

**STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**Agenda**

**MEETING 2**

**September 25, 2014**

AGENDA

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|--|------------|
| 1. Welcome and Introductions                       | 10 minutes |
| 2. Project Status                                  | 10 minutes |
| 3. Vision and Goals: review & discuss second draft | 60 minutes |
| 4. Planning Coordination Tool                      | 30 minutes |
| 5. Next Steps                                      | 10 minutes |

**Next Meeting:**

Thursday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

611 Walker Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor

**AGENDA:** Neighborhood Enhancement and Growth and Development Strategies

**Houston General Plan  
Steering Committee Meeting 9.25.14**

**Comments on draft vision**

Recorded by J Warren

**What form should the vision take?**

- Proposals 1 and 2 feel “overused”, just like ‘sustainability’
  - 4 is a good proposal
- Form could work nicely if you get the correct words
  - Everybody has their own point of view
- 3 or 4 words could have a big impact
  - “Houston: the place to be”
- Should be showing aspirations in our vision
  - 3 or 4 words – what are they trying to do?
- Use few words – keep it simple
- Value → “We value \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_.”
- “We value” is the implication – do we have to say it?
  - The flip side is “what do we not value”?
- Having just four words is a cleaner approach
- “Houston: \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, Home.”
- Date: 2036 – anniversary of the founding of the City
- Against a date; when speaking about unique to Houston, Houston is already some of these things
- Wouldn’t want to wait 20 years to see some of the changes that are discussed in the vision/goals
- Wouldn’t suggest tying the vision to a date
- Without a date, it sounds more like a slogan – could be elsewhere in the plan, doesn’t have to be in the vision
- Dynamic, should change as the plan changes
  - Houston is successful because it is adaptable to change; is diverse; plan should reflect this
- 2040 is a good target date
- Could we reference the next 20 years instead of a specific date? Still able to change the plan, but keep a timeline
- City of no limits...should be part of the vision?
  - Only defines the area as a “city” though; can we limit it to only a city?
- The goals that follow are important to support the vision
  - Opportunity for ALL, not just some, for example

**Word Activity**

- Vision statement prioritizes options
  - No connection to health/environment – are we going to capture that?
  - ‘Well’ covers that?
- Sustainable is a loaded term (and so is happy)
  - One main component of sustainability is affordability

- The word has no meaning anymore
- Could we pair sustainable with another word to eliminate the negative connotation?
- Houston is the least sustainable city; why should we consider using the word?
  - One of the challenges we face
- Measured by air quality, but sustainable is/can be measured by more than one component
- Has more than one definition
- 'Community' as a better word than 'home'?
  - Implies collaboration, neighborhood, engaged, beautiful, friendly
- 'Opportunity' and 'community' have the same magnitude; 'diverse' is of a different magnitude
  - Is there another word to use in place of diverse?
- 'Community' is about the people
- Not everyone is in a 'community' – does this word translate to all populations?
  - Is there another word for this?
- Using 'diversity' as inclusive may be a bit too forward
- 'Diversity' and 'community' are general terms in this form, which is a good thing; portrays the general sense of the words
- Diversity is our city's greatest/most unique quality
  - Hallmark of Houston
  - Has different forms of diversity – forefront of the country for this reason
  - 'Diversity' alone is a bit vulnerable – “we value” helps to get the point across
- Needs to have 'inclusive' – incorporates the engagement aspect
- 'Health' is a concept that is missing
  - Environmental health, human health, etc
- Is there a reason we can't just use 'health' as the word?
- Quality of life – home, livability, etc
- Houston can be marketable as an open/friendly city
  - 'Inclusive'
- Add “continuing” to the words – we're doing it now and will continue to do so
- “Quality of place”
- These words don't express the physical city
- 'Home' is a feel-good word
- 'Livable' is similar to 'sustainable'
  - Sets the bar low – can live anywhere

## Goals

- Overall, we are missing health and education
- Need to revise transportation goal – missing the affordability aspect
  - Not aspirational
- Balanced, multi-modal “approach” to transportation
  - Include affordability
- 'Support' could be changed
- Add something about health under the people category
- List is not very aspirational
  - Break it out into where we are and where we are going
- Goals should be a benchmark
- Preamble saying who we are today, what we don't want to lose and what we want to see

- Connect prosperity to people so they are not left out of the economy category
- Goals should not be meaty – get into the meat in strategies/measurements
- Can we alter the framework so that we’re focused on the end result?
- Future of Houston are the millennials – where is that addressed?
- 20% living in abject poverty – should address that outright
  - Is that addressed in the measurement of the improvement of this?
- Possible new transportation goal: “Affordable, multimodal transportation network that facilitates/dramatically or significantly improves access around the city”
- ‘Support’ needs to be a different word – ‘services’? ‘Systems’?
  - Could be ‘livability’? ‘Community’?
- Should rearrange some of the goals
- The support category uniformly is what government can do to support the other categories

**Coordination tool:**

- My City already has a lot of information. Is everything going to be on the same site? Are we adding to My City or creating a new site?
- Should increase communication between departments/organizations/agencies
  - Will there be notification or a trigger when plans change so that people will be aware?
- Citizen-drive plans (Heights, e.g.) could be included?
- Plans that are active and on-going could be labeled as “underway”?
- Will there be a map for all neighborhoods?
- Conflicts between entities – can we see when there are conflicting plans for a certain area?
- Galveston Bay Estuary Plan is not in the City or ETJ, but it may affect us
  - How we interact with the region is important
- Transportation plan for 8 counties may be something to incorporate
- Could include regional-focused plans that include Houston
- Last bullet (for criteria) – should it matter whether the plan was inclusive?
- Plan has to be attached to someone (an agency) who can implement it
  - If the body has no authority to implement the plan, it is not a plan, it’s just an idea – should we include these?
- How do you measure inclusivity? Maybe use “discrimination”
- Geography-based – majority owned by private people
  - Include plans of large property owners?
  - How do we handle this?
- Houston Housing Authority – 60,000 Houstonians for affordable housing
  - Need to connect these families to these things – become inclusive
  - Affordable and accessible

Side note – On October 16, Blueprint Houston is holding an event to honor Houston

## Notes from General Plan Meeting on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Recorded by R Medlen

“Sustainable” is a loaded, broad term with no meaning (response to two vetoes)

However, “Houston is the least sustainable city” is a constant branding challenge

For option 4, “Community” is better than “Home”

In terms of form: 3, 4 key words has a bang to it

They should be words that have well-known and consistent definitions

Should we use 200<sup>th</sup> birthday as a planning date or just drop the date all together?

Vision should answer “What embodies Houston?”

“Diversity” sounds much more general in context --- consistently cited as one of Houston’s best qualities

For form: “We value...” \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Health is missing – we need a word to incorporate this concept

Is “inclusive” more forward than “diversity”?

Should we use “continuing” to indicate we have these things currently?

Words currently under consideration lack connection to the physical city.

Is it more Houstonian for planning to be dynamic vs. having a horizon? A rolling timeframe so to speak

If we say “We Value”, then what does that say about what we don’t value --- just the words is cleaner

“Houston: “ \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

--- Strong support for this form

“Home” may conflict with the people not from here – or – is “Home” aspirational?

Diversity v. Inclusive/Engaged --- you have to do something to be inclusive

Health – belongs under “people” for goals, it is alluded to but no solidly present

Education – currently under economy now

Transportation statement doesn't address congestion, affordability --- it is not aspirational

----- "Support" doesn't make sense"

Goals sound aspirational, we need to acknowledge what we have

>>>> identify metrics for "Achieving getting better"

>>>> Address what we are/have through a preamble?

Connect people to the economy

Future of Houston is millenials

Find a way to say the current level of poverty is unacceptable

"Affordable, multi-modal transportation network that dramatically improves moving people around the city"

Support: Services? System? Access? Livability? Community?

>>>>> Uniformly takes on government actions that can be taken

## Suggestions from SC Members for draft 3 of Vision Statement

Our Houston: Opportunity, Diversity, Community

Notes: should be nouns; community includes 'home'

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Houston: A city of Opportunity

Houston: Diverse. Resilient. Thriving.

Houston: Community and Opportunity.

FAVORITE: Houston: Opportunity. Diversity. Home

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Houston: Opportunity. Diversity. Community. \_\_\_\_\_.

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The word "innovation" keeps repeating in my ear (creative, cutting edge, unique)!

Houston or "Our Houston: Opportunity, Diversity, Innovation, Community."

(Four words plays better than three, in my view). Myself and others like "Prosperity" as well! We think "Home" goes in the right direction, but sends a mixed message - more "me" than "we."

Diversity - certainly a great strength of our city, but the source of many challenges, suggesting many silos. As a stand-alone word, like "environment," without a modifier, such as "We Value," it appears somewhat ambiguous.

So finally: "Our Houston: Opportunity, Prosperity, Innovation, Diversity, Community."

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I want to clarify my core concern related to "health." I am not in love with the word, and I do not think it flows well with the others. My concern is the other three words do not begin to capture a range of goals and objectives the plan will want to address:

Human Health

Air and water quality

Recycling (hot issue right now)

Regional parks and recreation (otherwise, where does the Bayou Greenways project go?) Flooding and drainage Preservation of natural landscapes Climate Change and natural disasters

These may not be important issues for some committee members, but there is a sizable segment of the community that cares deeply about them. Given her recent statements and actions, my guess is Mayor Parker is in that group.

Resiliency: It has good alliteration with the other words. It implies health and addresses the ability to survive natural disasters. It also implies strength. It also can be used in an economic context, and in fact, Houston's come-back after the oil bust speaks to its resiliency. It also seems easier to stretch to cover environmental concerns than community or home.

Thriving: It does not have good alliteration. Unlike prosperity, thriving can be used in environmental, human health and economic contexts.

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Houston: Opportunity. Diversity. Community. This gets my vote, but I would be willing to add "Home"

I vote for 2040, not in the vision but in the goals/objectives

The term "Innovation" needs to be incorporated somewhere....it applies to the economy, a culture, our entrepreneurial spirit

I don't think this has any traction, but for what it is worth, when Amanda used the term "connected", it resonated with me on several levels: inclusivity, engagement, global, technology, opportunity, and transportation

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Houston is a community that values creating opportunity,celebrates diversity and promotes sustainability.