

## PERSPECTIVE ON HOUSTON RESILIENCE

Niel Golightly

Chief of Staff of the Recovery Office

City of Houston, Texas 77002

### **Abstract**

The unprecedented impact of Hurricane Harvey on the City of Houston has led to an unprecedented recovery effort. Mayor Sylvester Turner tapped Marvin Odum, former President of Shell Oil Company, to lead the city's multi-billion dollar recovery strategy. The Mayor charged Odum with running a recovery designed to "build forward, not just build back," that is, to enhance the city's resilience to future catastrophic events. Supported by a core team of senior city leaders, Odum is implementing a three phase program underpinned by four strategic priorities: 1) Providing immediate service to people and neighborhoods, 2) leveraging disaster recovery funds to transform as well as build back the city's housing stock, 3) strengthening buildings and infrastructure through repair, mitigation and new design standards, 4) catalyzing a coordinated regional flood management approach. The work of Houston's recovery team is progressing on track; but it has also revealed a number of opportunities for improving the nation's (as well as the city's) capacity to deal with what are likely to be more frequent and more intense future weather events. These opportunities include, better predictive modeling of weather impacts; better understanding and communication of potential risks; faster and more coordinated flow of recovery resources after such events.