

Political Forum



Priorities in Proposed Budget Come From Citizens, Leaders

by Mayor James Hahn

To all the City employees, thank you for all of your hard work, particularly during these tight budget times. It's been a tough time for the economy. While the City faces difficult financial challenges, I am committed to partnering with the City employees to do more with less.

This year, we went straight to the people of Los Angeles to help determine our budget priorities. As part of my budget process, I met with neighborhood council representatives who overwhelmingly told me that public safety is priority one, followed by street maintenance.

Working with the City Council, general managers and many other community leaders, I developed a budget that reflects these priorities:

- Making Los Angeles the safest big city in America;
- Improving the quality of life in neighborhoods;
- Creating more economic development;
- Increasing the quantity and quality of housing; and

- Making City government more efficient and cost effective.

In the last three years, we focused heavily on improving recruitment and retention at LAPD, reinstating community policing, and bringing new leadership to the department. As a result of our efforts, violent crime went down in every category citywide last year – homicides were down 22 percent. I want to continue that momentum. My budget proposal includes funding for a modest expansion of the police force and puts dozens of additional officers back into our neighborhoods by redeploying sworn officers who are currently doing administrative jobs.

My proposed budget also delivers services that people want by funding street maintenance at record levels. We will improve twice as many miles of streets as last year.

The proposed budget also fulfills a promise that I made to create a \$100 million Housing Trust Fund to increase the quality and quantity of housing in our neighborhoods. Los Angeles is now home to the largest local housing trust fund in America.

I want to thank you all for your energy, enthusiasm and effort in serving the people of Los Angeles. Together, we are working to make Los Angeles the best city it can be and I will continue to work with you to meet our goals.



Mayor Hahn presenting his Fiscal Year 2004-05 Proposed Budget.



Hiring Employees Is Critical, Even During Freeze

by Dennis Zine Councilmember, District 3

Recently, as Chair of the Los Angeles City Council Personnel Committee, my actions have come under serious scrutiny. Members of the City Council, including myself, have been chastised by the local media for allowing various departments to hire additional employees while the City is under a hiring freeze. However, I believe it is important that as employees of this City, you know what is fact, and what is fiction.

A hiring freeze is not a hiring moratorium; the City is not going out of business. Taxpayers expect the police and fire departments to be ready when needed; taxpayers expect their trash to be picked up, the libraries to be open, the parks staffed, the streets and sidewalks maintained, and our trees trimmed. All that takes people.

Members of the media and the public are often unaware that many of these positions are grant-, fee- or special-fund-supported. Additionally, many of these positions are seasonal, such as pool attendants or summer athletic staff at the parks. Moreover, many of these positions actually generate revenue for the City, such as Department of Transportation traffic officers who generate more than twice their cost in parking tickets paid and vehicle

Council District 3 includes these communities:

- Woodland Hills
- West Hills
- Canoga Park
- Reseda
- Winnetka
- Tarzana

impound fees.

The City Council Personnel Committee, working in concert with the City Administrating Officer (CAO) and the Budget and Finance Committee, scrutinized each and every request for personnel. We looked at the need for the job that is to be done and the funding source to pay for the job. Every single position that was approved by the Personnel Committee, or by the City Council, was clearly justified.

The City workforce may have grown over the last 14 months by 239 people, but the total budget has been reduced by millions, and the service the City provides to its citizens has been improved. I am proud that, even in these tough economic times, our City employees continue to dedicate their lives to public service.

Each month, Alive! invites political leaders to speak directly to City and DWP employees and retirees. Alive! brings you these views as a public service. The opinions of those on this monthly column are independent of Alive! and the City Employees Club of Los Angeles.



Happy

Father's Day

The Club wishes all dads a great day Sunday, June 20. Take a moment and congratulate yourself for the awesome job you do every day of the year. Best wishes from the Club for a job well done!



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