

NEW CONSENSUS POSITION

Position on Financing City Government 1989 and Beyond

JUN 13 1989

Support of financial policies that:

1. are guided by sound principles of fiscal responsibility and operational efficiency;
2. provide current revenues be sufficient to support expenditures;
3. are based on concepts of appropriate long range planning methods;
4. are based on diversified sources of revenue.

Specifically support:

1. the use by the city of additional sources of revenues in order to decrease the reliance on property taxes for funding the General Fund Budget;
2. the maintenance of debt service costs for all types of financing at a level not to exceed 20% of the General Fund revenues;
3. the maintenance of a General Fund undesignated ending fund balance whose level will be a minimum of 5% of the total expenditures less debt service costs;
4. the setting of user fees and charges by the city at levels sufficient to recover the cost of providing those services, except for those services associated with provision for the general welfare and common good;
5. the development of financial and management processes and systems which result in operational efficiency and cost containment.

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City Government Committee



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FINANCING CITY GOVERNMENT - 1989 AND BEYOND

INTRODUCTION

The membership of the League of Women Voters of Houston approved, at its 1988 annual meeting, an emergency study of the financial problems facing the city of Houston as it seeks to deal with tax pressures in funding that provide for essential city services. How will we close the gap between revenues and expenditures? Can new sources of revenue be found? Or is the answer more likely to be found in controlling expenditures and long-range planning in the management of city finances? This study examines how the city of Houston is financed, what new forces affect its current practices, and what are some possible solutions to the city's current and future financial problems.

CAUSES OF HOUSTON'S FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Houston's current, and continuing future funding problems came with the decline in its oil-based economy. Seemingly overnight, the city was faced with a recession of substantial proportions. With the recession came declining property and sales tax revenues; increasing debt service costs for the expansion of city services and facilities; and a sharp reduction in available federal funds. The city faced several years of annual budget crises. These budget pressures forced a large property tax rate increase for FY 89 and will continue to cause budget problems in the foreseeable future.

FINANCING MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT IN TEXAS

Most American cities have been limited in their fund-raising abilities by long-outdated constitutional provisions that are very difficult to change. This has certainly been the case for Texas cities. Legally, Texas cities are constitutionally limited to three tax sources of funds: general property taxes, miscellaneous occupation taxes, and sales taxes. Additionally, the legislature has authorized revenues from such non-tax sources as licenses and permits, fines and forfeits, charges for services, and the local share of certain state-collected taxes plus federal and state subsidies and grants. The state constitution further authorizes municipalities to issue bonds to fund capital improvements with the stipulation they must provide an annual sum sufficient to pay the interest and retire the principal without exceeding legal tax limits. Texas cities may charge a franchise fee based on a percentage of gross receipts on all public utilities operating within their jurisdiction. Municipalities have the authority to own and operate water, electric and gas utility systems. (Houston owns and operates only water/wastewater systems.) For such services, some cities collect fees large enough to generate profits transferable to general funds. (Houston does not.) In 1980, voter approval allowed many Texas cities to adopt a 1% local sales tax which the state collects and returns to the cities monthly.

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

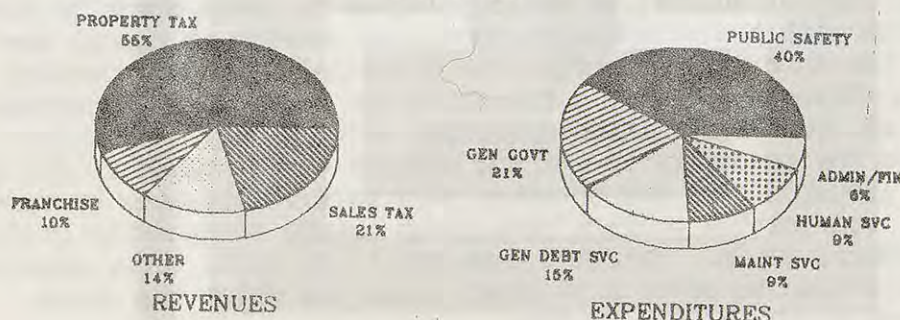
Where the money comes from depends on what type of fund being discussed. It is of great importance in any discussion of financing city government to understand that there are different funds for different purposes and with different funding sources. There are essentially three different types of operating funds in the Houston's annual budget:

1. the General Operating Fund which provides for the support of most basic services. It is tax and fee supported.
2. four Enterprise Accounts for the departments or divisions which operate like private enterprises. (Water, wastewater, aviation, civic center.) User fees pay for all costs, including their capital improvement debt service.
3. Special Revenue Funds which include a variety of accounts some of which, such as Sign Administration, resemble Enterprise Accounts and are fee supported. (These funds are dedicated to one specific operation.)

Enterprise Accounts and Special Revenue Funds are self-supporting, but not money making. Fee rates are determined by cost allocation studies. From a policy and philosophical point-of-view, the city does not consider fees as a revenue source, but rather as payment for service delivered. Nor are fees to be confused with taxes which are charges levied to meet the public need of government. Legally, therefore, if more is charged for a service than it costs to provide, that charge is considered a tax. Cities cannot levy a tax without state authorization.

For FY 89, Houston relies on the three tax sources of property, sales and franchise fees for 86% of its total revenues for it's General Operating Fund. The property tax accounts for 55% of budgeted revenues; sales taxes account for 21%; franchise fees account for 10% and other tax and non-tax sources (including fines and forfeits, license and permits fees, charges for services and inter government transfers etc.) account for 14% of the total budgeted revenues.

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY SOURCE AND USE OF FUNDS FY 1989



Property Taxes

Property taxes are by far the largest source of revenue for the general fund. This tax applies to all industrial, commercial and residential property within the jurisdiction of the city. Taxable values for all real and personal property within Houston are determined by the Harris County Appraisal District to be the market values as of January 1st of the current year. (Since January 1, 1982, all taxing jurisdictions within the District collect taxes based on the determinations of the Appraisal District.)

The three components of the property tax system in Texas are: appraisal to determine value of the property; appraisal review to settle disputes about the value; and the tax unit (the city in this discussion) to set the tax rate and collect the taxes.

Under the Property Tax Code rollback provisions, the taxing unit determines the tax rate each year based on new appraisal figures that will produce the same amount of revenue as generated the previous year. A rollback is initiated when the taxing unit sets a tax rate greater than 8% above the rate needed to produce this same revenue. Voters may petition for an election to limit the tax increase to no more than 8%. In 1988, Houston's property tax rate was increased by 10 cents which was an increase of 18.9%, thus bringing the rate to 63 cents per \$100 valuation. This tax-rate increase represents the adjustment of taxes to where they would have been if property values had remained stable, plus the additional adjustment to compensate for a 4% annual inflation rate. The Center for Public Policy points out if the city's spending continues in constant dollars unadjusted for the 4% annual inflation rate, but taxes are paid in current dollars with the adjustment, the tax bill will increase by almost 50% in ten years.

Dallas, Fort Worth and San Antonio also had property tax hikes in 1988 to offset the loss of revenues in the tax base. Austin had a hefty 30.5% property tax increase this past fiscal year, but decreased its rate 8.6% in the current fiscal year by drastically trimming its work force.

Historically, Texas local governments have relied on the property tax as their principal source of revenue due to constitutional and statutory restraints. It remains the single most important revenue source today and represents about 35% of all Texas local income. The total amount collected in 1986 was almost \$9.7 billion.

Although cited as providing a large and generally stable base, the general property tax is criticized as being inflexible, since during times of rising prices, assessed values rise much more slowly than the general price level. Thus, when governments need more money, the lagging tax base fails to provide it. Conversely, when prices fall, valuations drop at a slower rate.

In its assessment on the state's tax system, the Select Committee on Tax Equity voiced repeated concern over local government's growing reliance on sales and property taxes and stated that for many local governments these major taxes are approaching their practical limits. The Committee also pointed to the property tax as being the most notable among taxes that "impose special burden on certain Texans" calling it a tax that "puts a special strain on the equity of the tax system as it applies to low income elderly and others whose incomes are not rising to match rising tax burdens." The Committee's concerns, however, were not translated into recommendations for change in property taxes except for one relating to business inventories.

Five Texas cities were listed among the top fifty cities by City and State magazine in its "3rd Annual City Financial Report." The magazine ranked the cities by the amount of money in their total funds for FY 88. The following comparisons of the five Texas cities surveyed comes from this report. It shows not only how the Texas cities ranked with the top 50 cities of the nation, but also how they compared with each other in some selected categories.

TEXAS CITIES RANKED BY REVENUES - ALL FUNDS (1 - 50)		ALL FUNDS TOTAL REVENUE (\$ MILLION)	PROPERTY TAX REVENUE \$ PER CAPITA	YEAR-END GENERAL FUND BALANCE AS % OF EXPENDITURES	LONG-TERM DEBT \$ PER CAPITA
#10 Houston	\$905.5	(23)	\$203.7	(38) 2.68%	(19) \$719.6
#12 Dallas	\$675.6	(24)	\$186.9	(40) 1.40%	(21) \$683.1
#37 Austin	\$347.8	(29)	\$135.7	(19) 6.68%	(10) \$951.0
#41 Ft. Worth	\$333.3	(18)	\$248.6	(11) 11.90%	(2) \$1,463.9
#43 San Antonio	\$299.1	(38)	\$72.3	(1) 21.93%	(29) 559.1

City and State reports the percentage of each of the general fund revenues supported by property taxes as of FY 88. Houston relied on property taxes to support 49.9% of its general fund in FY 88 (55% in the FY 89), while Dallas' property taxes supported 41% of its total general fund budget; Austin's supported 28%; Fort Worth's 52%; and San Antonio's 25%.

Whether the property tax is considered one of the worst taxes known to the civilized world, or a stable and reliable revenue source, it will probably remain the most important source of revenue for the city in the foreseeable future, since alternative taxes are few and each has disadvantages. Even with improved property-tax assessments it is becoming increasingly more difficult for the general property tax to fund the costs of services citizens want.

Sales Taxes

The sales tax constitutes another large and important source of revenue for Houston's general fund.

The Texas legislature enacted a state sales tax law in 1961; it is now the most important source of state revenue. In 1987, the state sales tax was raised to 6%, and its base broadened to include utility services, data processing, trash

collections, and horticultural and yard work. (In 1987 sales tax collections totalled 44.6 billion, or 45% of state revenue. These revenues are projected to increase.)

Houston's sales tax of 8% includes Texas sales tax of 6%; Houston sales tax of 1%; and Metropolitan Transit Authority sales tax of 1%. These last two additional taxes were voter approved. The taxes are collected by the State Comptroller with the city's and METRO's portion returned to them on a regular basis. A 2% collection fee is paid to the Comptroller.

The sales tax is sensitive to economic conditions. In times of economic well-being, sales taxes produce adequate revenue, but decline with recessions. Much of the sales taxes' growth since 1983 is credited to rate increase and expansion of the base rather than to economic growth.

Although the increased use of sales taxes has produced large amounts of revenues, it has also produced administrative problems and inequities. Some consider the tax less painful than paying a large tax bill at one time. Others are opposed to the sales tax as being regressive since those with the smallest incomes spend a larger percentage of their money for basic goods and services than do the wealthy. The tax thus falls heaviest on those least able to pay. For these reasons, the League of Women Voters of Texas opposes the sales tax as a revenue source.

Houston's sales tax rate of 8% is one the highest in the nation. Although the city's administration has taken a position to widen the sales-tax base to include more services, City Council is not in support of such proposed legislation. The heavy reliance on the sales tax for state and local governments revenues is not likely to change in the foreseeable future.

Franchise Fees

Franchise fees constitute 10% of the budgeted revenues for the FY 89 General Operating Fund. A franchise is the granting of the use of a city asset to a private company for providing a service. The Texas courts have determined that this fee is fundamentally a street or alley rental charge. The franchise fee was adopted in 1907. Franchises for Houston include:

1. Electrical Franchise

Electric utility franchise fees are based on the gross receipts of the previous calendar year. Houston Lighting and Power's fee is based on 4% of its gross receipts and Gulf States Utilities' fee is based on 3% of its gross receipts. These rates are set by contractual agreements.

2. Gas Franchise

The city negotiated a new contract with Entex in 1988, increasing the franchise fee from 3% for all users to 4% for small users in 3-1/2% for large users.

3. Telephone Franchise

The telephone companies operating within the city have franchise agreements compensating the city for the use of streets and other rights-of-way. A new franchise agreement with Southwestern Bell has increased the fee from 3% to 4-1/2% of gross receipts, resulting in \$14.8 million in the FY 1989 budget.

4. Other Franchises

Other franchise fee revenues come from cable television, limousine companies and basement-loading docks.

Franchise fees, like property and sales taxes, are driven to a large extent by the economy. Just as all taxes are ultimately paid by the public, taxes levied on businesses are passed along to users of the product, usually in the form of higher prices, lower wages or reduced profits.

In Texas, both state and local governments rely heavily on direct business taxes. Litigation over issues of equity and administrative procedures have had a serious impact on the revenues realized from these taxes. Houston, for example, will suffer a substantial loss from state-shared bank franchise fees after the bank's court challenge to the state tax. The Tax Equity Committee has recommended that the state should reconstruct its entire business tax structure.

Other Revenue Sources

All other local government revenues from both tax and non-tax sources constitute 14% of the total revenues supporting the FY 89.

1. Fines and Forfeitures

These sources of revenues generated approximately \$21 million of the total funding of the FY 89 general fund budget. The Municipal Court produces revenue from parking and traffic violations (Class C misdemeanors). This source of revenue has consistently been below budget throughout the FY 89, and is projected to remain below budget by approximately \$3.4 million in FY 89. The city's long-range financial report, however, projects an annual increase in this source of revenue due to population growth.

Other revenues in this category include library fines, false alarm penalties and other miscellaneous fines.

2. Licenses and Permits

This category of various licenses and permit charges mainly comprises revenues coming from building inspections and related license and permit fees such as building, electrical and plumbing permits. To determine the full cost of these services and to establish full-cost recovery through fees, a Building Inspection Revenue Fund has been setup. Eventually this Special Fund will become an Enterprise Fund when the permitting process is totally self supporting. With this change the total remaining revenues total approximately \$7 million in support of the general fund budget, or 1% of the total budget. The city's long-range financial projection shows growth only in health permits based on service industry growth.

3. Charges for Services

This revenue category totals approximately \$50 million in support of the FY 89 General Fund Budget and represents 7% of the total budget.

These revenues are charges made by the city for activities such as ambulance service, library and parking fees, golf course fees, concessions, platting services, certified copies, tennis court fees, vending machines etc. One of the largest items in this account is for services performed for other funds, such as the inter-fund transfer from the Aviation Department's Enterprise Fund to the General Operating Fund for fire protection. It is projected that any increase in these funds will come from population growth.

4. Intergovernmental Revenues

This revenue category totals as approximately \$11 million in support of the FY 89 General Fund Budget and represents 1.48% of the total budget.

These revenues include the bank franchise fee, the mixed drink and bingo tax, and federal and state grants. The grants include among others, those for Women and Infant Care, Family Planning and Maternal Care.

Federal and state grants are accounted for based on each grant's fiscal period which usually differs from the city's fiscal year. That portion of the grant which affect an individual department or fund is included in the appropriate budget i.e. Health Department, Aviation Department and Police Department grants. Comprehensive budgets for major programs are accounted for in separate budgets - Community Development, Block Grants, Job Training Partnership Act, Nutritional and Recreational Programs for the Aging.

5. Interest on Investments

Interest income on investments totals approximately \$8 million in support of the FY 89 General Fund Budget and represents 1.08% of the total budget. There is no projected change in this income source in the city's Long Range Financial Projection.

DEBT FINANCING

Each fiscal year, concurrent with the Budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) deliberations, Houston adopts an Annual Financing Plan. This plan is a detailed schedule of financing to implement the upcoming fiscal year's Budget and CIP.

The city has financial advisors whose primary function is the issuance of debt i.e. they advise the city on when to finance, how to approach the financing and how the city should maintain its relationship with the rating firms and the investment community. Although the financial advisors coordinate the city's efforts, the ultimate responsibility on financial matters lies with the senior elected city officials - the Mayor and the City Controller.

Governments incur debt for several reasons. In one instance, cash may be needed before the actual revenue is collected. Short-term note issues, called Tax and Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANS), are sold to pay for cash-flow requirements prior to the collection of ad valorem tax revenue. They are sold by competitive bid, are backed by a general revenue pledge and have an 11 month maturity. Both principal and interest are paid at maturity.

When local government desires to finance a major capital improvement project and sources of revenue are insufficient, it may issue bonds or use other methods of borrowing. Called Public Improvement Bonds (PIBS) or General Obligation Bonds, these bonds are issued for public sale in support of the Capital Improvement Plan for that fiscal year. For example, in 1987, Houston presented an issue of Public Improvement Bond (totaling \$80 million) to permit the continuation of the street and bridge program plus fire, police, library, parks, and storm drainage projects. The issue was sold by competitive bid and secured by the ad valorem pledge. In February 1988, a \$157.2 million issue was sold.

Houston also uses revenue issues backed by user fees or dedicated tax sources. Over time, such use has increase more and more rapidly. Houston's FY 87 Financing Plan called for issuing \$5 million Water Revenue Bonds intended to pay for upgrading water distribution lines and for switching from ground to surface water, and for two treatment facilities. The bonds were sold by competitive bids and secured by water system revenue pledge. In addition, a Sewer System Revenue Bond issue of \$135 million was proposed for the purpose of completing contracts on the Southwest Treatment Plant. These bonds, sold by competitive bid, are secured by sewer system revenue pledge. Such issuance of Revenue Bonds will probably be needed at an accelerated rate until Houston's infrastructure complies with federal and state mandates for environmental standards for water and sewer systems.

Some debt or tax obligations are entered into by contract or assumed by annexing adjoining communities.

The financing of large vehicles and equipment purchases by issuance of notes called Certificates of Obligation (COs) was first used in FY 87 with an issue of \$16.5 million of debt. Previously, such purchases were bought with Federal Revenue Sharing Funds. This revenue sharing program was discontinued by the Federal Government in FY 87. In FY 88, an additional \$18.5 million of COs was issued, and COs were again proposed in FY 89 with an \$14.5 million issue for equipment and vehicle purchases. The final decision for the current year is uncertain, since the city council disapproved the proposal. It is important to note that COs do not require voter approval. In order for Houston to acquire a multi-year obligation that is not called a "debt" and that does not require an election, it must have the right to cancel the obligation at the end of the budget year. The repayment can not go beyond the life of the vehicle and is secured by the city's promise to pay or vendor reclaim of the vehicle. Interest for these notes is at a higher rate than that of the General Obligation Bonds. The notes are sold by competitive bid and are secured by tax revenues. Although they are a general debt obligation and are included in the debt service fund, they do not have a ceiling cap, nor are they included in the total debt that does have a specified percent limit.

There are no easy answers to the question how to fund these vehicle purchases, but the hard fact remains that COs contribute an additional burden to the already large tax-supported debt and greatly inflate the cost of equipment and vehicles. The rise in debt-service costs is one of the basic problems in controlling expenditures.

State and municipal bond rating do not set the interest rates on bonds, but they do affect the interest rates for new bond issues. Standard and Poor's municipal bond rating process involves consideration of such economic factors as the diversity and growth of area economic opportunities, such debt factors as debt burden and history, such administrative factors as tax rate, and debt limits, and such fiscal factors as trends in assets and liabilities, especially pension liabilities. Reputation is also important. Rating provide investors with an informed opinion on the creditworthiness of a particular issue. Houston's Moody's rating is Aa, and its Standard and Poor's rating is AA.

GENERAL DEBT SERVICE

An increase in local debt raises points of view from that of "no debt is best" to "capital expenditures benefit tomorrow's taxpayers and paying the debt appropriately can shift some of the cost to the future." For some, if government can meet debt payments and normal operating expenses, plus refinancing debt through the market, then the debt is acceptable. From any point-of-view, servicing a debt can be a tremendous burden to the community. A commonly used danger sign is the debt's service cost approaching 20 to 25% of the total budget.

The increase in Houston's debt service costs has risen steadily since FY 85 and is caused primarily by the Public Improvement Bonds sold to support the city's Capital Improvement Plan. In the past two years, the cost relating to Certificates of Obligation sold for the purchase of equipment and vehicle has been added to debt service costs. Since General Obligation Bonds require voter approval, city officials believe such approval indicate public recognition of needs and a willingness to pay for them.

In FY 88, Houston had a tax-supported debt of \$1,244.2 billion. The yearly service cost on that debt was \$152 million. The Mayor's overview of the FY 89 Budget reflects the impact of this cost. Although the FY 89 Budget of \$734 million is the same as that of FY 86, the FY 89 Budget has increased the debt service by \$30 million while decreasing operating costs by \$30 million. In other words, although the revenue income remained the same, the level of services declined and there was a loss of 1,124 employees.

In the budget document, the General Debt Service Fund accounts for the annual payments necessary to retire general long-term obligations. The city maintains a seven-month reserve in the General Debt Service Fund. This reserve is included in the ending fund balance and is sufficient to cover principal and interest payable in the first seven months of the following fiscal year until January 31, when current ad valorem taxes are payable.

At the time of the '84 bond election, it was assumed that the increased cost of the capital program would be met by projected increases in the property tax roll without a tax increase. Instead, the economic downturn caused a steady decline in the city's tax base and necessitated, in-part, a property tax increase.

RESERVES

Maintaining a significant General Fund balance is considered a critical component of Houston's financial management program. The purpose is to provide continuity of city services in the event of sudden and unusual changes in revenues or unforeseen expenditures. Most of the city's budgetary reserves take the form of ending-fund balances. There is no budget stabilization fund as such, although there is a goal in the city's financial policies to set aside 5% of total expenditures. Only four of the top 50 cities were reported to have such a rainy-day fund and two of these established their funds as recently as 1988. Requiring the establishment of such a fund means adopting by ordinance or committed policy, a plan requiring the setting aside of a specific amount of each year's general fund revenue.

The large surplus of \$36.9 million at the end of FY 88, regardless of how it was achieved, enabled Houston to have a fund balance which does meet its goal of 5% of annual expenses. This fund balance will also accomplish what it is meant to accomplish - provide a cushion for future emergencies which might threaten loss of services and loss of job security for city employees.

TAX DIVERSIFICATION

1. Excise Taxes

Tax diversification in Texas has been limited primarily to the local sales tax provision introduced in 1986, although local governments in other states have been empowered to augment their taxes by use of local excise taxes. Excise taxes include taxation on alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and motor fuels. The Select Committee on Tax Equality has recommended to the Texas legislature adding 1 cent to the existing motor fuel taxes, with the proceeds dedicated to cities and counties for the construction and maintenance of their roadways. Local governments are faced with the present and growing problem of maintaining their streets and road system with little help from the state highway program. Fourteen other states authorize local governments to tax motor fuels through either a cents per gallon or a sales tax. The Select Committee believes that the motor fuel tax offers an important potential source of future revenues for local governments in Texas, and would fit the constitutional requirements for the use of such a tax, if one quarter of the tax were dedicated to public education as is the case with the state motor fuel tax.

2. Wage or Payroll Taxes

Generally, states do not allow local governments to levy income taxes. Some cities, however, following the example of Philadelphia and Toledo, now collect a payroll tax. This municipal or wage tax allows struggling cities to collect money from people who work in the cities and use all of its facilities while living in the suburbs. The Cities and State survey reports that "revenues from wages and personal income taxes contribute major portions of the aggregate general fund of the top 50 cities." These tax revenues reflect more nearly the region's growth than do urban property or business taxes. Houston's response to the problem of rapid suburban population growth has traditionally been annexation. Critics of payroll taxes say that although this tax would bring in money, it could also have an adverse affect on attracting new businesses and might even result in surrounding communities retaliating with similar taxes.

3. Income Taxes

The personal income tax represents a powerful potential source of revenue for state and local governments. The Select Committee on Tax Equity has stated. "Nationwide 43 states and 3500 local governments use this tax. It accounts for one third of all state taxes nationally." It could do the same for Texas. At rates slightly higher than 3%, it could produce more annual revenue than the sales tax. The Select Committee on Equity, however, has concluded that there is no consensus among Texans on adoption of a personal income tax and that the state is not now ready to do so.

Additional arguments against the tax also give the lack of immediate need and the adverse affect on attracting new business. Proponents of an income tax say the current system lacks diversification and balance, and that this tax would provide a large, relatively stable source of revenue which would grow with the economy. It would also improve the overall equality of the state and local tax system, and if properly designed, would more nearly reflect the ability of individuals to pay. It would provide the state funding for a number of projects such as education and prison construction as well as giving flexibility at the local level through direct sharing of the taxes. The League of Women Voters of Texas in its study on financing state government concluded that a "graduated personal or corporate income tax meets League criteria for a new tax, but a general sales tax does not."

REDUCING EXPENDITURES AND CONTROLLING COSTS

Today, managers in the top 50 cities strive to deal more effectively with their present resources rather than to look for more. As one local official put it - "before you start talking about whether we should raise new revenues or cut expenditures or some of both, or even become more efficient, you need a sense of your goal. The goal of city administration is not to raise revenues or reduce services, but rather to provide the services and infrastructure the community desires at a price it is willing to pay."

Administering government more cost-effectively is more than an old cliché. It is estimated that between 5 and 9% of total city expenditures could be trimmed from the budget through just changes in management structure and reorganization of services alone. One obvious example of management improvement would be the implementation of the long-proposed vehicle maintenance program which would reduce costs by reducing the turnaround time for repairs, since the longer vehicle waits in the shop the more vehicles are needed.

Juxtaposed with the undertaking of long-term efforts to streamline more city departments for cost-cutting, is the high priority need of the city to invest in state of the art computers and other advanced technological equipment. Such equipment will cost a very large amount of money, but in the long term will save money. Other cities are justifying their investments in technology on the increased efficiency gained. Cities cannot cope with modern day demands for a cost-effective and well run operation with mostly manual systems. Manual systems are very clerical by nature and therefore require more people. People cost money. In addition, manual systems do not always provide the best or most complete information needed for making good management decisions.

One of the ongoing methods Houston uses in analyzing the cost of city services is cost allocation. Cost allocation studies include evaluation of the difference between internal and external costs and the possibilities of privatization. Studies of fee structure can give a good estimate of the cost of providing a service and can suggest possible sources of revenue enhancement. Increased user fees have the potential to be increased revenue generators.

Of course, not all city services can be supported by user fees. Basic services such as police and fire protection do not have revenue-producing potential and will remain tax supported. Other city service are totally or in large part tax supported in the interest of the public good i.e. some of the services of the health and parks departments.

Houston is making its cost allocation studies through contractual services with the City External Auditors. These studies include a thorough analysis of the user fees of four departments in an effort to determine their adequacy. The studies will also analyze fines and fees charged by other cities to see if there are lessons for Houston to learn.

All city departments are currently reviewing how adequately their fees cover their costs. Garbage fees in particular are being scrutinized. Most other cities have a garbage fee and Houston has considered such a fee in the past. Garbage fees will probably not be introduced in the near future, but they are still considered a long-term viable solution. Currently the Solid Waste Department is trying a series of new approaches to cost reduction. One such approach is the requirement for using plastic bags instead of cans thus permitting the use of side-loading trucks which need only a two-person not a three-person crew. Achieving a cost-effective operation would give the city information to set a cost-effective fee, if a fee were required.

Garbage collection is a totally tax-supported city service. Many people feel that if a garbage fee were imposed, property taxes should be reduced by a like amount. In that case, additional revenues would not be generated, but the tax mix would change.

Houston has considered privatization of certain operations for the past several years; it will continue to study this method of cost control. Cities commonly contract out to the private sector maintenance operations of buildings, fleet vehicles and park grounds. Houston has well-developed guidelines for privatization and is examining all services it believes the private sector can do more cheaply than the city can. Among the candidates for privatization are fleet vehicle maintenance and golf course operations.

Controlling costs by increasing productivity in each department is dependent on more than providing updated working tools for employees. Increasing productivity also lies in the provision of an open and supportive management toward employees. Open lines of communication between the workers and their managers can produce the type of exchange that leads to understanding and cooperative behavior and efforts. Supportive management can create a climate for employees to become a vital part of the process of achieving the central mission of the city, that is, providing the best service for which it is capable to its citizens. In their book "Search for Excellence" Peters and Waterman state "the simple act of paying more positive attention to people has a great deal to do with productivity." In their list of the eight basic principles used by America's best run companies is one that states "productivity through people - creating in all employees the awareness that their best efforts are essential and that they will share in the rewards of the

company." Rewards may be recognition and commendation for work well done or monetary incentives for creative and cost-saving ideas. Houston has such a monetary incentive program for those employees who make cost-saving suggestions.

Employees that share in a value system of a city that is service oriented and places a high premium on providing the best service possible to the citizens will be more productive and happier employees. There is no substitute for the well-trained employee who takes pride in and receives great personal satisfaction from the service he or she gives.

OTHER PROBLEMS

Other important issues impacting the city's budget are beyond the scope of this study. For example, how does the city deal with runaway health insurance costs, with escalating workmen's compensation costs, and with the loss of local control over classified civil servants. These three complex issues are part of the city's budget problems and deserve further study and attention.

SUMMARY

The complexity of the subject has necessarily limited the scope of this paper which has sought only to explore the mix of income resources available; to examine the limiting factors of the existing tax structure; to identify some of the more obvious local fiscal problems; and to suggest some possible alternatives.

Historically there has been an over-dependence on Houston's major revenue sources - the property tax and the sales tax. And since revenues have not grown enough to support the city's expenditures, recent tax increases have been necessary. But with tax rates reaching their practical limits, there is little room for further increases.

Containment of city government costs is driven by the need to corral increasing debt service costs and the need to reduce operation costs by modernization. Modernization entails not only using the latest technology but undertaking the long-term restructuring of more city departments.

Solutions to the fiscal problems facing Houston must come from both the revenue and expenditure sides of the ledger. The city can do more with what it has i.e. increase selected user and permit fees. It can also evaluate departmental procedures in an effort to eliminate waste and to increase efficiency. A new emphasis could be placed on employees with incentives to encourage productivity and creativity. Wage increases should be considered. All the potential "solutions" carry their own price tag.

Since cities are constrained by state law, in the long run, local fiscal problems will require changes in the state tax system to allow diversification of tax revenue sources.

Researched by City Government Committee, League of Women Voters of Houston and written by Melba Drake, Chair.

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FOCUS

League of Women Voters of Houston

FEB 25 1989



FOCUS #70

January 1989

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS IN HOUSTON

PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS

The Community Development Department of the City of Houston is in its 14th year of dispensing federal grant money to eligible projects. In 1974, the program's first year, a FOCUS by the Houston League described the primary objectives: "To develop viable urban communities by providing housing in suitable living environments and to expand economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income." The goal remains the same today. How well is that goal being followed? This update will give a review of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).

Federal aid to cities has been in existence in some form since the 1930's. Prior to 1974 aid came through such programs as Model Cities, Urban Renewal, Water and Sewer Loans, Revenue Sharing, and Categorical Grants. Most of these programs, with the exception of Revenue Sharing, required strict adherence to federal rules and guidelines in the disbursement of funds. The City of Houston at that time was reluctant to accept funds (particularly Categorical Grants) that had "strings attached." When these programs were phased out in favor of broad-based, non restricted Community Development Grants, Houston unfortunately found itself short-changed in the amount of CDBG funds received. The grants are awarded based on the following factors: population, poverty figures, characteristics of housing stock, and the amount of Categorical Grants previously awarded by the federal government.

Because of frequent media reports, the Houston League decided to initiate a study of the CDBG program in June 1988. At approximately the same time, Mayor Whitmire asked transportation consultant Barry Goodman to complete a Task Force Report on the City Planning and Development Division, which includes Community Development. Comments in this FOCUS will address significant changes proposed by the Task Force for the Community Development Department.

It should be noted, first of all, that much has been expected of CDBG funds, too much for one source of funds. \$20.6 million for 1988-89 (less than 5% of the total city budget) is not sufficient to solve poverty in Houston. Because of the broad range of uses, the task force report states, "too many goals are attempting to be addressed." But "few have been effective and little impact can be seen from program activities in terms of community improvement." Mayor Whitmire, at a CDBG hearing in 1988, described the money as "a drop in the bucket."

The city's most noticeable failure with Community Development is that it was forced by HUD (Housing and Urban Development) to return improperly managed funds to Washington on three occasions. \$2.6 million was lost in 1987. One improvement in performance for the CDBG Department, however, has been the spending, or drawing down, of accumulated past appropriations to a level requested by the HUD oversight office in Fort Worth.

GUIDELINES AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Some of the more significant CDBG requirements state that a grant benefit 51% low and moderate income residents, that it include citizen participation, and that it submit a Housing Assistance Plan (HAP) including an accurate survey of housing

stock, realistic goals for dwelling units or individuals to be assisted, and locations for proposed housing. The November 1988 HAP goal hopes to increase the rehabilitation of substandard housing to 4,365 units, up from the previous 3 year goal of 762 units. Citizen participation guidelines require at least one public hearing annually.

Hearings in Houston are held in each council district in conjunction with the city Capital Improvement (CIP) budget hearings. At that time the public may speak to their communities' needs. Citizens are then asked to submit grant applications requesting funding either through the regular city CIP budget or from CDBG money. CDBG applications are reviewed by the Planning Department, which then recommends acceptance of certain projects to city council. Council members have much input into the grant process, requesting funding for projects benefiting their constituents or for their own favored endeavors.

Some people feel that Community Development Grants deserve their own separate hearings, since CDBG projects are (or should be) essentially of a different nature than city CIP projects.

BROAD RANGE OF USES

There are five categories of CDBG funding in Houston: Capital Improvements, which currently comprises 15% of the CDBG budget; Housing Assistance, 34%; Economic Development, 21%; Public Services, 15%; and Administration, 15%. Multi-service Centers and Senior Nutrition Centers are typical of Capital Expenditures, as are sewers, fire and police stations, repaving, removal of architectural barriers, parks, water systems, library construction, and sidewalks. Councilmember Rodney Ellis believes that the latter projects belong in the regular city budget, not funded with CDBG money. On the other hand, some people feel that CDBG funds should be used as a supplement to the city budget.

Housing Assistance received great emphasis in the task force report, as it did in the primary goals. Housing received the largest appropriation in the 1987-88 CDBG budget, approximately \$7,121,000. The Task Force recommends that a minimum of 50% of CDBG money, inclusive of administrative costs, should be spent on housing rehabilitation and housing development (single and multi-family) and home ownership programs.

Boston spends between 60 and 70 percent of its CDBG money on housing, and Pittsburgh 50%. Professor John Gilderbloom, urban policy specialist, says that Santa Monica spends 80% on housing and 20% on public services. Boston and Santa Monica have higher housing costs than Houston. Their CDBG programs, nevertheless, are considered very successful, as is Pittsburgh's.

There is considerable argument about what constitutes true or "hard" costs for housing improvements. Included in the housing budget are demolition of dangerous buildings, housing counseling, legal services, relocation, removal of lead based paint, water and sewer hookups, code enforcement, and administration. Also included are safety and security services for seniors, such as tree trimming and smoke detectors. Task Force Director Goodman and some city council members estimate that only 10% of CDBG funds go directly to housing. Community Development Director Michael Marcotte, however, says that 30 to 40% goes to housing inclusive of housing programs and administration.

In Public Services, day care, elderly services, and juvenile programs received \$2,525,000 in 1987-88. Street lights are also considered a public service; the city pays HL&P for the street lights. Also included as public services are the War on Drugs, heavy trash pickup, parks and recreation leisure programs, and services for the homeless (\$100,000 is proposed for 1988-89).

Large budget items in Economic Development are the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund and the Economic Development Loan Fund. The latter includes the Target of Opportunity Loan Program. Council members often make recommendations for businesses and individuals to receive these loans. Since public CDBG funds are loaned to for-profit entities, scrutiny of this program is intense.

Mayor Whitmire has placed great emphasis on loans to El Mercado, a Mexican style market place, and Palm Center. Professor Robert Bullard, author of Invisible Houston, says that enough money needs to be included in the Palm Center project to revitalize development of the housing in the area. The attractiveness of redevelopment projects of this size lies in the many jobs generated in the process. On the other hand, failure is very costly.

Repayments to the multi-million Economic Development Loan Fund in 1988-89 are estimated to be \$39,825.

CHANGES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The mayor's task force has suggested changes in the structure of the Community Development Department. A separate division outside of the Planning Department is one suggestion. Transferring the federal CDBG programs to a new private non-profit corporation is another task force idea, one that has already been tried successfully in several large cities. It suggests that an independent corporation be appointed. The task force also urges redevelopment through targeting of certain neighborhoods over a period of several years, and public/private interaction is encouraged. Task force documentation of results in other cities is brief. A bibliography is not included.

Some people feel that media overview of CDBG would be significantly reduced if a private corporation ran the programs. CDBG information is routinely reported at present because it is included in weekly city council meetings.

Elected officials, mayor and council members, presently are the backup of the CDBG program which is a major source of funds, although limited, for older neighborhoods. Some feel that an appointed corporation would not be as accountable. Others feel that such a corporation, mainly concerned with redevelopment, might not benefit low income communities. They feel that land use changes in relatively small areas might destroy more low income housing than it would replace.

The task force recommends that 75% of the CDBG funds be allocated annually for implementation of housing and related neighborhood improvements through a community development corporation. Expenditures should be concentrated primarily in three target areas of greatest need. Primary target areas should be rotated every few years (based on need) so that all CDBG target areas receive concentrated improvements within an acceptable time frame. The recommendation assumes that some CDBG funding to support small businesses and neighborhood improvements will be available to serve all target areas throughout the program.

If Community Development funds were targeted to a smaller number of neighborhoods, for example, three, changes would very likely be more visible. The neighborhoods themselves would become energized by the larger improvements in housing, small businesses, and services.

The Houston Urban League has made the suggestion that a city staff person be hired with CDBG money to offer technical assistance to neighborhood groups and associations to encourage and to help them acquire the skills to make successful community development proposals. For example, a neighborhood group might want to renovate a house or an apartment, start a laundry, a child care facility, or a credit union. The group could be trained to write proposals and to develop financing strategies.

Mayor Whitmire has placed great emphasis on loans to El Paso, a Mexican-style market place, and Palm Center. Professor Robert Bullard, author of *Lynching in Houston*, says that enough money needs to be included in the Palm Center project to renovate the development at the site. The attractiveness of redevelopment projects at this site lies in the many jobs generated in the process. On the other hand, failure is very costly.

Repayments to the multi-million Economic Development loan fund in 1988-89 are estimated to be \$39,852.

CHANGES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The mayor's task force has suggested changes in the structure of the Community Development Department. A separate division outside of the Planning Department is suggested. Transferring the federal CDBG program to a new private non-profit corporation is another task force idea, one that has already been tried successfully in several large cities. It suggests that an independent corporation be appointed. The task force also urges redevelopment through targeting of certain neighborhoods over a period of several years, and public-private information is encouraged. Task force documentation of results in other cities is cited. A bibliography is not included.

Some people feel that media coverage of CDBG would be significantly reduced if a private corporation ran the program. CDBG information is routinely reported as present because it is included in weekly city council meetings.

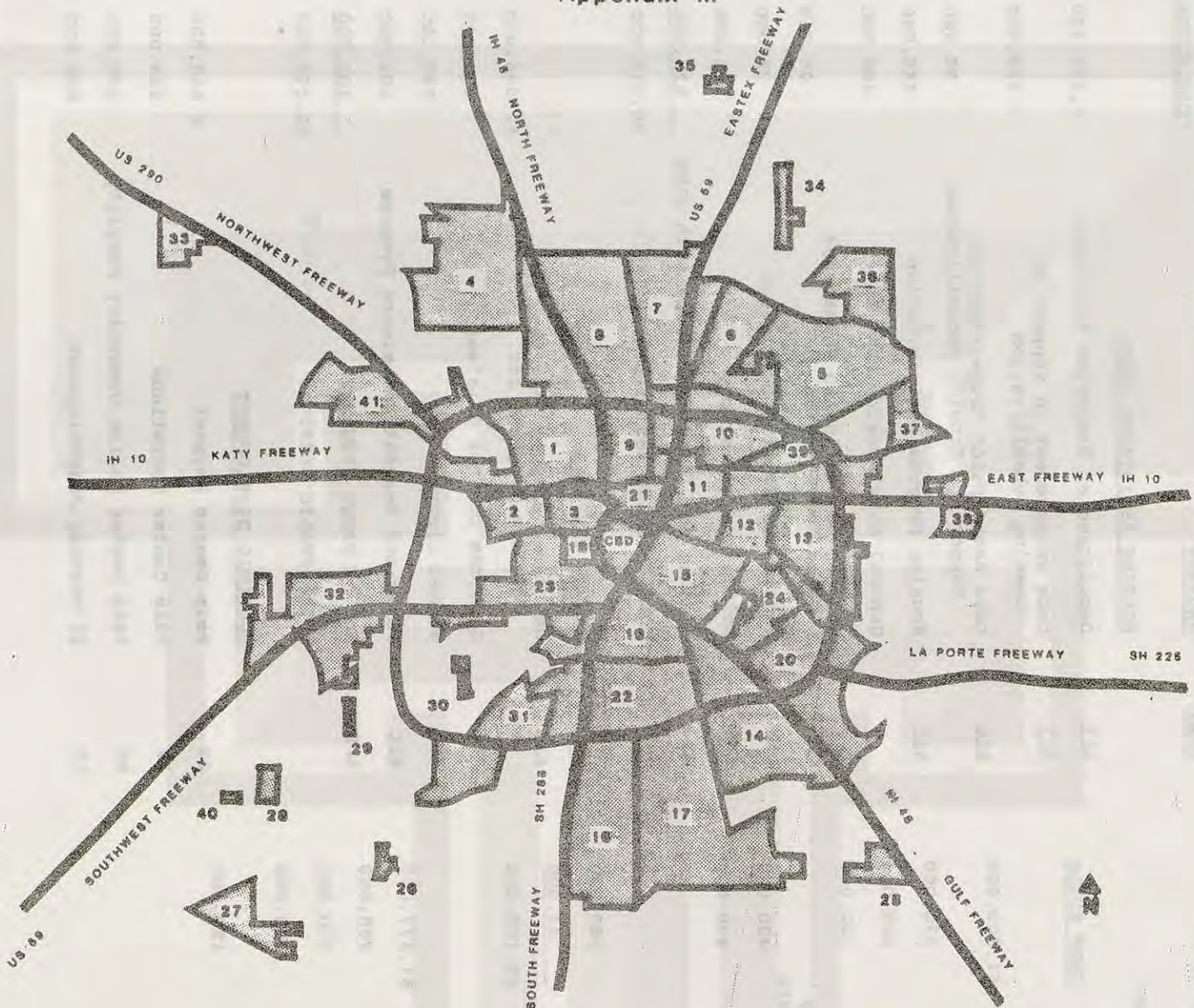
Elected officials, mayor and council members, occasionally are the backbone of the CDBG program which is a major source of funds, although limited for other neighborhoods. Some feel that an independent corporation would not be as accountable. Others feel that such a corporation, mainly concerned with redevelopment, might not benefit low income communities. They feel that any change in relatively small areas might destroy more low income housing than it would replace.

The task force recommends that 75% of the CDBG funds be allocated annually for improvement of housing and related neighborhood improvements through a community development corporation. Expenditures should be concentrated primarily in three target areas of greatest need. Priority target areas should be rotated every few years.

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Appendix M



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. HEIGHTS/SHADY ACRES * | 15. SECOND WARD/NAVIGATION/
NEAR EAST END * | 27. SOUTH MAIN ESTATES |
| 2. WEST END/COTTAGE GROVE * | 16. SUNNYSIDE * | 28. NORTHEROCK |
| 3. FIRST & SIXTH WARDS * | 17. SOUTH PARK/ALLEN PARK/
AIRPORT GARDENS * | 29. NORWOOD MEADOWS/BRAEMONT |
| 4. ACRES HOMES * | 18. FOURTH WARD * | 30. WAKE FOREST |
| 5. SETTECAST * | 19. THIRD WARD * | 31. ASTRODOME/SOUTH MAIN |
| 6. TWENTY GARDENS * | 20. MAGNOLIA/MANCHESTER * | 32. GLENHAVEN/SOUTHWEST/CARVERCREST |
| 7. TIDWELL/JENSEN * | 21. NEAR NORTH SIDE * | 33. CARVERDALE * |
| 8. NORTHLINE/LITTLE YORK/
INDEPENDENCE HEIGHTS * | 22. POSTER PLACE/MCGREGOR * | 34. EDGEWORTH/NORTHWOOD MANOR |
| 9. MOODY PARK * | 23. MONTROSS/SUNSET TERRACE/
MONTCLAR ADDITION * | 35. BORDENSVILLE * |
| 10. KASHMIRE * | 24. HARRISBURG/WATERSIDE * | 36. WILBOURNE/WOOD GLEN/KENTWIRE |
| 11. FIFTH WARD * | 25. ALMEDA-CHICOA | 37. GREENS BAYOU/MAZEY ESTATES |
| 12. DENVER MARSH * | 26. RANDELWOOD | 38. WOODLAND ACRES/GREEN BAYOU PARK |
| 13. FIDELITY/PLEASANTVILLE * | | 39. ELBORADO |
| 14. GULFGATE * | | 40. RICEVILLE * |
| | | 41. NORTHWEST HALL/HENPSTEAD GARDENS |

* NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AREAS

PROPOSED STATEMENT ON PROJECTED USE OF FUNDS
FOR THE FOURTEENTH PROGRAM YEAR

July 1, 1988 through June 30, 1990

AREA	PROJECT	CDBG FUNDS
	<u>CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS</u>	
23	Senior Nutrition Center - Construction	\$1,300,000
15	Canal Street Police Community Facility - Construction	250,000
	School Sidewalk Project	250,000
ALL	SPARKS School Park Program	100,000
ALL	Street Improvements - Asphaltic Overlay and Permanent Reconstruction of Streets in CD Areas	400,000
A,B,D, E,F,G,H & I	Police Store Fronts	500,000
ALL	Street Improvement Assessment Fund - Payment of Assessment on Behalf of Lower Income Citizens	250,000
	LeHall/Amos Street Sewer Lines	55,000
	TOTAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS 15,027,000	\$3,105,000

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

ALL	Houston Housing Improvement Program	\$1,877,000
ALL	Emergency Housing Repair Program	250,000
ALL	Replacement Housing Program	700,000
N/A	Public Housing Modernization	500,000
ALL	Legal Services in Support of Housing Rehabilitation	150,000

AREA	PROJECT	CDBG FUNDS
	<u>HOUSING ASSISTANCE CONT.</u>	
ALL	Demolition of Dangerous Buildings	1,242,520
ALL	Code Enforcement in Support of Housing Rehabilitation	225,000
ALL	Lead Based Paint Inspections in Support of Housing Rehabilitation	30,480
ALL	Housing Program Administration	850,000
	Central City Housing UDAG Match	400,000
ALL	Housing Counseling in Support of Urban Homesteading	25,000
	United Way Housing Initiative	75,000
ALL	Relocation Assistance	125,000
23	Housing for Indigent Persons with AIDS	525,000
	TOTAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE 33,747,000	\$6,975,000

PUBLIC SERVICES

ALL	Day Care, Elderly Services, Juvenile Program, etc.	\$2,525,000
ALL	Services for the Homeless	100,000
ALL	Street Lights	250,000
ALL	Parks and Recreation Leisure Program	200,000
ALL	War on Drugs Programs	100,000
	TOTAL PUBLIC SERVICES 15,367,000	\$3,175,000

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

22	Palm Center Payment	\$ 540,000
22	Palm Center Operations	435,000
22	Palm Center Police Community Facility	250,000
15	El Mercado Redevelopment	948,000

<u>AREA</u>	<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>CDBG FUNDS</u>
<u>ECONOMIC (Cont.)</u>		
ALL	Small Business Revolving Loan Fund	1,089,000
ALL	Economic Development Loan Fund	770,000
ALL	Small Business Technical Assistance	245,000
	TOTAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 20.67%	\$4,277,000
<u>ADMINISTRATION</u>		
	CDBG Program Administration	\$1,750,000
	Neighborhood/Sector Planning	400,000
	Citizen Assistance	400,000
	Legal Department	75,000
	Small Business Development Corporation Administration	50,000
	Contract Compliance and Affirmative Action	70,000
	Indirect Costs	395,000
	TOTAL ADMINISTRATION 15.19%	\$ 3,140,000
	TOTAL FOURTEENTH PROGRAM YEAR	<u>\$20,672,000</u>

<u>FISCAL YEAR</u>	<u>AMT. RECEIVED</u>	<u>DRAWDOWN</u>
1975-76	10.3 M	2.3
1976-77	13.5	8.5
1977-78	22.6	8.6
1978-79	24.1	16.1
1979-80	25.4	26.9
1980-81	28.3	29.8
1981-82	28.8	23.4
1982-83	23.5	19.8
1983-84	23.3	13.6
1984-85	25.5	14.8
1985-86	25.6	18.3
1986-87	21.7	32.4
1987-88	21.7	40.9

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PROGRAM FOR STUDY AND ACTION 1987-88

League of Women Voters
of Houston



The Principles are 'concepts of government' to which the League subscribes. These concepts are a direct descendant of The Platform, which served the League from 1942 to 1956 as the national repository for 'principles supported and positions taken by the League as a whole in fields of government to which it has given sustained attention.' The Platform has disappeared from the League vocabulary but the principles survived as 'The Principles.' Since that time, the Principles have served two functions according to the LWV-US Bylaws: 1) authorization for adoption of national, state, and local programs; 2) a basis for taking action at the national, state, and local levels.

PRINCIPLES

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HOUSTON
Local Program 1987-88

Local Positions

GOVERNMENT

MAYOR/CITY
COUNCIL

Support a strong mayoral form of government with the following components:

- an elected mayor who is chief administration officer of the city; who appoints all department heads subject to approval of council; who removes department heads and staff members as she/he sees fit; and who votes on all council business but does not have a veto.
- a 14-16 member council, the majority of whom are elected from single member districts.
- a four-year term for officials with staggered terms for council members.
- provisions for an election to fill a vacancy in the city council when more than a year of the term remains.
- the start of the fiscal year at some date other than January 1. (1980)

CITY CHARTER

Support a complete revision of the city charter of Houston. (1974)

BUDGET PROCESS

Support a budget process which takes into account long-range planning and budget evaluation, and encourages citizen input. Specifically support for:

- a performance type budget which reflects monies raised by the city and received from other levels of government;
- a budget process regulated by a budget calendar providing for adequate timing for public study and input with each step, and including specific dates for the submission of each department's budget request, departmental hearings, submission to council, public hearings, and formal adoption of the budget;
- the availability of the proposed budget when it is given to council;
- departmental hearings open to the public;
- the publication of budget summaries in the newspapers. (1977)

CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENT
BUDGET

Support the consideration of the capital improvement budget along with the operating budget. (1977)

REVENUE
SHARING

Support measures to encourage governmental determination of the total needs of the community and to implement effective citizen participation in the allocations process. (1974)

ANNEXATION/
DISANNEXATION

Support annexation by Houston of the Ship Channel Industrial Districts, with negotiation of short-term contracts in the interim. (1977)

Support an annexation policy which:

- avoids checkerboard patterns;
- avoids surrounding unincorporated areas except for those within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of another city;
- includes economically depressed areas;
- plans in advance to ensure that city departments are prepared for expanded services;
- notifies residents about to be annexed in time for them to help plan how needed services will be provided and coordinated with facilities already in place;
- provides public health and safety services immediately upon annexation, and a schedule for the provisions of other services within a reasonable time;
- provides an adequate level of services to all annexed areas without extra assessments when they would be a severe burden. Services to include: improving streets and drainage to a level at which services can be provided; and providing city water and wastewater service within a reasonable time if the area has no adequate facilities;
- establishes an impartial board to weigh the importance of annexation to the health of the city and the ability of the city to accommodate the needs of the area. (1979)

Support a comprehensive planning process for growth, open spaces, and capital investment in the ETJ, recognizing the possibility of eventual annexation of these areas. (1979)

Support the adoption of a subdivision ordinance for the city and the ETJ. (1979)

Support policies encouraging development within the city limits. (1979)

Support a policy encouraging water districts to consist of a single parcel of land. (1979)

Support a long-range policy of annexation and the adoption of a policy for annexation and disannexation to include:

- a legal clarification of circumstances under which disannexation would be permitted;
- a review board, preferably at the state level, to hear cases of disputed annexations and disannexations;
- a requirement for an annexing city to establish a baseline for the provision of municipal services to be maintained in all parts of the city and provided to newly annexed areas at the same level. (1983)

COMPREHENSIVE
PLANNING

Support planning in Houston's extraterritorial jurisdiction through

- the development of goals and priorities for Harris County by assessing the needs of the total community with maximum public participation;
- central planning coordination and implementation tools for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;
- development of a uniform performance building code for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;
- feasibility studies for the consolidation of planning services between municipalities and Harris County;
- increased use by Harris County of the planning services of the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and the development by H-GAC of practical services reflecting the planning needs of Harris County. (1976)

Support the development and adoption of a long-range flexible, constantly updated comprehensive plan, developed with adequate citizen input. This plan should include:

- the coordination and centralization of the planning process in Houston, with the strengthening of a central planning authority;
- the development of goals, objectives, and priorities for Houston through a process which assures maximum public participation;
- a broad-based planning commission with members from a diversity of backgrounds and expertise;
- a comprehensive plan which includes economic, social, and environmental concerns as well as physical development;
- public involvement in the planning process at the neighborhood level, and public hearings on proposed plans;
- an explanation to the public by the city council of why any given plan is or is not adopted; (1976)
- a strong role for the City Planning Commission, committed to the full range of powers granted it by the city charter, and to the coordination of its work with an equally strong Planning Department; cooperation between the private and public planning entities, with public participation throughout the process;
- vigorous enforcement of current regulations, and the enactment of additional ordinances which focus on civic concerns such as traffic congestion and storm water runoff, preserve and improve the quality of life in Houston neighborhoods;
- the use of growth management techniques such as performance standards, impact fees, and both short-term and long-term capital improvements budget planning;
- a city ordinance requiring the setting aside of land for open space and parks. (1984)

LIBRARIES

Support measures to insure adequate library facilities for Houston area residents, including merger of city and county systems and the regional library concept. (1969)

NATURAL RESOURCES

PARKS AND RECREATION Support measures to insure acquisition, maintenance, and development of public lands in the Houston area by:

- comprehensive planning for public lands in Harris County to meet National Parks and Recreation Association standards;
- adequate funding;
- adoption of an objective priority planning policy;
- investigation of legal ordinances to facilitate parkland acquisition and contribution of land and money by developers;
- maximum cooperation and coordination of park services and planning between city and county;
- maximum use of schools and churches for program development;
- opposition to long-term private leasing of public lands.

(1970)

TRANSPORTATION Support comprehensive transportation plans which include:

- the best use of land and access to employment, cultural, civic, medical, educational, and other facilities;
- public participation in the early planning stages; (1971)
- a well-balanced, environmentally sensitive, multi-modal transportation system which includes buses, rail, and well-regulated paratransit (jitneys, etc.);
- cooperation and funding of joint ventures among the different transportation agencies--Highway Department, Metro, and city and county;
- use of highway funds in the following order of priority:
 - maintenance
 - new construction
 - public mass transit
- limited use of user fees such as toll roads to help fund development and/or construction of a transportation system.

(1985)

FLOOD CONTROL Support comprehensive long-range planning for flood damage avoidance in Harris County by considering:

- all alternative methods for flood damage avoidance;
- the effect of future development on flooding patterns;
- the full effects of stream modification;
- the flood plain as a multiple use resource, especially its role as a natural retention system which reduces and delays peak flows;
- economic, social, and environmental factors, especially water quality. (1978)

SOLID WASTE Support a long-range solid waste management plan which emphasizes:

- recycling and development of new technology;
- separation of solid waste at the source;
- judicious use of incineration and land fills;
- effective land use principles;
- control of air and water pollution;
- regional planning;
- promotion of public education efforts;
- citizen participation. (1972)

TOXIC
SUBSTANCES

Support:

- the protection of public health with special concern for sensitive populations as the primary factor in determining regulatory action and decision-making involving toxic substances, with economic costs a secondary consideration;
- a policy requiring industry and unions to fully inform employees and the public of potential risks of toxic substances, both in the work place and the community;
- informing the public of any possibility of adverse effect of toxic substances via clear labeling, public forums, public access to information, and articles and programs in all media to help make informed choices;
- regulating the transportation of toxic substances by:
 - enforcement of safety, speed, and inspection regulations;
 - establishment of realistic schedules, routes, and work practices to protect the public health;
 - requirement of complete and informative labeling on the transporting vehicle, whether hazardous product or waste;
- stronger regulatory efforts to control hazardous pollutants in air and water by frequent re-examination of laws and regulations as new information is developed through research, and by enlarging existing regulatory agencies, as necessary, even at increased costs to the taxpayers. (1983)

SOCIAL POLICY

ADMINISTRATION
OF JUSTICE

Support the removal of certain areas of human behavior from criminal prosecution: sexual activity between legally competent consenting adults, gambling, adult access to pornography, use of alcohol. (1975)

Support measures for rehabilitation of offenders which would include:

- punishment or penalties which fit the crime;
- more equitable punishment;
- alternative arrangements to placement of juveniles in state schools which would include small, family type units close to home with effective supervision and qualified personnel;
- provisions for pre-trial release such as are incorporated in the present (1974) Harris County Pretrial Release Program.

DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE

Support efforts to:

- increase community awareness of the incidence of domestic violence;
- establish a process for keeping records on domestic violence calls, responses, charges, and dispositions;
- provide special training of police and special squads to deal with domestic violence;
- establish crisis intervention teams and provide aid to the victims;
- encourage the District Attorney's office to prosecute charges of domestic violence;
- encourage sensitivity to the problem of domestic violence throughout the justice system;
- encourage increased cooperation between agencies that deal with the problem;
- make counseling available for all members of a household involved in domestic violence. (1983)

EDUCATION

Support measures to improve educational accountability programs in the school districts of the greater Houston area, with:

- shared responsibility of educational accountability at all levels of the educational process, including the state legislature, the Texas Education Agency, local school boards, administrators, teachers, pupils, parents, and the community.
- state legislative accountability for fair and equitable funding;
- teacher accountability for knowledge of and competency in the subjects they teach;
- student accountability for conduct and attitude;
- community accountability for knowledge of election issues;
- community involvement in accountability programs;
- comprehensive student evaluations including methods other than standardized testing;
- parental input in the evaluation process of the school district personnel. (1978)

Support equal access to quality education, including:

- providing opportunities for students to learn to function in our pluralistic community;
- offering and encouraging the achievement of academic skills which enable each child to function at his/her highest potential;
- providing superior programs and teaching which take into account the needs of the individual pupil;
- offering superior programs in college preparatory and occupational/vocational training
- providing free transportation as an integrative tool for those requesting it;
- student transfer policies which preserve existing integration;
- magnet-alternative schools;
- closing under-utilized schools;
- combinations of the above. (1976)

Support measures to improve the responsiveness of all school districts by:

- expanding existing avenues of communication;
- providing specific opportunities for dialogue;
- encouraging more citizen input into the decision-making process. (1974)

HEALTH

Support the establishment of comprehensive public health services, including mental health services, for the citizens of Houston and Harris County. These services should be accessible in terms of cost, location, and education of the public. Emphasis should be given to prevention and primary care. (1978)

Support joint planning and coordination to eliminate duplication of health services, including:

- reorganization of the City of Houston and Harris County Health Departments;
- joint efforts by public health care providers;
- development of specific channels for consumer input into health planning from the early stages. (1978)

Support measures to control the escalation of health care costs, including:

- regionalization of highly specialized, expensive services and equipment;
- utilization of alternatives to inpatient care;
- utilization of paraprofessionals;
- development of pre-paid group practices. (1978)

HOUSING

Support equal opportunities for all Houstonians with emphasis on additional well-managed, low-cost housing and continued support of existing positions:

- a minimum housing code used in conjunction with existing building, fire, health, and sanitation codes;
- Adequate provisions for enforcing these codes, and any relocation of families necessary through such enforcement, to be the obligation of the city.
- completion of a workable program for land use and housing for more orderly growth of the city, thus leading to qualification for federal assistance;
- Encouragement of private investment in low-cost housing and the use of private initiative to seek new ways of housing the needy. (1971)

Program 1987-88

PREGNANCY
ALTERNATIVES

Support comprehensive sex education in all public schools in Harris County, including:

- greater parental involvement;
- broadening curricula;
- student access to specifically educated nurses, counselors, and teachers;
- greater use of city and county educational programs;
- programs to help parents open discussions with their children. (1982)

Support adequate, easily accessible, publicly funded family planning services to meet the community's needs, including:

- confidentiality of all clients;
- efficient scheduling of family planning services;
- advertising;
- adequate funding;
- adequate, accessible facilities. (1982)

Support equal access to legal and medically sound pregnancy termination services for all residents of Houston and Harris County, with government funding and/or a combination of government/private funding available for low and moderate income residents. (1982)

NEW STUDY

RE STUDY THE
CITY BUDGET
PROCESS

A study of the 1975 League position to assess our progress and ascertain any need for change or revision in our position.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS
State Program 1987-88

State Positions

I. WOMEN UNDER TEXAS LAW

- A. Action to reduce the incidence of domestic violence, to alleviate its effects, and to enhance enforcement of the law.
- B. Action to achieve equitable intestacy laws.
- C. Action to enable courts to award appropriate post-divorce payments.
- D. Action to redefine rape.
- E. Action to achieve equitable and efficient means of enforcing court orders for child support.

II. GOVERNMENT

- A. Action to achieve an effective method for drawing boundaries for congressional and state legislative districts through legislative action and constitutional revision.
- B. Action to achieve flexibility within a coordinated finance structure, equitable taxation, and increased accountability.
- C. Action to achieve an efficient, effective, and responsive state governmental system through constitutional revision and legislative action.
- D. Action to achieve more flexible structures and adequate powers at the local level.
- E. Action to achieve revision of the Texas Constitution.
- F. Action to achieve constitutional and statutory initiative and statutory referendum while assuring statewide citizen participation, education, funding disclosure, and legal review.
- G. Action to protect the right of every citizen to vote.

III. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

- A. Action to achieve an equitable system of criminal justice in Texas.

IV. SOCIAL POLICY/HUMAN RESOURCES

- A. Action to achieve a school finance system which provides an equitable distribution of funds and provides equity to the taxpayer.
- B. Action to achieve equal rights for all, to combat discrimination and poverty, and to provide equal access to housing, employment, and quality education in Texas.
- C. Action to achieve a basic level of health care for the medically indigent.

V. NATURAL RESOURCES

- A. Action to achieve measures for the protection, conservation, and development of the state's groundwater resources as an integral part of the comprehensive water plan.
- B. Action to achieve conservation and judicious development of land and water resources, the improvement of water and air quality, conservation of energy, and development of public transportation in a manner which assures adequate protection of the environment, improvement of the quality of life, and wise use of our natural resources.

NEW STUDY

Study of the state MH/MR system with an emphasis on the mentally ill.

- Who are they?
- Where are they?
- What are the components of a good mental health system?
- How much is allocated and where does it go?

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES
National Program 1986-88

National Positions

GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal base; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; and that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making.

CITIZEN RIGHTS

Citizen Right to Know/Citizen Participation Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

Individual Liberties Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENCY

Congress Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.

The Presidency Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

DC SELF-GOVERNMENT & FULL VOTING REPRESENTATION Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and representation in both Houses of Congress.

ELECTION PROCESS

Apportionment Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

Campaign Finance Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

Program 1987-88

Election of the President	Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and work to abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.
FISCAL POLICY	Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax and through the responsible use of deficit spending. Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old age, survivors, disability and health insurance; oppose cutting social security benefits to reduce the federal deficit.
VOTING RIGHTS	Protect the right of every citizen to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.
<u>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</u>	Promote peace in an interdependent world by cooperating with other nations, strengthening international organizations, fostering long-term development, negotiating arms control measures and encouraging the successful resolution of conflicts through nonmilitary means.
ARMS CONTROL	Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.
MILITARY POLICY AND DEFENSE SPENDING	Work to limit reliance on military force; examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.
TRADE	Support systematic reduction of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.
UNITED NATIONS	Support measures to strengthen the United Nations, in recognition of the need for cooperation among nations in an interdependent world.
U.S. RELATIONS WITH DEVELOPING NATIONS	Promote U.S. policies that meet the long-term social and economic needs of developing countries and that minimize U.S.-Soviet competition.
<u>NATURAL RESOURCES</u>	Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest, recognizing the interrelationship of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & POLLUTION CONTROL	Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.
<u>SOCIAL POLICY</u>	Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all and combat discrimination and poverty.
EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING	Support equal access to education, employment and housing.
EQUAL RIGHTS	Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.
INCOME ASSISTANCE	Support a federalized system of income assistance, with uniform standards, to meet the basic needs of all persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate or for whom jobs are not available.
TRANSPORTATION	Promote energy-efficient and environmentally sound transportation systems that improve the well-being of cities and other communities and afford better access to housing and jobs.
URBAN POLICY	Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

New Studies

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS	Evaluate public and private responsibilities for providing food, shelter, a basic income level and access to health care.
AGRICULTURE	Consider the role of the federal government in agriculture. Scope: Review, evaluate and establish criteria for U.S. agricultural policy and programs.

JUN 3 1987

LWV-HOUSTON NEW ADOPTED LOCAL STUDY

1987-88

Restudy City Budget Process

Restudy the 1975 position on Houston's budgetary process to assess our program and ascertain any need for changes or revisions in our position.

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Houston League VOTER

July-August 1985

TRANSPORTATION CONSENSUS - APRIL 1985

As a result of unit discussions during April, the following consensus was reached:

Support of comprehensive transportation planning now to determine the transit needs of the entire community--such as the best use of land and access to employment, cultural, civic, medical, educational, and other public facilities. (1971)

Support of public participation, especially in the planning stages of any transportation system, as essential. (1971)

Support of a well-balanced, environmentally sensitive, multi-modal transportation system for Houston. The system should include buses, rail, and well-regulated paratransit (jitneys, etc.). (1985)

Support of cooperation among the different transportation agencies--Highway Department, Metro, and city and county agencies. This includes funding of joint ventures.

Support of use of highway funds in the following order of priority:

1. Maintenance
2. New Construction
3. Public mass transit.

Support of the limited utilization of user fees, i.e., toll-roads, to help fund development and/or construction of a transportation system.

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MAY 19 1986

League of Women Voters of Houston
UPDATE

May 1986

AN OVERVIEW OF HOUSTON AREA PARKS

BACKGROUND

In 1977 the United States Department of Interior published a National Urban Recreation Study which contained disturbing information about parks and open space in Houston and Harris County. Houston, the fifth largest (and now the fourth largest) city in the nation, was found to be extremely deficient in park space. Houston had traditionally depended on philanthropic citizens to donate park land, and with neither zoning nor a requirement that a developer set aside a percentage of a site or subdivision for park space, the Houston area's park systems had not kept abreast of its rapid growth.

The effects of the National Urban Recreation Study were far-reaching and remain in evidence in the Houston community nine years later. In 1978, a broad-based group of concerned citizens formed The Park People, Inc., a nonprofit organization for parks advocacy. The founding of The Park People demonstrated strong citizen support for a major movement to increase and improve Houston and Harris County parks and open space. Consequently the Department of Interior chose Houston as the site for an experimental urban office of the Heritage, Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS). This office was to lend support to local government officials' efforts to improve area park systems. In February 1979, a unique "Partnership for Quality Growth" was signed by the Mayor of Houston, the Judge of Harris County, the Governor of Texas, and the Director of HCRS calling for a united effort to create a world-class park system for the Houston area. The Green Ribbon Committee, composed of more than 60 local citizens, was appointed to assess existing park and recreation facilities, to involve the community in establishing parkland priorities, and to recommend a comprehensive approach for fulfilling park and recreational needs. In early 1983, the Green Ribbon Committee Report recommended coordinating the management of city and county parks, increasing the parkland inventory by at least 5000 acres at an estimated cost of \$400 million, and using available school land for neighborhood recreation areas during the time schools are not in session.

PRESENT

The parks and open space picture in the Houston area has brightened considerably since 1977. Major parkland additions in both Houston and Harris County have tripled total park space from 12,000 acres to 36,000 acres, and an aggressive acquisition campaign continues. The two largest additions are Addicks and Barker Reservoirs, flood control facilities completed in 1948 by the Corps of Engineers to prevent flooding along Buffalo Bayou

and in downtown Houston. The city of Houston has leased 10,500 acres north of I-10, and in Addicks Reservoir, for the development of Addicks-Cullen Park. Harris County has leased 5400 acres in Barker Reservoir south of I-10 for the development of Cullen-Barker Park, with negotiations proceeding for another 3500 acres.

HOUSTON

In 1984, Houston voters passed a \$67.5 million five-year capital improvement bond program for parks, with part of the funds to be used for acquisition of fifteen 20-acre community parks in areas designated by the Green Ribbon Committee Report as lacking in park space. Further evidence that this report is not gathering dust can be seen in the successful program launched by a city council committee, in cooperation with the Houston Independent School District, to develop parks on school campuses. Nineteen of these school park sites are finished or in progress, two additional sites are in the process of being leased, and another four or five sites are planned for development in 1986.

The Houston Parks Board, a group of citizens appointed by the mayor to aid in the improvement and expansion of the Houston parks system, has made an ambitious commitment to match the city's acquisition of 15 community parks and to acquire two more 500-acre regional parks.

In addition to parkland acquisition, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department is actively involved in sports and recreation programs. These year-round programs range from free concerts, dances, and theater in Miller Outdoor Theater to Little League and softball league play, arts and crafts, and physical fitness programs.

HARRIS COUNTY

There are four parks departments in Harris County, one in each of the four precincts. With the hiring of a professional parks planner in 1979, Harris County Commissioners Court was able to intensify and coordinate ongoing parkland acquisition efforts. With nearly 16,000 acres of parkland acquired, the county has recently been able to shift emphasis from acquisitions to development of acquired sites, although acquisition continues. The Cypress Creek Parks Project, approximately 2000 acres of prime forested sites along Cypress and Spring Creeks in north Harris County, includes the 198 acres recently added to the Mercer Arboretum. When development is completed, Mercer will feature an education/information center, master-planned botanical gardens, nature trails with native trees and plants labeled, a picnic area, and a canoe launching site on Cypress Creek. Another major component of the Cypress Creek Parks

Project is the Jesse H. Jones Park and Nature Center with 225 acres along Spring Creek. An additional 70 acres has recently been added to the park east of the nature center.

Along Clear Creek in south Harris County the 541-acre Tom Bass Regional Park features a unique Playground for All Children, a facility which allows disabled children to play alongside their able-bodied friends. The playground structures include a custom-designed sand table and wheelchair ramps leading to a man-made hill and an elevated nature trail built up among the trees. From this wooden trail, both disabled and able-bodied alike can view the forest from a new perspective. Tom Bass Regional Park also has a lake stocked with fish, and a site for the future development of a golf course.

South Harris County boasts another outstanding park in the Armand Bayou Nature Center. Nature trails, an interpretive building, a native plant greenhouse, and a turn-of-the century farm are just a few of the attractions to be found in the many habitats along Armand Bayou.

JOINT CITY-COUNTY EFFORTS

The first city-county acquired park is located on Clear Creek in south Harris County. This 340-acre site has temporarily been named the Hall Road park site.

A more ambitious park development effort to be funded jointly by the city, the county and the private sector is the \$18 million Sesquicentennial Park, celebrating Texas' 150 years of independence from Mexico. The national design competition for the park site surrounding the new Wortham Theater Center and adjoining Buffalo Bayou has recently resulted in the final park plan. The plan chosen includes use of the already existing natural setting and augmenting it with extensive plantings, an island in the bayou, an outdoor amphitheater, a broad landscaped open space for general public use, and a series of historical masonry monuments.

STATE

The Houston area has benefited from recent state park developments, such as Brazos Bend State Park's 5000 acres of huge live-oaks and valuable wetlands along the Brazos River southwest of Houston. Another state park site, acquired in 1981 and currently under development, has 4,700 acres above Lake Houston on the East San Jacinto River in northeast Harris County. This park, as yet unnamed, includes rare cypress swamps and nine miles of sandy beaches. A state historical park in the Houston area is the San Jacinto Monument and Battleground currently being improved during this sesquicentennial year.

Future progress on these and other state park developments is in jeopardy with every session of the Texas Legislature. Legislators attempt to raid the Texas Local Parks Fund, created from cigarette taxes, and use the approximately \$17 million generated every two years for other purposes.

NATIONAL

Although the Heritage, Conservation and Recreation Service was abolished by President Reagan in 1980, and although federal funding sources for park acquisition and development have all but disappeared, there is currently underway a potentially valuable nationwide assessment of outdoor recreation programs and facilities. In January 1985, President Reagan established by Executive Order the President's Commission of Americana Outdoors. In late 1986, this 15 member panel will issue a report outlining options and recommendations for meeting the future needs of the American public. A recent strategic planning session held by the Commission in Houston involved local park providers and citizens in an all-day discussion of parks and recreation in the Houston area.

CONCLUSION

Despite the current downturn in Houston's economy with declining oil prices, there is unmistakable interest and momentum to improve and increase Houston area parks and open space. Myriad projects for park improvement and open space beautification are under way, and numerous citizen and business organizations are mounting efforts to plant trees, preserve open space areas in flood plains and along bayous, and create inviting public spaces in the downtown area. There is renewed pressure to develop the recreational and aesthetic potential of Buffalo Bayou without destroying either its wildlife habitat, or its capacity to carry heavy storm-water runoff. Groups leading this and other beautification efforts include Central Houston, Inc., Downtown Houston Association, Houston Chamber of Commerce, Bayou Preservation Association, Trees for Downtown Houston, The East End Progress Association, Buffalo Bayou Coalition, The Park People Inc., South Main Center Association, Woodland Heights Civic Association, and numerous garden clubs and civic groups. As the diversity of these groups attests, Houston area residents recognize that the quality of our urban life is as much an economics issue as an environmental one.

SOURCES

Conference on Parks sponsored by the Houston Chamber of Commerce
April 25, 1985

Addresses by:

James D. Bell, Director, Parks Division, Texas Parks
and Wildlife

Ty Probasco, Harris County Parks Planner

Donald G. Olson, Director, Houston Parks and
Recreation Department

Testimony before the President's Commission on American Outdoors
December 12, 1985, given by Vernon Henry, president, The
Park People, Inc.

"Houston Chronicle" Tuesday, April 15, 1986, page 4, section 4,
"Newcomers' Park Design Takes Prize", by Ann Holmes

Report of the Green Ribbon Committee, January 1983

"A History of Certain Citizens' Groups in Houston and Harris
County, Texas for the Period of 1966 to 1985", by Terese
Hershey

Researched and written by Glenda Barrett, Parks Committee Chair.

*The UPDATE is prepared by the League of Women Voters of Houston and costs
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FEB 3 1986

League of Women Voters of Houston

February 1986

BACKGROUND

HELP FOR THE HUNGRY AND HOMELESS

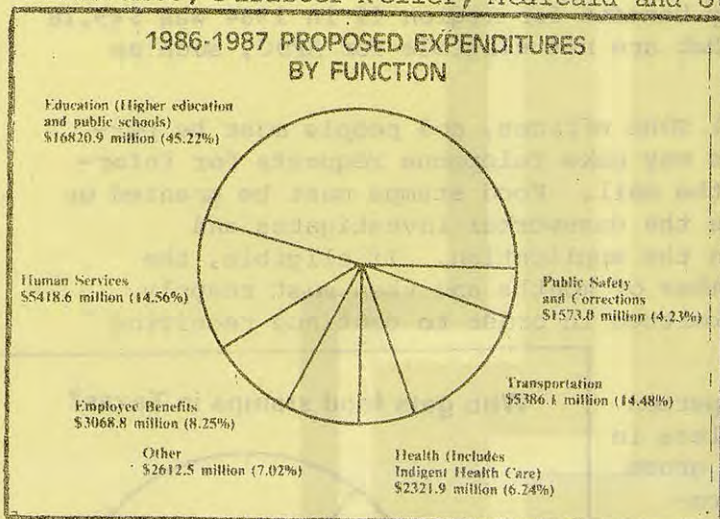
In 1971 the League of Women Voters of the U.S. reached agreement that the federal government bears a major responsibility for providing income assistance to meet the basic needs of all persons in the United States who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate, or for whom jobs are not available. In Texas we have worked to remove the constitutional limits on state spending for income assistance, and to raise Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) benefits.

In the last few years, many long-standing poverty programs have been eliminated, or budgets slashed. There remain a number of state and federal programs that provide income assistance, food, and some social services. In light of the poor economy, increased unemployment (especially in Texas), and increase in female headed families, the number of people seeking food and cash assistance has risen sharply. The prospect for the future is dim. The Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction law will mean more budget cuts, although Social Security, food stamps, and Medicaid are exempt.

In 1984 the number of Texans living below the poverty level was 2,809,927, and was expected to exceed 3,000,000 in 1985. Where do these people go for help? How much and what kind of assistance is available? How does the delivery system work?

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (TDHS)

TDHS is the state agency responsible for administering state and federal programs including the following: AFDC, Food Stamps, Commodity Distribution, Refugee Assistance, Disaster Relief, Medicaid and other services to aged and disabled



adults, Protective Services for children (protection from abuse, neglect, or exploitation), Child Care Licensing, Family Violence Services, Home Energy Assistance Programs, and Child Support enforcement. Our report will cover the main programs of AFDC and Food Stamps. Most of the figures quoted are for Region 11, which includes Harris and 13 adjoining counties.

TDHS maintains 30 offices in Region 11, 17 in Harris County. Harris County employs 1,478 people, of whom 520 are case workers and clerks. Case workers travel to towns and

county seats where there are no TDHS offices to take applications and interviews. Applications are taken in libraries and county offices. Between 1-2 trips a week and one trip a month are made. Home visits are made to take applications from the disabled, ill, and elderly. Caseworkers are usually required to have 60 hours of college work, and they earn a beginning salary of \$1,419 a month. Caseworkers see an average of 280 food stamp clients and/or 140 AFDC clients per month. There have been large increases in applications since 1981, due to bad economic conditions, but no increase in staff. Applications for Emergency Food Stamps (1 day) doubled during the month of October, 1985.

FOOD STAMPS

The Food Stamp Program, launched in 1964, helps low-income households meet basic food needs. The coupons count as money toward the purchase of food and for seeds and plants for growing food (not for alcohol, tobacco, or pet food). The federal government pays for 100% of the cost of the redeemed coupons plus 50% of the costs incurred by the states in administering the program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture finances and sets policies for the program; the TDHS administers it and determines eligibility. Administrative costs are less than 6% of the total budget.

Eligibility depends upon income, resources, expenses, and the size of the household. Determining monthly income is a complicated process. Food stamps are

Household Size	Maximum Allowable GROSS Income/Month	Maximum Monthly Food Stamp Allotment (For ZERO NET Income)
1	\$ 540	\$ 79
2	728	145
3	917	208
4	1105	264
5	1294	313
6	1482	376
7	1671	416
8	1859	475
9	2048	534

given to persons living alone or together who buy food and prepare meals together. For most households gross income cannot exceed 130% of the federal poverty level--\$10,200 for a family of four in 1984. The maximum allowable assets or resources of

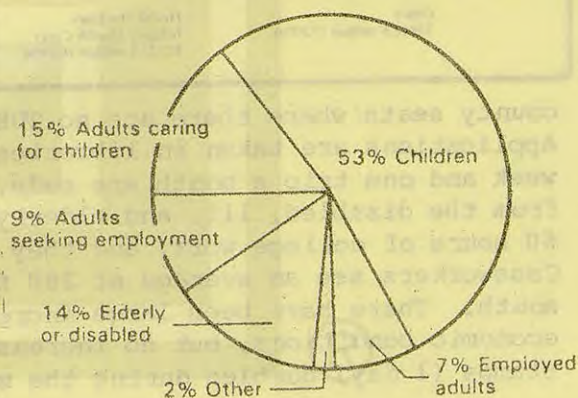
all members of a household is \$1,500 (\$3,000 if at least one person is age 60 or older). A homestead, household goods, personal effects, burial plots, the cash value of life insurance policies and most pension funds are not counted against the resource limit. The average monthly benefit for Region 11 in 1984 was \$49.18 per person. Food stamps cover groups that are not eligible for AFDC, such as 2-parent families and single adults.

Applications are available at nine local TDHS offices, and people must be permitted to apply immediately. Applicants may make telephone requests for information and applications may be sent in the mail. Food stamps must be granted or denied within 30 days. During that time the caseworker investigates and verifies all of the information given on the application. If eligible, the applicant is certified for a certain number of months and then must reapply. A monthly status report must also be submitted in order to continue receiving the stamps.

Emergency stamps must be issued when a person is in dire circumstances: has \$100 or less in liquid resources; and less than \$150 in gross monthly income. Migrant or seasonal farm-workers also qualify for expedited services if they are destitute. Prior to October 1985, emergency stamps were issued only after a five day wait. After the passage of the Omnibus Hunger Act, one day food stamps were mandated by the Texas Legislature, and consequently, applications for emergency food stamps have doubled.

Some of the most common complaints from clients about the program are: there is not

Who gets food stamps in Texas?



enough staff to handle the heavy caseload; they are not properly trained; and they give incorrect information or do not fully explain regulations to applicants. (The revision of food stamp regulations occurs too often to be fully understood by the staff.) If clients do not provide proof of their income on their status reports, they are cut off from benefits. Many clients do not know that emergency stamps are available. Some clients are cut off from benefits due to the loss of monthly status reports, or because they were not entered into the computer on time.

New federal regulations have been in effect for the last 6-8 months to reduce errors and to insure that no resources, income, or assets slip by the department. These new, more stringent verification procedures are necessary because the state is being asked to pay back the federal government for any errors in payments. The workers complain that the new rules and procedures add 15 to 20 minutes to the time necessary to process each application and status report.

The federal Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 mandated changes in food stamp income guidelines. Applicants must consider the income or resources of all other household members when applying for benefits. Gifts of money, loans, and Social Security payments are all considered eligible income. Another new federal requirement is called Retrospective Budgeting, which uses income and expenses from the month prior to application. This means that clients must often wait two months for certification based on their current status. Many clients must go to private food banks for emergency food during the time required for certification.

Monthly status reports, large increases in applications, a high turnover rate for workers (30%), and an inadequate budget to hire more workers often result in delay of benefits and loss or misplacement of applications and monthly status reports.

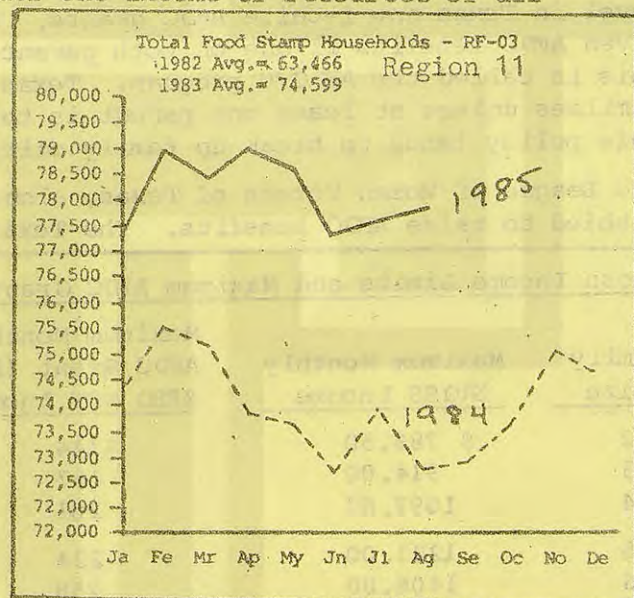
This also causes denial of some applicants' benefits, or, at least, a late payment, and often requires reapplication. About 30% of food stamp applicants are denied benefits: 22% are denied because of missing information or verification on an application; 21% because monthly status reports are not received on time; 16% for lack of information on status reports; and 10% for missed appointments. 25% of clients fail to reapply after the certification period has ended. Actual fraud in food stamps is less than 1/100th of 1%.

Food stamp allotments are never intended to cover more than 70% of monthly food costs for even the most needy families. Still, the Food Stamp Program operates as the most comprehensive of all food aid programs.

Martin Dukler, Deputy Commissioner for Programs for TDHS, states, "I think that the Food Stamp Program at the federal scene has been a disgrace in terms of management and what kinds of effects they've had in terms of the client, the recipient, the family, as well as the administration of the program from the state level."

AID TO FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN (AFDC)

Authorized in 1938 under the federal Social Security Act, the AFDC entitlement program provides monthly cash payments which cover basic living costs to



families with children who are deprived of support because of the absence, death, or disability of one or both parents. Eligible children must be under age 18, or if 18, must be full time students; the child must be a U.S. citizen, or a legal alien, admitted for permanent residence; the child must live in Texas with a parent or close relative; and the family must be in financial need according to Texas AFDC guidelines.

The federal government funds at least half of each state's expenditures, and the program is administered by TDHS. Local administrative costs amount to 6% of the total budget. Applications may be obtained at any of nine local TDHS offices, and may be turned in that same day. If applicants are accepted they are granted an interview in from 30-45 days at which time the grant amount is established. Benefit levels are determined by the individual states, and vary widely across the country. Texas ranks 44th among the states with an average monthly grant of \$57 per person, \$167 for a family of three with no income. The national average is \$109 a month per person, ranging from a payment of \$227 in Alaska to \$31 in Mississippi. About 27% of children living below the poverty level in Texas now receive AFDC grants. In some states 2 parent families are given AFDC benefits if one or both parents are unemployed and are seeking work. This is called the AFDC/U program. Texas does not grant benefits to 2 parent families unless at least one parent is totally disabled. Critics complain that this policy tends to break up family units during times of economic stress.

The League of Women Voters of Texas, along with other groups, has extensively lobbied to raise AFDC benefits. The Texas Legislature raised the average monthly

Gross Income Limits and Maximum AFDC Grants

Family Size	Maximum Monthly GROSS Income	Maximum Monthly AFDC Grant (for ZERO NET Income)
2	\$ 786.50	\$144
3	914.00	167
4	1097.00	201
5	1223.00	224
6	1406.00	258
7	1526.50	280
8	1739.00	319
9	1863.00	342

(Cases with one parent or caretaker)

child support, and lump sum payments. Workers' compensation, VA benefits, and unemployment benefits count as income. An owner-occupied home is not counted, nor an automobile whose equity does not exceed \$1,500. The actual grant is determined by subtracting the family net monthly income from the maximum monthly grant. A family of 3 may qualify for the minimum AFDC payment of \$10 with a monthly income just under \$914; that same family may qualify for \$167 with no income.

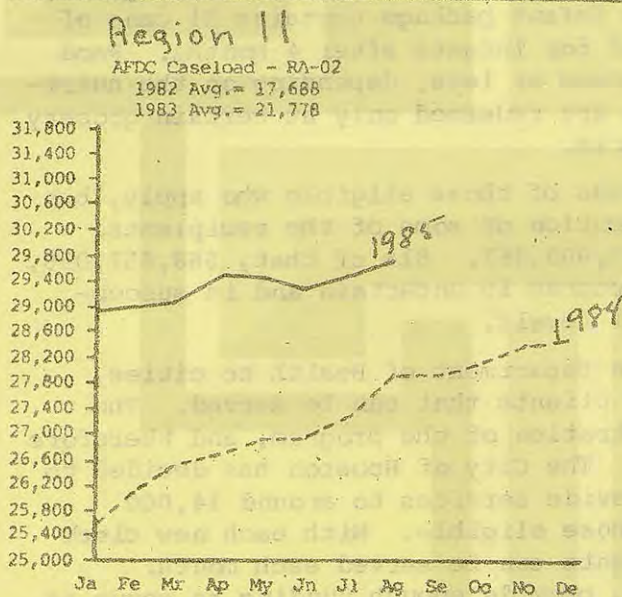
A certified AFDC recipient is also eligible for Medicaid benefits without a separate application or eligibility determination. Federal law prohibits AFDC payments under \$10, but families would still qualify for Medicaid. Fewer than 15% of AFDC mothers receive any kind of rent subsidy in Houston. A typical AFDC family is small. Two-thirds of recipient families never return to the rolls. It is clear that low levels of support in Texas do not encourage women to stay on AFDC.

AFDC grant from \$42 in 1983 to \$48 in 1984, \$53 for 1985, and \$57 for 1986. Except for these small increases, however, AFDC grants have remained about the same for 15 years while inflation raised basic living costs 183.3%.

The amount of benefits a family receives is a predetermined figure based on the income, resources, and number of certified recipients in a family group. A family's resources and income include such things as equity in real property, cars, insurance policies, business possessions,

The average AFDC family is mother, 2 children. 39% have one child, 30% have two, 17% have three. 96% of caretakers are female, 33% have a child under the age of two. The average length of time on AFDC is about four years.

If the youngest child is six years or older, the caretaker is required to register for employment with the Texas Employment Commission. Caretakers, but not their children, can lose their benefits if they are offered suitable employment and refuse to work. They must look for work for 90 days, and then reapply every six months. Many eventually find jobs despite the problems they face: 78% do not have a high school education; 70% have no job training. The jobs they may qualify for do not pay enough to support the family plus compensate for added child care expense and the loss of Medicaid benefits. Although 270,000 children qualify for subsidized day care, Texas only funds places for 15,550 children.



Fraud in the program came to less than 1% of benefits paid in 1984. Since 1985 status reports must be turned in each month with proof of the recipient's income and assets. These reports are checked by caseworkers and are as carefully verified as are the lengthy applications. If the status report is not properly completed, is not received on time, is lost by the caseworker, or is not typed into the computer on time, benefits for that month are delayed or denied.

Texas' denial rate is one of the highest in the U.S. The reasons for this are not very clear. 58% of AFDC applicants are denied benefits, mostly because of missing information or verification on applications or status reports. Also, many are denied because monthly status

reports are not received on time and because of missed appointments. In Harris County AFDC families increased from 14,114 (monthly average) in 1977 to 21,768 in 1984, while the TDHS staff remained essentially the same. When TDHS changes eligibility status and reduces benefits because of a change in circumstances, the recipient has the right to receive adequate notice. If the client requests a hearing within ten days, benefits will continue until the hearing.

SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)

WIC is a nutrition supplement program totally funded by the federal government under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. The focus of the program is to aid children in their most nutritionally vulnerable years, pre-birth to age 5. Therefore, the clients of the program are pregnant or lactating women, and children up to the age of five who are certified by health professionals to be at nutrition risk.

Harris County has WIC programs operating through three public providers: the city Health Department; the University of Texas Health Science Center; and the county Health Department. The WIC Project in Houston serves 12,000 pregnant or breast-feeding women, infants and children to age five. Participants must meet income guidelines not exceeding 150% of poverty. A family of two may have no more than \$882 per month; a family of four, \$1332 to be eligible. Physical need is determined by a medical exam and assessment, lab tests, and an interview as

to diet patterns. AFDC and food stamp recipients often participate in the WIC program.

In order to receive federal grant money (which is based on census figures), local or county health departments must serve at least 25% of those eligible. The Houston program currently processes 240 applicants each day. Recipients can be certified for any period of time from one month to one year. The number of applicants has increased greatly over the last 4-5 years.

Benefits include coupons for a food package (tailored for individual need), health care, and nutritional education which is mandated by federal law. The average value of a food package is currently \$32. Recipients must attend a nutritional seminar monthly before receiving their food coupons, which are available for certain foods and special brands only. The maximum adult food package contains 28 units of milk or cheese, 36 oz. cereal, 276 oz. fruit juice, 2 dozen eggs, and 18 oz. peanut butter. The infant package contains 31 cans of iron-fortified formula, plus juice and cereal for infants after 4 months. Food packages may contain the maximum amounts allowed or less, depending on the nutritional needs of the recipient. Food coupons are redeemed only at certain grocery stores that have contracts with the WIC Program.

There seem to be few problems filling the needs of those eligible who apply, but there are problems with the sporadic participation of some of the recipients. In 1984 the total WIC grant for Texas was \$83,905,467. 81% of that, \$68,857,096, was paid to Texas grocers. Funding of the program is uncertain and is susceptible to cuts at the local, state, or federal levels.

Federal grant money is allocated by the state Department of Health to cities, counties, or agencies based on the number of clients that can be served. The city or county budgets money for the administration of the program, and therefore determines the effectiveness of the program. The City of Houston has decided to provide a low level of funding, enough to provide services to around 14,000 clients a month. This is currently 15% of those eligible. With each new clerk provided for in the city budget 500 more clients can be served each month. Some localities (in the valley, for example), provide enough funding to serve as many as 40% of those eligible. The newly passed Omnibus Hunger Act will provide some funds to increase WIC participation, but only if the City of Houston provides funds for increased staffing.

In 1984 the federal government impounded \$8,000,000 of Texas' WIC money. Taken from the food budget, this caused direct cuts in the amounts and kinds of foods available to participants. The bulk of that money was returned to the program in July 1985. Some of the recovered funds were used to pay salaries for 12 additional clerks.

There have been recent complaints that the program is too small and poorly publicized to be effectively utilized by its target population; that needy children must have already experienced substantial malnutrition for several months in order to show physical symptoms. There is a concern that other family members share in the targeted food. Nevertheless, the WIC program has been judged to be very effective in meeting the needs of its participants, both in terms of cost effectiveness and in terms of measurable nutritional benefits to the recipients.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

Income assistance in the form of low cost public housing and rental assistance, a federal program, is administered by the Houston Housing Authority (HHA). To be eligible, people must prove need. There is a sliding scale which considers all factors, including those of age and family size. In October 1985, 28,025 people, including children were in some form of public or subsidized housing in

Houston. Almost the same number have qualified and are now on waiting lists. Also, in October, 3,148 of the public housing units of the HHA's 20 projects were occupied. A very few are temporarily empty; the rest are either being rehabilitated (Lincoln), are waiting repairs (Clayton Homes), or are waiting, pending action by the HHA (Allen Parkway Village).

In October, 6,114 Section 8 housing units were occupied. This is a program of rental subsidies that came from Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1974. HHA contracts with both tenants and landlords in the community. Tenants in the program may be above the poverty line, but are not able to pay full rent. The apartments rented must have fair market rents (one bedroom, \$262 with utilities). The tenants pay 30% of their income for rent, including utilities. Recently, HHA closed the Section 8 waiting list as it had become so long.

Two months ago, an experimental voucher system was started in Houston at the request of HUD. It is too soon for an evaluation of the effectiveness of this program. Vacancies occur in the housing projects when tenants get jobs or better jobs and leave for private housing. This happens more frequently now than in the past due to lower rents in private housing. Tenants in the more attractive projects for the elderly usually leave only for health reasons, when they must go to nursing homes or to live with family, or when they die.

The Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA) has 583 units occupied on the basis of rent subsidies. These are in Harris County, outside of Houston, Bellaire, and Pasadena. It does this as an agent of the Texas Housing Authority. The non-profit Housing Corporation of Greater Houston tries hard to assist in housing in the city. It has helped create and manage projects whose tenants often receive subsidies. Projects are either rehabilitated or built new with assistance from religious and other non-profit groups.

A growing number of the poor live without shelter. HUD provides assistance to 15 million Americans. Government surveys suggest more than 7 million more cannot afford safe or sanitary shelter. In spite of this, President Reagan is considering a budget bill for 1987 that would freeze housing aid to the poor, eliminate Urban Development Action Grants (which rejuvenate deteriorated neighborhoods), stop development of federally funded rental housing, freeze subsidies for existing public housing programs, end a major grant program for urban redevelopment, and sell the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Since Reagan took office, construction of public housing has come to a near halt. In 1981, under the Carter Administration's final budget, 36,000 new housing units were built. Next year, the number will be less than 7,000. 1985 was National Fair Housing Year. It was also the year that HUD failed to get enough money to enforce fair housing laws.laws.

HARRIS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES (HCSS)

HCSS provides emergency assistance, general assistance, transportation services, and special services to eligible clients. It also manages the county's nursing homes, provides an indigent burial program, and assists in planning for state schools and TB admissions. Funded by Commissioners Court, HCSS has an annual budget of \$4 million. The court has seen fit to increase the budget over the last several years. Out of 88 HCSS workers, there are 35 case workers and 5 supervisors. Administration costs are 9% of the total budget. Eligibility requirements are flexible and are determined following a thorough evaluation of the individual's resources and needs.

Emergency assistance provides temporary aid for persons in Harris County (including Houston) with valid vacate or eviction notices, utility cut-offs, or other extreme needs (food, medical bills, etc.). These persons may or may not

be receiving other income assistance. This emergency help may be granted only twice in 12 months, with a \$100 cap each time.

General assistance is available for those who are medically or mentally disabled or are unavailable for employment. This aid is also available on a temporary basis only as long as the participant is disabled or until other assistance is obtained, such as Social Security Disability. If funds are granted, the case is reviewed each month and reapplications can be taken by mail, on the phone, or by personal interview. The maximum general assistance payment is \$109 for a single person and \$185 for a family of three.

Special services provides counseling toward obtaining employment or getting help from other agencies. Help is also given in better management of client's resources.

HCSS has 10-12 fifteen passenger vans to provide transportation for clients to clinics, hospitals, job training, and other agencies. They make about 21,000 trips in one year. HCSS also provides \$2,000 in bus tokens to help clients with their transportation problems. HCSS provides about 20 indigent burials in one month. Burials take place in the county cemetery and cost about \$495. They are provided by a funeral home that contracts with the county for a year of services.

Beginning in 1986, state money will be available to the county on a 50/50 matching basis for the Emergency Nutrition and Temporary Emergency Relief Program (ENTERP) as designated by the state Omnibus Hunger Act of 1985. These funds should provide about 5% of HCSS budget, and will continue with the same emergency services offered by the county now. Administrative costs should not exceed 25% of the total funding. ENTERP is a cooperative effort between TDHS and counties, cities, or other non-profit organizations to provide needy persons with emergency food, utilities, housing, and clothing.

HCSS is open from 7 to 5 weekdays, and from January to August 1985, 48,000 applicants were seen. There has been a 40-50% increase in applicants over the last four years due to high unemployment and an influx of those looking for work. Increases also occur at mid-summer when applicants seek help with high utility bills.

OTHER ASSISTANCE

There are a number of non-profit institutions and private programs that provide mainly emergency shelter and food distribution. The Salvation Army and the Star of Hope Mission are the best known, but there are also 250 individual church programs, 100 denominational aid societies, seven church coalitions, eight distribution centers, and three distribution networks. These providers distributed nearly \$10 million worth of food in 1983, supply over 4% of the total combined dollar value of public and non-profit resources.

IN CONCLUSION

The League continues to try to dispel the myths held by much of the general public that large sections of our state and federal budgets pay out benefits to lazy, able-bodied people, driving big cars, and using food stamps for beer and cigarettes; or that women keep having children because of the rewards welfare offers, and that fraud is rampant in all the programs.

The LWV of Texas supported increased AFDC benefits as a legislative priority in 1985. The League asks for AFDC payments of at least \$60 per recipient per month.

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Faye Walker, WIC Project Administrator

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U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Hunger, 98th Congress

Researched and written by Allison Dieter, Income Assistance Director and Horthy Sher, Housing Chair

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January 1986

BACKGROUND

INDIGENT HEALTH CARE IN HARRIS COUNTY

As an outgrowth of the State League study on indigent health care which was adopted at the state convention in 1985, your local League health committee has been assessing the status of indigent health care in Harris County. We have concentrated our efforts on a brief overview of the city and county Health Departments, the Harris County Hospital District (HCHD), and the diffuse and changing mental health situation. This is by no means the final word and will probably raise more questions than it answers, but it is a beginning.

CITY AND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

While the HCHD serves those who are ill and injured, the purpose of the health departments, both city and county, is to keep people well. This is not a rigid division of responsibilities, of course. Some exceptions are venereal disease clinics in the health departments which screen as well as treat. HCHD does preventive medicine in many ways by counseling and educating in nutrition, special diets, and many other ways. But as a broad general division between the two, it holds true a good bit of the time.

It is also difficult to sort out what services of the health departments are directed solely toward the poor. Many of the things they do benefit the entire population, e.g., the inspection of food establishments, water supplies, septic tanks and sewerage plants, schools and day care centers, swimming pools, the county jail and detention facilities, animal control including licensing and rabies control--these are for everyone. Their communicable disease surveillance has been very much on everyone's mind the last few years with the advent of another new virus to track, understand, and control. But not at the expense of those diseases we've been long familiar with: measles; mumps; hepatitis; tuberculosis; and more.

Actually the range of services we've come to expect from these departments is quite comprehensive. And we want statistics to back up everything so we know how we're doing. What is the venereal disease rate now, higher or lower, and are the facilities for detecting and treating these diseases convenient and priced within reach of everyone? The same goes for communicable diseases and in times of emergency we like those mobile units that appear around the city with immunization shots available for everyone in need. They were free for everyone until just recently. But now that is changing.

As a result of recent legislation, charges will be made for most of the services. There is no mandatory price set by the legislation; the departments can set their own, but they must make the services available free of charge to those who are unable to pay. The city Health Department plans to charge \$1 for an immunization shot, but anyone who can't pay will receive the shot free. There will be no eligibility system based on ability to pay, a system that requires time and manpower and therefore, costs money.

The county Health Department comes under Commissioners' Court and operates six health centers interspersed from the northwest to the southeast, outside the city. Services include:

1. Maternal and child health
 - a. Pre-natal and post-natal care
 - b. Well-baby clinics
 - c. Education for parents
2. Family Planning
 - a. Physical exams, lab work, papsmears, birth control supplies,

- counseling, and education
- b. Educational programs to adolescents and adults through schools, clinics, and community
- c. Fees are charged on a sliding scale basis
- 3. General Health Services
 - a. Immunizations, screening for breast cancer, sickle cell anemia, diabetes, venereal disease, tuberculosis, high blood pressure
 - b. Administering the pap test
 - c. Nutrition-dietary counseling, educational programs on different aspects of nutrition, and Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (W.I.C.)
 - d. Dental care, preventive and restorative services
 - e. Home visits by nursing staff
 - f. Health maintenance nursing services at selected senior citizen nutrition sites.

The city Health Department comes under the City Council, the director being appointed by the mayor with the approval of the council. It too has six clinics which are spaced from the northwest to the southeast. The services are very similar to those offered by the county Health Department. At present the county Health Department has no director.

An interesting division of services occurs in the area of prenatal care. The city and county Health Departments are responsible for these services except for high-risk pregnancies which are handled by the HCHD at Jeff Davis, as are the deliveries. By Dr. Haughton's own admission there is a 5 to 10 week wait to get an appointment with the city Health Department. It is a problem he regrets but changing an entrenched bureaucracy isn't easy. Urging women to seek help earlier so that there will be less risk of low birth weight babies and other complications may only serve to overload the system further.

An overall glance indicates that there are a goodly number of clinics, all located in the northern, eastern, and southeastern areas of the county and city (see Appendix I). These are not 24-hour clinics; different services are operated on different days at different times. Appointments are often necessary. It takes some ingenuity on the part of anyone wishing to use these clinics to find them, get there at the right time, and be seen, especially if there is a lack of transportation or other inhibiting factors. As one worker in the county Health Department said, "There are a lot of services available, but you have to be aggressive to get into the system. You have to keep trying."

HARRIS COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

The Harris County Hospital District (HCHD) is authorized by the state constitution and comes under the jurisdiction of the Commissioners' Court. Run by a board of seven managers who are appointed by the Commissioners' Court for staggered 2-year terms, it is a separate taxing entity with power to levy taxes not to exceed 75¢ per \$100 evaluation. The present tax rate is approximately 13¢.

Twenty years ago the plight of indigent health care in Harris County became a national scandal with the publication of Jan de Hartog's book The Hospital in which the care, or lack of care, was vividly described. After four elections, the district became a reality and today comprises four major divisions: Ben Taub Hospital; Jefferson Davis Hospital; Quentin Mease Hospital; and the Community Health Program which is made up of ten Neighborhood Health Centers and a Dental Center.

It is a system which covers every medical contingency for a whole segment of the population. The system is, in fact, the final safety net for those who cannot get care elsewhere. That means that sometimes the volume of visits can be very heavy and the waits very long.

An eligibility scale is enforced (see Appendix II). One screening suffices for all points of entry, although it does have to be repeated at intervals.

The ten neighborhood health centers are the primary care facilities and are spaced throughout the county where citizens who are most eligible for the services are likely to reside. These centers are quite complete in the kinds of care that are provided. There is general adult medicine, general pediatrics, diabetic and hypertension clinics, nutrition services (since diabetes and obesity are common problems), respiratory clinics, ECG, laboratory, X-ray, pharmacy, and social services. There are some prenatal clinics in cooperation with the city and county health departments; home health care is contracted with the Visiting Nurses Association. If a case calls for surgery or more specialized attention, it is referred to Ben Taub where Baylor College of Medicine operates complete specialty clinics. The case can later be referred back to the neighborhood center for follow-up. The primary care physicians are contracted through Baylor and its Community Medicine Department.

Ben Taub, with 475 beds, is a major emergency center for acute care injuries and illnesses. This includes 58 intensive care beds, 8 critical wound (burn) beds, 68 pediatric beds, and 34 psychiatric beds, a level I trauma center, complete outpatient clinical services, day surgery, and patient education services. Last year there were 18,383 inpatients, 167,909 outpatients, 90,936 emergency center visits, and approximately 10,000 surgeries. At the emergency center a triage nurse determines the degree of injury or illness and patients are then seen according to the seriousness of their situations. Life-threatening cases are seen first; less serious illnesses must wait, sometimes for a very long time. Everyone is seen, however.

All citizens can use Ben Taub in an emergency, but only those who are eligible will receive free care. Complete back-up services are available 24 hours a day.

Jefferson Davis, 275 beds, is known mostly for its obstetrical and neonatal services. With 17,183 births last year and 18,000 anticipated this year, it has more births than any other single facility in the U.S. The newborn intensive care unit with 27 beds is frequently filled to capacity. There are 41 long-term pediatric beds in addition to rehabilitation and pulmonary beds. A high-risk prenatal clinic, follow-up baby clinic, patient education services, and a teen-age pregnancy clinic are also included.

Quentin Mease is a 195 bed hospital close to the Medical Center which is used primarily for non-acute patients.

HCHD BUILDING PROGRAM

In May 1983 the Board of Managers authorized the replacement of Jefferson Davis and Ben Taub General Hospitals, the new Ben Taub to be adjacent to the present building in the Medical Center. Jefferson Davis will be replaced by a facility in the northeast at 5656 Kelley off Loop 610, east of I-59, primarily to serve the northeastern quadrant of the county.

Several controversies have surrounded the current building program which was inaugurated after a threatened closing by the Houston Fire Department and a threatened discreditation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation. Both of

these groups made it clear that it was impossible to bring Ben Taub and Jeff Davis up to credible safety levels.

What is the Joint Commission on Accreditation? It is a joint effort by a group of voluntary organizations (the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association, the American College of Surgeons, the American College of Physicians, and the American Dental Association) to upgrade and maintain standards for all types of hospitals. Their inspections are very thorough and include everything from the qualifications of the medical personnel to the structure and maintenance of the physical plants. This accreditation is necessary if a hospital is to be eligible for Medicare funds and if a medical school which uses that hospital is to maintain its accreditation.

The decision hasn't met with unqualified support. It is hard to accept the fact that a 20 year old building is worn out. It was, however, built before stringent fire codes were enforced and at a time when local support for indigent health care was precarious at best and, therefore, "low bid" all the way. It is still felt that even today support is somewhat less than wholehearted. Nevertheless, those charged with the responsibility for providing this care have gone ahead with plans for replacing the aging structures.

The second controversy, and one which may still be determined in the political arena, concerns the feasibility of contracting with private hospitals for the use of their empty beds. This would make replacing the present hospitals unnecessary.

ARGUMENTS FOR CONTRACTING WITH PRIVATE HOSPITALS

On the surface this seems like a very simple solution. Those who propound it have logical straightforward reasons for doing so, certainly the most compelling being that there are so many empty beds in the private sector. There are estimated to be 6,000 in Houston. Why are there so many?

After World War II the federal government helped to create this glut by making Hill-Burton funds available and defining need as 4.5 beds per 1000 population. It appears now that a more accurate ratio would have been 3.5 per 1000. The government then went further and instituted Medicare which paid for cost plus 2%. There were no incentives to keep costs in check and hospitals became big business. Health insurance policies paid almost exclusively for inpatient care. So there were many incentives for using the most expensive care, that is, inpatient hospital beds, even for procedures which could have been performed on an outpatient basis.

Then came the crackdown. In 1983 Medicare started paying on the basis of DRGs, so much for a diagnosis-related group and only for a certain period of time. Insurance companies similarly reformed. Deductibles were increased, pharmaceutical costs restricted, and outpatient procedures and day surgeries encouraged, with the result that the need for hospital beds has fallen sharply and many already built are unused.

What could be simpler than putting indigent patients in these beds? Some are located close to the neighborhoods where these people live. Why have segregated health care, that is, special hospitals primarily for the use of the poor? Let the same hospital serve everyone, rich or poor, black or white. Or even better, let's use vouchers. Anyone eligible could be given a voucher and could go to the hospital of his choice. The county would pick up the tab. If a hospital mistakenly gave care to someone who was not eligible and who couldn't pay, that would be counted as a charitable contribution, a thing we used to expect from

hospitals and which was defined as part of the cost of acquiring Hill-Burton funds.

Proponents assume that clinical faculty from the medical schools, which are presently concentrated in the Medical Center, would manage the care of these inpatients in the private facilities scattered about the city. Whether the medical schools have been approached about this, or whether it would be possible for them to maintain their accreditation with such a thin layer of supervision, are things which haven't entered the discussion at this point. We only know it is a system which would ease the financial crunch presently confronting many private for-profit and non-profit institutions.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

But would this solve the problem of indigent health care? We are entering an entirely different world when we step into the public hospital. A patient who appears at HCHD has no private physician; he simply presents himself in some state of physical or mental pain. He may appear with a broken arm, but bring with him a series of other problems due to bad diet, poor living habits, drug dependency, or a host of other reasons; for example, diabetes, AIDS, hypertension, obesity, heart disease.

In the long run, as costly as hospital construction is, the building is not the most expensive part of the care. It is the layers of professional, skilled, and unskilled people who deliver the care.

Furthermore, it is very unlikely that segregated health care will end under this plan. The hospitals who have indicated any willingness to contract with the hospital district have generally had plans to set aside a special building or special floors. There will be no mingling of patients or visitors. If a way can be found to skim off the more profitable procedures, the other more costly diseases will be sent looking for space elsewhere.

Houston has 37 hospitals that are owned by investors and many of these are now suffering from low occupancy rates. Should county governments subsidize these businesses? When all is said and done, the business of a corporation, which sells stock on the stock exchange and issues dividends to shareholders, is, quite frankly, business. And what happens when a hospital under contract is bought or sold?

There are difficult populations (prisoners, mentally ill, AIDS) which are served by the public hospital. Which private hospital will step forward to serve these? To do so might risk the loss of their present patient populations who either have insurance or can afford to pay and who equate quality medical care with serene, luxurious surroundings and a patient population resembling themselves.

Only a very long-term contract would be of any value to the public hospital system. With it would have to come strict control of standards, length-of-stay, cost. Who would be in control? What safeguards could there be so this would not bankrupt the county?

The discussion is far from over and it should be noted that Houston is not the only city where it is occurring. The glut of beds is nationwide. Wherever construction of public or veterans administration hospitals is planned, the private sector is trying to find a way to substitute already existing beds for the planned construction. But how can the public be sure that another wave of rising costs won't resume, this time with the brunt of the financial burden shifted from the federal to the local governments?

MENTAL HEALTH

Facilities for private psychiatric care are very good, with 1,360 beds now available, 401 practicing private psychiatrists seeing 116,290 patients a year (or 290 patients per physician per year).

These statistics are taken from a biennial report of the Mental Health Needs Council. This organization was established in 1976 by Judge Lindsay and the Commissioners Court for the purpose of collecting information from all agencies and groups in the county and city involved in mental health. From this information the Council makes projections and recommendations on current and future needs. The Council supports its research and publishes its report through contributions from the member organizations.

Mental Health Needs Council

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Greater Houston Hospital Council | 7. Mental Health Assn. of Houston |
| 2. Harris County Hospital District | and Harris County |
| 3. Harris County Medical Society | 8. UTMSI, formerly TRIMS |
| 4. Harris County Psychiatric Hospital | 9. National Assn. of Social Workers, |
| 5. Houston Psychiatric Society | Houston Unit |
| 6. MHMRA of Harris County | 10. Houston Psychological Assn. |
| | 11. City of Houston Health Department |

The findings pertaining to the public sector are not so rosy. Harris County ranks third among all the counties in the nation according to the 1980 census report with a population of 2,409,547. Of this figure 574,000 are considered eligible to receive services from public institutions, which break down as follows:

Ben Taub has 25 inpatient psychiatric beds and 9 emergency beds. The emergency beds are for involuntary commitments and by law no patient can be held there longer than three days. At the end of that time the patient must be released, or transferred to an inpatient bed, or await the decision of Judge Scanlan's Probate Court #3 (Mental Illness Division) to be committed to Austin State Hospital or to an outpatient clinic for follow-up.

The Harris County Psychiatric Hospital is a holding facility for those who are waiting evaluation by Judge Scanlan's court. This 40-bed facility was purchased by the county as an interim arrangement until the new psychiatric hospital is opened in 1986. At the urging of the Mental Health Needs Council, eight of those beds are now treatment beds through special funding by Commissioners' Court. The remaining 32 beds are still only holding beds until the patients' cases can be heard in court. This hospital will be closed when the new psychiatric hospital opens and these 40 beds transferred there.

The University of Texas Mental Science Institute (formerly TRIMS) has another 40 beds in Hermann Hospital where they were transferred recently from Center Pavilion. These will also be transferred to the new psychiatric hospital when it opens.

This brings the total to 73 beds for a population of 574,000.

The question most begging to be answered, of course, is: how does one get into these beds? One way is through Ben Taub and the Baylor Psychiatric Clinic. Another way is through the UTMSI. This clinic is a part of the University of Texas Clinics in the Hermann Professional Building, which are private clinics. However, UTMSI charges on a sliding scale and patients who can't pay full charges can still be seen. The present plans for the new psychiatric hospital indicate that these clinics will also be moved to the new facility when it opens.

The third way into the system is through MHMRA (Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority). The legislation which created this authority became law in 1965. Since that day it has grown steadily in the number of facilities, the number of professionals and volunteers working, and the number of patients served, although it still is inadequate for the need. The budget for 1984 breaks down as follows:

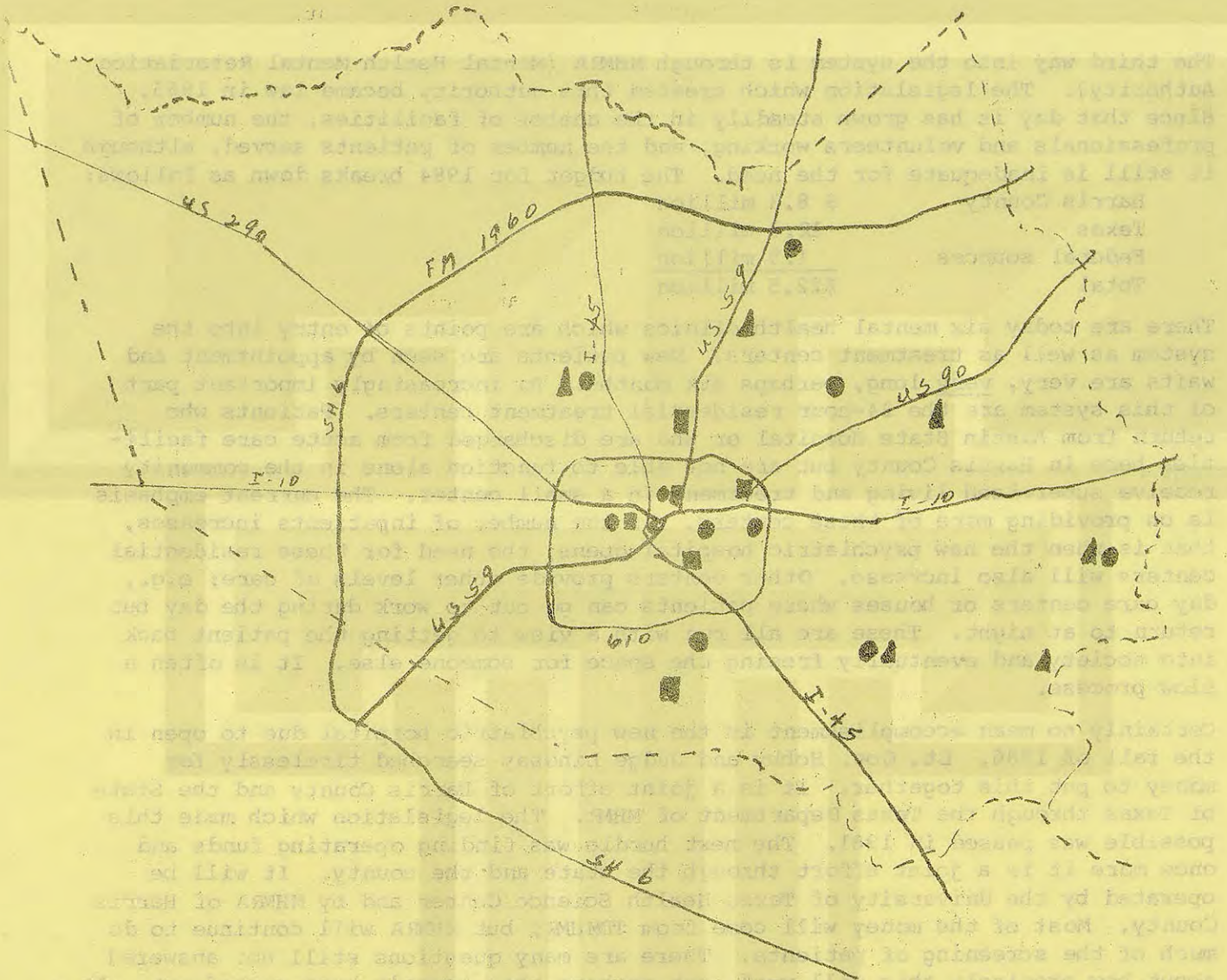
Harris County	\$ 8.3 million
Texas	12.7 million
Federal sources	1.5 million
Total	\$22.5 million

There are today six mental health clinics which are points of entry into the system as well as treatment centers. New patients are seen by appointment and waits are very, very long, perhaps six months. An increasingly important part of this system are the 24-hour residential treatment centers. Patients who return from Austin State Hospital or who are discharged from acute care facilities here in Harris County but are not able to function alone in the community receive supervised living and treatment in a small center. The current emphasis is on providing more of these centers. As the number of inpatients increases, that is when the new psychiatric hospital opens, the need for these residential centers will also increase. Other centers provide other levels of care; e.g., day care centers or houses where patients can go out to work during the day but return to at night. These are all run with a view to getting the patient back into society and eventually freeing the space for someone else. It is often a slow process.

Certainly no mean accomplishment is the new psychiatric hospital due to open in the fall of 1986. Lt. Gov. Hobby and Judge Lindsay searched tirelessly for money to put this together. It is a joint effort of Harris County and the State of Texas through the Texas Department of MHMR. The legislation which made this possible was passed in 1981. The next hurdle was finding operating funds and once more it is a joint effort through the state and the county. It will be operated by the University of Texas Health Science Center and by MHMRA of Harris County. Most of the money will come from TDMHMR, but MHMRA will continue to do much of the screening of patients. There are many questions still not answered about how precisely this will work, but perhaps they haven't been worked out. At any rate there will be 250 beds in this facility and another 25 at Ben Taub bringing the total to 275 all for use by indigents.

Whether these 275 beds will be enough, along with the increasing use of residential treatment centers, remains to be seen. It is a good beginning and one for which Judge Lindsay and the Commissioners Court should receive much credit. Looking at the amount of money that Harris County contributes to mental health, one realizes that their commitment surpasses that of every other county in Texas (see Appendix III).

At this time in Harris County treatment for mentally handicapped who cannot pay for private care is very hard to find. Waits are extremely long, six months at least. Arduous work has gone into solving this problem by members of Commissioners' Court and others who recognize the situation, particularly the Mental Health Needs Council. More money may be part of the solution, but organization and management must be supplied as well. The new psychiatric hospital will not be a panacea, particularly since no one knows exactly how it will work and UT Health Science Center isn't saying. MHMRA of Harris County is not as effective as it needs to be. Perhaps the situation will improve when citizens are more aware and demand more relief from the agencies responsible.



Harris County Health Dept. Clinics

1. Acres Home - 818 Ringold
2. Winfield - 12,040 Homestead Rd.
3. Riley Chambers - 808½ Magnolia
4. Baytown - 701 Baker Road
5. Pasadena - 2223 Strawberry
6. LaPorte - 911 South 8th St.

City Health Dept. Clinics

1. Casa de Amigos - 1906 Cochran
2. Lyons - 5602 Lyons
3. Northside - 8504 Schuller Rd.
4. Riverside - 3315 Delano
5. Sunnyside - 9314 Cullen at Wilmington
6. West End - 190 Heights Blvd.

Harris County Hospital Dist. Health Centers

1. Settegast - 9105 N. Wayside
2. Baytown - 807 W. Sterling
3. Casa de Amigos - 1615 N. Main
4. Acres Home - 818 Ringold
5. Sunnyside - 8106 Martin Luther King
6. Ripley - 4401 Lovejoy
7. West End - 201 Heights Blvd.
8. Pasadena - 1029 Strawberry Rd.
9. Dental Center - 1612 Fannin
10. Bordersville - 19,301 Hightower Lane, Humble
11. El Centro - 7301 Ave. F

HARRIS COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT ELIGIBILITY SCALE

EFFECTIVE 4-1-84

NUMBER OF PERSONS IN FAMILY UNIT

	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	Pt Class	% To Pa
GROSS MONTHLY INCOME OF FAMILY UNIT	0-735	736-1155	1156-1575	1576-1995	1996-2415	A	0%
	736-875	1156-1295	1576-1715	1996-2135	2416-2555	B	10%
	876-1015	1296-1435	1716-1855	2136-2275	2556-2695	C	20%
	1016-1154	1436-1574	1856-1994	2276-2414	2696-2834	D	30%
	1155	1575	1995	2415	2835	E	100%

SERVICES

Scale	Hospital & Physician	Basic Fee	MMA &Pedi	Normal Delivery Deposit	In- Patient/ Out- Patient	Admission Deposit
A	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
B	10%	7.50	4.00	200.00	10%	200.00
C	20%	15.00	8.00	400.00	20%	400.00
D	30%	22.50	11.00	600.00	30%	600.00
E	100%	75.00	39.00	1000.00	100%	1000.00

NOTE:

Inpatient obstetrical flat fees are based on patient classification and normal delivery costs. Babies and Outpatient charges are billed on a % basis according to eligibility classification.

EXHIBIT A

GRANT-IN-AID FOR FISCAL YEARS 1986 and 1987

Based upon Per Capita - Using 1985 TDH Population Projections

COMMUNITY MHMR CENTER	Current GIA FY 1985	Current GIA Per Capita	Percent of Population
1. Tri County MHMR Services	\$ 820,238	2.9384	1.954
2. MHMRA of Harris County	12,722,766	4.3786	20.335
3. El Paso Center for MHMR	2,814,294	4.8060	4.098
4. Tarrant County MHMR	5,087,942	5.1721	6.884
5. Amarillo MHMR Reg. Cntr.	1,948,572	5.2320	2.606
6. Dallas County MHMR	9,561,244	5.4226	12.340
7. North Central Tx MHMR	2,398,994	5.5215	3.041
8. Tropical Tx Cntr for MHMR	3,682,323	5.6029	4.599
9. MHMR of Southeast Texas	2,228,908	5.7559	2.710
10. Bexar County MHMR	6,693,635	5.7598	8.133
11. Gulf Coast Reg. MHMR	2,484,549	5.9728	2.911
12. Gulf Bend MHMR	1,051,890	6.0093	1.225
13. Lubbock Regional MHMR	1,840,088	6.2821	2.050
14. Northeast Texas MHMR	861,252	6.2940	0.958
15. Sabine Valley Reg. MHMR	1,893,190	6.3653	2.081
16. MHMRA of Brazos Valley	1,437,329	6.7624	1.487
17. MHMR Regional of E. Texas	1,905,863	6.8007	1.961
18. Deep E. Tx. Regional MHMR	2,300,672	6.9486	2.317
19. Concho Valley Center for Human Advancement	817,754	7.0130	0.816
20. Navarro County MHMR	296,317	7.3475	0.282
21. Heart of Tx. Reg. MHMR	2,219,917	7.4070	2.097
22. Abilene Regional MHMR	1,168,362	7.4949	1.091
23. Permian Basin Comm. MHMR	1,875,348	7.6715	1.711
24. Austin-Travis County MHMR	3,994,481	7.8560	3.558
25. Central Counties MHMR	2,500,474	8.2456	2.122
26. Wichita Falls MHMR	1,148,625	9.0429	0.889
27. Central Plains MHMR	1,101,104	9.2865	0.830
28. MHMR Services of Texoma	1,643,261	10.4796	1.097
29. Nueces County MHMR	3,222,339	10.4826	2.151
30. Pecan Valley MHMR	1,511,095	11.5425	0.916
31. Central Texas MHMR	1,274,862	11.9323	0.748
TOTALS	\$84,507,587		99.998

MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING IN HARRIS COUNTY: A PERSPECTIVE

EXHIBIT B

COUNTY DONATIONS/APPROPRIATIONS TO MHMRA CENTERS

COUNTY	1980 CENSUS POPULATION	83-84 FY FUNDING	PER CAPITA
Harris	2,409,544	\$ 5,890,152	\$ 2.44
Dallas	2,556,549	2,305,677	1.48
Bexar	988,800	395,000	0.40
Tarrant	860,880	495,000	0.57

EXHIBIT C

STATE HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS AND FUNDING

	<u>Harris</u>	<u>Bexar</u>	<u>Dallas</u>	<u>Travis</u>
Admission Rate/100,000 Population	72.9	202.5	122.1	391.6
Institutional Cost Per Capita	\$ 6.40	\$17.79	\$13.72	\$34.35
% of Total State Hospital Admissions	9.2	10.5	12.75	8.6
State Hospital Admissions FY 1983	1,757	2,002	1,900	1,642

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APR 1 1985

BACKGROUNDER

TEACHER PREPARATION AND COMPETENCY

Why can't Jane or Johnny read--or write--or add?
Is education really in trouble in this country?
How can we become more competitive in this modern age?
What is a good education?

As we have seen during the debates in the Texas Legislature, finding a solution to the "education problem" is not easy. The major stumbling block seems to be defining what, if any, problem there is. Many individuals and groups feel they have the clearest insight to the situation.

PROBLEMS WITH EDUCATION

The three major groups involved in the quest to find the true ills in the educational system are the teachers, the so-called educational experts, and the public at large.

Teachers see two major problems in educating today's youth. They are parents' lack of interest due to both parents working, and an increased amount of freedom for children. Another problem they define is students' lack of interest. Teachers feel that students have an unrealistic view of the world. "Many students believe they will emerge from school into an electronic world that will require less reading and writing." "Students need to realize that in a world overloaded with information, both a business and a personal advantage will go to those who can sort the important information from the trivial."

The public, on the other hand, sees a whole range of problems. A recent Gallup poll showed the following: (The numbers shown indicate the percentage of people who rank the problem as the largest in the system.)

Discipline	19%
Problems with teachers or administrators, getting good teachers, teachers lack of interest	17%
Lack of proper financial support	12%
Alcohol, drugs	11%
Poor curriculum, decreased academic standards	10%
Integration, bussing	8%
Overcrowding, poor facilities	5%
Lack of interest on the part of parent and child	4%

The "educational experts" see the problem with education in an entirely different light. They look not within the classroom but at products of the system. What the U.S. system of education produces, according to a University of Texas Adult Performance Level project, is illiterates. Their study found that 20% of adults nationwide could not interpret a bus schedule, understand a printed explanation of finance charges, or address a letter so that it would reach the intended destination. Although there is evidence that illiteracy

increases among non-whites (40% are Black, 50% are Hispanic, and 10% are White), and among those not completing school (16% completed grades 8-11, 9% completed grade 12), they argue that we have a system which makes it difficult for non-whites and makes it easy to drop out. Experts also cite declining Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores. The most striking statistics are not the percentages but the actual numbers. Despite an increased number of students taking the test, the number of students scoring 650 or above (out of a possible 800) on the mathematics portion of the test fell from 93,868 in 1972 to 73,386 in 1980. Even more dramatically, the number of students scoring 650 or above (out of a possible 800) on the verbal portion of the test fell from 53,794 in 1972 to 29,019 in 1980. The students also don't make a good showing in cross country comparisons. In an international math test administered to 13,500 U.S. students and to thousands of students world-wide, the U.S. scores fell below the international median in every area. In many cases they were close to the median, but always below it. John Silber, President of Boston University, emphasizes that increasing scores is not enough. "Tests only establish minimum standards (In reference to proposed mandatory tests for graduation). I'll be impressed when we can give the British O-level exams (given to 16 year-olds in Britain). On the O-levels in literature, the test begins by quoting a long passage from "The Merchant of Venice", and then asking 'What does 'a true conceit of Godlike amity' mean?' I don't think the average graduate of an American University could pass that exam."

HOUSE BILLS 246 AND 72--WHAT'S WHAT AND WHEN

HB 246, passed by the 67th Legislature in 1983, is a substantial revision of certain sections of the Texas Education Code that deal with curriculum. HB 72, passed by the special session in 1984, mandated many and varied reforms to education. The Select Committee on Public Education (SCOPE), chaired by H. Ross Perot, preceded the special session, precipitated much discussion and led to many of the provisions of HB 72. Highlights of the 2 bills include: (to begin in 1984-85) new grading scale with 70 as the minimum passing grade; attendance regulations on un-excused absences; stricter eligibility requirements for extra-curricular activities (Spring 1985); mandated parent conferences for failing students; six-week grading system; teacher career ladder; new state salary schedule; guaranteed uninterrupted teacher conference period; minimum teaching assignment of four classes per day; no final exemptions; tutorial services offered to failing students; limited school day interruptions; 10-day limit on class release days for extracurricular activities; computer literacy program; increased hours for summer school credit (140 old; 160 new); elimination of drivers education fund; no social promotions; management training for administrators, including principals and superintendents; and mandated four preparation days for teachers--two prior to the beginning of the school year and one at the end of each semester.

To begin in 1985-86: essential elements K-12; uniform school calendar with no school beginning prior to September 1; discipline management program with mandated teacher training in that program; teacher/parent conferences at least twice a year for each student; pre-kindergarten program for qualifying children (limited English speaking ability, or poverty income); K-2 class size limited to 22 students; criterion referenced testing in the basic skills for grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and an exam for juniors/seniors; and teacher and administrator testing and certification.

SENATE BILL 50--WHAT IT MEANS

Senate Bill 50 concerns itself with university level teacher education programs. Under the guidance of the Texas Education Agency, the bill requires a satisfactory performance on a competency examination of basic skills for admission to teacher education programs. The

bill also requires satisfactory performance on a comprehensive examination prescribed by the board as a condition to certification as a teacher and a separate examination as a condition to certification as an administrator.

The TEA will coordinate the implementation of this bill, including the development of the test, and the measurement levels for a satisfactory performance.

Senate Bill 50 does not apply to (a) a person currently holding a valid teaching certificate, or (b) a person who entered a teacher education program prior to the adoption of this bill.

EVALUATION STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

The following information on teacher evaluation standards was obtained from two local school districts--the Houston Independent School District and the Aldine Independent School District.

The Aldine School District provides a twenty-six point evaluation form for each teacher. The primary concern appears to be the professional attitude of the teacher towards administration, other teachers, students, and parents. Sixteen questions deal directly with attitude, including such areas as: loyalty, cooperation, punctuality, friendliness, personal appearance, and the physical appearance of the classroom. Seven questions deal with teacher methodology, and include areas such as: classroom organization, variety of teaching methods, and evaluation of the students. Three questions are related directly to academic ability, knowledge of subject matter, creativity, and resourcefulness.

Each of the twenty-six areas is evaluated on a three point scale. They are (1) acceptable, (2) area of concern, and (3) unacceptable.

HISD has a similar evaluation program, called the Teacher Quality Assurance Program. HISD teachers undergo a tri-dimensional assessment by a team consisting of the principal, an instructional supervisor, and an associate superintendent. This program has been in effect since August of 1983. The following chart is a part of the HISD Quality Assurance Program Manual. Each statement may be answered with "not observed", "not appropriate", or "a 1, 2, 3, 4 rating".

OBSERVED INSTRUCTIONAL PROFICIENCIES

A. Uses Instruction Time Effectively

1. Follows prepared lesson plans based on HISD curriculum and objectives.
2. Focuses the students' attention at the beginning of the lesson (focus or set) - starts lesson immediately.
3. Communicates to the students what they will be able to do by the end of the lesson or unit and why that accomplishment is useful (objective and purpose).
4. Relates all information to the stated objective(s) (instructional input).
5. Uses models or illustrates what students are to learn (modeling).
6. Checks to find out if the student comprehends the essential information before moving to something new in the lesson (monitor and adjust).
7. Allows students to practice the behavior stated in the objective while the teacher is readily available

- to assist (guided practice).
- B. Motivates Students Successfully
1. Relates learning activities to student interests (interest).
 2. Offers varied learning activities (interest).
 3. Makes involvement a part of the learning process.
 4. Increases or decreases student level of concern appropriately (level of concern).
 5. Uses pleasant feeling tone.
 6. Provides consistent and immediate feedback to students (knowledge of results).
 7. Sets the tasks at the correct level of difficulty (success).
 8. Divides assignments into short tasks when the objective presented is difficult to master (success).
 9. Supplies prompts when students need help (success).
- C. Increases Productive Student Behavior
1. Praises students for appropriate classroom behavior.
 2. Informs students of their progress.
 3. Varies praise words.
 4. Negatively reinforces inappropriate behaviors.
 5. Follows a negative reinforcer with a positive reinforcer.
 6. Ignores behavior that is merely attention-getting.
 7. Is specific when reinforcing a behavior.
 8. Uses appropriate reinforcement schedule when new behaviors are being learned.
- D. Demonstrates Proficiency in Subject Area
1. Demonstrates sound knowledge of subject matter in lesson presentations.
 2. Responds knowledgeably to students' questions on the subject matter.
- E. Demonstrates Proficiencies in Oral/Written Language
1. Pronounces words correctly.
 2. Uses grammatically correct English.
 3. Uses rules of spelling, punctuation, and grammar in all written materials.

TEACHER COMPETENCY

"We found that by every measure you can reduce to statistics, there is no basis for suggesting a lowering of quality level. The training of teachers is more exclusive than it used to be, and so the training of administrators." (Willard Wirtz, Advisory Panel on the SAT score decline). It is hard to find many people who will agree with Mr. Wirtz, however.

Among teachers, there is a feeling that their colleagues are not performing at an acceptable level. In a survey conducted by The Dallas Times Herald, a majority of teachers thought that one-fourth of their colleagues were incompetent. Their estimate was based on the number of teachers whose students' test scores were always low, no matter what group of children they work with. On a more local level, the Houston public's perception of incompetence comes from incidents like the general competency test given to HISD teachers. This resulted in negative reports by the media ranging from the way it was given, to the numbers of teachers who did poorly. The following questions were given to some math teachers in HISD. (The numbers indicate the

percentages of participating teachers that missed the question.)

Equating numbers in written words to corresponding figures 79%

Determining the missing angle in a triangle 32%

Adding whole numbers in a word problem 42%

There are many reasons given for declining quality of teachers. In teachers' colleges, students are encouraged to avoid their field. "Too often, teachers are the products of teachers' colleges which emphasize the theory of education. They are then supposed to be capable of teaching any subject." Teachers' colleges are described by Newsweek as "the biggest joke running in higher education." The schools of education attract students with an average SAT score of 812 (compared to engineering schools that attract students with an average SAT score of 987). Once in college, very little is expected from the education majors. Teachers' colleges in Texas only require a 2.0 to 2.25 average to graduate (with the exception of North Texas State University, which requires a 2.75).

Low salaries for teachers are also blamed for the decline in quality. In the Houston area, minimum salaries range from \$16,594 to \$20,000, and maximum salaries range from \$24,340 to \$30,000.

Although it seems easy to spot a shocking lack of subject knowledge, it is not at all easy to systematically sort the incompetent teachers from the competent. Researchers in the area of teacher competence readily admit that they "do not know how to define, prepare, or measure teacher competence." It has become clear in studies of teachers that the ones who have the most knowledge in their subject area are not always able to convey their knowledge to the students. And, conversely, some teachers with very little knowledge in their subject area are able to so highly motivate their students that their lack of knowledge does not hurt them in the classroom. The method of trying to rate teacher performance has many variables. Learning might be inhibited because of factors such as race, maturity, or late realization.

GOOD EDUCATION

There seems to be a preponderance of material discussing the ills of education, and illustrated manuals on how to fix it. Unfortunately, not many people have a clear idea of what would constitute good education. Ron Edmunds, Harvard Graduate School of Education, has one idea. "There are five seemingly indispensable characteristics of effective schools (ones in which students learn): (1) principals who are active leaders; (2) orderly climate; (3) emphasis on basic skills; (4) standardized tests to measure basic skills; and (5) high expectations for all students."

PROBLEMS WITH NEW LAWS

Although there is general consensus that the recent bills passed by the Texas Legislature concerning education are a step in the right direction, there are some areas of concern, especially among teachers.

The new career ladder for teachers, although designed as an incentive program, does not adequately reach that goal, teachers argue. The money increase from the lowest to the very highest level is only \$2,000. In today's economy, this is hardly motivation.

The idea of evaluations to determine job status also has not gone over well. The new system of evaluating will be implemented by 1986. Teachers argue, "If we haven't been able to define what a good teacher is yet, how can we do it in the next two years?"

Once the evaluation process begins, who trains the evaluators? Will the evaluators be subject to periodic evaluation? Also, the problem of local evaluation has arisen. It has been suggested that to minimize the problem of local politics, personalities, and unfairness that many teachers fear, the evaluation should be done at the state level. Teachers also argue that new evaluations will not take into account teacher's past success. There need to be assurances that the appeals process mentioned in the new laws will be both clear and fair.

Alternative certifications concern those interested in teacher education. One type allows for math/science/technical professionals, uneducated as teachers, to teach on a part time basis. Another type grants certification to fill the many classroom vacancies. According to concerned educators, the provisions for alternative certification including student teaching, training in teacher methods, and a one-year internship need to be specific and rigorous when the State Board of Education rules on the matter.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION

The Brackenridge scholarship awarded to students of Trinity University in San Antonio makes teaching more financially profitable and even getting teacher education financially profitable. Students awarded the scholarship receive \$5,000 each of their first two years and \$6,000 their junior and senior year. Tuition at Trinity is \$5,400. The program also promises to supplement the salary of graduates by \$2,000 a year once they start teaching.

The University of Virginia gives warranties to cover their students. It "will cover only graduates in their first year out of school who were recommended for certification...the university will send a trouble shooting faculty member to the teacher's school to correct difficulties. The remedies will vary from conferences with teachers to remedial summer courses."

One very simple idea is to keep increasing emphasis on basics and to make proficiency tests in high school the rule. "Experts" feel this will definitely make the U.S. more competitive.

Work on getting a better public perception of education. Use the tactics of politicians, regardless of whether or not something is good or bad, maintaining good public perception helps capture public support.

Start children in school earlier. By the age of 19, those who have taken pre-school classes prove more likely to finish high school, find jobs, or go to college, and less likely to have trouble with the law or teen-age pregnancies. They also scored higher on achievement tests. The reduced costs for delinquency and welfare more than compensate for the initial expense of pre-school.

Today education is more important than ever before. Most people agree that money alone is not the solution. All agree that a great deal of thought and effort is also needed to prepare our children to meet the challenge of our ever-changing society as well prepared as possible.

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Researched by the Education Committee. Written by Leesa Boeger.

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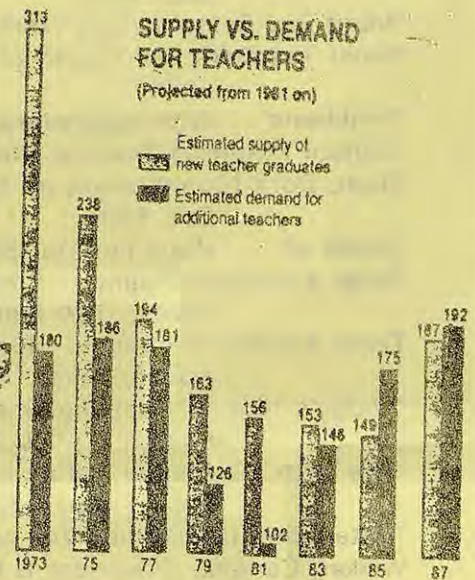
A PROFESSION IN TROUBLE

With a shortage of teachers imminent, the quality of applicants to education programs is declining, the pay they can expect on graduation is far lower than their classmates' in other fields and on-the-job morale is poor.



SUPPLY VS. DEMAND FOR TEACHERS

(Projected from 1981 on)



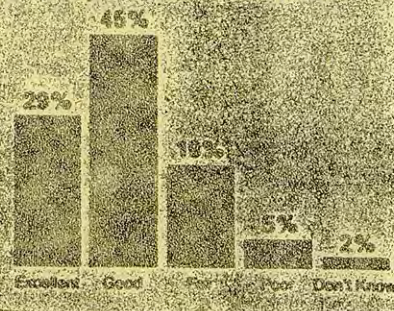
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NEWSWEEK/SEPTEMBER 24, 1984

PUTTING TEACHERS TO A PUBLIC TEST



How would you rate the performance of your children's teachers?



What are your reasons

(Teachers rated good or excellent)

Child is doing well in school	37%
Teachers really care about students	35%
Teachers are good at their jobs	24%

for making that rating?

(Teachers rated fair or poor)

Teachers don't care about students and don't spend enough time with them	38%
Teachers are incompetent	24%
Generally not satisfied	20%
Teachers can't control classes	10%
Classes overcrowded	9%
Teachers don't teach fundamentals	5%



What effect has the unionization of teachers had on the quality of education?

Positive	26%	No Effect	27%
Negative	32%	Don't Know	15%

Should teachers be required to pass a competency test before they are hired?

Yes	89%	No	7%	Don't Know	4%
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Do you think teaching in public schools is an attractive career for young people today?

Yes	26%	No	68%	Don't Know	6%
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Christoph Blumrich, Cor van den Heuvel—Newsweek

For this NEWSWEEK Poll, The Gallup Organization conducted 1,103 telephone interviews between March 11 and 17. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points. Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding or because of multiple responses.

APR 1 1985



Focus #64

TRANSPORTATION IN HOUSTON

April 1985

The Houston League presently supports a well-balanced, multi-modal, publicly owned, non-polluting mass transit system with low fares. We also support comprehensive transportation planning to determine the transit needs of the entire community as well as public participation in the development of a mass transit system.

The LWV national position on transportation states that federal aid for highway construction should be reduced and that cities should be able to use money from the Highway Trust Fund for forms of ground transit. The League favors promoting alternate forms of transportation for cities. Public participation and social and environmental costs must be considered during the transportation planning process. Transportation should be considered a public service whose operating costs are subsidized as are the operating costs of all public services. The League believes that government policy should promote energy efficient forms of transit, including rail and more efficient cars. The use of private automobiles should be discouraged when alternative forms of transportation are available.

The reality is that the automobile is the primary mode of transportation nationwide. Transportation planners who hope to wean Americans from the automobile face a major challenge.

In Texas, the number of cars in the state is increasing 3.5 percent per year, a rate 192 percent greater than that of the nation as a whole. Currently, only 3 percent of Houston area workers take the bus. Bus service has greatly improved during the past two years, which may account for the 15 percent increase in ridership in that time. Census statistics show that people here are somewhat more likely than workers in other metropolitan areas to share their cars or vans. The Texas Transportation Institute, a research body in College Station, estimates that 1,300 to 1,400 van pools now operate in Houston, compared to a peak of about 2,000 in 1982.

THE REGIONAL MOBILITY PLAN

In an effort to achieve a diversified transportation network for the Houston area, the Chamber of Commerce formed a committee in 1981 which included transportation officials from the City of Houston, Harris County, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Harris County Toll Road Authority, and the Houston-Galveston Area Council. This committee developed the Regional Mobility Plan (RMP), a comprehensive long-range (1982-1997) transportation plan designed to reduce the congestion level of Houston area freeways and roads to that of 1975. The plan was published in 1982 and an update will be released in mid-1985. Various methods of reducing congestion were investigated. These methods included widening and extending arterials, constructing parallel arterials, widening freeways, constructing elevated freeway lanes, building underpasses or overpasses, and expanding transit service. 1983 traffic volumes are used in the update to determine which projects are included in the RMP.

With this criteria in mind, the committee determined improvements that were needed to meet today's traffic demand. The following improvements were identified:

- * 175 miles of new freeways (currently there are 232 miles of freeway)
- * 64 miles of widening existing freeways
- * 105 miles of major capacity improvements to existing freeways with provisions for buses and transitways
- * 30 miles of minor capacity improvements to existing freeways with provisions for buses and transitways
- * 896 miles of new arterial streets
- * 37 grade separations
- * 10 three level interchanges

The estimated price tag is \$12.5 billion. Cost of improvements that will be needed in the next 13 years to serve one million new residents is estimated at \$3.5 billion. \$1.4 billion is needed for system maintenance, including buses and transit facilities. The total cost to implement the RMP is estimated at \$17.4 billion over the next 13 years. Approximately 19 percent are needed for transit projects, 21 percent for arterial improvements, and 60 percent for highway improvements.

METRO

In a referendum in August 1978, Houston area residents approved the creation of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro) to implement a Regional Transit Plan which had been developed. The plan included the following elements:

1. Improvements in bus service
2. Neighborhood feeder buses and other special transit programs
3. Crosstown routes
4. Street improvements, including railroad grade separations
5. A transitway system that could be converted to automated guideway/rail as demand for transit increases.

In 1984 Metro developed a new Regional Transit Plan that included three different options for system expansion through the year 2008. All options are expected to attract the same number of riders with a capacity of 600,000 daily transit trips. The options include the same improvements for the first 5 years:

- * Bus fleet of 1363 vehicles
- * 73 miles of transitways on the Gulf, North, Katy, Southwest, and Northwest freeways, and South Loop from West Loop to SH 288
- * 26 Metro Park & Ride lots with approximately 30,000 total spaces
- * 11 transit centers
- * Activity center and community based circulators
- * 4 new bus facilities (total 6 bus operating & maintenance facilities)

Each alternative calls for additional bus service after 1989: median busways on the West Loop (S.W. Freeway to South Loop), South Main (Missouri City to SH 288), SH 288 (Harris County Line to downtown); an independent busway in the northeast along Southern Pacific right-of-way north of Buffalo Bayou to Jetero and within the Eastex median between Jetero and Kingwood Drive; a bus street on Harrisburg along HB & T and G H & H Rail right-of-way between Lawndale and downtown; a Main Street transit mall.

The options also include the following improvements:

Option A
Busway -- Total Cost \$3.5 billion

- * 2700 buses
- * 100 miles of median busways (single lane reversible facilities within median)
- * 86 miles of independent busways (two directional facilities constructed in their own right-of-way)
- * 4.5 miles of automated transit guideway (People mover, such as at the airport)
- * Total of 190.5 miles of transit guideway service

Option B
Busway/Light Rail Loop -- Total Cost \$3.8 billion

- * 2215 buses
- * 97 miles of median busways
- * 80 miles of independent busways
- * 28 miles of light rail transit connecting to major employment centers
- * Total of 205 miles of transit guideway service

Option C
Busway/Light Rail Transit System
Total Cost \$3.7 billion

- * 1900 buses
- * 97 miles of median busways
- * 36 miles of independent busways
- * 75 miles of light rail transit connecting suburbs to employment centers
- * Total of 208 miles of transit guideway service

The corridors chosen for the development of transit guideway service are the same for all three options with the exception, in Option C, of rail spurs to the Astrodome area, and the UH/TSU/3rd Ward area. These corridors are included in the update of the RMP and are identified as high capacity transitways. The technology that will be used (busway or rail) differs somewhat between the three options.

BUSWAYS

Busways are included in all three options. Houston currently has two busways in operation on Katy Freeway and North Freeway. The busway can be utilized by buses and vanpools. An experiment to allow carpools of four or more people will be initiated on the Katy busway in April.

The Katy busway has an approximate volume of 5,000 passenger trips a day during its seven hours of operation. A passenger trip is a one way trip; divide by two to get an estimate of the number of people. According to a study conducted by the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation and the Texas Transportation Institute, the Katy busway results in an average time savings of 5 to 9 minutes during rush hours. The North busway has an approximate volume of 15,000 passenger trips during its five hours and fifteen minutes of operation. The North busway saves passengers 11 to 14 minutes during rush hours. The capital costs for a busway system are low compared to a rail system. One disadvantage of a busway is that the number of access points is limited.

LIGHT RAIL

One of the components of Metro's Options B and C is Light Rail Transit (LRT). LRT is an updated version of the streetcar. LRT has a diversity of options for rights-of-way location and configuration, design of guideway and stations, and operations. Costs per mile range from \$10 to \$20 million (or as high as \$70 million where local conditions have dictated placement in tunnels). Some experts state that the system must carry 10,000 passengers per peak hour to be cost effective. According to Metro, ridership in the Northwest, Katy, Westpark, and South-southwest (Astrodome Rail Spur) corridors will exceed these levels by the year 2000. Ridership for the Southeast (UH/TSU/Third Ward Rail Spur) corridor is projected at 33,000 a day. Ridership is expected to be fairly evenly distributed throughout the day; there will probably be less than 10,000 passengers during the peak hours.

San Diego has a two-year-old LRT in operation, with a new line presently under construction. San Jose, Sacramento, Portland, and Buffalo have LRT's in the construction stage, and San Francisco, Boston, and Philadelphia have completed LRT's to supplement their heavy rail systems.

One advantage of rail is that it is a high capacity system, and thus has a greater potential to reduce congestion. It is relatively fast and non-polluting. Operational costs are lower than for buses because of its capacity and lower labor pool requirement. Metro officials state that Options B & C offer these cost savings with Option C providing the largest savings.

Disadvantages of rail include the fact that it is a fixed guideway system which cannot be moved easily to accommodate changing travel patterns. Rail requires larger capital investment than the busway. Some argue that the population density in Houston is not great enough to warrant a rail system.

JOINT PROJECTS

Metro is also participating in joint roadway projects with governments within its service area. The Metro Board voted in December 1984 to contribute \$150 million over the next five years to roadway projects that will improve the efficiency of the bus system. Seventy percent will go to projects in the City of Houston, 20 percent to Harris County, 5 percent to suburban cities, and 5 percent will be allocated at a later date. The projects include roadway construction, widening, paving, and grade separations.

FREEWAYS

The State Department of Highways and Public Transportation (SDHPT) is in charge of construction and maintenance of freeways and some major thoroughfares such as Westheimer. SDHPT has a 10 year plan which includes projects in the Regional Mobility Plan; however, the RMP contains additional freeway projects. SDHPT is conducting feasibility studies on some projects such as constructing elevated freeway lanes ("double-decking"). The Highway Department feels that existing freeways should be widened where possible before double decking is considered. It would cost \$20-30 million/mile to construct elevated freeway lanes. The arterial street system would have to be expanded and improved to meet the increased demand caused by additional freeway lanes.

Below are some estimates for construction and maintenance of freeways:

- * \$2 million per mile per lane for new freeway construction
- * \$100 million for a major interchange i.e., S.W. Freeway and W. Loop
- * \$5-15 million for a 2-level underpass or overpass
- * \$1 million per mile for overlay (new surface)

The greatest amount of funds to implement the RMP is allocated to freeways. Some say that devoting this money to freeways is reinforcing Houstonians' tendencies to drive their cars. Regardless of the number of freeway lanes constructed, congestion is never eliminated, only reduced. New lanes tend to fill up quickly, especially during peak hours. Freeways, however, are a necessary component of an integrated transportation system. Mass transit needs an adequate freeway system to operate efficiently. An inadequate freeway system may divert cars onto already congested arterials and streets.

ARTERIAL STREETS

Generally, the City of Houston and Harris County are charged with constructing and maintaining the arterial street system, although some arterials such as Westheimer are under the jurisdiction of SDHPT. Arterial streets include major thoroughfares and roads that carry large volumes of traffic. Subdivision developers are required to dedicate land for the construction of major thoroughfares and must construct all or part of the road. Commercial developers that do not subdivide land do not have to construct roadways.

The city includes the construction and widening of arterials in its five year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Most of the roadway improvements included in the CIP are included in the Regional Mobility Plan; the RMP includes a larger number of projects because it covers a longer period of time.

In the county, the roads to be constructed or widened in each precinct are decided by each county commissioner. The projects must be approved by commissioners court. The RMP includes projects that the commissioners would like to see completed by 1997.

TOLL ROADS

On September 13, 1983, Harris County voters authorized the county to issue up to \$900 million in bonds to construct toll roads. Commissioners court created the Harris County Toll Road Authority to plan, construct, and operate the toll roads.

The Toll Road Authority is constructing the Hardy Toll Road which will extend from the Montgomery/Harris County line to Crosstimbers. SDHBT is responsible for the connection between Crosstimbers to Loop 610. The facility is expected to open in July 1988. Once the 30 year bonds are retired, the road will become a "free road"; however, it is uncertain at this point what agency will be responsible for maintenance.

The bond money is also being used for construction of the main lanes of Beltway 8 between the Southwest Freeway and IH-45 North. SDHPT is responsible for the construction of the frontage roads. The section from the Southwest Freeway to Katy Freeway is expected to be open in July 1988. The remaining section is scheduled for completion in late 1990. The Beltway will become a "free road" when the bonds are retired in 30 years; SDHPT will be responsible for maintenance.

The Harris County Toll Road Authority will be in existence until all its bonds are retired. It is possible that the Authority could seek voter approval to sell bonds for additional projects. One limit on the Toll Road Authority is a state law that prevents the conversion of a "free road" into a toll road unless it is replaced by a "free road." Toll roads are thought to be an equitable method of constructing roadways, as the motorists who use the roads pay for the construction, operation, and maintenance until the bonds are retired. When they become "free roads" however, the taxpayers must then pay for maintenance.

PARATRANSIT

Paratransit service is provided by both private enterprise and public agencies in most cities. Paratransit includes car and van pools, dial-a-bus, jitneys, taxicabs, and subscription bus. In Houston, Metro has a Metrolift service for the elderly and handicapped, averaging 23,000 trips per month. It also sponsors a car and van pool service. Some cities have provided Dial-A-Ride and Demand Responsive services in the past, but found that the cost far exceeded the demand. Most of these cities have discontinued the service or limit it to the elderly and handicapped.

Private businesses are staging a comeback in paratransit services. Some public transit managers oppose the idea, but a growing number of political leaders welcome the competition as a way to reduce costs.

Private operators are thriving most in the suburbs. For example, Chicago commuters have organized "bus clubs," using old school buses to carry 3,000 people daily. From the southern suburbs, patrons pay an average \$1.15 a ride to cover the full costs of the service, compared with competing rail fares of \$1.80 to \$2.80.

Houston was the first major city in the nation to operate private van pools from the outskirts to various downtown headquarters. Many van pools are still operating in 1985.

Currently, there is a big movement across the country to deregulate taxicabs, a trend which started on the west coast five years ago. Several cities, including San Diego, Seattle, Atlanta, and Kansas City now have an open entry taxi industry. But because of confusion concerning fares and other problems, these cities now have controls over entry and fares. The controls are similar to those included in the proposed Transportation Reform Ordinance for Houston.

Jitney services usually run along limited fixed routes and carry more than one person per vehicle. A few cities, San Diego and Atlantic City, now have private jitney services which are regulated by the city and operated at a profit. Several cities, such as San Francisco, Chicago, Miami, Cleveland, and Indianapolis, have very limited jitney service. They are permitted to run along a few streets which are not served by public mass transit.

Some feel that private paratransit could play a much larger role here in Houston. Currently there are ordinances which prevent both jitneys and subscription buses from operating within city limits. (Subscription buses serve a particular destination, operating on a pre-arranged schedule, used on a regular basis.) Proponents of private paratransit point out that it is flexible and cost-effective, reduces congestion and air pollution, and creates jobs. Opponents argue that private paratransit offers a very limited solution to traffic congestion. Public transit managers question whether private companies would maintain less profitable, or unprofitable, service to lower-income areas. Additionally, the unions fear for their jobs.

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Researched and written by Vivian Mower and Susan Alleman. FOCUS is prepared by the League of Women Voters of Houston and costs ten (10) cents per page up to a maximum of fifty (50) cents plus postage. This material may be printed or reproduced in whole or in part only with the permission of the League of Women Voters of Houston.



April 29, 1985

League of Women Voters
of Houston

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MAY 23 1985

Board of Directors
Houston-Galveston Area Council

The League of Women Voters of Houston urges you to adopt the proposed regional plan for solid waste management.

Our organization has studied solid waste management in the Houston area for many years. We have found great need for a coordinated approach to solid waste management.

Their plan provides a comprehensive, practical means of managing solid waste, and we support its ultimate approval by the Texas Department of Health as the Houston-Galveston region's solid waste management Plan.

Yours very truly,

Lavora Arizaga

Lavora Arizaga, President
League of Women Voters of Houston

AUG 8 1984



PROGRAM FOR STUDY AND ACTION

1984-85

League of Women Voters
of Houston



LOCAL PROGRAM FOR STUDY AND ACTION 1984-1985

Study and action are the essence of League program. Members select issues for study at the local, state, and national level. After probing in depth to identify problems and evaluate solutions, member agreement creates positions which, in addition to national principles, are the basis for action. This action ranges from educational activities to lobbying.

Members of the League of Women Voters of Houston are involved in study and action at the national, state, and local levels. This booklet identifies the year in which local positions were adopted, and gives the details of that position. The state and national positions and study items are given in brief.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs, and performance must meet these criteria:

- competent personnel and clear responsibilities,
- coordination among agencies and levels of government,
- adequate financing,
- well-defined channels for citizen input and review.

GOVERNMENT

Support for a strong mayor form of government with the following components:

- an elected mayor who is chief administrative officer of the city, appoints all department heads subject to the approval of council, removes department heads and members of his/her staff as he/she sees fit, votes on all council business, and does not have a veto;
- a 14-16 member council, the majority of whom are elected from single member districts;
- a 4-year term for officials with staggered terms for council members;
- provision for an election to fill a vacancy in the city council when more than a year of the term remains;
- the fiscal year some date other than January 1. (1980)

Support for a complete revision of the City Charter of Houston. The majority of provisions in the charter are obsolete, restrictive, inconsistent, incomplete, or unconstitutional, making it very difficult to understand.

Support for a budget process which takes into account long-range planning and budget evaluation, and encourages citizen input. Specifically, this includes support of:

- a performance type budget which reflects monies raised by the city and received from other levels of government;
- a budget process regulated by a budget calendar providing for adequate timing for public study and input with each step, with the calendar including specific dates for the submission of each department's budget request, departmental hearings, submission to council, public hearings, and formal adoption of the budget;
- availability of the proposed budget at the same time it is given to council;
- departmental hearings open to the public;
- publication of budget summaries in the newspapers. (1977)

Support of a Capital Improvement Budget. This budget, whether included in the operating budget or not, should be considered at the same time. (1977)

Support of annexation by the City of Houston of the Ship Channel Industrial Districts, with negotiation of short-term contracts in the interim. (1977)

Revenue Sharing

Support of measures to encourage governmental determination of the total needs of the community and to implement effective citizen participation in the allocations process. (1974)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Annexation

Recognition of the importance to the City of Houston of the power to annex additional geographic territory in order to protect its economic base and to provide a government which addresses regional needs. Such power should be exercised within the following guidelines:

- checkerboard patterns to be avoided;
- no unincorporated areas to be left surrounded by the city (except for those within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of another city);
- annexations to be planned in advance in order to make sure that the city departments are prepared for expanded services;
- advance notification to be provided to residents of areas about to be annexed in order to give residents the opportunity to help plan how needed services will be provided and coordinated with facilities already in place;
- economically deprived areas not to be excluded;
- an adequate level of services to be provided to all annexed areas, without extra assessments to residents of areas where such assessments would be a severe burden. Services to include (a) improving streets and drainage to a level at which services can be provided; (b) providing city water and wastewater service within a reasonable time if the area has no adequate facilities;
- services related to public health and safety to be provided immediately upon annexation, along with a schedule for the provision of other services within a reasonable time. (1979)

Support of along-range planning for annexation and belief that Houston should develop and adopt a policy for annexation and disannexation. (1983)

Support of a review board, preferably at the state level, to hear cases of disputed annexations and disannexations.

An annexing city should be required to establish a baseline for the provision of municipal services; that this level of service be maintained in all parts of the city, and that newly annexed areas be serviced at no lower standard than this baseline. (1983)

Support of comprehensive planning concerning growth, open spaces, and capital investment in the ETJ in recognition of the possibility that these areas may eventually be annexed. (1979)

Support of the adoption of a subdivision ordinance to be enforced in the city and in the ETJ. (1979)

Support of policies encouraging development within the city limits. (1979)

Support for legal clarification of circumstances under which disannexation would be permitted. (1979)

Annexation

Support for a policy which would encourage water districts to consist of a single parcel of land, since state law mandates that a whole water district be annexed at one time.

The LWV-H feels that, because residents of an area proposed for annexation do not have veto power, in cases where there is strong dissent by residents of the area being proposed for annexation, there may be a need to consider the establishment of an impartial board which could weigh the importance of annexation to the health of the city and the ability of the city to accommodate the needs of the area. (1979)

Comprehensive Planning

Support planning in the extraterritorial jurisdiction through:

- the development of goals and priorities for Harris County through assessing the needs of the total community, utilizing maximum public participation;
- central planning coordination and implementation tools for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;
- development of a uniform performance building code for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;
- feasibility studies for the consolidation of planning services between municipalities and Harris County;
- increased utilization by Harris County of the planning services of the Houston Galveston Area Council and the development by H-GAC of practical services that reflect the planning needs of Harris County. (1976)

Support for the development and adoption of a long range, flexible, constantly updated comprehensive plan for Houston, one which is developed with adequate citizen input. To this end, LWV-H supports:

- the coordination and centralization of the planning process in Houston, with the strengthening of a central planning authority;
- the development of goals, objectives, and priorities for Houston through a process which assures maximum public participation;
- a broad-based planning commission with members with a diversity of backgrounds and expertise;
- a comprehensive plan which includes plans for economic, social, and environmental, as well as physical development;
- public involvement at the neighborhood level in the planning process, and public hearings on proposed plans;
- an explanation by city council to the public as to why any given plan is or is not adopted. (1976)
- a strong role for the City Planning Commission, committed to the use of its full range of powers granted by the city charter, and to the coordination of its work with an equally strong Planning Dept;
- cooperation between the private and the public planning entities, with public participation throughout the process;
- vigorous enforcement of current regulations, and the enactment of additional ordinances, which focus on civic concerns such as traffic congestion and stormwater run-off, in order to preserve and improve the quality of life in Houston neighborhoods;

- the use of growth management techniques such as performance standards, impact fees, and both short-term and long-term capital improvements budget planning;
- a city ordinance requiring the setting aside of land for open space and parks. (1984)

Flood Control

- Support of comprehensive long-range planning for flood damage avoidance in Harris County. Any such comprehensive approach should consider:
- all alternative methods for flood damage avoidance;
 - the effect of future development on flooding patterns;
 - the full effects of stream modification;
 - flood plans as multiple use resource (including the flood plain as a natural retention system, reducing and delaying peak flows);
 - economic, social, and environmental factors, including water quality. (1978)

Libraries

- Support of measures to insure adequate library facilities for Houston and Harris County, with emphasis on prevention, education, availability of counseling, and delivery of services.

Parks and Recreation

- Support of measures to insure acquisition, maintenance, and development of public lands in the Houston area including:
- comprehensive planning for public lands in Harris County to meet National Parks and Recreation Association standards;
 - adequate funding;
 - adoption of an objective priority planning policy;
 - investigation of legal ordinances to facilitate park land acquisition and contribution of land and money by developers;
 - maximum cooperation and coordination of park services and planning between city and county;
 - maximum use of schools and churches for program development;
 - opposition to long-term private leases on public lands. (1970)

Solid Waste

- Support of long-range solid waste planning with emphasis on recycling and development of new technology. Effective land use principles and control of air and water pollution are vital considerations. Specifically, this includes:
- separation of solid waste at the source;
 - judicious use of incineration and land fills;
 - regional planning;
 - promotion of public education efforts;
 - citizen participation in solid waste planning. (1972)

Transportation

- Support of a well-balanced, multi-mode, publicly-owned, non-polluting mass transit system with low fares. (1971)
- Support of comprehensive transportation planning now to determine the transit needs of the entire community - such as the best use of land and access to employment, cultural, civic, medical, educational, and other public facilities. (1971)
- Support of public participation, especially in the planning stages of any mass transit system, as essential. (1971)

Toxic Substances

Support for the protection of public health with special concern for sensitive populations as the primary factor in determining regulatory action and decision making involving toxic substances. Economic costs should have secondary role.

Support for the policy that industry and unions should fully inform employees and the public about potential risks of toxic substances, both in the work-place and the community. The government, federal, state, and local, through its appropriate agencies, has clear responsibility to inform and educate the public on all aspects of toxic substances, whether or not the hazard or extent of hazard has been determined. Any possibility of adverse effect of toxic substances should be communicated to the public via clear labeling, public forums, public access to information, and articles and programs in all media, to enable the public to make informed choices. (1983)

Support of measures to regulate the transportation of toxic substances including:

- enforcement of safety regulations (including speed and inspection);
- establishment of realistic schedules, routes, and work practices to protect the public health;
- the requirement for complete and informative labeling on the transporting vehicle, whether hazardous product or waste.

Support of stronger regulatory efforts to control hazardous pollutants in the air and water by frequent re-examination of laws and regulations as new information is developed through research, and by enlarging existing regulatory agencies, as necessary, even at increased costs to the taxpayers.

SOCIAL POLICY

Administration of Justice

Support for the removal of certain areas of human behavior from criminal prosecution: sexual activity between legally competent consenting adults, gambling, adult access to pornography, use of alcohol. (1975)

Support of measures for rehabilitation of offenders which would include:

- punishment or penalties which fit the crime;
- more equitable punishment;
- alternative arrangements to placement of juveniles in state schools which would include small, family type units close to home with effective supervision and qualified personnel;
- provisions for pre-trial release such as are incorporated in the present (1974) Harris County Pretrial Release Program;
- rehabilitation facilities in Harris County Jail which would include counseling and listening services, testing, educational opportunities such as literacy and GED programs, training in marketable skills, and recreation. (1974)

Education

Support of measures to improve educational accountability programs in school districts of the greater Houston area:

- shared responsibility of educational accountability at all levels of the educational process, including the state legislature, the Texas Education Agency, local school boards, administrators, teachers, pupils, parents, and the community;

Education

- Support -- state legislative accountability for fair and equitable funding;
-- teacher accountability for knowledge of and competency in the subjects they teach;
-- student accountability for conduct and attitude;
-- community accountability for knowledge of election issues;
-- community involvement in accountability programs;
-- comprehensive student evaluations including other methods besides standardized testing;
-- parental input in the evaluation process of the school district personnel. (1978)

Education - Houston Independent School District

- Support integration as integral to quality education; support the belief that all children should have equal access to quality education including:
- providing opportunities for our children to learn to function in our pluralistic community;
 - offering and encouraging the achievement of academic skills which enable each individual child to function at his/her highest potential;
 - providing superior programs and teaching which takes into account the needs of the individual child;
 - offering superior programs in college preparatory and occupational-vocational training;
- To achieve these ends, the Houston League supports these tools:
- providing free transportation as an integrative tool for those requesting it;
 - acting to achieve student transfer policies which preserve existing integration but increase integration in non-integrated schools;
 - building new schools with flexible capabilities;
 - renting alternative facilities in locations to facilitate integration;
 - urging the courts to mandate the use of several integration techniques at the same time;
 - redrawing school attendance zones;
 - magnet-alternative schools;
 - closing under-utilized schools;
 - combinations of the above. (1976)

Education - Spring Branch Independent School District

Support of integrative measures as under Education - HISD.

Support of measures to improve the responsiveness of the SBISD by:

- expanding existing avenues of communication by publicizing: (a) district publications which are available; (b) factual program evaluation data; (c) meeting times and places of citizen committees and of all board meetings in local newspapers;
- providing specific opportunities for dialogue such as: (a) board meetings at which either a written or verbal response be given to the citizen then or after the meeting; (b) community meetings which may be initiated by the board where citizens could be heard and answered by the board;
- encouraging more citizen input into the decision-making process through: (a) vehicles which are ongoing and can speak on any issue such as Parent Advisory Committee at each school; (b) expanding

Education

use of citizen committees which are broadly representative of the community both geographically and ideologically; (c) workshops, such as a budget workshop, at which citizens can be informed in depth about an aspect of the district's operation with emphasis on concurrent communication; (d) election procedures which would ensure greater accountability of elected officials. (1974)

Health

Support for the establishment of comprehensive public health services, including mental health services, for the citizens of Houston and Harris County. These services should be accessible in terms of cost, location, and education of the public. Emphasis should be given to prevention and primary care. (1978)

Support for joint planning and coordination to eliminate duplication of health services, including:

- reorganization of the City of Houston and Harris County Health Departments;
- joint efforts by public health care providers;
- development of specific channels for consumer input into health planning from the early stages. (1978)

Support of measures to control the escalation of health care costs, including:

- regionalization of highly specialized, expensive services and equipment;
- utilization of alternatives to inpatient care;
- utilization of paraprofessionals;
- development of pre-paid group practices. (1978)

Housing

Support of equal opportunities for all Houstonians with emphasis on additional well-managed, low-cost housing and continued support of existing positions:

- a minimum housing code used in conjunction with existing building, fire, health, and sanitation codes - useful tool in protecting the health and welfare of our fellow citizens; urge adequate provisions for enforcing all these codes and that any relocation of families necessary through enforcement of the codes be the obligation of the city;
- completion of a workable program for land use and housing so that:
 - (a) we may look forward to a more orderly growth of our city, and
 - (b) we may qualify for federal assistance to aid us in solving our housing and land use needs;
- encouragement of private investment in low-cost housing and the use of private initiative to seek new ways of housing the needy. (1971)

Pregnancy Alternatives

Support of comprehensive sex education in all public schools in Harris County. This should include:

- greater parent involvement;
- broadening curricula;
- student access to specifically educated nurses, counselors, and teachers;
- greater use of city and county educational programs;
- programs to help parents open discussions with their children. (1982)

Support of adequate, easily accessible, publicly funded family planning services to meet the community's needs. This should include:

- confidentiality of all clients;
- efficient scheduling of family planning services;
- advertising;
- adequate funding;
- adequate, accessible facilities. (1982)

Support of equal access to legal and medically sound pregnancy termination services for all residents of Houston and Harris County with government funding and (or) a combination of government/private funding available for low and moderate income residents. (1982)

Women Under Texas Law

Support of efforts to:

- increase community awareness of the incidence of domestic violence;
- establish a process for keeping records on domestic violence calls, responses, charges, and dispositions;
- provide special training of police and special squads to deal with domestic violence;
- establish crisis intervention teams and provide aid to the victims;
- encourage the District Attorney's office to prosecute charges of domestic violence;
- encourage sensitivity to the problems of domestic violence throughout the justice system;
- encourage increased cooperation between agencies that deal with the problem;
- make counseling available for all members of a household involved in domestic violence. (1983)

STATE PROGRAM 1983-1985

I. WOMEN UNDER TEXAS LAW

Action to achieve fair treatment for women under the divorce and sex offense laws.

Support of an equitable and efficient means of enforcing court orders for child support, including the assignment of wages.

Study continued with emphasis on domestic violence and intestacy laws.

II. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Action to achieve an equitable system of criminal justice in Texas.

Action to achieve creation of a single state juvenile justice agency.

Action to achieve a state juvenile agency budget flexible enough to allocate available financial resources to either community or institutional programs and facilities as the need arises.

III. HUMAN RESOURCES

Action to achieve a school finance system which provides an equitable distribution of funds and provides equity to the taxpayer.

Action to achieve equal rights for all, combat discrimination and poverty, and to provide equal access to housing, employment, and quality education in Texas.

IV. NATURAL RESOURCES

Action to achieve measures for the protection, conservation, and development of the state's ground water resources as an integral part of the comprehensive state water plan.

Action to achieve conservation and judicious development of land and water resources, the improvement of water and air quality, conservation of energy, and development of public transportation in a manner which assures adequate protection of the environment, improvement of the quality of life, and wise use of our natural resources.

Support of water planning and development being the responsibility of the state government.

Support of state governmental action for control of air pollution in Texas.

Support of a comprehensive state land use policy which would provide for the orderly development of the state.

V. GOVERNMENT

Action to achieve an efficient, effective, and responsive state governmental system through constitutional revision and legislative action.

Action to achieve flexibility within a coordinated finance structure, equitable taxation, and increased accountability.

Action to protect every citizen's right to vote.

Action to achieve more flexible structures and adequate powers at the local level.

Support of comprehensive regional state planning, including regional planning councils.

Action to achieve revision of the Texas Constitution.

Action to achieve constitutional and statutory initiative and statutory referendum while assuring statewide citizen participation, education, funding disclosure, and legal review.

Action to achieve an effective method for drawing boundaries for congressional and state legislative districts through legislative action and constitutional revision.

NATIONAL PROGRAM 1984-1986

GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; and that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making.

Action to protect the citizen's right to know and to facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

Action to oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

Action to protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Action to support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.

Action to promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

Action to secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and representation in both Houses of Congress.

Action to support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

Action to improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to: ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

Action to: elect the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and to abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

Action to protect the right of every citizen to vote.

Action to support a federal tax system that : is fair and equitable; provides adequate resources for government programs while allowing flexibility for financing future program changes; is understandable to the taxpayer and encourages compliance; accomplishes its objectives without creating undue administrative problems.

Evaluate U.S. fiscal policy; revenue sources, including borrowing; tax expenditures; and the funding of entitlement programs.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Promote peace in an interdependent world through cooperation with other nations, the strengthening of international organizations, arms control measures and the resolution of conflict without the use of military force.

Action to reduce the risk of war through arms control measures.

Action to support U.S. development assistance policies that improve the quality of life for the people of the developing countries.

Action to limit reliance on military force and to examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

Action to support systematic reduction of tariff and nontariff trade barriers and broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.

Action to strengthen the United Nations, in recognition of the need for co-operation among nations in an interdependent world.

Examine the interdependent nature of IR program, including new and innovative ways to promote global security.

Examine U.S. economic and military aid to developing countries and its relationship to our international economic and political interests.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote the wise management of resources in the public interest and an environment beneficial to life.

Action to reduce air pollution from vehicular and stationary sources.

Action to support policies that bring about a significant reduction in U.S. energy consumption; give priority to conservation, renewable resources and the environmentally sound use of coal in the energy mix before the year 2000; and rely predominately on renewable resources thereafter.

Action to support responsible management of our finite land resources and developed environment to ensure consideration of public interests and private rights.

Action to reduce the waste stream; recycle suitable portions; and ensure the safe treatment, storage and disposal of all wastes.

Action to improve and protect water quality and to support planning and management of water resources to meet local and regional needs and the national interest.

SOCIAL POLICY

Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all and combat discrimination and poverty.

Action to provide equal access to education, employment and housing.

Action to support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and to bring laws into compliance with the goals of ERA.

Action to support a federalized system of income assistance, with uniform standards, to meet the basic needs of all persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate or for whom jobs are not available.

Action to promote energy-efficient and environmentally sound transportation systems that improve the well-being of cities and other communities and afford better access to housing and jobs.

Action to promote the economic health of cities and to improve the quality of urban life.

The Principles are 'concepts of government' to which the League subscribes. These concepts are a direct descendant of The Platform, which served the League from 1942 to 1956 as the national repository for 'principles supported and positions taken by the League as a whole in fields of government to which it has given sustained attention.' The Platform has disappeared from the League vocabulary but the principles survived as 'The Principles.' Since that time, the Principles have served two functions according to the LWUS Bylaws: 1) authorization for adoption of national, state, and local program; and 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state, and local levels.

PRINCIPLES

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public record accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

FEB 28 1983

League of Women Voters of Houston

March 1983

BACKGROUNDER

TEXAS WATER PLAN

Texas is a land of contrast. The weather varies from no snow in Brownsville to 24" that fell in Lubbock in January '83; from 8" of rain per year in El Paso to 56" per year near the Louisiana border. The state is also a cross-road of 4 major physiographic subdivisions; the Gulf Coastal Forested Plains, the Great Western Lower Plains, the Great Western High Plains, and the Rocky Mountain region. With this much diversity in climate and geography, it is no wonder that water planning in Texas is so complicated. Further complexity is provided by a wide variety of management and legal issues impacting water resources. These range from the distinct legal status of groundwater (owned by overlying land-owner) and surface water (owned by the state); the relationship between state and local entities in developing supplies; the widely varied approaches to maximization of supply, conservation, dam and reservoir construction, importation of needed supply from outside the state; freshwater supplies for the bays and estuaries; to over appropriation of surface streams, to name a few.

Following is a historical review of water planning and funding efforts in the State of Texas:

- 1957 Texas had just experienced a severe 7-year drought followed by heavy rains and flooding. The state legislature, through the Water Planning Act of 1957, authorized the Texas Board of Water Engineers to formulate a plan for water supply development in Texas. Voters of the state approved a constitutional amendment creating the board. Several other governmental bodies -- national, state, and local -- were also conducting studies of the water problems.
- 1965 Texas Water Development Board was given responsibility for preparing a long-range plan for meeting the water needs of the state.
- 1968 TWDB officially adopted a preliminary plan that had been released in 1966. The final plan proposed meeting the water needs of south and west Texas mainly through transfer of surplus water from wet areas in the state and from sources outside the state.
- 1969 Texas voters narrowly defeated a \$3.5 million bond issue to begin implementing the Texas Water Plan. Despite the election results, TWDB and various west Texas groups continued to support the plan which remained the official plan for the state.
- 1973 A federal study declared the scheme of importing Mississippi River water to the western half of the state economically unworkable. Governor Preston Smith appointed the Committee of 500 which supported the TWP on the basis that it was necessary to the economic development of the state.
- 1974 Governor Dolph Briscoe affirmed the state's need to get more water to west Texas, where underground water sources are nearing depletion, and to find a supplemental source of water from outside the state. The Water Development Board re-computed the project's ratio of economic benefits,

both direct and indirect, to economic costs and concluded the projects, funding from other than federal sources would have to be found.

1981 Another Water Trust Fund Amendment was placed on the ballot. This was a plan to use the undedicated state revenues in excess of the constitutional ceiling on state spending each biennium to finance water development, water conservation or water quality enhancement projects, and flood control. Texas voters again rejected the amendment. Opposition centered on the fact that there was no specific water policy outlined; Texans had no idea how their money would be spent. HB8, which did not need voter approval, went into effect. It set up a water assistance fund for water development. It also:

- A. Linked the TWDB, the Texas Water Commission, and the TDWR in the process.
- B. Restricted the use of the water development assistance program -- no inter-basin transfers of "surface water necessary to supply the reasonable foreseeable future water requirements for the next ensuing 50-yr. period within the river basin of origin, except on a temporary interim basis." This was the most controversial limitation.
- C. Allowed ten-to-one leveraging of the fund (i.e. if there is \$5 million in the fund, the state can spend up to \$50 million).

1983 Outgoing Republican Governor Bill Clements predicted Texas will import water on a "willing-buyer, willing-seller" basis. He added that the cost of such ventures makes interim options such as water conservation educational programs important. Under the most frugal water use plans, by 2020 large portions of the High Plains area will not be able to continue irrigation and some areas will not have sufficient municipal and industrial water supplies. The region now produces more than 15% of the nation's wheat, corn, sorghum, and cotton, and 38% of the nation's livestock.

Even though water importation plans have been defeated over the years, a large number of the dams and reservoirs necessary to a transfer system have been built. A reservoir-and-dam oriented water plan has, therefore, for all practical purposes been implemented.

Following defeat of the November 1981 water fund proposition, the Governor's Task Force on Water Resource Use and Conservation, with a few new members drawn from the opposition, was charged to review the Texas Water Plan and recommend revisions which would likely produce electoral acceptance. The magnitude of the task led to creation in 1982 of three advisory subcommittees to the Governor's Task Force. As an investment in future electoral support, the membership of the three subcommittees included representatives of varying water perspectives. The issue of water importation fell to one subcommittee; finance to the second. The remaining issues were divided into some 20 broad topics and were assigned to the Resource Use and Conservation Subcommittee. The subcommittees were subsequently expanded and made advisory to the Texas Energy and Natural Resources Council

(TENRAC) which is charged with formulative assessment of the state's natural resource policy.

Observing that "the public may want a water plan but not this one," extensive public comment was sought through hearings, interviews with selected opinion leaders, and a random sample poll of Texans to test general awareness and specific preferences. Paying more or less attention to the public comments, the subcommittees sent their recommendations to the task force in the fall. They are now pending before TENRAC for adoption as the state's water resources policy. The review below reflects the current wording of the recommendations.

WATER IMPORTATION: Water conservation should be encouraged to lengthen the life of present supplies. Continue to consider importation as part of a long-range water plan.

FINANCE: (1) Continue appropriation of funds to the Water Assistance Fund for construction and maintenance of freshwater supply and distribution systems, wastewater treatment, flood control, and storage acquisition. (2) Continue the Water Development Fund and obtain constitutional authorization for an additional \$250 million in state bonds. Give funding and loan priority to storage acquisition. Loan interest rates should be higher than the bond rates with the goal of a self-sustaining fund. (3) Create a water bond insurance program by legislative appropriation and the sale of state bonds, to be used to purchase local water bonds. An insurance type premium and payments on the local obligation would be used to retire the state bonds. This proposal likely will be modified.

RESOURCE USE AND CONSERVATION: Many of this subcommittee's recommendations dealt with issues which were technical or limited in scope (e.g. systems operations of reservoirs, conflict between no discharge policy and downstream requirements, water quality factors relating to instream and downstream flow, calculation of effects on fish and wildlife) and are not detailed here. Of perhaps more general interest and impact:

1. Water planning and management continue as a cooperative effort with local and regional authorities to identify problems and solutions, and to provide necessary financing. Conflict is resolved by state if necessary. The state continues to be responsible for allocation and permitting of surface water, water quality standards, resource inventories, needs projections, and identification of financing options. The legislature should vest all water quality jurisdiction in one state agency, (TDWR) preferred. The legislature should authorize the levying of withdrawal fees for surface water diversion in order to fund enhanced state administration, particularly in data collection, enforcement, permits, and dam safety.

2. State water planning should be based on regularly reviewed population and economic projections which are neutral with respect to water demand factors and which result in range of limits. Changes in industrial and agricultural make-up of the state, improved water use efficiency, and increased conservation are to be taken into account.

3. Underground water conservation districts should be established in all areas overlying ground water reservoirs with the state setting minimum standards. Areas which fail to do so and which have overdraft or pollution problems should be placed under state management and control. A pumpage fee should be authorized to defray state administrative costs. The legislature should authorize local districts to levy a pump fee and to buy and sell surface water.

4. State water quality efforts should be increased where this would assist in meeting long-range water needs.

5. The state should assume greater role in planning and financing structural and non-structural flood protection programs but only in areas of widespread, non-localized flood problems. Counties should be given greater authority, on a local option basis, to regulate development and drainage design. Counties should also consider legislation which provides for disclosure of flood plain status in deeds.

6. Conservation of water is critical and should be given high priority in planning and management "particularly since a strong commitment to conservation would show that the objectives. . . are broader than simply development of new supplies." The state should expand its conservation related research and development efforts and eliminate water pricing policies which encourage consumption.

7. State should have exclusive responsibility for management, regulation, and enforcement in bays and estuaries, with TDWR to continue as the lead agency. When sufficient data is developed, the legislature should establish a policy on fish and shellfish productivity level. Enhancement of productivity should be state financed; maintenance levels should be a local cost.

8. Regionalization of water and sewer systems should continue as a responsibility of local and regional entities. The state should encourage regionalization through planning funds and priority in funding in areas where quality or equity dictate. The procedures for creation of municipal utility districts should be revised to insure consideration of the potential for regionalization.

9. Project prioritization should continue on a case-by-case basis considering need, statutory use priorities, and ability to optimize future use.

10. Interbasin transfer of water should continue to be used to meet reasonable needs provided the requirements of the basin of origin will be satisfied.

11. The state should develop public education programs, including curricula and materials to enhance the public's understanding.

These recommendations are now pending before TENRAC for review or revision prior to forwarding to the legislature or administrative agencies, as appropriate, for implementation. All issues addressed bear importantly on the matter of water resource management and planning and this selective review does not reflect an assignment of relative importance. As with any document, interpretations vary. Thus, the recommendations are either "breakthroughs, weasel words, or too little to late."

LEAGUE ACTION

At the national level, League study of water resources began in 1956. A study of state water planning, adopted by the League of Women Voters of Texas 1970 Convention, was the first natural resources item to appear on the state League program. Impetus for the study was the 1968 Texas Water Plan, and the hotly

contested 1969 election in which a \$3.5 billion bond program to begin implementation of the plan was narrowly defeated. The most expensive and controversial feature of the plan was importation of large amounts of out-of-state water to west Texas and south Texas via two major canal systems. While affirming the need for state water planning, the League consensus disagreed with that aspect of the plan, stating that additional water supplies should be developed in an ecologically sound manner from within the state, and that more efficient use should be made of existing water supplies.

The League took another look at the Texas Water Plan in 1974, following publication of a Corps of Engineers analysis of a detailed proposal for importation of water from the Mississippi River to west Texas. This consensus reaffirmed the League's 1971 positions and indicated widespread dissatisfaction with the existing Texas Water Plan.

Thus, when Constitutional Amendment #1 calling for a \$400 million increase in authorization for Texas Water Development bonds was placed on the ballot in November 1976, the League mounted an intensive campaign for defeat of this proposition. League opposition was based on the absence of financial safeguards guaranteeing timely repayment by beneficiaries of water development projects, absence of environmental protection provisions, and inadequate information as to what projects would be funded. The amendment was defeated. At the same time, the League supported Amendment #2 calling for a \$100 million increase in bonds authorized for water quality enhancement purposes. This amendment was approved by Texas voters.

The 1977 state convention voted to delete from the League water position the statement that additional water resources should come from "within the state". Discussion indicated continued strong opposition to massive water transfer projects; however, it was felt that such projects should be opposed on the basis of other League water and land use positions.

The 1977 convention adopted as a program item a study of groundwater management and protection. The League position on groundwater management, adopted in November 1978, has supported: the state lignite mining program, state water quality management plans, hazardous waste disposal legislation, the High Plains Ogallala Aquifer Study, the federal Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act, and a proposed EPA groundwater protection strategy.

In 1981, League action on water issues once again focused on opposition to a proposed constitutional amendment authorizing additional state funding for water projects. This complex amendment would have dedicated half of the state's "excess" revenues in each biennium to a new water fund. In addition to the concerns that prompted League opposition to the 1976 amendment, the League opposed the constitutional dedication of state revenues in accordance with our positions on Financing State Government, and questioned whether the dedicated revenues would, in fact, be "excess" to state needs for public education and other state services. The League also pointed out that the revision of the 1968 Texas Water Plan initiated by the TWDB in 1976 had not been completed. The amendment, which appeared as Proposition #4 on the November ballot, was defeated. Shortly after the November election, the governor called for revision of the Texas Water Plan prior to the 1983 legislative session. League members were named to and worked on the governor's task force and its subcommittees. In 1983, League members will have

an opportunity to work for changes that are in accordance with our positions on water planning and management.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACRE FOOT - A foot of water covering one acre -- 325,851 gallons -- enough water for a family of four for a year.

AQUIFER - Underground water-bearing geologic formation yielding water in sufficient quantity for a usable supply.

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS - Districts set up to preserve the ground and surface water of the area under local control.

INTERBASIN TRANSFER - Transfer of water from one water basin to another by means of canals, etc.

PLAYA LAKE - Small saucer shaped flat floored bottom of an undrained basin.

RUN-OFF - water which appears in surface streams.

SURFACE WATER - Water which flows over the surface-lakes or streams, in Texas controlled by the state.

TDWR - Texas Department of Water Resources

TWP - The Texas Water Plan

TWDB - Texas Water Development Board

Researched and written by LWV-H Water Committee.

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SEP -7 1982



PROGRAM FOR STUDY AND ACTION 1982-83

League of Women Voters
of Houston



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SEP - 7 1982

Study and action are the essence of League program. Members select issues for study at the local, state, and national level. After probing in depth to identify problems and evaluate solutions, member agreement creates positions which, in addition to national principles, are the basis for action. This action ranges from educational activities to lobbying.

Members of the League of Women Voters of Houston are involved in study and action at the national, state and local levels. This booklet identifies the year in which local positions were adopted, and gives the details of that position. The state and national positions and study items are given in brief.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs and performance must meet these criteria:

- competent personnel with clear responsibilities,
- coordination among agencies and levels of government,
- adequate financing,
- effective enforcement, and
- well-defined channels for citizen input and review.

GOVERNMENT

City Government

Support for a strong mayor form of government with the following components:

- an elected mayor who is chief administrative officer of the city, appoints all department heads subject to the approval of council, remove department heads and members of his/her staff as he/she sees fit, votes on all council business, and does not have a veto;
- a 14-16 member council, the majority of whom are elected from single member districts;
- a 4-year term for officials with staggered terms for council members;
- provision for an election to fill a vacancy in the city council when more than a year of the term remains;
- the fiscal year some date other than January 1. (1980)

Support for a complete revision of the City Charter of Houston. The majority of provisions in the charter are obsolete, restrictive, inconsistent, incomplete, or unconstitutional, making it very difficult to understand.

Support for a budget process which takes into account long-range planning and budget evaluation, and encourages citizen input. Specifically, this includes support of:

- a performance type budget which reflects monies raised by the city and received from other levels of government;
- a budget process regulated by a budget calendar providing for adequate timing for public study and input with each step, with the calendar including specific dates for the submission of each department's budget request, departmental hearings, submission to council, public hearings, and formal adoption of the budget;
- availability of the proposed budget at the same time it is given to council;
- departmental hearings open to the public;
- publication of budget summaries in the newspapers. (1977)

Support of a Capital Improvement Budget. This budget, whether included in the operating budget or not, should be considered at the same time. (1977)

Support of annexation by the City of Houston of the Ship Channel Industrial Districts, with negotiation of short-term contracts in the interim. (1977)

Revenue Sharing

Support of measures to encourage governmental determination of the total needs of the community and to implement effective citizen participation in the allocations process. (1974)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Annexation

Recognition of the importance to the City of Houston of the power to annex additional geographic territory in order to protect its economic base and to provide a government which addresses regional needs. Such power should be exercised within the following guidelines:

- checkerboard patterns to be avoided,
- no unincorporated areas to be left surrounded by the city (except for those within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of another city),
- annexations to be planned in advance in order to make sure that the city departments are prepared for expanded services,
- advance notification to be provided to residents of areas about to be annexed in order to give residents the opportunity to help plan how needed services will be provided and/or coordinated with facilities already in place,
- economically deprived areas not to be excluded,
- an adequate level of services to be provided to all annexed areas, without extra assessments to residents of areas where such assessments would be a severe burden. Services to include (a) improving streets and drainage to a level at which services can be provided; (b) providing city water and wastewater service within a reasonable time if the area has no adequate facilities,
- services related to public health and safety to be provided immediately upon annexation, along with a schedule for the provision of other services within a reasonable time. (1979)

Support of comprehensive planning concerning growth, open spaces, and capital investment in the ETJ, in recognition of the possibility that these areas may eventually be annexed. (1979)

Support of the adoption of a subdivision ordinance to be enforced in the city and in the ETJ. (1979)

Support of policies encouraging development within the city limits. (1979)

Support for legal clarification of circumstances under which disannexation would be permitted. (1979)

Support for a policy which would encourage water districts to consist of a single parcel of land, since state law mandates that a whole water district be annexed at one time.

The LWV-H feels that, because residents of an area proposed for annexation do not have veto power, in cases where there is strong dissent by residents of the area being proposed for annexation, there may be a need to consider the establishment of an impartial board which could weigh the importance of annexation to the health of the city and the ability of the city to accommodate the needs of the area. (1979)

Comprehensive Planning

Support planning in the extraterritorial jurisdiction through:

- the development of goals and priorities for Harris County through assessing the needs of the total community, utilizing maximum public participation.
- central planning coordination and implementation tools for the unincorporated areas of Harris County.

- development of a uniform performance building code for the unincorporated areas of Harris County,
- feasibility studies for the consolidation of planning services between municipalities and Harris County,
- increased utilization by Harris County of the planning services of the Houston-Galveston Area Council and the development by H-GAC of practical services that reflect the planning needs of Harris County. (1976)

Support for the development and adoption of a long range, flexible, constantly updated comprehensive plan for Houston, one which is developed with adequate citizen input. To this end, LWV-H supports:

- the coordination and centralization of the planning process in Houston, with the strengthening of a central planning authority,
- the development of goals, objectives, and priorities for Houston through a process which assures maximum public participation,
- a broad-based planning commission which would include representatives of varying occupational backgrounds,
- a comprehensive plan which includes plans for economic, social, and environmental, as well as physical development,
- public involvement at the neighborhood level in the planning process, and public hearings on proposed plans,
- an explanation by City Council to the public as to why any given plan is or is not adopted. (1976)

Disannexation

Expansion of the annexation study to establish a position on disannexation. (1982)

Flood Control

Support of comprehensive long-range planning for flood damage avoidance in Harris County. Any such comprehensive approach should consider:

- all alternative methods for flood damage avoidance,
- the effect of future development on flooding patterns,
- the full effects of stream modification,
- flood plans as multiple use resources (including the flood plain as a natural retention system, reducing and delaying peak flows),
- economic, social, and environmental factors, including water quality. (1978)

Parks and Recreation

Support of measures to insure acquisition, maintenance and development of public lands in the Houston area including:

- comprehensive planning for public lands in Harris County to meet National Parks and Recreation Association standards,
- adequate funding,
- adoption of an objective priority planning policy,
- investigation of legal ordinances to facilitate park land acquisition and contribution of land and money by developers,
- maximum cooperation and coordination of park services and planning between city and county,
- maximum use of schools and churches for program development,
- acquisition of flood plain lands for recreational purposes,
- opposition to long-term private leases on public lands. (1970)

Solid Waste

Support of long-range solid waste planning with emphasis on recycling and development of new technology. Effective land use principles and control of air and water pollution are vital considerations. Specifically, this includes:

- separation of solid waste at the source,
- judicious use of incineration and land fills,
- regional planning,
- promotion of public education efforts,
- citizen participation in solid waste planning. (1972)

Transportation

Support of a well-balanced, multi-mode, publicly-owned, non-polluting mass transit system with low fares. (1971)

Support of comprehensive transportation planning now to determine the transit needs of the entire community - such as the best use of land and access to employment, cultural, civic, medical, educational, and other public facilities. (1971)

Support of public participation, especially in the planning stages of any mass transit system, as essential. (1971)

HUMAN RESOURCES/SOCIAL POLICY

Administration of Justice

Support for the removal of certain areas of human behavior from criminal prosecution: sexual activity between legally competent consenting adults, gambling, adult access to pornography, use of alcohol. (1975)

Support for mandatory availability of medical treatment for drug abusers in jail. (1975)

Support of measures for rehabilitation of offenders which would include:

- punishment or penalties which fit the crime,
- more equitable punishment or penalties,
- alternative arrangements to placement of juveniles in state schools which would include small, family type units close to home with effective supervision and qualified personnel,
- provisions for pre-trial release such as are incorporated in the present (1974) Harris County Pretrial Release Program,
- rehabilitation facilities in Harris County Jail which would include counseling and listening services, testing, educational opportunities such as literacy and GED programs, training in marketable skills, and recreation. (1974)

Education

Support of measures to improve educational accountability programs in school districts of the greater Houston area:

- shared responsibility of educational accountability at all levels of the educational process, including the state legislature, the Texas Education Agency, local school boards, administrators, teachers, pupils, parents and the community,
- state legislative accountability for fair and equitable funding,
- teacher accountability for knowledge of and competency in the subjects they teach,
- student accountability for conduct and attitude,
- community accountability for knowledge of election issues,
- community involvement in accountability programs,
- comprehensive student evaluations including other methods besides standardized testing,
- parental input in the evaluation process of the school district personnel. (1978)

Education - Houston Independent School District

Support integration as integral to quality education; support the belief that all children should have equal access to quality education including:

- providing opportunities for our children to learn to function in our pluralistic community,
- offering and encouraging the achievement of academic skills which enable each individual child to function at his/her highest potential,
- providing superior programs and teaching which takes into account the needs of the individual child,
- offering superior programs in college preparatory and occupational-vocational training,

To achieve these ends, the Houston League supports these tools:

- providing free transportation as an integrative tool for those requesting it,
- acting to achieve student transfer policies which preserve existing integration but increase integration in non-integrated schools,
- building new schools with flexible capabilities,
- renting alternative facilities in locations to facilitate integration,
- urging the courts to mandate the use of several integration techniques at the same time,
- redrawing school attendance zones,
- magnet-alternative schools,
- closing under-utilized schools,
- combinations of the above. (1976)

Education - Spring Branch Independent School District

Support of integrative measures as under Education - HISD.

Support of measures to improve the responsiveness of the SBISD by:

- expanding existing avenues of communication by publicizing: (a) district publications which are available; (b) factual program evaluation data; (c) meeting times and places of citizen committees and of all board meetings in local newspapers,
- providing specific opportunities for dialogue such as: (a) board meetings at which either a written or verbal response be given to the citizen then or after the meeting; (b) community meetings which may be initiated by the board where citizens could be heard and answered by the board,
- encouraging more citizen input into the decision-making process through: (a) vehicles which are ongoing and can speak on any issue such as Parent Advisory Committee at each school; (b) expanding use of citizen committees which are broadly representative of the community both geographically and ideologically; (c) workshops, such as a budget workshop, at which citizens can be informed in depth about an aspect of the district's operation with emphasis on concurrent communication; (d) election procedures which would ensure greater accountability of elected officials. (1974)

Health

Support for the establishment of comprehensive public health services, including mental health services, for the citizens of Houston and Harris County. These services should be accessible in terms of cost, location and education of the public. Emphasis should be given to prevention and primary care. (1978)

Support for joint planning and coordination to eliminate duplication of health services, including:

- reorganization of the City of Houston and Harris County Health Departments,
- joint efforts by public health care provider,
- development of specific channels for consumer input into health planning from the early stages. (1978)

Support of measures to control the escalation of health care costs, including:

- regionalization of highly specialized, expensive services and equipment,
- utilization of alternatives to inpatient care,
- utilization of paraprofessionals,
- development of pre-paid group practices. (1978)

Housing

Support of equal opportunities for all Houstonians with emphasis on additional well-managed, low-cost housing and continued support of existing positions:

- a minimum housing code used in conjunction with existing building, fire, health and sanitation codes - a useful tool in protecting the health and welfare of our fellow citizens; urge adequate provisions for enforcing all these codes and that any relocation of families necessary through enforcement of the codes be the obligation of the city.
- completion of a workable program for land use and housing so that:
 - (a) we may look forward to a more orderly growth of our city, and
 - (b) we may qualify for federal assistance to aid us in solving our housing and land use needs.
- encouragement of private investment in low-cost housing and the use of private initiative to seek new ways of housing the needy. (1971)

Pregnancy Alternatives

Support of comprehensive sex education in all public schools in Harris County.

This should include:

- greater parent involvement,,
- broadening curriculums,
- student access to specifically educated nurses, counselors and teachers,
- greater use of city and county educational programs,
- programs to help parents open discussions with their children. (1982)

Support of adequate, easily accessible, publicly funded family planning services to meet the community's needs. This should include:

- confidentiality of all clients,
- efficient scheduling of family planning services,
- advertising,
- adequate funding,
- adequate, accessible facilities. (1982)

Support of equal access to legal and medically sound pregnancy termination services for all residents of Houston and Harris County with government funding and (or) a combination of government/private funding available for low and moderate income residents. (1982)

ADOPTED STATE PROGRAM
1981-1983

I. WOMEN UNDER TEXAS LAW

Study of the impact on women of existing state laws and proposed legislation.

II. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Action to achieve an equitable system of criminal justice in Texas.

Action to achieve creation of a single state juvenile justice agency.

Action to achieve a state juvenile agency budget flexible enough to allocate available financial resources to either community or institutional programs and facilities as the need arises.

III. HUMAN RESOURCES

Action to achieve a school finance system which provides an equitable distribution of funds and provides equity to the taxpayer.

Action to achieve equal rights for all, combat discrimination and poverty, and to provide equal access to housing, employment, and quality education in Texas.

IV. NATURAL RESOURCES

Action to achieve measures for the protection, conservation, and development of the state's groundwater resources as an integral part of the comprehensive state water plan.

Action to achieve conservation and judicious development of land & water resources, the improvement of water & air quality, conservation of energy, and development of public transportation in a manner which assures adequate protection of the environment, improvement of the quality of life, and wise use of our natural resources.

Support of water planning & development being the responsibility of the state government.

Support of state governmental action for control of air pollution in Texas.

Support of a comprehensive state land use policy which would provide for the orderly development of the state.

V. GOVERNMENT

Action to achieve an efficient, effective and responsive state governmental system through constitutional revision and legislative action.

Action to achieve flexibility within a coordinated finance structure, equitable taxation and increased accountability.

Action to protect every citizen's right to vote.

Action to achieve more flexible structures and adequate powers at the local level.

Action of comprehensive regional state planning, including regional planning councils.

Action to achieve revision of the Texas Constitution.

Action to achieve constitutional and statutory initiative & statutory referendum while assuring statewide citizen participation, education, funding disclosure and legal review.

See We Support and/or Program Perspectives for details.

NATIONAL PROGRAM

1982 - 1984

GOVERNMENT

- Action to protect the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and the right of every citizen to vote.
- Action for apportionment substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local government bodies.
- Action to support the exercise of presidential powers within the constitutional balance of power, 25th Amendment succession procedures, two-term tenure limitation, and direct election of the President.
- Action for self-government and for full voting representation in Congress for citizens of the District of Columbia.
- Action in support of responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.
- Action to improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to make our government more accountable, more representative, more responsive to all of our citizens.
- Determine national position through member concurrence of 'The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.'

HUMAN RESOURCES/SOCIAL POLICY

- Action to provide equal access to education, employment and housing.
- Action to support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.
- Action for a federalized system of income assistance, with uniform standards, to meet the basic needs of all persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate, or for whom jobs are not available.
- Action to provide energy-efficient and environmentally sound transportation systems that enhance the well-being of cities and afford better access to jobs.
- Action to promote the fiscal well-being of cities and the quality of urban life.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- Action for U.S. development assistance policies that improve the quality of life for the people of the developing countries.
- Action in support of systematic reduction of tariff and nontariff trade barriers and broad, long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.
- Action to strengthen the United Nations, in recognition of the need for cooperation among nations in an interdependent world.
- Evaluate U.S. national security policies and their impact on our domestic programs and our relationships with other nations.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Action supporting policies that: (1) bring about a significant and progressive reduction in the U.S. energy growth rate; (2) give priority to conservation, renewable resources and the environmentally sound use of coal in the U.S. energy mix between now and the year 2000; (3) effect a shift to predominant reliance on renewable resources beyond the year 2000.
- Action to reduce air pollution from vehicular and stationary sources.
- Action supporting policies to reduce the nonessential part of the waste stream, recover its nonreducible portion, then ensure safe disposal of the rest.
- Action for improvement of water quality and for planning and management of water resources to meet regional needs and the national interest.
- Action in support of management of our finite land resources and built environment to ensure consideration of public and private rights and responsibilities.

See Impact on Issues for details. (8)

The Principles are 'concepts of government' to which the League subscribes. These concepts are a direct descendant of The Platform, which served the League from 1942 to 1956 as the national repository for 'principles supported and positions taken by the League as a whole in fields of government to which it has given sustained attention.' The Platform has disappeared from the League vocabulary but the principles survived as 'The Principles'. Since that time, the Principles have served two functions according to the LWVUS Bylaws: 1) authorization for adoption of national, state and local program, and 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels.

PRINCIPLES

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public record accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

MAY - 6 1982

League of Women Voters of Houston
Backgrounder for April Units - SAVE

March 1982

SOME EFFECTS OF DIVORCE IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

The rapid changes taking place in our society make it necessary to examine current consequences of our laws in order to evaluate their effectiveness. The LWV is undertaking this study in order to determine how women are affected under Texas law due to dissolution of marriage. We gathered information from those who experienced divorce, family law attorneys, and referees in the family courts.

Few women in Texas are prepared for the realities of divorce. The effect is especially profound for the woman who has lived for a number of years as a dependent spouse, for she is limited under our present laws and systems by the ways in which she can be compensated for the economic sacrifice she has made. Financial burdens are inevitably added to the emotional turmoil she already feels while confronting unpreparedness in the job market.

Although we sometimes hear of women receiving alimony in Texas, it should be remembered that alimony is contractually agreed upon by the parties and not awarded automatically by state law. Courts will enforce a husband's voluntary agreement to make support payments to his wife, but Texas is the only state which does not provide for some type of on-going maintenance payments for a dependent ex-spouse.

Ownership & Management of Income and Property: Since Texas is a community property state, many women enter a marriage viewing it as an equal partnership. The law states that the income and the assets acquired with that income are shared equally from the date of marriage. However, that does not mean that a breadwinner must come home and give his wife half his paycheck to manage as she sees fit. Under Texas Family Code, Section 5.22, each spouse has the sole management, control, and disposition of the community property that he or she would have owned if single (e.g. personal earnings). The law appears to treat husband and wife equally. In reality, it could operate to give a voice in family financial management to working wives while denying a voice to a woman who chooses not to work outside the home.

Some dependent spouses find that assets have grown considerably under their husband's management. On the other hand, it is not unusual to discover that poor management has left very few, if any, assets to be divided at the time of divorce. Being married to a high income earner in no way assures a woman future financial security if no assets are being accumulated during a marriage except for retirement plans which will be discussed later in this paper.

Division of Property - Section 3.63, Texas Family Code

"In a decree of divorce or annulment the Court shall order a division of the estate of the parties in a manner that the Court deems just and right, having due regard for the rights of each party and any children of the marriage."

The concept of community property might seem to automatically dictate a 50/50 division of assets. This is usually the case when young couples divorce and both spouses have been employed. However, there are times when this would not be equitable. The following factors may be considered when the courts award one spouse more than 50% of asset

Duration of marriage	Fault (adultery)	Business Opportunities
Income	Liabilities	Style of living
Skills	Needs of the parties	Age and circumstances of the children
Educational level	Pre, post nuptial agreements	
Future assets & income	Tax consequences	
Age of the spouses	Attorney's fees	
Health	Contribution to the Estate (good record keeping is essential)	

It is not common to award more than 65% of the assets to one spouse (the trend is toward equal division). For a middle-aged woman who must re-enter the job market, it is questionable as to whether a property settlement can compensate her for the time and job skills sacrificed by her domestic contribution. Neither a re-training allowance nor alimony is provided by law in Texas.

Child Support: Under Texas law, both parents are equally liable for the support of their children. The court usually awards child support to the custodial parent. Although there is no formula that is used to determine the payments, a look at the amounts that are awarded generally fall within the following ranges:

18-22% of net monthly income for 1 child

22-27% " " " " " 2 children

27-33% " " " " " 3 or more children

When the mother is the custodial parent, the father who makes the payments usually has the higher income and is better able to make the payments that fall into the above range. However, when the situation is reversed and the father becomes the custodial parent, the mother must make child support payments out of what is most likely a lower income. She could be disadvantaged if these same percentages apply to her income.

It is common for a mother who is a custodial parent of pre-school children to find she must use the entire child support payment for child care expenses. Then she must fully support herself and the children solely on her income.

Once child support payments are determined, there is no escalating provision for inflation. During years when cost of living rapidly spirals, the value of the child support payments quickly decline. In order to receive higher payments, a parent must go through the court process for a "modification of child support". If this is put off for a long period of time, a mother may not receive as much increase as she would have if she requested modification every two or three years.

For taxation purposes, a wife may agree to accept alimony payments as a substitute for some child support. This arrangement may be advantageous when the man is in a much higher tax bracket than the woman. He can deduct alimony from his gross income (taxable to his ex-wife) whereas he cannot deduct child support. Although initially this may be equitable, there could be some serious drawbacks. First, alimony is not enforceable by contempt as is child support. Secondly, alimony payments are not eligible for modification whereas child support payments would be. Third, if the alimony ceases upon remarriage, a mother could lose a substantial amount of money when she still has child-rearing expenses. Finally, child support is an obligation on the estate of the father if he were to die; alimony is not. Professional tax advice is in order before this arrangement is undertaken.

Medical Expenses: A divorce decree may include provisions for other financial responsibilities such as medical expenses. It is not unusual for children to continue being covered on their father's medical insurance through his employment. The first medical expenses paid in any calendar year fall under the "deductible". If provision for these and other expenses non-reimbursed by the insurance company have been omitted from the decree, the custodial parent will probably withstand the cost.

Upon divorce, a wife immediately loses medical coverage she had through her husband's employment. Many jobs held by women do not have employee benefits such as medical insurance. Individual coverage is very expensive, but necessary. During the years of marriage, some women develop medical problems which make them uninsurable. Under certain conditions, medical insurance might be extended to a woman for a limited period of time by a conversion policy from her husband's existing insurance.

Retirement Income: During the years of marriage, retirement benefits are the most valuable asset for couples who have not accumulated other assets. With the present life expectancy, a woman can anticipate living a quarter of her life with no household paycheck. Since most women have no retirement fund, what will be the source of income for the divorced woman?

In Cearley v. Cearley, the Texas Supreme Court decision allowed for an award at the time of divorce of an interest in the retirement benefits, payable to the wife "if, as and when received" by the husband. It is too early to determine the real effects of this decision. Situations of the women affected should be observed in the future.

The case above involves private pensions. Unfortunately, the situation is entirely different in the case of military retirement. In June 1981, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a ruling in McCarty v. McCarty which stated that state courts could not treat military retired pay as property to be divided between spouses in divorce cases. It is feared that the reasoning in this case may eventually extend to private pensions as well. In states that award alimony, there is a chance a woman could be compensated for the loss of retirement funds. However, in the state of Texas, there is no way to do this except for property division if, indeed, there are such assets available.

Texas women who are divorced in the first ten years of marriage will find that the Social Security system does not operate on the concept that marriage is a financial partnership. An employed spouse accrues credits based on earnings. A dependent spouse has no right to future benefits based on any part of her husband's social security credits if the ten year duration of marriage requirement has not been met.

There is a tremendous need for Texas women to continue to examine the way in which they are affected by our laws and systems. While community property laws promote an equitable partnership, the final outcome for a divorced woman may or may not be equitable.

We express our appreciation to Mary Bacon, Norman Lee, Burt Raborn, and Doris Stewart whom we consulted to obtain factual information about community property and divorce laws in Texas. Opinions expressed in this article should not be attributed to those consulted. A special thanks to individuals who shared their experiences with us.

MAY - 6 1982

League of Women Voters of Houston
Backgrounder for April Units

March 1982

THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND TEXAS LAW: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence (physical harm between family members) is the most common form of violence, yet the least reported. Due to fear and embarrassment, fewer than one out of ten battered women reports her assault, and only a small fraction of those is able to file a complaint or seek alternative solutions such as counseling or refuge in a shelter.

EXTENT In Houston in 1981, Crises Hotline received 3076 calls for help from adult family members who were abuse victims, the great majority being wives. United Way Information and Referral handled approximately 300 such calls, WIRES (Women's Information and Referral Service) received about 700 calls for shelter and about 480 for related medical, legal and counseling aid.

During the first four weeks of 1982, the District Attorney's Intake Office recorded 82 domestic violence complaints; 76 of these were against husbands or ex-husbands. The Houston Police Department does not have assault statistics broken down into victim/abuser relationship. One police captain estimates that out of 658 assaults in August, 1981, half were domestic disputes and 85% of those involved spouses. This projects to approximately 3500 assaults on spouses reported annually. Of the 60 women murdered in the first nine months of 1981, 25 were killed by their husband or ex-husband.

The above numbers should be multiplied by at least ten (excepting homicides) to estimate the number of battered women in Houston. Women of all races and classes are victims; in fact, the percentage of college-educated husbands who consider wife-slapping acceptable is 5% higher than the overall average!

POLICE When Jane Citizen does seek help, she will usually find obstacles in every path. Police cadets are instructed not to file a report on an assault call unless the woman is going to file charges. Officers will not arrest the abuser on the spot unless the victim is beaten to the point of being "immobilized" by broken bones or severe bleeding. The policeman, as mediator, treats wife-beating as a civil, family matter rather than as a crime; his goal is to halt the violence at the moment. Each officer has a card provided by United Way listing shelters, and legal, Medical and other assistance phone numbers. He is encouraged to give the victim the appropriate referral if it can be done without retaliation from the husband.

Domestic violence can be extremely dangerous to the intervening officer; 25% of police fatalities occur during these situations. A shocking 80% of murdered wives had called the police at least once, and most of these had made repeated calls. All experts agree that wife beating, left unchecked, almost invariably escalates in frequency and severity.

LEGAL SYSTEM If Jane Citizen is brave and knowledgeable enough to file assault charges, she can do so at the D.A.'s Intake Office downtown between 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, although most domestic assaults happen at night or weekends. Under Article 14.03 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedures, effective August 1981, police may perform a warrantless arrest with probable cause in cases of assault resulting in bodily injury where there is danger of further injury. Few Houston officers have been instructed about the existence and use of this procedure; they are reluctant to use it because of the need to show cause and the number of women who fail to follow through due to fear and economic and emotional dependence). All authorities indicate great difficulties involved in pressing charges. It took the director of the Houston Area Women's Center Shelter four visits to the D.A.'s office, including a - 5 p.m. wait, to file charges on a man who broke into the shelter!

Of 82 domestic violence complaints filed January 1 - 29, 1982, only seven resulted in an assault charge filed by the D.A. The great majority of complaints are sent to the Neighborhood Justice Center. The NJC acts as a mediator in disputes. Its director estimates that only half of those referred come in for one mediation visit, and that 2 to 3% follow through with repeat visits.

It is recommended that the victim present a calm, neatly-dressed appearance, that she bring witnesses and medical evidence of her injuries, and have the current address of the assailant. Class A assault charges are accepted only if there are broken bones, stitches, or internal injuries. The warrant is sent from the D.A. to the police or sheriff's department and, if possible, is served immediately. Otherwise, it joins the file of unserved warrants. Lesser injuries result in Class C charges; the abuser is sent a letter to come into municipal court, where the maximum fine is \$200 and there is no jail term.

If Jane Citizen suffers repeated harrassment at home or at work she may seek a peace bond, a temporary restraining order (if in the process of a divorce), or a Temporary Protective Order. A restraining order is effective only if a man is intimidated by a piece of paper. Violation carries no criminal penalties, although contempt of court charges can then be filed, resulting in a fine.

Two years ago, the Texas legislature provided in the Family Code for a Temporary Protective Order against any abusive household member. A civil attorney must file for a TPO in a district or county court; the order is valid for 20 days, and goes on the police or sheriff's computer. A TPO may prohibit violence, harrassment, transfer of property, and may award use of residence, spouse or child support, and may be extended for full protection up to one year. Violation of a full order carries a maximum sentence of 12 months in jail and/or a \$2000 fine. UNFORTUNATELY, a proposed amendment to the criminal code for these penalties was never voted on by the legislature! In one family court, only two TPOs have been filed in two years. It is estimated that fewer than a dozen overall have been filed in Houston, and that most lawyers are unfamiliar with the procedure.

Inflation and budget cuts have reduced legal aid to practical non-existence. AVDA (Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse), providing free counseling and paralegal assistance, has one part-time attorney who can handle about 20 cases of divorces for domestic abuse victims. The Gulf Coast Legal Foundation can no longer afford aid for battered women or for contested divorce cases. Some of the shelters can recommend lawyers who give 5-10 minutes of free legal advice, or services on a sliding scale.

SHELTERS Jane Citizen will finally seek shelter when she feels that her safety or that of her children is in serious danger. There is only one full-service shelter, with 29 beds for women and their children, to serve the 1,700,000 Houston population. The Houston Area Women's Center Shelter houses 600 a year, with an average stay of 10 days and a maximum of 2 months. HAWC offers counseling, support groups, and legal and employment advocacy. It is funded by grants from the Texas Department of Human Resources, the City of Houston, United Way, and community donations. More grants are hard to obtain because many forbid duplication of already existing services despite increased need. HAWC hopes to expand by another 20 beds. They currently turn away 10 women a day. WIRES or other referral agencies then send the women to the Salvation Army (3 days - no male child over 6), Mission Yahweh (serves 100, accepts any needy women, mostly newcomers), Madonna House (9 mothers and children), and several others that do not take children and are funded through donations. During the crowded holidays, women are sent to any safe public place such as emergency rooms and bus

stations! Harris County Day Care has a waiting list of 400 children, and will have its services cut by 20%, compounding the problem of the fleeing mother who seeks employment.

Public funding is obviously minimal, and there is little coordination between agencies, police, and the courts. The victim is isolated by ignorance of existing services, economic dependence, a frustrating legal system, and the myths of a society that wonders why she stays but does little to help her or him to change or escape.

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The Houston Post

The Houston Chronicle

Interviews with

Nikki Van Hightower, director of Houston Area Woman's Center

Pat Gearity, director of HAWC Shelter

Mojie Burgoyne, director of Montgomery Co. United Way service center

Kim Kovach, assistant director of Neighborhood Center at the D.A.s office

Houston Police Department and Academy: Officer Hickman, Lieut. I.L. Stewart, Capt. Bill Higgins.

Texas State Senate Human Resources Committee, chair Chet Brooks, hearing at University of Houston, March 12, 1982

Women's Information and Referral Service

Crises Hotline

United Way Information and Referral Service

PARENT CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

According to many lawyers, the law does not discriminate against women, it is technically non-sexist. However, there is a problem in Harris County with some judges who interpret the law according to their own values and traditions. Probably the largest area affected by the judges' interpretation is in the area of child custody. A lawyer related a case where she had proven in court that the father would be the best parent to have custody but because the judge has wide discretion in these cases, custody was awarded to the mother because of the longstanding tradition of mothers being the best guardian of children. There are some cases in Harris County where the father receives custody of the children, but it is still the exception rather than the rule. We presently have all male judges in the family law court, yet many lawyers see a growing improvement in some of the rulings toward women.

Economics seems to be the guiding principal in custody decisions. Often the home goes with the children. Many settlements today include an agreement whereby the custodial parent lives in the house until the last child reaches eighteen at which time an evaluation is made and the property is divided. Another way to handle the house settlement is that the day of the divorce an evaluation is presented at prevailing real estate prices and a promissory note is signed by the spouse with custody paying one-half of that evaluation when the last of the children reaches eighteen. Closely tied to the custody question is the matter of support. If the father is ordered by the court to pay support for the children approximately 20 to 30 percent of his salary goes to child support payments according to formula. However, if a woman is ordered to be the supporting parent, often the judge will order payments which are much lower than the amount required by the father. This appears to be reverse discrimination but it actually adds credence to the fact that the woman simply does not earn as much as the man does. Economics again.

Today in Harris County the District Attorney's office enforces child support orders. In 1973, the Texas Legislature passed the Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act (URESA) which enables the District Attorney to enforce payment of child support to a person in another state and allows other states to enforce payment from a spouse who is living outside of Texas to make payments to their families in Texas. Before this enabling legislation was passed, a parent had to hire a lawyer in the state where the supporting parent was living and then go to court for an order of child support and if during this process the defaulting parent moved, the custodial parent would have to repeat the costly procedure. Under this Federal support act, those in arrears can be sighted for contempt and ordered to pay increased payments until arrears are paid. According to statistics in an article from the Houston Chronicle between 1979-81 Harris County received 8,070 cases from other states to prosecute. In 1980 out of 3,119 cases the District Attorney's non-support division actually got support orders on 1,538 cases. Eight times as many URESA cases are filed here yearly than are sent from Houston to other states.

Often women do not understand the importance of the pre-divorce agreement. It is necessary to seek and shop for a lawyer who is knowledgeable in family law and knows the judges of the family law court. Most family lawyers recommend liberal visitation rights the rationale being that the parent who has access to the child will be consistent with support payments.

The Abused Child

In the past, the criminal code allowed for women and children to be physically punished "short of deadly force". The revision of the code took women out but left children in. There is a real question about where parents' rights begin and end concerning the punishment of their children. The Simms case will possibly help decide some of these issues in Texas. It is interesting to note that we are the only state that has a jury trial for custody of the child--note the Vicki Daniel custody trial. In addition to that we have what is called a 'Tender Years Presumption' stating that the child under seven years of age goes to the mother. Often there is no one to speak for the child and some experts believe that a child advocacy system is needed for the battered and abused and abandoned child. This child advocate could testify impartially and present cause as to who is best suited to raise the children. In extreme abuse cases, legal council is entitled to turn children over to juvenile court. However, if a child has been reported as a runaway, the law requires that the child be returned home regardless of the quality of the environment. In Texas 85% of the girls in institutions have been victims of incest. In his column Coping With Kids (Houston Chronicle) Dr. Saul Kapel describes child abuse as a most complicated issue. He says, "Much more study will be required before we fully understand its sources and find ways to prevent this terrible behavior with its lasting and deadly effects on both perpetrators and victims".

The statistical material was from an article in the Houston Chronicle of Feb. 21, by Jim Barlow.

The Simms case is the recent bruised and battered death of young child by mother's boyfriend with mother's consent. Trial pending.

Appreciation and thanks to Marie Oser, Director of the Texas Institute of Families and to Dianne Richards, an attorney in Houston for sharing facts and information in preparing this paper.



JUL 21 1981

League of Women Voters
of Houston Education Fund

Program Development Background

The two-part television program, "Houston's Neighborhoods: A Study in Contrast", is the culmination of a special project begun by the League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund in the spring of 1980. At that time KHTV offered the League free air-time and use of its production facilities for a series of television programs. The League determined that high school students learning about their city and its neighborhoods could provide an exciting format to help all residents learn about their fast-growing, sprawling hometown.

The League discussed with teachers in the Jesse H. Jones High School Vanguard Program (a magnet school for the academically gifted and talented) the possibility of a cooperative effort with the League. Students and teachers alike were excited about the opportunity. The Vanguard Program then designed a one-year elective course in urban studies. LWV members worked with students and teachers throughout the year as advisers and interview subjects. The League, also, pursued a fund-raising campaign to cover production costs.

The eighteen students themselves researched the history of Houston, the geographical and demographical boundaries of neighborhoods, and the characteristics of the five specific neighborhoods they chose as representative of the diversity of the city as a whole. The students spent countless hours in determining the process of their research and, also, in interviewing residents of the neighborhoods. They wrote the scripts for the two television shows and they participated in both the studio and location filming. Both shows were produced by Locke Bryan and Tim Bersch of Bryan and Schultze Film Productions. Throughout the production of "Houston's Neighborhoods: A Study in Contrast", BSEP offered technical advice and training to the League and the Vanguard students.

The television program "Houston's Neighborhoods: A Study in Contrast" is a real contribution to the fund of knowledge about our city. It, also, represents the unique opportunities that exist for the media, the schools, and public interest groups to interact to the benefit of the community as a whole.

Program Description

Part one of Houston's Neighborhoods: A Study in Contrast" focuses on the city as a whole and on the process Vanguard students used to research the neighborhoods. It includes commentary on the concept of neighborhood, the selection of five representative neighborhoods, and the refinement of interview techniques. The students elaborate on elements of Houston's history and illustrate serious issues facing Houstonians in the past, present and future, particularly as they relate to growth and the quality of life. An impromptu discussion highlights how the unique project, a combined effort of Houston Independent School District's Vanguard Program, the League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund and KHTV evolved.

Part two of the program is a location visit to each of five neighborhoods in Houston. Moody Park is a predominately Hispanic neighborhood which is lower middle to middle class economically. Riverside Terrace is a quiet, affluent, primarily black neighborhood with an interesting history. River Oaks represents a planned and affluent white neighborhood near the city center. Meyerland illustrates an orderly suburban environment where residents express concern about education, crime, traffic and flooding. Gesspark, the fifth neighborhood, is a surprising jumble of residential and commercial elements with diverse types of residents who represent the young Houston and may foretell the demise of the true neighborhood.

Public Response

The programs aired June 21 and 28, 1981, on KHTV inside "Pulse", a weekly public affairs program. Initial response was very good with the programs and students being complimented on both content and execution. Numerous phone calls were received at the League of Women Voters office. New Houston residents felt that they were given a complete background into their "new" city and older residents commented that they learned new information about how Houston has become the boom town it is considered to be.

The League of Women Voters is making copies of the programs available to groups wishing to use them. Several inquiries have already been received, including the HISD and local civic clubs.

JUL 21 1981



League of Women Voters
of Houston Education Fund

May 4, 1981

Dot Ridings, First Vice President
League of Women Voters of the United States
1730 15th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Ms. Ridings,

The LWV of Houston has been involved in a unique and exciting process and project this year that we would like to share with the national League. The project itself evolved from the Houston League's 1979 grant proposal to LWV-US entitled "Cities: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." Although the Houston League did not receive a grant, we went ahead and held a series of dialogs with local television station managers, cultural leaders, and League members about how local television mirrors Houston. As a result of these dialogs a local television station offered the League free air time and use of its editing and studio facilities for a series of programs on the neighborhoods of Houston.

In assessing how best to take advantage of this opportunity, the League determined that high school students learning about their city could provide an exciting format to help all residents learn about their fast-growing, sprawling hometown. As a result, the League approached two of the magnet schools within the Houston Independent School District to explore a cooperative effort with the League. Students and staff at both the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and the Jones Vanguard Program (for the academically gifted) at Jesse H. Jones High School were excited about the opportunity. The League then made preliminary arrangements with The Broadcasters Group, a local production company, to videotape the series.

Through the summer and fall the League worked with the schools and at the same time pursued a fund-raising campaign among local corporations and foundations. In February the two schools presented an interim report to the League on the results of their research to date. Enclosed are some of the materials they used as well as a news article about the project.

The Houston League's hope that we could fund a series of six to ten television programs has not been realized, but we have been able to gather \$3,500 for the project. We are finalizing plans now for the optimum use of these funds to achieve the objectives of the project. We will produce two half-hour programs in the studio with limited location photography. The first telecast will probably be in late June. The tapes become the property of the LWV of Houston and can be shown on other television stations at a later date.

Our neighborhoods project has brought the Houston League insight into the grants seeking process, productive interaction with the school district, and exposure to the community as a whole. Certainly the League has learned more about the neighborhoods of Houston. Hopefully some residents will gain understanding and awareness of their community and be encouraged to participate responsibly and actively in its civic affairs as a result of our project.

Sincerely,

Jan Martin, Project Coordinator Kathie Eichberg, Vice President Lynne B. Johnson
Contributions to the Education Fund are deductible for income tax purposes President

JUL 21 1981



League of Women Voters
of Houston Education Fund

July 17, 1981

Dot Ridings
First Vice-Chair and Communications Chair
League of Women Voters Education Fund
1730 M Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Ms. Ridings,

The Houston League's two-part television program, "Houston's Neighborhood's: A Study in Contrast," aired for the first time on June 21 and June 28 on KHTV.

We are pleased with the interest you have shown in the project and have included some additional background material. The material was prepared when Columbia University invited KHTV to submit the program tapes to its media awards process in July.

We are looking forward to making creative use of the tapes in the community and also at the national convention in May.

Sincerely,

Margaret Freitag, Chair

Jan Martin, Project Coordinator



JUL 21 1981

Preview: 'Houston Neighborhoods'

By VICKI MACIAS
Post Reporter

A group of Vanguard program students at Jones High School has put together the ultimate class report. Its one-year study of Houston's history and its neighborhoods will air as a two-part edition of Channel 39's *Pulse* beginning at 6:30 p.m. Sunday.

On part one of *Houston Neighborhoods: A Study in Contrasts*, the students, all members of the magnet school's program for the academically gifted, appear on camera to report on Houston's past, present and future. It's a

fast, easy way for short-term residents to brush up on the recent and distant history of their new home.

The students also talk about how the project came about and the kind of planning and research involved. Among other things, the students designed a questionnaire for help in interviewing residents in the neighborhoods.

In the more impressive second half, which airs at 6:30 p.m. June 28, individual students go to the five neighborhoods they picked as representative of Houston's diversity: Moody Park, Riverside Terrace, River Oaks, Meyerland and

Gessner/Westpark (they call it Gesspark). Their research, analysis and on-camera presentations are remarkably professional.

The students gleaned most of the material used on the second program from interviews with neighborhood residents, although they don't give the results in statistics and don't put most of their interviews on camera.

Houston Neighborhoods is a joint effort of the students and the League of Women Voters. Independent producer Locke Bryan did the filming for the 18 students. Their teachers are Barbara Hughes and Michael Adams.

Fri. day June 19

APR 24 1981

UPDATE ON HOUSING ISSUES: PUBLIC HOUSING

Federal policy makers sought to provide decent housing for low income individuals and families through the enactment of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. States were given the option to create local housing authorities to implement public housing programs at the local level. The Housing Authority of the City of Houston (HACH) was chartered as a nonprofit public corporation under Texas state law in 1938 to provide low income housing in an area conterminous with the City of Houston.

Five projects were constructed during HACH's first fourteen years: Guney Homes in 1940 (565 units); Kelly Village in 1941 (333 units); Allen Parkway Village in 1941 (972 units); Irvington Village in 1942 (318 units); and Clayton Homes in 1952 (348 units). In 1950, HACH proposed to the Houston City Council to build 2,500 more units. After the council approved the proposal, it was put before the public in the form of a referendum and was soundly defeated when real estate leaders and developers denounced the plan as "socialistic."

After the construction of Clayton Homes in 1952, it was twenty seven years (1979) before HACH broke ground again. During the building moratorium, the original stock of 2,500 units was expanded by more than 1,200 units through the purchase of seven existing apartment buildings. The 1979 project of 100 units at 6767 Long Drive is the first of six which will add a total of 600 units to HACH within the next few years. Unlike earlier projects of 300 to 600 units, the new projects will be comparatively small--60 to 150 units. The Executive Director, William R. McClellan, expressed the hope that smaller projects would encourage a feeling of community among residents, deter crime, and aid in building maintenance.

In addition to the housing units which are managed and leased directly by the HACH, two other mechanisms have been utilized by the Housing Authority to provide housing for low and moderate income individuals. The Housing Assistance Payments Program (HAPP) permits eligible individuals and families to seek housing in the private sector. Both the low income applicant and the housing unit must be approved to participate in the program. Upon approval, HACH agrees to pay the landlord as a rent subsidy any amount which exceeds twenty five percent of the renter's net income. As of 1979, over 4,500 units in the private sector were approved for participation in this program. Ninety six percent of those applicants approved were below poverty level. However, that same year the HAPP waiting list was temporarily suspended when it exceeded 10,000 families.

A second mechanism used by the Housing Authority has been the creation of two non-profit holding companies. Houston Apartment Housing Corporation One owns and operates four facilities. DeVillie Apartments is composed of 16 units designed for blind, multihandicapped persons. Three other apartment complexes are inhabited by a limited number of individuals and families receiving rent subsidies while the majority of renters receive no subsidy. Houston Housing Corporation Two was created to purchase, rehabilitate, and lease to the general public the 330 unit St. Regis Apartments at 4227 San Felipe. Revenues from these corporations are turned over to the HACH to be used for expenditures not permitted for HUD funds. For example, HACH was able to buy a "bucket truck" to service outdoor lights on HACH grounds. Mr. McClellan explains the Housing Authority's involvement in the creation of these two corporations. It rehabilitates and returns housing stock to the Houston market while offering housing units to moderate income groups. It also generates local income for the HACH budget.

Eligibility Criteria for Public Housing Projects

Criteria used to determine eligibility for public housing subsidies is based on income and asset ceilings--and age in the case of housing for the elderly. After deductions and exemptions are calculated (including \$300 deductions per minor or full time students), the maximum annual income permitted for one individual is \$8,650, for two is \$9,850, up

to \$15,400 for 8 or more persons. Income ceilings for the newest project, Long Drive, will be higher and are reflected in the average rent of \$135 per month. Public housing residents pay no more than one fourth of their net income for rent.

Waiting Lists

Applicants who seek residence in the housing projects submit applications and are interviewed at project offices while applicants who seek rent subsidies for units in the private sector submit applications at HACH headquarters (4217 San Felipe). The waiting lists are long. Adele Nissen, who supervises the application process for public housing projects, reports that in February 1981, applicants approved in 1978 were being called in.

In a 12 month period ending September 1980, female heads of households submitted 58% of the 1,394 applications received for public housing projects. AFDC mothers comprised 34% of the applications. Blacks and Hispanics comprised the majority of applicants (62% and 23% respectively), while comparatively few whites sought public housing (6%). About 75% of applicant families reported annual incomes of less than \$4,000.

Annual Budget

The HACH assets as shown on December 31, 1980 were \$36,055,189, exclusive of \$29,000,000 for new projects in progress. The 1981 operating budget for conventional public units is about \$5,000,000. President Reagan's budget cuts this year of 15% and proposed 20% in 1982 are in the area of subsidized public housing units.

The Future of Public Housing

Given the pattern of the federal housing program's failure to fill the housing need, what direction might future subsidized housing take?

Conventional public housing will remain for some time because of the years of bond indebtedness which remain on old and new projects. Allen Parkway Village, for example, has 20 years indebtedness remaining; new projects have 40 years indebtedness. HUD is obliged to subsidize the indebtedness; however when the debt is retired, HUD is no longer responsible.

One of the primary housing questions in the year 2000 will be, what happens to these public housing units as the debts are retired and the units become the responsibility of the local Housing Authorities and, indirectly, local governments.

Mr. McClellan believes the future impetus will have to be at the local level of government because of a lessening federal role and the necessary involvement of the private sector. The housing corporations described are generating income on a small scale today; in the future, these kinds of profits may have to be a sizable part of HACH's budget. It seems very likely that the scope of the public housing authorities will have to change substantially to avoid possible bankruptcies. What will be the reaction of local governments, who historically have resisted using municipal funds, as they are asked to approve or fund innovative housing programs with few guarantees from HUD?

Finally, after housing project debts are retired, Mr. McClellan foresees the purchase of units by residents in a program designed to maintain and up-grade the projects. That may be the future fatal but necessary blow to the already small number of rentals available to low- and moderate-income persons--condominium conversion of public housing units.

UPDATE ON HOUSING ISSUES: FAIR HOUSING

The League of Women Voters of Houston was instrumental in the proposal and passage of the City of Houston's Fair Housing Ordinance of 1975. Working closely with the Council of Human Relations and the Houston Area Urban League, the LWV-H was able to help to find a solution to the problem of housing discrimination identified in our 1973 housing survey.

The current administrator of the Houston Fair Housing Division, Joan Edwards, feels that the ordinance of 1975 is quite broad in its coverage of discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, and national origin. However, it does not cover discrimination against the handicapped and against people with children. Representatives of the Coalition for Barrier Free Living have had tentative discussions with the city concerning an amendment which would include protection against discrimination of the handicapped. There is, at the moment, no proposal for anti-discriminatory measures against people with children.

All complaints of discrimination under the ordinance are referred to the administrator. Upon completion of the complaint investigation, if it appears that a discriminatory housing practice has occurred, the administrator attempts a voluntary conciliation including the discontinuance of discriminatory practices and assurance of future compliance. A conciliation agreement is then signed. The Fair Housing Division monitors compliance on a monthly basis for two years. If efforts at voluntary compliance are unsuccessful, the case is referred to the city attorney who decides whether to proceed with prosecution in municipal court. The maximum penalty for a conviction is a \$200 fine for each violation; the person or firm is guilty of a misdemeanor under criminal law.

Ms. Edwards reports that her office receives about 200 complaints a year; of these, 129 were filed by women, mostly black women with children. Half are dismissed for insufficient evidence and the other half are settled through informal conciliation. A typical complaint received follows (the actual names have, of course, been changed):

"Mr. and Mrs. Smith, a black couple, saw an ad in the paper for a home in southwest Houston¹ at a price which was within their range. They called the XYZ Realty Company and made an appointment to see the home. Upon arrival at the sales office, they were told that the advertised home had been sold, however the agent encouraged them to look at several homes in the South Park area. The agent did not offer to show them any homes in the southwest region.

Investigation of the XYZ Realty Company revealed that black couples were 'steered' toward homes in minority areas or transitional areas while white couples were steered toward homes for sale in largely white neighborhoods. The investigation also indicated that the home originally sought by the Smiths had not been sold, but that it was located in an all white area. Upon conclusion of our investigation, the XYZ Realty Company agreed to show the home in question to the Smiths and to show homes in all areas to prospective buyers without regard to race."²

The Fair Housing Division receives approximately \$140,000 from the general revenue fund of the city. In addition, the division has funds designated through Community Development Block Grant Funds, but cannot draw this money until they need it. At the moment the division is operating solely on city funds and has not drawn CD monies for two years.

1. Site of most alleged discrimination complaints.
2. Fair Housing Division Annual Report--1978

Ms. Edwards indicated 200 complaints in a city the size of Houston might be just "the tip of the iceberg." In a study done by HUD three years ago based on random sampling in 40 cities, it was found that some form of housing discrimination exists in three out of four minorities seeking homes. Unfortunately, Houston was not included in this study. There certainly seems to be a need for some sort of current monitoring or study to determine the extent of unreported housing discrimination existing in Houston. The Fair Housing Division at present has merely the authority to react--not act.

Any studies proposed by the Fair Housing Division must be approved by city council, as the studies would involve contracts with outside organizations with the expertise and manpower to conduct such projects. One such proposal, rejected by a former city council, was a comprehensive study of the problems faced by minorities trying to buy housing. Another project, rejected by the last council, was a study on neighborhood stabilization. The present council turned down a proposal to set up a landlord-tenant counseling and mediation service which would have dealt with complaints not involving discrimination, such as cleaning deposits and repairs. Although for the moment those projects have been dropped, Ms. Edwards feels that they need to be done. She said, "now and then there are people who express an interest in having these proposals again presented."

It seems unlikely that much can be accomplished regarding studies to determine the real extent of the problem of discrimination in housing unless there is a new strong push from the community. It is ironic that one of the few city departments that is well funded and has the desire and potential for action and/or projects is unable to initiate them.

APR 24 1981

UPDATE ON CITY GOVERNMENT

CITY COUNCIL - ONE YEAR LATER

At the annual meeting of the membership of the League of Women Voters of Houston in May 1980, it was agreed to "continue study of Houston City Government to include monitoring and evaluation of election processes." Some months earlier, in the summer of 1979, the City of Houston was directed by the Justice Department of the United States to restructure its method of selecting council members in order to give minority groups a better chance at representation. At a city-wide election in August 1979, the City Charter was amended. Prior to the amendment, the eight council members were elected by all the voters with five of them representing districts and required to live in the districts they represented. As a result of the amendment, the council was enlarged to fourteen members. Nine were to be elected by and represent the nine districts into which the city would be divided. The remaining five members were to be elected by the voters of the city as a whole and were to represent the city at-large. In November of 1979, a fourteen member council was elected. Eight of those elected had never served on council before.

Meanwhile the League was conducting a study of the structure of city government. The study resulted in a consensus, May 1980, reaffirming the position reached in 1974. This position supports a 14 to 16 member council with a majority of those elected by districts, and the strong mayor form of government among other things. Since the method of selecting council members was now changed substantially, the League felt that a year of monitoring was in order to see just how effectively the new council is meeting the needs of the citizens of Houston. This Update is an evaluation of that issue based on interviews with city officials and a survey of League members.

WHAT CITY OFFICIALS THINK

Six city officials were interviewed by the committee in January 1981. Two of those officials were appointed and serve in the mayor's office; one has been in that office for some time and the other was appointed in the summer of 1980. The other four officials interviewed were elected council members. Two were newly elected to the position and two have served on council for some years. Two represent districts and two represent the city at-large. Two of the four were minorities, one woman and one black. All officials interviewed were given the same list of questions and were asked to respond. The interviews were conducted in a rather informal manner allowing some of those interviewed to voice concerns of their own as well as to answer the questions.

All officials interviewed were asked a question concerning the effect of the new structure of the council itself. There appeared to be some resentment towards the newly elected officials by the long-term ones. This resentment appears to be mainly due to longer council meetings. The new officials are termed "workaholics" and are admired for this, but it is felt that they are overly articulate and prolong meetings. Aside from this complaint, all officials interviewed were pleasantly surprised at how well the new system is functioning. There is not the expected polarization between old and new members; instead there are alignments based on issues, therefore always changing. The restructured council is working effectively and communication in city government is much improved. New members of council are pleased to be allowed to pursue actively their special interests and feel that they have had an overwhelming impact on city government. For the first time, some of the members of city council now view that job as their only job--they have no other source of income. The council is slowly becoming an "active" council (they initiate changes) instead of a "passive" council (they react to changes).

All officials interviewed were asked a question concerning the responsibilities of the city to its citizens, how these responsibilities are being met, and how council members

keep in touch with their constituents. Those interviewed all felt that the city should provide its citizens with basic services (police, fire, garbage pickup, streets, etc.). One council member felt that the city should provide for the "social needs" of the citizens and another felt that the city was responsible for the "quality of life" of its citizens. These interviewed felt that not all the responsibilities of the city to its citizens were being met, due to tremendous growth, lack of planning, poor supervision and inefficiency, politics, etc. All agreed that long range planning was a great need in the city. Some of the council members were using creative ways of keeping in touch with their constituents--town hall meetings, newsletters, speaking engagements, etc.

All officials interviewed were asked a question concerning the ability of the city to meet the needs of all socio-economic groups equally. Most felt that the poorer areas of the city were not well served in the past and those areas are just now beginning to catch up. One council member said that the more affluent areas of the city were better organized and thus tended to get better services. One of the council members said that all areas were equally well served.

WHAT LEAGUE MEMBERS THINK

In January 1981, a questionnaire was sent to all League unit meetings. Members were asked to determine their perceptions of the responsiveness and effectiveness of city council since the restructuring. Members were also asked in which council district they resided and whether their district council member was accessible. The questionnaires were filled out with no unit discussion.

Sixty-four questionnaires were returned. Four of the responses were from members living outside the city (Humble, 3). Eleven of the responses were from members who did not know who their council representative was (all from two units, Memorial-Ashford and Memorial Night).

The remaining responses (49) reflected a general feeling that the new council was trying to deal with the problems of the city. Many people were very pleased with the attempts of some council members to communicate with citizens through town meetings, appearances at civic club meetings, newsletters, etc. Also reflected in these 49 responses was the feeling that the problems of the districts, and the city as a whole, were just too great for anyone, no matter how able and committed, to handle.

The most responses received were from Lance Lalor's district (Sharpstown-Alief, 3; Mid-west, 6; Southwest Night, 2; City-wide Evening, 5). These responses indicated that city services were about the same as a year ago, that their councilman does try to meet with his constituents through civic clubs, and that he was generally accessible.

A number of responses were received from Christin Hartung's district (Spring Branch, 1; Memorial-Ashford, 8; Memorial Night, 3). Indications from these responses were that city services were about the same as a year ago, but there was some feeling that the needs of the district are not adequately met, apparently due to conflict between neighborhoods and commercial development.

Responses from Larry McKaskle's district (Northwest, 8; Spring Branch, 1) indicated that the needs were being met more effectively than a year ago and the larger council is trying to do a better job.

Those living in John Goodner's district (Sharpstown-Alief, 5; Southwest Night, 1) were impressed with his town meetings; those living in Frank Mancuso's district (Southeast, 4) felt that he was not accessible and were concerned about lack of street repair and by water standing in ditches. One response was received from Anthony Hall's district and one from Dale Gorczynski's. No responses were received from Ben Reyes' or Ernest McGowen's district.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of these interviews, city officials generally feel that the restructured council is more effective and more responsive than before. Council members appear to be making efforts to become more aware of the needs of all citizens of Houston. League members questioned generally support this view. All agree that the restructured council is certainly not worse, and perhaps a little better, than the old one.



Houston's Growth Characteristics

Houston covers 556 square miles. Its population is a little less than 2 million. It has a population density of some 5½ people per acre. Forty percent of the area enclosed by the city boundaries is undeveloped. The shape of the city defies description, bulging here and there in angular outthrusts and flaunting some far-flung territories like banners on a string.

Why has Houston grown in this exuberant fashion when other cities, although growing rapidly, expand with more logic? The root reasons are two: the historical fact of Houston's laissez-faire attitude toward development and the geological facts--related to water supply and drainage.

Usually a city grows around a bay or on the banks of a river, but Houston has many streams and bayous. Development has tended to follow them, partly because of the natural beauty but mainly because rainwater and sewage treatment effluent can be removed from developments more cheaply and efficiently through these natural channels. Water for domestic use is lavishly distributed underground; water can be obtained anywhere in the Houston area merely by drilling a well and tapping one of the several aquifers (ignoring, for the moment, the related subsidence problem). This water generally needs only to be treated with chlorine to be usable. Among other Texas cities, only San Antonio has such an abundance of sub-surface water; however its single source is the Edwards Aquifer, and the residents have now recognized the necessity to observe this resource. In areas such as Dallas, where most water is obtained from surface impoundment, the city or a single water authority controls the supply, and through it can control development.

Historically Houston has felt that development is good and has not passed legislation that might hinder it. Since 1963 cities in Texas have been authorized by state law control over development in their extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ), the area within a certain distance of their borders. (Cities greater than 100,000 have ETJ of 5 miles, smaller cities proportionately less. Houston and its ETJ cover some 2000 square miles.) Other cities have used this power to control development and to make sure that it occurs in ways that are compatible with the city's long range plans. Houston has chosen not to adopt such ordinances.

The high percentage of undeveloped land within the city is largely the result of several massive annexations. These annexations were carried out 1) to forestall the possible incorporation of new communities on Houston's periphery, 2) to obtain land to build the Intercontinental Airport, and 3) to control the land around Lake Houston in order to protect the city's water supply. Much of this land has remained underdeveloped.

There are many advantages to building outside of Houston's corporate limits; there is no building code, the city does not inspect, and it is easy to assemble a package of land for development purposes. But above all, outside of the city a water district may be formed and through it funds raised to install water, sewage, and drainage (W/S/D) infrastructure, an early expense in any development.

A water district, by any name, is essentially a special district with specific limited governmental powers. As such, it may raise funds through the sale of bonds which are treated as municipal bonds, the interest on which is tax free to the holder. This tax factor tends to make municipal bonds attractive investments, even though the interest rate is lower -- as well as a fortuitous way in which to reduce the developer's cost of money. Consequently there has been a tendency for development to take place outside of the city in locations that are in the best interest of the developer rather than those of the city.

As areas on the periphery of the city are developed, the city annexes them (see Annexation Focus), thus increasing its horizontal growth with attendant problems of transportation and delivery of services.

History of Water Districts (WD)

Early in this century, Texans recognized that there was a need in rural areas for water control and conservation. The Constitution was amended (Article III, Sec 52) to allow creation of special, quasi-governmental districts for the purpose of drainage control, irrigation, and navigation. Creation required a 2/3 vote of qualified resident property owners. Such a water district (WD) could issue government obligation bonds to the amount of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the assessed valuation of the real property in the district. A more liberal amendment, (Art. XVI, Sec 59) passed in 1917, permits WDs with wider powers and unlimited indebtedness to be created by a majority of qualified property-tax paying residents. WDs created under III 52 may convert to XVI 59; all the WDs in the Houston area now are authorized under XVI 59.

After WWII local developers began to realize that the WD concept could be used for promotional development by providing money from tax-free bonds to underwrite the infrastructure for W/S/D, the most expensive part of a development. Since there are likely to be no residents on the land, the developer and his associates could petition for the creation of the WD, move in a few sympathetic residents and have the WD voted in without opposition.

---Abuses and Reforms---

The opportunities for fraudulent activities in the use of promotional WDs were many, and they were not ignored. Money raised by bonds which could legally be used only for W/S/D infrastructure was diverted to other purposes. Sometimes substandard material was used, work was not done to specifications, or work was simply not done at all. Many districts were bailed out by being annexed by Houston, which took over both the bonded indebtedness and the problems of the district. Furthermore, a great deal of money could be made on WD bonds, since their value increased substantially when the WD was annexed and the bonds became City of Houston bonds. In some instances, large bond issues were approved shortly before the districts were annexed.

Even a development whose promoters meant well often ran into trouble. The ease of formation of a WD led some to enter the field who had neither the resources nor the expertise to carry out the work. Some went bankrupt; others failed to provide adequate materials and workmanship; some promised facilities which were never constructed. The unsuspecting property buyer, often unaware of the existence or purpose of the WD, often sustained a rude shock.

The litany number of scandals finally prompted reform legislation. The reforms of 1971 resulted in the addition to the Texas Water Code of Chapter 54, which standardizes and regulated Municipal Utility Districts (MUD). MUDs are the type of Water District commonly used now for development. After the 1971 reforms there were still complaints of abuses; hearings revealed that the problems lay in the operation of the WDs and the relationships of the WD to the people living in them. People objected to inadequate notice of hearings, few and poorly advertized public meetings of the WD board of directors, lack of supervision of WD construction, lack of understanding on the part of a buyer in the WD as to the taxing power and indebtedness of the WD, and a general feeling that the WDs were misused for the profit of the controlling interests. These new complaints produced several changes in the Water Code to regulate and supervise WDs more closely. Among the reforms are these requirements:

- that the WD be "feasible and practicable, necessary and a benefit to the land" and a specific definition of this was written into the Water Code.
- that before a WD is created, it must be considered whether the desired services could be made available from another system.

- that a written notice of the taxing authority, most recent tax rate, and total bonded indebtedness of the WD must be given to and signed by the purchaser of property in a WD which provides water and sewer services,
- that each WD have an annual audit by a CPA using standard techniques, supervised by the Texas Department of Water Resources (TDWR),
- that any person who has continuing business interests or a relationship within a 3rd degree of consanguinity with the developer or others serving the WD in a professional capacity be disqualified as a board member or tax assessor and collector,
- that WD business must be conducted at a publicly designated place and at regular times; that a district office must be established in the district if there are more than 25 resident voters and 5 of them so request; and that meetings must be held in the district unless a majority of voting residents vote otherwise at a public meeting,
- that an authority be established to coordinate and formulate a management program for surface and groundwater in critical subsidence areas (the Harris Galveston Coastal Subsidence District was established in 1975),
- that an office of TDWR be established in Houston for better supervision of WDs in that area since that is where nearly all the WD action occurs.

One of the most effective regulations adopted during this period is the "30% rule". Under this rule, the developer must contribute 30% of the cost of all W/S/D facilities including engineering expenses and fees with the exception of 1) wastewater treatment plants, 2) water supply, treatment and storage facilities, and 3) necessary trunk lines outside the district. The 30% rule may be waived at the discretion of the board of directors of the WD if the WD bonds have a high rating or if the ratio of debt to the assessed valuation of the WD is less than 10%. The rule was adopted at the behest of certain area developers who believed that some of the difficulties with promotional developments were caused by developers who did not have enough monetary stake in the success of the development.

Gray areas remain in the creation and operation of WDs. Bills are introduced at each legislative session to further refine WD regulations. Still, with closer supervision of WDs, better understanding by residents of WD functions and authority, and more opportunity for public scrutiny, the reputation of WDs has greatly improved.

Creation of Water Districts

Water Districts (WDs) may be created by:

1. the State Legislature
2. the County Commissioners Court
3. the Texas Water Commission (TWC), an arm of the Texas Department of Water Resources (TDWR)

---WDs Created by the Legislature---

WDs created by the legislature (special law districts) may be given any power which does not violate the Constitution. Before the passage of the MUD reforms, which facilitated the creation of MUDs by TWC, most promotional WDs were created by special law. Some promoters still prefer to have WDs created by the legislature because they believe it to be faster (a possibility if the legislature is in session) or because they wish to have exemptions from the Water Code regulation (they seldom get them). Also, the extensive studies required by TDWR may not be demanded for special law districts. Actually few promotional WDs are now created by the legislature; districts which are created by the legislature are usually for a special purpose, such as the Harris Galveston Coastal Subsidence District.

There were 8 WDs created in the last session, none of them in the Houston area. (Of the 89 WDs created by TDWR during the same period, the great bulk were MUDs in Harris and adjoining counties.)

---WDs Created by the County Commissioners Court---

Four types of WDs may be created by the County Commissioners Courts; Fresh Water Supply District (FWSD), Water Control and Improvement Districts (WCID), Levee Districts, and Drainage Districts. A FWSD requires fewer procedural steps in its creation, but does not have authority to issue bonds for the construction of drainage facilities. Most FWSDs have been dissolved, annexed, or converted to another type of district. Most of the special law promotional districts were labeled WCIDs, which have more extensive power than FWSDs. Levee and Drainage Districts are used for flood and drainage control.

---WDs Created by TDWR---

Most WDs are now created through the TDWR. A person or group which wishes to form a WD must proceed through several steps, the first of which is to submit a petition signed by landowners holding a majority in value of the land within the proposed district, or 50 signers if there are more than 50 holders, to TSWR. Accompanying the petition must be:

- a plat showing the proposed boundaries
- a statement of the nature of the work to be done, its necessity and estimated cost
- the projected name of the district
- a preliminary plan showing location of existing facilities (wells, roads, structures) and the location of proposed facilities
- a map of drainage patterns and the 100 year flood plan
- a preliminary engineering report
- projected tax and W/S rates
- existing and projected populations
- an investigation and evaluation of the availability of comparable services from other sources (other WDs, municipalities, regional authorities)
- an evaluation of the effect the WD will have on land elevation, subsidence, groundwater level, recharge capability, natural run-off rates and drainage, water quality, total tax assessments within the proposed WD
- a statement that copies of the petition have been sent to the county
- proof of the consent of the city in whose ETJ the WD will be, if any*

In the Houston area, the petitioner must submit a letter to TDWR from the Subsidence District stating that no problems are foreseen with the plans at the present time. Copies of the plat and preliminary engineering plan must be sent to the Houston office of TDWR.

*If the proposed WD will be in the ETJ of a city, the consent of the city must be secured. If the city refuses or fails to answer in 120 days, a majority of owners or 50% of the voters in the proposed WD may petition the city to provide the W/S/D services which the WD is intended to provide. Failure to reach agreement is authorization to initiate proceedings for the creation of the WD.

A hearing is held, usually in Austin. The TWC may deny the petition or redefine the boundaries before granting it. If the petition is granted, TWC will appoint 5 temporary directors; they must either own land in the district or be qualified voters in it. Usually they come from other parts of the city and are deeded lots in the new WD; the cost to them depends on the risk of the development.

The temporary directors then call a confirmation election in which the resident voters of the district decide whether or not the district shall be created and elect 5 permanent directors. In a promotional WD it is unlikely that there are any resident voters, so some are provided. In some cases mobile homes have been moved in, but more often the developer will build 3 - 5 houses, known as "water district houses" which will be sold, usually at bargain prices. In the latter case the developer will have built a certain amount of infrastructure to provide W/S and access to the houses; thus quite a bit of work and investment has occurred before the WD is confirmed. The buyers of the water district houses naturally are in agreement with the aims of the developer and will vote to confirm the district. Since the permanent directors must be qualified voters in the district and be subject to taxes, they are nearly always the owners of the water district houses.

A positive confirmation election is the final step in the creation of a WD. If the election is negative, the promoters may try for another election later. Nothing in the law states how often or how many times a confirmation election can be held.

The TDWR has the right of continuing supervision as long as the WD remains in existence. Directors serve for 2 year staggered terms, so that some are up for election each year. They are paid a token amount (\$25 per meeting not to exceed \$100 month). The board starts out with directors friendly to the developer and may be considered a "developer's board". Within about 4 years, the board is likely to become a "resident board", that is, a board dominated by directors elected from among residents who are more recent purchasers of property. Resident boards may not be sympathetic with the developer's aims, hence the developer plans to have the property within the WD nearly totally developed by the time a resident board might be in control. To facilitate this schedule most promotional WDs contain less than 500 acres. Developers learned this lesson when in one instance a WD of several thousand acres was established; a resident board gained control after only a portion of the WD had been developed and refused to request bond issues for further development since the majority of the residents were happy with their rural atmosphere. Now a developer may buy a several thousand acre tract of land but will allow only a small WD to be created on the portion he is ready to develop.

Most, but not all, new promotional Water Districts are MUDs. An existing WD may convert to a MUD. To do so it must follow essentially the same process that original creation of a MUD requires except for the confirmation election. After it becomes a MUD it must follow the regulations of Chapter 54 unless there is a specific problem for which MUD powers do not provide. Conversion does not require a change of name.

Bonds

The purpose of creating a promotional water district is to form a governmental entity which can issue tax free bonds with which to finance the cost of W/S/D facilities. Never the less, a great deal of construction is often done before bonds are issued. Developers are anxious to get the project under way, particularly in a time of rising prices; the approval and issuance of bonds takes time. Furthermore, the WD cannot gain approval for a bond issue greater than the total value of the project; thus the more construction, the greater the value and the greater the possibility of a larger bond issue. The developer generally finances this early construction with bond anticipation notes (BANS) even though they carry higher interest rates than tax free bonds. BANS are loans made on the assumption that bonds will be issued and that the BANS will be repaid from bond money.

Until construction financed by bond money occurs, the work is not subject to inspection by TDWR although if the developer expects to be reimbursed from the bond money, the work is to be done according to specifications approved by TDWR.

It is difficult, however, to inspect work that has been done and covered over. Furthermore, a WD may use bond funds to buy existing private facilities; thus a developer could build certain facilities before the WD makes a bond application. The WD could then include purchase of the facilities in the bond application, and the only inspection would be an appraisal of water or effluent quality; a procedure less effective than on-site inspection of construction. If a large amount of work has been done, the TDWR may feel forced to grant the bond issue to prevent the WD from going into bankruptcy even though there may be some doubts about the quality of the work. The developer will be reimbursed for 70% of all the early work and 100% for water and sewage treatment facilities and large trunk lines, but he must absorb the difference between the interest on the BANS and the tax-free bonds and accommodate this in the pricing structure. Bond funds can be used to pay for water, sewage and drainage hardware only. The developer must provide the land or easements for mains and drainage facilities and must carry the cost of other development such as roads and bridges (although culverts can be considered part of the drainage system).

The bond application is made by the WD board, not by the developer, and it must be preceded by an election in which the residents of the WD vote for the bond issue.

This election may be held at the same time as the original confirmation election and the amount of bonds approved may be the total required for development even though the WD may wish to issue only a part at a time.

TDWR also requires a maintenance tax authorization. The temporary directors must agree that they will put the maintenance tax proposition on the confirmation ballot. This is a tax that can be collected if necessary to keep the system running in an emergency; it is the only tax a WD can collect to be used for operation and maintenance. Other taxes collected by a WD are those required to service the bonded indebtedness. Normal operation and maintenance costs are not paid by user fees.

In order to issue and sell bonds, the bond application must be accompanied by the consent of the city in whose ETJ the WD lies. In the Houston area, the Flood Control District must give approval of the plans, and a copy of the application must be sent to the Houston office of the TDWR. The application must include information about:

- developable land acreage and amount to be developed with this bond issue
- previous and proposed improvements
- projected improvements and population when fully developed
- total bonds authorized by voters
- source and adequacy of water supply and wastewater treatment capacity for present and proposed district
- description of proposed facilities both outside and inside district
- legal history of the district
- summary of previous bond issues, if any, and project expenditures
- summary of BANS to be refunded by bond issue
- physical description of the area including soil types, vegetation, drainage, elevation and flood hazard information
- specifics about proposed improvements and detailed plans
- need for the improvements

- feasibility of the project - growth potential of the district
- fiscal stability of the district
- ability of the district to service the bonds

After a careful analysis of all this information, the TDWR will approve the bond issue if it appears to be warranted, although the sum may be reduced. The application is sent to the Attorney General, who must approve all bond issues.

Acceptable Use of Bond Money

Each bond issue is sold for specific purposes and cannot be used for anything else. Typically a large portion of the bond issue pays for costs other than construction. For example, in Harris County Utility District 3, 1/3 of a bond issue of over \$4,000,000 was for non-construction costs:

- 6.0% Engineering
- 1.7% Inspection of construction
- 2.0% Legal and administrative costs
- 1.0% Issuing and selling of bonds
- 3.6% Interest on funds advanced to the WD by the developer
- 16.0% Interest for 2 years at 8% for the bonds
- 3.0% Bond Discount
- 33.3%

The other 2/3 is used for water supply and treatment, sewage collection, treatment and disposal and drainage infrastructure such as ditches and culverts. Land for plants and lift stations and necessary land for drainage easements outside the district may be purchased with bond money, but easement for pipes and drainage inside the district must be provided by the developer.

Although the Attorney General gave an opinion in 1975 that WD bond money could be used for parks and recreation, that office tends to be conservative about approving for such capital intensive facilities as swimming pools and clubhouses. Some small facilities such as a boat ramp or trails have been accepted.

In 1978, the Texas Constitution was amended to permit a WD to issue bonds or to assess its residents to finance fire protection services. Such services may be jointly operated by more than one district. To do either, the district must:

- develop a detailed plan and finance plan
- coordinate the "fire protection plan" with the city

- obtain approval of the voters of the district

- submit the plans to the TDWR for approval

- hold a hearing.

Previously WDs were not permitted to engage in such municipal functions as firefighting. Consequently fireplugs which are necessary to a suburban development were called "high speed flushing valves" necessary to keep water lines clear.

When a WD makes a bond application to TDWR, it may set aside a section as an unrestricted reserve, often a strip along a road which it is hoped will develop commercially. The infrastructure to be constructed with the bond money will eventually serve this area also. TDWR will agree to a plan that leaves a small percentage unplatted as an unrestricted reserve. While there is no limit defined, TDWR would not accept a plan with an undue amount of unrestricted reserve.

Territorial Changes in WDs

A WD may annex territory (which need not be contiguous with the district). There are several reasons why a WD might wish to do so. The owner of land near a WD might petition the district to be annexed in order to share the district's facilities. The WD might need land for a new facility such as a well. The developer might wish to start development on another tract and convince the WD to annex it; if the bond rating of the WD is high, the developer could be exempt from the 30% rule. An annexation also requires a hearing, election, and positive action of the TDWR. Land can be de-annexed if there are no outstanding bonds. WDs can consolidate with the agreement of both districts.

A WD may be dissolved if no bonds are outstanding. The TDWR may unilaterally dissolve a district that has remained inactive for 5 years, but would not do so if the promoters wanted to keep it. Many WDs do remain inactive for a long time after they have been created; they must register and file a financial statement with TDWR each year but need not be audited.

Master Districts

Although developers retain control by using small WDs, efficient and cost effective W/S/D services often require a larger long-range approach. One way to achieve this is through master districts, which are being used with increasing frequency. Master districts can be set up in a variety of ways to provide master W/S facilities for surrounding WDs. It is the policy of TDWR to encourage regional waste treatment facilities; the use of master districts is a step in that direction. Master districts may be used for water supply and treatment, waste treatment, or both. Depending on how they are set up, master facilities can be paid for with revenue bonds, which do not require voter approval, or by user fees paid by the WDs they serve.

If the solution to a drainage problem requires a large-scale plan, this can be tackled through a master drainage district. This type of district would deal with drainage only; its costs would be reimbursed by WDs and other developments within it.

WDs in Cities

Although MUDs can be used as a tool for development within cities, as well as in outlying areas, Houston has never permitted them and has no plans to do so at present. Property owners in WDs within cities must pay the WD taxes used to service the WD bonds, adding another layer of taxes to those already paid to the municipality. WD taxes may be and often are higher than municipal taxes; cities may rebate municipal taxes to some extent to residents who are subject to WD taxes. The 30% rule may be waived for WDs inside cities.

Problems Faced by WDs

MUDs are a developmental tool. They offer a system by which an efficient, well-constructed W/S/D infrastructure can be provided to a new, rapidly developing area, rather than using private wells, septic systems and ineffective drainage. However, when the developer is finished and the resident property owners take over the operation, a variety of problems may appear. The resident board must deal with the maintenance and operation of a fairly complicated engineering system. The original engineering and construction may have been of poor quality; this is often true of older districts that were created before 1971, but it occurs also in more recent WDs. The board is made up of laymen who have other full time jobs; however dedicated they may be, they rarely have the time or the opportunity to develop the expertise to solve the problems caused by originally defective work.

The resident board must depend on hired experts. An attorney, a financial advisor, an engineer, a tax appraiser and collector, a systems operator--all these and occasionally others are needed. WDs and developers are separate entities; both need these experts, but there is a built-in conflict of interest when the same consultants serve both.

- feasibility of the project - growth potential of the district
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It would be foolish for anyone involved in so technical a matter as water districts to forego the use of consultants who are expert in the subject; but all must use a rather limited number of firms. Moreover, the fees of these firms are often quite expensive. Consulting firms often seem to be more appreciative of a developer's problems than those of a struggling WD; nevertheless, the WD may have difficulty changing consultants.

Roads cannot be financed by a WD. They are built by the developer and if not built to specification, the county will not accept them leaving property owners responsible for maintaining them.

The WD structure cannot provide many of the municipal services needed by a suburban population. If the residents wish to have such services as street lighting and cleaning, maintenance of community facilities, and police protection (the county provides minimal protection through the sheriff; many communities contract with the sheriff or constable for extra deputies or hire a private security firm) they may be paid for through a Community Association which assesses each property owner for his share. Deed restrictions originate with the developer; they are a covenant running with the land and enforced by the Community Association.

Annexation of WDs by Houston

When Houston annexes a WD, it inherits the WD's problems; financial, operational, and legal. Mindful of its own existing maintenance difficulties, the city now is much more careful to be sure that WDs are well designed and are compatible with its own systems. Houston still does not inspect construction in a WD, but relies on the engineering firm hired by the developer or WD.

Houston annexes the outstanding bond debt along with the WD. The city attempts to annex only districts in which revenues to the city will be greater than the cost of municipal services and bond debt services. This usually means well developed (at least 75%) WDs whose bonds have been paid off partially. However, WD bonds are inherently more expensive than Houston City bonds because they usually carry a higher interest rate and have a longer life span.

WD Taxes

While most recent WDs have good W/S/D infrastructure, their planning and construction is costly. Millions of dollars worth of bonds are issued. Repayment of the principal does not start for 2 years, and the initial issue is large enough to pay the first 2 years' interest. This gives time for construction and sale of improved property before any money is due on the bonds.

The Houston metropolitan area is unusual in that the tax rate is often higher in suburban areas than it is in the city. Houston's municipal tax rate is \$.84/\$100. The average WD tax rate in Harris County is \$.89/\$100 although it varies widely among districts (from \$.09 to \$2.25) depending on the age of the district and the problems it has encountered.* Furthermore, WDs are reassessed regularly at 100% of market value whereas in many areas of the city assessments are out of date and much lower than true market value.

Inspection of WD Construction

The Houston office of TDWR was established in 1973 to provide on-the-spot inspection of water, sewer, and drainage pipe in WDs. They were given 5 inspectors then; now with many more active WDs, the office has been cut back to 4 inspectors, and most of their time must be spent on inspection of WDs that are petitioning for bond issues.

*If a WD runs into serious difficulties, the developer may go into bankruptcy. It is much less common for a WD to go bankrupt; this has not happened in the Houston area, although it has occurred in other parts of Texas. In the worst case near Houston, the tax rate has reached nearly \$7.00/\$100.

The quality of inspection by a consulting engineering firm depends on the WD, which gets what it is willing to pay for. However, an engineering firm mindful of its reputation would insist upon adequate inspection.

Subsidence

Local WDs must have the permission of the Subsidence District before drawing on subsurface water. Where subsidence is a serious problem, the Subsidence District will not permit the use of wells. A WD dependent on surface water would have to obtain it from one of the few entities which control access to local surface water. Furthermore, surface water is much more expensive to pipe and treat than is well water. Consequently development through WDs is less attractive in areas in which subsurface wells are not allowed.

Drainage

Drainage is a serious problem in Harris and surrounding counties (see Flooding Focus). WDs generally dispose of run-off with efficiency but take no responsibility for the water once it is out of the WD. Large well-cleared drainage ditches emptying into small meandering bayous can cause flooding in downstream areas in the event of a heavy rainfall, even though the downstream areas have been above the flood plan before the upstream development took place. There is a move to demand that WDs control excess run-off, but there is little agreement on how it should be done. Retention or detention ponds have been suggested, but developers are unenthusiastic. The large amount of land required and the present requirement that the developer must grant the land as a drainage easement make this solution expensive for the developer. There is a possibility that if detention ponds are made mandatory for flood control, TDWR would allow their cost to be paid with bond money. If detention ponds are to be effective, they would have to be kept either below capacity or virtually empty to allow for storage during times of flooding. They could however, be used for golf courses or hike-and-bike trails, but not for anything vulnerable to flood damage.

Houston is the only city in Texas whose surrounding territory is being developed primarily by WDs. There are both advantages and disadvantages to the use of WDs for this purpose. Members of the business community feel that as transportation becomes more expensive, development will occur closer to the city and that more development will take place inside the city, especially as Houston improves its own water and sewage infrastructure. Many continue to believe that the laissez-faire philosophy will best accomodate both the advantages and disadvantages.

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- Water District Subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee: Hearing, June 1980
- Harris County Coastal Subordinate District
- Texas Department of Water Resources: Data on Water Districts in Harris and Surrounding Counties
- Other Sources:
- Texas Water Rights Commission: NEW 11, Bond Application, 1974
- Harris County Utility District 12: Engineering Report on Bond Issues #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #19, #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28, #29, #30, #31, #32, #33, #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #39, #40, #41, #42, #43, #44, #45, #46, #47, #48, #49, #50, #51, #52, #53, #54, #55, #56, #57, #58, #59, #60, #61, #62, #63, #64, #65, #66, #67, #68, #69, #70, #71, #72, #73, #74, #75, #76, #77, #78, #79, #80, #81, #82, #83, #84, #85, #86, #87, #88, #89, #90, #91, #92, #93, #94, #95, #96, #97, #98, #99, #100, #101, #102, #103, #104, #105, #106, #107, #108, #109, #110, #111, #112, #113, #114, #115, #116, #117, #118, #119, #120, #121, #122, #123, #124, #125, #126, #127, #128, #129, #130, #131, #132, #133, #134, #135, #136, #137, #138, #139, #140, #141, #142, #143, #144, #145, #146, #147, #148, #149, #150, #151, #152, #153, #154, #155, #156, #157, #158, #159, #160, #161, #162, #163, #164, #165, #166, #167, #168, #169, #170, #171, #172, #173, 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- Red Arnold: General Counsel for Texas Department of Water Resources, Austin
- Bill Rhyder: Representative for District 91, Chairman of House Interim Committee on Water Supply and Waste Disposal in Metropolitan Area, 1974-75
- Bob Bradley: Texas Utility and Water, Cambridge Publishers, Houston
- Jack Carr: Harris County Water District, Texas Department of Water Resources, Austin
- Chas. Gilchrist: Harris County Water District, Houston
- Ray Goodman: Director of Harris County Water District, Texas Department of Water Resources, Austin

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To: Lucy Polter, President, LWV-Dallas
From: LWV-Houston

MAY 6 1966

Re: LWV-Houston request to lobby for its annexation positions at the state level

We appreciate the opportunity you have given us to respond to Kay Irvin's comments. Taking her points in order:

POINT 1: Houston has a policy of encouraging growth in its ETJ through water districts, with the objective of annexing the water districts when they are fully - or almost fully - developed. The City has such a hands-off policy toward planning that it has not even passed a subdivision ordinance and only enforces its subdivision regulations by its ability to withhold permission for the formation of water districts.

At the same time, Houston is a "low-service" city; services provided to residents are minimal, yet it must be stretched to cover newly annexed areas. If areas without water or sewage facilities are annexed, a situation that Houston tries to avoid, the City does not feel that the provision of these services is its responsibility and several such areas within the city limits have gone for years without these facilities.

Other Texas cities are more concerned with planning growth in their ETJs and making sure that the growth will be compatible with orderly annexation.

Therefore we have not felt that annexation is a problem of the same dimensions in other cities and did not consider that other local leagues would be interested in a state study. With hindsight we agree that we should have given them the opportunity to decide for themselves.

POINT 2: The legislation that we would like to support would require that:

- A) Annexation would be preceded by multiple public hearings, at least one of which must be within 3 miles of the affected area. (This can be supported under the LWV position of greater citizen input.)
- B) Plans for municipal services and capital improvements for the area to be annexed must be provided within 60 days. Capital improvements must begin within 2½ years.

These plans will be part of the annexation ordinance. Thus failure to implement them would be cause for de-annexation.

That a city should provide services to its residents seems so reasonable to us that we do not believe that other leagues would object to such amendments to the Municipal Annexation Act. They would not interfere with orderly growth nor would they conflict with other League position; actually some, such as "capabilities for planning and management of land resources" would be enhanced by requiring advance planning.

Our position does not cover consolidation as this is a contractual matter between the two cities involved.

POINT 3: We have not asked for concurrence in the sense that we wish other local leagues to lobby; we are requesting permission for us to do so. However we would like to do more than lobby our own legislators; we would like to lobby other state officials and to testify at hearings, making it clear in all cases that we are speaking only for the Houston League.

In a telephone conversation with the State League, we understood that we would be able to do this. However it is true that this is not clearly spelled out and we are asking the State League to take this question under consideration and to clarify it.

To: Lucy Polter, President, LWV-Dallas
From: LWV-Houston

MAY 6 1964

Re: LWV-Houston request to lobby for its annexation positions at the state level

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MAY 6 1980

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From: LWV-Houston

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Other Texas cities are more concerned with planning growth in their ETJs and making sure that the growth will be compatible with orderly annexation.

Therefore we have not felt that annexation is a problem of the same dimensions in other cities and did not consider that other local leagues would be interested in a state study. With hindsight we agree that we should have given them the opportunity to decide for themselves.

POINT 2: The legislation that we would like to support would require that:

- A) Annexation would be preceded by multiple public hearings, at least one of which must be within 3 miles of the affected area. (This can be supported under the LWV position of greater citizen input.)
- B) Plans for municipal services and capital improvements for the area to be annexed must be provided within 60 days. Capital improvements must begin within 2½ years.

These plans will be part of the annexation ordinance. Thus failure to implement them would be cause for de-annexation.

That a city should provide services to its residents seems so reasonable to us that we do not believe that other leagues would object to such amendments to the Municipal Annexation Act. They would not interfere with orderly growth nor would they conflict with other League position; actually some, such as "capabilities for planning and management of land resources" would be enhanced by requiring advance planning.

Our position does not cover consolidation as this is a contractual matter between the two cities involved.

POINT 3: We have not asked for concurrence in the sense that we wish other local leagues to lobby; we are requesting permission for us to do so. However we would like to do more than lobby our own legislators; we would like to lobby other state officials and to testify at hearings, making it clear in all cases that we are speaking only for the Houston League.

In a telephone conversation with the State League, we understood that we would be able to do this. However it is true that this is not clearly spelled out and we are asking the State League to take this question under consideration and to clarify it.

MAY 6 1981

To: Lucy Polter, President, LWV-Dallas
From: LWV-Houston

Re: LWV-Houston request to lobby for its annexation positions at the state level

We appreciate the opportunity you have given us to respond to Kay Irvin's comments. Taking her points in order:

POINT 1: Houston has a policy of encouraging growth in its ETJ through water districts, with the objective of annexing the water districts when they are fully - or almost fully - developed. The City has such a hands-off policy toward planning that it has not even passed a subdivision ordinance and only enforces its subdivision regulations by its ability to withhold permission for the formation of water districts.

At the same time, Houston is a "low-service" city; services provided to residents are minimal, yet it must be stretched to cover newly annexed areas. If areas without water or sewage facilities are annexed, a situation that Houston tries to avoid, the City does not feel that the provision of these services is its responsibility and several such areas within the city limits have gone for years without these facilities.

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February 29, 1980

STATEMENT BY THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HOUSTON
TO THE TEA COMMITTEE

APR 29 1980

Good morning. I'm Judy Swift. I'm speaking on behalf of the Houston League of Women Voters, a community-based organization with more than 600 members that live in every school district in the greater Houston area. The League is delighted to be here today - not just because we are a citizens' group who believes in open hearings and citizen participation - but because we recognize the vital importance of the work of this committee to the community. The League after years of study and restudy reaffirms its belief that integration is a necessary component of quality education.

The continued growth and vitality of the city and the quality of life it can offer its residents are linked in a variety of ways to the viability of its school districts. Common sense tells us, backed up by many studies, that where people want to live depends to a large degree on the quality of the schools and their confidence in them. What you are doing can surely be of great benefit to both the schools and our city.

We, as residents of greater Houston, have a chance now to set an example for the rest of the country - to once again be a leader as we have in so many other areas. If we can devise a positive, successful, voluntary plan that will attract a number of students, we can ensure that our children need not grow up in an isolated environment; but will have the benefits of a multi-racial, multi-ethnic education to prepare them for the kind of pluralistic society in which they will live and work.

It has been 25 years since the Supreme Court declared separate but equal schools to be inherently unequal. We have a chance now to take a step forward, so that 25 years from now our children will not be grappling with these same issues.

We are one community here. As a community, all of us have a responsibility to and stake in meeting the needs of all of us. We have a chance now to accept this commitment to work for the benefit of the city as a whole and for each of us.

When the League researched successful, voluntary, inter-district programs in other cities, they all seemed to share several characteristics:

1. Any plan, to be accepted by the community, requires citizen participation in both the planning and implementing stages. In particular, a voluntary plan to work depends upon the enthusiasm of its citizens. Where a program has been successful, it has been so because it reflects the goals and interests of the citizens.

A plan developed by and utilizing the expertise of all sections of our community - parents, students, business, labor, teachers and administrators - will have a much better chance to succeed because it will have the commitment of the people it seeks to attract. We urge you to form an advisory committee, made up of a broad base of citizen interests, drawn from all over the community, to be part of the design, implementation and monitoring program.

2. All the plans demonstrate that urban-suburban exchange can work. Each program has an average of 1000 student transfers per year participating.

3. Some kind of equitable financing, either state or federal, must be worked out for tuition and support services. Neither the sending nor the receiving districts should be penalized. It must be to each district's advantage to participate. In Milwaukee, for instance, the districts receive financial incentives from the state for transfers.

4. Transportation must be provided for those students needing it and paid for by the state. Enough busses should be provided and bus routes worked out so that transferring students need not spend excessive amounts of time in travel. To do so will allow families to make the choice to transfer. To not do so would be irresponsible.

5. The League believes that magnet schools are an exciting concept and wisely used can contribute to any program's success. We hope that the kind of magnet schools developed will be designed to attract transfers in the interest of integrated education and will avoid duplication of already existing programs. However, magnet schools are not by themselves enough. Other programs all utilize a non-magnet transfer as well - a kind of majority to minority transfer such as already exists in HUSD. There are some schools along district boundaries that could participate easily in this kind of transfers.

The role the state can play in implementing a successful program is large: it can provide technical assistance in developing desegregation programs and establish a clearinghouse of information. It can provide funding for incentives, for enrichment, for capital improvements, for transportation, for tuition, for grants and for magnet schools.

Drawing upon some of the information the League has gathered, we have prepared for each of you a packet concerning other voluntary programs which we hope will be of value to you. We are not endorsing any particular program at this time because it is our firm belief that any program must evolve from an open process involving all facets of the community and must fit the particular needs of that community. The League wishes to commend you for this important undertaking. Thank you.

APR 7 1980

FOCUS

League of Women Voters of Houston



APRIL 1980
Focus No. 59

CITY GOVERNMENT

A study of the structure and responsiveness of the Houston city government, including analysis of the functions and powers of city council members, the mayor, and administrative aides, with a view to evaluating whether this is the most efficient and responsive form of government for Houston.

INTRODUCTION

A city is made up of a large number of people living relatively close together in a permanent location. This compactness creates a need for different and more comprehensive services for its residents than for those in more rural areas. These include an ample water supply, sewage and garbage disposal facilities, police and fire protection, health services, parks and other recreational facilities, etc.

It is the city government which decides what services shall be provided and determines how they will be allocated and funded. These decisions are the basis for current complaints in Houston, among them uncertain garbage pick-up, improper street maintenance, long response time of police, inadequate bus service, and lack of services in certain areas of the city. Citizens are frustrated when they turn to the city for help in dealing with these complaints. Is the obstacle to handling these problems the structure of city government, the caliber of people in that government, or the tremendous increase of population over a relatively short time? To provide some background for answering that question, this Focus looks at the present Houston city government and how it is organized to respond to the people's need for dependable services.

FORMS OF CITY GOVERNMENT

According to the National Municipal League, government must have an organizational structure designed to guard the democratic process through a system which ensures checks and balances, without resulting in a stalemate. It must be efficient in the sense that it uses its resources economically, is adaptable to changing conditions, and has respect for its constituents.

As with federal and state, city governments are divided into three branches, the administrative or executive, the legislative, and the judicial. Our interest is in the organization of the city government's executive and legislative branches. The legislative branch is the law-making body; the executive branch enforces the laws and administers the affairs of the city.

There are three main forms of city government -- the commission, the council-manager, and the mayor-council. There are others but their use is very limited. Each is an effort to balance the powers and still have an efficient and functional city government.

Commission In the commission form of government, a small group of elected officials serve as the policy-making body with each commissioner functioning as the head of one or more administrative departments (police, fire, tax, legal, etc.). As a group, the commissioners set policy; as individuals, they serve as administrators to see that these policies are carried out. This lack of separation between policy-making and administration is one criticism of this form of government. There is also a lack of coordination and little incentive for cost control.

Council-Manager Under the council-manager plan, the council is the policy-making body. A professional city manager, appointed by the council, is solely responsible for administration.

The manager appoints and dismisses department heads, prepares the budget, and carries out the policies of the council, as well as recommending policies in some areas. In this type of government, the mayor is part-time, sometimes chosen by the city council from among its members, in other cases elected by the voters. In the latter case, the mayor may have limited veto power.

One of the objectives of the council-manager form is to divorce city administration from politics. In theory, this ensures more efficient government, including better provision of services to the residents. Criticisms include difficulty in replacing an ineffective city manager and resentment of his authority by council members.

Mayor-Council

1) Weak Mayor This form of government consists of an elected mayor, an elected city council, and elected department heads. Boards and commissions may also be elected and may have over-lapping terms intended to prevent the achievement of real power by the mayor. This form reflects the traditional fears of executive power and is used today only in small towns.

2) Strong Mayor The mayor-council form of government with a strong mayor is used, with variations, by most large cities in the United States. A council is the policy-making body; a mayor is the strong administrator, with power to appoint and remove most or all department heads, with responsibility for preparation of the budget for council consideration, and in the majority of cases, with veto power. Some strong mayors vote on all matters, others only in case of a tie.

The concentration of power in the mayor is the distinguishing characteristic of this form of government, but can vary substantially from city to city. In many cases the mayor appoints, sometimes subject to consent of council, a chief administrative officer with professional qualifications. The size of the council varies widely, from fewer than 10 to as many as 50. In some cities, the council is elected by district; in others, some or all are elected at large.

The strong mayor system has been criticized on the grounds that the mayor may abuse his substantial powers. Moreover, deadlocks frequently result between the mayor and the council. A favorable argument is that it is important, in large cities, that there be one visible, powerful political leader to whom the people may look for solutions to their municipal problems. If solutions are not forthcoming, the people can reject that leader at the polls. In a strong mayor form, it is usually to the mayor's benefit, as well as that of the citizens, to employ able professionals as administrative officers and department heads.

HISTORY OF GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN HOUSTON

Incorporated in 1837, Houston was first governed by a mayor and 8 aldermen, 2 elected from each of 4 wards. In 1874, the council was enlarged to 12 aldermen from 6 wards.

In 1905, the Texas legislature approved a new charter for the city which provided for a commission form of government. A mayor and 4 commissioners were elected at large for 2 year terms, and each commissioner was responsible for administration of a particular city department. The new government was hailed for its simplicity and efficiency, costs dropped and revenues rose. As Houston grew, however, the number of departments increased to such an extent that the commissioners were no longer able to function as both administrators and legislators.

The 1912 Home Rule Amendment to the state constitution permitted cities of more than 5,000 inhabitants to amend their city charters by majority vote of their citizens without recourse to the legislature. As a home rule city, Houston has the power and authority to enact any laws not in conflict with the general laws or constitution of the state. Over the years, Houston voters have approved many city charter amendments.

Charter changes adopted in 1933 reduced the role of the commissioners to a purely legislative body without administrative authority, and concentrated administrative power in the mayor. The newly designated "councilmen" resisted yielding their positions as department heads and thus commenced a long struggle for authority. Then Mayor Holcombe attempted to minimize friction by appointing councilmen to head the departments they desired.

In 1941, Mayor Pickett was in office only 9 weeks when the local newspaper, The Press, denounced his policies and began a drive for a council-manager form of government. The city council refused to submit a charter amendment to the voters and a citizen petition bearing 16,000 signatures forced the issue to a favorable vote in 1942. Thus the city government was converted to a council-manager form with a part time mayor, 3 at large council members and 5 elected by district. The city manager was appointed by the council and given the administrative responsibility. The mayor presided over the council and represented the city at public functions. During the next 4 years the entire city government was disrupted by growing conflicts between the city manager and the council. This contest for administrative authority made it very difficult for department heads to function, and city services suffered.

In 1946, Oscar Holcombe was re-elected mayor, this time on a platform to eliminate the position of city manager. Soon after his election, the citizens approved charter changes which vested in the mayor the duties of the city manager, resulting in the present strong mayor system. The revised charter provided for 8 council members elected at large.

In 1979, the U.S. Attorney General ruled that annexations by the city had the effect of diluting minority voting strength in violation of the Voting Rights Act and that the city had to elect at least some council members from single member districts to compensate for the dilution. Houston voters approved a charter change that provided for 9 council members elected from single member districts and 5 elected at large. This change in the council became effective January 1, 1980.

PRESENT STRUCTURE OF HOUSTON CITY GOVERNMENT

Houston is the fifth largest city in the country with an estimated population of 1.7 million and total city budgets in excess of one billion dollars. Running the city of Houston is big business. The question is: can the city, with its present structure, respond in an efficient and fair manner to the needs of the public?

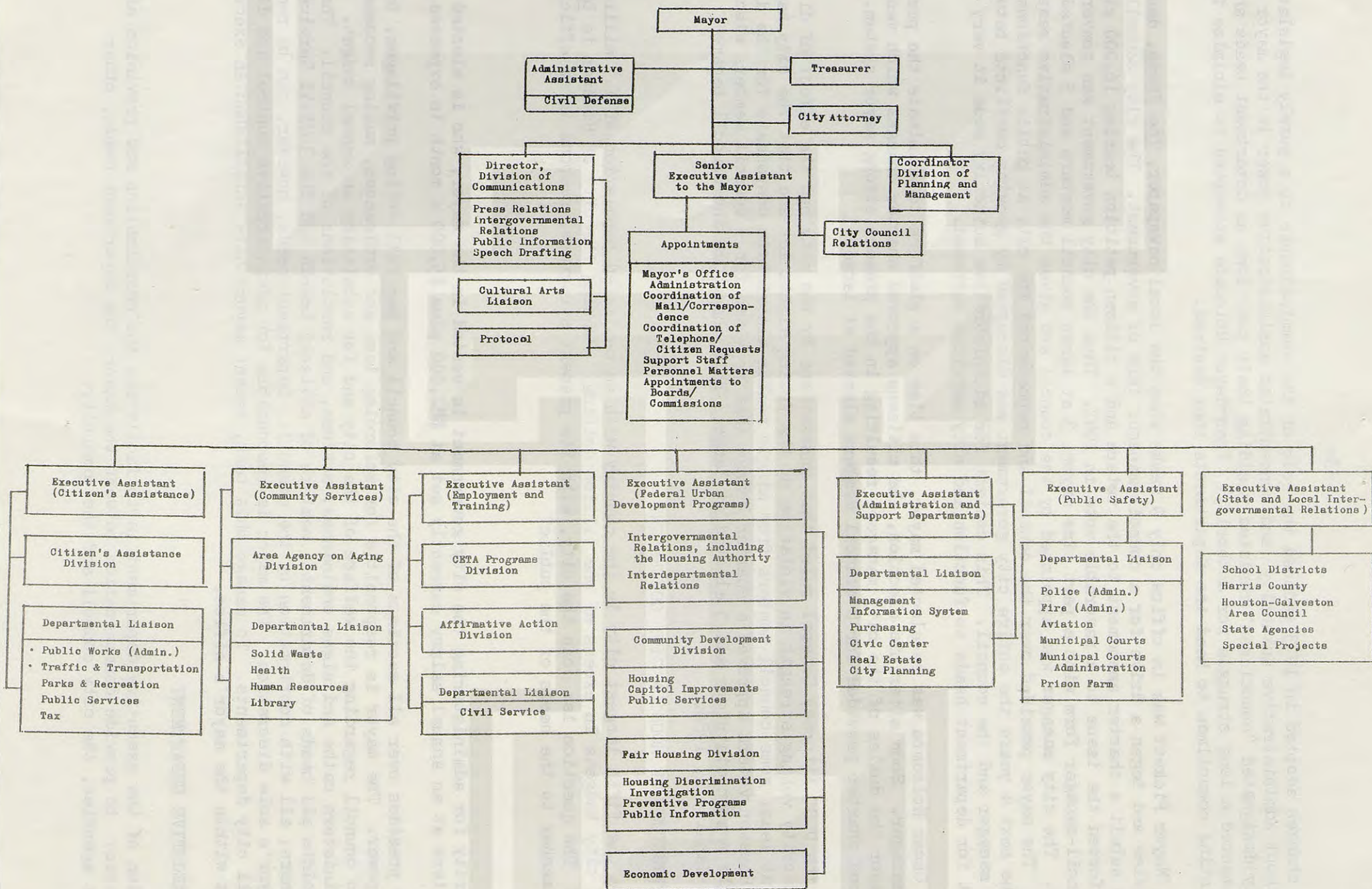
MAYOR

The authority for administering the city government is vested in the mayor, who is elected for a 2 year term at an annual salary currently set at \$82,000 plus \$5,000 a month in expenses.

The mayor presides over all meetings of the city council and has full voting privileges, but not veto power. The mayor is responsible for enforcing laws and ordinances, making recommendations to council regarding the welfare of the city and for submitting an annual budget. The mayor administers oaths and signs ordinances, motions, and resolutions of the council. The mayor appoints all heads of departments, members of advisory boards and the 3 Civil Service Commissioners, all with confirmation by the council. Department heads, however, can be removed at the mayor's sole discretion. The mayor is responsible for administrative control and direction of all city departments. To manage this task, recent mayors have established an executive department within the mayor's office.

MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

The function of the executive department is to facilitate the coordination and provision of city services; to provide communication between the mayor, the department heads, other government agencies, the city council and the community.



At present the executive department consists of 13 senior level staff members, as follows: Senior Executive Assistant; Director of the Division of Communication; Coordinator, Division of Planning and Management; Treasurer; City Attorney; Administrative Assistant; and seven Executive Assistants. Total salaries presently authorized for these are \$304,000. The city charter contains no provision for the executive department or the staff positions within it. Such positions have been authorized by personnel ordinances of the city. No professional or managerial qualifications are specified for members of the executive department. They are considered to be political appointments and are at the discretion of the mayor. Organization of the department is also at the mayor's discretion and recent realignments indicate it is in flux.

The Senior Executive Assistant coordinates mayor/city council relations; assists the mayor in establishment of priorities; identifies areas requiring the mayor's attention; and administers the mayor's office, including the appointments schedule.

The Director of the Division of Communications is the public information officer for the city, and serves as the mayor's chief speech writer. A protocol officer and an officer of cultural arts liaison are on the staff of the communications director.

The Coordinator, Division of Planning and Management reviews the budget and monitors various city departments, especially in the realm of future planning.

The Treasurer prepares the annual budget for the mayor's consideration (an assignment shared with the Division of Planning and Management) and administers the budget after its approval by council.

The City Attorney heads the legal department which provides legal advice to and representation for the mayor, city council, department heads, and city boards and commissions. The legal department drafts ordinances, reviews those drafted by others to determine if they are consistent with the city charter, and checks the wording of resolutions.

The Administrative Assistant acts as liaison with all elected officials in the state and is in charge of civil defense.

Executive Assistants provide communication between the mayor and the council, city departments and citizens. Their responsibilities are:

Citizens Assistance deals with requests and complaints regarding the physical aspects of city operations, e. g. street maintenance, drainage, and building code enforcement, and acts as liaison between the public and the responsible departments.

Community Services coordinates and assists in developing community service programs specifically those concerning solid waste, health, human resources, libraries and the aging.

Employment and Training coordinates agencies dealing with employment programs, including Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (C.E.T.A.) programs, the Affirmative Action Division, and the Civil Service Department.

Federal Urban Development works closely with federal urban programs and with related departments such as the Community Development Division. The executive assistant chairs the "Interdepartmental Council" and works with federal urban grant programs. An Economic Development Division of the mayor's office has recently been created to monitor federal programs.

Administrative and Support is liaison to several administrative and support departments such as Management Information Services, Purchasing, City Planning and Real Estate. The executive assistant oversees operation of the Civic Center.

Public Safety is liaison to the city's police, fire and aviation department, municipal courts and municipal court administration, and the prison farm.

State and Local Intergovernmental Relations coordinates community planning between the city and the school districts, Harris County, Houston-Galveston Area Council, state agencies and special projects.

The executive staff and assistants serve to extend the administrative capability of the mayor, who cannot possibly confer with 34 departments on a day-to-day basis. The executive assistants advise the mayor on operations within the various departments and facilitate the flow of information between the mayor and the departments.

It is one thing to describe the mechanics of a system and quite another to determine how it actually works. To explore this, the League's City Government Committee interviewed city council members, city personnel, the mayor and community leaders. In theory, each department head reports regularly to the executive assistant who, in turn, reports to the Senior Executive Assistant who then reports to the mayor. The police and fire chiefs are exceptions and report directly to the mayor. Weekly meetings of all executive assistants and the senior executive assistant are to provide an overall picture of the city's operations and to recommend priorities. In practice, regular meetings fail to occur; in emergencies department heads by-pass the executive assistants; and when the system does work as designed, delay may result. Executive assistants and department heads alike complain of lack of access to the mayor. Nevertheless, the former, at least, approve of the strong mayor form and believe it can work for Houston with the mayor being comparable to a city manager. Many point out that with the mayor as manager and chief elected official, accountability to the electorate is enhanced.

CITY COUNCIL

Houston has 14 council members, 5 elected at large and 9 from single member districts, designated A through I. A candidate for a district seat must reside within the particular district and be elected by voters in that district.

Council members serve a 2 year term and at present receive a salary of approximately \$21,000. The charter specifies that council members are not required to devote full time to the duties of their office.

The city council is empowered by the charter to enact all ordinances necessary to protect and promote good government order, and to provide for the general welfare of the city and its inhabitants. By ordinance, the council may establish any city department, fix salaries or abolish an office not created by charter. The council confirms all appointments of department heads, advisory board heads, and Civil Service Commissioners. By a majority vote, council passes certain resolutions, ordinances, and motions. The council authorizes the issuance of bonds for permanent improvements, appropriates bond funds and awards contracts, and determines public utility rates. The council can lease or dispose of city-owned real estate, and levy assessments against property. Some council members are appointed by the mayor to serve on the city's Board of Appraisal. Certain ordinances provide for appeals from decisions of various appointed officials to the council. One of the council's most significant prerogatives is consideration and adoption of the budget. It may amend, increase, decrease, or omit items from the budget submitted by the mayor.

Any member of the public may, by appointment, appear before council, on Wednesday morning, to express concerns, complaints or suggestions. The first order of council business on Wednesday afternoon, known as "taking up the book", is to discuss and act on such appearances either by referring the matter to the appropriate department, preparing ordinances, directing it to the attention of the mayor, or establishing a committee to further consider the matter. Wednesday afternoon also serves as "pop off session" where council members raise matters important to them but which do not appear on the agenda.

CONTROLLER

The only other elected official in Houston is the controller, who serves a 2 year term. The controller "is responsible for managing, conducting, and supervision of the financial affairs of the city". The controller keeps the books on all monies and/or appropriations received and disbursed, and maintains separate accounts for all city departments. The controller signs, with the mayor, all orders for payment of city funds, informs the city council and mayor of the city's anticipated income, and assists the mayor in preparing the budget. The controller supervises the issuance and servicing of all general obligation bonds and issues a report at the end of the fiscal year on all financial transactions.

Based on the League's committee's interviews, it is safe to conclude that opinion on the merits of a strong mayor/council system differed. Some expressed the opinion that council members need more administrative authority, greater budget control and the authority to fire department heads. Council members expressed frustration in their attempts to perform the duties granted them by the charter, e. g., while council may propose ordinances, it is extremely difficult to pass any ordinance not proposed by the mayor. Further, as all ordinances must be approved by the legal department, those not proposed by the mayor often "get lost in legal".

Citizens generally take their complaints to council members; however, council members cannot give directions to department heads. In fact, council members do talk directly to department heads, but the correct channel is through the administrative assistants in the mayor's office. Many council members believe better results would be achieved if they could personally follow through on citizen complaints. On the other hand, some felt this could lead to many "little" mayors and no clear chain of command or responsibility.

Frustration was expressed regarding council's input to the budget process. While council has extensive powers in terms of budget adoption, they find it extremely difficult to change the budget once presented due, in part, to lack of time or staff to do the research which would justify amending the budget.

Many council members spend full time on their legislative duties and feel the job should be full time. Others feel that the council salary must be augmented by other income and would prefer to hire aides. On the other hand, some felt council corresponds to a board of directors and should serve full time at a commensurate salary rather than have appointed aides making decisions for the citizens. Still others believe the expanded council eliminates the need to serve full time.

The merits of a system which finds most department heads and executive assistants being political appointments prompted varying responses ranging from questions regarding the need for some specific qualifications to concerns that efficient government requires continuity in personnel.

Turning to matters of council structure, many officials are fearful of the expanded council, elected partly by district, and find it reminiscent of past ward systems; others believe that small districts will afford better representation.

IN CONCLUSION

Houston has changed dramatically since the Allen brothers founded the city in 1836. It has experimented with most of the forms of city government. Yet, the efficiency of the present structure has been questioned. Some reply that structure is not the problem but rather the uncontrolled growth and lack of comprehensive, integrated planning.

Would changes in the structure of the city government enhance the capacity of the city to do its job? Should Houston have a city manager? A mayor with veto power? A mayor with no vote on the council? Should council members have more power? Administrative power? Larger staff?

For the past few months Houston has been governed by a mayor and an expanded city council which is designed to increase the responsiveness of the government to all the citizens of Houston. Will this new council design be sufficient to achieve Houston's governmental goals? Are other changes necessary?

It has been observed that "Americans show an innate tendency to 'tinker' -- be it with their machines or their governmental arrangements." This may be reflected in a history of changes in local government, to meet specific demands and needs at given points in time.

It is well to remember the perhaps obvious suggestion that government is only as good as the people elected to govern.

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The Wall Street Journal
The Houston Post
The Houston Chronicle

Interviews with the following:

Jim McConn, Mayor of Houston
Louie Welch, President, Chamber of Commerce
Kathy Whitmire, Controller
Gene Gatlin, Senior Executive Assistant to the Mayor
John Castillo, Executive Assistant, Employment and Training
Bob Heard, Executive Assistant, Public Safety
James Manley, Executive Assistant, Citizen's Assistant
Florence Neumeyer, Executive Assistant, State and Local Intergovernmental Relations
Marsha Wayne, Executive Assistant, Administrative and Support Departments
Connie Williams, Executive Assistant, Federal Urban Development Programs
Homer Ford, City Council
Larry McKaskle, City Council
Frank Mancuso, City Council
Frank Mann, City Council

Judson Robinson, Jr., City Council
James Westmoreland, City Council
Dr. Louis Stern, Director, Economics Department, Institute of Urban Studies, University
of Houston
Dan Jones, Public Relations, Public Works Department
Jack McDaniel, Director, Department of Solid Waste

(All titles are as of date of the interview).

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LWR Houston Texas
614 Harold

Program
By-Laws

LWV PROGRAM 1976-77: IN SUMMATION

(For details of program, see following pages where it is divided into national, state, and local program study and action.)

77006

AUG 5 1976

HUMAN RESOURCES, Study and Action Related to:

Education)
Employment)-- Equal Access to
Housing)
ERA Ratification
Income Assistance
Combating Poverty (Welfare)
Revenue Sharing
Health Care
Child Care

NATURAL RESOURCES, Study and Action Related to:

Air Quality
Water: Quality, Conservation, and Development
Land Use: Conservation, Development, Parks and Recreation (and Housing, see HR above)
Solid Waste
Mass Transit
Comprehensive Planning for Houston and Harris County and at Regional and State Levels
Energy

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, Study and Action Related to:

Development
Trade
United Nations

GOVERNMENT, Study and Action Related to:

Campaign Financing
Citizen Rights
Voting Rights
Congress
Presidency
Reapportionment
Self-government and Voting Representation for D.C.
Financing State Government
Financing Local Government
Texas Constitutional Revision
State Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Reform
Flexible structures, adequate powers at local government level
Houston City Charter
Administration of Justice (also related to HR above)
Libraries (also related to HR above)

} (under "Local, Miscellaneous")

*NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR STUDY AND ACTION 1976-78

FOCUS ON INTERRELATIONSHIPS:

Human Resources

Equal Access to:

Education

Employment

Housing

ERA Ratification

Income Assistance

Promote social justice by securing equal rights for all and combating discrimination and poverty.

Natural Resources

Air

Land

Solid Waste

Water

Energy

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the wise use of resources in the public interest.

Evaluate sources of energy and the government's role in meeting future needs.

International Relations

Development

Trade

United Nations

Promote peace in an interdependent world through cooperation with other nations and the strengthening of international organization.

Reexamine the UN system with emphasis on relations between developed and developing countries and their implications for U.S. policy.

Government

Campaign Financing

Citizen Rights

Congress

Presidency

Reapportionment

Self-government and Voting

Representation for D.C.

Cities/Urban Crisis

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive to all citizens and protects individual liberties established under the Constitution.

Thematic treatment to develop urban policy by (a) examining present national League positions and (b) studying how government programs & policies affect urban problems.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs and performance must meet these criteria:

- competent personnel with clear responsibilities,
- coordination among agencies and levels of government,
- adequate financing,
- effective enforcement, and
- well-defined channels for citizen input and review.

* Expanded statements on national program are available in the League publication #521--Documents: Background on National League Program 1974-76 and in your red, white and blue Spring '76 national Voter.

*STATE PROGRAM FOR 1976-78

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Focus on practices in administering the judicial process, including both adult and juvenile justice.

FINANCING STATE GOVERNMENT

Support of an equitable system of taxation which assures an adequate revenue, is easily administered, and is consistent with economic and social goals.

Action to achieve fiscal measures to equalize educational opportunity in Texas and to attain constitutional provisions for flexibility within a coordinated financial structure.

Focus on revenue distribution and governance.

VOTING RIGHTS

Action to protect the right to vote of every citizen by improving the election, administration, procedures, and laws.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Action to achieve the conservation and judicious development of land and water resources, the improvement of water and air quality, and the conservation of energy, and to support the development of public transportation in Texas.

TEXAS CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION

Action to achieve revision of the Texas constitution.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Action to achieve equal educational opportunity and combat poverty and discrimination.

MODERNIZATION OF STATE GOVERNMENT

Support of executive, legislative, and judicial reform.

STATE-LOCAL RELATIONS

Support of more flexible structures and adequate powers at the local level, comprehensive regional and state planning.

* Full positions available in Fall from State office.

LOCAL PROGRAM FOR STUDY AND ACTION 1976-77

(To focus on local programs inter-relationships as LWV-US has done at the national level, local items are also grouped under four major headings.)

HUMAN RESOURCES

Health Care (New Item): Study of the adequacy and availability of health care in the Houston League area.

Revenue Sharing: Support of measures to encourage governmental determination of the total needs of the community and to implement effective citizen participation in the revenue sharing allocation process, especially in the early stages.

The government's main consideration in determining the areas in which General Revenue Sharing funds are spent should be:

- *establish the needs of our community,
- *coordinate the General Revenue Sharing budget with other governmental budgets,
- *implement citizen input in the early stages of the process.

A vehicle for citizen participation would provide for communication between government officials and citizens in which citizens have sufficient access to information, and their recommendations are fairly weighed. The participation should be representative of the community, with a broad base of support ensured by publicity from the government and the media. If the vehicle provides for government officials to appoint participants, this should be done without regard to partisan politics.

Evaluate the concept and performance in Houston and Harris County.

Education-HISD: Evaluate the responsiveness and accountability of the Houston Independent School District.

Support integration as integral to quality education and the belief that all children should have equal access to a quality education which includes:

- *providing opportunities for our children to learn to function in our pluralistic community,
- *offering and encouraging the achievement of academic skills which enable each individual child to function at his/her highest potential,
- *providing superior programs and teaching which take into account the needs of the individual child,
- *and offering superior courses in college preparatory and occupational-vocational training.

To achieve these ends, the Houston League supports these tools:

- *providing free transportation as an integrative tool for those requesting it,
- *acting to achieve student transfer policies which preserve existing integration but increase integration in non-integrated schools,
- *closing under-utilized schools,

- *building new schools with flexible capabilities,
- *renting alternative facilities in locations to facilitate integration,
- *urging the courts to mandate the use of several integration techniques at the same time,
- *redrawing school attendance zones,
- *pushing residential integration,
- *magnet-alternative schools, and
- *combinations of the above.

Education-SBISD: Support of measures to improve the responsiveness of the SBISD to all the members of the district by:

- *expanding existing avenues of communication by publicizing: (a) district publications which are available; (b) factual program evaluation data; (c) and meeting times and places of citizen committees and of all board meetings in local newspapers;
- *providing specific opportunities for dialogue such as: (a) board meetings at which either a written or verbal response be given to the citizen then or after the meetings, and (b) community meetings which may be initiated by the Board where citizens could be heard and answered by the Board;
- *encouraging more citizen input into the decision-making process through (a) vehicles which are ongoing and can speak on any issue, such as Parent Advisory Committees at each school; (b) expanded use of citizen committees which are broadly representative of the community both geographically and ideologically; (c) workshops, such as a budget workshop, at which citizens can be informed in depth about an aspect of the district's operation with emphasis on concurrent communication and (d) election procedures which would insure greater accountability of election officials.

Support of integrative measures as under Education-HISD.

Housing (also NR-Land Use): Support of equal opportunities in housing for all Houstonians with emphasis on additional well-managed, low-cost housing.

Support of the principles of the Model Cities program as a means to achieve improvement of the environmental and physical conditions of the community.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Air: Support of measures leading to improvement of air quality in Houston, with emphasis on enforcement. Specifically, this includes:

- *stricter enforcement of local legislation, regulations, and standards;
- *eliminating variances in the near future;
- *more stringent local legislation, regulations, and standards;
- *specific local legislation with regard to the following: requiring new industrial plans and public buildings to include antipollution equipment before they are permitted to operate; requiring industry to store its pollutants at times when pollution is a health hazard, and
- *a regional approach to the problem of air pollution.

Solid Waste: Support of long-range solid waste planning with emphasis on recycling and development of new technology. Effective land use principles and control of air and water pollution are vital considerations. Specifically this includes:

- *separation of solid waste at the source;
- *judicious use of incineration and land fills;
- *regional planning;
- *promotion of public education efforts;
- *citizen participation in solid waste planning.

Evaluate the quality of drinking water.

Land Use-Parks and Recreation: Support of measures to insure acquisition, maintenance and development of public lands in the Houston area including:

- *comprehensive planning for public lands in Harris County to meet National Parks and Recreation Association standards;
- *adequate funding;
- *adoption of an objective priority planning policy;
- *investigation of legal ordinances to facilitate park land acquisition, and contribution of land and money by developers;
- *maximum cooperation and coordination of park services and planning between city and county;
- *maximum use of schools and churches for program development;
- *acquisition of flood plain lands for recreational purposes, and
- *opposition to long-term private leases on public lands.

Mass Transit: Support of a well-balanced, multi-mode, publicly-owned, non-polluting mass transit system with low fares.

Support of comprehensive transportation planning now to determine the transit needs of the entire community--such as the best use of land and access to employment, cultural, civic, medical, educational, and other public facilities.

Support of public participation, especially in the planning stages of any mass transit system, as essential.

Comprehensive Planning: Support (new Position) of planning for the unincorporated areas of Harris County through:

- *the development of goals and priorities for Harris County through assessing the needs of the total community, utilizing maximum public participation;
- *central planning coordination and implementation tools for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;
- *development of a uniform performance building code for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;
- *feasibility studies for the consolidation of planning services between municipalities and Harris County, and
- *increased utilization by Harris County of the planning services of the Houston-Galveston Area Council and development by H-GAC of practical services that reflect the planning needs of Harris County.

Support of the development and adoption of a long-range, flexible, constantly updated comprehensive plan for Houston, one which is developed with adequate public input.

To this end, LWV-H supports:

- *the coordination and centralization of the planning process in Houston, with the strengthening of a central planning authority;
- *a broad-based planning commission which would include representatives of varying occupational backgrounds;
- *the development of goals, objectives, and priorities for Houston through a process which assures maximum public participation;
- *a comprehensive plan which includes plans for economic, social, and environmental, as well as physical development;
- *public involvement at the neighborhood level in the planning process, and public hearings on proposed plans;
- *an explanation by City Council to the public as to why any given plan is or is not adopted.

GOVERNMENT

Financing Houston City Government: Support of a budget process which takes into account long-range planning, budget evaluation and encourages public input.

Specifically this includes support of:

- *a performance type budget which reflects the monies raised by the city and received from other levels of government;
- *a budget process regulated by a budget calendar providing for adequate timing for public study and input with each step, with the calendar including specific dates for the submission of each department's budget request, departmental hearings, submission to Council, public hearings, and formal adoption of the budget;
- *availability of the proposed budget along with the Personnel Book to the public at the same time as it is given to Council, ~~and~~
- *departmental hearings ~~open to the public~~; and
- *publication of budget summaries in the newspapers.

Support of a Capital Improvement Budget. This budget, whether included in the operating budget or not, should be considered at the same time.

Study of taxation and other revenue sources for the City of Houston.

City Charter: Study of the terms of city councilmen.

Support of a complete revision of the Houston City Charter with emphasis on the election of some councilmen by district.

MISCELLANEOUS

Administration of Justice (also HUMAN RESOURCES, GOVERNMENT): Support of the removal of certain areas of human behavior from criminal prosecution: sexual activity between legally competent, consenting adults, gambling, adult access to pornography, use of alcohol.

Support of the mandatory availability of medical treatment for drug abusers in jail.

Support of measures for rehabilitation of offenders which would include:

- *punishment or penalties that fit the crime;
- *more equitable punishment or penalties;
- *alternative arrangements to placement of juveniles in state schools which would include small, family-type units close to home with effective supervision and qualified personnel;
- *provisions for pre-trial release such as are incorporated in the present Harris County Pretrial Release Program (1974);
- *rehabilitation facilities in Harris County Jail which would include counseling and listening services, testing, educational opportunities such as literacy and GED programs, training in marketable skills, and recreation.

Libraries (also HR, GOVERNMENT): Support of measures to insure adequate library facilities for Houston area residents, including merger of city and county library systems and the regional library concept.

LWV of Texas
June, 1976
I. D. 3.
Administration
Board-Local

TO: State Board
FROM: Helen Hunter & Jan Wilbur
RE: Leadership Development Workshop--Houston, June 14

Last year Diana C., Jane, Jan & I did the "squeezed agenda" 5-hour workshop for Houston. This year they asked for a slightly different agenda. They know how to pick priorities and plan strategy. We planned an agenda that included the "games"--time, member shut-out, joining the dots, & hollow squares. Then Leadership Management--this included Force Field analysis, Transferring Skills; the Building Block concept; Career Development; Spotting Leaders; Functions and Goals of Leaders; "For Fun"; and The Chaste and the Chased--except we changed this portion. We had role play with problem solving; 5 persons acting as president using 5 typical styles of leadership and stopped there. The last 30 minutes for discussion of the following questions:

- How did each president feel about the style she played?
- How did you react to each style?
- In reviewing your recent leadership behavior, which style have you chosen most frequently?
- Are you still using the same style of leadership that you used 2 or 3 years ago?
- Do you see a change in your leaders' styles?
- What styles do you think your leaders use most frequently?
- When you are a member of a group, rather than the leader, what leadership behavior makes you strive to do your best?

EVALUATION BY HOUSTON LEAGUE

League Resume "B"--leave out--do your own rather than someone else's. Role play along with the Chaste and Chased--small group participation with observers and delegators, etc.,--some who were present last year said they missed this part. Puzzle very good motivational--participants respond too. Evaluate their own actions and reactions. Styles of leadership very good. Bring more people into participation with Chaste and Chased (delegation and observing) Liked all games Liked the 30 minutes analyzing their own and each other's leadership styles in an open discussion Retreat setting might be better The most favorable comments were from new board members who were not involved in the workshop last year.

FEB 25 1976

Houston

February 24, 1976

Madeline Appel
[REDACTED]

Dear Madeline:

I trust you have had conversation with Helen or Jane after Feb. 11 and our discussion of LWV-Houston creating its own education fund. I had to leave some of my materials in Austin since I was not returning directly home. In fact, my TEF Handbook and notes from that meeting must be in the materials I left.

However, I was asked to convey to you the gist of the discussion:

- . it's your (Houston's) decision to make. We understand your frustration about getting projects in for approval under our deadlines. I believe we can expedite matters, however, by committee approval between Trustee meetings; I understand this is how national works on LL trust fund accounts.

- . our reservations--

- . it would reduce TEF income: the 5% overhead that is charged on LL trust accounts, and the interest that is accrued;

- . if several LLs set up their own trust funds, we would need to reconsider the amount of money that is charged (1/4 in next year's budget) to TEF activities. However, if we use a little imagination, I think we can justify 1/4 of our activities as educational, citizen information and voters service activities.

- . if you do launch into this venture, seriously consider retaining legal counsel. There is some body of expertise built up on the TEF board over a period of years--still there is much we do not know--and our advise would be-- to seek counsel.

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. In 1972, this policy was adopted by TEF: "that all funds recovered by local Leagues over and above the local League expense of a project shall be returned to the TEF for the unrestrained use of the TEF." I can't remember any projects that have made money--but it is a consideration.

If you do decide to set up your own Fund, we will be happy to share any documents in the state office or any expertise that we may have acquired over the past few years.

I'm sure it's not an easy decision to make--but I wish you well--whichever route you take.

Best wishes,

Betty Anderson
Chairwoman

cc: ✓SO
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DEC 10 1973

TEXAS

DEC 10 1973

The League of Women Voters of the United States

December 5, 1973

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LUCY WILSON BENSON

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Margaret Walker
Westfield, New Jersey

Executive Director

Peggy Lampl

Mrs. Laura Keever, President
League of Women Voters of Houston

Dear Laura:

When I joined the League, executive committees were a "no no", the reason being the concept of total board responsibility for all decisions. The idea was to keep the League from being run or dominated by a small, self-perpetuating elite group at the top. Whether this system worked as intended is of course, moot.

It was designed for a time when events moved much slower and allowed time for the board to come together to discuss a problem before a decision was made. I don't think this was possible at the time I joined the League 25 years ago. It certainly isn't possible now. Then, too, the TBR concept got misconstrued in many ways. We understand its ramifications and applications much better now.

I cannot remember exactly which large Leagues operate with an executive committee. I just know most do, as do most large state Leagues and of course, the national board. Leagues that have a geographical/communication problem, e.g. Los Angeles (it costs to telephone across town), New York City, Miami, Montgomery County, Maryland, all use the executive committee for interim decision-making.

Our experience is that executive committees do best when the composition is flexible, i.e., the committee isn't always composed of the officers. More often than not it consists of certain portfolios: President, a vice-president (or more), public relations, treasurer. This kind of committee usually makes only those decisions that affect the on-going administrative operation of the League as an organizational entity. Decisions involving Program action always include the relevant Program chairman, plus the Action chairman (if there is one). If it is a voters service matter, obviously she would participate in the decision.

The inclusion of the public relations chairman and the Treasurer is obvious since visibility and money are so inextricably woven into all decisions. Most decisions cost money. The internal and the external impact of a decision need the judgment of the public relations people.

Decisions made by an executive committee, regardless of composition are always explained, discussed and affirmed (or rescinded) by the total board at its very next meeting. Creation and composition of the executive committee is also a board function. You will find that professional parliamentarians are not in agreement as to the composition, function, power, and authority of executive committees. An executive committee can serve as a protection against unilateral decisions by the president, but more important it seems to me, is the protection it provides the president. I have yet to see the League president at any level who is capable of making all decisions by herself. I have no fear of this, but League presidents need back-up in their decision-making, if for no other reason than to provide strength in numbers.

Leaders must lead, must make decisions. At the same time there must be a mechanism which provides input into the decision-making process from peers as well as from members. It seems to me that an executive committee provides a device for quick decisions that can subsequently be reviewed by a larger peer group, representative of the membership.

I urge the Houston League to create and use a core executive committee for interim housekeeping decisions. This committee could then be supplemented by the necessary Program chairman and Action chairman when a decision is needed quickly on Program. The decisions then should be reviewed and formally approved by the board at its next regular meeting. At every national board meeting we approve the interim actions taken by various departments, e.g., Organization, Action, EF grants. The present executive committee at the national level consists of: President, three Vice-Presidents (EF division/Bradley, Special Research and Projects/Waterman, EQ and PR/Clusen), Treasurer, Organization. In the previous biennium I was a V.P. and Organization; Connie Rabinowitz was P.R. but not a V.P. and so was included. I do not know what the system will be in the next biennium, but I'm sure the combination will change to some extent. I wouldn't rule out the possibility of having someone on the committee regardless of portfolio, who has a long and varied background, or with whom the President feels comfortable and whose judgment she values and trusts.

Area Leagues - I urge you to re-read the national material on this subject (state and local handbooks). The manner in which area Leagues function varies with the kind of geography the League has. To my knowledge, almost without exception, most area Leagues have not fully utilized or exploited their area basis of organization to the best advantage - both for members and administratively.

Your bylaw provision relative to the adoption of program items by members in separate governmental jurisdictions is fine. I would suggest eliminating the words "of concurrence" in the last sentence since I think it is redundant as well as confusing. At this moment, I do not recall how many governmental subdivisions the Houston League encompasses, but I would guess you include Bellaire, West University Place, and some of those villages in the Memorial Drive area.

Let's assume Houston League members living in Bellaire want to study the possibilities for having a home rule Charter government. According to your bylaws, these members would submit this to the Houston board which would then propose this item as part of the total local Program. Other jurisdictional proposals would also be part of the package. During the annual meeting, a time would

be allowed for the members of these jurisdictions to meet separately (including Houston members to discuss their items), to discuss and formally adopt their own items. In a plenary session following the jurisdictional small meetings, all the items would be adopted.

There should be someone on the Houston board who oversees the coordinator of all these various "sub-items," who helps organizationally with problems the groups encounter. Each sub-jurisdictional group is responsible for organizing the study, researching and producing the materials, scheduling the kind, type, time and place for member involvement in becoming informed, recommend a decision-making procedure to the board. All this is done under the direction and supervision of the Houston board. The point of contact between the board and the jurisdictional group is the coordinator I spoke of.

Once the members have reached a decision on the item (notice I do not use the word consensus, in order to allow for maximum choice in the way the decision is made), the formal position is phrased and approved by the Houston board. From this point on, it is the responsibility of the jurisdictional group to watch for Action opportunities and formulate an overall action plan for the item. This action plan must be approved by the Houston board, i.e., the overall strategy is approved and then the day-to-day decisions are left to the jurisdictional group. Action is taken in the name of the members of the Houston League living in Bellaire etc. Spokesmen always are from this group. Rarely would the Houston president appear before the city council of a sub-jurisdictional group. All this action must be supervised by the Houston board in some way - by that coordinator, by the Action chairman, etc. Obviously, the Houston president has to be cognizant of what a group is doing, but she does not have to be their spokesman on all occasions.

There is no reason why a Houston position could not be concurred in by a sub-jurisdiction, e.g., desirability of home rule and then the group move immediately to action. The requirement is that members of the jurisdiction be informed of the background material that formed the basis of the Houston position. In other words, positions reached by one jurisdiction should be applicable horizontally to other jurisdictions without going thru the member adoption, study, and decision-making phase. The only "study" needed is the applicability and relevancy of the position to the "local" situation. This is the same idea as the vertical application we are now using re national and state program. For example, if the city council of Bellaire is not apportioned according to one citizen, one vote, Bellaire League members could formulate an action plan to bring this about without formal adoption, study, decision. They would have the help, approval, and supervision of the Houston board in formulating their action plan and carrying it out.

The whole concept of the area basis of organization was not geographical, but rather to provide League members living in different governmental jurisdictions with Opportunities to affect changes in their local communities while sharing a joint overall board with other small communities. It is not necessary, nor was it ever intended, that members living in other jurisdictions participate in the study, decision, action of a particular group. They all participate together on items that affect all of them. The board should work to make it possible for these jurisdictional members to accomplish what they wish. The structure (bylaws) and the procedure I've described permit this. This is one of the true meanings of a grass-roots organization.

As I mentioned to you on my last visit, the Houston board could allow Houston city units to have more autonomy in choosing purely "local" problems to work on, e.g., more street lights in a given neighborhood, a park or recreational area, pedestrian and bicycle traffic safety, etc. These units could also develop an action plan for their "interest" and act to get it done - all with the oversight of the Houston board. Just as the national and state boards provide and encourage local autonomy, local initiative, local problem solving by local Leagues, why can't local League boards extend the same process to groups within its organizational basis? The area concept does this. You may want to develop some action guidelines for your sub-jurisdictions.

Be sure everybody knows, understands, and interprets the "ground-rules" ahead of time - and then trust them. This isn't to say there won't be problems, but these will be problems of "doing" rather than of doing nothing. It is certainly more exciting for the individual member and provides many more opportunities for her involvement which is what we continually give lip service to, but do nothing about procedurally because we are afraid - of I don't know what.

Well - enough for the moment. I may be in Houston early in 1974 for a few days of medical checkups. If so, I'll be in touch.

Regards

Gwen Murphree
Organization Chairman

GM:hl

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE UNITED STATES
1730 M STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

State

APR 7 1972

April 4, 1972

Mrs. Don Berthelson, President
League of Women Voters of Houston
[REDACTED]

Dear Mrs. Berthelson:

The national Board has granted permission to the League of Women Voters of Houston to enlarge its basis of organization as outlined on your application and so clearly delineated on the attached map. The data presented was sufficient for the purpose of authorizing the change.

Since there is no name change, we will enter the change in the basic documents of the Houston League without awaiting any formal Houston League vote.

You have bitten off quite a chunk of territory, but if anybody can service so much geography, we are sure Houston can.

With best wishes,

Mrs. Harold E. Murphree, Jr.
Vice President - Organization

C
O
P
Y

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January 26, 1972

Mrs. Edmund Gehan
[REDACTED]

Dear Mrs. Gehan:

Ruth Joor has asked us to send you information concerning the procedure to follow for a local League to become an Area League.

We are enclosing herewith "Guidelines for changing the community basis of organization of a local League", which will give you all the information you need for the Houston application.

As for a deadline, you will note in Gwen Murphree's communique of November 15, copy enclosed, she asks that we submit our organizational matters to national as soon as possible due to the national convention. Therefore, we would suggest you send in your request for area status to the state Board by February 24, so that we may circularize the state Board and then we can pass our recommendation on to the national office. With a little bit of luck, you will have your answer in time for your Annual Meeting in May.

If we can be of any further help, please call on us.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Frank W. Gallaher,
Executive Secretary

encl. 2.

cc: Joor

Bc: Murphree



March 14, 1972

Mrs. Harold P. Murphree, Jr.
Organization Vice President
League of Women Voters of the U.S.
1730 M Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Gwen:

Attached you will find the application for change of community basis of the League of Women Voters of Houston. The League of Women Voters of Texas feels that servicing of the area by the Houston League is the most effective manner of bringing League to the area delineated on the map.

You will note that the boundaries have been drawn carefully to exclude the territory of existing Leagues, so that no conflicts should arise. The state Board is concerned that many of these small communities may petition for organization of their own League, and are anxious to avoid this development, if possible. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the League of Women Voters of Texas that this application be approved.

Information concerning economic characteristics, etc. of the area (item 3 in the list of explanatory information), and detailed data on types of governmental jurisdictions and special districts (Items 6 and 8 have not been included, since much of this material is contained in Houston's County Government booklet which you already have on file. We feel certain that the Houston LWV will be happy to furnish such additional data as you feel may be necessary.

However, we urge the approval of this application without waiting for the supplemental data if at all possible, since the Houston League is anxious to have your answer in time for their Annual Meeting in May.

Your cooperation will be much appreciated.

Cordially yours,

Mrs. Darvin M. Winick, President
League of Women Voters of Texas

bc: Wackerbarth



February 24, 1972

To: Organization Core Committee: Wackerbarth, Leabo, Dot, Ulrickson
From: State Office
Re: APPLICATION of the HOUSTON LEAGUE for change of status from a municipal
League to an area League

Enclosed is the above mentioned application for your comments. Will you advise Eloise by return mail so that we may make applications to national as soon as possible. Houston is hoping approval will come thru in time for their Annual Meeting in May. Due to convention, national has asked that organization matters be submitted as early as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HOUSTON

February 23, 1972

Mrs. Frank W. Gallaher
Executive Secretary
League of Women Voters of Texas
Dickinson Plaza Center
Dickinson, Texas 77539

Dear Mrs. Gallaher:

Enclosed is the application of the Houston
League for change of status from a municipal
to an area League.

We hope that the State Board will complete
its consideration of our application in time
for our Annual Meeting in May.

We thank you for your assistance and information
which have been most useful to us in preparing
this application.

Sincerely yours,

Area League Committee

Brenda Gehan

Mrs. Edmund A. Gehan, Chairman
Mrs. William E. Joor
Mrs. Earl Stephens



MEMORANDUM FROM:

League of Women Voters of Texas

DICKINSON PLAZA CENTER • DICKINSON, TEXAS 77539

MAR 8 1972

To: Wackerbarth cc: State Office
From: Ulrickson
Re: LWV of Houston's application to become area League

Eloise, this is to confirm "in writing" what we discussed in person regarding the LWV of Houston becoming an area League. I can see no reason why such status should not be granted. In fact it seems to be a wise move to me.

October 12, 1970

Mr. Martin Dies, Jr.
Secretary of State
Office of the Secretary of State
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Mr. Dies:

The League of Women Voters of Texas is pleased to consent to the
incorporation of the League of Women Voters of Houston,

Sincerely,

Mrs. Darvin M. Winick, President
League of Women Voters of Texas

VW/ag

cc. LWV of Houston





OCT 8 1970

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HOUSTON

October 7, 1970

Mrs. Darvin M. Winick
[REDACTED]

Dear Vera:

May we please have a letter of consent as outlined by Martin Dies, Jr. in the attached letter. We are planning to file for incorporation as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jackie

Mrs. Chapman Cronquist, President

JAC/jt

Attachment

CC: Mr. Harold Friedman





STATE OF TEXAS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

Martin Dies Jr.
SECRETARY OF STATE

April 27, 1970

W. O. Bowers III
ASST. SECRETARY OF STATE

Mrs. George Watterworth
League of Women Voters of Houston
[REDACTED]

Dear Mrs. Watterworth:

Thank you for your letter of April 20. We do not have the forms for incorporating a non-profit corporation. However, this form can be found in Volume III of Vernon's Civil Statutes on page 556.

Since the League of Women Voters of Texas is a corporation, a letter of consent from them will be necessary.

Sincerely,

Martin Dies Jr.
Martin Dies, Jr.

MDjr:mh



JUL 24 1970

The following Office Policies and Procedures is submitted subject to Board approval.

STAFF SECRETARY (OFFICE) DUTIES

- A. Responsible to President and Vice-Presidents
- B. Is a Public Relations person:
 - 1. Telephone
 - 2. office visitors
- C. Incoming Mail - date stamps, opens, routes
- D. Incoming Checks - types deposit slips, mails, routes copies as required
- E. Operates mimeograph machine (no one else except J. Gordon permitted to)
- F. Maintains up-to-date address files (plates), operates addressing machine
- G. Serves all committees as time permits.
- H. Wages - paid hourly rate set by Budget for hours scheduled (Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.). Holidays and vacation times to be set by the Board.

III SUPPLIES AVAILABLE

- A. Paper, envelopes, stencils, postage, etc. must be requisitioned from Office (approved by Vice President in charge of Office).
 - 1. Costs will be back charged to Committee or project at time materials are requisitions. (Form to be of design and style acceptable to Treasurer.)
- B. Price List (set according to current cost figures)
 - Stencils \$.15 each
 - Twil-Tone Paper 1.00 per ream
 - Mimeo Bond Paper 1.22 per ream
 - Letterheads .02 each
 - Envelopes, large (#10) .02 each
 - Envelopes, small (6-3/4)x 3-3/4.015 each
 - Kraft envelopes
 - Note Paper (when available) n/c
 - Scratch Paper (when available) n/c
- C. Paper Color Code:
 - 1. White -
 - Policy Sheets
 - Procedures
 - By-Laws
 - Board Organization chart
 - 2. Blue -
 - Board Reports
 - 3. Pink -
 - Board Agenda
 - 4. Green -
 - Board Minutes
 - 5. Gold -
 - Finance Drive Reports
 - Treasurer's Reports
 - 6. Blue Twil-Tone-
 - Bulletin
 - 7. White Twil-Tone -
 - Program Information in Bulletin

III COMMITTEE REPORTS (Typing and Reproduction)

- A. By Staff Secretary - if to be typed by Staff Secretary, time must be cleared or reserved through Office Manager
 - 1. Assignment calendar will be maintained at Office
- B. Material to be reproduced must be presented in legible form (preferably typed) in keeping with current style guide with:
 - 1. written instructions listing:
 - quantity required
 - form wanted
 - date wanted
 - save or dispose of stencils
 - 2. If Report is to be collated and/or mailed, Committee is responsible for gathering, stapling, stuffing, addressing, sorting and mailing. (Information on classes and costs of mailing available in Office.)

IV BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITY TO OFFICE

- A. Check mail folder weekly (minimum)
- B. Serve in Office one (1) day per month (minimum) per Schedule
 - 1. If unable to serve on scheduled day, recruit replacement

V OFFICE VOLUNTEERS ASSIGNMENTS & DUTIES

- A. Office Duties: Helping Staff Secretary & Committees
 - 1.
 - answering telephone
 - collating reports, Bulletin
 - stapling, sorting material
 - help prepare Bulletin for mailing
 - help prepare Subscription Service material for mailing
 - 2. Publication Sales - help in maintaining materials for sale putting up orders - help set up and maintain inventory
- B. Library - Help in reorganization of Library, re-catalog, add additional volumes available, with goal of maintaining a workable reference library for members.
- C. Office Up-Keep
 - help clean, dust, vacuum, wash windows, etc.
- D. At home or afternoon assignments -
 - Typing assignments for afternoon (1:00 p.m. on) in Office
 - Typing assignments at volunteers' homes
 - Clerical assignments at volunteers' homes

IWV-HOUSTON REPORTS
7-13-70

REPORT: 3rd VICE PRESIDENT -
PROGRAM COORDINATOR
Dot Schmidt

The tentative League program was approved at the June 26, 1970 meeting. The September 30 Discussion Leader Training date was added, and the Pro and Con on the City Charter (in September) was discussed, but was left on the tentative calendar. The City Council action regarding the Charter is an "unknown" (to be considered in our planning). We need to set up definite times, dates, places - filling in the calendar with all possible programming, including elections, voters services, unit, general meetings, etc., for the coming year.

REPORT: MEMBERSHIP

Janice Hathaway

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of July 6, 1970 is 411 members.

Of the 315 past due notices mailed on June 11, 121 dues have been received as of July 6. The members that have not renewed their membership (drops) are being listed by Lila Lerner, assistant to the Treasurer, to be telephoned by the Board.

UNIT ORIENTATION will be suggested at the August 31st meeting of Unit Leaders and Membership representatives. One Unit has already requested this. I think cooperation and response to a special meeting will be better if the plans originate at the Unit level. If few Units want this, then I can plan another type of meeting.

INTEREST FILE Chairman is Katherine Toevs, a former Board Member in Greenwich, Connecticut. She has three experienced Leaguers for her telephone interviewers. In August this file will be kept in the League Office.

PROSPECT RECRUITER is Karen Weatherly. She has a helper for the September rush.

REPORT: LEGISLATIVE COORDINATOR

Lynda Counts

INTERVIEW WITH CONGRESSMAN GEORGE BUSH, MONDAY JULY 13, 1970 in his office, 5607 Federal Building, Houston, Texas. Present in addition to Mr. Bush: Mrs. Watterworth, Mrs. Cronquist, Mrs. Counts.

The purpose of the interview was (1) our annual interview with the Congressman from Houston, and (2) in response to a Time for Action on the Trade Bill currently before the House Ways and Means Committee of which Congressman Bush is a member.

(HR 14870)

The Trade Bill was discussed at some length since this was a major reason for our visit. On the subject of quotas Congressman Bush said that he was undecided as to his vote. He said recent testimony before the House Ways & Means committee indicated that the textile industry may not be in as bad a position as originally indicated. (He stated that he has missed three days of testimony due to his Texas trip.) He stated that oil quotas were a concern to him, that he was worried about the domestic oil situation as it relates to the Mid-East crisis. He said hearings before the GOP Task Force on Earth Resources and Population (of which he is Chairman) demonstrated that we have a critical gas shortage and we are becoming increasingly dependent on unreliable foreign sources of oil. He considers this

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dangerous to our national security. Bush stated that in considering the question of quotas it is important to study quotas imposed on US goods in foreign countries (he gave as an example prices on American cars and drugs in Japan). We stressed the League's opposition to quotas. Philosophically, Bush is against quotas, but hasn't decided on how he will vote on this bill (political aspects may demand a swap of his vote for textile quotas for a vote for oil quotas).

On the question of the American Selling Price (A.S.P.) he said he might very well vote to eliminate it, as our trade representatives have said it hindered them in negotiations, but again, we must look at foreign prices on our goods before deciding. We stressed that the League was against the A.S.P.. Congressman Bush evaded the question of his view on restoration of Presidential discretionary powers but said he agreed with our view of assistance to persons jobless because of injury to their industry by foreign competition.

On Welfare he feels it needs reform but objects to the label of the President's plan as a "Guaranteed Annual Wage"-- it is not. He feels that job opportunity must be tied to an annual wage.

Congressman Bush said that on the Electoral College the bill for direct election had passed the House (he co-sponsored it). He said he voted for all three alternatives -- direct election, by district and legislature because he felt we needed a change and the 4th alternative, which he disagreed with, was to do nothing.

Bush felt home rule for D.C. was fine, but that there should be safeguards for federal property. He felt Washington, D.C. belonged to all the people and not one particular group. He does not feel that D.C. should have 2 Senators and said he liked the idea of the people voting in Virginia, Maryland or another State.

Pollution and Population were not covered directly, but he is sending copies of the report of the GOP Task Force to Jackie Cronquist.

He agreed to send the Congressional Record to us at my home address.

Congressman Bush asked what the political view of the League was -- liberal or conservative. We discussed "labelling" and stressed that the League was generally moderate in its views. He stated that the League (and all groups) should study why a Congressman votes as he does and refrain from labelling him as opposed to an entire area because of his no vote on one bill (he gave education as an example). He stated that there may be other solutions and the Congressman may simply favor a different approach. (He said, for example, he'd rather see tax reform, revenue sharing, etc., instead of blanket increases in one area. You pay for what you get, he said, and many times better solutions must be found instead of simply spending more money on existing programs.)

Congressman Bush was relaxed, courteous and unrushed (although he told one caller on the phone that he had a plane to catch shortly). He spoke on subjects inquired about and many times brought up areas himself. The interview lasted just over 30 minutes.

LWV-HOUSTON REPORTS
July 13, 1970

REPORT: VOTERS SERVICE

Jan Wilbur

HCCAA ELECTIONS - 145 persons acted as Election Judges for the regular HCCAA election on Sunday, June 21, 1970 and for the run-off on Saturday, June 27. Many people worked the Sunday election and the run-off, as follows:

	SUNDAY	RUN-OFF	
		Repeat	New
Houston LWV	53	24	11
Baytown LWV	18	6	3
Pasadena LWV	5	3	2
Montgomery Prov. LWV	1	1	0
Others	38	8	14
Totals	115	42	30

The results: For the Sunday election five areas turned out about 1,605 votes. For the run-off four areas turned out 1,261 votes. (FYI: Last year 481 voters participated in the HCCAA elections for 10 areas.) One representative was elected in Sunday's election and two more representatives were elected in the run-off. The election was thrown out by the election board for irregularities on the part of the candidates.

VOTERS GUIDES - at present no results to report.

REPORT: BULLETIN

Jean Gordon

The Bulletin deadline for the September Bulletin will be August 21, 1970. It will be mailed August 28, 1970. Please have all reports written and sent to me at my home no later than August 21. There will be no Bulletin between now and the September Bulletin. My Assistant Editor, Madeleine Appel, and I will have to do some changing of deadlines throughout the coming year. We hope you will not be too inconvenienced, but it will be necessary.

REPORT: PUBLIC RELATIONS

J. Cronquist

The 50th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote will be celebrated on August 26. The LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HOUSTON has been invited to have guests on a number of local Radio and TV stations. The schedule is as follows:

Tues. August 18 KPRC-TV Ch. 2 5:00 p.m. STEVE SMITH SHOW (live)
guest: Edith Bailey

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Wed. August 19 KHOU-TV Ch. 11 8:00 a.m. MORNING SHOW -JOY NOUFER (live)
guest: Virginia Frederick

Thur. August 20 KTRK-TV Ch. 13 6:15 a.m. NOTEBOOK (taped)
guest: Veta Winick

Fri. August 21 KTRK-TV Ch. 13 1:15 a.m. NOTEBOOK (taped)
guest: Veta Winick

Pending KHTV- Ch. 39 10:00 a.m. MARIJANE VANDIVER - CALENDAR (live)
guest: Virginia Frederick

Wed. August 26 KIRH Radio 710 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. J. KENT HACKLEMAN PROGRAM(live)
guests: Marilyn Skolnick
Virginia Frederick

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE -- Pending

NOTE: Marge Fisch set most of the schedule before leaving Houston; and Virginia Frederick has done and is doing historical research for the various programs.

AIR QUALITY, POPULATION DENSITY,
REFUSE DISPOSAL, WATER RESOURCES

REPORT: QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT

Laura Keever

Our Committee met July 13, 1970. We discussed the bibliography from LWV-Texas concerning the state Water Planning item, and have begun reviewing materials suggested. Inasmuch as we have not yet received direction from state regarding the nature of our program (which will be in October) we cannot submit an Outlook for Work at this time.

Reorganization of the Committee was discussed and it is recommended that another Off-Board position be created to cover the Water item on all levels. Bobbie Grover has expressed her willingness to accept this position. Board approval of this recommendation is requested.

I would like to recommend that the superb publication "Where Rivers Meet the Sea" (LWV-US 50¢) be purchased for resale, the quantity to be decided by the Board.

REPORT: HUMAN RESOURCES

J. Cronquist
July 14, 1970

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, WELFARE

The monthly meeting was held at Carol Wells', July 14. A panel discussion on (1) the Human Relations Commission was presented:

Background on Civil Rights -- Martha Murphree
Discussion of the Law enacting HR Commission -- Mary Lee Burrus
Current recommendation of the Committee -- Lucy Stephenson

(cont) What can a Local Commission do? -- Janna Macy
Martha Murphree will be the Chairman of this study item. An Outlook for Work and Consensus questions, etc., for the September General and Unit meetings will be presented at the August Board Meeting.

LWV-HOUSTON REPORTS

(2) Volunteers in Public Schools: As recommended at the June meeting, a letter was written expressing our interest in participating and explaining our position by By-Law approval. This letter received an immediate reply by phone from Mrs. Stafford Andrews advising that the By-Laws should be completed and available by mid-September. Janna Macy has been invited to observe if she feels it will be informative, etc.

(3) Housing Outlook for Work:

- Study of:
1. Breakthrough program (prototype housing)
 2. Evaluation of programs and plans for Model Cities
 3. Evaluation of Housing Code enforcement

Under Housing Code enforcement we will research additional funding programs that are available to the City through HUD.

Included in our studies on Housing in Houston we plan to compile a booklet with the information we have gathered plus writing a "paper" on State-related housing for Senator Barbara Jordan and Representative Curtis Graves.

The Housing Committee is a very viable group, currently has 13 members who are very conversant with local housing needs, federal programs, etc.

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REPORT: HUMAN RESOURCES, continued

HOUSING

Jean Hards

Meeting with Dr. Kiessling, Director, Model Cities, July 10, 1970

The meeting proved fruitful and a good rapport developed. "Doc", as he is called, feels League has an important role to play and will continue to call on us when necessary. He is interested in our role in government and what we plan to introduce in the way of City Charter changes and recommendations for structural changes in the City government. He said he wants to see more cooperation between the City departments. He wants to see immediate action on Model Cities programs. He feels enough studies and surveys have been made -- now is the time for implementation. He also believes in following the "book" and does not jump before he looks. I was impressed with the information he has gathered on the program as well as the conclusions he has drawn about personnel in his Department, the political structure of the City government, his acceptance by the residents' planning commission, his rapport with the Regional HUD Office, and his sincere dedication to the program and the people of the target area. "Doc" seems to be an excellent choice for the position. He is very frank in his opinions and as to his objectives.

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REPORT: HUMAN RESOURCES, continued

EDUCATION

Janna Macy

Committee Members: Janna Macy, Chairman; Martha Murphree, Polly Clark, Barbara Coyner, Lorraine Goldstaub

The Committee needs to obtain more information before deciding on its direction. Under the national position we are free to study or act on almost any phase of education relating to equality of education. There are particular parts of the total education picture in which we seem to be most interested in studying; however,

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before we begin wholeheartedly, I feel that we need to know more about what is being done locally by other organizations in regards to surveys, research, etc.

Specifically, we need to interview the Citizens for Good Schools, other similar organizations, the Volunteers for Public Schools, and in particular, Mrs. Ruth Denny, who is the liaison between the HISD and the VIPS. Other interviews that would be helpful may be with the Houston Council of Human Relations, the Public Affairs Institute of the YWCA, and the Metropolitan Ministries. These interviews would help us determine not only what is being done, but also help determine the area in which the need is the greatest.

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REPORT: CITY CHARTER AND
STATE & LOCAL RELATIONS
Blanche Stephens

I strongly urge all Board Members examine HGAC's "Goals for the 70s". Those with portfolios directly concerned should look closely at the plans for the future. There is much food for thought in another publication (this one is thin!) of great value to every League member: "Reshaping Government in Metropolitan Areas" published by the Committee for Economic Development. These are in our League reference Library in the Office - please make an effort to look at them.

Guidelines from state on State and Local Relations are interesting. The 4th support position -- the Formation of COGS has been dropped! I believe this is a correct thing to do, but the manner in which it was done seems questionable.

This item is a dilly: If you are interested, read the whole bit on State and Local Relations that came from state office in late June. We may run into problems. I know there will be bills introduced in the State Legislature which I feel the Houston League could properly support, but unless we are careful, technically state will not allow us to support them, and it would be to the advantage of all Texas Leagues!

For the present, I am trying to read as much background material as possible. Otherwise State & Local Relations seems to be in a holding pattern. Sometime the H-GAC should be re-examined. Their meeting on July 21 should be an interesting one.

No word at this time on City Charter developments -- might have something by Board Meeting.

JUN 12 1989

League of Women Voters of Houston
Board Report
June 19, 1989

League Conference Room

NOTE: UNUSUAL DATE & PLACE--June 19th, League Conference Room

LWV-HEF Trustees
AGENDA
Monday, June 19, 1989

9:30	Call to Order	
	Adopt Agenda	
	Approve Minutes	
9:35	Treasurer's Report	
9:40	President's Report	
9:45	PROGRAM	
	Garden Project Contracts	Jo Williams
	Summer Seminar "Hunger in America"	Alison Dieter
		Alison Dieter
9:55	COMMUNITY RELATIONS	
	Voters Guide	Mary Elder
		Belinda Chagnard
10:05	Adjourn	

Hostess for June 19 Board Meeting

Pam Holt

DATES TO REMEMBER

July/Aug. VOTER Deadline	June 16	12 noon
Board Meeting/Board Training	June 19	9:30 a.m.
Calendar Planning	June 27	10:00 a.m.
July/Aug. VOTER Mailing	June 28	
Executive Committee	July 10	1:30 p.m.



LWV-H Board Meeting
AGENDA
Monday, June 19, 1989

10:05 Call to Order
Adopt Agenda
Approve Minutes

10:10 Treasurer's Report

10:15 President's Report
LWVUS Council
Calendar Planning

10:25 Office Search Update

Charlotte Bowers

10:35 PROGRAM
Child Abuse Study

Novelle Doherty
Betty Oertel

10:40 Priority Setting

Jo Williams

11:00 Adjourn

Round Robin



Jackie Alfred called the meeting to order at appx. 11:30 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Jackie Alfred, Charlotte Amrhein (Bowers), Alison Dieter, Novelle Doherty, Melba Drake, Betty Foote, Pam Holt, Helen Hunter, Denise Isaac, Jean Lustgarten, Ruth Marsh, Betty Oertel, Margaret Wedge. Others in attendance: Phyllis Frye, Mary Gillette, Fauncine Martin, Karen Miller, Barbara Nelson, and Jennie Mae Rall.

AGENDA - Under Treasurer's Report - Add: Approving Budget.
Under Program, add: Betty Oertel
Agenda adopted as amended.

MINUTES - Novelle Doherty moved acceptance as read, seconded by Margaret Wedge, passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Jean Lustgarten

Jean reported a "very healthy" account; it is difficult to spend money from it. Jean reported she would like to change our account to a NOW account which would earn interest on a minimum balance of \$1,500. The Ed Fund account would have no trouble maintaining this minimum. She had investigated and the bank requests that we have a 501(c)3 classification with the IRS...we do. Jean made the motion that we transfer the Ed Fund monies into a NOW account, seconded by Charlotte Amrhein, passed.

Jean also wanted us to note that the report attached to the May Board Report reflects only two months; next month will have the full year.

Jean Lustgarten moved acceptance of the Budget Report, seconded by Denise Isaac, passed.

The question was asked if there wasn't some way whereby the Ed Fund could pay more of LWV-H's expenses...? Almost half of all phone calls that come in are Ed Fund calls. This is going to be addressed this August through election to document all Ed Fund calls. Then we may be able to amend the budget. Jean Lustgarten has asked Barbara Swartz to keep track of her hours also, which she is doing.

PROGRAM - Jo Williams

Mary Gillette asked about paying the dues to the Galveston Bay Foundation, the amount is \$100. Mary has been appointed to the Citizens Advisory Task Force of the Foundation. The Foundation is now a part of the Galveston Bay Estuary Program. Mary moved payment of the \$100 dues, seconded by Margaret Wedge, passed. Mary further advised that this dues payment will keep us on their board of directors. Mary also asked if Barbara Swartz could run off mailing labels (for ?). Okay by the group.

Mary Gillette will get together with Charlotte Amrhein and seek another contribution from the Ray Charles Foundation...and get this in proper form before August. Jackie Alfred asked that the amount of office time in working on this be accounted for...as rationale for some of this money to be charged to Ed Fund.

Alison Dieter then reported on the Community Garden Project. Alison gave us a rundown on the volleying back and forth between LWV-Ed Fund, the city, Covenant House, ad infinitum. It all boiled down to a point where if Covenant House can get their insurance carrier to add LWV and the City of Houston (at an estimated cost of \$115-120), maybe all signatures necessary for us to use the Multi-Service Center land can be obtained (whew!).

Alison Dieter moved that we accept the agreement with the City of Houston and one from Covenant House, contingent upon receiving additional insured status from Covenant House, seconded by Pam Holt.

Phyllis Frye pointed out various areas of potential liability to the League; Alison Dieter felt that the October '89 expiration date - and assuming all monies would be spent by that time - would clear the League from any further liability and/or responsibility...only Covenant House would be involved. Jackie Alfred pointed out that Phyllis Frye looked at our "agreement" from a trial lawyer's standpoint, whereas, Lavora Arizaga looked at it from a corporate standpoint. (None of us could qualify for either standpoint!)

Jackie Alfred called for the vote...passed.

Betty Uertel reported a meeting on May 25th with Diane Sheridan and Evelyn Bonavita re State's involvement in the Child Abuse Study. Betty Uertel will prepare a timetable. We are responsible for expenses up to the concurrence part of this study. There will be a large amount of print...very expensive. If we receive no grant, we will sell print material to other Leagues. The FOCUS must be prepared to be sure it deals with state issues, and to be sure it is unbiased. State will also do some of our mailings. If we can time it right, many mailings to other Leagues can go out with regular DPMs, etc.

Jackie Alfred sees this as a pioneering way to get studies done so that all Leagues can have input...State is interested in seeing that it works well. Betty Uertel reported that this will be worked on during the summer, so this is a great time to use our energies in this endeavor. It will be completed prior to our program in November.

COPY MACHINE - Barbara Nelson

Barbara asked that we turn to page R-3 in Board Report. She told us that Gloria DeYoung had offered to help us in obtaining a new(er) copying machine. Barbara called Bill Krull and told him we were interested in a machine but that we did not have any money. Gloria DeYoung touched base with him again in March. The machine he has now for us looks to be in good condition...the firm that owned it gave it very little use (small company..."little old lady"). It has been totally reconditioned. He told Barbara that his company would not make much money on a machine that would have many service calls.

Phyllis Frye moved that this copy machine be bought and that Barbara Nelson act as our agent. Betty Foote seconded. Discussion...No sales tax as we are a tax-exempt organization...LWV-H will rent from LWV-Ed Fund. Phyllis wondered if the old machine would be taken out of the office...? Barbara Nelson said Bill Krull does not deal in Xerox machines but would call someone who might take our old machine for parts. This is not specifically part of the deal. Jean Lustgarten asked if he could hold the new machine until a decision is made? Can guarantee become effective on actual delivery date? Barbara Nelson would let him know we want to buy the machine but do not want it delivered until a decision is made on our office move...the first full week in June.

Mary Gillette asked about a maintenance contract? Barbara told us there was one for \$295/year...for one year or 20,000 copies whichever comes first. She supports a maintenance contract as money well spent, saying we would get better service (the contract would be renewable up to a 5-year period).

Vote was called, passed (kudos to Barbara Nelson for a hard job well done!)

Meeting adjourned.
Auncine Martin
Acting Secretary

Jackie Alfred called the meeting to order appx. 9:35 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Jackie Alfred, Charlotte Amrhein (Bowers), Alison Dieter, Novelle Doherty, Melba Drake, Betty Foote, Pam Holt, Helen Hunter, Denise Isaac, Jean Lustgarten, Ruth Marsh, Betty Oertel, Margaret Wedge. Others in attendance: Mary Gillette (arrived @ 11 a.m.), Fauncine Martin, Karen Miller, Barbara Nelson, and Jennie Mae Rall.

AGENDA - Add: Under President's Report, after ...off-board directors...Appoint vice-presidents for president Pro Tem terms
After ...committees, add: Board Training
After Board Lists, add: National Council
Under Organization, add: Report by Helen Hunter re Fort Bend County LWV Unit. Add Betty Foote.
Add: Name of Charlotte Amrhein who will make the Office Search report
Under Community Relations, add: Margaret Wedge
Under Dates to Remember, correct the dates of LWVUS Council to reflect: June 9-13. June VOTER deadline...correct to July/Aug. VOTER deadline.

Novelle Doherty moved that the Agenda as amended be accepted, seconded by Margaret Wedge, passed.

MINUTES - Betty Foote moved acceptance of Board minutes as read, seconded by Novelle Doherty, passed.

Executive Committee Minutes. Page 2, sixth para. beginning "Covenant House..."
Change 3rd line to read: "...if National could sign with us or would authorize Covenant house..."

Eighth para., Pg. 2, last sentence should end "...likes her Canon copier."

Helen Hunter moved approval of Executive Committee Minutes as corrected, seconded by Denise Isaac, passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Jean Lustgarten

Jean told us that the Assets figure would change. She'd had to withdraw \$850 to pay the Doctors' Club two weeks in advance of our Annual Meeting. That deposit has now been returned to us so the Assets figure is really better than this report reveals. The Treasurer's Report will be filed for audit.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Jackie Alfred

Jackie directed our attention to Page R-1 of Board Reports, appointments: Jean Lustgarten moved acceptance of On-Board nominees, Novelle Doherty seconded, passed.

Betty Foote moved acceptance of Off-Board nominees, seconded by Betty Oertel, passed. Helen Hunter, June-thru-August; Novelle Doherty, September-thru-November; Mary Elder, December-thru-February; Jo Williams, March-thru-May.

Jackie then directed our attention to the committee appointments named at the bottom of Page R-1. All suggested committee appointments accepted by acclamation.

Jackie Alfred told us she'd like to have a board training session. She'd like to concentrate on the most effective and efficient use of board time. Diane Sheridan can come and do the board training. Dates she will be available are:

Friday, June 16

Monday, June 19

Thursday, June 22

Friday morning, June 23rd...this is board meeting day, also -- and, would make for a very long day. After some discussion, the idea of changing board meeting to June 19th seemed to fit the majority, and to have board training in tandem to board meeting. Margaret Wedge so moved, seconded by Pam Holt, passed. Because of this change, board reports will be due on June 7th.

June 19th, 9:30 'til appx. 1:30 p.m. Board meeting/training

Location: League Office, conference room-3rd floor

Jackie passed the Board "Lists" out (1) Sign up times you can most readily accept calls, and (2) Sign up for board meeting hostesses.

NATIONAL COUNCIL - Re the workshop for Metro Area Leagues (cities with populations over 350,000). The Council's agenda addresses our concerns. One session is entitled "BeLeaguered" and addresses membership. Jackie asked that we consider the problems we have in this area as well as listing things that we do particularly well; she'd like to hear from board members.

Another session is entitled "Internal World of the LWV." It addresses many areas - involving members. Here again, Jackie would like input. The third workshop session is entitled (conversely) the "External World of the LWV." This sounds like an excellent workshop; Jackie passed around a summary and asked anyone to jot down anything that comes to mind that would be relevant.

Jackie Alfred advised there is an approved line item in the budget for sending the president to National Council...\$500 is scheduled (to pay air fare, hotel and registration). It will probably cost \$200 more than this figure.

ORGANIZATION - Helen Hunter

Helen reminded us that program material for Study and Action is due June 27... this involves Jo Williams and Novelle Doherty. Pertains to any new program or change in social policy.

Directory information also due on June 27. In conjunction with the Directory, last year it was suggested by the Policy Committee that the League's National Principles be put into the Directory if there is room. As of now, there isn't room and if an additional page is required, the consensus of the group was to leave it out.

Helen asked our help in re-electing Barbara McCormick to the National Board.

Helen then told us of a program to "work" on this summer...an insert page will be in the VOTER in the form of CLASSIFIED ADS "Help Wanted" column, i.e., Need someone to be on such-and-such committee, Observer needed at City Council, etc. Helen would like this insert to go out with the September VOTER (deadline: August 1). The ads should also mention "No pay!" (Lotza satisfaction).

Helen reported the membership roster is complete except for Hospitality (volunteers welcome!).

Re the Fort Bend County unit, Helen Hunter and Jackie Alfred met with three representatives from the FBC Unit along with Diane Sheridan regarding the establishment of FBC as a State Unit. Final decision: FBC Unit will operate as a unit of State League rather than as part of our League. Diane Sheridan gave them the info needed to set this up. Jackie Alfred told us that this was a good decision and we will not be involved in their operation. Further, we will submit a letter supporting FBC and strongly encouraging State Board to take them as a State League. Jackie Alfred moved that we submit a letter supporting FBC Unit and saying that we as a League strongly encourage State Board to take FBC Unit as a State Unit. Charlotte Amrhein seconded.

Discussion followed -- it was noted that FBC Unit was having difficulty in living with the constraints imposed upon them by the Houston League -- particularly in their fund-raising efforts (having to share with the "parent" organization). Ruth Marsh wondered if they'd have the requisite number of members to become a State League...? Jackie Alfred told us they presently had about six members and in order to become a State Unit they will have to have 20 members. FBC Unit feels this goal can be attained. Helen Hunter will remain "our" member for the time being. Melba Drake commented that FBC Unit cannot be just a single issue group. Helen Hunter said this is what they will have to learn and the State League can help them.

The motion passed.

Betty Foote commented that for directory purposes, we need to know by next weekend about this matter. Jackie Alfred also stated that if FBC Unit needs our help in any way, we stand ready to give it.

Betty Foote reported on the unit Robert Mullally is organizing. He is "gung-ho" for the League. One of his big concerns is that young people do not vote. Last week he had a meeting and eight young men attended. Also attending were Betty Foote, Jeanette Vanderwater, and Mindy Iravillian who will participate in this "new" unit. They will have to learn to work within the parameters of the League. Betty Foote pointed this out to them...they will have to work within the structure. Robert Mullally plans to catch up on all our past issues; he already has stacks of literature from our library. They plan to keep meeting throughout the summer...will study welfare.

This still-forming unit would like to know if there are any objections to the name, "Young Adult" Unit...is this okay? (It will go into the Directory...it would have a header stating "Units are open to all members.") Their meeting place will be in Robert Mullally's office (a computer shop) in the near n northwest area. This name had the concurrence of the board.

Margaret Wedge told us that Public Relations means just that, not just "media." She calls each member of the League a member of her committee. Inviting just one person to a League meeting is public relations. Margaret suggested using all bulletin boards available in or near meeting places. Would need someone to be responsible for keeping bulletin boards current. Jackie Alfred asked Margaret for a VOTER article pertaining to public relations...Margaret will do.

Jackie Alfred then began our discussion on Office Search. Appx. 10 mins. would be spent discussing the merits of two locations. After Charlotte Amrhein summarizes info on 5373 West Alabama, the acting secretary will post comments from the group on poster paper for all to see. Charlotte told us that appropriate space has become available, but that we are facing a time limit for a decision (5373 West Alabama). In relation to our present location on Montrose, the West Alabama location has...

856-sq. ft.

Same amount of storage as our present space

Costs less than present space: \$558/mo. vs \$667

Parking - plenty in back of building

Conference room can be scheduled for use

Full-time security - present space has none

Building open 6-6 weekdays, 8-noon on Saturdays

Cleaning service; present space has none.

taken from the poster paper comments made in general discussion on merits of both the West Alabama and Montrose locations:

West Alabama

Name: YORKTOWN PLAZA

5th floor

Conf. Room, as scheduled

\$558/month = 65¢ sq.ft.

Access: Westpark/S. Rice

Any "overflow" storage
available to us

Owned by John Hancock

Co./local mgmt.

"Hub" location

Good bus service

Change image - more

prestigious location

Montrose

Rent may be reduced to \$485

750 sq.ft.=65¢ sq.ft.

Easy to reach/give
directions

Wouldn't have to change
phone #

No change on print mtl.

Print matter storage (we
require lots)

"Hub" location

Good bus service

Charlotte Amrhein moved that with informed direction from the Office Search Committee, Arnold Smith be authorized to negotiate with both locations to attain the

best contractual deal possible for the Houston League. Margaret Wedge seconded.

Because of time limitations to act upon the West Alabama space, Charlotte asked that the foregoing motion be acted upon by our June 5 Executive Committee meeting. Jo Williams suggested taking a "straw vote" so that the "Feeling of the Group" could be ascertained...stating the question: All things being as the information given this morning, how would we lean?

Staying	Minority of vote
Moving	Majority of vote...
	Some abstentions

Charlotte's motion passed.

(A break for refreshments)

PRIORITY SETTING (Preliminary) - Jo Williams

Jo asked us to refer back to Page 8 of our Annual Meeting Workbook to see how priority-setting will fit in with our objectives and the criteria Items 1-thru-6. Turn back to page 7 of Annual Meeting Workbook and pick from the areas of Government, Social Policy, and Natural Resources. Jo then worked the poster paper and following are the suggestions from the board:

Priority Suggestions

1. Membership (action)
2. Advocacy for Voter (action)
3. City/County - City/State on financing government (education)
4. Develop Education Program about government levels*
5. Increase networking in all program levels
6. Teen-age pregnancy meeting
7. Child abuse
8. Open forum - debate (city government)
9. Hunger in America slide show
10. Open meeting law (guttled)
11. Finance and creative ideas

*Mary Gillette wondered if this subject couldn't be added to the Speakers Bureau.

Jackie Alfred thought this would make a good PR tool.

Jackie told us that from suggestions made here and at next Executive Committee meeting, definite decisions can be made at our next Board Meeting.

Karen Miller then spoke to the issue of Open Meetings, telling us that exclusion 2R virtually guts the Open Meetings Act. Karen feels this should be addressed at the next legislative term. She passed around a report on this matter and Jackie Alfred said it would be posted in the office and any additional thoughts of members should be added -- between now and the next Exec. Cte. meeting and board meeting. Be thinking of these in terms of actual implementation. Two things: the board can do "brainstorming" on occasion; and second, the board should not do committee work.

Meeting Adjourned.

Fauncine Martin
Acting Secretary

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Phyllis Frye - I'll miss Jennie Mae...although I'm happy as a clam for her.

Melba Drake - Echoed Phyllis

Betty Oertel - ditto

Pam Holt - reported two tickets to Houston Ballet in office for anyone who might want to go... "Life of Buddha." Need volunteers to help in office. Jackie said to ask any League member who might be able to come into the office one or twice a week.

Charlotte Amrhein - commended Jackie Alfred on a fast! meeting.

Helen Hunter - Reminder: For Ads column...League office help.

Jo Williams - Observed that Phyllis Frye had her own cup for coffee. Would it be a good idea for all of us to bring our own cups to meetings? Would help our environment (vs. the foam throwaway cups). Had a phone call from a citizens lobbying group on hunger. They, in conjunction with other groups, received a grant from Kellogg Company. Would the League be interested in participating in this group. There will be a 2-hour meeting to read and discuss its material. Either evening or morning of June 8...somewhere in this vicinity. Margaret Wedge can participate on Thursday evening. Jackie Alfred suggested putting a note in the office to contact Jo on this item. Jo says they need about eight people; Betty Oertel said a Great Decisions group might be interested.

Margaret Wedge - Told Jackie she did a good job. Margaret thanked the League for sending her to Rice University for a PR seminar. She received a certificate and will give us a report. One thought was that networking could be very advantageous...media can be a last source of PR. Keep her up-to-date on "working" items that can be put into newspapers WHEN THEY BECOME SPECIFIC.

Novelle Doherty - Has two giant boxes of info from Anne Deidrick. And, Novelle, too, will miss Jennie Mae. She also reminded us of Jennie Mae's lemonade parties.

Alison Dieter - Told us of her participation in a play she has written...to be held at the Houston House Apartments, Fannin & Leeland, 8:30 p.m. this Friday and next Friday.

Betty Foote - Will miss Jennie Mae both here and at church.

Jean Lustgarten - Will miss Jennie Mae who is always at the League office when Jean comes in.

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Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting
Monday, June 5, 1989/12:30 p.m./League Office

Present: Jackie Alfred, Melba Drake, Novelle Doherty, Charlotte Bowers, Jo Williams, Mary Elder, Denise Isaac, Allison Dieter, and Barbe Bozeman.

Jackie Alfred called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.

Jackie announced that prospective Executive Committee Meetings will be held on the second Monday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in the League Office. She requested that all Committee business be conducted in advance of that time.

Jackie announced that a Calendar Planning Session will be held on Tuesday, June 27, at 10:00 a.m. at the League Office. This upcoming Wednesday, June 7, at 3:00 p.m. will be the deadline for submitting items for inclusion in the Board Report.

Monday, June 19, has been slated as a joint Executive Committee Meeting/Board Development Session. The Board meeting will be held in the League Conference Room from 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. A brief break will follow for lunch. The Board Development Session will end the day and all activities should wrap up by 2:30 p.m. Jackie suggested collecting \$2/person from attendees and sending over to the Kroger deli for sandwiches. Those who wish to "brown bag" are welcome to do so.

Denise Isaac led discussion of the Membership Committee's activities. She wants the Committee to lend a "personal touch" in welcoming new and prospective members. This can be achieved by warmly welcoming newcomers to the League and quickly involving them in some committee work so they will feel a meaningful part of the organization. How can this objective be achieved? Jackie suggested that each committee chair write a brief (three to four sentence) description of the activities of their group, meeting dates/times/locations for inclusion in the September issue of the VOTER. The Program VPs will contact each of their respective committee chairs with this request.

Jo Williams suggested that a membership brochure be sent to each returning member in the fall to distribute to an interested friend/colleague. Jackie agreed that this item could be included in the mailing of the VOTER; the brochure would also serve as a reminder to members of the objectives of the Long Range Plan endorsed by the membership at the Annual Meeting. Novelle thought the September VOTER would be a good issue in which to include the membership brochure; she added that we will probably need to order 1000 extra brochures to accomplish this mailing.

Jackie suggested that we identify new members at our monthly meetings by a unique nametag/badge. In this way, it will be easier for experienced members to greet the newcomers.

Mary Elder announced that she was seeking a Voter Registration Chair. Jackie suggested Kay Shillock as a potential name. Jennie Mae Rall has finished the written material for the Publications. Barbara Nelson is leaning towards acceptance of the Publications Chair. In light of Jennie Mae's rapidly approaching departure, Mary advised appointment of a Librarian/Historian to fill Jennie Mae's shoes. The name of Laura Mewhinney was recommended as a

possible candidate.

Jackie added that a program is being introduced at the Looscan Library to introduce youth to government and civics this summer. This may be a possible avenue to market some of the League concepts and voting materials. Barbara Swartz is the lead contact on this program.

Mary stated that the questions to the mayoral candidates for the VOTER will be sent in the near future. She will investigate the filing deadline for this race and report back.

Mary announced that she will contact Hope Dyson concerning the League co-sponsorship of a proposed mayoral candidate debate for the fall. At present, one of the city's Hispanic organizations is tentatively planning this event which will be held in some public area, such as the Galleria shopping area balcony. Mary will report back by the Calendar Planning Session.

Jo Williams inquired whether we would like to include a General Meeting on Natural Resources, specifically Recycling? Support was lent to this suggestion. Jo will contact Fran Smith and attend her meeting, if possible, on June 21 to formalize a plan that can be presented at the Calendar Planning Session. Jo then confirmed the Committee Chairs/assignments in her portfolio.

Jackie Alfred introduced a topic concerning review authority for articles submitted for the VOTER. She is concerned that the tenor and title of articles published clearly reflect either League position or the personal opinion of the writer. Jackie suggested that a "Letters to the Editor" column could be included to accommodate the personal opinions of the membership regarding certain issues. Following a lengthy discussion, it was decided that, for present, three copies of each article should be submitted to the following 1) Organization VP; 2) appropriate Program VP; and 3) VOTER Editor. It will be the responsibility of each Program VP to proof the article for consistency with League position. In the event that an article requires modification, the Program VP should contact the VOTER Editor and the author and discuss/revise prior to publishing the article.

While on the subject of the VOTER, Jo Williams requested that we somehow highlight the pertinent points and request for action in VOTER articles. Jackie suggested that this is what the "Want Ads" and "What You Can Do This Month" sections attempt to accomplish in the present VOTER. Jo will review for any enhancements to the present layout of the articles.

Charlotte Bowers introduced a topic for a Summer Seminar entitled "Hunger in America". The League has purchased a 17-minute slide tape/handouts addressing this topic. Would it better suited as a Summer Seminar or a Program Meeting? Charlotte will develop a program proposal and a publicity sheet to present at the Calendar Planning Session on June 27. She will also included a recommended cost for leasing this media presentation to other interested groups.

Novelle Doherty had no additional comments on her portfolio. She noted that the Child Abuse Study is in "good shape" following a meeting with some of the state and Houston League officers.