



## CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 9/19/2023

ALL

Item Creation Date: 9/10/2023

HHD - Fifth Ward Voluntary Relocation Fund

Agenda Item#: 15.

### **Summary:**

AN ORDINANCE CREATING THE FIFTH WARD VOLUNTARY RELOCATION FUND; ESTABLISHING THE SOURCES AND USES OF THE FUNDS THEREIN FOR THE VOLUNTARY RELOCATION OF CERTAIN FIFTH WARD/KASHMERE GARDENS RESIDENTS; APPROPRIATING THE SUMS OF UP TO \$5,000,000.00 OUT OF THE GENERAL FUND FUND BALANCE AND AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF THOSE SUMS TO THE FUND FOR PURPOSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE VOLUNTARY RELOCATIONS; AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF ANY AND ALL FUNDS RECEIVED INTO THE FUND AND APPROVING THE EXPENDITURES THEREFROM FOR THE PURPOSES SET OUT HEREIN; MAKING VARIOUS FINDINGS AND PROVISIONS RELATED THERETO; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

### **Background:**

#### **Summary:**

ORDINANCE approving the creation of the Fifth Ward Voluntary Relocation Fund, establishing the sources and uses of the funds therein for the voluntary relocation of Fifth Ward/Kashmere Gardens residents living in proximity to the contaminated Union Pacific Railroad site; appropriating and transferring \$5 million out of the General Fund, fund balance and transferring such funds to the fund; appropriating any and all funds received into the fund for the purposes set out herein and authorized expenditures consistent with the purpose thereof.

#### **Background:**

The Director of the Houston Health Department (HHD) and the Director of the Finance Department recommend that City Council approve the creation of the Fifth Ward Voluntary Relocation Fund for the voluntary relocation of Fifth Ward/Kashmere Gardens residents living in proximity to the contaminated Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) site.

The Fifth Ward/Kashmere Gardens is a historically disadvantaged and underserved community that has experienced a variety of detrimental health effects including cancers. Upon request by HHD, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) conducted a cancer cluster assessment for the census tracts surrounding the site and found that there were 5 different types of cancer observed (larynx, liver, lung and bronchus, childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and esophagus) that were statistically higher than expected. The types of cancers assessed were limited to those linked to exposure to the chemicals of concern that are present at the UPRR site.

To protect the residents living in the highly exposed and dangerous contamination zones with limited means, the requested funding will be used to fund the voluntary relocation out of the danger zones by those residents who choose to relocate.

On July 13, 2023, Mayor Sylvester Turner created the Strike Team to begin work on a program to help relocate residents living above the creosote plume and in a two and three block radius around the UPRR site. The Strike Team is comprised of members from City departments including Health, Housing, Public Works, Complete Communities, Recovery and Legal teams. The external stakeholders include the Houston Land Bank, Community Land Trust and the office of Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis.

The Strike Team has worked to provide a Relocation Plan (Plan) for those residents who voluntarily agree to participate. The Plan includes options to provide acquisition and relocation assistance to those property owners who have been subject to the negative health and safety impacts of the contamination zones and wish to relocate to an area out of harms' way. The Plan may include an offer to purchase property at fair market value, along with relocation assistance services to help find a comparable replacement dwelling. Relocation assistance may include advisory services, replacement housing payments, rental assistance payments, and moving expenses.

#### **Fiscal Note:**

Funding for this item is not included in the FY2024 Adopted Budget. Therefore, a Fiscal Note is required as stated in the Financial Policies.

DocuSigned by:

*Stephen Williams*

Stephen L. Williams

Director Houston Health and Human Services

Estimated Fiscal Operating Impact

| Estimated Fiscal Operating Impact |              |          |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| Recurring or One-Time:            | One-time     |          |              |
| Fund Name                         | FY2024       | Out Year | Total        |
| General Fund - General Government | 5,000,000.00 | -        | 5,000,000.00 |
| Total                             | 5,000,000.00 | -        | 5,000,000.00 |

**Amount and Source of Funding:**

\$5,000,000.00  
General Fund  
Fund No.: 1000

**Contact Information:**

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

| Description          | Type               |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| RCA Novus Coversheet | Signed Cover sheet |
| Funding Verification | Backup Material    |
| Caption (revised)    | Other              |
| FAQ document         | Backup Material    |