

## District 6

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## Recalling 2008 and focusing on the future

### Dear fellow citizens,

Previously, we outlined our four priorities: Public safety, infrastructure, fiscal accountability and quality of life.

Regarding public safety, Fort Worth remains one of the safest large cities in the nation. For three years now, District 6 has been one of the safest districts in the city. This is a credit to our citizens who, through community policing and neighborhood watch efforts, continue to work hand-in-hand with our police and code compliance departments.

But in light of our progress, we will not relent in our crime prevention efforts. As we start the New Year, the city and its citizens should remain vigilant to protect our safety and the safety of our homes, our schools and our neighborhoods. The new police storefront on McCart Avenue will help us maintain our momentum in District 6.

Our second priority is infrastructure, and we've devoted considerable effort to improving mobility and air quality. Construction on Southwest Parkway will begin this summer and we're making great headway on the future Southwest to

Northeast commuter rail line (SW2NErail.com). We expect these major projects to be completed and in use by 2012. For the commuter rail line, District 6 will have two modern rail stations, one located on Summer Creek Road (at Sycamore School Road) and the other in the Southcliff Shopping Center (at Granbury Road and I-20).

With respect to street maintenance, the city council continues to be aggressive. Inside this newsletter, you'll find more specific information on recent street improvements.

Turning to fiscal accountability, we've maintained an aggressive audit program. The city audits are expected to be completed and on schedule by the spring of this year. And, despite national economic uncertainty, we delivered a balanced budget without a property tax increase or a significant reduction in public services. We will continue to push to hold the line on taxes and ensure that we account for every penny.

Finally, improving quality of life is an all-encompassing goal. With that in mind, we approved amendments to the gas drilling ordinance.

In District 6, we also developed a master plan for gas wells and pipelines that has been very successful in minimizing negative impacts.

Additionally, we enacted a strong sign ordinance to relieve our neighborhoods of bandit signs, and we continue to make sure our neighborhoods and regional parks are well lit, safe and clean. The natatorium and Southwest Community Park are now in the design phase, and we're optimistic that construction will be underway this year.

While we may see local indications of the national economic slowdown in 2009, I'm confident Fort Worth will fare much better than most. Nevertheless, we are not immune to these hard times. Knowing this, we must remain visionary and focused in our efforts to promote the future economic viability of our region. By working together, we will ensure Fort Worth remains the envy of the nation.

Sincerely,

Jungus Jordan

# Proposal could bring modern commuter rail to Fort Worth

Fort Worth has grown enormously, and the growth is expected to continue well into the future. Not only will there be an increase in the number of people and jobs but, as a result, there will be the potential for greater traffic congestion.

Even with unlimited funds, Fort Worth and the region still could not build enough roads and highways to support the growth. Without finding an alternative solution to the automobile, current and future generations will be forced to live with certain gridlock. Such major congestion will not only affect people, it will greatly impede future business development and job creation.

Many believe a comprehensive commuter rail service should be the future people mover in Fort Worth and our region. Commuter rail is clean, safe and efficient. And, by getting people out of their cars, the rail service will help protect the environment.

To begin researching solutions for rail in our region, Rail North Texas was established. There are four underlying principles that guide the membership of Rail North Texas:

- To embrace transit as an integral element of our regional mobility and



- air quality solutions
  - To promote local control, local options and local priorities
  - To use resources efficiently through public accountability
  - To partner with citizens, businesses and government agencies to develop specific projects with specific revenue and specific accountability
- Local leaders with Rail North Texas believe they have an answer to give people more control over the time they spend in traffic. With the support of local elected officials, business leaders, and the public, a comprehensive regional rail system can be built. In fact, the Rail North Texas initiative has already identified 251 miles of additional rail lines that would reach across seven different counties in North Central Texas. These corridors would give commuters the option to get out of their vehicles and step onto trains with

direct connections between neighborhoods and job centers.

Rail passengers will be able to watch the commuters stuck in traffic as they quickly pass by reading their newspaper or getting ready for the day at work. The possibilities are remarkable.

Of course, the major challenge to the implementation of this rail plan is funding. Elected officials and planners, with input from the public, drafted a proposal that would establish a regional transportation fund supported through a host of funding options. According to the plan, voters in each county would choose the funding options they would use to contribute to the fund. Once the revenue is generated, the fund would be used to pay for rail and other critical transportation infrastructure projects, including roads.

Creating the transportation fund will require the approval of the Texas Legislature and the Governor; and if approved, any new funding sources would require voter approval.

To view the funding sources and explore funding options, you can use the Rail North Texas Revenue Options Worksheet on the Rail North Texas Web site: [www.nctcog.org/RNT](http://www.nctcog.org/RNT).

## Progress continues on road improvements

District 6 has been very active in its efforts to improve mobility and air quality. Along with the major efforts to expand and add major thoroughfares, there's been a considerable amount of work on neighborhood streets, with more to follow this year.

Portions of Sycamore School Road and Hulen Street have been rebuilt and work has begun on McCart Avenue. Soon, work will

begin to improve Granbury Road and complete Summer Creek Road south to McPherson Boulevard.

Additionally, the section of Summer Creek Road south of Altamesa Boulevard should be under construction in the spring. This project was delayed 90 days due to the need to rebid the contract; however, the work is now back on track.

Neighborhood streets aside, other

priorities in District 6 continue to focus on sidewalks and medians. The city made significant progress on sidewalks near schools and in our growing communities. The quality and cleanliness of the city's medians also add to our quality of life. The city is now working to secure agreements with private contractors to maintain our medians. ♦

# New city budget retains tax rate, streamlines services

Creating a leaner, more streamlined city government while maintaining core public services—that's the foundation of Fort Worth's new budget for 2008-09.

The \$1.1 billion budget is up 2.2 percent from the last fiscal year and holds the tax rate steady while still addressing community funding priorities.

Priorities include a continued focus on public safety, homelessness, and streets and infrastructure.

In addition, the proposed budget aims to provide fiscal stability over the next three to five years by increasing the city's available reserves, aligning expenditures with anticipated revenues, reducing the workforce and providing an appropriate compensation package for remaining employees.

Fort Worth's complete budget is available for review online at [www.fortworthgov.org/finance](http://www.fortworthgov.org/finance).

## The Numbers

The budget includes \$536,934,855 in the general fund, supported primarily by city property taxes and sales tax. The budget holds the tax rate at 85.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

The budget does include a small system-wide increase in retail water rates.

## The Savings

Three major reorganizations to improve efficiencies and provide better services were completed with the new budget: The Engineering Department merged with



affected employees were offered other positions, and the large majority of employees accepted those new roles. No sworn police or fire employees are affected by the reduction in force.

## The Expenditures

The lion's share of the budget—\$368 million—is allocated to labor costs. The new budget added 28 new firefighters as well as 34 patrol officers and five sergeants to the Police Department.

Additionally, the budget

includes \$2 million to fulfill the second year of a three-year funding program to create a Housing Trust Fund. The fiscal year 2009-10 budget likely will include the third \$2 million installment to fulfill City Council's commitment to this program, which provides a loan fund benefit for low-to moderate-income populations.

Transportation and Public Works, the Housing Department joined Economic and Community Development, and public information and education professionals were centralized and added to the Community Relations Department.

All totaled, the consolidations save slightly more than \$1 million.

Another major change is the consolidation of the Public Health Department's programs. The vital records and epidemiology services will shift to the Tarrant County Health Department. The city retains Animal Care and Control as well as Consumer Health services, which were moved to the Code Compliance Department. Outreach and Education services were joined with the Community Relations Department.

The budget reduces hours at Fort Worth's Central Library as well as its regional and branch facilities. Library services, however, remain available seven days a week.

The budget includes a reduction in workforce that affected many city workers. However, thanks to hundreds of job vacancies, all

A total of \$2.9 million will be used to implement the city's recently adopted 10-year homelessness initiative, called Directions Home.

In keeping with the city's commitment to a strong infrastructure, the budget increases by \$1.5 million for contract street maintenance and another \$500,000 for the city's bridge maintenance program. This is in addition to money set aside for streets and arterials in the 2004 and 2008 bond programs, the 2007 critical capital program and the \$15 million of unrestricted gas revenues council voted this year to use for transportation needs.

The proposed budget also sets aside approximately \$500,000 in gas well revenues to create a Gas Drilling Management Division. ♦

# New regulations on signs keep city attractive, safe

Each year Fort Worth's Code Compliance department removes more than 30,000 "bandit" signs from public streets.

Yard placards, banners, portable marquees and other signs are regulated by ordinances adopted by the Fort Worth City Council in concert with its strategic goals and mission to become the most livable city in the nation.

That's because unregulated signage can create traffic hazards, make mowing right of ways difficult and become litter that blights neighborhoods.

In general, "bandit signs" detract from the city's image and pose safety hazards. Help keep Fort Worth attractive and safe — and avoid a citation carrying a fine of up to \$5,000 — by following these regulations:

- Political signs must be located on private property and cannot exceed 36 square feet total, with height limited to 8 feet. Political signs cannot be illuminated or contain any moving elements. Political and other private signs are never permitted



in a median, along the edge of a road, attached to a utility pole or attached to a traffic light or signal.

- Window signs cannot exceed 10 percent of the total window area. Maximum window height for calculation purposes is 15 feet.
- Permits must be obtained for temporary signs, including portable signs and banners. They may be displayed for 30 consecutive days, six times per calendar year.
- Homebuilder signs are allowed only in special kiosks at locations approved by the Planning and Development Department and the Transportation and Public Works Department.

Electronic "changeable copy" signs require Board of Adjustment approval and are not allowed in residential areas. Electronic text can change only once every 20 seconds, prohibiting flashing and blinking text and/or graphics that can distract drivers. ♦

## Watch Your City Council meetings online!

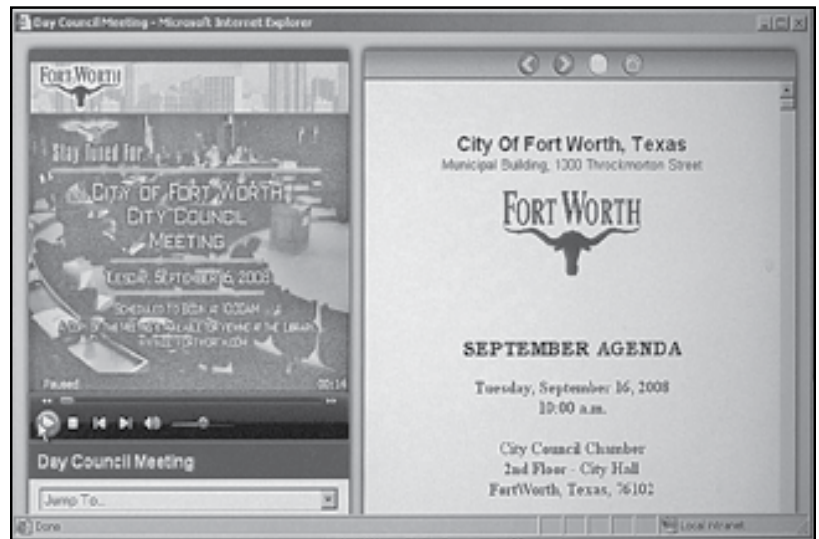
If you recently missed a television broadcast of the Fort Worth City Council meeting, you can now use any computer connected to the Internet to watch live and archived broadcasts of public meetings and other Municipal Channel programming.

Fort Worth's Municipal Channel, which until now has been available only to cable subscribers, is now streamed seven days a week, 24 hours a day at [www.fortworthgov.org](http://www.fortworthgov.org). A link to the service is available on the site's home page.

Interested in just one item on a City Council agenda and don't have time to sit and monitor the playback to see just that 10-minute section? No problem. City Council videos are now indexed to the meeting's agenda. This function is like skipping to a "chapter" on a DVD. A searchable archive of council and board and commission meetings is also available.

This video streaming project was initiated by the council to offer residents and non-residents additional convenient access to information.

NOTE: There are some minimum software requirements for a computer to view the video stream.



Check the city's Web site for more details.

### But wait, there's more!

For those residents who subscribe to AT&T U-Verse, the Fort Worth Community Access Channels are now available on channel 99. Once channel 99 is selected, use the drop down menu to pick the channel that you want to watch. ♦

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# Meet Fort Worth's new police chief: Jeff Halstead

Following a nationwide search, City Manager Dale Fisseler announced the appointment of Jeff W. Halstead as the new Fort Worth police chief. Halstead began his new duties in December.

A 20-year veteran of the Phoenix Police Department, Halstead most recently served as police commander, Homeland Defense Bureau, in that department. He succeeds Police Chief Ralph Mendoza, who retired earlier this year after a 35-year career with the city of Fort Worth.

"This has been a tough decision because we had a number of outstanding candidates, but I believe that Jeff will provide the leadership we need as we enter a new era of labor relations, and that he will continue to make



improvements to an already efficient department," said City Manager Dale Fisseler. "Protection of our residents remains our highest priority."

Halstead began his law

enforcement career with the Phoenix Police Department in 1988 as an officer. During his career there, he served as police sergeant responsible for media relations, traffic enforcement and field training. He also held the rank of lieutenant over several other city bureaus and units.

Halstead has a bachelor's in law enforcement administration from Ottawa University in Arizona and a master's in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University.

Earlier this year, Halstead received the U.S. Attorney's Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee's Award for excellence as part of Arizona's planning team for Super Bowl XLII in addition to serving as the police department's lead planner for that event. ♦

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## Organizations needed to join Adopt-A-Street program

It started nearly 10 years ago, when members of Boy Scout Troop 14 decided they wanted to help keep Dutch Branch Road litter-free. There was no formal program, but within a few years, 20 sections of roadway within the city limits had been "adopted" and were being cleaned several times a year by volunteers.

Over the years, though, participation has diminished. The city is looking to rejuvenate the effort. Neighborhood associations, civic groups, schools, youth organizations, faith-based organizations, businesses and individuals interested in keeping their streets litter-free are invited to join the Adopt-A-Street Program.

In addition to making Fort Worth a cleaner, more attractive city, there



are many other advantages, such as:

- encouraging neighborhood pride
- helping maintain and increase property values
- encouraging people to stop littering
- reducing roadway and waterway pollution
- increasing environmental awareness
- reducing litter removal costs

Adopting a street is easy. Just submit an adoption application to the Code Compliance Department for a half-mile to two-mile stretch of roadway. Once the chosen stretch of roadway is approved, the adopter agrees to clean it at least four times a year. The city provides free trash bags, disposal vouchers and safety vests. Signs recognizing the organization's cleanup efforts will be placed on the boundaries of the adopted roadway once the first clean-up has been completed. Adopters also will receive an official certificate of adoption, and at the end of the program year they will be recognized.

For more information or to submit an application, call 817-392-6572. ♦

# Traffic signal improvements coming in 2009

Relieving congestion and improving air quality are top priorities for Fort Worth and the North Texas region. That's why the city will improve its traffic signal operations in 2009.

Upgrading the system will improve traffic flow, reduce traffic accidents, improve air quality, decrease fuel consumption and manage Fort Worth's traffic more efficiently.

The current traffic signal system, installed in 1986, needs a major overhaul. The overhaul includes a \$3.4 million investment to install intelligent transportation system (ITS) components. The investment will be covered with federal grants and a city funding match.

ITS makes use of the latest modern technologies, including transportation communication systems that relay traffic information to the city's Traffic Management Center. It's a real-time operation that



uses digital cable modems, wireless modems, traffic cameras and control boxes to alert staff to all types of traffic upsets.

Today, 160 intersections are connected to the city's traffic signal system. After installation of the high-speed ITS communication system, 300 additional traffic signals will be connected. Staff will be able to synchronize clocks for coordination, monitor signal operations, detect traffic flow, react to events, change timing and receive automatic malfunction alerts.

As part of the improvement package, 30 new traffic cameras also will be installed in 2009. These cameras "keep an eye" on traffic flow, signal timing and railroad crossing activity. They will allow staff to conduct traffic studies, evaluate responses and share video with the Texas Department of

Transportation as well as the city's 911 Call Center and Emergency Operations Center. ♦

## City of Fort Worth Warrants Online



## Warrants, Fines Available Online

The Fort Worth Municipal Court now offers a convenient way to look up warrants and pay some fines using your personal computer.

All active warrants issued by the City of Fort Worth can be found at [www.fortworthgov.org/applications/warrantsonline](http://www.fortworthgov.org/applications/warrantsonline). The list is updated daily.

Fines and other costs associated with warrants can be paid online via Western Union Quick Collect, over the telephone at 1-800-CALL-CASH (1-800-225-5227) or in person at any Western Union Quick Collect location. Warrants also can be paid by mail or in person, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Fort Worth Municipal Court, A.D. Marshall Public Safety and Court Building, 1000 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth, Texas, 76102.

For more information, call 817-392-6700.

# Helpful Numbers

This section is included to help residents find direct access to some of the most needed services in the communities.

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 <a href="http://www.fortworthgov.org/codecompliance">www.fortworthgov.org/codecompliance</a>
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 .....	Development.....	817-392-7820
Construction services, engineering .....	Engineering.....	817-392-8306
Housing services, concerns, complaints.....	Housing.....	817-392-7540

## *We want to hear from you!*

Please use this form to send your comments about pressing issues in our District. You can remain anonymous if you choose. Once you have completed this form, place it in a stamped envelope and mail it to: The City of Fort Worth, Council District 6, 1000 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth, TX 76102. You can also submit comments or suggestions by e-mail at [district6newsletter@fortworthgov.org](mailto:district6newsletter@fortworthgov.org).

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

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

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

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

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