

Harris County Strategic Framework

*for the April 23, 2024 Commissioners
Court meeting*

Our Purpose

To provide community-centered services and infrastructure effectively, efficiently, and equitably, creating opportunities for all to be safe, healthy, and economically secure.

Our Vision

By 2050, Harris County will be...

Safe and Fair

Healthy

Resilient

Thriving

Secure

Connected

Guiding Principles



Serving
people first



Leading with
accountability



Embracing
change



Engaging
partners



Prioritizing
equity



Empowering
employees



Investing
responsibly

Why?

Our purpose: To provide *community-centered services and infrastructure effectively, efficiently, and equitably*, creating opportunities for all to be *safe, healthy, and economically secure*.

community-centered services and infrastructure: In a county as large and diverse as ours, one-size-fits-all services and infrastructure may not work for everyone. We tailor our work to the unique circumstances and needs of our distinct neighborhoods. That means listening to residents, understanding problems, and targeting investments and outreach as much as possible. Also, we define infrastructure broadly, to include streets, bridges, channels, parks and other public spaces, trees, trails, fiber cables, and more.

effectively, efficiently, and equitably: We commit to delivering services with integrity, transparency, and accountability, holding ourselves to the highest standards. Effective services are accurate and high-quality. Efficient services minimize waste of time, funds, and resources. Equitable services are just, fair, and inclusive, shifting more to communities where we have historically underinvested and removing barriers to access, such as language and ability.

safe, healthy, and economically secure: We believe Harris County should be a place where each person is free from violence and trauma; lives in quality, affordable housing; receives quality resources when facing climate-related disasters and environmental hazards; gets quality and responsive mental and health care; and benefits equitably from our growing regional economy.

Vision statement

*Where are we
going?*

By 2050, Harris County will be...

Safe and Fair: All communities are safe and are free from violence and trauma, racial and economic disparities, and the justice system operates fairly for all.

Healthy: Everyone has access to health care, and health disparities across communities are greatly reduced.

Resilient: All communities—regardless of race, income, or geography—are free from environmental harms and prepared for climate change and disasters.

Thriving: Our economy is inclusive, resilient, and equitable, where all are able to support their families and build wealth, and businesses large and small can grow and innovate.

Secure: All residents have quality, affordable, and safe housing.

Connected: Every neighborhood has access to well-maintained green spaces, modern infrastructure, and affordable, reliable, and sustainable transportation options.

Guiding principles descriptions

How?

Guiding Principles



Serving people first

We put people at the center of everything we do, provide equitable access to services, and serve with empathy.



Leading with accountability

We set clear goals for improving service delivery, use data and evidence to inform decision making, measure and communicate progress, learn from success and setbacks, and hold ourselves to the highest standards of integrity.



Embracing change

We embrace new challenges and opportunities, adapt to change, and disrupt the status quo when needed to achieve goals.



Engaging partners

We work respectfully and collaboratively with communities, local partners, and all levels of government to solve our biggest problems.



Prioritizing equity

We embrace the diversity of our community, and we will integrate equity in all County work to reduce and prevent disparities.



Empowering employees

We will provide opportunities for employees to thrive, and we will make Harris County a place where people want to build careers.



Investing responsibly

We align resources with policy goals, ensure long-term financial sustainability, and follow best practices to deliver high value to those we serve.

Harris County Strategic Framework Summary: 6 Goals and 23 Focused Objectives

Make Harris County safer and more just

Reduce violent crime across the County

Reduce criminal legal system exposure that does not advance public safety

Improve safety and health conditions in the jail

Reduce racial, ethnic, and economic disparities in the criminal legal system

Increase efficiency across the legal system

Improve physical and mental health outcomes across all communities

Improve the health behaviors of community members

Increase access to quality health care, including preventive and behavioral health

Improve children's health outcomes

Minimize the impact of climate change and disasters

Reduce GHG emissions from County operations by 40% by 2030

Enhance disaster preparedness and resiliency

Equitably reduce the health, economic, and other impacts of climate change and disasters

Encourage residents, businesses, and public entities to significantly reduce their environmental footprint for the health of our region

Make our economy more inclusive

Grow the number of minority- and women-owned businesses

Provide workers with training and other support (e.g. childcare) to participate fully in the local economy

Ensure that Harris County remains the best place in the region to start and grow a business

Foster more family-wage jobs that ensure worker safety, benefits, and stability across all educational levels

Help residents achieve housing stability

Build and preserve affordable housing, particularly for low-income families

Reduce eviction and foreclosure rates among residents

Transition people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing

Connect our community with safe, reliable, equitably distributed, and well-maintained infrastructure

Expand and optimize transit options

Ensure safety and security for all using the county's transportation network in alignment with the County's Vision Zero plan

Increase access to safe, clean and enjoyable green space

Improve the condition and resilience of county transportation, flood control, & other infrastructure

Goal:

Make Harris County safer and more just

**Goal
Description:**

Residents deserve to live safely. Yet addressing safety only through traditional criminal legal system solutions has led to jail overcrowding, court backlogs, and strains on the county budget. We can make our communities safer and support victims through effective, holistic approaches that prevent violence and trauma, narrow racial and ethnic disparities, elevate both the efficiency and fairness of the justice system, center rehabilitation, and minimize unnecessary legal system exposure.

**Community
Indicator:**

Violent crime rate

*Average daily jail
population*

*# of people arrested for
issues primarily related
to poverty, substance
use, and mental health*

*Jail population index for
race, gender, and
veteran status*

Objective:

**Reduce violent
crime across the
County**

**Reduce criminal
legal system
exposure that
does not advance
public safety**

**Improve safety
and health
conditions in the
jail**

**Reduce racial,
ethnic, and
economic
disparities in the
criminal legal
system**

**Increase
efficiency across
the legal system**

Initiative:

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

Goal:

Improve physical and mental health outcomes across all communities

**Goal
Description:**

According to the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Harris County scores lower than peer counties on resident health outcomes, and severe disparities exist across communities in those outcomes. We will continue addressing the social determinants of health through County services to equitably improve health outcomes.

**Community
Indicator:**

*Life expectancy disparities by
race / ethnicity, income, and zip
code*

*% of residents with affordable
access to health care*

Childhood obesity rate

Objective:

**Improve the health behaviors of
community members**

**Increase access to quality health
care, including preventive and
behavioral health**

**Improve children's health
outcomes**

Initiative:

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

Goal:

Minimize the impact of climate change and disasters

**Goal
Description:**

Flooding, extreme heat, increasingly intense storms, and other climate-induced risks continue to plague our region, along with environmental and human-caused threats and hazards. We will equitably champion climate adaptation, resilience, and mitigation strategies as well as respond to environmental hazards to make Harris County a sustainable and livable county for decades to come.

**Community
Indicator:**

*# of people, occupied structures,
and housing units in 100 year
flood plain*

Number of heat-related deaths

*% of county-wide energy usage
from renewable sources*

Objective:

**Reduce GHG emissions
from County
operations by 40%
by 2030**

**Enhance disaster
preparedness and
resiliency**

**Equitably reduce the
health, economic, and
other impacts of
climate change and
disasters**

**Encourage residents,
businesses, and public
entities to significantly
reduce their
environmental footprint
for the health of our
region**

Initiative:

TBD

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Goal:

Make our economy more inclusive

**Goal
Description:**

Education, income, and wealth disparities across races, ethnicities, and gender persist for Harris County, despite a growing economy. We will expand access to high-paying, quality jobs and opportunities to build wealth for all residents, so all are included in regional prosperity

**Community
Indicator:**

% of Harris County contract dollars awarded to minority- and women-owned businesses

Number of affordable and accessible quality childcare slots

% of households with family-sustaining income

Objective:

Grow the number of minority- and women-owned businesses

Provide workers with training and other support (e.g. childcare) to participate fully in the local economy

Ensure that Harris County remains the best place in the region to start and grow a business

Foster more family-wage jobs that ensure worker safety, benefits, and stability across all educational levels

Initiative:

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TBD

Goal:

Help residents achieve housing stability

**Goal
Description:**

Over half of Harris County renter households (and more than 35% of all households) paid more than 30% of their income on housing costs in 2022 (defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as housing cost-burdened), as the pandemic exacerbated housing inequities. We will develop policies and make investments to address the shortfall of affordable housing and enable people to access and stay in safe and stable housing environments.

**Community
Indicator:**

% of households earning median income or below that are housing cost burdened

of eviction and foreclosure filings

Number of individuals experiencing homelessness

Objective:

Build and preserve affordable housing, particularly for low-income families

Reduce eviction and foreclosure rates among residents

Transition people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing

Initiative:

TBD

TBD

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TBD

Goal:

Connect our community with safe, reliable, equitably distributed, and well-maintained infrastructure

Goal Description:

Harris County is responsible for maintaining thousands miles of roadway, as well as bridges, channels, culverts, sidewalks, and other infrastructure. Historically, public investment in infrastructure has not been distributed across communities based on need. We will modernize our infrastructure and use all available mobility options to improve quality of life, advance equity, and strengthen our economy.

Community Indicator:

% of residents using alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles to get to work, school, services, and amenities

% of residents within a 10-minute walk of a park

Road Condition Index of county-maintained roads

Objective:

Expand and optimize transit options

Ensure safety and security for all using the county's transportation network in alignment with the County's Vision Zero plan

Increase access to safe, clean and enjoyable green space

Improve the condition and resilience of county transportation, flood control, and other infrastructure

Initiative:

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

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