

December 7, 2009

Honorable Mayor and City Council,

The members of the Citizen Bond Task Force want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve our City and the trust you put in to us to examine our City's infrastructure needs and consider a possible bond issue to take to the voters.

We began meeting on September 14, 2009 and met every second and fourth Monday of each month thereafter. We learned that our City has been systematically working to replace our aging infrastructure and facilities by establishing a program of going to the voters every three to five years to consider projects to advance this goal. This systematic program is based on the premise of doing these projects in "bite sized" pieces and with an eye at keeping our tax rate as stable as practical. We reviewed our city finances and debt history and current obligations. We are most grateful to Pam Eaves, Finance Director, for her excellent presentation that first night and her help throughout this process.

City staff reviewed the City's infrastructure needs and shared with us the independent third party review of our City's street system. We were assigned "homework" to rate our city streets and drainage system. Members spent many hours reviewing the data and driving around the city. We would like to acknowledge the help of Sal Aguirre, City Engineer; Craig Nisbett, Public Works Director; and, Athelstan Sanchez, Assistant City Engineer for their outstanding support and the data they provided to the Task Force.

The Task Force took all this information and thoroughly discussed our infrastructure needs, our finances and what, if anything, we would recommend to City Council be proposed to the citizens of Lake Jackson.

It was very important to the Task Force that whatever we would propose as a bond issue that it not require a tax increase.

We developed a preliminary bond proposal and held a public forum on Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at the Civic Center. Unfortunately it was poorly attended by the public. This forum, along with an internet based survey, notices on the city web site, notices on Channel 16, and regular articles in The Facts comprised our public outreach seeking public input. We have

had just over 100 survey responses with 75% of the respondents favoring some level of bond spending on our infrastructure.

**The following is the recommendation of the Citizens Bond Task Force:**

That a \$7 million streets/drainage bond issue be submitted to the voters at the May 8, 2010 city election. Based on our documentation this level of bond issue to be sold in two segments, \$3 million in 2010 and \$4 million in 2013, will not require an increase to the City's overall tax rate of 39 cents/\$100 assessed valuation. Of this \$7 million, \$2 million will be dedicated to drainage improvements and \$5 million to street repairs/improvements.

**Drainage:**

The primary purposes of our drainage recommendations are to improve drainage channels/crossings along our major drainage ditches south of State Highway 288/332. With the highway work going on, city staff persuaded TxDot to install drainage structures under the highway (replacing the older undersized ones) that will handle a 100 year rain event. However, TxDot has placed restrictor plates in these new structures until the city enlarges and improves the ditches and outfalls south of these structures. The proposed work will allow TxDot to removed the restrictor plates and thoroughly improve drainage in the center part of our City.

There are four other drainage projects included and these are: Anchusa ditch renewal, Timbercreek Park outfall, Willow/Blossom drainage, and the upper slave ditch renewal. A late consideration by the Task Force was brought to us by a Timbercreek resident. We had considered a \$500,000 Lake Sealy drainage project, but it did not make the final "cut". However, city staff devised a \$125,000 revised project that will help this erosion problem. We did not want to change the proposal as presented, so we ask that this \$125,000 project be considered as "add alternate" to either the 2010 sale or 2013 sale, if approved by voters.

**Streets:**

We extensively discussed the damage caused to certain major streets as the result of the year's intense drought. We learned that to fully replace these damaged streets would cost in excessive of \$11 million. After much discussion with city staff we are recommending that \$1 million in bonds be set aside to help in the repair of the worst sections of these major streets which include: Lake Road, Oak Drive South, North

Yaupon, Medical Drive and This Way. We are leaving the ultimate determination of how best to use these funds to our Public Works Director and City Engineer.

We then are proposing \$4 million to continue the City's systematic, nearly 20 year, program of replacing aging residential streets in our older neighborhoods. As you will see in the attached what we are recommending will help us "complete" much of the center part of the City. The streets we recommend are: The remainder of Magnolia from Acacia to SH 332, Gardenia from Azalea to Magnolia, Laurel from ditch to Azalea, all of Chinaberry, and Camelia from Winding Way to Yaupon. Also proposed for reconstruction are the various "courts" in this area. They include: Bluebonnet Court, Camellia Court, Elm Court, Hybiscus Court, Lantana Court, Lupine Court, Periwinkle Court and Vinca Court. While some segments of other streets may have "scored" higher, the logic of working to "complete" the center part of our City made sense before we moved on to other areas. Further we encourage council to continue their practice of not assessing adjoining property owners when replacing these older streets that were built to City standards at the time.

We proposed that the bonds be sold in the two phases previously mentioned in order to keep the tax rate at 39 cents. In 2010 we recommend the sale of \$3 million to fund \$2 million in drainage improvements and \$1 million to help fix the worst areas of the major streets damaged by this past summer's drought.

In 2013 we recommend the sale of \$4 million to fund the reconstruction of the streets previously listed.

Finally, we thank our fellow members of the Task Force for all their hard work and effort. Everyone was able to speak their mind freely and to openly debate all the issues. We are proud to be part of such a strong, dedicated group of volunteers.

We stand ready to answer any questions you and the citizens of our City would like to ask.

Respectfully Submitted,

The 2009 Citizen Bond Task Force

**Co chairs:** Tony Barre and Mike Lee

**Members:** Henry Mendez, Vic Wade, Darrell Bourgeois, David Howarth, Mike Leatherwood, Joey Kennedy, David Nicks, Jeffrey Smith, Locke Sanders, Garrett Williams, Sue McCourt, Scott Schwertner and Bob Lundahl.