- 2. Establish a "Productivity Investment Fund" to fund future productivity investments within city departments that can achieve substantial savings for the city.**
- 3. Create a "Vacant Job Fund" to better manage the millions of dollars appropriated to the departments for vacant personnel slots.**
- 4. Implement a technology plan for HPD's Real-Time Crime Center to upgrade the center's technology and the technology available to our offices on the field, to ensure the utilization of the best available technology so that Houston can be a leader in "intelligence-led" policing.**
- 5. Direct HPD to perform a cost/benefit analysis on the outsourcing of their vehicle parts warehouse, similar to what Public Works did in 2005.**
- 6. Evaluate the use of a real-time safety monitoring and reporting system for the security of the city's drinking water system and the availability of Homeland Security Agency funding.**
- 7. Re-authorize its tax abatement program to include tax abatement for the construction of new "green" buildings. This will also allow builders to take advantage of a county abatement that is currently not available to builders of "green" buildings in the city.**

Council Member Brown's proposals call for balancing reductions in certain expenditures, with strategic investments in other areas, particularly technology. "It's critical that we use resources smarter and more efficiently while maintaining our commitments to the citizens of the City of Houston. It would be irresponsible to cut off resources vital for essential services such as police, fire and infrastructure."

*Peter Brown, FAIA, AICP, is a third-generation Houstonian, a nationally recognized architect and urban planner, serving his second term on Houston City Council, At-Large Position 1.*

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