

2. Draft Critical Questions by Theme (Verbatim)

Listed below are the critical questions raised by the Steering Committee during its meeting on January 23, 2003. The questions are verbatim. Questions that need clarification are indicated by “(NOT CLEAR)”. The second draft of Critical Questions includes edits made by ACP staff to combine similar questions and clarify questions, when possible.

Government and Politics

Governance

How can values/opinions get into public policy?

What is the appropriate form of government for 8 million people?

How do we incorporate sustainability to our public policy, how do we account for externality? (NOT CLEAR)

What policies need to be in place to foster leadership/stewardship?

Transparency and Accountability

How to obtain accountability from public officials?

How do we get public officials to not “sell out” from changing opinions because of campaign contributions?

How do we lock candidates into their campaign promises?

Financial Management

How do we prevent this city from going into bankruptcy?

How do we prevent city money from going to county?

How to make an investment where get something out of investment for city. (NOT CLEAR)

Local to Regional and Beyond

Who is Houston? What is region without Houston?

How do we stop thinking in terms of us/them? How do we stop thinking in terms of city/state/region?

How does Houston grow as a region and emphasize cooperation not competition?

How do we become more local? (Have access to local features)? (NOT CLEAR)

Clean Air

How do we get Houston to comply with Clean Air Act?

Culture

Is it (Houston) the cultural center of region?

How do we attract the creative class?

Healthy Communities

How ensure healthy community? Environment, health, prosperity.

Education

How do we improve quality of inner-city school districts?

The Economy

Oil Industry

Is petro chemical industry holding us back?

Is oil-based economy a long-range economic base for Houston?

Is petro-chemical complex good for Houston – health/economic perspective? If not, how can we transition?

Can you have competitive petro-chemical industry and clean environment?

The Technology Sector

What does city have to attract high-tech professions?

International Trade

Import/export? With largest port why can't we bring distributors to Houston? (Take away from CA – we are more centrally located.)

How do we take advantage of diverse population to being in international trade?

Can we be an international trade city without expanding our ports?

Economic Growth

In interest of economics are we willing to police ourselves? Are we willing to force political will to be regulated in certain areas for positive economic change? (Look at MA & CA). (NOT CLEAR)

Is current economic environment holding us back?

How do we balance impact of macro-econ swings on economy? (NOT CLEAR)

Balancing Economic Interests and Opportunities

How do you get private sector to recognize public desires?

How do we make macro-econ trickle down to neighborhood level? True trickle down effect?

How do we continue economic growth/expansion without destroying our history and cultural fabric of our community?

How do we shift paradigm to where there is a balance between community minded economic model and corporate/global model?

Social Equity

Does low cost of living (marketed as major Houston advantage) offer a decent standard of living for all? Does low cost lower our standards of living?

Development***Managing Growth***

How do we stop expansion around city – stop the flow of people going outside city? (NOT CLEAR)

How do we look at both dominant model and homegrown model? How do we balance/implement the two? (NOT CLEAR)

Will Houston have zoning?

Character

How do we maintain the current character or image with lofty goals? (NOT CLEAR)

How do we maintain characteristics unique to Houston?

How do we create a city so attractive people don't want to live elsewhere?

Transportation

Can we creatively and innovatively conquer our mobility issues for sustainability and smart growth?

Can we reduce our freeway/car dependence and shift to transit?

How do we make our waterway system into our transportation system?

Can we get federal funding for transit instead of highways?

How will we invest in transportation and will we still have money left to invest in other programs (schools, people, etc.)?

Overriding Values***Values***

What are "our desires" for Houston?

Does the broader community share our values?

How do we become a more unified society?

How?

Is what we do consistent with our values?

How do we control our own destiny?

How do we change viewpoints to be homegrown? (NOT CLEAR)

Costs and Commitment

Are we committed?

Do we have discipline?

Are we willing to pay for our values and goals?

Are those of us who can, willing to pay for those who can't?

Why?

What's our reward for doing this? Need an answer. (NOT CLEAR)

Miscellaneous or Unclear

Need a dialogue about how to make life flow smoothly. Fast buck city.

Challenge – Mutual respect.

How do we stop being naive of intentions of people outside of the city?

How expand can industries lux and?? energy? Need new industries.