

WHY HOUSTON NEEDS A TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

COUNCIL MEMBER LETITIA PLUMMER





WHY DOES TRANSPORTATION MATTER?

01

COMPETITIVENESS

Houston is competing with other cities and its own suburbs for jobs.

02

CHOICE

People want choices on how to get to work, school, and everything else they do.

03

GROWTH

Houston is rapidly growing and redeveloping.

04

RESILIENCE

Transportation infrastructure is key to resilience against natural disaster.

05

EQUITY

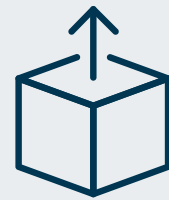
Houston neighborhoods are being impacted by massive transportation projects.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION?



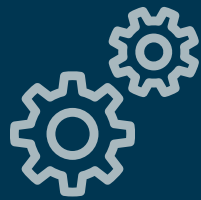
CONGESTION

Congestion is increasing.



INEQUITY

Some parts of Houston are being left behind because of a lack of access to economic opportunity.



HAZARDOUS

Houston is one of the most dangerous places to drive, walk, or bike.



INACCESSIBLE

Much of Houston is not accessible to people with disabilities.



LIMITING

Infrastructure is aging and the city's resources are limited



PUBLIC ISSUE

The public sees transportation as one of the city's biggest issues.

WHAT IS THE REASON?



DIVIDED

Transportation is split across agencies



FRACTURED

Transportation is split within the city



TOO BIG

Pubic works is too big

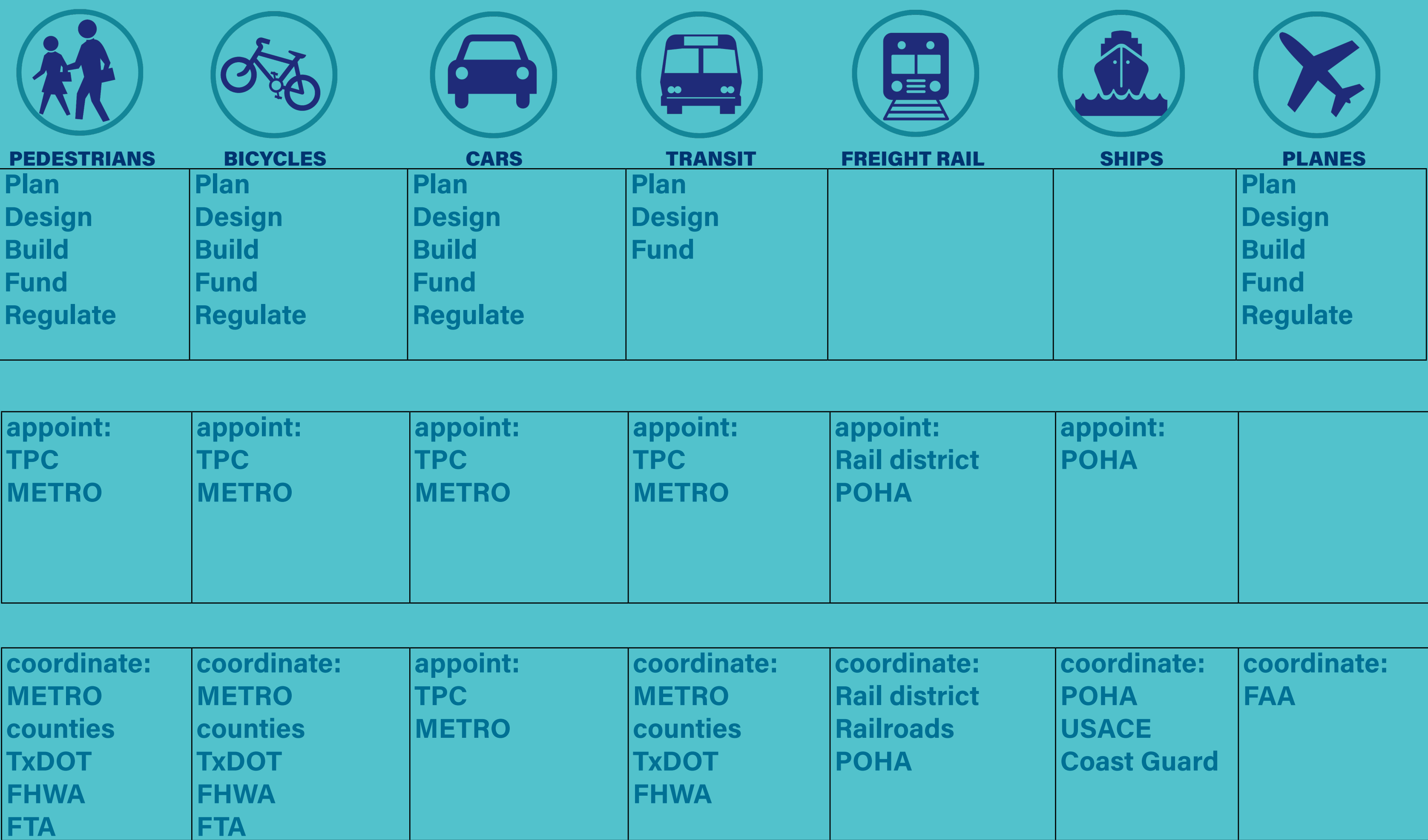


LACKS SHARED VISION

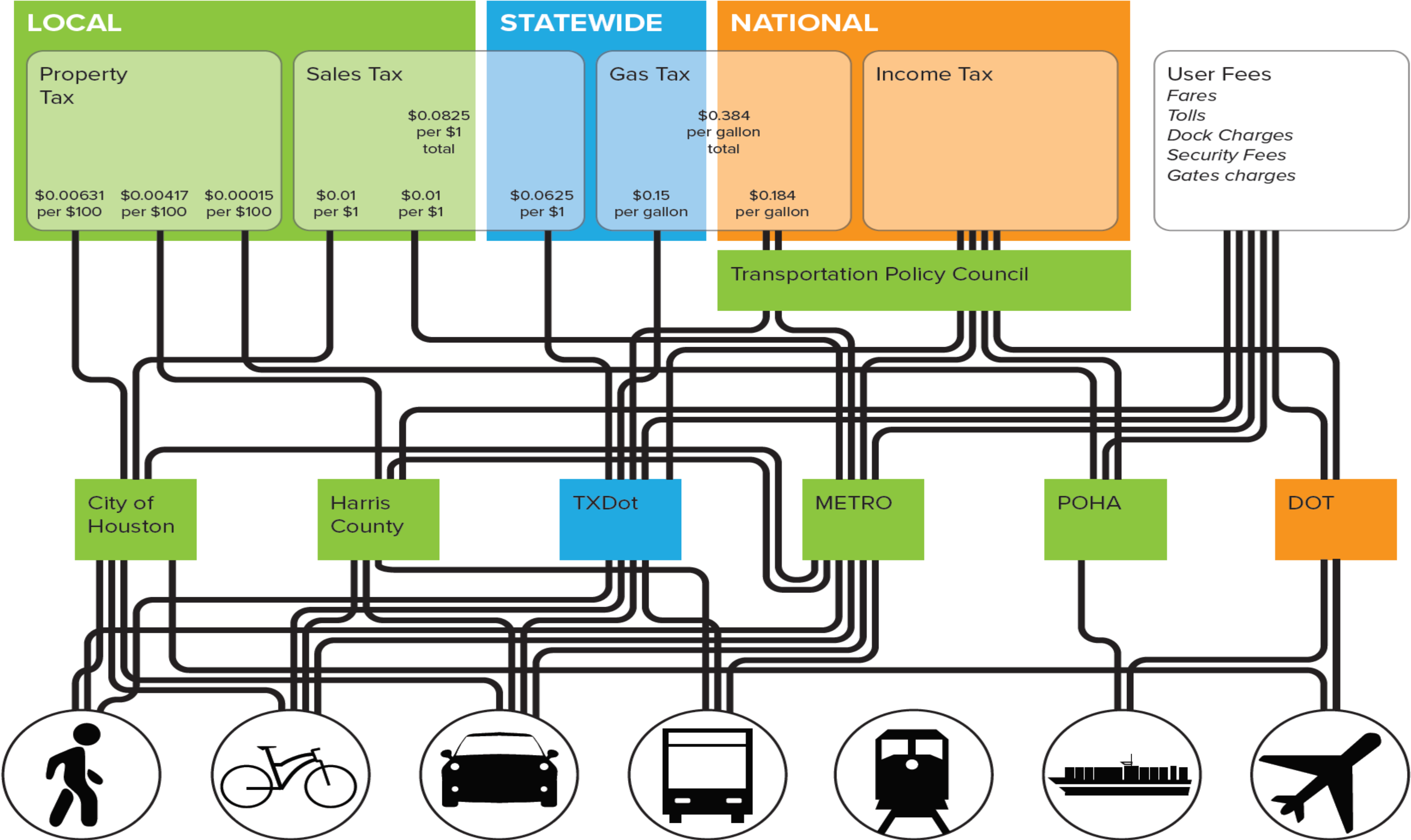
There is no shared vision.



THE CITY PLAYS A HUGE ROLE IN THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.



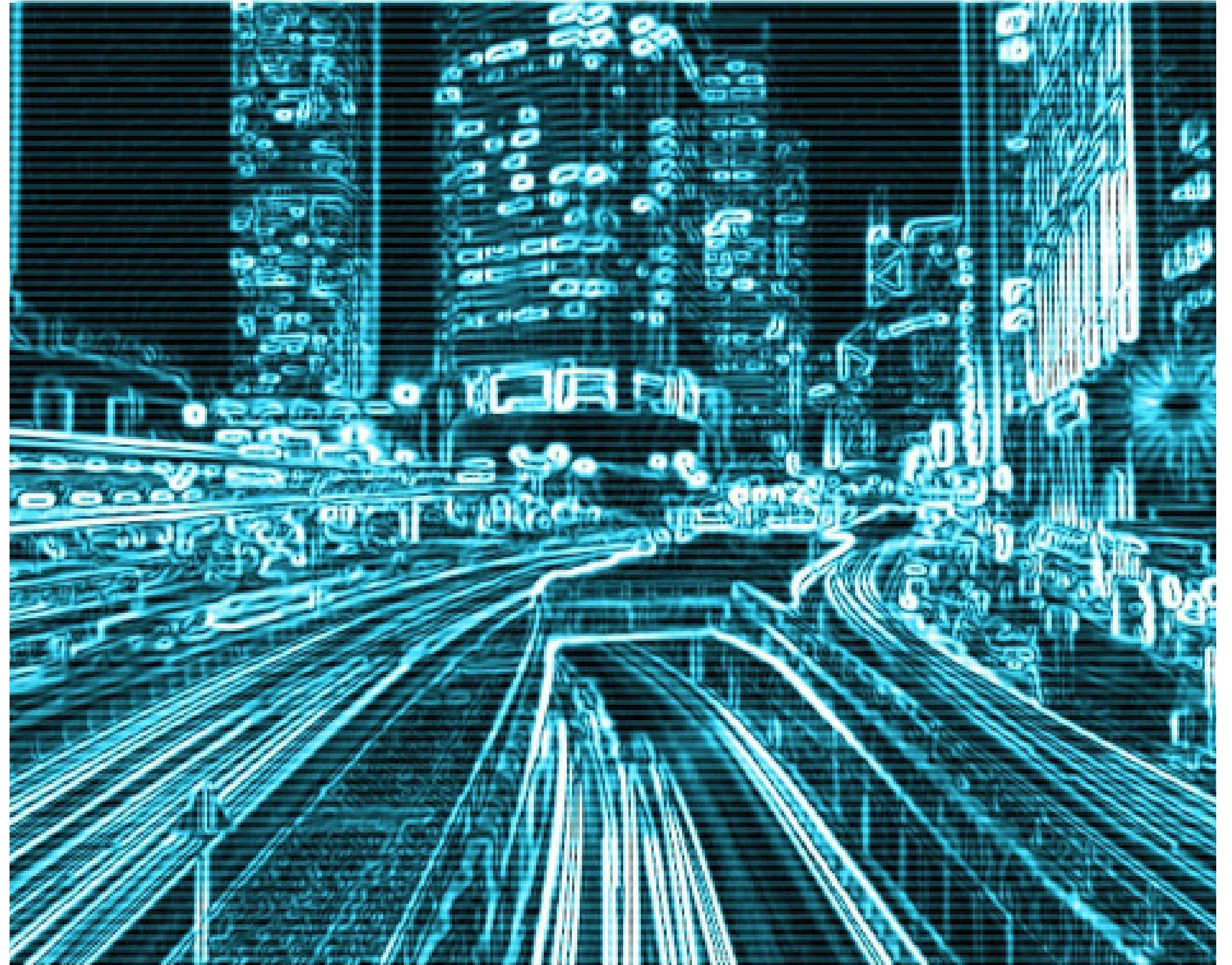
TRANSPORTATION FUNDING AND JURISDICTION IS COMPLEX



AND CITY STREETS PLAY A HUGE ROLE IN SHAPING THE CITY.

58% platted property

42% road and highway right-of-way



A STREET HAS TO DO MANY THINGS...

UTILITIES

TRANSIT

GATHERING SPACE

TREE CANOPY

BIKES

THROUGH TRAFFIC

PEDESTRIANS

OPEN SPACE

LOCAL ACCESS



... AND WORK FOR



CAN I SEE WHO ELSE IS AROUND?
WILL MY FEET GET WET?
HOW MUCH TIME DO I HAVE TO CROSS?
WILL I GET SOME SHADE?
HOW FAST IS THAT CAR COMING AROUND THE CORNER?
IS THERE A SPEEDING CAR RIGHT NEXT TO ME
WILL THIS BE SLIPPERY?



HOW LONG WILL THIS PAVEMENT LAST?
HOW DO I CLEAN THIS STORM SEWER?
CAN I ACCESS THAT SIGNAL CABINET WITHOUT CLOSING A TRAFFIC LANE?



WHAT'S THE NEXT CROSS STREET?
WHERE DO I PARK?
IS SOMEONE PULLING OUT OF THAT DRIVEWAY?
HOW FAST SHOULD I DRIVE?
IS THAT A PEDESTRIAN?



WHERE DO I GET MY DELIVERIES?
CAN I HAVE A SIDEWALK CAFE?
CAN MY CUSTOMERS SEE MY SIGN?



BUT THE CITY'S TRANSPORTATION FUNCTIONS ARE SPLIT ACROSS MANY DEPARTMENTS

MAYOR

CITY COUNCIL

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- Complete Streets Plan
- Major Thoroughfare Plan
- Bike Plan
- Transit Plan coordination w/ METRO
- Complete Communities
- Plat approval
- Planning of reconstructed and new streets
- Review of building permits for transportation issues
- Street abandonment requests
- Travel Demand Model
- Traffic counts
- Transportation GIS data

PUBLIC WORKS

- Infrastructure Design Manual (portions dealing with transportation)
- Design of reconstructed and new streets
- Design of bicycle/pedestrian projects
- Design approval for TIRZ/Management District projects
- Traffic signal operations (timing, synchronization)
- Traffic signs
- Traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle safety
- ADA compliance
- Permits for street closures (construction, special events)
- Traffic Impact Analysis and mobility permits for new buildings/developments
- Response to 311 requests
- Detailed design of projects
- Construction of projects
- Maintenance
- Planning and design of utilities
- Maintenance

POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Safety and Enforcement

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

- Parking
- Taxi/TNC

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS

- (Airports not shown)

THIS MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO BUILD GOOD PROJECTS.

KEY DECISIONS ABOUT HOW A STREET WORKS GET MADE HERE:

WHO IS THE STREET FOR?

WHAT ARE THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS?

WHAT IS THE BALANCE OF THROUGH TRAFFIC AND LOCAL ACCESS?

HOW MUCH PARKING IS NEEDED?

WHAT PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS ARE IMPORTANT?

HOW DOES THIS FIT IN THE BIKE NETWORK?

WHAT SHOULD THE STREET LOOK LIKE?

PLANNING

Network
Planning

PUBLIC WORKS

(operations)

Conceptual
Design

Traffic
Engineering

PUBLIC WORKS

(Capital
Projects)

Civil
Engineering

Construction

PUBLIC WORKS

(operations)

Operations

GAP

GAP

THE VISION: A NEW TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Plans, designs, and operates



Serves all Houstonians and considers equity in everything it does



Focuses on doing the most with every city dollar



Uses every major transportation project as an opportunity to solve multiple problems



Coordinates all modes -- cars, pedestrians, bikes, transit, freight



Creates streets that support complete communities



Works with all regional transportation agencies and stakeholders



OTHER CITIES HAVE DONE THIS, AND THE PFM REPORT RECOMMENDED IT



A Ten Year Plan for the City of Houston: A Plan for Fiscal Sustainability and Economic Growth

pfm November 2017

One of the biggest differences between Houston's approach to Public Works and the approach in other cities is that Houston has concentrated a series of related functions into a single "super" agency. In Austin, PWE's functions cut across four departments - Public Works, Transportation, Watershed Protection and Development Services. In New York, the functions housed in Houston PWE are spread across five departments: Buildings, Design and Construction, Environmental Protection, Housing Preservation and Development and Transportation. **And, among big cities, Houston is the only one that does not have a separate transportation department of some kind.**

City	Department
Austin	Department of Transportation
Chicago	Department of Transportation
Dallas	Mobility and Street Services
Los Angeles	Department of Transportation
New York	Department of Transportation
Philadelphia	Streets Department
San Antonio	Transportation and Capital Improvements

The City should consider a reorganization of PWE that creates multiple departments rather than concentrating functions into a single department. This reorganization would not just divide up PWE, but would also incorporate functions and operations from other City departments.

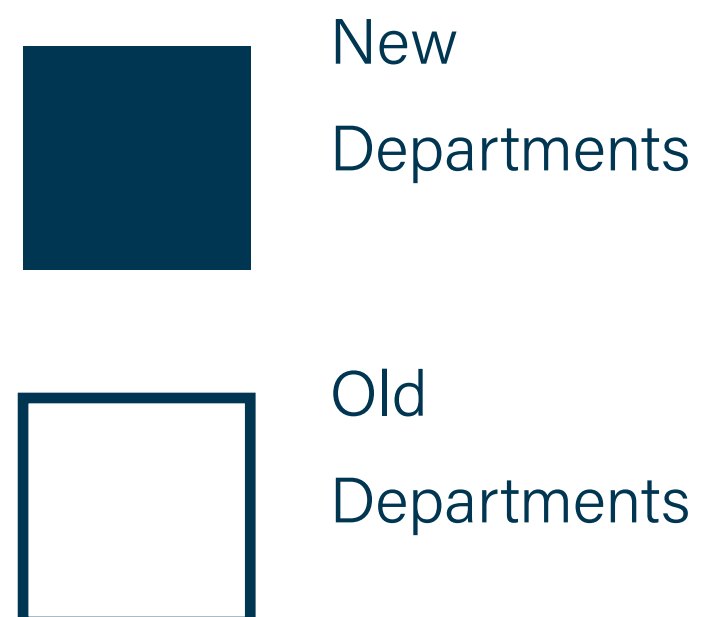
A Department of Design and Construction (DDC) would take on the responsibility of design and construction for all departments, including General Services. While the Chief Procurement Officer would be responsible for all goods and services procurement, DDC – modeled after a similar department in New York – would be responsible for all construction-related procurement and project management. While there are differences between so-called vertical and horizontal construction, there are also real similarities – in the nature of the procurement process, the potential for the use of pre-qualification of contractors and construction project management. Even if there were no resulting reduction in headcount, savings could be achieved through improvements in project management and procurement.

A Department of Water Services would focus on the City's flooding problems, storm water and management of the Water utilities. It would be modeled after the Department of Water Services in Metro Nashville which has a mission "to provide drinking water, wastewater treatment and storm water management services to our community so we can enjoy a vital, safe and dependable water supply and protected environment." Again, consolidation of "all things water" under a single operating department would complement the Mayor's strategic focus on addressing flooding through the Chief Resiliency Officer.

A Department of Transportation would consolidate transportation planning, traffic operations, streets and bridges into a single department and would be responsible for liaison with METRO. It would also be charged with transportation-related responsibilities, such as implementation of the City bike plan.

Finally, the City should consider creating a single Department of Code Enforcement that would consolidate the Building Code Enforcement activities currently within the PWE Planning and Development Services division and the Department of Neighborhoods (DON). This would allow for consolidated inspection activity. Both Los Angeles and Dallas have centralized code enforcement activity to reduce administrative cost, increase efficiencies and align strategies. The Department of Code Enforcement would also be positioned to impose new fees related to blight and vacant properties and increase compliance with anti-blight regulations.

A TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT WOULD COMBINE ALL THESE FUNCTIONS IN ONE PLACE, WITHOUT THE DISTRACTION OF MANAGING WATER SYSTEMS AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.



DEPT. OF WATER SERVICES
 Planning and design of utilities
 Maintenance

DEPT. OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
 Detailed design of projects
 Construction of projects
 Maintenance

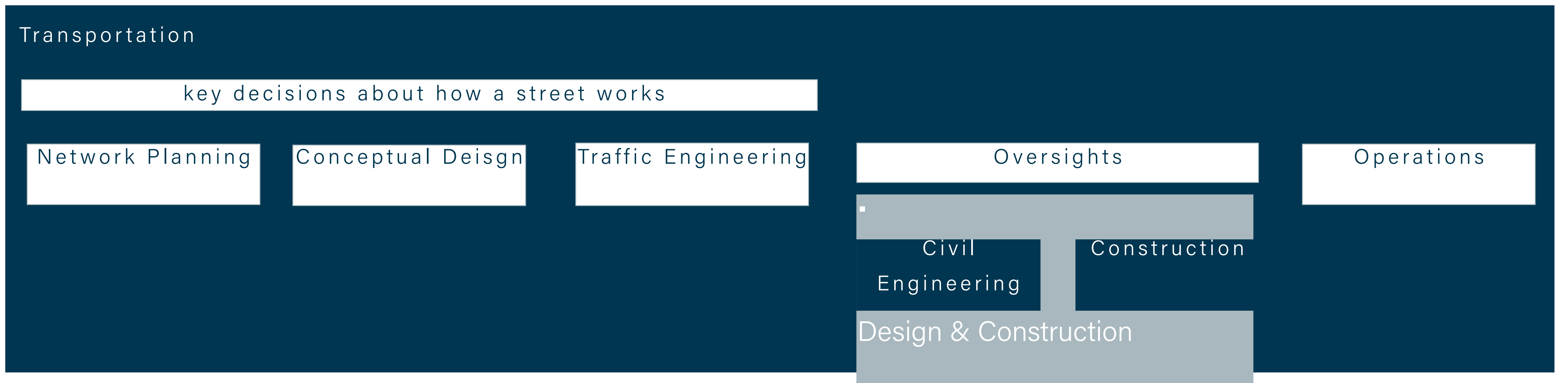
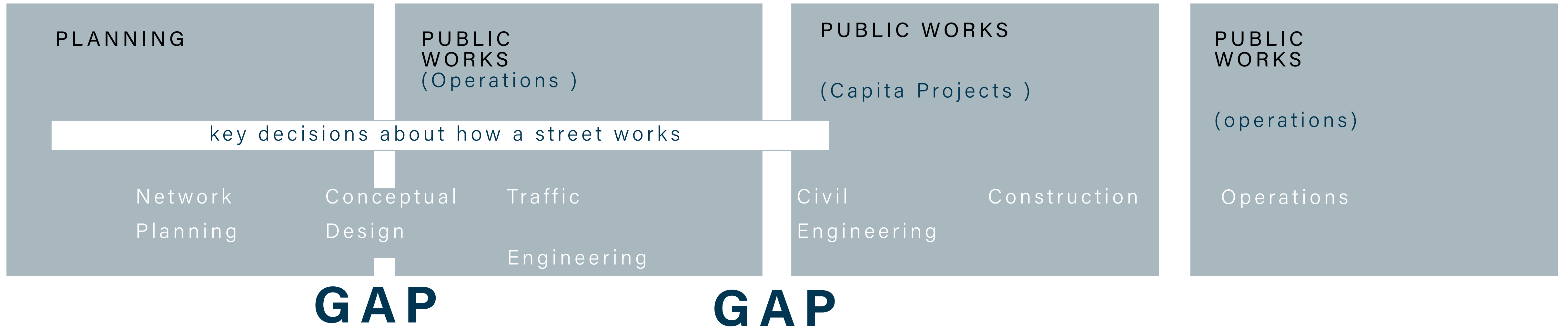
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
 Complete Communities Plat approval

POLICE DEPARTMENT
 Safety and Enforcement

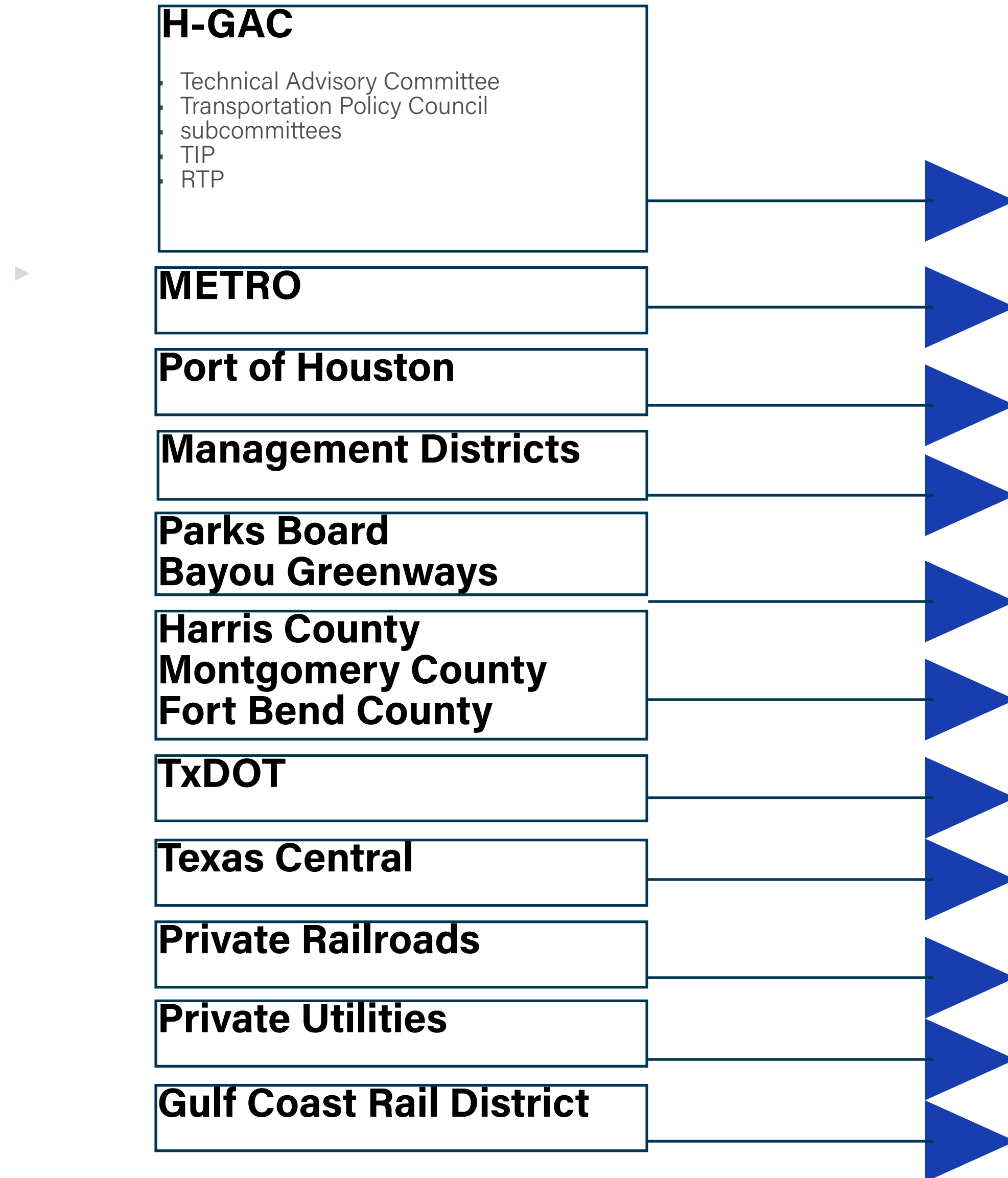
DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
 Parking
 Taxi/TNC

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 Grant applications for transportation funding
 CIP prioritization
 Complete Streets Plan
 Major Thoroughfare Plan
 Bike Plan
 Transit Plan
 Vision Zero
 Infrastructure Design Manual (portions dealing with transportation)
 Design of reconstructed and new streets
 Design of bicycle/pedestrian projects
 Design approval for TIRZ/Management District projects
 Travel Demand Model
 Traffic counts
 Transportation GIS data
 Traffic signal operations (timing, synchronization)
 Traffic signs
 Traffic, pedestrian, and bicycle safety
 ADA compliance
 Permits for street closures (construction, special events)
 Traffic Impact Analysis and mobility permits for new buildings/developments
 Coordinate on review of building permits for transportation issues
 Street abandonment requests
 Coordinate with Department of Permitting on new permits impacting transportation
 Response to 311 requests

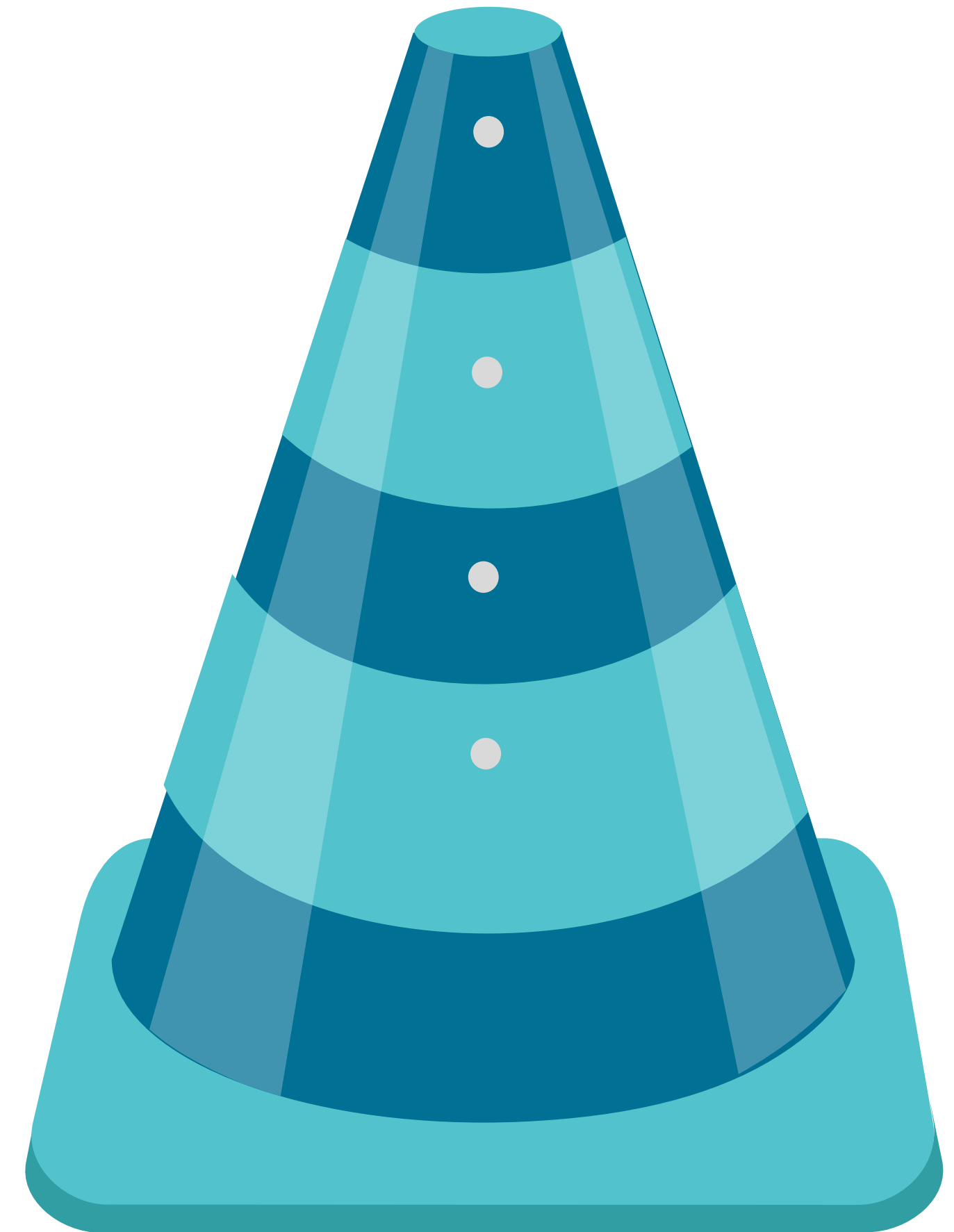
THIS WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS WELL.



A TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT WOULD CREATE A SINGLE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE CITY AND ITS TRANSPORTATION PARTNERS.



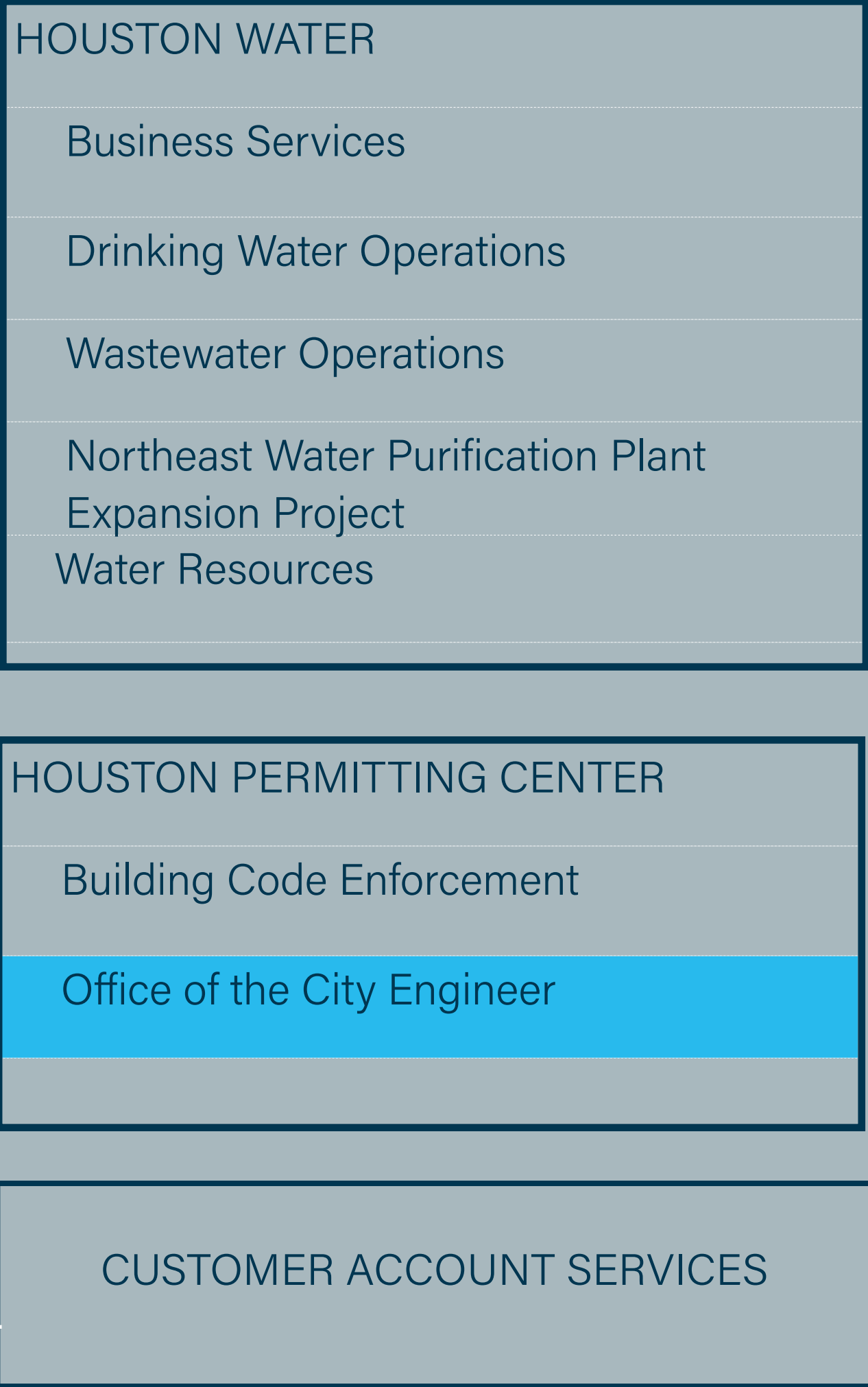
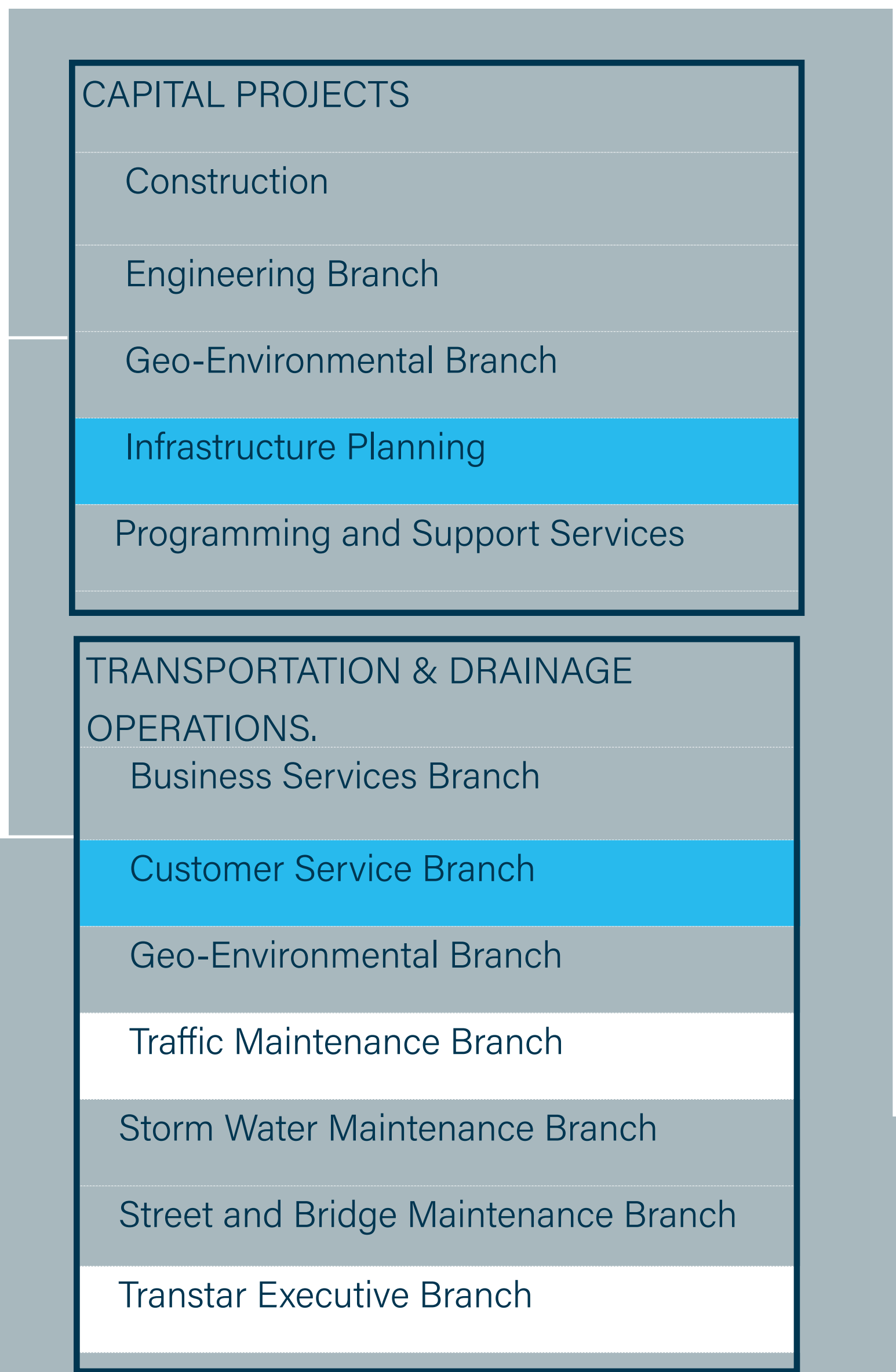
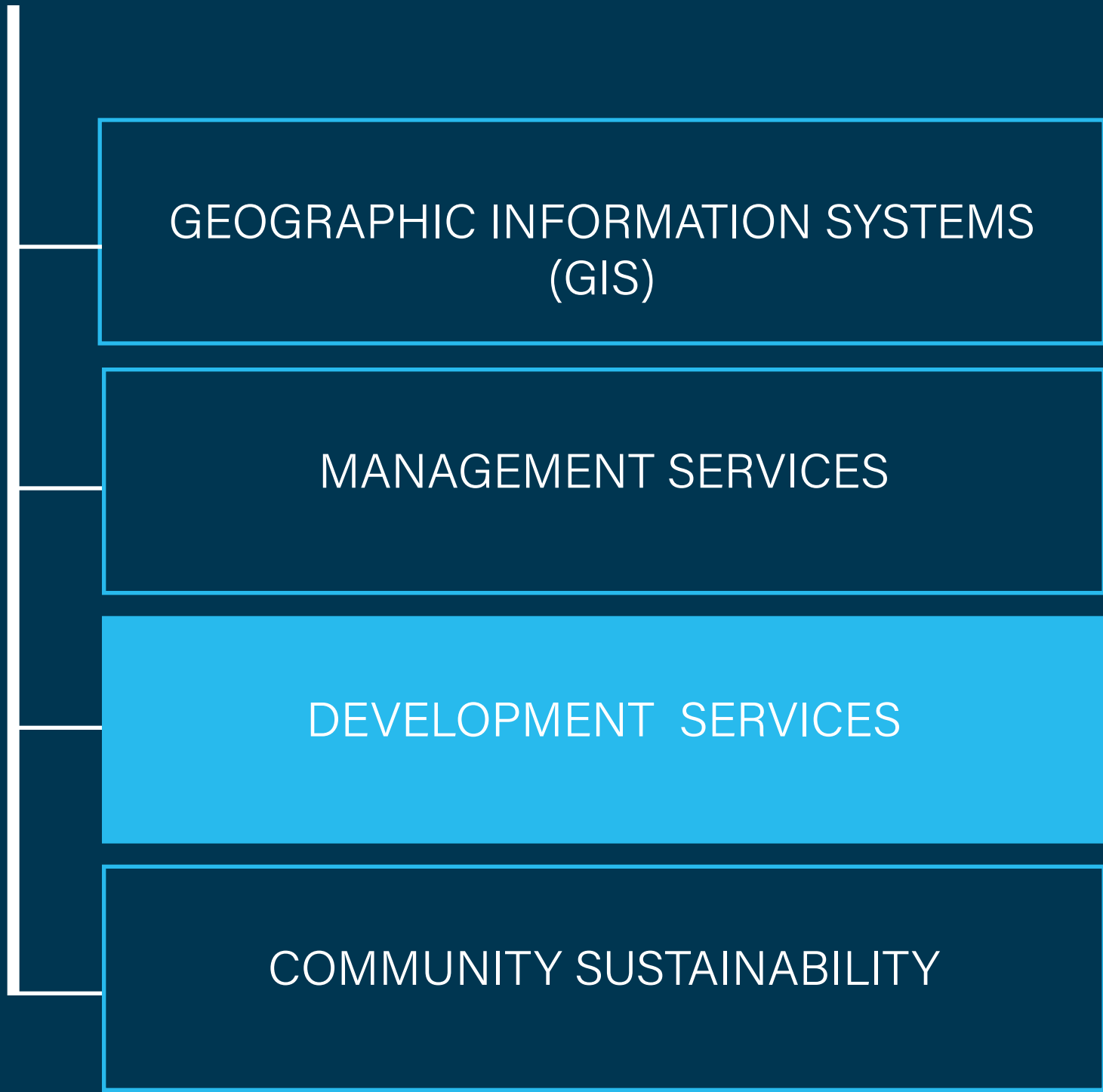
Department of Transportation



THIS WOULD NOT REQUIRE NEW STAFF; IT WOULD SIMPLY CONSOLIDATE EXISTING DEPARTMENTS IN ONE PLACE.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC WORKS



Partially transferred to new Department of Transportation

Transferred to new Department of Transportation

HOW DO WE PAY FOR THIS?



USE EXISTING POSITIONS INSTEAD OF CREATING NEW ONES



GET GRANTS (CREATE THE CAPABILITY TO USE THEM!)



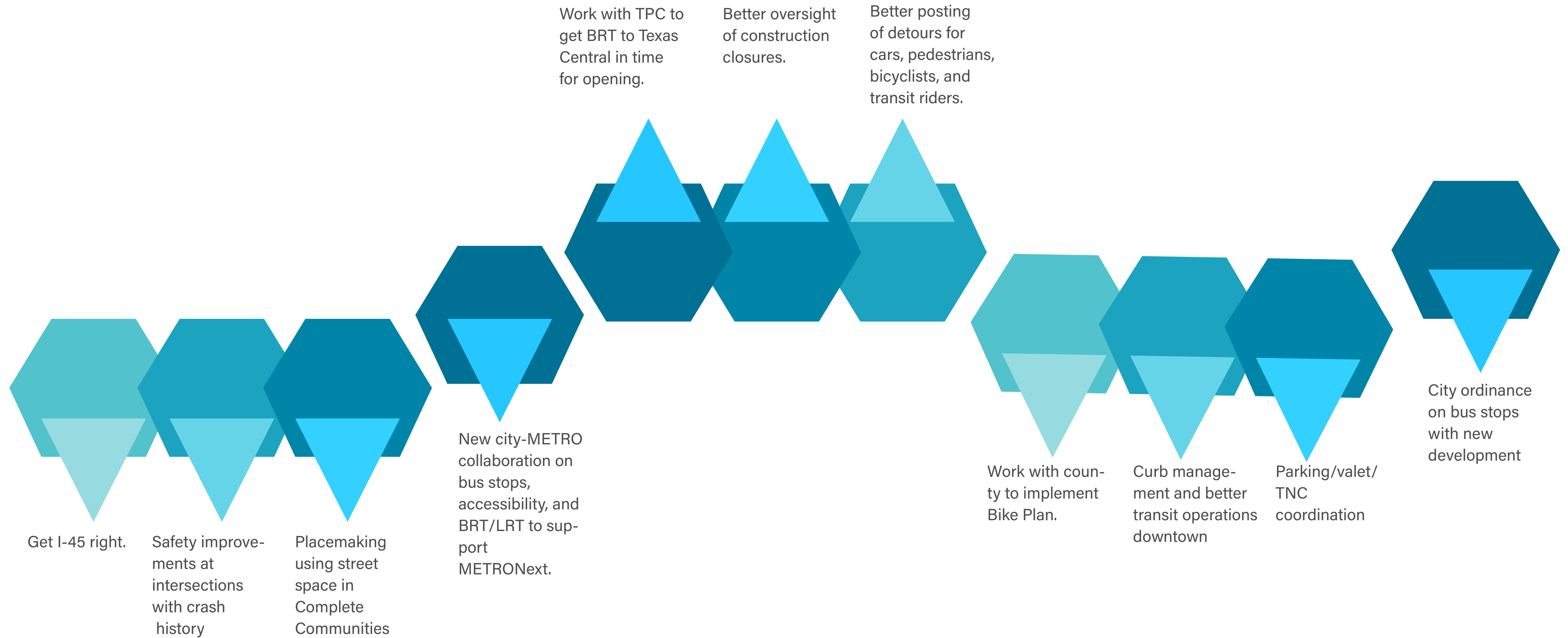
PARTNER W/ PHILANTHROPY



PIGGYBACK ON PROJECTS METRO/TXDOT/POHA ARE DOING ALREADY



EARLY WINS



THANK YOU

