



COUNCIL MEMBER
SALLIE ALCORN'S

2023

YEAR IN
REVIEW

A NOTE

December 28, 2023

Dear Friends,

I am grateful for another opportunity to report on the work my team and I have done over the past year. It's our job to represent you, keep you informed, and advocate for you and your priorities. This recap will show you how we've strived to do just that in 2023.

This year marks the end of my first four-year term. A term punctuated by a global pandemic, social and civil unrest, and a brutal winter storm. A term where I got to see up close and personal the good nature of Houstonians, people who go out of their way to help others. We live in a very generous and compassionate city.

Thankfully 2023 came without plague or disaster in Houston. Your city council was able to govern without major disruption, and we accomplished many good things. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Mayor Turner and my fellow council members, and I will dearly miss those who are term-limited and won't be returning — Martin, Cisneros, Gallegos, Knox, Robinson, and Kubosh. I learned much from these dedicated public servants, each bringing his/her brand of passion and commitment to the horseshoe.

As we close the book on 2023, I look forward to continuing the work. It's all about the work! The work to make our city safer, improve our infrastructure and city services, grow our local economy, and enhance quality of life in our neighborhoods. Houston still faces lots of challenges, but with your help, I'm confident we will make good progress.

So get some rest. We have much more to do in 2024. Wishing you and yours a joyful and prosperous New Year!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Seattle Allen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

748

CONSTITUENT CASES

We understand residents usually call their district council member with specific city issues to resolve, but my staff and I are also here to be your advocates. This year we directly helped 748 constituents with a wide array of issues ranging from stray dogs to high water bills and everything in between. Please remember to call us if you need help from a city department.



75 SITE VISITS & CONSTITUENT MEETINGS



1,248 PHONE CALLS

PET PAN-TREES

This year, my team and I partnered with Trees for Houston, the Houston Humane Society, BARC, and Council Member Martha Castex-Tatum to host a “pet pan-tree” event. We were able to distribute over 3,000 pounds of pet food. In combination with other tree giveaways and plantings throughout the year, our team has helped distribute 2,012 trees.

PET PAN-TREE



166 CIVIC & COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS



200 BACKPACKS DISTRIBUTED



COMMUNITY MEETINGS

My team and I participated in a total of 239 community meetings this year. These include civic clubs, super neighborhoods, and homeowner association groups. These meetings offer a great way to hear directly from people about issues specific to their neighborhoods. No two neighborhoods are alike. Each has its own needs and it’s important to keep the communication flowing.



239 COMMUNITY MEETINGS



INFRASTRUCTURE & SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS

FLOODING

The City of Houston continues to leverage federal and state grant dollars to mitigate flooding. Post-Hurricane Harvey, FEMA awarded hazard mitigation funds to the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) to address flood mitigation opportunities. TDEM awarded four Hazard Mitigation Grant Projects to the city: Inwood Forest Stormwater Detention Basin, TIRZ 17 Memorial City Area Detention Basin, North Canal Diversion Channel, and Lake Houston Dam Gate Structure.

- [Inwood Forest Stormwater Detention Basin](#)

Construction on the \$80 million Inwood Forest Stormwater Detention Basin began in May, with an anticipated completion in early 2026. The project will protect over 4,400 structures in the White Oak Bayou and Vogel Creek watersheds and will hold about 1,200 acre-feet of water, equivalent to nearly 592 Olympic swimming pools or enough water to fill the Astrodome.

Inwood Forest is the first of the four Hazard Mitigation Grant Projects approved by FEMA following Hurricane Harvey and would have taken at least seven additional years without FEMA funding. The project is jointly funded by FEMA, the Harris County Flood Control District, and City of Houston. The Houston Parks Board is developing an amenities package to enhance the project landscape with funding from private donations.



- [TIRZ 17 Memorial City Area Detention Basin](#)

This \$54 million project consists of the design of a subsurface detention basin, located in a Spring Branch ISD sports facility (Memorial Middle School site), and a conveyance system beginning at Barryknoll Lane, near Bettina Court and connecting to the sports complex detention basin. An alternative detention basin is being considered at 872 Bettina Court. The design consultant has been selected and the preliminary engineering phase has begun. Once completed, the consultant will produce a recommended project scope. The basin and improvements will act as a relief storm water system, reducing flooding for thousands of residents.

- [Lake Houston Dam Gate Structure](#)

The city was initially awarded \$47.1 million in Hazard Mitigation Grant funds to construct new gates on the Lake Houston Dam structure. During preliminary design, engineers determined that the construc-

tion methods necessary to complete the gates proposed in Houston’s original grant application were too high-risk due to the age of the dam. A new design was announced in December 2022, consisting of 11 additional gates being built into the existing embankment on the east side of the current dam structure. The new design is significantly pricier and requires additional funds to complete. During the 88th Texas Legislative Session earlier this year, the city was successful in lobbying for \$50 million to directly address this increased cost.

- [North Canal Diversion Channel](#)

The North Canal Project is a \$131 million project that will reduce the risk of flooding downtown and minimize flood damage to upstream areas along White Oak and Buffalo Bayous. The project consists of three components: a high-flow diversion channel, an overflow channel, and channel improvements. The project is being funded partially through FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and is based on a 35% federal and 65% local cost share – being split with Harris County Flood Control District, TxDOT and



Memorial Heights TIRZ 5. The project is currently in its final design phase.

- [Sunnyside Area Detention Project](#)

On October 25, city council submitted a \$10 million grant application to the General Land Office for a Sunnyside area detention project. The proposed project would design and construct a 181 acre-foot multi-use detention basin at Bender’s Creek which will reduce flooding to the neighborhood by capturing overland flow and includes accessible greenspace and improves accessibility to Martin Luther King Blvd.

RESILIENT HOUSTON & CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Unveiled on Earth Day 2023, the city released its three-year update on Resilient Houston and the Climate Action Plan. The milestones were presented to the [TTI committee in October](#) and the [full report can be found here](#).

ROADSIDE DITCH RE-ESTABLISHMENT

Council Member Tarsha Jackson passed a budget amendment allocating \$20 million to the local drainage program, inspiring the mayor's ditch [re-establishment program](#). This five-year program has allotted an additional \$40 million to regrading, clearing and grubbing, flow line establishment, culvert flushing and repair, and removal of heavy debris/obstruction from neglected ditches as the city establishes a new maintenance schedule.



SIDEWALKS

This year, I created a Sidewalk Technical Advisory Group consisting of members from Houston Public Works, the Planning and Development Department, the Mayor's office of People with Disabilities, and the Finance Department and Legal Department. The goal was to determine the feasibility of an overarching citywide sidewalk program and to develop a comprehensive funding model. We met throughout the summer to discuss research presented by my staff on Houston's current programming and best practices in other large metropolitan cities. This included examining the spending of Community Development Block Grant public facilities dollars (utilized in San Antonio, Dallas, and El Paso) as well as the legality/capacity for a future sidewalk bond election (as seen in Austin, San Antonio, Atlanta, Chicago, and Phoenix). The group presented its findings and methodology for a potential increase in funds toward sidewalk construction and repairs to Mayor Turner, who agreed to transfer \$5 million from the general fund to the city's existing sidewalk programming, increasing the total sidewalk funding for FY 2024 to \$10.1 million. This additional funding will help clear out the backlog of applications for the [Pedestrian Accessibility Review program](#), [school sidewalk program](#), and [major thoroughfare sidewalk program](#).



RESILIENT SIDEWALKS

The Resilient Sidewalks Plan was created to assess the state of sidewalks and develop scalable solutions to address pedestrian mobility needs without contributing to flooding impacts. The plan, completed on June 1, includes a [citywide toolkit](#) and resilient community sidewalks plans for both the [Gulfton](#) and [Kashmere Gardens](#) communities.

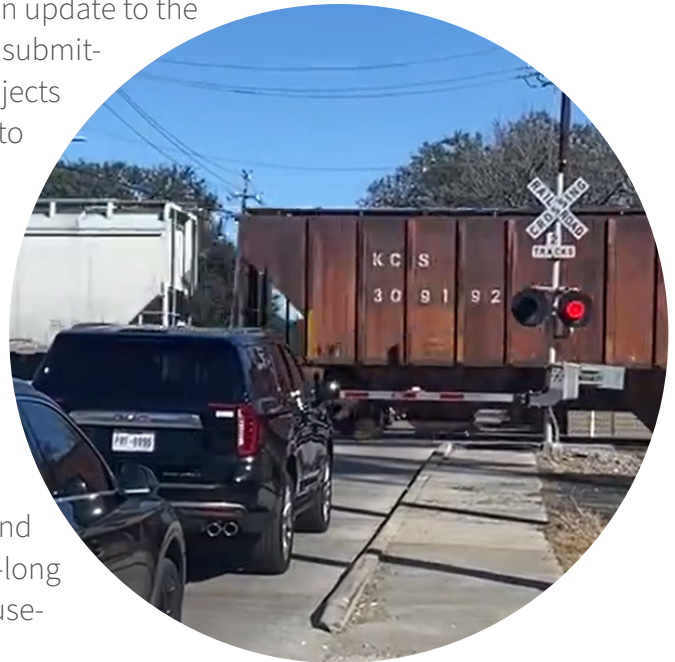
The plan's design was funded by Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery 17 (CDBG-DR 17) funds the City of Houston received after Hurricane Harvey for planning activities. Houston Public Works and the Planning and Development Department [jointly applied](#) for the 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program grant funded by the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act. Upon award, the project will invest \$43 million in walk-

ability and resiliency improvements to meet the need of these two communities. Once constructed, the project can be scaled and replicated across Houston.

BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

In September, the city’s government relations team presented an update to the TTI committee on our Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) grants submissions in [September](#) and [December](#). The presentation covered projects submitted to the federal government and described our efforts to leverage these dollars for projects that prioritize safety, equity, and resilience.

Houston’s major awards include \$36.9 million in funding from the federal Railroad Crossing Elimination Program for the [West Belt Improvement Project, Phase 1](#), announced in June. This money will close the funding gap for four underpasses at two locations in the East End – Commerce at Navigation and York near McKinney. Conceived over 15 years ago by nearby residents, the West Belt Improvement Project will decrease traffic and improve safety by closing several crossings, creating a five-mile-long quiet zone and removing train noise from more than 15,000 households. The total project cost is \$123.6 million.



Additionally, in October, Houston was selected as one of seven regional clean hydrogen hubs to receive \$1.2 billion in BIL funding. The seven hubs will initiate a nationwide network that connects clean hydrogen producers, consumers, and connective infrastructure to facilitate the production, storage, delivery, and end-use of clean hydrogen. The Houston H2Hub will create 45,000 direct jobs, including 35,000 in construction and 10,000 permanent positions.

“VULNERABLE TO VIBRANT: STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE CLIMATE RESILIENCY IN AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY”

On November 8, city council submitted a \$1 million grant application to the Environmental Protection Agency for this project in Houston’s Greater Fifth Ward and Kashmere Gardens communities. The project will use a multi-pronged approach to address climate resiliency, environmental vulnerability, and economic disadvantages experienced by the two communities. Implementation includes a local solar hub, state-of-the-art flood alert system, an air permit application warning system, targeted native tree plantings, hyper-local neighborhood resilience planning, and funding for graduates of our workforce program to work as interns and gain experience for permanent job placement in their own neighborhood.

NAVIGATION CENTER

In February 2023, Houston’s [Navigation Center](#) officially opened, providing individuals with a consistent, safe, and stable location as they transition from homelessness to housing. In the first five months of operations, the center successfully provided temporary housing (with support services) to 174 individuals. Of those who exited the program/facility, nearly 80% exited into permanent housing with wrap-around services. The facility helped the city holistically decommission 113 encampments, consisting of nearly 700 people, placing 90% into housing. The Navigation Center, coupled with others city/county programming, helped the greater Houston area reduce street homelessness by 17% in the past year alone.

Houston’s collaborative homeless housing efforts have become [a model for cities and counties across the country](#) interested in effectively and compassionately reducing homelessness and encampments.



COMPOSTING

Houston residents, businesses and institutions generate approximately 6.2 million tons of municipal solid waste per year, and municipal solid waste landfills are the third-largest source of human-related methane emissions in the U.S. I continue to champion composting efforts and diverting food waste from the landfills.

This was the third year our office partnered with the Solid Waste Department (SWD) to offer composting drop-off services. Pumpkins were accepted from November 1 to 8, with a total of 14,000 pounds collected.

On November 29, city council approved an application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in [support of SWD’s composting and food waste reduction grant pilot project](#). This grant will help expand composting education and opportunities while reducing the emission of greenhouse gases in Houston, aligning with the city’s Climate Action Plan, Resilient Houston, and SWD’s long-range plan.

On January 16, 2024, SWD is launching a free drop-off program at four ocatons – Kashmere Gardens, Acres Homes, Alief, and Sunnyside. All food scraps and some non-edible items will be accepted.

Kashmere Multi-Service Center

4802 Lockwood Drive
Mondays 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Acres Homes Multi-Service Center

6719 W. Montgomery Road
Tuesdays 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Alief Neighborhood Center

11903 Bellaire Boulevard
Wednesdays 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Sunnyside Multi-Service Center

4410 Reed Road
Thursdays 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.



MACGREGOR PARK

In December 2023, city council approved a \$54 million investment in MacGregor Park. This proposed project is an important step in ensuring park equity across Houston by providing critical improvements, including upgrades to the tennis center, baseball field, swimming pool, a new amphitheater, community plaza, playgrounds, event lawn, youth multipurpose field, historic center renovation, and reconfigured parking. Managed by the Houston Parks Board, the project is expected to be complete by the end of 2028. Of the \$54 million total cost, half of the funds (\$27 million) are being provided by the Kinder Foundation, with an additional \$12.5 million committed by the Houston Parks Board. The remaining \$14.5 million is funded by HUD grant dollars, TIRZ 7, and HPARD.

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

REGULATORY & NEIGHBORHOOD AFFAIRS (RNA), CHAIR

The RNA committee considers policies and regulations that protect and promote strong, vibrant neighborhoods and encourage the positive development of communities. The committee oversees the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and the Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department (ARA). Council Member Amy Peck serves as Vice Chair.

TRANSPORTATION, TECHNOLOGY, & INFRASTRUCTURE (TTI), VICE CHAIR

The TTI committee reviews matters pertaining to the Houston Information Technology Systems Department (HITS), the General Services Department (GSD), the Houston Public Works Department (HPW), and some issues relating to ARA. The committee is chaired by Council Member David W. Robinson.

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL (H-GAC), CHAIR-ELECT

H-GAC is our region's council of governments. Leaders from our 13-county region make decisions about spending federal and state funds for workforce development, childcare, flood mitigation, safety, solid waste, and community and environmental planning.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY COUNCIL (TPC), ALTERNATE MEMBER

TPC provides policy guidance and overall coordination of the transportation planning activities and spending of federal and state transportation funding within the eight-county region.

TEXAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE (TML), DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

TML represents the interests of cities before government bodies at the state and federal level. TML provides valuable research on relevant topics to municipalities. Through their promotion of cooperative relationships between municipalities and other levels of government, TML provides their member cities with information on shared interests and concerns.

PROPOSITION B

A citizen-led charter amendment petition initiative was launched earlier this year with the goal of increasing Houston's representation on H-GAC and TPC. Despite Houston's outsized contribution to the regional population (more than 30% of H-GAC's population are Houstonians), the City of Houston has just two seats on H-GAC's 37-member board. Fair for Houston successfully collected the necessary signatures to make it on the ballot and the charter amendment received voter approval in November. The charter amendment language allows Houston 60 days from the date the amendment was certified into the city's charter to either secure proportional representation on H-GAC and TPC or leave the organizations. The clock began on November 27 and negotiations are ongoing at H-GAC and TPC.

NOISE

Changes to the city's noise ordinance addressing outdoor amplified sound at bars and nightclubs were implemented in 2022. These changes were inspired by numerous residents negatively impacted by excessive late-night noise from nearby bars and nightclubs. The committee worked with stakeholders to strengthen neighborhood protections and bring repeat violators into compliance. One of the worst violators was El Poblado, located at 702 West Dallas. After receiving numerous noise complaints from neighbors and hundreds of citations from

HPD, the city revoked El Poblado's commercial establishment permit in May, which allowed outdoor sound amplification within 300 feet of a residence. Despite losing its permit, El Poblado continued to play loud music resulting in more citations. The city subsequently filed a lawsuit against the club seeking injunctive relief. On August 22, State District Judge Frederika Phillips of the 61st Judicial District granted the city's application for an Agreed Temporary Injunction. El Poblado has since moved to a new location, and the city's lawsuit is still pending.

DANGEROUS BUILDINGS

In February, the department of neighborhoods presented an overview on the [dangerous buildings program](#), outlining the process to determine a dangerous building. At the time of the presentation, the department had a backlog of 400+ dangerous buildings that require abatement. Following the meeting, Mayor Turner announced the city's "Demolition Initiative," allocating \$18 million to abate 300 properties by the end of this calendar year.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

On March 23, RNA met to discuss short-term rentals (STRs) in Houston, in response to the complaints I have heard across the city regarding STR "party homes." An Airbnb representative presented the [company's trust and safety tools](#), described [how residents may report complaints](#), and explained how the platform works to enforce the company's global party house ban. Houston First also provided an overview of the city's STR [hotel occupancy tax agreements and collections to date](#). During the public comment period, the committee heard from several residents regarding a 24-unit apartment complex at 1116 Banks Street that was operating as a STR "hotel." Residents from several communities described the disruptions and nuisances STRs brought to their neighborhoods. Complaints from council members and public speakers were summarized in a [memo for Mayor Turner](#), who directed the legal department to look at other cities' best practices and STR ordinances that have survived court challenges. As the legal department continues its investigation, the city attorney is working to improve enforcement at the Banks location and several other problematic properties.

Houston remains one of the only major cities without STR regulations. I look forward to working with the next administration to put some guardrails in place to better protect Houston neighborhoods.

COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

In 2022, RNA convened to review the city's rules and processes associated with commercial vehicles and 18-wheelers parked in residential neighborhoods. Following the meeting, [a memo](#) was submitted to Mayor Turner summarizing several recommendations made by council members and the presenters. The administration agreed to raise fines for large vehicle parking violations from \$60 to \$150 and bring forward amendments to strengthen the parking ordinance. Those amendments were approved by city council on July 12, and include updating the definition of commercial vehicle to align with federal/state code for clarity and enforcement purposes as well as closing a loophole that a logo/signage must be located on the outside of the vehicle's front door to be considered commercial. Now signage anywhere on the vehicle classifies it as commercial. Additional amendments were approved to include large vehicles in rules that prohibit trailers and commercial vehicles from parking more than two hours at any



time on a city street. Parking of all large trucks, commercial vehicles, and trailers is strictly prohibited from 2:00 am to 6:00 am.

On November 29, city council revised Chapter 33 of the city's code of ordinances to authorize the Planning and Development Department (PDD) to establish a [citywide truck route plan](#). The plan aims to effectively manage freight movement, enhance roadway safety, and improving the quality of life in Houston by guiding commercial vehicles to travel on designated truck routes. Beginning in January 2023, PDD began collecting input and ideas from concerned residents and stakeholders through three public meetings, two stakeholder meetings, community survey, trucking industry survey, online truck hotspot mapping tool, and neighborhood tours. Planning staff presented the proposed ordinance to the Planning Commission on October 19, 2023, and presented to TTI on [November 9, 2023](#).

A spring 2024 pilot program is planned for the Settegast community to test the proposed through truck route designation approach before finalizing the citywide plan.

BARC

BARC provided an [annual update](#) at the June 27 RNA meeting. Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 2023) and 2024 highlights include:

- Compared to other Texas cities, Houston spends far less per capita on animal welfare services. This is why I have been a strong advocate for additional BARC resources, this year adding \$500,000 to the BARC budget. This money will fund an adoption trailer and three new animal enforcement vehicles.
- Since mandatory microchipping was implemented, BARC has seen a 16% increase in return to owner outcomes
- City council approved funding for a new warehouse and replacement of the administration building, dome building, and outreach trailer in the five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Impounds increased to 10,003 – up 48% since FY 2022.
- 18,413 animals were brought to BARC, with 61% of intake coming from field captures
- One pet store continues to violate the recently adopted humane pet store (no puppy mills!) ordinance. BARC cites the store regularly and our team is tracking this with municipal courts.



On November 29, city council approved an additional \$1 million in ARPA funds for 6,200 spay and neuter surgeries. These surgeries are free of cost to Houstonians and are performed through local spay and neuter clinics. Learn more [here](#).

PERMITTING

During my first term, I strongly advocated for streamlined processes, improved customer service, and greater efficiency at the Houston Permitting Center (HPC). Participating in monthly HPC advisory board meetings, I have worked with industry stakeholders to help implement several recommendations at HPC including updating checklists, improving community efforts and outreach, expanding live chat services, and pushing for third-party

assistance to help reduce application backlog. While some progress has been made, we still have a long way to go as seen in the performance metrics below.

Commercial, Residential, & Public Infrastructure Plan Review				
Performance	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Target	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2024 Target
Number of commercial building plan reviews completed	24,640	13,000	32,700	32,00
Number of residential building plan reviews completed	28,889	15,000	16,000	17,000
Public infrastructure plan reviews completed - 10 business days	21%	60%	24%	60%
Residential plan reviews completed - 10 business days	47%	55%	38%	55%
Total plans reviewed	86,304	55,000	80,000	80,000

Development Services & Design Review				
Performance	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Target	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2024 Target
Number of commercial applications reviewed annually	5,909	6,500	5,896	6,500
Number of residential applications reviewed annually	15,273	16,000	14,059	16,000
Number of subdivision plan applications reviewed annually	3,463	3,248	3,687	3,248
Percentage of commercial projects reviewed in 13 business days	1%	90%	3%	80%
Percentage of residential projects reviewed in 10 business days	1%	90%	3%	80%

As can be seen, the city’s performance falls way short of targets, and this is unacceptable. Speeding up permitting processes remains a top priority of mine, and I look forward to addressing this with the next administration.

In 2022, city council approved two staff augmentation contracts to assist with expedited plan review in Building Code Enforcement (BCE), storm plan review, and within commercial plan review. In June 2023, city council approved another \$17 million contract with Versa Infrastructure to bring additional third-party resources related to construction permitting and code enforcement. This contract provides professional review services for the Plan Review Express Program, which allows customers to pay a fee to expedite plan review.

In addition, city council has appropriated approximately \$15 million for the [implementation of HouPermits](#), a new permitting system to streamline and improve the permitting and inspection process. HouPermits will serve as a one-stop shop for permitting and inspection information. The project is currently wrapping up design.

At the April 6, 2023, [TTI committee meeting](#), HPC Director Chris Butler presented an update on the department. From 2016 to 2022, HPC generated \$1 billion in revenue, sold over 2.7 million permits, completed 5.1 million inspections, and 542,000 project reviews. HPC has attempted to keep up with this activity while losing more than 90 employees in 2023. Staff attrition is due to the better pay and flexible teleworking options private companies and other public agencies can offer. We must re-examine our pay structure to retain and recruit good employees as well significantly shorten the hiring timeframe, which currently averages six months from job posting to start date.

DROUGHT & WATER LEAKS

At the March and April TTI meetings, Houston Public Works (HPW) presented on both [meter reading and water bills](#) as well as FY 2023 [water line leaks](#). Customer Account Services (CAS) reads and maintains over 500,000 meters throughout the city, serving over two million people. Seventy-nine percent of meters are currently read through electronic remote reading devices, with roughly 22,000 meters read manually each day. If part of a water meter is damaged, it could require a manual read or an estimated bill until repairs are made. Due to aging infrastructure, the monthly demand for manual meter reads continues to rise. CAS is working to replace obsolete automated meter reading infrastructure and procure a third-party meter reading contract to meet rising demand.



By the end of this process, 99.2% of accounts are billed correctly.

According to HPW, incorrect bills are attributed to a variety of reasons including aging infrastructure, human performance (for example, an error in visual meter reading), meter reading estimates, inclement weather, and damaged components or meters.

This year's drought has wreaked havoc on water lines throughout the city. In the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, when many Houston neighborhoods were built, standards called for shallowly buried sewer and water lines. These shallow water lines are more susceptible to shifting and breaking when the soil dries. Pipes installed today are buried deeper, lowering the chance of being affected by extreme weather. The city is currently implementing a long-term strategy to decrease future water leaks by consistently funding and installing small-diameter pipes over the next 20 years. There are 97 miles of new pipes currently planned, with 21 projects in design and two in construction.

Roughly 7,880 water line repairs have been completed since June 1, with city crews addressing 4,400 of those leaks.

On December 13, city council approved nine much-needed reforms to provide relief to customers. These changes will address customer account service representatives' limitations when it comes to resolving high water bill issues.





In June, city council approved the city’s \$6.2 billion Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 2024) operating budget. Some budget highlights include:

- \$1.6 billion, or 68%, slated for public safety including, funding for five police cadet classes and four fire cadet classes
- Previously negotiated pay raises – 3% for municipal workers, 3% for police officers, and 6% for firefighters
- \$160 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding
- An ending fund balance of \$404 million, 16.6% above expenditures less debt service, \$221 million above the minimum 7.5% requirement
 - The current ending fund balance projection is \$425.2 million, \$238.8M million above the 7.5% requirement.
- Increased funding for street and drainage projects from \$76 million last year to \$123 million in FY 2024
- \$20 million to the local drainage program

When the budget was released on May 16, my team and I got straight to work reading and analyzing the data, asking departments over [100 questions](#) about proposed spending.

The FY 2024 budget is fiscally conservative, leaving the city with healthy reserves to buffer next year’s budget which will not benefit from the use of ARPA funds. It includes actions for which I have pushed for in the past, including creating an Other Post Employment Benefits trust to bring down the unfunded liability associated with retiree health benefits and adding dollars to tackle the growing cost of deferred maintenance of city facilities.

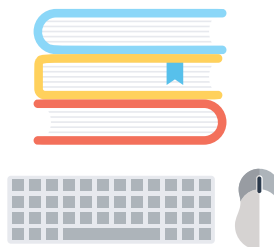
BY THE NUMBERS



**\$1.01B
POLICE**



**\$593M
FIRE**



**\$52.3M
LIBRARIES**



**\$97M
TRASH**



**\$91.7M
PARKS**

OUTCOME-BASED BUDGETING

After several years of advocating, the city’s finance department began its transition from an incremental budgeting approach to outcome-based budgeting (OBB) during this year’s budget process. OBB turns the budget on

its head, starting with the results we demand and the price we are willing to pay rather than the programs we have and the costs they incur. It uses competition to squeeze more value out of every tax dollar and makes every program, organization, and employee accountable for results.

This implementation of OBB began with public input. One of my favorite parts of the budget process has been reading the responses to the YOUR TWO CENTS public budget survey I sent out every spring over the past three years. The city put out its own survey this year, so I put mine on the shelf. The city's survey had more than [2,500 responses](#). Priorities were ranked from “not important” to “very important” with respondents selecting public safety (70%), service and infrastructure (63%), and sound financial management (44%) as the most important. Increasing public input in the budget process remains a priority of mine, and it is a key principle of OBB. I plan to work with the next administration to push for more accessible budget hearings and town halls, outside business hours and in locations across the city.

Performance is another tenet of OBB. This year, I took a deep dive into the performance measures included in each general-funded department budget program. Some departments excelled, some included cursory evaluations from years' past, others offered honest assessments, showing where the challenges lie. I have summarized comments and suggestions on this year's performance measures in a memo to be provided to this next administration and department directors.

FALLS PREVENTION

I hosted my annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day events in September. This year, we expanded the program to host two events, visiting Kashmere Multi-Service Center on Thursday, September 21 and Clear Lake's Freeman Library on Monday, September 25. Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among seniors. In partnership with Houston physical therapist Bill Case, the Houston Health Department, Harris County Area Agency on Aging, and BakerRipley, we provided evidence-based programming to help reduce falls by using strategies including balance and strength exercises, medication management, vision improvement, and reduction of home hazards. Before and after the program, seniors had the chance to visit with local service organizations, agencies, and city departments.



PUBLIC SAFETY

ONE SAFE HOUSTON

Houston Police Chief Troy Finner continued to present quarterly crime statistics to city council in 2023. At the October 18 briefing, he stated implementation of the [\\$78 million One Safe Houston initiative](#) has helped lower violent crime rates throughout Houston over the past year. Year-to-date non-violent crime rates also decreased over the same time period last year.

Crime Comparison	Year to date (Jan - Oct 15)		% Change
	2022	2023	YTD 2022 - 2023
Murder	351	288	-17.95%
Rape	974	992	1.85%
Robbery	5,817	5,215	-10.35%
Aggravated Assault	14,352	12,911	-10.04%
Kidnapping	307	296	-3.58%
Human Trafficking	58	50	-13.79%
Violent Crime Total	21,859	19,752	-9.64%
Burglary	11,205	10,495	-6.34%
Theft	59,400	54,696	-7.92%
Auto Theft	14,064	16,188	15.10%
Non Violent Crime Total	84,669	81,379	-3.89%
Violent & Non Violent Crime	106,528	101,131	-5.07%

ONE CLEAN HOUSTON

Mayor Turner launched [One Clean Houston](#), an \$18 million initiative aimed at combatting illegal dumping, in March. Illegal dumping is a pervasive problem negatively impacting the health, safety, and quality of life in many communities throughout the city. The initiative, funded by federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and local general fund dollars, takes a three-pronged approach:

- A rapid cleanup response, achieved by contracting additional abatement services, purchasing more grapple trucks, increasing driver signing bonuses, and improving complaint routing through 311.
- Improving enforcement through the purchase of new dumping cameras and increased funding for investigators and inspectors.
- Educating residents and preventing future dumping by deploying tools like barricades, landscaping, and signage at chronic dumpsites and increasing equipment at depositories to reduce wait times.

Since the program's launch, the city's average response time to deal with illegal dumping has decreased from 49 to 10 days, and the Solid Waste Management Department has collected over 61,000 cubic yards of garbage.

On December 20, city council appropriated another \$1.9M in ARPA funding for an additional 120 illegal dumping cameras and six dedicated inspectors, in partnership with Harris County Constable Precinct 1.

ONLINE & IN THE NEWS

HOUSTON PUBLIC MEDIA

HOUSTON RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO DROP OFF OLD PUMPKINS AT COMPOSTING LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY

“ IF WE CAN RECYCLE AND COMPOST TO DIVERT OUR FOOD WASTE, WE’LL REALLY HAVE VERY LITTLE TRASH GO INTO THE LANDFILL. ”



HOUSTON PETSET

CONVERSATIONS FOR THE ANIMALS WITH SALLIE ALCORN, HOUSTON CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

I joined Houston PetSet earlier this year to discuss the state of animals in Houston, new regulations including mandatory microchipping, and PetSet’s amazing work.

OTHER NEWS

I’ve also been quoted on neighborhood issues like [noise](#) and [large vehicles](#), the [city budget](#), and [other topics](#) this year.

FIND ME ONLINE

If you’re interested in hearing about what my team and I are working on throughout the year, please sign up for my [newsletter](#) (I promise to only send important information) or follow me on one of the platforms linked below:

 @CMSALLIEALCORN

 &  @SALLIEALCORN



JANUARY 25 – Amended Chapter 40 of the code of ordinances to implement a [sidewalk fee-in-lieu-of \(FILO\)](#) program and strengthened the [buffering ordinance](#) to address the rising impact of newly constructed, mid-rise and high-rise structures abutting single-family and small-scale multi-family structures. The FILO program allows for instances where sidewalks do not make sense or cannot be built. Rather than requiring a “sidewalk to nowhere,” there is now an option to pay into a fund – 70% of the collected fee will be spent within the designated area and the remaining 30% will be distributed citywide. The changes addressing residential buffering standards include garage screening and lighting, wall and pole-mounted light fixtures, and dumpster screening.

FEBRUARY 22 – Approved interlocal agreement with Harris County Public Health to collaborate and improve service delivery of the health needs of residents in both the city and county – another step towards examining shared services to gain efficiencies.

MARCH 8 – Voted against a long-term concession agreement to replace Pappas restaurants from Hobby Airport. The measure was upheld (11-6) and now Areas HOU JV, LLC has a 10-year concession contract at Hobby.

MARCH 22 – Authorized permanent closure on Main Street for [Main Street for More Space program](#). The Planning and Development Department presented on [Main Street for More Space 2.0](#) later in October.

APRIL 5 – Amended Chapter 33 to enable the process of creating [conservation districts](#) in six pilot neighborhoods: Independence Heights, Freedman’s Town, Acres Home, Magnolia Park/Manchester, Pleasantville, and Piney Point.

APRIL 12 – [Repealed the busking ordinance](#), rescinding the requirement for a permit.

MAY 24 – Amended Chapter 28 to [strengthen permitting and enforcement at BYOB establishments](#). Beyond restricted permit hours, it calls for other required safety measures such as mandatory security guards, lighting in parking lots, a video surveillance system, hand wands or metal detectors as well as background and criminal history checks for owners and operators.

JUNE 5 – Mayor Turner approved [executive order \(EO\) 1-72](#) requiring additional testing for municipal setting

designations (MSD), which prohibit use of impaired shallow groundwater as potable water. MSDs were created in 2003 to encourage redevelopment of vacant or abandoned properties with contaminated water while protecting the public health. The intent of the EO is to demonstrate enhanced protection of citizens and municipal resources following approval of an MSD.

JUNE 21 – Approved the \$11.5 billion [FY 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan \(CIP\)](#). Planned appropriations for the Public Improvement & Citywide Capital Programs total approximately \$936 million, Component Unit Programs at \$938 billion (made up of tax increments and private donations), and \$9.7 billion for the Enterprise Programs (aviation and the water/wastewater combined utility system.)

JUNE 21 – Created the Opioid Abatement Fund for the operation, maintenance, and support of the city’s targeted interventions and strategies to address the opioid crisis locally. To date, the fund holds \$2.2 million.

JULY 12 – Amended Chapters 16 and 26 to update and strengthen rules related to commercial vehicle parking in Houston neighborhoods. Refer to RNA Committee section of this report for more information.

AUGUST 1 – Submitted \$15 million grant application to deploy 366 electric vehicle chargers at city-owned libraries, community centers, and parks (about 81 project locations and 366 chargers in total).

AUGUST 30 – Refined Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) policies and successfully advocated for amendments to the administration’s proposed redline. These changes address TIRZ creation, termination, boundary adjustments, life extensions, and non-contiguous areas.

SEPTEMBER 27 – Created the [Fifth Ward Voluntary Relocation Program Fund](#), established for residents living in proximity to the contaminated Union Pacific Railroad site.

SEPTEMBER 27 – Reduced tax rate to 51 cents per \$100.

SEPTEMBER 27 – Updated Chapter 42, the city’s residential development regulations. The residential development changes incentivize second dwelling units, multi-use residential, courtyard-style, and narrow-lot development. Narrow-lot developments is where compromise was reached. The city was proposing to disallow front-loading driveways on narrow lots in favor of shared driveway flag-shaped or rear-access lots. This caused much opposition from the building community, and from residents worried about increasing the number of cars parked on the street. The compromise allows for direct driveway access for existing lots narrower than 33 feet if specific standards are met.

OCTOBER 15 – Transferred former [Velasco incinerator site to the Houston Land Bank](#) to begin cleanup.

NOVEMBER 1 – Authorized second 10-year segment for [Westchase 380 agreement](#).

NOVEMBER 12 – [Extended the downtown entertainment zone](#) to match existing central business district boundaries and align with the Downtown District’s vision.

NOVEMBER 26 – Amended Chapter 33 to allow the establishment of the citywide truck plan.

DECEMBER 6 – Waived previously required \$200 fee associated with street light installations. To request a street-light in your neighborhood, [click here](#).

DECEMBER 13 – Approved nine water bill ordinance reforms.

THE PEOPLE ARE THE CITY

THE TEAM

JORDAN MCGINTY FRAZIER



CHIEF OF STAFF



JULIA OSSEMI-SEIED



DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF

JUSTICE COUTEE-MCCULLUM



COMMUNITY OUTREACH LIAISON

KATIE SHELTON



PUBLIC AFFAIRS LIAISON

INTERNS

ABRIELLE RANGEL-REYNA



LORNA MORRIS



STOCKTON LORD

