Today’s agenda

1) Overview and progress
2) Priority recommendations
3) Other highlights from report
4) Proposed timeline
5) Additional comments and questions
Overview of Welcoming Houston

**Mission:** To recommend and implement policies and programs that foster the integration of immigrants and refugees into the civic, social, and economic fabric of Houston

**Goals:**
- Build on existing efforts to support immigrants and facilitate their integration into Houston
- Formalize existing best practices to expand them across Houston
- Provide the City and community organizations with cutting-edge ideas and best practices from across the country
- Empower stakeholders to successfully implement recommendations
- Bring all stakeholders to the table to begin an ongoing cross-sectoral conversation about immigrants and refugees
Welcoming Houston participants

100+ participants in total

- Welcoming Houston Task Force and six committees, which included:
  - Immigrant and native-born voices
  - Refugees
  - Individuals that work with refugees, asylum seekers, and victims of human trafficking
  - LGBTQI community
  - Faith leaders
  - Individuals from the private sector and the education sector
  - Persons of all abilities
  - Documented and undocumented individuals
  - Academics and other researchers
  - Civil servants

- Welcoming Houston Project Team
  - Experts across diverse fields who contributed research, best practices
  - Survey and focus group participants
Progress to date

✓ Gateways for Growth winner: **Technical assistance** from Welcoming America and New American Economy

✓ Local **economic impact report**

✓ **Launch** event – Aug. 3rd

✓ **Seven Task Force meetings** from Sep. 1 to Jan. 6

✓ **Committee meetings, survey / focus group** events from September to January

✓ **Mayor Turner’s press conference** (and request for recommendations from the Task Force) on Dec. 12

✓ **50 recommendations** + strategic plan finalized Jan. 18
Broader context

- Urgency and uncertainty created by:
  - New presidential administration
  - State legislative session

- Welcoming Houston as a way to show commitment and support to ensure Houston remains welcoming and a city of opportunity for all, even in the face of potential challenges

- Community members’ survey responses:
  - “We want the best for this City”
  - “Immigrants are hardworking, religious, responsible, honest, and compassionate”
  - “We’re not harming people, we’re here because we want to be safe”

- Firsthand perspectives
I. Local Government & Civic Engagement
   - More Government Engagement with Immigrant Houstonians
   - Including Immigrants in Decision Making

II. Well-being and Security
   - Legal Assistance and Public Safety
   - Health
   - Environment
   - Housing

III. Economic Stability and Growth
   - Entrepreneurship
   - Workforce Development

IV. Inclusive Community
   - Access to Services and Space
   - Welcoming Schools
   - Cultural Competency

V. Leveraging Data and Evidence
Priority recommendations (1/6)

**Government Engagement**

**Recommendation 1:** Appoint a Special Advisor to the Mayor on Immigration and expand the capacity of the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

*Key functions (with support from a Welcoming Houston (WH) implementation committee):*

1. Align WH with Complete Communities, Plan Houston, and other initiatives
2. Implement the Office’s WH goals and support other City entities’ WH work
3. Track implementation and impact of WH, convene stakeholders to help track process, and continue to adjust the evolving recommendations
4. Publicize WH through a two-way communication strategy for immigrant engagement
5. Advocate for immigrants to be included in City Boards/Commissions
6. Ensure that up-to-date information is communicated to relevant stakeholders
7. Continue celebrating immigrant Houstonians through events and other efforts
Priority recommendations (2/6)

**Public Safety**

**Recommendation 4:** Ensure local resources are not used to gather and disseminate sensitive information, including immigration status, for immigration enforcement purposes

- Protect the private information of residents, including but not limited to LGBTQ status, immigration or citizenship status, religion, ethnicity, and/or disabilities
- No use of City funds or other resources to help enforce federal civil immigration law
- Except to track compliance with racial profiling policy, HPD should not gather or maintain information about LGBTQI status, religion, ethnicity, national origin, medical condition, disability, or pregnancy of individuals that interact with HPD
- HPD should never ask about immigration status (unless human trafficking suspected)
- Ordinance requiring public health providers to provide Patients’ Bill of Rights in top ten languages spoken in Houston and ensure patients’ private info will not be shared
Priority recommendations (3/6)

Public Safety (cont’d)

Recommendation 5: Avoid police involvement in civil immigration enforcement

- No civil immigration enforcement assistance (incl. holding, transferring, arresting)
- Do not honor any civil immigration detainer, ICE admin warrant, or interview request
- Do not detain, transfer, or notify federal immigration authorities about the release of any individual from local custody without a valid judicial warrant
- Prevent ICE agents from entering law enforcement facilities and from holding individuals within/from law enforcement facilities without a valid criminal warrant
- Do not sub-contract with facilities that unlawfully hold individuals after jurisdiction ends
- Do not inquire about civil immigration status unless necessary for criminal investigation
- Publish investigating/disciplining procedures officers who ask about immigration status
- Expand racial profiling policy to incorporate personal characteristics
- Ensure officers are aware that the Mexican “Matricula Consular” is an official form of ID

Share policies with and provide training to HPD officers and other City agents

Create community-led committee to advise on implementation
Priority recommendations (4/6)

Public Safety (cont’d)

- **Recommendation 6**: Enhance the safety and due process rights of Houston’s immigrant residents in partnership with Harris County
- **Recommendation 7**: Reduce and address hate crimes, bias, and hate incidents, and provide resources to victims
- **Recommendation 11**: Create a City Immigrant Legal Fund to provide representation to indigent immigrants in removal proceedings
Priority recommendations (5/6)

Access to Services and Spaces

- **Recommendation 34**: Create Welcome Stations across the city to provide access to comprehensive information, resources, and services

Welcoming Schools

- **Recommendation 39**: Support the mitigation of targeted bullying, social isolation, and differential discipline in schools
- **Recommendation 42**: Advocate for the Texas DREAM Act to ensure affordable higher education for immigrant youth
Leveraging Data and Evidence

- **Recommendation 47**: Collect data to conduct equity analyses that should be made available to the public and taken into account for decision making purposes.

- **Recommendation 50**: Create, track, and publicly share key performance indicators that will allow the City and community to confirm progress on the recommendations outlined in this document.
Expansion of existing programs

- **Recommendation 28**: Expand the successful LiftOff! Houston small business pitch competition to reach non-English speakers.

- **Recommendation 25**: Augment the capacity of the Inspections & Public Service Division to inspect rental properties.

- **Recommendation 35**: Continue improving multilingual/multicultural capacities of public-facing employees to better understand and respond to the needs of immigrants.

- **Recommendation 46**: Generate opportunities for immigrants to tell their stories and enhance cultural understanding.
Broad-based recommendations

- **Recommendation 3:** Explore and potentially implement a participatory budgeting process.

- **Recommendation 10:** Evaluate whether a Municipal ID would have a net positive impact and, if so, implement an ID program that maximizes benefits while fully protecting private info and safety.

- **Recommendation 22:** Create and implement a “Community Environmental Tour” for all area public servants.

- **Recommendation 23:** Establish a “Clean Houston” grant for innovative projects that address environmental issues.

- **Recommendation 24:** Increase housing access and prevent housing discrimination by offering buying, renting, and Fair Housing Act info.
Other highlights from the report

Health

- **Recommendation 18:** Convene coalition of mental health experts to coordinate culturally competent mental health services

Entrepreneurship

- **Recommendation 29:** Work with local universities to attract entrepreneurs through Global Entrepreneur-in-Residence programs

Workforce Development

- **Recommendation 30:** Facilitate immigrants’ career transitions by streamlining credential recognition and re-certification processes

- **Recommendation 31:** Create a collaborative marketing strategy to promote Houston as a destination for foreign workers

Cultural Competency

- **Recommendation 43:** Create a training curriculum for the Houston community concerning the immigrant experience in Houston
Proposed timeline

January
- Continued communication with and assistance to City staff regarding implementation
- Task Force members meeting next week

February
- Welcoming Houston press conference and reception
- Publish Welcoming Houston document
- Website launch
- Begin implementation of recommendations

Ongoing 2017
- Continue implementation efforts while updating recommendations
- Quarterly check-ins on progress
Welcoming Houston Task Force

- Ali Al Sudani, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston
- Amanda Cloud, The Simmons Foundation
- Ana Andrea Molina, Organización Latina de Trans in Texas
- Angela Blanchard, Neighborhood Centers
- Anne Whitlock, Connect Community
- Brenda Kirk, National Immigration Forum
- Charles Foster, Foster LLP
- Chi-Mei Lin, Chinese Community Center
- Claudia Ortega-Hogue, NALEO Educational Fund
- Cynthia Colbert, Catholic Charities
- David Johnston, Houston Independent School District
- Danielle Bartz, Office of Mayor Sylvester Turner
- Diane McGehee, Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
- Eva Thibaudeau-Graczyk, Houston Coalition for the Homeless
- Frances Valdez, United We Dream
- Francisco Arguelles, Living Hope Wheelchair Association
- Glenda Joe, Houston International Network
- Gordon Quan, Quan Law Group
- Grace Olivares, Univision
- Hany Khalil, Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation
- Jannette Diep, Boat People S.O.S.
- Jodi Berger Cardoso, UH Graduate College of Social Work
- John Hernandez, Amegy Bank
- Lauren West, PAIR Houston
- Long Chu, Houston Endowment
- Mary Moreno, Texas Organizing Project
- Meghna Goswami, Houston Endowment
- Minal Patel Davis, Special Adv. to Mayor on Human Trafficking
- Oni Blair, Mayor’s Office of Trade and International Affairs
- Oscar Hernandez, United We Dream
- Rafael Pantoja, Houston Police Department
- Resha Thomas, SEIU Texas
- Sarah Howell LMSW, Las Americas Newcomer School, HISD
- Sergio Garza, Apache Corporation
- Sineria Rosa, Houston Hispanic Forum
- Stan Marek, Marek Brothers
- Wafa Abdin, Catholic Charities
- Willy Gonzalez, UNITE HERE, Local 23
- Zahra Jamal, Boniuk Institute, Rice University
Project Team

- Alex Triantaphyllis, Neighborhood Centers
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- Andrea Guttin, Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative

- Benito Juarez, Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

- Helen Chou, Houston Public Library

- Kate Vickery, Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative

- Luba Guzei, Welcoming Houston Project Team (project co-lead)

- Marisol Valero, Neighborhood Centers

- Samantha Chapa, Neighborhood Centers

- Terence O’Neill, Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities