The Proposed Framework for Houston’s General Plan

Presented by
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Houston City Council - Quality of Life Committee
Wednesday, April 23, 2014
Background

- Need for a general plan discussed for many years
- Many voices across the community continue to advocate for a general plan
- Currently no plan articulating overall City vision
Framework Process

• Mayor directed the Planning & Development Department to start process in Fall 2013

• Project consultant: Peter J. Park
Framework Process

• Internal meetings with multiple City departments
• External meetings with major institutions and organizations

- Texas Department of Transportation
- Harris County Texas
- Texas Medical Center
- Greater Houston Partnership
- Rice University Kinder Institute for Urban Research
- New Metro Going Places
- Gulf Coast Rail District Houston Texas
- Houston-Galveston Area Council
- Center for Houston’s Future The Region’s Think Tank
- Kinder Foundation

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Framework Process

• Seven **Focus Groups**
  – Communication/Public Engagement Experts
  – Neighborhoods/Community Groups
  – Development/Business Professionals
  – Management Districts/TIRZs
  – Arts & Culture
  – Young Professionals
  – City Planning Staff

Multi-Department Workshop on Planning
Key Findings

- Support for a **citywide vision** and coordinated strategy
- **Strategic regional vision** necessary for Houston to fully realize global opportunity and potential
- Projected growth provides opportunities but requires **new and better approaches**
- Need for **continuity across changes** in City leadership and key staff
Benefits

- Ensure City efforts are **coordinated** – both internally and externally
- Increase **collaboration** across City departments
- Maximize **effectiveness** of City efforts by enabling a **proactive approach** to solving problems
- Accelerate **quality policymaking** at every level
- Increase **citizen engagement**
- Create **consistency** across changes in City leadership
# Project Advisory Group (PAG)

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ed Gonzalez</td>
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<td>David W. Robinson</td>
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<td>Stephen Costello</td>
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<td>Ellen Cohen</td>
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<td>Mark Kilkenny</td>
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<td>Keiji Asakura</td>
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<td>Antoine Bryant</td>
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The Houston General Plan will...

- Build on information in existing plans, studies, policies, practices, and regulations
- Rely on results of past community engagement and visioning exercises
- Provide guidance for future plans, studies, policies, and regulations
The Houston General Plan will...

• Be led by the Planning & Development Department
• Engage City Departments, related agencies and organizations
• Be a communication tool to engage citizens
• Be overseen by the Houston Planning Commission
• Brought to City Council in 2015
Laying the Groundwork

• Identify partners and stakeholders

• Utilize existing information (plans, studies, policies, and regulations) from the City and other organizations in the City and ETJ

• Inventory and analysis of existing conditions, major projects, trends and forecasts

• Evaluate/document existing plans, policies, and practices

• Identify gaps and opportunities
Major Components

• Vision Statement
• Interactive Website of Plans, Policies & Projects
• Performance Indicators
• Neighborhood Enhancement Strategy
• Growth & Development Strategy
• Implementation Strategy
Vision Statement

• Expect the vision statement to include aspects of:
  – Jobs and sustainable development
  – Fiscal responsibility
  – Infrastructure
  – Public safety
  – Quality of Life

• Vision statement will be presented to the public for comment and confirmation
Interactive Website

- Simple, easy to use website
- An information resource for plans, policies and projects
  - Interactive maps
  - Customizable search engines
  - Engagement platform and monitoring tool (future)
Performance Indicators

• Simple, easy to understand
• Measuring progress on implementing the vision statement
• Performance Indicators may include:
  – Delivery of City services
  – Fiscal Conditions
  – Public Safety
  – Health/Environment
  – Economic Opportunity
  – Parks and Amenities
  – Education, Arts and Culture
  – Affordability
  – Built Environment/Infrastructure
Neighborhood Enhancement Strategy

• Clearly document strategies related to Neighborhood Enhancement in one location

• Examples include:
  – Neighborhood character preservation tools
  – Reduction of blight and substandard living conditions
  – Cleanup and beautification projects
Growth & Development Strategy

• Clearly document strategies related to **Growth and Development** in one location

• Examples include:
  – Development regulations
  – Capital projects
  – 380 Agreements
  – TIRZ/Management Districts
Implementation Strategy

• Document strategies from existing plans in one location
• Create consensus on next steps to accelerate implementation
• Create consistency and ties plans together
• Near, mid, and long-term actions
• Identify current gaps and new efforts for City to pursue
Implementation Strategy

• Sources used to build Implementation Strategy include, but are not limited to:
  – Rebuild Houston
  – TIRZs/Management Districts
  – Library Master Plan
  – Parks Master Plan
  – Mobility Studies
The General Plan

GENERAL PLAN

Vision Statement
Interactive Website
Defined Strategies
Implementation Strategy

Capital infrastructure

City programs and services

Plans, Studies and Policies

Development-related regulations and standards

Funding and budget allocations
Leadership Structure

• Planning & Development Department

• Technical Working Group
  – City departments
  – Outside agencies and organizations

• Houston Planning Commission
  – General Plan Subcommittee

• City Council
Next Steps

• Planning & Development Department begins work:
  – Inventory and analysis of existing conditions, major projects, trends and forecasts
  – Evaluate/document existing plans, policies, and practices

• Project Request for Proposal (RFP)

• Identify Funding Needs and Project Partners
  – Project expected to exceed 12,600 hours
  – Estimated funding needs: $500-600K
  – Determine in-house capacity
Next Steps

• Aggressive, but realistic project schedule
• Fits in with existing timetables and scheduling
  – Capital Improvement Plan
  – Budget FY 2016
• Additional updates to City Council and Planning Commission as project moves forward
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