



## Mayor's Message February 2022

As we head into the official month of "Valentine love", Superbowl, and Winter Olympics...we also have our own local news to focus us on the great life we enjoy here in Horseshoe Bay.

### City News

We were proud to kick off the year by **finalizing the role of City Manager**. Jeff Koska stepped forward to serve as interim during a 3 month review for City leadership needs. During that time, he brought his over 20 years of community/regional work forward. As we engaged county and neighboring cities – and worked with department leaders and business owners within the City, the relationships and respect he has built over the years proved a major benefit for a smooth transition for City operations. The article in the Beacon gave you a solid professional history review, but our daily walk with Jeff has demonstrated the valued character, competence and commitment we know will serve us all well in the coming years.

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As promised, a **full data report of State of the City** activity for 2021 is posted on the website (<https://www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/574/Mayors-State-of-the-City-Message>). Reflecting on the near 9,000 calls to police, 20,000+ city documents converted to electronic records, over 5,000 utility field calls, etc....it underscore the huge volume of behind the scenes daily work engaged to keep our City functioning well. The posted report will give you more information than you want....but is definitely an interesting review as we look ahead to how we maintain our current high quality service and response.

Our **Emergency Planning tabletop held this month** to ensure preparation for any winter weather events demonstrated full competence in our readiness. In-house equipment, detailed roles of each department/council member, and step by step communication processes were checked off from first notice of event through to final safe return to normal for all. We don't anticipate anything coming our way – but **take confidence, your city is prepared**. A thorough utility infrastructure audit has provided a sense of stability in our processes and services, with planned major upgrades appropriate for aging facilities and increased demand. A spring Emergency practice will focus on tornadoes, wind fire safety.

**A team of volunteers will be contacting every citizen** through utility contacts information to ensure we have current phone/email for notifications if/when an emergency occurs that requires action on the part of the homeowner. If they cannot reach someone (phone/email changed), they will mail a notice or reach out through community Property Owner's Associations. Please respond so you are part of the communication network. **This information will only be used in an emergency.**

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**A review of City Hall/Center continues.** An **inspection** of the current building shows significant mildew (but not mold – a relief of prior concern), some roof damage, and wood rot/attic area damage from 'frisky critters' and weather. Add-ons over the years (creating office space in halls, closets, etc.) and the original basic scale create different challenges. But the space can still be usable for maybe the next 10 years with some mild remodel and care for some departments if some move out. A 10 year forecast has determined that Development Services, Public Works, Compliance, and Utility management can remain. Moving City administrative functions to a new site will allow this remaining core staff to spread out in professional space, development plans/map review meetings, and manage the constant flow of builders/inspectors until/developers until the time comes to either sell or repurpose this original space. The **new space donated on FM 2147** will allow for a conservative footprint for administrative functions (finance, HR, city manager, public utility support, IT, city council/chambers, records management, and

communications). While city functions are the main focus, it will allow the community to also have a City Center with a foyer area to display the history, awards, mapping, and celebrations of HSBay. It will provide for public access with a council chamber to hold up to 75 (rather than the current crowded 30 for a community of 7,000) and provide for safe Municipal Court activity. An outside covered area (near the creek and potential walking/picnic area) can help support demo workshops for (ex: water conservation, native planting) and lead into larger parking lot area for outdoor community gatherings such as Veteran's salute, Earth Day, Holidaze, or collaborations with POA/special interest groups. This Center will serve the core of City operations for decades to come – and present a proud profile along FM 2147- with potential for expansion on the 4 acres for decades to come if needed. The resort has future plans under consideration to create a quality retail 'boardwalk' fronting FM 2147 that would extend the City Center space to create outdoor gathering/dining/shopping options for our convenience. In addition to the Center, a much needed expansion of the West Fire Station to support the growth and minor renovations to the existing building to address roof/mildew/usage will be needed.

As we examine projections for city costs/needs – we are being careful to ensure to calculate a conservative (but realistic) look at staffing, rising equipment/fuel costs, increased service needs. In the end, we will come to the community for a vote so that all have a voice in the community future. We are working hard on managed growth, but growth is emerging. While this brings added tax revenue – it also adds to service costs. Still - we are confident that the careful fiscal management to date will allow us to meet all these needs with NO tax increase. Low interest rates (even with some pending adjustments) make this the wise time to invest and address needs.

We will host community meetings in May (through POAs, citizen academy members, interest groups, business alliance, and Town Hall meeting) so all questions can be answered before neighbors head out for the summer and return to a November bond vote (early/mail-in voting in October). Communication and transparency will be at the heart of all discussions so that you can vote with confidence for your city's future. In the meantime, we search for all grants and financial partnerships. This year alone we have taken advantage of over 2 million dollars of non-property tax funds to the benefit of utilities, internet collaboration, and emergency services to honor efficiency of tax dollar expenditures.

### Community Focus

We are learning (without surprise) the value developers are placing on having a "Horseshoe Bay" address as multiple projects are being promoted. The City is holding firm to welcoming new development only if the proposal carries the standards of HSBay and puts a plan in motion that will have limited, managed direct impact on others now and in the future. Already three requests have been denied based upon the density, zoning challenges, and limited planning. Some high quality, comprehensive plans are coming forward that could be a proud addition to our community as a whole – and provide for new home settings for neighbors in developments with amenities and greenspace.

**Remember that tree trimming is banned** after February 1<sup>st</sup> to prevent Oak Wilt activity through June. Hopefully, all have had a chance to clear out broken/dead branches from last year – if not, wait 'til July.

**It is 'dig in' month in Horseshoe Bay** – as you find creative ways to manage the cold, wet, wind that is February. Your City team will be working daily to keep the water, sewer, safety, and forward movement going. I hope you will relax into 'in home' activities, spread some Valentine love, and hang on .....spring is just a month away in our Horseshoe Bay.



Cynthia Cline Smith, Mayor

City Website - [www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov](http://www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov)