

# THE QUARTERLY



## FIFTH WARD CANCER CLUSTER

Learn about cutting edge Early Cancer Detection screening that can save lives.

## 100 DAY CHALLENGE

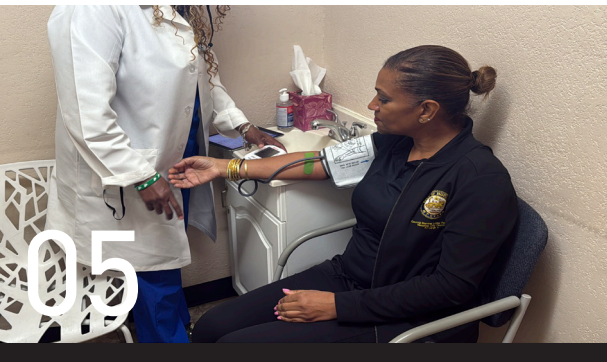
City Council's sustainability measures, a project led by Council Member Plummer

## DDSR UPDATE

How the City of Houston will restore trust, a timeline.







Dear friends and neighbors,

Spring is a season of renewal, and here in Houston, it's also a season of action. As we move through April, I'm proud to share the impactful work our office has been doing to advance equity, resilience, and opportunity for all Houstonians.

This month's newsletter reflects our commitment to addressing the issues that matter most. From launching the 100-Day Challenge to eliminate single-use plastics to pushing for accountability in our short-term rental ordinance while supporting great small businesses, we are continuing to lead with purpose. You'll also find updates on the FY2026 budget workshops, where your voice and presence can help shape how our tax dollars are spent.

We are also spotlighting progress in environmental justice, healthcare equity, and economic development, including our 'Fifth Ward Exposed' documentary, highlighting the voices of those impacted by the Cancer Cluster. We also launched a cutting edge Early Cancer Screening program that will help save lives.

As always, I remain committed to governing with transparency, compassion, and a deep belief that when we center community voices, we create better outcomes for all.

Thank you for the trust you place in me to serve as your Council Member. I look forward to continuing this work together as we build a stronger, healthier, and more connected Houston.

With gratitude,

Council Member Letitia Plummer, DDS  
At-Large 4

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# COUNCIL MEMBER LETITIA PLUMMER PARTNERS WITH NATIONAL PRODUCER TO DOCUMENT FIFTH WARD CANCER CRISIS



The documentary is available on YouTube at: <https://bit.ly/5WardExposed>

## WHO IS NOW INCLUDED?

*Now Included is a storytelling platform amplifying the voices of historically underserved communities, particularly in health equity. By sharing personal experiences, they empower individuals to shape better outcomes for their families and communities. Through digital media and grassroots engagement, Now Included drives awareness, advocacy, and trust in health care, ensuring everyone is represented and heard in conversations that impact their well-being.*

### Great News

Our documentary Fifth Ward Exposed has been nominated for the Shorty Award. You can help us win by voting at

<https://bit.ly/5WardExp-ShortyAward>

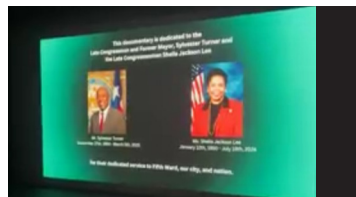
In a powerful move to amplify the voices of Houston's Fifth Ward, Council Member Letitia Plummer has partnered with Now Included, a national documentary producer committed to elevating stories that matter, to create a moving and urgent documentary about the Fifth Ward Cancer Cluster.

The documentary, titled "Fifth Ward Exposed: Community", gives a voice to families who have lived for decades with the devastating consequences of environmental contamination. Residents share stories of loved ones lost to leukemia, childhood cancers, and other chronic illnesses, all suspected to be linked to exposure from the Union Pacific railyard, where toxic chemicals like creosote were used and improperly stored for years. The partnership with Now Included ensures that the documentary reaches a national audience, drawing attention to a crisis that has persisted too long in silence. By weaving together community

testimony, historical context, and expert insights, the film presents not only a call to action, but a path forward rooted in early detection, environmental justice, and community-led solutions. Council Member Plummer has long been a vocal advocate for equitable healthcare and environmental accountability. This documentary is part of her broader Shift-Cancer initiative, which includes a free early detection cancer screening program in partnership with the National Minority Quality Forum, Quest Diagnostics, and Equality Science. "This is about more than statistics — it's about people, families, and a community that deserves answers and action," said Plummer. "The documentary helps ensure that the suffering endured by so many is not ignored, but seen, heard, and met with real change." The film is a rallying cry for transparency, investment in underserved communities, and the urgent need to prevent similar

crises elsewhere.

Watch the full documentary: <https://bit.ly/5WardExposed>



The documentary was dedicated to the late Congressman/Mayor Sylvester Turner & the late Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee.



# Free Cancer Screenings Come to Houston's Fifth Ward



In a groundbreaking step toward health equity, Council Member Letitia Plummer is leading a community-wide cancer screening initiative in Houston's Fifth Ward and Kashmere Gardens, where residents have long faced disproportionate cancer rates linked to environmental contamination.

The effort is part of the Shift-Cancer Early Detection Screening Project, a collaborative initiative between Council Member Plummer's Office (At-Large 4), the National Minority Quality Forum, Quest Diagnostics, and Equality Science. The goal: provide free, life-saving cancer screenings to residents who may have been exposed to toxic soil and groundwater near the Union Pacific railyard, the site identified in a 2019 state health study as a cancer cluster. Equality Science will provide free cancer related education to the community.

Early detection is key. Through this project, residents can receive diagnostic screenings and support at no cost, helping catch cancer in its earliest, most treatable stages. The initiative also aims to create a national model for environmental justice and

public health response in underserved communities.

Staff from the At-Large 4 office, along with dedicated volunteers from the Fifth Ward, have been canvassing neighborhoods, going door to door to ensure residents are informed and empowered to participate in this vital program. This project more than a public health initiative and is about restoring trust, driving equity, and saving lives.

To learn more or sign up for a free screening, visit:

<https://bit.ly/EarlyDetectionInterest>



# COUNCIL MEMBER LETITIA PLUMMER BECOMES FIRST PATIENT IN GROUNDBREAKING CANCER DETECTION INITIATIVE

In a powerful demonstration of leadership and solidarity, Council Member Letitia Plummer has become the first patient enrolled in the Cancer Stage Shifting Initiative, a transformative cancer detection effort focused on early diagnosis and prevention in historically neglected communities. The initiative is part of the broader Shift-Cancer campaign, which provides free early cancer screenings to residents of Houston's Fifth Ward and Kashmere Gardens. These neighborhoods have been identified as cancer clusters, with elevated rates of leukemia and other cancers tied to long-term exposure to toxic chemicals near the Union Pacific railyard.

Council Member Plummer's decision to step forward wasn't just symbolic, it was deeply personal. "As a public servant and a woman of color, I couldn't ask my community to do something I wasn't willing to do myself," she

said. Her participation underscores the initiative's message: early detection saves lives.

By becoming the first patient, Plummer hopes to reduce the stigma around cancer screening, especially in communities of color where mistrust of the healthcare system remains high. "We are shifting fear into action," she said. "This is how we break cycles of illness and neglect." The screenings are offered in partnership with the National Minority Quality Forum, Quest Diagnostics, and Equality Science, and are free for residents.


This bold act of leadership is part of a broader vision: to ensure no community is left behind when it comes to health, safety, and the chance to live a long, healthy life. If you live in Fifth Ward and are interested in free early cancer detection screening, complete this form:

<https://bit.ly/EarlyDetectionInterest>





# IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO SAVE LIVES



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#42951684.0

**I'M IN**  
ON LIFE SAVING  
RESEARCH FOR MY  
COMMUNITY


**ARE YOU IN?**  
Help ensure no one is left behind in the fight against cancer. Your participation can help advance early detection in your community. The NMQF Community Health Biobank program is enrolling near you.

**Qualified Participants:**

- Must be 35 years of age or older
- May receive compensation for study-related time

**You can learn more by getting involved today.**  
For more information call  
713-993-6000.

LEARN MORE AT  
[WWW.SHIFTCANCER.ORG](http://WWW.SHIFTCANCER.ORG)

 CANCER  
SHIFTING / STAGE  
INITIATIVE

# COUNCIL MEMBER LETITIA PLUMMER LAUNCHES 100-DAY CHALLENGE TO ELIMINATE SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

In honor of Earth Day, the Council Member Plummer is launching an impactful initiative: a 100-Day Challenge to reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of single-use plastics within City Council chambers and offices. The challenge begins on April 29 and is a commitment by Council Members and their staff to lead by example in the fight against plastic pollution.

For the next 100 days, and ideally far beyond, Council Members will replace plastic water bottles with reusable ones and bring their own bags for grocery shopping. This effort promotes environmental sustainability and also highlights the importance of everyday choices in creating a cleaner, healthier planet for future generations.

The challenge is part of a broader effort to inspire Houstonians to rethink their use of plastic and consider long-term, sustainable

alternatives. By modeling these practices in government spaces, the City hopes to encourage residents, businesses, and other organizations to join in this important mission.

Special thanks go to the Houston Zoo, which has been a leader in reducing plastic waste and has partnered with the City to elevate this challenge. Several other local organizations are also stepping up, bringing momentum and support to this citywide effort.

"This is more than a symbolic gesture, it's a lifestyle shift," said Council Member Letitia Plummer. "We're showing that government can lead on climate action in real, tangible ways."

Stay tuned for updates, resources, and community events related to the challenge. Houstonians are encouraged to participate by adopting their own plastic-free habits and sharing their journey on social media.

Join our challenge. Snap photos with your reusable bag and reusable water+ / drink bottles. Tag our social media :



Council Member Letitia Plummer



@cmplummer4



@cmplummer4

or send the photos to

[atlarge4@houston.tx.gov](mailto:atlarge4@houston.tx.gov)

for us to post!




**100-DAY CHALLENGE TO  
REDUCE SINGLE USE PLASTICS**  
APRIL 29 - AUGUST 7, 2025

JOIN US IN  
MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE!

 SIGN UP BY  
SCANNING  
QR CODE  
OR  
VISITING  
THE LINK  
BELOW

<https://bit.ly/100DayChallengeSignup>

Logos for Houston Zoo, 4GAP, CCNHS, bit, HOUSTON PUBLIC WORKS, HOUSTON, TEXAS, and others.



**Did You Know?** plastic facts

More than 40% of plastic produced is used only once before being discarded.

Every minute, one million plastic bottles are purchased worldwide. Most are never recycled.

Plastic takes up to 1,000 years to decompose, releasing harmful chemicals into the environment.

Plastic bags take 500+ years to break down and are one of the most common items found in ocean cleanups.



# RESTORING TRUST IN HOUSTON'S STREETS AND DRAINAGE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DDSR FUNDING

Houston's streets and drainage infrastructure have long been a point of concern for residents. From potholes to flood-prone neighborhoods, many have wondered why promised improvements never came. The answer lies in a funding issue that is finally being addressed, with big changes now on the way.

**What Is DDSR?**  
DDSR stands for Dedicated Drainage and Street Renewal. It's a fund approved by Houston voters in 2010 and again in 2018, designed to pay for repairs and upgrades to our drainage systems and roadways. The fund was supposed to receive the equivalent of 11.8 cents per \$100 of property value from property taxes every year.

**What Went Wrong?**  
Instead of transferring the full amount, the City of Houston used a flexible interpretation of the charter language, tying DDSR contributions to revenue caps and other financial limits. Over 12 years, this led to a \$419 million shortfall in DDSR funding. This meant fewer drainage and street projects were completed—and more communities were left vulnerable to flooding and deteriorating roads

Issue	Details
DDSR Funding Shortfall	\$419 million underfunded since 2010
Cause	Tied to tax caps, not full 11.8 cents
Impact	Delayed or canceled infrastructure work

**What's Coming Next?**  
Starting in Fiscal Year 2026, Houston will increase DDSR funding by at least \$75 million across all revenue sources. The city currently contributes about 57% of the required funding but will step that up year by year until it reaches 100% in FY2028.

Fiscal Year	DDSR Property Tax Contribution
FY2026	67% of full 11.8 cents
FY2027	77% of full 11.8 cents
FY2028+	100% of full 11.8 cents


**Why It Matters**  
This funding restoration is about restoring trust. Houstonians voted for a better infrastructure system. Now, that promise is finally being honored.

The next few years are critical. Residents, neighborhood leaders, and city council members alike will need to stay involved, helping prioritize the most urgent projects and ensuring these funds make a real difference.

Houston deserves streets that are safe, and drainage systems that protect us. Thanks to this legal and financial turnaround, that vision is once again within reach.

# IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR: CITY BUDGET

The City of Houston has launched the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget process, and residents are encouraged to take part in the upcoming budget workshops. These sessions provide an opportunity for constituents to see how their tax dollars are allocated across departments and to hear directly from city leaders about priorities and challenges. From public safety to infrastructure, these discussions shape the future of our city. Community participation is key to a transparent and equitable budgeting process. View the full schedule of workshops.



**City Council Committee on Budget & Fiscal Affairs**  
Council Member Sallie Alcorn, Chair  
Council Member Mario Castillo, Vice Chair

**Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Workshop Schedule**

Wed	7-May	2:00p	Special Called BFA: Five-Year Forecast & Budget Overview
Tues	13-May	9:00a	Finance Department
		10:00a	Legal Department
		11:00a	General Services Department
Weds	14-May	1:30p	Planning and Development
		2:30p	Housing and Community Development
		3:30p	Houston Airport System
Thurs	15-May	9:00a	Houston Health Department
		10:00a	Municipal Courts
		11:00a	Solid Waste Management Department
		12:00p	BREAK
		1:30p	Houston Information Technology Services
		2:30p	Houston Public Works
Fri	16-May	9:00a	Houston Parks and Recreation Department
		10:00a	Department of Neighborhoods
		11:00a	Fleet Management
Mon	19-May	9:00a	Mayor's Office
		9:30a	City Council
		10:00a	Office of Business Opportunity
		12:00p	BREAK
		1:30p	Human Resources
		2:30p	Administration & Regulatory Affairs
		3:30p	Houston Fire Department
Tues	20-May	9:00a	Controller's Trends Report & Controller's Office Budget
		10:00a	Houston Public Library
		11:00a	Houston Police Department

All meetings will take place in the Anna Russell City Council Chamber, City Hall, Second Floor, 901 Bagby, Houston, TX 77002. Workshops are open to the public and the opportunity for public comment will be available at each presentation. No action will be taken on any item during workshops. Schedule subject to change. For updates or other inquiries please contact [atlarge5@houstontx.gov](mailto:atlarge5@houstontx.gov).

**CAN'T ATTEND? YOU CAN STILL PROVIDE YOUR OPINION.**

The Chair of the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Committee, Council Member Sallie Alcorn, wants your two cents!

<https://bit.ly/Budget2Cents>

COUNCIL MEMBER SALLIE ALCORN WANTS

YOUR 2¢



A HOUSTON BUDGET SURVEY



# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

THESE RESOURCES WERE SHARED BY ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE AT-LARGE 4 OFFICE. ALWAYS CHECK WITH THE ORGANIZATION AND VERIFY INFORMATION.



## Project Elevate: Urban Youth Empowerment Program

**JUMP START YOUR CAREER TODAY!**

Looking for participants  
ages 18-25

NATIONAL ACADEMIES Sciences  
Engineering  
Medicine

### Free Pre-Employment Training Entry-Level Industry Certifications in

**OSHA 30, INTRO TO PIPELINE SAFETY, INTRO TO  
POWER INDUSTRY, ALTERNATIVE ENERGY &  
FALL SAFETY PROTECTION**

**Must be able to commit for Training  
Mon-Fri 8am-5pm for 2 weeks**

- Pass Drug Screening
- Background Screening

OTHER SERVICES INCLUDE:

Job Placement Assistance  
Transportation Assistance  
Support Services  
Program Incentives

**For More Info**  
**Contact Harvey Kelley**  
**(281) 220-6022 | [hkelley@haul.org](mailto:hkelley@haul.org)**



Scan QR Code to complete interest form



Houston Area  
Urban League

JPMORGAN  
CHASE & CO.

**Core Strength.  
Real Skills.  
Bright Futures.**

Powered by

**BASF**

We create chemistry

**Limited Scholarships Available**

**OSHA 30, INTRO TO PIPELINE  
SAFETY, and NCCER CORE**

REGISTRATION IS EVERY  
TUESDAY@ 10AM

5260 Griggs Road, 77021

**Must be able to commit  
Mon-Fri 8am-5pm for 2 weeks**

- Pass Drug Screening
- Background Screening

#### OVERVIEW

80-Hours of  
Pre-Employment Training  
Entry-Level Industry Certifications  
Resume Development  
Interviewing/Communication Skills  
PPE Provided



#### NCCER CORE

Introduction to  
Basic Construction  
Skills prepares  
individuals for  
entry-level  
positions on project  
sites.



#### OSHA 30

This training provides  
essential safety  
information and  
requirements for an  
aspiring EHS director,  
safety coordinator or  
field supervisor.



#### PIPELINE SAFETY

Receive standard  
pipeline and  
prevention training  
to prevent incidents  
and meet Federal  
and State  
regulations.

For More Info  
Contact Harvey Kelley  
(281) 220-6022 | [hkelley@haul.org](mailto:hkelley@haul.org)





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Letitia Plummer



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