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**Critical Capital Needs: It's Streets and Roads**



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**Dear North Fort Worth Citizens,**

The City of Fort Worth is a great place to live. Many people continue to move to Fort Worth because of its wonderful quality of life. However, Fort Worth is now a large metropolitan center with a major challenge: Our street/road infrastructure.

Many of our older neighborhoods have streets that need to be reconstructed. The arterial streets in our newer growth areas are in need of widening. On December 11, 2006, the council and staff participated in a Capital Needs Workshop.

The numbers presented show the challenges before us: \$400 million in poor neighborhood streets and roads that need to be reconstructed and \$585 million in existing arterial streets needs.

In 2004, voters in Fort Worth approved the largest bond program in the city's history—a \$273.5 million package. This followed a \$120

million bond package in 1998.

However, rather than wait until the 2010 bond election, the City Council asked city staff to put together a critical capital needs package.

The \$150 million critical capital needs package proposed by staff includes \$50 million for neighborhood streets, \$6 million for premature street failures, and \$24 million for arterial streets for which there are matching funds from other public entities amounting to leveraged funds of over \$100 million. On January 9, the City Council approved the issuance of \$42.3 million of certificates of obligation as the first phase of this program.

Streets and roads are part of the overall transportation picture in Fort Worth and North Texas. We will be asking the Texas Legislature to support a Regional Rail Initiative, which would allow cities in North Texas to exceed

the sales tax cap by one-half percent and have local option elections to determine whether citizens want to allocate that extra half-cent sales tax for regional rail—rail that would connect cities in Tarrant, Denton and Dallas counties.

The other major piece of the puzzle here in Fort Worth is our major north-south transportation corridor, I-35W north of downtown. Recently, the Texas Department of Transportation announced plans for what they call the North Tarrant Express. I-35W North will be widened as will Loop 820/SH 183.

As is our practice in Council District 2, we will continue to keep you engaged through neighborhood meetings, breakfasts and town hall meetings. Working together, we can continue to improve our city.

Respectfully,

*Sal*  
Sal Espino

# North Tarrant Express to relieve congestion on I-35

Another opportunity to accelerate needed mobility improvements is on the way for a high priority corridor in the Fort Worth area. A request for private sector proposals to speed up development of the North Tarrant Express was issued Dec. 8 by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

The North Tarrant Express is a 36-mile project along the I-35W/I-820/SH 121/SH 183 corridor. This corridor is important to the future of North Tarrant County – the fastest growing area in North Texas. The improvements, estimated at \$2 billion, will reconstruct and add lanes on I-35W, I-820 and SH 121/183, including express toll-managed lanes.

The North Tarrant Express is needed to accommodate the increasing transportation demand in this portion of the region. In addition, the development of this project will greatly reduce congestion, enhance safety, expand economic opportunity, improve air quality and increase the value of the region's transportation assets.

“Fort Worth has many challenges, not the least of which is an aging transportation infrastructure,” said Councilmember Sal Espino. “But this new Council with seven new faces since 2003 is committed to dealing now with our critical capital needs. We came into some serious issues, but are working through these issues in a manner that will benefit our great city.”



for innovative ideas that will improve mobility for these crucial economic generators.”

Private sector teams interested in competing for this public-partnership will first submit qualifications and conceptual proposals, which will be due by March 2007.

After the initial proposals are reviewed by TxDOT, detailed proposals will be requested. TxDOT will evaluate the detailed proposals to determine which offers the best value to Texas.

The public-private partnership opportunity calls for developing, financing, constructing, operating and maintaining the first segment at I-820 from I-35W to the Northeast Interchange, which includes a new multi-level interchange at I-35W.

This 6.4-mile segment would include the addition of four tolled managed express lanes plus one non-toll lane in each direction.

Proposals will also include development and financing plans for the remaining segments of the North Tarrant Express.

“The North Tarrant Express is ideal for a public-private partnership because it calls for a new level of thinking on a complex project,” said Fort Worth District Engineer Maribel Chavez. “This is a highly traveled corridor providing connections for Alliance Airport, D/FW International Airport and major businesses. We’re looking

## Golden Triangle Update

The Fort Worth voters in 2004 approved a bond program that included \$7.3 million for improvements to Golden Triangle from I-35 to US 377. At that time, this funding only allowed for a four-lane rural roadway (asphalt road with ditches).

Consequently, voters in Tarrant County in May 2006 approved a \$200 million road package, which included a matching \$7.3 million for Golden Triangle.

Now, Golden Triangle will be a concrete divided four-lane road with curbs and gutters. The design of the roadway and the acquisition of right-of-way will take place this year. Construction is expected to begin in 2008 with a completion date sometime in late 2009 or early 2010.

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# City begins team effort to restore public trust

As part of continued efforts to restore public trust and confidence in its financial management process, the City of Fort Worth began a bold, new initiative with creation of a “Strike Team.”

The Strike Team—comprised of 10 accounting, finance and budget experts from various City of Fort Worth departments—brings an unprecedented, holistic approach to meeting current fiscal challenges.

Strike Team members will work hand-in-hand with Finance Department staff for the next 60 to 90 days, ensuring the city’s 2005 and 2006 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR) are completed as soon as possible; evaluating internal controls surrounding cash handling and time and attendance reporting; and managing capital projects and financial reporting.

The approach is similar to emergency response tactics used by City of Fort Worth staff to handle hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the spring tornadoes of 2000. Staff scored high marks, earning the applause of media and dignitaries worldwide, for its team effort



during both natural disasters.

“We’ve enjoyed a lot of national recognition and citizen satisfaction over the years, and we are fully committed to improving our current financial situation,” said City Manager Charles Boswell. “As with hurricanes and tornadoes, we’ve proven we’re at our best in the worst of circumstances. Current challenges are no exception. Our strategy is to build on our strengths and manage our weaknesses with the pride and integrity that our City Council and community have come to expect.”

In other proactive steps to strengthen the city’s financial affairs, the new Audit and Finance Committee is meeting regularly. The six-member committee is made up of Fort Worth City Council members and two members of the community with financial expertise serving ex-officio. One of the community members is a certified public accountant.

The committee will continue to meet monthly to provide additional oversight of the city’s financial management process.

Design is under way for a new, comprehensive technology program that supports the City of Fort Worth’s business functions, including software for payroll and accounts payable processing. An Enterprise Resource Planning Team is looking at best practices and lessons learned from other organizations that have implemented similar programs.

Reorganization of the Finance Department continues, with the search for a Finance director and a reporting coordinator. Both searches should be completed very soon.

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## Neighborhood Empowerment Zones

*Promote housing, economic development and quality services in Fort Worth Central City*

Now there are more reasons than ever to build in Fort Worth’s central city, thanks to an incentives package recently approved by the City Council for any Neighborhood Empowerment Zones (NEZs) designated in the city.

Municipal property tax abatements, fee waivers and release of City liens are available to property

owners who build or rehabilitate property within a NEZ. These incentives are designed to promote affordable housing, economic development and expanded services.

Currently, there are 15 active NEZs in Fort Worth. Those zones include Stop Six, Ridglea Village/Como, Rolling Hills, Riverside, Lake Arlington, Evans/Rosedale,

Hemphill/Berry, Handley, Berry/University, W. 7th/University, Polytechnic/Wesleyan, Magnolia Village, Woodhaven, Trinity Park, Wedgewood Square.

To find out more about NEZs or how to apply, contact the Housing Department at (817) 392-7316 to request an application form or download the application form.

# Fort Worth crime rate lowest in 25 years

No matter how many jobs and attractions a city has, one thing makes it a great place to live and visit—public safety. Recently ranked the ninth safest large city in the country, Fort Worth continues to see a reduction in its overall crime rate.

Even though 2006 statistics aren't final, preliminary indicators show that the city's crime rate is at its lowest in 25 years—a boast few other major cities can share. The city logged the fewest number of murders since 1963. With 51 homicides, the numbers are down 18 percent over 2005, which had 62.

And there's more good news.

Response time for police officers has decreased from 8 minutes in mid-2003 to almost 6 minutes.

That's because the city continually adds 9-1-1 call takers, police



officers and other staff to meet the needs of a burgeoning population. In all, the city added 27 crime fighters in 2006 and 14 call takers.

Success for Fort Worth's distinction as a safe place to live

and work is due in large part to its community-based approach to reducing crime citywide.

Touted nationwide as a prototype for other municipalities, the city's community policing effort started in 1986 when the Police Department was divided into four divisions — North, East, South and West. Today, the department still has four divisions but also boasts 12 Neighborhood Police Districts — mini police stations strategically located throughout the city — 80 Neighborhood Police Officers and 20 storefronts.

In a nutshell, community-based policing puts peacekeepers and their civilian partners, Citizens on Patrol (COPs), in neighborhoods throughout the city, diffusing problems before they become crimes.

## Community policing protecting neighborhoods

On October 15, 1991, 105 people representing eleven neighborhoods attended a twelve-hour training session at the Fort Worth Police Academy. The training was conducted for three hours per night over a four-night period covering legal liabilities, patrol procedures, communications and the penal code.

Nobody anticipated how successful the Citizens on Patrol Program would be. Today, more than 2,000 volunteers remain active in 120 neighborhoods. The program has been credited with being a primary factor in decreases in Part I Crimes especially those of theft, burglary and auto theft.

At the conclusion of each training session, graduates are given a diploma, cap, T-shirt and windbreaker bearing the Citizens on Patrol insignia. The citizen is then required to ride with a uniformed officer and meet with the officer in charge of the program

in their division. The volunteer goes over any regulations established by the commander in charge of the area.

After the training, ride-a-long and meetings, the individual is then released for citizen patrolling.

Each Citizens on Patrol group selects a leader who completes the neighborhoods patrolling schedule and works on program development. The volunteers are furnished with portable radios similar to those issued to police officers to report suspicious activity back to their base station.

The Base Stations may be housed at an individual's home or at the local Field Operations Division. The base unit then contacts police officers for a prompt response.

The citizens can contact the dispatcher if necessary and a channel is available, which allows the responding officer to directly contact the citizens patrol group to obtain

additional information.

The Citizens on Patrol program serves as a catalyst in strengthening neighborhoods, and remains in an expansion mode. Advanced training has been instituted at the Field Operations Divisions and the department has a biannual recognition luncheon for all Citizens on Patrol members and their families.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining a Citizen on Patrol group, please call the coordinator for your patrol division:

- **North Division**, 2500 Houston, 817-740-2118
- **West Division**, 3525 Marquita, 817-392-4706
- **South Division**, 3128 Bolt, 817-922-3418
- **East Division**, 5650 E. Lancaster, 817-871-5220

# Storm water fees at work in District 2

Watershed studies and drainage projects have begun with the help of the city's new stormwater utility program.

Five people in Fort Worth lost their lives in 2004 due to roadway flooding and over 300 homes and businesses were flooded. More than \$500 million in urgent storm water upgrades have been identified to prevent property flooding, street flooding and low water crossings.

In early 2006, council approved the ordinance establishing a storm water utility. This utility collects and manages funds to reconstruct and upgrade storm drain systems and provide operation and maintenance of the storm water system, including storm drains and drainage channels. Fees are collected from all

developed property within the city limits—both residential and non-residential.

Storm water fees generated by the utility are used to benefit the storm water system as a whole and are not designated to a specific council district. Not all drainage projects have been detailed; however, 64 projects are on the list for early implementation and another 200 sites citywide are being considered for future projects.

The early implementation projects are scheduled to begin study or design in 2007. Depending on utility conflicts and other design difficulties, construction of these projects will begin in 2009 or later. Additional

projects will begin design based on the results of a systematic study of drainage problems citywide.

Storm water utility funds will supplement some drainage projects funded by the 2004 bond election so that the scope of the work can be expanded. These projects in District 2 are scheduled to begin in 2007:

- Robin – Denver Storm Drain Reconstruction
- Lebow Channel Watershed Improvements
- Trail Drivers/Schwartz Storm Drain Replacement
- Mercado Channel Erosion Improvement

To report storm water problems (erosion, flooding, blocked inlets) call 817-392-8100.

## Learn more about zoning, land use in our city

All property in the City of Fort Worth is zoned for certain uses and development standards. Many residents of single-family neighborhoods, though, don't realize how properties are zoned.

Some single-family neighborhoods, for example, are zoned to allow duplexes or for multi-family use. This could be a problem for home-owners in the event of a disaster. If a home located within commercial zoning, for example, is damaged in a fire or other disaster where more than 75 percent of the structure is a loss, the home could not be rebuilt without a zoning change. Only about 82 percent of properties in District 2



are zoned consistent with use.

While the City of Fort Worth's Web site contains detailed information on zoning and land use, the Planning Department offers the following answers to some of the most frequently asked questions.

### How do I learn how my property is zoned?

Visit the city's website at [www.fortworthgov.org](http://www.fortworthgov.org). Click on the interactive maps link on the left hand side of the City's menu page, and then select zoning. For more information about your current zoning call the Planning Department at 817-392-8000.

### How do I learn about the Comprehensive Plan future land-use designation for my neighborhood?

Future land-use designations are available via the GIS Online Map Services. Using the same interactive

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# Zoning, land use in the city

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map, click in the box next to Comprehensive Plan Land Use. A solid color on the map indicates future land use. Next, click on View Legend for an explanation of the color used.

If you have questions about your zoning and its consistency with the Comprehensive Plan future land-use map, call the Planning Department at 817-392-8000.

## **What can I do if my zoning is not consistent with the future land-use designation for my neighborhood?**

There are two ways to change inconsistent zoning in neighborhoods: Petition-based rezoning, and City Council-initiated rezoning. In 2000, the Fort Worth City Council established certain procedures that allow zoning changes—requested by property owners—in accordance with the city’s Comprehensive Plan.

Under these procedures, the city can initiate a zoning change in response to a petition signed by property owners representing 50 percent or more of the parcels and 50 percent or more of the land area to be rezoned.

The City Council also established additional procedures to allow council to initiate zoning changes without petitions from affected property owners. This process begins when a council member requests that the city manager prepare a Mayor and Council Communication (M&C), which authorizes the city manager to initiate one or more specific zoning changes.

## **What is the process for petition-based zoning changes?**

Planning Department staff members first meet with interested neighborhoods to: 1) examine existing zoning in the proposed petition area, 2) verify that the requested zoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s future land-use designation, and 3) review requirements for the petition to be valid.

After receipt of the completed petition, staff verify that petition signatures represent 50 percent of the parcels and 50 percent of the land area within the petition boundaries, according to the most recent Tarrant Appraisal District (TAD) records. Staff members also verify that the proposed rezoning is logical and defensible.

Neighborhood representatives then are notified that the petition is valid and asked to schedule a meeting with all affected property owners, the pertinent council member and the Zoning Commission member.

After conducting the meeting, staff members prepare the rezoning application and submit it to the Development Department for the next available Zoning Commission hearing.

## **What is the process for City Council-initiated zoning changes?**

A council member may ask that the city manager initiate the requested zoning changes. Planning Department staff members then verify that the proposed changes are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that the proposed rezoning

is logical and defensible.

City staff may accompany the council member to an informational meeting in or near the area to be considered for rezoning.

Then, planning staff briefs City Council on the results of the meeting and demonstrated level of support for the proposed zoning changes at an appropriate Pre-Council meeting.

Councilmembers indicate to staff whether it wishes to initiate the proposed zoning changes. If so, the city manager places an appropriate M&C on the next regular council agenda. After approval of the M&C, staff prepares the rezoning application and submits it to the Development Department for the next available Zoning Commission hearing.

## **What are some other considerations regarding zoning?**

If an individual property owner is opposed to a petition-based or council-initiated zoning change, it takes a supermajority — seven out of nine votes — by the City Council to effectuate a change. If a property owner has moved forward with plans for development, city legal staff must review those zoning changes to make sure there are not constitutional issues under the “Takings Clause” where the owner would be entitled to compensation.

## **How do I learn more about city-initiated zoning?**

Contact the Planning Department at 817-392-8000.

# 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.

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



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**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 comment card to mail me your feedback about pressing issues in our District neighborhoods. You can remain anonymous if you choose.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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