

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF RICHARDSON

POSITIONS

I. **CITY CHARTER:** The League of Women Voters of Richardson believes that the Charter should provide a flexible and consistent framework to enable the city to function effectively and respond to the needs of its citizens. We support:

A. Electing City Council Members and Mayor

1. Election of the Mayor by City Council.
2. Seven Council Members all elected at large; those members in elected Places 1, 2, 3, and 4 must reside in the correspondingly numbered districts.
3. District boundaries that are drawn to ensure equal representation on the Council. These boundaries should be reviewed by a Commission after every census (every ten years). The Commission should be made up of citizens appointed by the Council and representatives of all areas of the city;
4. Staggered terms of office for Council Members.
5. Compensation set by the Council by ordinance at least six months before an election.

B. Miscellaneous

1. Adequate and timely input from citizens into the budget-making process: the proposed budget should be published a sufficient time before a public hearing is held, and sufficient time should be allowed after the public hearing before adoption by the City Council.
2. Publication and adequate opportunity for public input on all ordinances before adoption by the City Council.
3. A review of the Charter at least every ten years by a charter commission of citizens.

II. **ELECTION LAWS AND PROCEDURES:** We support:

- A. Consolidation of elections where possible;
- B. Itemized bond elections.

III. **LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN:** We support:

Policies and practices designed to achieve the optimum use of land in our city. We believe that good land use planning and zoning takes into account such factors as: integrity of neighborhoods, management of traffic, requirements for municipal services, environmental quality, open and green space, protection of flood plains, preservation of historic sites and rare or fragile ecosystems, potential for redevelopment, the need for a variety of types of housing, tax base, and the relationship of proposed development to the needs of the city as a whole.

A. Land Use Policy

1. A system for making decisions on local land use planning and zoning that includes:
 - a. Opportunities for public input at all stages.
 - b. A well-informed city council that considers the needs of the city as a whole in setting policy.
 - c. A city plan commission with a broad base of citizen representation. Members of the commission should be provided with, and encouraged to take advantage of, opportunities for training.
 - d. A highly qualified professional planning staff that is well acquainted with the local situation. The staff should have adequate funding and facilities.

2. A balance between commercial and residential development that ensures both a high quality of life and a reasonable tax base.
3. Flexibility and innovation in planning, zoning, and building codes.
4. Housing that will accommodate a population with age, economic, and cultural diversity.
5. Permanent zoning for all land in Richardson that currently has a temporary zoning designation.
6. Land use policies that ensure the maintenance of flood plain integrity.
7. Use of the concept of planned development district to encourage innovative uses of land that will preserve usable open spaces and landscape features.
8. Communication on land use issues with neighboring municipalities and inter-jurisdictional organizations, and cooperation in areas of mutual concern.
9. We support a comprehensive long-range land use plan for Richardson that:
 - a. is based upon a thorough evaluation of current and projected land use in developed and vacant parts of Richardson and the contiguous areas of neighboring cities.
 - b. addresses the needs of the community as a whole.
 - c. considers the effect of planning decisions on the integrity of neighborhoods and the viability of local businesses.
 - d. takes into account the potential for redevelopment in the city as well as new development in vacant areas.
 - e. incorporates innovative and effective methods for management of traffic in developed areas of the city, and makes adequate provision for projected traffic in areas that will be developed in the future.
 - f. provides sufficient park land, open space, and green space to serve the current and anticipated population size and lifestyle of the community. The area devoted to parks and open space should reflect local needs and desires and not be limited by minimum guidance standards. This section of the comprehensive plan should be based upon reevaluation of parks and open spaces in the developed areas of the city as well as estimation of future needs in undeveloped areas.
 - g. includes elements of urban design that will produce an attractive and livable city.
 - h. includes provisions for periodic review and revision.
 - i. provides convenient and well-defined opportunities for public participation in the review process.
 - j. is used as a policy guide for decisions on land use planning and zoning in the future.
 - k. encourages the use of techniques and materials to protect the environment.

B. Parks

1. A system of parks and open spaces designed to serve a diversity of needs and interests within the community. These should include:
 - a. A variety of parks ranging from vest pocket size to greenbelts.
 - b. Utilization of flood plains for natural parks and open spaces.
 - c. Identification and preservation of historic sites and unique ecosystems.
 - d. Identification and preservation of areas suitable for bird and wildlife sanctuaries.
 - e. Provision for passive as well as active use areas in parks.
 - f. A balance between space for free play and for organized sports.
 - g. Efforts to make neighborhood parks adjacent to schools more inviting to the public.

- h. Utilization of plants to conserve natural resources.
- 2. Establishment of a historic park at the site of the Routh Cemetery.
- 3. Preservation of a large naturalistic area in the Beck Branch/Rowlett Creek corridor of Breckinridge Park. This area should be large enough to remain ecologically viable while supporting projected use.
- 4. Use of a variety of methods to acquire open space and park land, such as:
 - a. Encouraging private donation of desirable park sites.
 - b. Encouraging private contributions to park funds.
 - c. Using money from bond elections, general funds, and other county, state, and federal sources for acquisition and maintenance of parks and open spaces.
- 5. Quality municipal recreation center facilities with adequate space to serve recreation and leisure needs in the City of Richardson. Funding sources should include, but not be limited to:
 - a. City bond referendum to fund construction, renovation, and/or land acquisition;
 - b. Partnership with other entities to develop shared facilities;
 - c. Private or corporate donations.

C. Transportation

- 1. Greater involvement of all sectors of the community in local and regional transportation planning, with continuous reevaluation and flexible, long-range plans;
- 2. Consideration of social, environmental, aesthetic, and human values;
- 3. A total transportation system, including various forms of public transit.
- 4. Participation of Richardson in the Dallas Area Rapid Transit;
- 5. Funding of DART by General Use and Sales Tax (up to 1%) and/or other sources.

D. Solid Waste

- 1. Reduction of the volume of material going into the landfill;
- 2. Recycling of solid wastes;
- 3. Encouragement of the use of recycled materials.

IV. CHILD CARE IN RICHARDSON: The League of Women Voters of Richardson believes that safe, reliable, affordable, quality child care should be available for every child in Richardson. We support:

A. Improvements in child care

- 1. Improve access to quality child care for all families;
- 2. Aid low- to moderate-income parents in paying for such care;
- 3. Provide for sliding fee scales to help facilitate the socioeconomic mix of children within child care facilities;
- 4. Strengthen child care standards and improve their implementation;
- 5. Strengthen family day care as well as center care;
- 6. Support parental involvement in child care;
- 7. Support the development of training programs to ensure qualified staff in child care programs;
- 8. Encourage coordination among the various state and local agencies that affect young children and their families;

9. Provide sufficient funds to serve more children, assure quality, and improve the level of compensation for child care workers.
- B. Utilization of federal and state tax funds to achieve higher quality child care and to subsidize child care for lower-income families.
- C. Utilization of PISD and RISD physical facilities for activities related to child care, such as:
 1. On-site care of school-age children before and after school;
 2. Developmentally appropriate educational programs for three- to five-year-old children;
 3. Adult education classes for parents and child care workers.

V. PUBLIC HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN RICHARDSON: The League of Women Voters of Richardson believes that the City of Richardson and school districts serving Richardson residents should be involved in addressing local needs for health care services. We believe that mandated public health care services should be provided equitably, effectively, and efficiently. We support:

A. The City of Richardson

1. Providing those environmental and consumer health services necessary to maintain a safe and healthy community.
2. Providing resources to identify public health care services needed in the community and to seek support for programs that address these needs (e.g., apply for public or private grant support).
3. Working with others (e.g., volunteer groups, local school districts, medical centers, and state and county agencies) to identify needs for health care services and information in the community, and to promote public awareness of services that are available.
4. Participating in programs that address unmet needs in the community for immunization programs, preventive care, primary care, and transportation for eligible Richardson residents to and from facilities that provide public health care.
5. Actively working to ensure that public and private health care services, including a Dallas County Hospital District Community Outreach Primary Care (COPC) clinic, are available to Richardson residents at convenient locations in or near the city.

B. Local School Districts Serving Richardson

1. Working with others (e.g., parents, volunteer groups, medical centers, city staff and elected officials, and state and county agencies) to identify needs for medical services and information in the student population, and to maintain a referral system for those who do not have access to necessary services.
2. Supporting the location within the community of public and private facilities that address the health care needs of students and their families.

VI. TELEVISIONING CITY COUNCIL AND RISD TRUSTEE MEETINGS: The League of Women Voters of Richardson supports video recording the Richardson City Council meetings and Richardson ISD Board of Trustees meetings and making the recordings readily available to the public by television or other electronic means.

VII. RICHARDSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT: We support:

1. The development within RISD of elective programming, such as Magnet Schools and Centers of Interest, for the purpose of providing a variety of opportunities and choice for parents and children in the public school system;
2. The consideration of ethnic and racial balance in selection of students for Magnet Schools and other elective programs as one of the possible ways to comply with federal, state and local laws and policies regarding desegregation and applicable federal court desegregation decrees;

3. The availability of full-time kindergarten for children who are economically disadvantaged or have limited English proficiency, as well as for all other children who wish to be included;
4. The development and implementation of special language and foreign language programs available to all elementary and secondary students who choose to participate, in addition to required language programs for limited English speaking students;
5. The participation of RISD in parental education programs that provide non-English speakers and others the skills parents need to help their children succeed in school;
6. The expansion of technical and vocational programs designed to meet the needs of non-college bound students;
7. The use of the following sources of funding to develop and support these programs: redistribution of available local funds; increased property taxes if allowable by state law; state (TEA) funds; federal funds; grants from public and private sources; public/private partnerships and other sources such as gifts if available.

VIII. RISD AND SCHOOLS IN PISD THAT SERVE RICHARDSON STUDENTS; We support:

1. Effective school guidance and counseling programs. Essential elements of an effective guidance counseling program include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Services for students of all ages and stages of development.
 - b. A comprehensive program designed to address the academic, personal, social, and career development of all students.
 - c. The availability of informational materials for non-English speaking students and parents, wherever practical.
 - d. Resources to help guidance counselors address student needs and increase the time available for student/counselor interaction.
2. School health service programs with sufficient staff and facilities to provide health education and address health problems that influence the ability of students to learn. The school health service should provide:
 - a. Nurse: student ratios that take into account the health status of the student population and the recommendations of the National Association of School Nurses.
 - b. Support staff to assist nurses with clerical tasks and routine screening procedures.