

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE July 31, 2020

TO T.C. Broadnax, City Manager

SUBJECT Budget Priorities

Dear Mr. Broadnax:

It is clear that due to the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this budget cycle and the next will require us to make many difficult financial decisions that will affect the 1.4 million constituents whom I represent.

While this should not be considered an exhaustive list of my priorities for the upcoming fiscal year, I believe that the following items are critical for our residents and must be included in the upcoming budget:

- 1) **Public Safety.** This is our primary responsibility to our residents. Our residents ranked crime as the city's No. 1 problem in our 2020 Community Survey. And thus far in 2020, we have had far too many aggravated assaults and homicides.

Protests over the brutal killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis have highlighted the longstanding needs for reform and systemic change in the country, much of which will require action from the federal, state, and county governments. I am happy to discuss our police policies and procedures, oversight, and how we can provide resources to better serve our residents, but the Dallas City Council last year committed to investing in public safety. I do not believe we should deviate from that course.

We must remain competitive in recruiting and retaining the best possible law enforcement talent and demand that our police department's leadership instill a culture of community policing. We must strengthen the relationship between police and our communities. We must accept that police officers cannot be expected to deal with every vexing situation or to carry the entire burden of reducing crime in our city. And we must be able to prevent the escalation of criminal behavior, meet response-time targets, provide appropriate care, and ensure swift and thorough resolution for the victims of crimes.

With that in mind, the following should be funded in the budget:

- a) **Task Force on Safe Communities Recommendations.** The Task Force's proposals should receive City funding for pilot programs. We are working with the Communities Foundation to help provide private funds for these programs, but I believe we cannot expect these four recommendations, which have been proven effective in curbing crime in other cities, to move forward only as a private sector effort. The Task Force gave us a list of clear, data-supported programs to reduce crime without law enforcement intervention, and I support allocating City funds to move these four specific recommendations forward.
- b) **RIGHT Care Expansion.** This program, with its emphasis on social services and deescalation for those experiencing mental health crises, has proven effective as a pilot program. With the pandemic's strain on people's health, finances, and social structures, we should support a robust expansion of this program to multiple patrol divisions to handle as many mental-health calls as possible.

- c) **Maintaining and Strengthening Code Compliance.** As demonstrated by the pandemic, Code Compliance is an important component of maintaining order and encouraging lawful behavior. We should provide robust Code Compliance services to strengthen our neighborhoods.
  - d) **Continue the Police Hiring Plan.** Our police department shrank considerably for several years, and we cannot afford to take a step backward in our hiring goals. In addition, I would like to see the recommendations from the KPMG staffing efficiency study implemented.
  - e) **Community Police Oversight Board.** Accountability is key in policing, and the Community Police Oversight Board must have the resources it needs to credibly fulfill its mission.
- 2) **Salary Cuts.** I am willing to consider reductions in some areas to improve the City's efficiency and balance our budget. However, we have experienced years of growth in our payroll. Salaries, particularly among the highest-paid City government employees, should be reasonably reduced before any service cuts, which add to the burden of residents, are considered. These compensation-reduction steps have already been taken at numerous private sector employers due to declining revenue, and we need to take them as well.

The savings achieved through these reductions should be used to provide tax relief to residents and businesses, maintain current services, and fund any new services required as a result of the pandemic, to the extent possible.

Therefore, I propose the following tiers and cuts for civilian employees:

- a. \$250,000+: 25% reduction
  - b. \$200,000-\$249,999: 20% reduction
  - c. \$160,000-\$199,999: 16% reduction
  - d. \$140,000-\$159,999: 12% reduction
  - e. \$120,000-\$139,999: 9% reduction
  - f. \$100,000-\$119,999: 6% reduction
  - g. \$80,000-\$99,999: 3.5% reduction
  - h. \$70,000-\$79,999: 2% reduction
  - i. \$60,000-\$69,999: 1% reduction
  - j. No cuts for employees making less than \$60,000 annually.
- 3) **Reorganization and Consolidation of Departments and Offices.** Taxpayers deserve the most efficient City government possible. We need to be aggressive in our efforts to reorganize offices and departments to eliminate redundant, underperforming, or inappropriate functions. We also need to consider how we can consolidate services into the same reporting structures to break through silos in ways that help us save money. I will be looking for such proposals in your proposed budget.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters. I look forward to reviewing your proposed budget and to having a robust discussion about the best ways to help our residents during this difficult time.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office.

Sincerely,



Eric Johnson  
Mayor

c: M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer