

Precinct 2 Newsletter

EL PASO COUNTY COMMISSIONER DAVID C. STOUT'S PRECINCT UPDATE



What's New

**A WORD FROM
COMMISSIONER STOUT**

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**FISCAL YEAR 2020
BUDGET UPDATE**

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**86TH TEXAS
LEGISLATIVE SESSION
UPDATE**
.....

Overview

by David Stout

Serving as your County Commissioner for Precinct 2 is both a pleasure and an honor. I truly enjoy being your advocate on Commissioners Court and communicating the needs for our unique and diverse precinct. Precinct 2 encompasses the El Paso Children's Hospital, our historic downtown, Ascarate Park, and really, the heart of El Paso.

As you know, I am currently in my second term and have enjoyed deliberating the budget, promoting innovative and thoughtful policies that impact our precinct and all of El Paso County.

Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Overview

On September 9th, 2019, Commissioners Court adopted the budget for the 2020 Fiscal Year. Most notable about this budget, is that it incorporates funding for a few of my top policy priorities for the County of El Paso. Included are the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, the Office of New Americans, and continued support for the Downtown Historic Survey and a Cross Border Study to help with our County's economic development goals.

The budget also incorporates a 4.1% wage adjustment for ALL county employees. Through the new collective bargaining agreement the Sheriff's Office also received a 4.1% raise and I whole heartedly supported the wage adjustment for all county employees because I do not believe in having different classes of employees. To that end, we have also adjusted ALL elected official salaries to align our county with the rest of the state of Texas.

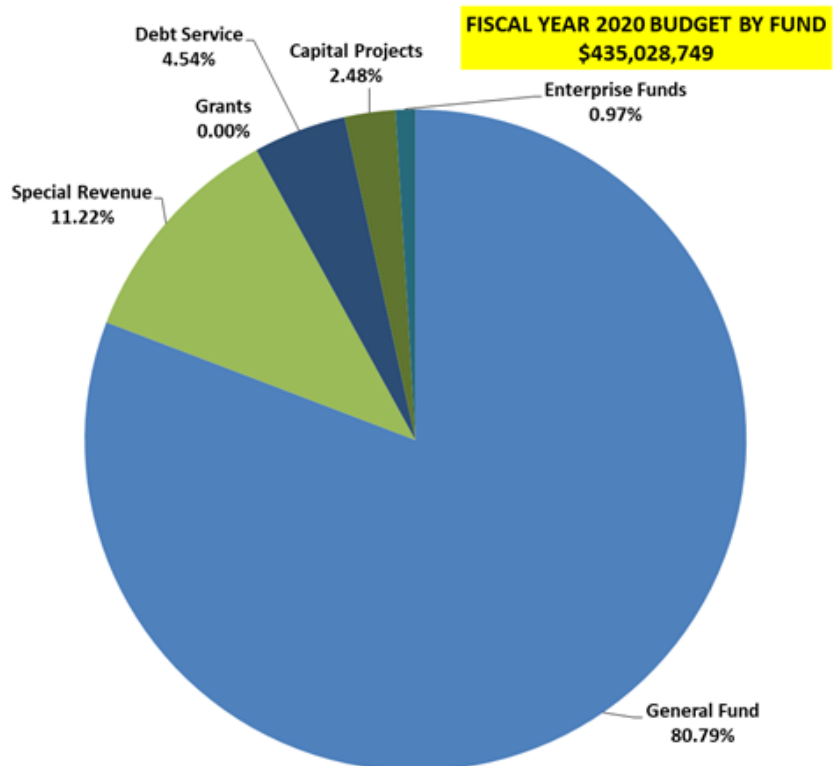
All county employees, to include elected officials, should earn what the market says they should earn. Our employees are our greatest asset and should be treated as such.

Many of the services the County provides are to individuals who live outside of the city limits. We, as the only local governmental body that directly provides services for many of those constituents, must address storm water issues, Investment in parks and roads, to name a couple.

Ensuring our County facilities are maintained and representative of the services we provide for the community, we have also allocated significant funds to capital projects. We can no longer afford to wait to address certain projects and may not have the ability to levy the funding necessary in the future.

Addressing critical infrastructure was also a top priority. We set aside \$3.2 million for storm water mitigation, \$800,000 for park enhancement grant matches, \$2 million for rural transit, and \$4.2 million for road paving and maintenance.

Addressing these many policies is not without cost, and coupled with the implementation of the 3.5% tax cap imposed by the state legislature that goes into effect in 2020, we have also seen that there is no alternative but to increase taxes for the incoming tax year. We simply cannot be financially sustainable as a county without this increase.



Census 2020

The upcoming decennial census will likely be the most impactful in our history. Given the political climate, now more than ever, it is vital that our community be accurately counted. We, in this community, and around the country, are part of the fabric that is America, are productive members of this society, and, fundamentally, are constitutionally required to be counted, regardless of immigration status.

This has been a major focus for me this year and last year and I have been greatly involved with the efforts being led by the County and the City. I am a member of the Action Team, or the steering committee, of the

Paso Del Norte Complete Count Committee. Our mission is to ensure that the Committee is on task and working towards mobilizing any and all community members and organizations so that no matter who you are or where you live, the Census is on your mind, and you have all of the information needed to fill it out.

To that end, Commissioners Court has invested considerable funds to ensure we achieve an accurate count, specifically counting the hard to count populations in our community, notably outside of the city limits. To date, the county alone has committed

\$350,000 to this effort. We will have an incredibly robust marketing plan and outreach tools so that everyone in our community is well aware of the importance and level of information security that surrounds the information individuals provide to the Census.

If you're interested in being part of these efforts, please contact Carlos Martinez with my office so that we can connect you to the Complete Count Committee and get you, your organization, or business on board. It's going to take all of us to make sure El Paso is accurately counted and receives the share of federal funding we deserve.

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United States
Census
2020

86th Legislative Session Update

Make no mistake, the 86th Legislative Session was not a good session for Cities and Counties. One of the main reasons we had to raise taxes this fiscal year, is because the State Legislature found it necessary to attack local entities and take away the local control, you the tax payers, you our direct constituency, entrust us with. For the past four years we had held the line on property taxes, in fact, last year we lowered taxes. We have been responsible stewards of your tax dollars, however, given the limitations the state has imposed beginning next year, there is no fiscal scenario that allows us to be sustainable in the coming years without raising taxes this go around.

The Speaker of the House, in

a recently released recording, explicitly said that his objective last session was to ensure local entities had the worst possible session ever, and that his hope is that next session is even worse. He is grossly unfit for office if he believes his local partners in counties are his enemy. We, like him, have sought public office to help improve the lives of our constituencies, shaping policy that is reflective of what the public seeks.

Ultimately, the tax payer will not see property tax relief until the legislature decides to adequately fund public education and the federal and state government address retirement adjustments and social security adjustments, respectively.

In terms of Education, the legislature added significant funds to public education, but it will not be enough. It is not a long term solution, and our children, educators, and tax payers deserve a more concrete plan for the future.

Another contributing factor to the tax rate increase is the fact that 65% of our county's budget must be allocated for programs and services the state deems we must provide. That, coupled with state's consistent implementation of unfunded mandates (other services and programs we are required to provide without the state's allocation of funds for us to implement them) creates an unsustainable situation. Over the course of time, the tab for these efforts adds up, and we need to find the funding to meet the letter of the law. Just this last session the state legislature directed us to develop a plan for disaster preparedness, implement a cyber-security training for all local government employees, and ensure all inmates of county facilities are evaluated for mental health issues. Not that we're against these mandates, but they cost money, and the state legislature seldom allocates funding for us to implement the programs they compel us to provide by law.



Healthy Food Financing Initiative, Binational Survey, and Binational Board

Three major policy proposals that have come out of my office include the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI), a Binational Survey, and creating an Office of New Americans were supported by the Court this fiscal year.

The Healthy Food Financing Initiative and the Binational Survey are two economic development tools that we are putting into place to assist our community. The former deals with addressing the major health crises our community faces that can all typically be traced to poor diets. The HFFI takes half a million dollars in grant funding and low interest loans and allows small businesses and entrepreneurs to apply for funding and loans to help increase access to healthy foods in what are called “food deserts.” These “food deserts” are areas in our community where there is no easy access to a grocery store or healthy restaurants or foods. The goal is to motivate private individuals and organizations to introduce and provide the access our community needs and deserves.

The Binational Survey is another economic development tool,

that will be useful for our Economic Development Department when attracting business. The County’s goal in this realm is not to award millions of dollars of incentives when attracting business, rather, we aim to sell the county and provide concrete data that demonstrates our community’s market power. To that end, the Binational Survey will help us attract businesses by showing them the data of how Mexican Nationals spend their money in our community and how our binational community is a major economic driver and worthy of investment from the types of businesses and restaurants our community craves and deserves.

Finally, the Office of New Americans is based on what other major cities in our country have done to ensure their communities are welcoming to migrants and refugees. El Paso is the new Ellis Island. We are the place where the next generation of immigrants and refugees will trace their roots to, and as a welcoming and responsive community, we will have a plan and people in place to connect people to resources so that they can have a smooth transition into our community. Enhancing and fortifying the fabric of our society, introducing their dreams, talents, and ambitions, to the land of the free and the home of the brave.



Precinct 2 Resolutions

Resolution recognizing El Paso Boxer, Kayla Gomez.

Resolution recognizing the life and work of Carlos Rosales in El Paso, County, Texas.

Resolution recognizing community members awarded by the Black El Paso Democrats.

Resolution designating February as Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month in El Paso County.

Resolution asking President Trump meet with local officials to become properly informed about our great and safe region during his visit to El Paso County.

Resolution recognizing the El Paso Bandits Youth Football Team for their American Youth Football National Championship victory.

Resolution designating February as El Paso Children's Hospital Birthday Month.

Resolution designating March 2019 as Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Resolution designating April as "Sexual Assault Awareness Month" in El Paso County.

Resolution designating April 2 as "National Service Recognition Day" in El Paso County.

Resolution recognizing the Veterans Food Drive.

Resolution seeking federal funding to mitigate trans-boundary flows and ensure adequate sewage, clean water, wastewater, and trash infrastructure.

Resolution designating May 1-4, 2019 as "Jury Appreciation Week."

Resolution recognizing the El Paso Rhinos hockey team in El Paso, County.

Resolution declaring June 2019 as Pride Month in El Paso County, Texas.

Resolution opposing the Migrant Protection Protocols policy.

Resolution recognizing El Paso Rage FC girls soccer team. (pictured below)

Resolution condemning hateful rhetoric against the Hispanic Community.

Resolution declaring October as "League of Women Voters of El Paso 100th Year Month.

Resolution recognizing October as "Domestic Violence Awareness Month", and the Center Against Sexual and Family Violence for their efforts combating sexual and family violence.



Commissioner Stout in the News

<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2019/08/el-paso-mayor-donald-trump-visit>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/06/el-paso-congresswoman-veronica-escobar-trump-not-welcome>

<https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/local/el-paso/2019/08/05/donald-trump-el-paso-visit-beto-orourke-veronica-escobar-mass-shooting-walmart/1926271001/11>

<https://kfoxtv.com/news/local/el-paso-county-announces-new-healthy-food-financing-initiative>

<https://kfoxtv.com/news/local/el-paso-county-hospital-considering-to-increase-taxes>

<https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/education/episd/2019/05/17/el-paso-parents-file-civil-rights-complaints-over-episd-plan-close-beall-burleson-schools/3700054002/>

<https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/2019/02/15/el-paso-community-leaders-sue-over-state-emergency-declaration/2883895002/>

<https://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/editorials/article/Urban-areas-are-not-the-enemies-of-Texas-13620848.php>

<https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/2019/02/28/el-paso-county-supports-position-help-migrants-undecided-100-k/3022269002/>

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