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Dear Friends,

Despite unprecedented and harsh fiscal circumstances for the City of Los Angeles, I am proud to report that my colleagues and I this week passed a smart, lean budget that prioritizes public safety and protects vital neighborhood services.

While we faced a budget shortfall of \$400 million as we prepared the budget for fiscal year 2008-2009, we found a way to hire 780 new police officers, increase street maintenance and repair, and spare libraries, parks, graffiti abatement, and neighborhood councils from the budget axe.

Additionally, we maintained funds for homeless services, programs for seniors, sidewalk repair, alley paving, regional planning, installation of left-turn signals, local cable programming, and enforcement against illegal signs.

As part of the budget process, I also devised and won approval for a new system for trash billing to improve the environment and save you money. The "*Pay as You Throw*" program will charge residents a trash fee based on the amount of garbage they generate. Residents who reduce the garbage they produce through reuse and recycling will save money each month on their bills.

This \$7 billion budget has its share of sacrifice, however. The office budget for each elected official will face steep cuts. More than 700 city staff positions will be eliminated. We will also be requiring every City employee, except in public safety and sanitation functions, to take 6 unpaid days off over the next year to reduce salary costs.

At the same time fees for many City services – such as parking fines, police impound fees, building permits, animal licenses, recreation and park programs – will increase. To fund the continued police hiring, we will also be decreasing the City subsidy of residential trash pick-up. And at my urging, we chose to scoop up some "gold in the gutter" by increasing parking meter fees.

Here are some highlights of what we preserved from the mayor's proposed budget:

Additional Police Officers and Overtime Hours

- Hiring 780 new police officers to achieve 10,000 sworn LAPD officers and fully funding 1.6 million hours of police overtime so officers have the time and tools necessary to investigate and prosecute criminals.

Permanent Staffing and Equipment for Fire Station 67 in Playa Vista

- Securing permanent funding for necessary fire and medical response staff at the newly built fire station, including a new Basic Life Support ambulance.

Increased Street Maintenance and Repair

- Funding the repair of over 250,000 potholes, resurfacing 235 miles of City streets, and slurry seal an additional 400 miles of streets as a preventative measure.

Reducing Gridlock and Improving Mobility

- Funding for 15 new left turn signals at the busiest intersections and increased signal synchronization will help keep traffic moving.

Funding for Abbot Kinney Parking Lots

- Funding for the completion of the new metered parking lots to serve the shops and restaurants on Abbot Kinney Blvd.

Continue Funding of \$50,000 to each Neighborhood Council

- Funding is continued for each Neighborhood Council for operations and administration as well as community improvement projects.

Environmental Review of Proposed Development Projects

- Funding for 6 positions in the environmental unit of the Planning Department that will ensure thorough and accurate Environmental Impact Reports (EIR) are completed for major projects.

My colleagues and I also voted to restore the following programs and services that had been eliminated in the mayor's proposal:

Restoration of Homeless Services

- The budget provides funding for the federally mandated Homeless Count and adds funding to provide 369 additional shelter beds for the City's homeless.

Library Books and Sunday Hours

- Los Angeles Public Library will have \$2 million for purchasing new books and the City's regional libraries, including West L.A. branch, will remain open on Sundays.

City Funds to Continue Supporting Local Public Television Channel 36

- LA36 will continue to offer vital educational and community programming such as distance learning courses, a world affairs lecture series, high school sports, and local political debates. Councilmember Rosendahl helped create this station in his previous career as a cable executive.

Inspection and Enforcement in the Public Right of Way

- Funding is restored for the *Newsrack Inspection Program* to cite and remove illegal and un-permitted newsracks from public sidewalks;
- Funding is restored for the *Illegal Sign Program* which identifies, and removes unsightly posters and flyers from the public right of way.

Paving of Dirt Alleys

- Funding is provided to improve 6 miles of deteriorated dirt streets and alleys throughout the City. Over two miles of dirt streets and alleys are located in the 11th Council District and these funds will be used to make them more durable and continue to allow natural rainfall to percolate into the ground, reducing urban runoff.

50 / 50 Sidewalk Repair Program

- A new 24 person crew will be funded in order to complete 450 additional locations.

Community Beautification Programs

- The City Council restored the following:

Staff positions to assist communities in obtaining City grant funds for neighborhood improvement projects;

Funding for graffiti removal services to keep our neighborhoods clean and safe;

Funding for the LA Conservation Corps' Clean and Green program, which empowers City youth with job skills by working on community beautification projects.

In anticipation of another tight budget next year, my colleagues and I will be implementing some structural reforms to our budget process to help the City through lean times. We will be requiring all City departments to evaluate their staff and programs from the ground up. This "Zero Base Budgeting" approach, which I have been advocating since I took office, will help us eliminate unnecessary positions, consolidate programs to realize efficiencies, and refocus the City on its core services.

In addition, we will also be creating a "Budget Stabilization Fund" that will save extra revenues in boom years to help ease the fiscal pain in lean years. Given the cyclical nature of the economy and the City's real estate tax and sales tax revenues, this is an absolute necessity to achieve long term fiscal health. Both of these measures will ensure that the City can maintain its top level bond rating even though tough times.

Regards,



BILL ROSENDAHL
Councilmember, 11th District