

*Jim Lester, Vice President, Houston Advanced Research Center*

# Welcome and Goals of the Workshop



# Organization of Workshop - Today

- Perspectives on Urban Sustainability:  
national experts
- Local experts on components of  
sustainability
  - Natural and Built Capital
  - Human Capital
- Breakout sessions: local approaches and  
incentives

# Organization of Workshop - Tomorrow

- Efforts from government
- Measuring success
- Plenary: Center for Houston's Future
- Breakout sessions: regional scale and barriers/challenges

# Define sustainable development

- Meeting “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Brundtland Commission (1987).
- “Sustainable development is a strategy for improving the quality of life while preserving the environmental potential for the future,” Choosing a Sustainable Future, National Commission on the Environment (1993).
- “The reconciliation of society’s developmental goals with the planet’s environmental limits over the long term..” Our Common Journey: a transition toward sustainability, National Research Council (1999).

# Metropolitan Houston

- 8-counties, 8,778 sq mi > New Jersey
- City population: 2.1 M in 2010 (#4)
- Metro Area: 5.95 M in 2010 (#6)
- HQ of Fortune 500 companies (#2)
- Energy Capitol of the World: 5,000 Energy-related firms
- Gross Area Product in 2006 \$325.5 B > GDP of Poland
- Texas Medical Center: largest in world, 4.8 M patients/yr
- Port of Houston is 1<sup>st</sup> in international tonnage

# Goals of Workshop

- Consider the scope of the problem.
- Understand the drivers of sustainability.
- Identify existing components of a sustainable future, i.e. plans, policies, programs.
- Characterize the effectiveness of these policies, plans and programs.
- Explore approaches to measuring progress.

# Goals of Workshop

- Identify barriers and challenges that must be addressed. Also identify incentives and policies to overcome barriers.
- Describe approaches to fill knowledge gaps, utilize decision support tools, communicate and motivate.
- Specify pathways toward more sustainable practices in Houston. Identifying the who, what and how for the path forward.