



## MAKING BETTER STREETS, BETTER DRAINAGE A REALITY

Dale A. Rudick, P.E.  
 Deputy Director  
 Public Works and Engineering Department  
 City of Houston, Houston, Texas

### 1. Introduction

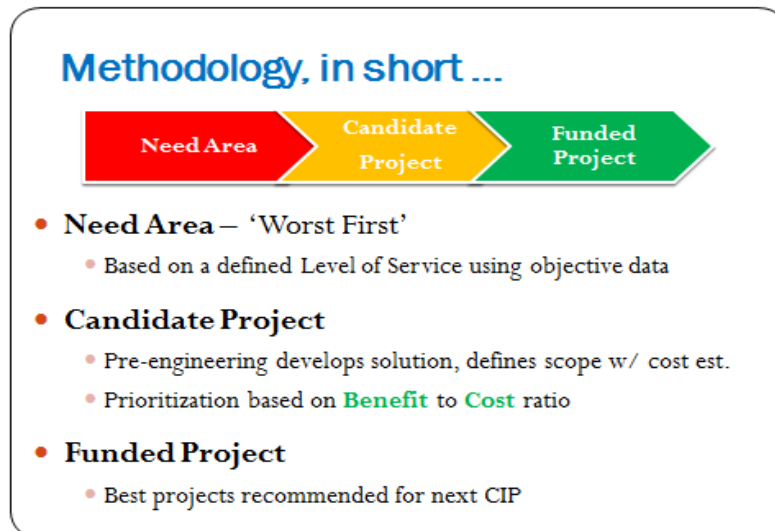
ReBuild Houston is a direct result of City of Houston voters approving Proposition One in November 2010. The proposition directed the City's Charter to "be amended to provide for the enhancement, improvement and ongoing renewal of Houston's drainage and streets by creating a Dedicated Pay-As-You-Go Fund for Drainage and Streets".

### 2. Objective

Better Streets. Better Drainage. Better Future.

### 3. 'Worst First' Methodology

ReBuild Houston is technically only a funding mechanism. However, a *CIP Process Manual* has been authored by the Public Works & Engineering Department to communicate a transparent methodology in the development and prioritization of a "5+5 Year" Plan. Years 1 through 5 is the Programmed "5-Year" Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) but is now complemented with a strong Planning component. Planning practices a 'worst first' approach utilizing objective, citywide data based on uniform city standards.

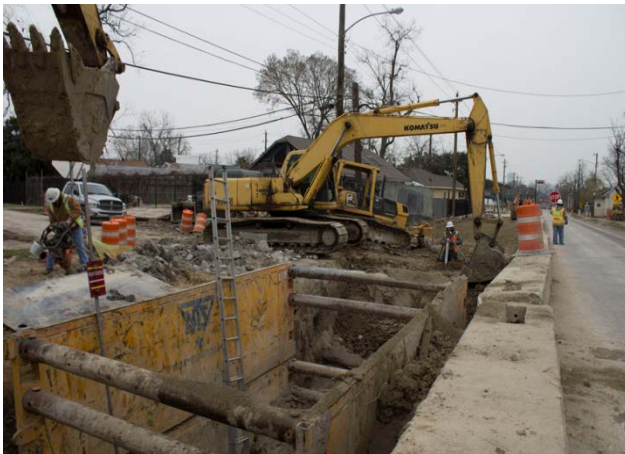


The Need Areas of each of three categories (Storm Drainage, Thoroughfares/Collectors, and Local Streets) are comparatively scored throughout the City. The highest of these Need Areas are identified and placed in the “+5 Year” Plan (Years 6 through 10) to be Pre-Engineered. Pre-Engineering develops a solution to the problem, defines a Candidate Project scope and derives an estimated cost. Pre-Engineering is performed by an engineering consultant who is encouraged to be creative in finding holistic alternatives in solving the problem.

Once a Candidate Project is defined, it competes with other Candidate Projects within its category and is prioritized based on a benefit to cost ratio. The highest ranking Candidate Projects are then recommended for the next CIP as funding allows.

**4. ReBuilding Our City**

ReBuild Houston is a voter initiated and approved Pay-As-You-Go, long-term initiative to address street and drainage infrastructure needs in a systematic, prioritized and objective manner. ReBuild Houston is a subset of the City’s legacy 5-Year CIP specific to streets and drainage. At the same time, it is an extension of the CIP providing a 10-year planning process for our street and drainage systems. This initiative allows the City to pro-actively mitigate the degradation of our infrastructure and focus on the areas of highest need or ‘worst first’.



**N. Main Reconstruction Project**



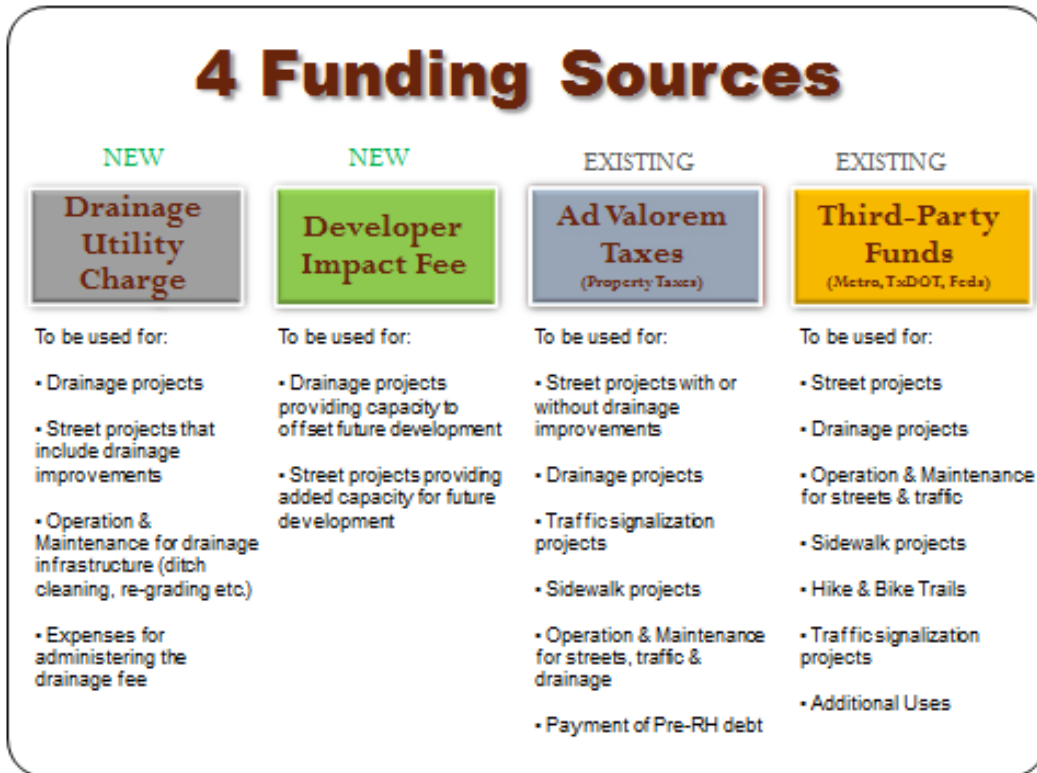
**Beechnut Reconstruction Project**

ReBuild Houston is not a ‘quick fix.’ The reality of Houston’s drainage and street infrastructure is that it has been inadequately funded for more than 30 years. ReBuild Houston addresses this problem by providing a reliable, long-term funding stream that will free the City from the restraints of mounting debt. Pre-ReBuild Houston debt totals approximately \$1.7 billion and costs more than \$150 million per year in debt service. Debt is a primary source of infrastructure funding in the United States but the City of Houston is setting a new trend. Houston is standing apart from others as we pay off the

old bonds over time and the number of street and drainage projects paid for in cash will increase dramatically.

**5. Funding**

The ReBuild Houston Pay-As-You-Go solution provides 4 sources of funding that will, in time, alleviate all street and drainage infrastructure debt. By the year 2020, the city will begin to see a dramatic drop in debt and an increase in funding due to pay-as-you-go funding.



**6. References**

*CIP Process Manual* (<http://bit.ly/1ptFS6a>)

[www.rebuildhouston.org](http://www.rebuildhouston.org)

[www.facebook.com/rebuildhouston](http://www.facebook.com/rebuildhouston)

[www.twitter.com/rebuild\\_houston](http://www.twitter.com/rebuild_houston)

[www.linkedin.com/company/rebuild-houston](http://www.linkedin.com/company/rebuild-houston)