

PRESS RELEASE

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Houston Joins World Renowned Global Cities Initiative Exchange

Network to enhance region's foreign direct investment, global competitiveness

HOUSTON (January 16, 2015) – Today, Houston joined a prestigious economic development network created by the Global Cities Initiative. The Global Cities Initiative (GCI), a five-year joint project of the Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase, was launched in 2012 to help business and civic leaders grow their metropolitan economies by strengthening international connections and competitiveness.

The Partnership teamed with the City of Houston and the Port of Houston to submit an application for entry into the GCI Exchange late last year. Houston is one of eight metro areas accepted to the GCI Exchange's 2015 group, the final cohort of the 28-metro-area network.

“For the Exchange, we selected metro areas that are committed to expanding their global economic reach by working together to identify regional competitive strengths and increase exports,” said Marek Gootman, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Global Initiatives at Brookings.

The network assists metropolitan areas as they develop plans to achieve sustainable growth, first addressing exports and then foreign direct investment. Houston will start its involvement in GCI Exchange by developing a metropolitan export plan this year.

“The Houston region understands the need to become more globally competitive in the 21st century economy and has established the fundamentals needed to promote greater international trade and economic success,” said Mayor Annise Parker. “This will help promote our efforts to showcase Houston as the gateway to the Americas, enhance investment possibilities and build stronger networks linking our key commerce and trade counterparts.”

Gina Luna, Chairman of JPMorgan Chase in Houston and Chair of the Partnership's Board of Directors added: “The Global Cities Exchange provides another level of depth for our efforts to secure Houston's long-term economic success. This innovative public-private initiative will produce trade and investment strategies that create jobs and grow our economy through greater global engagement.”

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The Brookings Institution selected metro areas through a competitive process based upon their readiness and commitment to pursue GCI Exchange’s global competitiveness principles. As the fourth largest city in the nation, Houston will greatly benefit from the program, including data production and research to guide decisions, fostering practice and policy innovations and facilitating a peer learning network.

“We have world-class industries, an educated workforce, a strong history of innovation, deep ties to the world and an open, welcoming opportunity culture,” said Partnership President and CEO Bob Harvey. “Our diversity is a major strength, with one in five residents born outside the U.S. and over 100 languages spoken every day. Houston is truly a city with no limits, and joining the GCI Exchange will greatly enhance our strong international economic, social and cultural ties, increase foreign direct investment and help us to attract more high-paying jobs to the region.”

“We had record performance in 2013 and we beat those records in 2014,” noted Janiece Longoria, Chairman of the Port Commission of the Port of Houston Authority. “Because of our central location, and our consumer reach, we are positioned to be the Gulf Coast port of choice for additional cargo through the expanded Panama Canal, and as the host to the second largest petrochemical complex in the world, we will capture the opportunity for growth of petrochemical exports through our Port. In partnership with our stakeholders, we will make the second century of the Houston Ship Channel as remarkable as the first.”

In addition to Houston, the 2015 GCI Exchange members include: Baltimore; Fresno, Calif.; Kansas City, Mo.; Philadelphia; Salt Lake City; Seattle; and St. Louis. The cities join Atlanta; Charleston, S.C.; Chicago; Columbus, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; Indianapolis; Jacksonville, Fla.; Los Angeles; Louisville-Lexington, Ky.; Minneapolis-Saint Paul; Milwaukee; Phoenix; Portland, Ore.; Sacramento, Calif.; San Antonio; San Diego; Syracuse, N.Y.; Tampa Bay, Fla.; Upstate S.C. representing the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson CSA; and Wichita, Kan.

For more information on the Global Cities Initiative please visit www.brookings.edu/projects/global-cities.aspx or www.jporganchase.com/globalcities. Read more at: <http://www.brookings.edu/about/projects/global-cities/exchange>.

Greater Houston Partnership works to make Houston one of the world’s best places to live, work and build a business. It represents 11 counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Walker and Waller. With more than 1,400 member organizations, GHP represents approximately one-fifth of the region’s workforce. Visit the Partnership at www.houston.org.

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