



APRIL 1, 2016



Transition Team Report



Mayor Sylvester Turner began his administration by building a transition effort of unprecedented scope and inclusiveness. His goals were to examine the pressing needs of the City of Houston across every key issue area and to establish a detailed vision for moving Houston forward. Mayor Turner convened an executive committee comprised of residents and leaders from a broad variety of Houston communities. From labor leaders and community activists to lawyers and philanthropists, and even one of his former opponents in the mayoral race, Mayor Turner wanted strong voices at the table who would come together for the sake of a stronger Houston. With the help of this transition team, chaired by businessman and long-time civic advisor David Minckberg, Mayor Turner established thirteen separate working groups — in total, over 250 Houstonians from all walks of life — to address each of the following issue areas:

- Comprehensive Financial Reform
- Criminal Justice
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Housing
- Houston Airport System
- Public Health
- Public Safety
- Public Works
- Quality of Life
- Rebuild Houston
- TIRZs
- Traffic and Transportation

DELVING DEEPLY INTO QUESTIONS OF VISION, POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION, each working group spent two months interviewing community members, city leaders and experts, researching what works and what doesn't in large cities across the country, and discussing their own interactions with the City of Houston to develop a comprehensive set of policy recommendations to keep Houston moving forward.

Despite the wide range of topics represented by the thirteen transition groups, many of the recommendations concentrated around four key areas of opportunity:

Vision, Comprehensive Planning and Coordination

Each of the thirteen working groups determined, first and foremost, that the city needs a clear vision for its future. Critical to the development and communication of this vision is the need for comprehensive, long-term

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city planning that takes into account the links between city investments like transportation and housing and outcomes like economic growth, health, educational and workforce impacts, and Houston's overall quality of life. Mayor Turner has consistently held that Houstonians must determine a clear, holistic vision for our city, then target our investments and incentives to achieve those outcomes. The development and communication of this clear vision will allow not only our residents but also potential partners in the business investment and grant communities to understand our

priorities and to participate in the coordinated effort to move Houston forward.

Goals, Metrics and Accountability

Each of the thirteen groups articulated the need for clear, measurable goals and the development of a framework of metrics to keep the administration focused on its priorities. Measurement of performance and progress toward goals ensures that results are tracked and provides opportunities to improve the impact and implementation of policies. The city should establish public economic opportunity goals and develop a measurement framework to enhance the clarity, measurability, breadth and depth of the metrics it collects for the purposes of tracking goals and communicating activities and progress to the public. Indicators should be established up front and then reviewed on a regular basis to keep the administration informed and focused on key goals.

Communications and Community Engagement

Each of the thirteen separate working groups touched on the city's community engagement or communications efforts as a key area for improvement. In many cases, it was clear that Houston — either through the efforts of the city or through the efforts of strong community partners — is successfully addressing some of the critical issues facing the city. However, it

was also clear that many Houstonians just simply don't know about the city's efforts; the city's communications and outreach efforts are in real need of improvement. Basic changes like updating the city's website to make it more



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user-friendly, adopting a customer service-driven ethic at public-facing agencies like the Department of Public Works and Engineering, and implementing a proactive communications model to let Houstonians know what their city is doing, could go a long way toward improving resident awareness of, and satisfaction with, city operations.

In addition to improving its outward-facing communication, Houston must improve its capacity to receive and use information communicated to the city by its residents. The working groups each addressed the importance of incorporating community input and feedback in city decision-making, as well as the importance of ensuring that residents have open and transparent access to city data and information. The working groups explored the need for various sets of data and city policies to be made easily available to residents, as well as basic changes such as making public meetings convenient for members of the public to attend,

and proactively soliciting the input of community members before finalizing city plans or making key city investments.

Local and Regional Coordination

Some of the most pressing issues facing the City of Houston — from economic growth to transportation to flood control — are regional concerns. Each of the working groups discussed the desirability of strong

working relationships with overlapping local and regional jurisdictions.

More specifically, many of the important issues addressed by the working groups — from property tax fairness and pension reform to improving wage standards and increasing education funding — will require state legislative action. Typically, local jurisdictions have approached the legislature as individual entities, thereby missing the opportunity to communicate with one clear voice on key issues of common interest. The clear opportunity exists for a new approach to working with the legislature — one that includes early and ongoing consultation with local and regional partners such as local school districts, Harris County and other area jurisdictions, key business interests, and local community stakeholders, to promote the interests of the entire region. Mayor Turner's long legislative experience uniquely qualifies him to lead this new effort.

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Exhibit A

The following pages contain a summary of key issues addressed by each of Mayor Turner's thirteen issue-based transition working groups.



COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REFORM *The Comprehensive Financial Reform Committee offered items to consider in crafting reforms, based on budgeting philosophy, cost-savings measures and additional revenue sources, revenue caps, and pensions.*

ITEM	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Convert incrementally to a Performance Based Budget system , with a few departments converting each year. ¹	✓		
Explore opportunities for additional revenue sources , including by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amending existing Municipal Services Agreements (MSAs) to charge TIRZs for an appropriate share of the cost of utilized services. • Reviewing the performance of Tax Abatements and 380 agreements. 		✓	
Explore options for cost-savings, including by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking advantage of the current low interest-rate environment to achieve debt-service savings. • Evaluate personnel expenses for both classified and civilian employees. • Review current private contracts for cost effectiveness. • Consider support of legislative efforts to equalize property values between commercial and residential properties. 	✓		
Determine supportable contribution levels for pension liabilities and continue to negotiate plan changes in good faith to lower plan costs and ensure future sufficiency at supportable contribution levels.		✓	
Make additional city contributions to ensure adequate funding of the plans.		✓	
Consider structural and transparency changes to governance of the plans.			✓
Provide independent expert validation of the revised plans and contribution levels.		✓	
Reach general stakeholder consensus on pension-reform legislation for the 2017 Texas legislative session.		✓	
Modify the existing city revenue caps to provide a uniform revenue cap that does not damage Houston's financial well-being or competitive ability to provide amenities or services, and that takes the population of the entire metropolitan area into account in setting limits.			✓

¹See "Turner issues directive aimed at fixing city budget," *Houston Chronicle*, January 28, 2016, at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/houston/article/Turner-issues-directive-aimed-at-fixing-city-6789012.php>

CRIMINAL JUSTICE *The Criminal Justice committee addressed body cameras, community policing, ICE, cite-and-release practice, drug diversion practice, appropriate use of municipal courts, and effective offender re-entry.*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Hire a police chief who will adopt a policy for body-worn cameras that eliminates loopholes, minimizes officer control over body camera operation, ensures proper uploading with a clear chain of custody, and maximizes prompt public access to footage.		✓	
Hire a police chief who supports and will implement the concept of community policing.		✓	
Hire a police chief who will provide a clear written policy that HPD will not inquire into the immigration status of anyone it encounters.		✓	
Hire a police chief who will adopt the policy of cite and release for low-level offenses.		✓	
Hire a police chief who will adopt a policy that instead of arresting and incarcerating low-level drug offenders, HPD should generally divert them to the Houston Sobriety Center for evaluation and referral to rehabilitation programs.		✓	
Ensure that the municipal court fine collection practices do not prey on indigent citizens by expanding the use of community service, prohibiting the use of jail as a means to collect fines from the poor, and insulating the municipal courts from pressures to collect fines.		✓	
Establish an effective strategy to reintegrate ex-offenders into society, including by facilitating their reentry into the workforce. ²		✓	
Ensure that representatives of the communities affected by the foregoing recommendations are fully included in the process for selecting a new police chief.		✓	

²See "Turnaround event offers hope for struggling Houstonians," *Houston Chronicle*, March 26, 2016, at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Turnaround-event-offers-hope-to-struggling-7186395.php>.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY *The Economic Opportunity Committee recommended that Houston increase opportunities for family-sustaining jobs, enhance development and growth of small businesses, and strengthen workforce development by establishing a “City that Works!” initiative to improve economic opportunity for the historically marginalized residents of Houston. The committee’s recommendations detail the key elements of the initiative’s focus.*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Systematically focus the city’s investment resources — especially economic development funding — on marginalized communities and neighborhoods with higher poverty and unemployment rates. ³		✓	
Establish public economic opportunity goals and measures of success using an “Economic Opportunity Dashboard” to review indicators toward progress on a regular basis.			✓
Implement living wage and local hire policies for all contracts, subcontracts, and tax incentive projects.			✓
Strengthen workforce development initiatives in key, demand-driven industries such as construction and health care to focus economic opportunity outcomes for targeted neighborhoods and populations.			✓
Enhance the support and development of Minority, Women-Owned, Small Business Enterprises (MWSBEs).		✓	
Establish a director-level position reporting directly to the mayor who is responsible for meeting Houston’s economic opportunity goals set forth by the administration and coordinating and maintaining accountability regarding these goals across all city departments and divisions.			✓

³ See, e.g., “City wants companies to do more for tax breaks,” *Houston Chronicle*, March 22, 2016, at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/houston/article/City-wants-companies-to-do-more-for-tax-breaks-6975333.php>

EDUCATION *The Education Committee issued recommendations addressing school-supportive infrastructure, education advocacy, and education partnerships.*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Hire a Chief Education Officer within the Office of the Mayor to coordinate the city’s education efforts across communities and stakeholders. ⁴	✓		
Prioritize infrastructure investment that supports local schools, including safety improvements such as sidewalk and streetlight repair.			✓
Push for state-level policy improvements during the 2017 legislative session, including increased school funding allocations and the implementation of ethnic studies curriculum.			✓
Strengthen workforce education for students in grades 6-8 by providing them with career-path opportunities and access.		✓	
Promote the development of a strong workforce through coordination of post-secondary opportunities in career technology education and apprenticeships.		✓	
Create a standing roundtable consisting of the 17 local K-12 superintendents to meet regularly with the mayor and develop coordinated efforts on key interests.		✓	
Establish a Houston Business-Education Alliance to more effectively involve local businesses in education support activities.			✓

⁴“Turner names former HISD board member as education czar,” *Houston Chronicle*, February 4, 2016, at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/houston/article/Turner-names-former-HISD-board-member-as-his-6808528.php>.

HOUSING *The Housing Committee addressed improvements to housing departmental operations, increasing and preserving quality affordable rental housing, increasing and protecting homeownership, and increasing housing funding and financing.*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Create a comprehensive housing plan to improve citywide strategic approaches to producing market-rate and affordable units that are based on the mayor’s vision for Houston.		✓	
Standardize and centralize housing data to improve the transparency and effectiveness of the city’s housing-related activities to provide a comprehensive understanding of challenges and successes.			✓
Double the number of annual affordable units produced in neighborhoods designated as zones of emerging opportunity and high opportunity.			✓
Target efforts to increase working-class homeownership —i.e., homeownership for households earning 50% to 120% of average median income.			✓
Prevent the involuntary displacement of current homeowners due to market pressures in neighborhoods that are experiencing growth and new investments, including by exploring strategies to freeze ad valorem property taxes for certain categories of homeowners.			✓
Establish a Housing Trust Fund to create and/or preserve housing and targeted investment in neighborhoods designated as revitalization zones and emerging opportunity zones.			✓

HOUSTON AIRPORT SYSTEM *The Houston Airport System Committee explored issues of community engagement, contracting and compliance, and economic growth and expansion*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
<p>Review and Revise the HAS Mission Statement to reflect priorities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to the economic development of the Houston community and supporting local businesses. • Commitment to transparency and public engagement. • Stewardship of community resources, protecting the environment, contributing to the positive public image of the Houston community. • Furthering employee development and diversity in the workplace. 			✓
<p>Continue to review and audit the procurement and reporting processes at the Houston Airport System.⁵</p>		✓	
<p>Continue to review and audit, on a post-award basis, the utilization of local, small, minority, and women owned firms by prime contractors.</p>		✓	
<p>Consider implementing an online “report card” to highlight city departments whose vendors are consistently paid within city guidelines.</p>			✓
<p>Implement a formal debriefing process for unsuccessful bidders.</p>			✓

⁵ See, e.g., “Turner tears up airport contracts, will start bidding over,” *Houston Chronicle*, February 9, 2016, at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/houston/article/Turner-tears-up-airport-contracts-will-start-6819268.php>.

PUBLIC HEALTH *The Public Health Committee researched, reviewed, and developed a comprehensive strategy to address and measure Houston’s capacity to address issues that significantly affect Houston’s health, both physically and economically.*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Re-issue and re-draft of the GoHealthyHouston Executive Order , modified to include a wider definition of health issues in addition to obesity (e.g. environmental quality).			✓
Conduct an inter-departmental assessment of the city’s capacity to address environmental health issues.			✓
Mandate external subject matter expert involvement in the city’s coming implementation of the Healthy Communities Institute data platform to ensure it meets the widest needs of the city in the realm of public health.			✓
Conduct a financial audit of the health department.			✓
Ensure HHD serves as a centralized delivery hub that connects Houstonians with public health services.		✓	
Ensure HHD collaborates meaningfully with other departments and assesses public health needs within shared data frameworks, including geographic and high-risk demographic classifications.		✓	
Develop a comprehensive, inter-agency, multi-year plan , situated above the HHD, that is directly tied to health outcomes that emerge from shared data frameworks.			✓
Diminish the many silos that characterize PH efforts in Houston.		✓	

PUBLIC SAFETY *The Public Safety Committee addressed issues of personnel, operations and facilities and equipment for the Houston Police Department, the Houston Fire Department, and the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Implement recommendations contained within the President's 21st Century Policing Report. ⁶			✓
Conduct an independent work demands analysis of the department's entire operation inclusive of a focus on police officers staffing and deployment patterns, use of technology, and deployment protocol.			✓
Improve the transparency of the citizen complaint process.			✓
Examine the viability of requiring a psychological assessment of classified personnel between their 5th and 7th years of employment.			✓
Work with local agencies, community associations and institutions of faith to develop a network of translators who can assist public safety officers in obtaining information from citizens who do not speak English.			✓
Develop partnerships with diverse / international communities and grassroots organizations that work directly with the community as a means of connecting, disseminating public safety information and developing trust within those respective communities.			✓
Establish a Community Partnership Division within each public safety department.			✓
Increase HPD's burglary and theft clearance rate. Currently a clearance rate of 6.2% is reported.		✓	
Hire certified paramedics/fire fighters to assist in reducing training costs.			✓

⁶ http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf.

PUBLIC WORKS *The Public Works committee explored opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the city's Department of Public Works and Engineering with respect to communication, planning and permitting, and procurement.*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Improve departmental communications by devoting an upper-level staff position to focusing on four key communications areas: communication with citizens, inter-agency communications, media communications, and internal/business communications.		✓	
Revise the departmental structure to minimize silos, improve effectiveness, and increase public engagement.		✓	
Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of planning and permitting by implementing strategies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a quality of review standard for a set of plans. This in part can be accomplished by having the same plan reviewer on a set of plans and training on the code. Establishing a maximum time frame for each plan review group to achieve the maximum amount of times a set of plans will be within the review system. 			✓
Revise the procurement schedule for professional services to more closely model the TxDOT schedule of four times per year.			✓
Pre-qualify contractors that utilize “earn while you learn” registered apprenticeship training programs with the Department of Labor (DOL).			✓
Set goals around a percentage of workforce on public construction projects.			✓
Pre-qualify and only allow contractors who meet minimum standards — including wage compliance and safety training, to bid for projects.			✓

QUALITY OF LIFE *The Quality of Life Committee explored issues of arts and culture, parks and greenspace, neighborhoods, and partnerships and city promotion*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Appoint a working group of stakeholders to research additional arts revenue sources and make recommendations for potential new funding opportunities to benefit all of the Houston arts.			✓
Appoint a post-transition committee to update the Civic Art Ordinance last revised in 2006.			✓
Form and implement an Arts & Cultural Policy , initiated through the Department of Planning & Development with input from the Mayor’s Office for Cultural Affairs (MOCA).			✓
Better support the mission of an active, diverse urban greenspace sector by streamlining all inter-departmental and inter-agency aspects of parks and greenspace planning, implementation, and partnership according to all existing parks & greenspace master plans.		✓	
Through the Department of Planning & Development, create a model for innovative inner-city redevelopment that places a priority on neighborhood revitalization coupled with efforts that support affordability and locally-driven stability.			✓
Complete an inventory of potential new historic districts.		✓	
Announce initial support of the application to designate Freedmen’s Town a UNESCO World Heritage Site , working with the Historic Preservation Office to determine feasibility and impact as a tourist destination and historic landmark.			✓
Directly manage city involvement and performance in existing public-private partnerships and use them as a model to design, attract, and promote future partnerships.		✓	
Require HOTfunded organizations to conduct regular stakeholder meetings.			✓

REBUILD HOUSTON *The Rebuild Houston Committee explored issues of the legal status of the Rebuild program, project planning, and communications and community engagement.*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Vigorously defend the dedicated funding source and the ad valorem tax lock box provisions of ReBuild Houston. The mayor should explore all avenues to protect the funding sources of this program.		✓	
Establish a vision for ReBuild Houston , with specific goals, objectives and metrics for success. The mayor should hold PWE accountable for implementing that vision with a sense of urgency.		✓	
Engage, empower, educate, and convert skeptics into advocates by actively engaging community leaders and concerned citizens.		✓	
Give the Advisory Committee authority over certain aspects of ReBuild Houston. Currently the Advisory Committee has no authority to engage PWE or hold PWE to any level of accountability.			✓
Restructure PWE's approach in implementing ReBuild Houston. Currently, they are implementing the program as if it were a capital improvement program, structured around a bond financing model. This is PWE's default methodology since no vision or direction has been provided by the administration.			✓
Revise the drainage design criteria. Currently, the criteria produce results that are counter-intuitive to the expectation of a reduction in flood risk. Strict adherence to the criteria often creates situations that increase flood risk.			✓

TIRZs *The TIRZ Committee explored issues of funding flexibility, vision and planning, effective governance, and transparency and communication.*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Require each TIRZ to enter into a Municipal Service Agreement (“MSA”) to allow the city to recapture TIRZ revenue (where appropriate) necessitated by an increased demand on city services.		✓	
Require all non-petition TIRZs to either spend one-third of their increment on affordable housing projects focused within their boundaries or by contributing one-third of their increment to the city’s affordable housing fund.			✓
Establish a TIRZ grant match bank to maximize leveraging of federal, state and local resources for projects and to establish an accessible pool of revenue for use by newer/smaller TIRZs to seed initial projects.			✓
Require TIRZs to create a higher level of transparency to promote trust and collaboration among the TIRZs, the public and other city Departments.		✓	
Adopt TIRZ board composition guidelines to encourage diversity in all respects such as ethnicity, gender, age, occupation and stakeholder interests.			✓
Conduct a TIRZ evaluation process every two years to measure each TIRZ’s progress and success.			✓
For each TIRZ, identify effective means to increase information dissemination to, and improve communication with, its constituents.		✓	

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION *The Traffic and Transportation Committee addressed issues of planning and coordination, balancing short-term and long-term transportation improvements, and increasing the transparency and operational efficiency of METRO*

RECOMMENDATION	DONE	IN PROGRESS	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Develop a multi-modal transportation plan that is coordinated with other agencies and the development community. ⁷		✓	
Establish a new transportation executive within the Office of the Mayor to coordinate transportation and mobility issues across departments.			✓
Identify bottlenecks, hotspots and deficiencies and develop short-term mitigation measures that can be implemented in less than a year.		✓	
Conform to the Federal Highway Administration recommendation to re-time traffic signals every three years by prioritizing re-timing one-third of city traffic signals annually.			✓
Develop a METRO mission statement and vision that reflects the organization's intended purpose.		✓	
Reconstitute a citizen advisory board for METRO consisting of regular transit users.			✓
Develop a plan for METRO to maximize the efficiency of the existing assets and focus on customer service.		✓	

⁷ See, e.g., "Turner calls for change in transportation philosophy," *Houston Chronicle*, February 9, 2016, at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/transportation/article/Turner-calls-for-change-in-transportation-6815475.php>