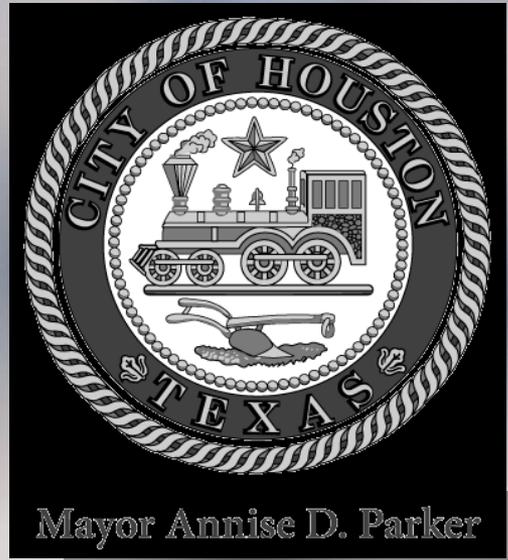


Houston Regional Forensic Science Center: The Path Forward

Mayor's Report to
Houston City Council
February 2012



Mayor Annise D. Parker

HPD Current and Required Forensic Services

Crime Lab

- Controlled Substances
- DNA
- Serology
- Firearms
- Toxicology

Identification

- Automated Fingerprint Identification System
- Crime Scene Unit
- Digital Forensics Unit
- Disposition Unit
- Forensic Audio-Video
- Latent Prints
- Photo Lab
- Polygraph Unit

Harris County: Present Services

- Controlled Substances
- DNA
- Serology
- Toxicology
- Trace Evidence
- Harris County Sheriff's Office provides limited forensic services for latent prints and firearms



Other services listed in previous slide that are needed by HPD are not offered by Harris County

A Timeline: How We Arrived Here

- Dec 2002** Investigation reveals serious problems in Biology/DNA Unit. Unit discontinues operations
- March 2005** City hires Michael Bromwich & Associates to begin independent investigation
- May 2005** HPD Crime Lab receives accreditation in disciplines of controlled substances, blood alcohol analysis, firearms, and serology
- June 2006** Crime Lab is granted provisional accreditation for DNA analysis. DNA Unit resumes operations.

A Timeline: How We Arrived Here

- June 2007** Bromwich issues "Final Report of the Independent Investigator."
- June 2007** Crime Lab granted full accreditation for all operational units.
- Feb 2011** Crime Lab's accreditation renewed until January 2016 for Controlled Substances, Toxicology (blood alcohol only), DNA, Serology, Firearms, and Trace Evidence (limited).
- June 2011** City Crime Lab budget becomes separate from HPD, but Lab Director still reports to Chief of Police

Two Years of Stakeholder Meetings

Date	Meeting Attendees	Meeting Location
7/21/2009	John Walsh (U of H); Andy Icken	City Hall
8/21/2009	Issa Dadoush; Andy Icken	City Hall
8/27/2009	TMC/Baylor College of Medicine; Andy Icken	Baylor College of Medicine
2/15/2010	Mayor; Dr. Luis Sanchez (Harris County); Andy Icken	Mayor's Office
5/12/2010	Pat Lykos (Harris County); Andy Icken	DA's Office
6/28/2010	Kevin Seat, Dick Raycraft (Harris County); Dr. Luis Sanchez; Amir Rashid; Andy Icken	County Administration Bldg.
7/12/2010	Dr. Luis Sanchez; Dick Raycraft (Harris County); Andy Icken	Commissioner's Court Bldg
7/14/2010	Bill Jackson, Dave Bechtol, Kevin Seat (Harris County); Dr. Luis Sanchez; Andy Icken	Medical Examiners Office
11/11/2010	Pat Oxford, Bob Borochoff (GHP); Pat Lykos; Andy Icken	DA's Office
3/21/2011	Kevin Seat; Andy Icken	City Hall
3/24/2011	Dick Raycraft; Amir Rashid (Harris County); Andy Icken	1001 Preston
3/30/2011	Kevin Seat; Amir Rashid; Andy Icken	City Hall
5/11/2011	Dave Feldman; Dr. Luis Sanchez; Pat Lykos; Pat Oxford; Dick Raycraft; Andy Icken	City Hall
7/15/2011	Chief Oettmeier; Andy Icken	City Hall
7/20/2011	Mayor; Pat Oxford; Larry Kellner (GHP); Andy Icken	Mayor's Office
8/3/2011	CM Noriega; Andy Icken	Council Office
8/10/2011	Mayor; Dave Feldman; Chief McClelland, Waynette Chan; Chief Oettmeier; Andy Icken	Mayor's Office

Two Years of Stakeholder Meetings

Date	Meeting Attendees	Meeting Location
8/17/2011	Chief Oettmeier; Andy Icken	City Hall
8/17/2011	Pat Lykos; Dr. Luis Sanchez; Dick Raycraft; Dave Feldman; Andy Icken	DA's Office
9/15/2011	Andy Icken; Dr. Luis Sanchez	Conference Call
11/2/2011	Dave Feldman; Tom Allen; Andy Icken	Annex
11/15/2011	Dr. Luis Sanchez; Andy Icken	Sanchez' Office
11/17/2011	Waynette Chan; Dave Feldman; Tom Allen; Kelly Dowe; Chief Oettmeier; Andy Icken	City Hall
11/21/2011	Mayor; Dave Feldman; Waynette Chan; Andy Icken	Mayor's Office
12/2/2011	Pat Oxford; Larry Kellner; Tony Chase (GHP); Tom Allen; Dave Feldman; Andy Icken	City Hall
12/14/2011	Kelly Dowe; Jaime Alvarez; Gary Wood; Andy Icken	City Hall
12/21/2011	Pat Lykos; Dave Feldman; Andy Icken; Tom Allen; Bill Jackson	DA's Office
12/27/2011	Alex Giannotti (consultant); Andy Icken	City Hall
1/5/12	Dave Feldman; Barry Scheck (Innocence Project)	Conference Call
1/19/12	Dave Feldman; Senator Rodney Ellis	City Hall Annex
1/27/12	Dave Feldman; Pat Johnson (DPS); Tom Allen	City Hall Annex
2/2/12	Dave Feldman; Michael Bromwich	City Hall Annex



According to the National Academy of Sciences:

"Scientific and medical assessment conducted in forensic investigations should be independent of law enforcement efforts." *(emphasis added)*

Independence? Not yet...

- Houston's crime lab reports to the Chief of Police, who in turn reports to the Mayor.



- In accordance with state law, the Harris County Institute of Forensic Science is managed by the County's Chief Medical Examiner, who in turn reports directly to Commissioners Court.

Achieving Independence



- All HPD forensic operations will be transferred to a **Regional Forensic Science Center**
- The Regional Forensic Science Center will be managed by an independent board of directors known as a **Local Government Corporation (“LGC”)** as authorized by Texas law

What is an LGC?

- An independent organization that includes the participation of one or more governmental entities
- Existing examples include:
 - Houston Zoo
 - Houston First
 - Houston Parks Board
 - Discovery Green



Regional Forensic Science Center Responsibilities

- Set policy, independent from law enforcement and political pressure
- Safeguard the integrity of operations
- Balance public interests with the rights of accused persons
- Help ensure sound financial management



The Board of Directors

- All LGC Directors are confirmed by City Council
OR
- For example, COH and Harris County could each appoint three Directors; together appoint a seventh Director
- Directors serve for terms prescribed by the LGC's articles of incorporation
- Directors are not removable except for cause.

Accountability

The Bylaws of the LGC will require appointment of a Technical Advisory Committee (“TAC”) to advise the Directors regarding:

- Protocols
- Personnel
- Equipment
- Finances
- other matters related to the operation of a forensic science center.

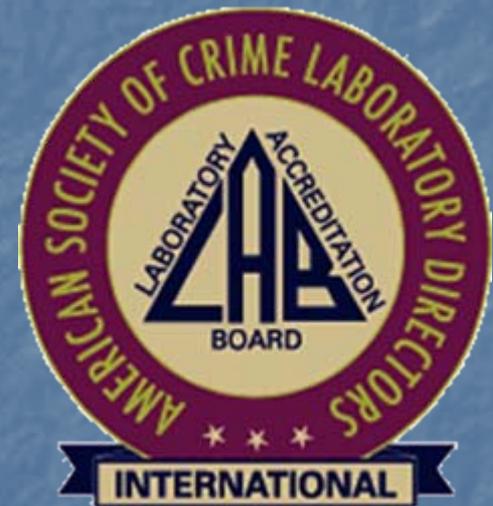


One or more appointees to the TAC are likely to be members of:

- American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD)
- American Board of Forensic Toxicologists; and/or
- International Association for Identification.

Accreditation

- Like the current crime lab, the Center will obtain and maintain accreditation for all disciplines.
- Certification requires rigorous programs for both *Quality Assurance* (error prevention) and *Quality Control* (error detection).



HPD Forensic Services FY 12 Funding

Funding Source	Crime Laboratory	Identification Division
General	\$7,164,730	\$13,347,229
Grant	\$1,148,812	\$969,045
Asset Forfeiture	\$100,000	\$140,000
Total	\$8,413,542	\$14,456,274
Total FY12	\$22,869,816	

Regional Forensic Science Center Funding



- Significant start-up funding from COH (and regional partners, if applicable)
- Fee-for-service basis, with a goal of being financially self-sufficient by mid-2016
- Additional funding likely from private foundations and federal grant programs

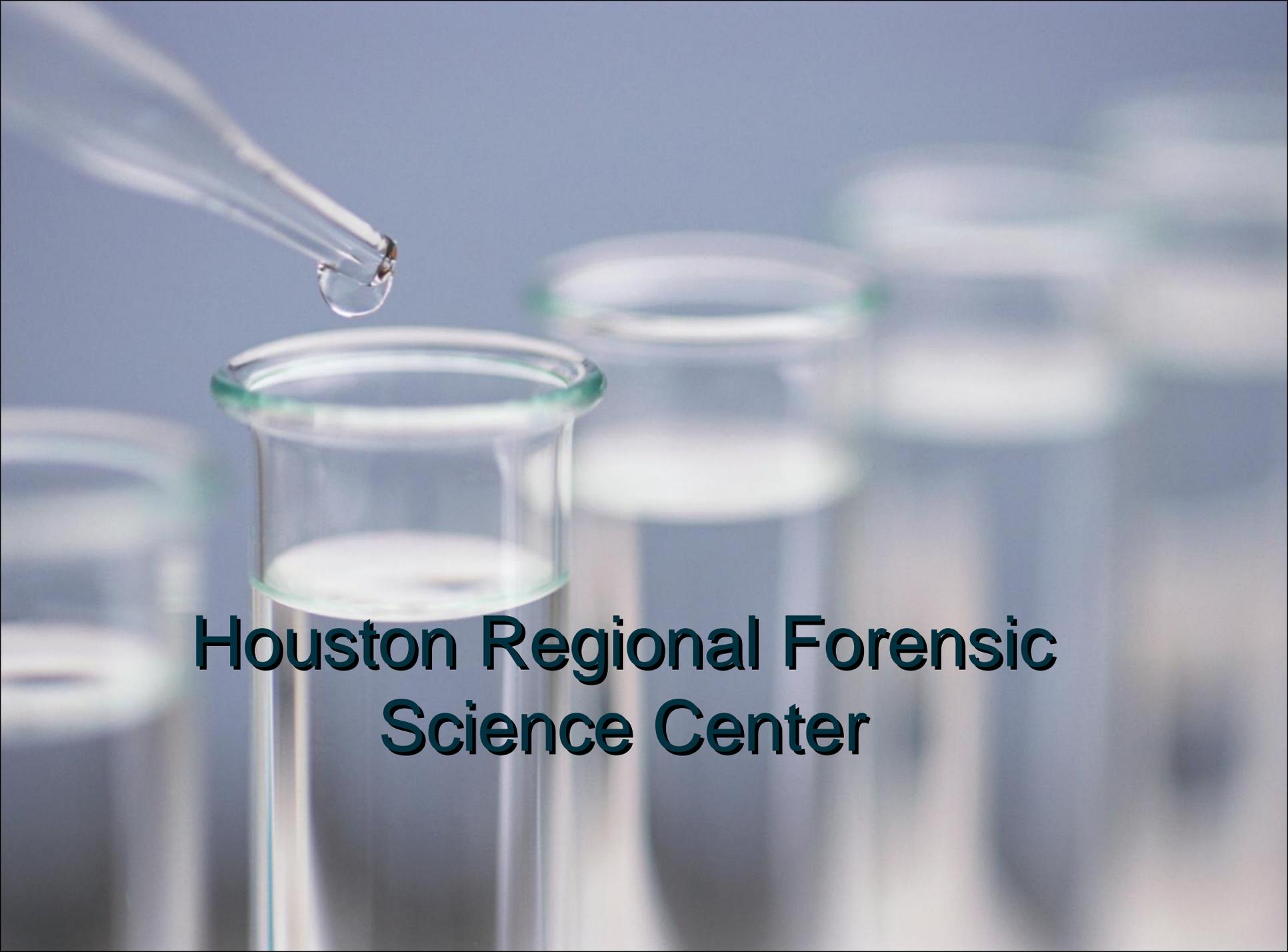
Future Partnership?

- The creation of the LGC does not preclude a future merger with Harris County or other potential regional partners.
- Both the City and Harris County could contribute their present facilities and personnel to the LGC, making adjustments for any imbalances in their respective contributions.



Next Steps

- **February:** Engage internal stakeholders (including HOPE, HPOU)
- **Feb/March:** Presentation to Public Safety Committee
- **March:** Council asked to approve LGC's articles of incorporation and bylaws
- **April/May:** Initial meeting of LGC's directors
- **Summer:** LGC's employment of executive staff
- **Fall:** Transfer of HPD's forensic science operations to LGC
- **Ongoing:** Continue discussions/negotiations with potential regional partners

A close-up photograph of a laboratory setup. A glass pipette is positioned above a test tube, with a small droplet of liquid suspended at its tip, about to fall into the tube. The test tube is held in a metal stand and contains a small amount of clear liquid. In the background, several other test tubes are visible, some containing liquids of different colors (yellow, green, blue), but they are out of focus. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a clean, professional laboratory environment.

**Houston Regional Forensic
Science Center**