

Department of Community Services Citizens' Budget Advisory Committee Report on FY 07 Budget

Process – Our committee met weekly beginning in November 2005. Each week we had an opportunity to interview managers of departments whose services are categorized under the two departments we represent. Some of the managers we met with included: Becky Porter – Information Technology; Animal Services - Mike Oswald; Transportation (Bridges) - Stan Ghezzi; Department Director - Cecilla Johnson; and Housing – Diane Luther.

Our initial discussions were to understand the general operational activities, organization structure, strategic direction, and the specific area's needs for FY2007. We were able gain insight and perspective on the program offers presented from these areas.

Major Changes – In 2005, the Business and Community Services area was one department. In 2006, the department was divided into two departments; County Management and Community Services. Overall, we support the division as it provides a more integrated operational approach to providing support services to the community and to the internal county functions.

Recommendations/Concerns –

Program offers for the Department of Community Services are basically supported by the committee with the following exceptions:

- Offer 91006 – Housing Program supports 1 FTE that facilitates the development of affordable and special needs housing. Although, the cost for this program is small the benefit as stated in the offer does not appear to be where it should be. The population of homeless and special needs individuals / households seems to be increasing. Other housing agencies (government and non-government) do not specifically deal with this specific population. Integrating this population's needs into other agencies may be a viable way for better serving the group. Alternatively, better performance measures would provide more meaningful data – such as percent reduction in the community's homeless and special needs individuals / households in the county. The program's cost could be offset by a reduction in costs for other county services through more efficient delivery or a reduction in the need for the services.

- Program offer 91004 – Animal Services Spay/Neuter Program is a one time offer to pilot this outreach effort. The committee understands the need for the effort and as it is also supported by a coalition on non-profit animal welfare agencies can support this offer. The committee also feels this effort needs to have better goals. Reducing the intake of felines is one measure, but as there are many other agencies that also deal with the intake and adoption of felines. It is

important to gain a complete understanding of the effectiveness of the program to view all the intakes and to see a reduction overall. Other Animal Service program offers should be kept at Current Levels, but there needs to be an increased effort to improve the fee revenue. Through a public/private effort, advertising campaign, etc.

- Infrastructure is critical to a Thriving Economy. The program offers dealing with Asset Preservation for Bridges and roads need to be funded. The deferred maintenance needs of these areas are appalling in the opinion of the committee.

Emerging Issues –

- Revenue generation for the Roads department needs to be improved. Either through a gas tax, user fee, or some other method. The reduction of funding for this Fund, has caused a high level of deferred maintenance that will cost multi-million dollars to remedy.
- The cost of the Sellwood Bridge repair or replacement will be huge. This is a key crossing between Clackamas, SE Portland, and the West side of the Willamette. Opportunity for timely repair has long passed with no real plan in place and costs rising. The County should look to a public-private partnership (Toll) bridge option as this is outside of the urban core.
- Doing capital programs without considering the on-going operational needs/dollars is a waste of tax payers' money.
- Emergency Management, IT Disaster Recovery, and Business Continuation Planning (BCP) need to have a major role in all the County's operations. These are not one time expenses. These efforts need to be coordinated countywide and integrated with other government and non-government agencies with which the county works. Also, an on-going strategy needs to be developed before any funds are spent to ensure the new business applications, programs, and process changes are incorporated into the BCP and Disaster Recovery process.

2005-2006 FY Citizen Budget Advisory Committee

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Bruce Farrer
Iris Newhouse
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