

NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER

CHRIS HOLLINS, CITY CONTROLLER



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Controller Chris Hollins Launches “This Fee is Garbage” Tool to Help Houstonians See the Real Cost of Proposed Garbage Fee

Interactive tool lets residents compare the proposed \$5 monthly garbage fee with other revenue options as Reality Check budget series continues

HOUSTON — Before Houstonians are asked to pay a new monthly fee, [Houston City Controller Chris Hollins](#) wants them to see the math for themselves.

Today, Hollins launched [“This Fee is Garbage,”](#) an interactive cost-comparison tool designed to help residents understand how the proposed \$5 monthly garbage fee could affect their household and how it compares with other ways to raise the same revenue.

The tool is the latest part of Hollins’s Reality Check budget series, which has included town halls, plain-language budget analysis, and social media content designed to help residents understand what is in the proposed city budget before final decisions are made.

“The budget is not just City Hall math. It shows up in people’s monthly bills,” said Controller Hollins. “Before residents are asked to pay a new fee, they should be able to see the numbers for themselves. This tool gives Houstonians a clearer way to understand what is being proposed, who carries the burden, and what the long-term cost could become.”

By entering their taxable home value, residents can compare potential costs under different revenue scenarios and see whether they would pay more under the proposed flat garbage fee or another revenue option.

Under the proposed structure, every household would pay the same \$5 monthly garbage fee regardless of income, home value, or ability to pay. Because the fee is fixed, it places a greater relative burden on working families, retirees on fixed incomes, and residents with fewer resources.

According to the Controller’s analysis, homeowners with taxable home values below \$875,000 would pay more under the proposed garbage fee than they would under a property tax increase designed to raise the same amount of revenue. The average taxable home value in Houston is about \$300,000.

“A flat fee hits every household the same on paper, but not in real life,” Hollins said. “Five dollars may sound small to some, but the starting point is not the full story. The city’s own solid waste study projects the fee would need to rise to \$46 per household per month by Year 5 to cover the true cost of service. That’s over \$500 a year.”

Hollins emphasized that the tool is not an endorsement for raising property taxes. It is a transparency tool designed to let residents compare options and evaluate the impact for themselves.

“The Controller’s Office does not decide how the city spends money or raises revenue,” Hollins said. “Our job is to show the numbers, explain what they mean, and make sure Houstonians have the facts before decisions are made. If City Hall is asking residents to pay more, the burden should be visible before the bill arrives.”

As the Reality Check town halls conclude and budget discussions continue, the Controller’s Office is encouraging Houstonians to use the tool, compare scenarios and share feedback.

Try the “This Fee is Garbage” tool and explore the numbers for yourself [here](#).

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ABOUT CITY OF HOUSTON CONTROLLER’S OFFICE: Established in 1903, the City of Houston Controller’s Office is the cornerstone of financial oversight and accountability for America’s fourth-largest city. With a mission to uphold Houston’s fiscal integrity and protect residents’ tax dollars, the office oversees a broad spectrum of the City’s financial operations, including its budget, investments, and debts. Committed to transparency and fiscal responsibility, the Controller’s Office is key to maintaining the economic vitality of Houston, contributing to its status as a thriving metropolis for its diverse community.

ABOUT CONTROLLER CHRIS HOLLINS: Chris Hollins, serving as Houston’s City Controller since January 2024, brings a dynamic approach to City governance and financial management. With a rich background in legal practice and management consulting, coupled with innovative leadership as Harris County Clerk, Hollins is dedicated to enhancing the city’s fiscal practices and community engagement. Educated at Morehouse College, Yale Law School, and Harvard Business School, Hollins’s commitment to accountability and service excellence drives his mission to build a financially resilient Houston. Residing in the Third Ward with his family, his work is deeply informed by his strong community ties