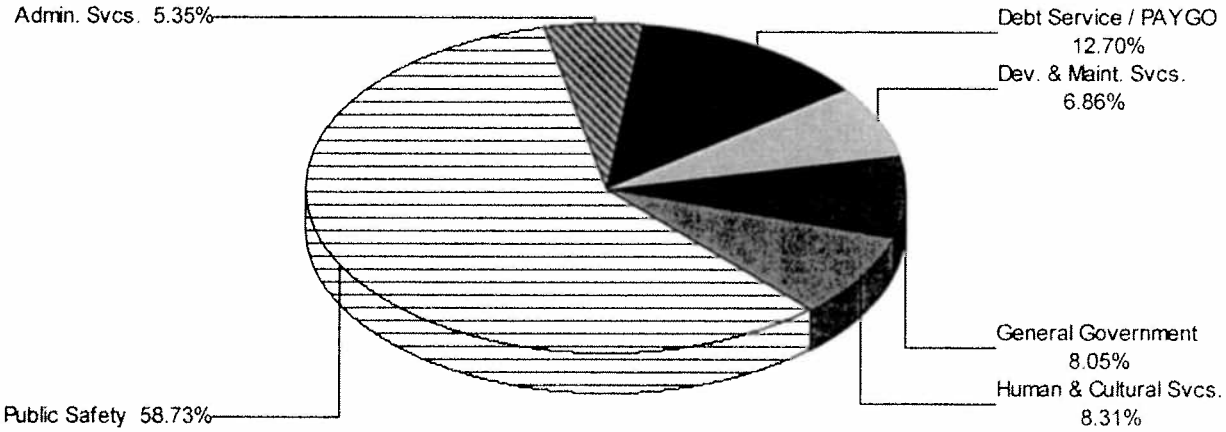
GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES/OTHER USER SUMMARY

General Fund Expenditures and other uses make up the largest portion of the City's FY2017 Budget. These expenditures and other uses are funded by revenues from property and sales taxes, franchise fees, licenses and permits, charges for services, miscellaneous categories and other sources. (For a detailed explanation, see the General Fund Resources Summary).

FY2017 General Fund expenditures and other uses are allocated among twenty-four (24) departments and five (5) functional areas, the functional areas include: Public Safety, Development and Maintenance Services, Human and Cultural Services, Administrative Services, and General Government. The following graph illustrates the allocation of these expenditures and other uses. Please note that the Public Safety and Human and Cultural Services categories are supported by expenditures in all other categories.

GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES/OTHER USES FY2017 BUDGET



Total=$2,308,370,504

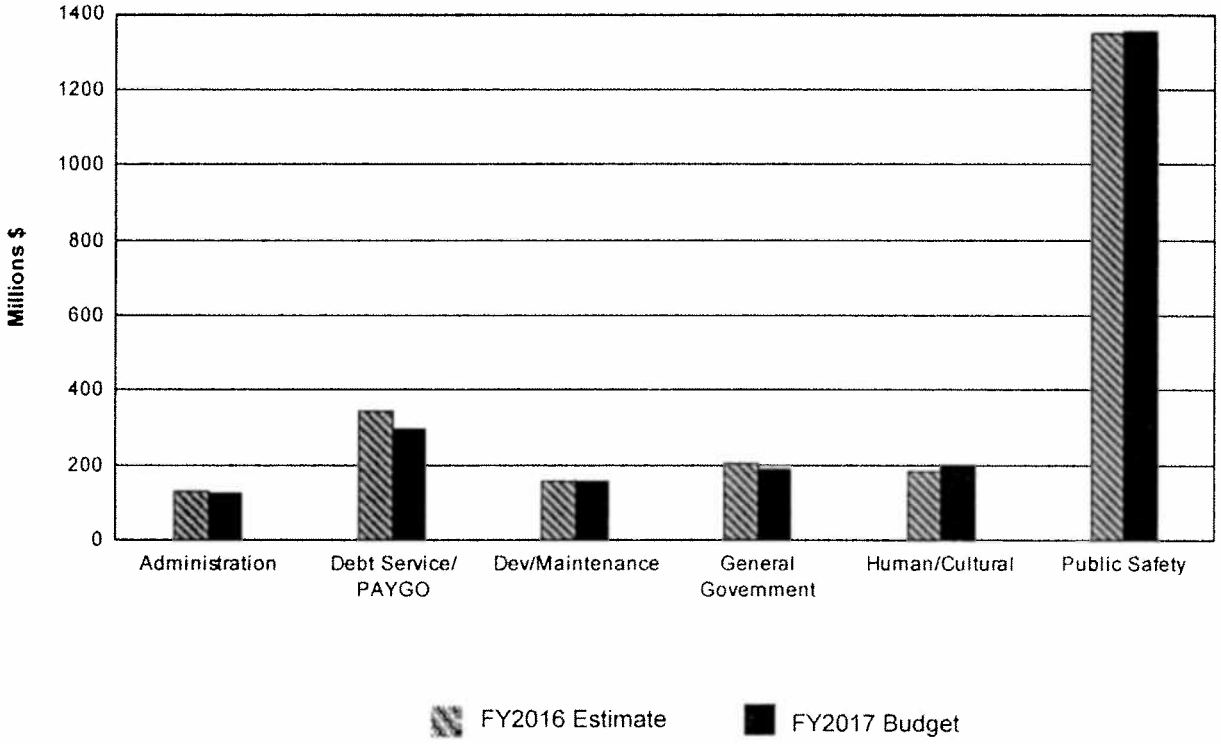
OVERVIEW

The largest single category of expenditures and other uses in FY2017 is Public Safety with (58.73%) of the total, followed by Debt Service/ PAYGO (12.70%), Human and Cultural Services (8.31%), General Government (8.05%), Development and Maintenance Services (6.86%), and Administrative Services (5.35%).

The General Fund is dominated by public safety costs. While the public safety category makes up a majority of the total costs, it is important to note that other expenditure categories such as debt, general government, maintenance, and administrative services provide support for public safety activities. Those public safety activities could not operate without that support. Further, it is widely recognized that many of the human and cultural services the city provides indirectly reduce crime by actively engaging at-risk groups. In many ways those services are public safety costs as well.

The following graph compares the FY2016 Estimate and FY2017 Budget by functional category. Please refer to the tables at the end of this section for comparisons among departments.

General Fund Expenditures/Other Uses
FY2016 Estimate vs. FY2017 Budget



The FY2017 budget for General Fund expenditures/other uses of $2,308 million is $65 million lower than the FY2016 estimate of $2,373 million.

The following section provides highlights of FY2017 General Fund expenditures/other uses by functional category and department.

Public Safety

The Public Safety functional category includes: Fire, Houston Emergency Center, Municipal Courts, and Police Departments.

- The Fire Department's FY2017 budget provides for: (1) five new cadet classes that include two non-certified and three certified classes (2) two new paramedic training classes and (3) the continuation of Fire Ground Survival Training.

- The Houston Emergency Center will continue its mission of providing the citizens of Houston with the most efficient, accurate, and professional service when processing life-threatening calls.

- Municipal Courts FY2017 budget has five divisions Administrative Services, Court Operations, Public Services, Information Technology, and Judicial Operations that work collectively to provide court services to the public. Municipal Court provides magistrate services, executes blood search warrants for law enforcement, and oversees various specialized dockets including: Juvenile, Truancy, Teen Court, Property Disposition, high-volume Impact, and Homeless Outreach.

- The Police Department's FY2017 Budget includes funding to meet the department's goals of enhancing safety throughout the city, continuing positive relations with the community, ensuring the department's accountability to the public, maintaining and increasing productivity, and increasing professionalism of department employees. It also includes funding for five new cadet classes.

Development and Maintenance Services

The Development and Maintenance Services functional category includes: the General Services, Planning and Development, Public Works and Engineering, and Solid Waste Management Departments.

- The General Services Department continues to provide best practices in managing facilities, design, construction, security and resource conservation in core civic buildings to optimize the life of City buildings. Funding for preventive and corrective maintenance costs for facilities managed by the department are being reported in Maintenance Renewal and Replacement Fund.

- The Department of Planning and Development provides leadership and support in making Houston a vibrant city in which to live, learn, work and play by: (1) administering regulatory and other tools affecting development and growth (2) developing plans to meet future citywide needs (3) administering tools that enhance and protect neighborhood character and stability (4) and providing reliable data, mapping and analysis to decision-makers.

- The Public Works and Engineering Department's FY2017 Budget includes the Resource Management, Traffic Operations and Planning Divisions. The Planning Division will continue to process Joint Referral Committee transaction activities assigned to the department in a timely matter. The Traffic Operations Division will continue to work to alleviate traffic congestion resulting from malfunctioning traffic signals, accidents and other mobility issues throughout the City during peak periods.

- The Solid Waste Management Department provides solid waste services to the citizens of Houston through the collection, disposal and recycling of discarded material in a manner that is safe, efficient, environmentally sound and cost-effective. In FY2017, the department will continue to refine its major work program performance measures.

Human and Cultural Services

The Human and Cultural Services functional category includes: the departments of Houston Health Department and Human Services, Housing and Community Development, Library, Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Neighborhoods.

- The Houston Health Department works with the community to promote and protect the health and social well-being of Houstonians. The FY2017 budget includes funding for the Texas Medicaid Transformation 1115 Waiver Intergovernmental Transfer.

- The Housing and Community Development Department continues to provide services principally to low and moderate income persons. The Department manages and administers both federal and non-federal funds that are earmarked for the development of viable urban communities. FY2017 General Fund budget includes funding to support personnel costs of individuals who have been assigned in part and/or whole to two citywide initiatives: (1) Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority (LARA) and (2) Service of the Emergency Aid Resource Center for the Homeless (SEARCH) Mobile Outreach Program.

- The Houston Public Library (HPL) remains committed to its role as a leader in the state and in the nation. The FY2017 budget allows HPL to focus on our five customer-driven organizational priorities which are Lifelong Learning, Literacy Learning, Life Skills Learning, Laboratory Learning, and Lifestyle Learning.

- The Houston Parks and Recreation Department's FY2017 budget will allow the department to continue to enhance urban life by providing safe, well-maintained parks and offering affordable programs for the community; as well as offering quality neighborhood parks for the citizens to enjoy. The Department partners with other departments such as Library, Health, Planning and Development as well as Public Works and Engineering to offer the best family experience the City has to offer.

- The Department of Neighborhoods' FY2017 budget includes funding to continue the department's focus of increasing awareness of the City's blight ordinances, signs code enforcement activities and other activities such as citizens assistance, gang prevention outreach, addressing the concerns of people with disabilities, international communities, volunteerism, and education programs in an effort to improve neighborhoods and help make Houston a better place to live.

Administrative Services

The Administrative Services functional category includes: the departments of Administration and Regulatory Affairs, City Controller's Office, City Council, City Secretary, Finance, Houston Information Technology Services, Human Resources, Legal, Mayor's Office, and Office of Business Opportunity.

- The Administration and Regulatory Affairs (ARA) Department applies efficient and logical solutions to administrative and regulatory challenges. Our goal is to provide increasing value to Houston via a customer-driven team that pursues continual improvement in operational efficiency and service excellence. We employ these improvement principles in the administration of our various divisions, from our public-facing functions such as examining vehicle-for-hire licensing requirements, administering the City's 3-1-1 information line, expanding animal wellness programs, providing on-street parking management, and business permitting; to our administrative and regulatory functions such as utility regulation, franchise administration, Citywide policy administration, and management of the City's risk and exposure through commercial insurance.

- The Controller's Office continues to protect the financial integrity of Houston's City government. In FY2017 the department will continue ensuring accurate and timely reporting on the City's current financial condition. Also, assessing the City's future financial condition, and certifying to City Council that funds are available for all appropriations.

- The Finance Department promotes fiscal responsibility, provides high-quality financial services and information to the Mayor's Office, City Council, City departments and citizens. Finance promotes engaging staff and providing them with resources needed to get the job done. The continued improvement of the financial process of execution internally and citywide remains a high goal of the department in FY2017.

- The Houston Information Technology Services (HITS) continues to engage to become a partner of choice; to create a resilient, scalable and agile IT infrastructure; to transform our IT workforce; to improve the overall management of IT services; protect city information and data; and enhance citizen engagement. The FY2017 budget includes funding for all citywide technology initiatives.

- The Legal Department continues to provide core legal services, bond issue representation, preparation of ordinances and resolutions, utility regulation, and revenue collection. The FY2017 budget will continue to focus on the citywide debt collection program, assisting civic groups and individuals in the protection of their neighborhoods, handling deed restriction violations, moving to demolish blighted multi-family complexes, closing unlawfully operated sexually oriented businesses, and evolve into a more technology oriented law office environment.

- The Office of Business Opportunity is charged with creating a competitive and diverse business environment in the City of Houston by promoting the growth and success of local small businesses. The FY2017 budget includes funding for the continued implementation of the Department's program priorities, initiatives, and major core services which includes the Minority, Women, Small, and Persons with Disabilities Business Enterprises (MWSBE and PDBE) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Programs, the Hire Houston First Program, as well as a suite of services for small businesses and entrepreneurs through the department's Office of Business Opportunity Solutions Center.

General Government

General Government includes citywide costs that are not attributable to any single department. The FY2017 budget includes limited purpose annexation payments which are offset by revenues, claims and judgments payments, legal services for the upcoming legislative session, health insurance for retired civilians and citywide membership fees.