



September 20, 2011

Honorable Betsy Price, Mayor
Members
Fort Worth City Council
1000 Throckmorton
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

Re: Comments on 2011-2012 Proposed City Budget

Dear Mayor Price and Council Members:

The League of Neighborhoods has reviewed the 2011-2012 budget proposal as we did last year. It's clear that this year's budget has much less painful cuts for neighborhoods than last year's budget. That's a relief for all of us.

We continue to keep an eye on services to neighborhoods, believing that as long as our neighborhoods are healthy, the City will be healthy. We also noted that a key guiding principle of this year's budget is to increase the City's investment in infrastructure by shifting one penny to debt service. This, as staff pointed out, will necessarily mean a reduction of general fund revenues available for various city services, including neighborhood services. Our comments on the budget are these:

1. We can't find any evidence that there is a 5 to 10 year forecast of demand and need for neighborhood services compared to the City's ability to pay for them. We know that the police and fire pension issue stands to have a huge impact on future available City funds. We are also mindful of the recent news that the City must find \$95 million to build a new police and fire training center because it must move the present facility to accommodate the Trinity River Vision Project. (For example, how does this new requirement reduce the ability to pay for the construction of badly needed new roads or the repair of existing roads? And if so, by how much?)
2. The community wants to know what will happen to neighborhood services including but not limited to: existing road repair; new street construction; stormwater infrastructure maintenance, repair and construction; park

maintenance; neighborhood median maintenance; availability of swimming pools and libraries; code enforcement services; police and fire services and others.

For example, what can neighborhood groups with parks in need of maintenance or improvement expect in funding from natural gas revenue which comes from the lease of those park minerals and pipeline agreements?

Also, there is interest in a comparison of required fees compared to costs of natural gas drilling in the City. Related to that is interest in how the City's gas drilling fee structure compares to those of cities in the area and the nation.

3. Where can we get a report on the options for pension fund and capital project spending and how those options (and any prioritization of them) will affect neighborhood services?
4. Where can we get a report on big picture municipal financial planning for neighborhood services as compared to capital projects? How can we see that this financial planning is being done?

As always, we appreciate your attention to these issues. We would appreciate responses to Items No. 1 - 4 (including identification of sources of funding for the police and fire training facility) by December 1, in time for the League's next general membership meeting.

Sincerely,

Libby Willis
President