Building a Better Budget Through Public Engagement

Presented to City of Houston Budget and Fiscal Affairs Committee

Patrick Walsh, P.E., Director of Planning & Development
David Benson, Chief of Staff to Chief Business Officer

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Today’s Discussion

• Review an improved process for setting annual budget priorities
  ✓ More input sooner from City Council and community
  ✓ Use Plan Houston as a guide
• More informed decision-making
• Culminates in an annual work plan
  ✓ List of initiatives to address highest priorities
Plan Houston’s Core Strategies

☑ Spend money wisely.
☑ Grow responsibly.
☑ Nature safe, healthy communities.
☑ Connect people and places.
☑ Support a global economy.
☑ Sustain quality infrastructure.
☑ Champion learning.

☑ Foster an affordable city.
☑ Protect and conserve our resources.
☑ Communicate clearly and with transparency.
☑ Partner with others, public and private.
☑ Celebrate what’s uniquely Houston.
• Previously: no formal channels for early input from public and City Council
• Stakeholders receive information after decisions made
• No overarching policy guide to inform decision-making
• E.O.1-53 and associated A.P. 4-10 highlight new Administration’s commitment:
  ✓ Focus on outcomes - return on City’s investment
  ✓ Increase public input ahead of budget development
A New Approach

- Formal channels for engaging City Council and public as Mayor develops budgetary priorities
- Encourage input during Fall, before budget decisions finalized
- Use Plan Houston as a policy guide
Community Engagement

- Online public feedback
- Plan Houston Steering Committee
- Citizen satisfaction survey
- Mayor-Council budget retreat
Online Public Feedback

- Gather community guidance regarding Houston’s strengths and opportunities for improvement
- PlanHouston.org
- Council members asked to encourage community participation
Plan Houston Steering Committee

- Reconvene Plan Houston Steering Committee
  - Broad-based representation
- Provides suggestions on priority issues facing City
- Ambassadors for encouraging public participation
Citizen Satisfaction Survey

• Gauge level of satisfaction of various services

• Begin survey in late 2016
  – Set baseline measures of citizen satisfaction with City performance/direction

• Results inform discussions at Mayor-Council budget retreat
Mayor and Council Budget Retreat

• One-day public meeting in Nov/Dec
  – Properly posted
• Led by Mayor
• Professionally facilitated
• Identify Council’s suggested budgetary priorities
• Provides input to Mayor for use in preparing budget and directives to departments
Expected Timeline

• September/October 2016
  – Reconvene Plan Houston Steering Committee
  – Initiate online public feedback

• November/December 2016
  – Citizen satisfaction survey
  – Budget retreat for Mayor and Council
  – Opportunity for Council members to suggest initiatives
  – Mayor finalizes FY18 budgetary outcomes/priorities and communicates to departments

• January 2017
  – Mayor begins FY18 budget development
Linking Plan Houston and Budget

• Plan Houston serves as guide throughout process
  – Align resources with City goals and priorities

• A more proactive approach
  – Influence outcomes rather than just responding to problems

• Results in annual work plan
  – Initiatives that address priorities
  – Described in budget
Result: A Better Budget

• Increased emphasis on outcomes in budget decision-making
  – Greater focus on goal-setting and monitoring

• Better scrutiny of spending proposals – focus on return on investment

• Earlier, more in-depth input for Mayor’s use in budget development

• Align City budget with community wants and needs