



City of Austin

City Manager's Office

P. O. Box 1088, Austin, TX 78767
(512) 974-2200, Fax (512) 974-2833

Toby Hammett Futrell, City Manager
Toby.Futrell@ci.austin.tx.us

August 7, 2007

Dear Neighborhood Association Representative:

I would like to take a moment to thank those of you who were able to participate in the Neighborhood Association Town Hall Meeting on July 19, 2007. Your feedback proved invaluable to me as the Proposed Budget for next year was being prepared for Council consideration.

For those who couldn't make it, we had a great turnout with key representatives from more than 100 Austin neighborhoods attending. Hours of engaged dialogue at the Town Hall meeting produced the following five neighborhood priorities (in rank order):

1. Neighborhood Sidewalks and Pedestrian Improvements.
2. Neighborhood Policing and Traffic Enforcement.
3. Traffic Calming.
4. Code Enforcement.
5. Neighborhood Parks, Parks Improvements and Parks Maintenance.

The Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2008 was presented to Council the last week in July. Public presentations along with public hearings on the different components of that budget begin on Thursday, August 9th. Additional public presentations and public hearings are scheduled for August 23rd and August 30th before the Council takes action to adopt a final budget on September 10th, 11th and 12th.

Below is a summary of the investments included in the 2008 Proposed Budget in each of the neighborhood's top five priority areas.

Neighborhood Sidewalks and Pedestrian Improvements

The Proposed Budget appropriates \$1.2 million of capital funds from the 2006 Bond Program for new neighborhood sidewalks and sidewalk repairs as part of the Year Two spending plan. Additionally, Public Works continues to fund the two dedicated sidewalk crews Council recently added to be able to be more responsive to sidewalk requests.

Neighborhood Policing and Traffic Enforcement

The Austin Police Department budget for 2008 continues the Council's policy of maintaining 2 officers per 1,000 population and includes more than \$3 million in additional overtime dollars. Part of the overtime funds will be used to enhance patrol in those neighborhood areas most in need of enhanced patrol, such as the South Central and North Central neighborhoods. Our newly appointed Police Chief Art Acevedo comes to us with extensive experience in traffic enforcement from the California Highway Patrol. Chief Acevedo has committed to a greater focus on traffic enforcement citywide with an eye to the special needs of our neighborhoods that are dealing with increased cut-

through traffic and speeding. Capital dollars are also included to fund preliminary work on the new Northeast Austin Police Substation.

Traffic Calming

The City's traffic calming program began in 1997 and we funded 13 neighborhood traffic calming projects before the program was discontinued as part of budget cutbacks earlier in the decade. The 2008 Proposed Budget reinstates \$900,000 in capital funding to restart the traffic calming program. If approved by Council in the final budget, Public Works will identify up to four neighborhoods for traffic calming installation in 2008. Additionally our traffic calming project guidelines are being revised and updated and should be in front of the Urban Transportation Commission by the beginning of the fiscal year for review and comment.

Code Enforcement

Code enforcement resources have been consolidated in the Solid Waste Services Department and geographic districts have been created to mirror or overlay the existing police command districts. Council has steadily added resources to this under-funded area since 2005, increasing their budget by 80% over the last two years. This includes adding an evening docket for code enforcement cases at Municipal Court with a dedicated prosecutor for these cases. The 2008 Proposed Budget adds an additional five code enforcement positions for inspections and compliance and \$800,000. In the related area of graffiti abatement, we added three more positions in a continuation of efforts to expand cleanups and improve clean up turnaround or response time.

Neighborhood Parks, Parks Improvements and Parks Maintenance

The Proposed Budget addresses this area head-on with an additional 15.5 positions for operational maintenance of our parks and park facilities, as well as four positions for the project management of heavy maintenance and renovation projects from the 2006 Bond Package. Additionally, \$14 million in bond dollars is allocated to Year Two capital improvements for parks facilities, including pools, playscapes and recreation centers, as well as parkland acquisition for neighborhood infill parks.

Top Neighborhood Budget Priority

The top budget priority that came out of the Town Hall meeting was a neighborhood ombudsman function. This Proposed Budget includes adding four positions and \$300,000 to create that ombudsman function to provide community and neighborhood leaders with enhanced development information on significant proposed developments in their neighborhood. That information would include earlier direct notice to designated neighborhood contacts and include a project description, potential variances, compliance with neighborhood plans and full information on the development process and timelines related to that project. These positions will also help track and advance implementation of the neighborhood plans to include an annual report to each neighborhood on the status of their neighborhood plan.

Neighborhood Planning Process Improvements

We collected all of your feedback and ideas on improvements to the neighborhood planning process and have conveyed them to Greg Guernsey, Director of Neighborhood Planning and Zoning, and to Laura Huffman, the Assistant City Manager over this area. I have asked them to consider your ideas for implementation and prepare to report back to the neighborhoods in a follow-up Town Hall meeting this fall.

Individual or Neighborhood-Specific Issues

In addition to the valuable feedback on citywide issues impacting our Austin neighborhoods, you also brought forward a number of individual issues specific to each of your neighborhoods. We have sent those issues out to the departments to assess and respond. I anticipate responding in writing to each written concern you left with us as early as August 10th, although some of the issues will require additional time for research or may involve a staff member contacting you directly for additional information. Jason Maurer in my office is monitoring the follow-up on all of these individual issues and can be reached at 974-2427.

Follow-up Town Hall Meeting

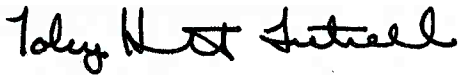
I will be suggesting a follow-up Town Hall meeting this fall after the adoption of the 2008 Budget in early September to review adopted budget resources for the upcoming year, discuss neighborhood planning process improvements and receive input on implementation of the proposed neighborhood ombudsman function, if approved by Council. We will notice all neighborhood associations again at the time that follow up meeting is proposed.

As a reminder, public hearings on the budget are scheduled by departmental groups with budget adoption as follows:

August 9 th	Community Services (Parks, Libraries, Health, Housing)
August 23 rd	Public Safety (Police, Fire, EMS, Municipal Court)
August 30 th	Public Utilities (Austin Energy, Water & Wastewater, Watershed, Aviation)
Sept 10 th	First Reading: Budget Adoption
Sept 11 th	Second Reading: Budget Adoption
Sept 12 th	Third Reading: Budget Adoption

The 2008 Proposed Budget may be obtained online at www.cityofaustin.org. Once more, thank you for your time and care for your neighborhoods and our community.

Sincerely,



Toby Hammett Futrell
Austin City Manager

cc: Laura Huffman, Assistant City Manager
Rudy Garza, Assistant City Manager
Michael McDonald, Assistant City Manager
Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager
Greg Guernsey, Director, Neighborhood Planning and Zoning
Chief Art Acevedo, Austin Police Department
Sondra Creighton, Director, Public Works
Jason Maurer, Assistant to the City Manager