



For Immediate Release

Wednesday, September 10, 2014

Contact: Leigh Murrin

210.215.9415 | leigh.murrin@seiu.org

San Antonio Residents Call for City to Include \$3 Million in Budget for West Side Street Lights

SEIU members and neighbors attend final budget hearing to let City officials know that the city's west side deserves the safety that comes with well-lit streets.

San Antonio – Wednesday, as part of the We're All in This Together team, SEIU Texas members stood with neighbors at a press conference prior to the final city hearing regarding the 2014 – 2015 budget to call for at least \$3 million to use towards street lights on San Antonio's west side.

"All San Antonio residents should feel safe on their own street," said **Juanita Elizondo, a San Antonio west side resident**. "However, without streetlights, those of us living on the west side don't know what we are walking out to because our streets are dark, so of course, some of us are fearful when we walk out our front door after the sun sets."

In Las Vegas, 42,000 new LED streetlights were installed in 2013, at a cost of \$20.8 million.¹ That's roughly \$495 per light. With reduced energy costs and longer lifespans, the city expects payback in seven to ten years. In 2010, Boston replaced 25,000 lights at \$6.8 million, roughly \$265 per light (and the city workers proved cheaper and faster than contractors).² Based on these cities' investments and others across the United States, it is estimated that a light costs an average of about \$500 to retrofit. Retrofitting a light does not require new wiring and poles. \$3 million would retrofit 6,000 lights.

In 2012, San Antonio spent \$14 million on 25,000 new LED streetlights.³ This equaled about \$560 per light, fully installed.

Based on estimates by the City of Santa Monica, new installations, which require poles, wiring, and other infrastructure, need more funds per light.⁴ Using this estimate, \$3 million would buy approximately 45 blocks of new lights.

The City can afford spending \$3 million on streetlights. According to City records, over the last ten years, the City of San Antonio has underestimated revenues and overestimated expenses by an average of \$52.6 million per year. Expenditures have been overestimated by an average of \$21.5 million per year while revenue has been underestimated at an average of \$31.1 million per year.

more

¹ <http://www.energymanagertoday.com/led-street-lights-save-las-vegas-2-million-per-year-095235/>

² Apparently phase one did 40% of 64,000 lights for \$6.8 million <http://www.cityofboston.gov/publicworks/lighting/led.asp>.

³ <http://www.kens5.com/news/25000-new-LED-streetlights-to-brighten-up-San-Antonio-141121933.html>

⁴ <http://www.smgov.net/Departments/PublicWorks/ContentCivEng.aspx?id=8621>

“While it is wise to budget cautiously -- the city should not act as if it does not have revenues it actually has,” **said Buddy Villejo, SEIU Texas member and city worker.** “The residents of San Antonio deserve better. We should not have to live in fear because our streets don’t have working lights when the city is has an average over \$50 million more than projected each year.”

The We’re All in This Together team has been active throughout the 2014-2015 budget process and worked to make sure the City included a 1% cost of living increase, funds for senior and health programs and added technology at public libraries in its proposed budget. However, the \$300,000 was not enough to cover the costs to light up San Antonio’s west side neighborhood, specifically streets In the I-35/Hwy 90 corridor.

“It’s our city and our budget,” said **Dee Lim, SEIU Texas Executive Board Member.** “We are all in this together to make sure that our priorities are put into this year’s budget.”

###

We’re All in this Together is a coalition of SEIU Texas members, other city residents, community organizations, and local businesses who believe that all residents should have equal access to quality public services. Together, they are working to make San Antonio a better place to live and work by ensuring residents’ priorities are the foundation of our city budget.