

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE September 13, 2019

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Responses to Budget/Policy Questions**

Following an NBC5 report on September 10 about City funding for social programs, Councilmember Narvaez requested information about social programs included in the FY 2019-20 proposed budget. Below is the additional information provided in response to his inquiry.

1. Expanded cultural and recreational programming

The Office of Arts and Culture (OAC) will be increasing its cultural contracts by \$376,000 for “pop-up” cultural programming centers. These funds will allow us to grow our arts programming in underserved neighborhoods (based on data collected in the 2018 Dallas Cultural Plan). We estimate this will provide an additional 100 arts events for Dallas residents. Furthermore, \$250,000 in funding for the Juanita J. Craft House will support critically needed repairs and programming in South Dallas, specifically the historic Phyllis Wheatley neighborhood. Early community conversations indicate enthusiasm about telling the story of Dallas’ Civil Rights era and leaders and working with youth and the broader community to build civic engagement. Lastly, all of OAC’s cultural funding programs, totaling \$6.5 million in the proposed budget, have had funding criteria adjusted to advance our departmental goals for increasing equity and diversity and access to arts. FY 2019-20 is our first complete fiscal year under this new cultural plan.

Park and Recreation (PKR) piloted the Teen Late Night Program (TRec) at five recreation centers from June 14 to August 24. Programs were hosted from 7-11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings throughout the summer. During the pilot, PKR staff observed that most teens departed the program between 10-10:30 p.m. both evenings; based on the pilot, we do not believe 24-hour operations would be effective. PKR will continue to monitor growth and make programmatic changes as necessary, including but not limited to the addition or reduction of program hours and review of our current program deployment. As we prepare to roll out the program at seven additional sites (if funding and staffing is approved), we will closely monitor attendance at those sites as well.

PKR is also working very closely with the OAC to deploy additional cultural programs within our TRec/Late Night Programs. This summer, PKR observed participating teens were very receptive to the various cultural programs implemented at our Late Night and Teen Camp program sites. It is our goal to strengthen this area and also increase

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the level of “traditional” recreation, health resources and employment and trade opportunities for our participants (age 13-17). We want to make a variety of programming available for teens—technology, sports, health and wellness, leadership, and socialization are areas of importance. Options for programming in these categories are limitless, and we will continue to partner with community organizations and other City departments to effectively roll out these programs.

2. Legal defense support for separated families

The proposed FY 2019-20 budget makes no changes to the civil legal immigration services budget item. The civil legal immigration services program was established in response to Welcoming Plan recommendations to increase access to civil immigration legal services for Dallas families impacted by immigration enforcement. This \$100,000 item would continue in FY 2019-20, and if the proposed budget is approved, representation services would continue. More than 8,000 residents on the Dallas Immigration Court’s docket are without legal representation.

3. A ticket forgiveness program for parking, code, moving, and other violations

The Municipal Court has and will continue to consider ability to pay citations. In lieu of payment, we offer options such as community service and time served. Additionally, payment plans are offered. During warrant roundup, the prosecution and/or judiciary offer creative options to many defendants who appear.

The City does not have a parking ticket/citation forgiveness program. However, per City ordinance, the hearing officer may decide to dismiss a citation based on evidence presented at the hearing. Adjudication Officers may also dismiss tickets based on their judgment of the situation; for example, issues with the citation itself, extenuating circumstances such as mechanical trouble, or financial hardship for seniors or disabled residents may lead the officer to dismiss the citation or issue a warning instead.

Code officers generally have discretion in issuing citations. For instance, officers may issue citations immediately or give residents time to comply before issuance. State law does not typically cover citation timelines related to city ordinances and codes. The table below outlines the top 10 neighborhood code citations and their compliance timeframes.

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Neighborhood Code Citation Matrix		
Violation Type	Immediate Citation/Fine Issued	Code Compliance Time Frame (Citation may be issued after compliance time frame)
Bulk Trash	Yes	Immediately
Litter*	No	7-10 days
High Weeds*	No	7-10 days
Parking on Unapproved Surface	Yes	Immediately
Substandard Structure*	No	10-30 days
Graffiti	No	7-10 days
Illegal Outside Storage*	No	24 or 7-10 days
Bandit Signs*	No	Immediately
Street/Alley/Sidewalk Obstruction*	No	15 days
Illegal Dumping	Dallas Marshal's Office	7-10 days (no traceable evidence – litter case)

***Officer may issue citation immediately or may grant extension**

Code Compliance (CCS) does not establish payment plans for citations; this falls under the jurisdiction of the appropriate court. Also, CCS does not forgive code fines, since fines are owed to the court, not the department.

4. Benefit coordinators helping residents navigate local and federal programming dollars

While the City does not have dedicated “benefit coordinators,” departments that offer social services (Community Care, Homeless Solutions, etc.) have case managers on staff who provide clients with information about various programs and how they can access those benefits.

All the above programs fall under the purview of the City of Dallas. Policy changes can be made at the direction of the City Council.

Please contact me or Jack Ireland, Director of the Office of Budget, if you have more questions.


M. Elizabeth Reich
Chief Financial Officer

- c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, City Attorney (Interim)
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Billerae Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
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Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
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