



## ***City of Houston Legislative Principles For the 83rd Session of the Texas Legislature***

### **City of Houston Mission Statement**

The City of Houston will focus its proactive legislative efforts on the enhancement of the quality of life in Houston through emphasis on public safety and criminal justice initiatives; economic development and increasing jobs; strengthening neighborhoods; decreasing congestion; creating sustainable communities; addressing the challenges of regional air quality; making needed investments in drainage mitigation and upgrades; providing affordable housing opportunities; and making the government more efficient, responsive, and transparent.

All of this must be pursued with a focus on regional cooperation, while preserving local control and ending unfunded state mandates.

### **Regional Cooperation/General Government**

Oppose all unfunded state mandates that negatively affect the operations of the City of Houston either monetarily, by requiring state micro-management of local programs, or by limiting the City's local authority in employee relations and benefits, public safety, revenue collection, city operations or other local programs. Support meet and confer to allow local control of firefighters' pension fund.

Oppose diminishing the City of Houston's regulatory authority, water rights, and representation on the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) Board of Directors or other entities. Support and protect the City's authority in its rights of way and on municipal premises.

Support proportionate funding and financing models by the State and other relevant units to assist Houston in meeting its needs including health care, public safety, housing, transportation and infrastructure development, and education.

## **Public Safety/Criminal Justice**

Support improvements in the ability to train, deploy, and fund emergency operations and public safety personnel. Support legislative and administrative efforts to assist the City of Houston in preparation for and prevention of acts of terrorism and emergencies, including the equitable, threat-based distribution of Homeland Security funds.

Support changes and improvements to the Criminal Justice Codes, Juvenile Justice Codes and Transportation Codes including those supported by the City of Houston in previous sessions of the Texas Legislature.

Support legislation that will enhance technology and security at municipal courts.

## **Neighborhood Improvement and Quality of Life**

Support technical legislation that assists the City's homeowners and strengthens neighborhoods, our environment and quality of life, as well as the neighborhoods, parks and schools to standard programs.

Support legislation to enhance after school programs and summer programs for youth.

Support legislation which reduces unnecessary regulatory burdens for removing dangerous buildings and urban blight.

## **Economic Development**

Support legislation enhancing economic development and fostering job creation in regional growth areas. Support legislative efforts to promote inner city redevelopment including the creation and maintenance of affordable housing. Support legislative and administrative initiatives to improve the economic viability of the Port and Houston Airport System.

Support legislation to improve education, health and safety, literacy, library programs, and to emphasize opportunities for youth to ensure our workforce remains competitive.

## **Environment & Public Utilities**

Support legislative and administrative efforts to assist the Houston region in improving air quality and addressing flooding/drainage challenges. Support initiatives for additional open space, urban forestation and enhancements.

Support legislation promoting energy efficiency and the authority of local governments, the Public Utility Commission, Railroad Commission and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to have sufficient regulatory authority over industry participants to protect consumer interests and make the delivery systems more reliable and resilient.

Support legislation which protects adequate compensation for the use of City of Houston property and public rights-of-way.

## **Mobility**

Support legislative and administrative efforts to improve mobility funding and project implementation throughout the region. Pursue balance in the region's allocation of transportation funding, particularly for preservation, based on the region's population, vehicle miles traveled and relative contribution to transportation revenues.

## **Other**

Support, where possible, other local governments, school districts, local colleges, universities and medical institutions, health care providers, non-profits, and film, arts and tourism.