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Action plan on roads and city services

Dear North Fort Worth Friends,

School has started, football season is upon us, and the City Council has concluded its budget deliberations. The budget began with a two-day retreat and several work sessions. This was my third budget cycle, and it was the most difficult.

The key challenge for the council was how to balance the needs of older neighborhoods with the needs of newer growth areas.

The adopted 2007-2008 budget addresses many key concerns of our citizens: roads, public safety and quality of life issues (Page 4).

This budget adds more police officers, firefighters, and even allows council the opportunity to call for a \$150 million bond election in May 2008 without adversely impacting the tax rate. In fact, with this new budget, we reduced the tax rate by one half cent—the second such reduction in a row.

The budget also provides \$498,000 for the clearing, cleaning and maintenance of 300 alleyways in the city.

There is also an additional \$2 million in funding for the Housing Trust Fund that will promote quality, affordable, accessible housing in the city (Page 3).

We also added more resources to the Environmental Unit in Code Compliance to address illegal dumping and environmental violations. Furthermore, we added funding for an additional municipal court.

Our council office receives the most calls and e-mails on road conditions. This is also the No. 1 citizen concern in the city. A \$150 million road bond package will provide additional capital funding for both arterial streets and neighborhood streets.

Earlier this year, the council approved a \$150 million critical capital needs package financed by certificates of obligation, which provides for \$50 million in neighborhood street reconstruction, \$6 million for premature street failures and funding for a few arterials for which there is public/private sector matching funds available (e.g. Keller Hicks Road).

In addition, this year's budget includes \$25 million for street maintenance, which will prevent streets from falling into such a poor condition that they require total reconstruction.

We will keep you posted on the public input process of the \$150 million road bond package. Included in this newsletter is an update of the 2004 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), which voters approved in 2004 (Page 4-5).

Since our last newsletter, we have continued our public engagement model of service. My council aide Belinda Norris and I have attended neighborhood meetings, special community forums and hosted town hall meetings...and there are more to come.

This wonderful city belongs to all of us. We encourage you all—neighborhoods, schools, churches and non-profit agencies—to become involved.

Your councilmember,

Sal

Council adopts stricter smoking ordinance

Fort Worth's public places will be mostly smoke-free come Jan. 1.

City Council's vote to ban smoking in most public places—including bars in restaurants—comes after several months of public meetings and surveys.



In 2006, City Council appointed an ad-hoc work group to gather input from residents on strengthening Fort Worth's smoking ordinance. Representing a broad spectrum of opinions and interests on smoking, the ad-hoc work group met nine times from June to September last year and presented specific

recommendations to council.

Four public hearings were conducted to obtain feedback on these recommendations. Residents also provided more feedback by phone and e-mail, and the work group conducted telephone surveys to better gauge public opinion.

For more information regarding the smoking ordinance, call the Smoking Ordinance Hotline at 817-212-2710 or e-mail smokingordinance@fortworthgov.org.

In addition to restaurants and their bars, the stricter ordinance bans smoking in bowling alleys and business offices/buildings and within 20 feet of the main entrance or exit of a public facility. Smoking will be allowed at the owner's discretion in the following places:

- Bars
- Bingo parlors
- Private residences, except when used as a child care, adult day care or healthcare facility
- A private or semi-private room in a nursing home or long-term care facility that is occupied by individuals who smoke and have requested in writing to be placed in a room where smoking is allowed
- Designated smoking rooms in hotels and motels (only 25 percent of the total number of rooms at a hotel or motel can be designated as smoking)
- Outdoor patios at restaurants as long as they are more than 20 feet from the primary entrance or from operable windows
- Private clubs
- Retail tobacco stores

Audit of tax incentive agreements show great return on investment

Twenty-five tax incentive agreements were audited for the 2006 calendar year. According to the audit, all but one agreement are meeting or outperforming expectations.

Based on the 2006 audit, incentive agreements with the city generated 9,683 jobs and are responsible for \$444 million worth of new construction. Nearly \$210 million worth of construction contracts based on tax abatement agreements have gone to local minority- and women-owned businesses.

The audit shows the true value of the agreements, which were created in order to attract business and economic development to Fort Worth. Based on the results of the audit, thousands of jobs have been created or retained and millions of dollars have been spent with Fort Worth and minority- and women-owned businesses.

For many years, the city of Fort Worth's Tax Abatement Policy has had three primary areas of emphasis:

- 1.) employment opportunities,
- 2.) Fort Worth business participation, and
- 3.) minority- and women-owned business enterprise participation.

Current incentive agreements include major companies such as Bell Helicopter-Textron, Ben E. Keith, Coca-Cola, and JCPenney, Mattel, just to name a few.

The audit found that only one company failed to meet all of its commitments according to its tax abatement agreement. Due to the non-compliance status, the City Council approved a recommendation by city staff to reduce the company's total tax abatement.

Gas well endowment being reviewed

The Fort Worth City Council is considering a new spend-and-save policy for gas well revenues that come from city-owned properties. The new plan, as proposed, would create a gas well endowment to ensure this one-time windfall benefits not only current residents, but future generations as well.

The new financial management strategy calls for splitting the revenues on a 50/50 spend/save ratio. This means that 50 percent of gas well revenues should be spent only on long-term capital improvements such as parks, and the other 50 percent should be added to a trust and invested.

The new proposal is based on recommendations from the Gas Well Revenues Financial Management Strategy Ad Hoc Committee. The committee was

charged with developing a strategic financial management plan for natural gas revenues derived from the Barnett Shale. The committee was made up of nine citizen members with backgrounds in financial management, banking or endowments.

The committee held many public meetings in response to these charges. Additionally, the committee reviewed the current policy, Council Proposal 265, drilling reports, legal documents, comparable financial strategies and financial models.

Overall, the committee feels that a prudent financial management strategy will require conservative and disciplined spending policies. The focus of the approach should be on preservation and growth of entrusted funds.



Landmark decision creates Housing Trust Fund

During the last few years, there has been concern about the lack of availability of quality affordable housing in the City of Fort Worth. In fact, there is \$1.8 billion in housing needs in the city today. To begin chipping away at the problem, the Fort Worth City Council recently created a Housing Trust Fund based on recommendations of the Mayor's Advisory Task Force on Quality Housing, chaired by Councilmember Sal Espino.

So far, \$650,000 in Community Development Block Grants and \$1.75 million from Housing and Urban Development HOME grants have been dedicated to the fund. Additionally, the city has dedicated \$4 million toward the Housing

Trust Fund through next year. These funds will get the program off to a healthy start, with nearly \$6.4 million in the bank.

Money from this new trust will be used to preserve housing units for homeowners and renters, encourage new construction that promotes mixed-income communities and provide permanent supportive and transitional housing for our homeless population with special needs.

This financial support will come in the form of loans, grants and/or guarantees. Funds will be available in all council districts. All allocations will be weighted based on the Area Median Income.

To ensure responsible use of

tax payer money, any dollars spent by the trust that originated from the city's General Fund will be enhanced through interest bearing loans.

The Housing Trust Fund will be staffed by the Fort Worth Housing Department. The Fort Worth Housing Finance Corporation will be accountable for the administration of the Housing Trust Fund and will adopt annual plans for funding and lending activities.

The board also is required to provide a quarterly report describing the fund's progress in leveraging and spending against performance goals as well as outlining the populations that are being served by the Fund.

New city budget includes half-cent reduction

The City Council recently voted to reduce the property tax rate by half a cent for the second year in a row with the adoption of the FY2007-08 Budget. The property tax rate now stands at 85.5 cents per \$100 of assessed property value.

For the first time, the budget topped the \$1 billion mark as the city continues to fund critical services to support recent growth. A primary focus of the new budget was to fund more personnel for the

Fire, Police and Code Compliance departments.

The budget adds 100 police employees, including 54 general funded police officers. Additionally, the Crime District budget includes four more officers for a total increase of 58 police officers. Fifty-six firefighter positions were also added to the budget. Additionally, the Code Compliance Department will add four environmental investigators and a vacant property manager.

Another large push was to fund greatly needed street improvements all across the city. The adopted budget will support a \$150 million bond election in 2008, which will be used for neighborhood and arterial street improvements.

The FY 08 budget also includes \$13 million in contributions to shore up the city's pension fund. There will be no across-the-board raise for city employees, although some will receive step increases.

Capital Improvement Programs — District 2

Bond elections, which are held approximately every six years, fund Capital Improvement Programs (CIP).

Such projects consist of reconstruction of residential and arterial streets, bridges, storm drain systems and drainage channels, street lights, traffic signals, sidewalks and city buildings.

Prior to the voter approval of

the bond package, each eligible project is given a ranking based on objective criteria such as amount of deterioration, traffic volume, proximity to community facilities, benefit to the public and other issues. Transportation and Public Works Department (TPW) then works with citizens, neighborhood organizations, other city departments and the City Council to

develop recommended projects for inclusion in a CIP.

In February 2004, voters approved a bond package that will run through 2010.

The progress of these improvements can be seen in all sectors of our district. The following charts and other information indicate the status of monumental 2004 CIP projects in District 2:

Neighborhood Streets

Street	Limit	Status	Year Bond Construction
NW 22nd St .	Ellis Ave. to Lee Ave.	Construction	2007
NW 22nd St .	Pearl Ave. to Chestnut Ave.	Construction	2007
NW 22nd St.	Prospect Ave. to Lincoln Ave.	Construction	2007
NW 23rd St.	Ellis Ave. to Clinton Ave.	Construction	2007
NW 24th St.	McKinley Ave. to Hanna Ave.	Construction	2006
NW 25th St.	Macie Ave. to McCandless St.	Complete	2005
NW 26th St .	Pearl Ave. to Loving Ave.	Construction	2006
NW 26th St.	Robinson St. to Titus St.	Complete	2005
NW 27th St .	Robinson St. to W Dead End	Construction	2006
NE 29th St.	Weber St. to Schwartz Ave.	Design	2007
NE 37th St .	Grover Ave. to Deen Rd.	Design	2007
N Chandler Dr.	Daisy Ln. to Goldenrod Ave.	Construction	2006

N Chandler Dr.	Springdale Rd. to Selma St.	Construction	2006
Clinton Ave.	NW 23rd St. to NW 25th St.	Construction	2007
Daisy Ln.	Blandin St. to N Chandler Dr.	Construction	2006
Decatur Ave.	Altamont Dr. to Elaine Pl.	Design	2007
Decatur Ave.	Terminal Rd. to Altamont Dr.	Design	2007
Goldenrod Ave.	N Chandler Dr. to N Riverside Dr.	Construction	2006
Gould Ave.	NW 25th St. to NW 26th St.	Construction	2007
N Hampton St.	NE 32nd St. to E Long Ave.	Design	2007
Hardy St.	Elaine Pl. to Mineola Ave.	Design	2007
Honeysuckle Ave.	N Sylvania Ave. to N Riverside Dr.	Construction	2006
Jeff St.	N Sylvania Ave. to Nelson Ave.	Design	2008
Marigold Ave.	N Sylvania Ave. to N Riverside Dr.	Construction	2006
Nelson Ave.	Bird St. to Dalford St.	Design	2008

City Arterial Projects

- The northern two lanes of North Tarrant Parkway from Rainy Lake Drive to US 377 was completed in June 2006.
- The design for Golden Triangle Blvd. from IH -35W to US 377 is well underway. Utility relocations will be complete in mid-2008. Construction could subsequently start, with a completion date projected for 2010.

Major Drainage Projects

- \$3,700,000 to improve Lebow Channel Watershed and reconstruct Robin-Denver storm drain.

Playground Replacement

- Buck Sansom Park received funds for new fencing.
- Improvements or new playgrounds for Buck Sansom, Diamond Hill, Paz Hernandez and Trail Drivers Park have been completed. Rodeo Park is in the design phase and will be installed in fall, 2008.

Trail Bridges or Structural Renovation Needed

- Both Buck Sansom and Marine Creek Linear Park will receive a total of \$215,000 for renovation.

Walk and Trail Replacement

- Replacement is currently scheduled for the Buck Sansom and Saunders Parks.

Replace Existing Competition Athletic Fields

- Rockwood Park Fields 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be replaced under the 2004 CIP.

Replace Existing Deteriorated Ballfield Lighting Systems

- The replacement of deteriorated lighting has been completed at Riverside Park.
- Upgrades to a centralized computer lighting control system software has been implemented for city fields.

New Community Centers

- The city broke ground on the new YMCA/City of Fort Worth joint use community center in the far northeast sector of District 2 at North Park near Shiver Rd. and North Beach. The community center is expected to open in late 2008.

Fire Safety Improvements

- Opened Fire Station No. 38 at Alliance Gateway and Park Vista in far north Fort Worth
- Construction has begun on fire stations No. 41 on Willow Springs south of SH 287 and No. 11 off Texan Drive and SH 156 (eastern edge of the NWISD campus). These stations will open in 2008.
- Once Fire Station No. 41 is completed, the city will reassign the temporary station on Blue Mound Road east of SH 287 as Temporary Fire Station No. 34. The permanent Fire Station No. 34 will be built in Sendera Ranch and is expected to be completed in 2009.

Neighborhood Street Program ahead of schedule

The City of Fort Worth's 2004 Neighborhood Street Program is ahead of schedule and, if all goes as planned, will be completed even earlier than expected.

When voters approved \$273.5 million in tax-exempt municipal bonds three years ago — including \$65 million for neighborhood streets — the adopted program was set to last for six years.

Preliminary design for the street reconstruction projects actually began before the bond program was approved, and design of all 208 projects should be finished by this fall. Completing the entire design effort a year ahead of schedule gives the city two years of pure construction to complete the Neighborhood Street Program. Early design completion also provides flexibility in packaging street projects for bids and allows for better coordination of private utility relocations.

Construction has begun or is complete on 134 projects, with the remaining 74 scheduled for wrap-up by mid-2009 — approximately six months ahead of schedule. And, city staff continues to work with local utility companies to further accelerate design and construction of the 2004 Neighborhood Street Program.

Nevertheless, barring more unforeseen wet weather or issues with utility coordination and



contractor availability, all 208 of the neighborhood street reconstruction projects funded by the 2004 CIP will be completed on schedule.

In addition to the 2004 CIP and Fort Worth's annual budget for street maintenance, City Council voted this year to sell \$150 million of additional debt through certificates of obligation. A portion of these funds, some \$50 million, is dedicated to additional neighborhood street reconstruction projects. But, even these extra funds don't cover reconstruction of all 600-plus lane miles of streets in need of improvement. While finding even more funds to focus on street reconstruction is a challenge, council and staff continue to look for creative ways to deal with Fort Worth's aging infrastructure as well as unprecedented growth.

All 2004 capital improvement projects can be located by neighborhood via the Web at <http://maps.fortworthgov.org/CIP>.

City officials looking at public pool options

The City of Fort Worth's public pool system is rapidly deteriorating, and in need of a major upgrade. The last city pool was built in 1960, nearly half a century ago. Because the city has grown so quickly since then, many new citizens lack access to public swimming facilities.

What's more, the fact that these pools are so old means they are continually in need of repair—causing attendance and use to drop significantly.

In short, the public pool system is no longer meeting the needs of Fort Worth.

To remedy this problem, the City

Council has appointed Kimley-Horn and Counsilman-Hunsaker, both aquatics and engineering firms, to conduct a study of the public pool system and report the findings and recommendations to the Council. These two firms have been in the aquatics business for decades, and have worked on numerous projects in the State of Texas and around the country.

This past February, they began studying existing pools in the Fort Worth area, and by April were ready to meet with city officials in the Parks and Community Services department. PACS is responsible for maintaining

the public pools. Since that time, more meetings and public hearings have been held to outline the progress of the project.

Common at the public hearings were reports of low pool attendance, disappointment at the poor quality and inaccessibility of pools, and the need for swimming lanes and greater recreational value in general.

Preliminary results of the study have been presented to the City Council. The council expects a final audit and cost analysis along with recommendations for new and existing facilities to be presented in November.


Helpful Numbers

This section is included to help residents find direct access to some of the most needed services.
If additional assistance is needed, please feel free to contact District 2 office.


Report crime or non-emergency requests	Police	817-335-4222
Trash, recycling, brush, bulky waste	Environmental Management	817-392-3279
Barking dogs, animal abuse, dead animal, lost or found pet	Animal Care and Control.....	817-392-3737
High weeds and grass, junk vehicles, debris, open and vacant structures	Code Compliance	817-392-1234 www.fortworthgov.org/codecompliance
Sidewalks, speed bumps, school zones, curbs	Transportation and Public Works.....	817-392-8100
Water service, billing, sewer issues	Water	817-392-4477
Permits, inspections, licensing	Planning and Development.....	817-392-7820
Construction services, engineering	Engineering.....	817-392-8306
Housing services, concerns, complaints	Housing.....	817-392-7546




FROM _____



PLACE
STAMP
HERE



FORT WORTH
CITY OF FORT WORTH
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
DISTRICT 2 COUNCILMEMBER
SALVADOR ESPINO
1000 THROCKMORTON ST
FORT WORTH TX 76102-6311





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We want to hear from you!

Please use this card to send your feedback about pressing issues in our district. You can remain anonymous if you choose.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Comments: _____

Neighborhood Association Name: _____