

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE July 15, 2021

TO T.C. Broadnax, City Manager

SUBJECT FY 2021-2022 Budget Priorities

Dear Mr. Broadnax:

As promised during our recent meeting, I am sharing with you my top budget priorities for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

This budget comes at a critical time for our city. Our decisions during this budget cycle will determine how quickly Dallas is able to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic and whether our city and its people will be prepared for the demands of the future.

While I will continue to advocate strongly for programs, policies, and plans that can set Dallas up for success in the decades to come, I believe our primary focus this fiscal year must be on improving basic services. Our residents depend on these services, and it is imperative that the city council and city staff rally around these concepts and goals. Support for the basics — as well as a continued emphasis on implementation and follow-through — will be the key to ensuring that the entire city of Dallas, for which I am the sole elected representative, can reach its full potential.

Accordingly, I have divided my top priorities into two areas: public safety and core city functions. While the below list is not comprehensive in terms of my preferences, it represents what I believe are the highest priorities in the upcoming fiscal year's budget, which will be bolstered by federal American Rescue Plan Act funds.

Public safety

- **Hire 275 new police officers.** This is 125 more officers than what your planned fiscal year 2021-22 budget called for last year and 70 officers above the expected attrition. With federal funding available through the American Rescue Plan Act, we should intensify our police hiring efforts. To help meet this goal, we should also adopt a robust lateral hiring program, which can help us get officers on the street faster.
- **Mark police and fire salaries to market rates.** Retention is crucial to public safety. We made a commitment in our meet-and-confer agreement to keep pace with the market to help us retain talent, and we should honor that agreement this year.
- **Improve 911 call center staffing.** We need more 911 call takers, and we need to reduce burnout and turnover. Increase the authorized number of positions to 125. Use retention bonuses, pay increases, and other benefits to encourage hiring and retention for these difficult-to-fill positions.
- **Task Force on Safe Communities programs.** We should continue to fund all the Mayor's Task Force on Safe Communities programs with general fund money, but we should also deploy federal funding to boost our blight remediation and violence interruption efforts that are aimed at improving public safety and strengthening neighborhoods.

Core city functions

- **Streets and sidewalks.** We should fully fund our annual allocation for all 12 focus areas that city staff identified in the Sidewalk Master Plan. We should also increase funding for streets in the general fund to get us as close as possible to net-zero degradation for the year, as laid out in the Five-Year Infrastructure Management Program.
- **Sanitation services.** We should pay sanitation drivers the local industry standard to ensure adequate staffing. We should also make budgetary adjustments and program changes needed to ensure that every single month of bulk-and-brush pickup during the upcoming fiscal year is on time.
- **Permitting.** All options should be on the table to reform our permitting process. Our goal should be to become the most efficient major city in Texas when it comes to processing and approving building permits for commercial properties and multifamily and single-family homes. Anything less than striving for that goal will put Dallas at a competitive disadvantage.

I appreciate your continued attention to our policy agenda, and I look forward to reviewing your proposed budget and to working with you and the City Council to ensure that it meets the needs of our residents during this important year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Johnson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eric Johnson
Mayor