

I am Susybelle Gosslee speaking on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Dallas. I would like to present our Fair Park position which was developed by study and coming to consensus by our members, then reviewed in 1993 and 1999.

The League of Women Voters does not support political parties or candidates for public office. We encourage informed and active participation in government, work to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

The League supports:

1. Maximizing the use and attractiveness of Fair Park
2. Improvement of the management of Fair Park through:
 - a. Centralized and entrepreneurial management methods
 - b. Increased cooperation among the city, the park department and the various museums of Fair Park
 - c. Income generation by placing a surcharge on special events and/or leasing Park facilities while maintaining free admission to the Park
3. Strengthened relationship between Fair Park and the surrounding neighborhood by:
 - a. Protection of existing housing stock
 - b. A better link between Fair Park, downtown and the Arts District
 - c. Improved security in the neighborhood
 - d. Employment of more area residents
 - e. Promoting events geared to the neighborhood
4. The LWV believes that when governmental entities consider the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector, the community impact and goals of such transfers must be identified and considered. Further, the LWV believes that transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good must be ensured.

The decision to privatize a public service should be made after an informed, transparent planning process and thorough analysis of the implications of privatizing service delivery. While specific criteria will vary by service and local conditions, the League believes the following considerations apply to most decisions to transfer public services, assets and functions to the private sector:

- On-going and timely communication is needed with stake-holders and the public;

- Statement of the circumstances as they exist and what is to be gained with the proposal;
- Definitions of the quality, level and cost of services is expected;
- Assessment of the private market; whether there are providers to assure competitive pricing and delivery; (in some cases there may not be multiple providers if a service is so specialized.)
- Cost-benefit analyses evaluating short and long term costs of privatization should be made public, including the ongoing costs of contract administration and oversight;
- An understanding of the impact on customers, the broader community, environment and public employees is needed;
- An open, competitive bidding process with clearly defined criteria to be used in selecting a contractor is best practices;
- A provision and process to ensure the services or assets will be returned to the government if a contractor fails to perform;
- A data-driven selection of private entities whose goals, purposes, and means are not incompatible with the public well-being;
- The careful negotiation and drafting of the controlling privatization contract; and
- Adequate oversight and periodic performance monitoring of the privatized services by the government entity to ensure that the private entity is complying with all relevant laws and regulations, contract terms and conditions, and ethical standards, including public disclosure and comment.

The League created a study committee of the Fair Park proposal several months ago. More answers to some critical questions asked by the public need to be provided and a transparent decision-making process are needed before the League can make an informed decision. You are encouraged to follow the recommendations made in this presentation before having a vote to continue with the proposed plan.