

2020 Annual Report
City of Fredericksburg, TX



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City Manager's Message by Kent Myers

The year 2020 brought a new set of challenges to every City department as we dealt with the many issues related to COVID-19. While we normally devote staff time every year to planning for emergency disasters, nothing could have fully prepared us for this pandemic. However, City employees met the challenges of the pandemic and we were able to provide essential services without interruptions. This included Police, Fire/EMS, Electric, Water/Wastewater, Sanitation and Building Permit/Inspection services.

One thing that the virus has taught all of us is the importance of being flexible so that we can react to suddenly changing conditions. We apparently reacted quite well as we realized many major accomplishments which are included in this report. Our local economy rebounded very well after several months of decreased activity. And the City's financial position also improved due to budget adjustments that were made during the year. As 2020 came to a close, we started to see hopeful signs that the impact from the virus was diminishing.

When reflecting on the past year, the following accomplishments rise to the top of the list:

- Secured designation as a Dark Sky Community by the International Dark Sky Association
- Continued implementation of recommendations included in Community Visioning Study
- Worked with County and TXDOT to complete the Relief Route Feasibility Study
- Served as President of the Texas Public Power Association (TPPA)
- Received the Mentoring Award from the Texas City Management Association (TCMA)
- Prepared FY 2021 City Budget that included another decrease in the property tax rate
- Initiated planning for the 2024 Eclipse event
- Completed major study on roadway improvements for possible future bond election
- Increased TMRS benefits for City employees which will increase our ability to retain and recruit quality employees in the future
- Hired new employees to fill key positions in several City departments including a new Development Services Director and IT Director
- Continued implementation of the annexation plan previously approved by the City Council
- Developed new policies and procedures for handling special events during the pandemic
- Initiated new contract for HOT tax collections and HOT permitting with outside vendor
- Completed coordination efforts with Census Bureau to ensure an accurate local population count
- Initiated major revisions to Historic District Guidelines for Council consideration in 2021
- Initiated fund-raising for major improvements at Marktplatz including new playground, restrooms, and meeting room
- Continued construction of major water improvements included in the \$18 million water revenue bond project
- Coordinated with Morning Rotary Club to add new playground at Old Fair Park
- Complete construction of new Electric Services Building
- Reduced expenses in all City departments in response to expected decreases in revenues due to COVID-19
- Administered a successful November election

- Received Distinguished Budget Presentation Award
- Initiated new mental wellness program for first responders and their families
- Completed cybersecurity training for all City employees in compliance with State law
- Completed career development plan for the Police Department
- Ranked in the top 50 safest cities by several statewide professional organizations
- Implemented the pandemic response plan for COVID-19
- Completed a five-year plan for Fire/EMS operations

One of our primary goals for the coming year is to continue to protect the public and our employees from potential exposure to the virus while we continue to progress as a community. This will require partnerships with local organizations and the public as we work together in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. We should not lose sight of the fact that the City of Fredericksburg is the envy of many cities across the State due to our resilience in dealing with challenges and our ability to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves now and in the future.

Development Services

2020 was a busy year for Development in the City of Fredericksburg. Commercial Construction saw a 20% increase in activity from 2019 as well as the addition of several new businesses to the community. This includes Guadalupe Bank, Granite Lounge and the two new county buildings. A total of 24 Building Permits were issued for New Commercial Construction and 43 permits were also issued for commercial remodel or additions.

A total of 100 permits were issued for new single family residential homes and another 247 permits were issued for residences that included additions, alterations, accessory buildings and other property development.

Short-term rentals continued to be a booming industry for the City of Fredericksburg with 654 STR permits issued. Staff did see a significant increase in complaints, specifically in R1 Zoned areas and are actively working with management companies and property owners alike to address these issues.

Code Enforcement stayed busy monitoring the City for various code violations. A total of 1,000 violations were observed and addressed. That number consisted of 650 public nuisance violations, 300 water violations and 40 sign violations. Code Enforcement also issued 30 temporary signs, 103 community service banners, 50 sign permits, and 85 water variances. This also led to six properties abated due to multiple nuisance violations. Code Enforcement facilitated the removal of 10 unsafe structures from the city of Fredericksburg.

The Planning & Zoning Commission met throughout the course of 2020 and held 9 meetings which reviewed a total of 23 Project Applications 13 of which involved Public Hearings. The Board of Adjustments held five meetings and considered five applications in 2020.

The department also completed the annexation of Area 6, 117.1 acres of land located along the south side of West Live Oak Street, extending from east of Post Oak Road to West of Smokehouse Road. Several zoning ordinance amendments were approved, including an amendment to the Sign

Ordinance regarding the uniform sign standards for C-1.5, establishing Ordinance 2020-12 which requires form surveys upon forming up the proposed foundation of a building or improvement.

The City kicked off the update of the Historic District Design Guidelines in January of 2020 with a well-attended public meeting at Pioneer Museum that included presentations from staff and the guideline consultants, HHM from Austin. A survey was sent out that more than 70 people responded. HHM released a draft of the Guidelines/Standards in May. The City hosted two virtual public meetings to go over the draft document. A workshop was held in October to fine tune comments on the draft. The Historic Review Board made a recommendation on their comments to be sent back to the consultants in December. The final draft will be released in early 2021 for HRB and City Council adoption.

The Historic Review Board continued to meet during COVID-19 restrictions at the Hill Country University Center. Joe Salinas, Jr. joined the Historic Review Board in August. The HRB recommended landmark designation of the Old High School and Fort Martin Scott both of which were approved by City Council.

In August, Anna Hudson gave a presentation on the success of downtown Fredericksburg at a regional virtual conference of the American Planning Association Southwest Section. She also completed the Chamber's Leadership Gillespie County 2020 Class.

Staff issued 96 administrative Certificates of Appropriateness and the Historic Review Board reviewed 58 Certificates of Appropriateness. The HRB saw many requests for additions, new construction, and demolition of accessory structures.

Engineering Division

Over the past year, the Engineering Division of the Public Works Department has assisted all divisions within Public Works and other City departments in the review, development, and implementation of a number of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects and various other systems and programs.

CIP projects involving the Engineering Division include Street, Drainage, Sanitation, Electric, Water, and Wastewater Projects. Projects completed in 2020 include improvements to pavement and sidewalks throughout the City as part of the annual paving and sidewalk improvement programs. Additionally, Engineering staff designed and/or provided project management oversight for the completion of the Landfill Cell #8, a Traffic Impact Study relating to short and medium-term roadway improvement projects, installation of an all-way stop condition at the intersection of W. Austin St. and N. Milam, storm sewer improvements at Old Fair Park and off of Industrial Loop, 2018 Water Bond Projects (3 - 1 MG Water Tanks, Knauth Pump Station, HWY 290 East Water Transmission Main), and the New Electric Department Building at the City Warehouse. In addition, the City applied for and received a grant through the Flood Infrastructure Fund for installation of flood early warning systems (flood gates) at five low-water crossings throughout the City.

Looking ahead to 2021, work will continue on locally-sponsored projects that could help relieve traffic congestion in and around the City, the annual sidewalk improvement program including

possible completion of the S. Llano shared-use bridge project (grant funded), completion of the flood early warning system project, completion of the Bell Street water line rehabilitation project, completion of the construction of the Green Meadows Lift Station, completion of the construction of the Main Street Decorative Light Replacement Project, completion of the electric meter replacement project, start design for the West Live Oak Road water and sewer, and start design and construction of the North Llano and East Main water line replacement.

Electric Division

In addition to their regular duties associated with the operation and maintenance of the City's electric distribution system, the City of Fredericksburg Electric Division is also responsible for a number of special seasonal projects within the City. This includes the installation, removal, and maintenance of Christmas lights on buildings, stringing of lights across Main street, hanging of wreaths on poles along Main Street during the Holiday Season.

In 2020, the Electric Division completed many projects including:

- LBJ RV Park Electric Upgrade - 1700 Hwy 16 South
- Gillespie County Maintenance Building - 95 Frederick Road
- Guadalupe Bank - 804 South Adams
- New Electric Department Warehouse - 235 Friendship
- Kerrville Public Utility - Storm Restoration
- New Eagle Apartments - 603 S. Eagle
- Mosley Condos - 925 Apple
- Sandcastle URD rehab
- Ongoing Street Light Replacement to LED
- 8 - Rehab jobs
- 9 - Upgrade Residential Service
- 2 - New Fiber Optic Installations
- 95 - New Service Installations
- 37- Temporary Services
- 179 - Trouble Calls
- 178 - Street Light Repairs
- 576 - Field Service Orders
- 593 - Line Locates
- Had 8 Safety Meetings from TEC Loss Control

Upcoming projects in 2021 include:

- Seven Hills Hotel & Conference Center - 1450 US Hwy 87 North
- Turner Hall - 103 East Travis
- The Emigrant - 341 East Main
- Fredericksburg Hotel - 108 East Ufer
- Street Light Pole Replacement - 100 W,100,200 and 300 E. Main

- West End Pizza - 209 E. San Antonio
- Ongoing Street Light Replacement to LED
- Sandcastle URD rehab
- The Albert Hotel - 234 E. Main

Streets Division

The Street Division of the Public Works Department maintains over 100 miles of streets throughout Fredericksburg. As part of the program to maintain these streets, the Street Division performs an annual paving project, where 10% of all city streets are paved or sealed each year. The project begins the previous year with an assessment of the condition of paved surfaces. The areas selected then have the trees trimmed, any base failures repaired, and patching (level up) performed to improve the quality of ride and drainage. Additionally, Street Division crews maintain street right of ways to provide vehicle clearance, as well as sign and intersection visibility.

The City's fleet of light vehicles and heavy equipment is maintained by three mechanics from the Street Division. State vehicle inspections are done in house and vehicles being sold are also prepped in the city shop. Warranty repairs and fleet lease service is also scheduled by the mechanics.

The Street Division typically provides traffic control for 3 parades on Main Street each year, as well as for several other festivals and incidents, such as street/lane closures for construction or weather issues. All street name signs, warning signs, and information signs on non-TxDOT maintained roadways within the city limits are installed and maintained by Street crews.

A free service that the City provides is the annual city-wide leaf collection program. Twice each year (October-January & March-April) leaves are collected and transported to the City Landfill and made into compost for lawn and garden use. Approximately 3,000 cubic yards are processed each year.

Major projects completed in 2020:

- With assistance from the Engineering Division, installed 288 feet of new curb and 50 feet of new handrail on West Schubert Street. Also constructed ADA compliant sidewalk ramps at the intersection of West Windcrest and South Milam.
- Repaired and paved the majority of the RV camping area at Lady Bird Park.
- The overall paving project was limited to about 100,000 square yards due to financial and staffing challenges.
- A project driven by the Transportation Study was implemented by transitioning the West Austin/North Milam intersection to a 4-Way STOP. This has proven successful in moving traffic more smoothly in all directions.
- About 760 feet of 24-inch drainpipe and a curb inlet structure were installed at Old Fair Park to solve some erosion issues.

Looking to 2021, the Street Division's focus will include:

- Complete repairs and pave the camping next to the Dog Park at Lady Bird RV Park.
- Resume the paving with about 200,000 square yards (40 plus acres) planned.
- Continue with Vegetation Management/Storm Water Division to install drainage structures at Industrial Loop and Beverly Drive.

- Develop a department on-call system to improve response in emergency situations.
- Modify traffic control at various areas based on the Transportation Project Traffic Impact Study.

Water/Wastewater Division

This past year, the Water Division treated and delivered 850,276,000 gallons of potable water to the city's water distribution system and our customers. All conservation measures are still in effect and being enforced. In the distribution system, crews repaired 25 water main breaks, and 70 new connections were added to our system. On the collection side, 70 connections were added and 12 sewer tap replacements were addressed. Crews responded to 25 mainline stoppages and cleaned approximately 14,325 linear feet of sewer mainline. Crews responded to over 514 calls for service which range from water shut off, leaks, to pressure issues and sewer stop ups. Crews also performed over 1,393 line locates as part of the 811 system for contractors, citizens, and other utility companies. In addition, City crews help contractors replace all the water meters in our distribution system. The water department finished all of the water and sewer upgrades to Lady Bird Johnson RV Park. Over 900 feet of pipe, along with many water and sewer services, were added into the system, and numerous other small-scale projects were completed. Crews also started a valve maintenance program and started painting fire hydrants City wide. The Water and Wastewater Division has worked on many small projects such as painting all the wells and pump stations.

The Water Reclamation Facility treated 428 million gallons of wastewater and pumped 235 million gallons of effluent water to our local golf courses annually. The plant also produced 2,664 cubic yards of Bio-Solids which was hauled to our local landfill.

Sanitation Division

In 2020, approximately 37,432 tons of garbage were placed in our landfill which is approximately 2,033 tons more than in 2019. Of this, 5,077 tons was city residential, picked up by City crews. The estimated useful life of the landfill is approximately 17.6 years which is 2.1 years less than 2019. The division chipped 15,631 piles of brush at 301 tons from curbside collection which is approximately 95 tons less than in 2019. Also, 1,312 tons of brush were collected at the landfill which is 72 tons more than in 2019. Approximately 184 tons of grass clippings and leaves were added to the compost operation while approximately 1,317 cubic yards of double ground wood chips were sold along with 283 cubic yards of compost.

The City of Fredericksburg Recycling Center recycled over 404 tons of material in 2020, 292 tons less than 2019, which consisted of approximately 273 tons of cardboard, 11 tons of aluminum, and 120 tons of steel.

The number of residential garbage customers is 5,105, an increase of 126. The City currently collects from 101 dumpsters, 5,480 AGC cans, and makes 25 assistive stops each week.

In 2020, construction of Cell #8 was completed, and a new chipper truck, chipper, and leaf truck were purchased.

Projects for 2021 include fixing scale railing and replacing a lawnmower. Additionally, the City will continue to research ways of expanding the City's recycling program and researching the long-term plan for the landfill.

Stormwater/Vegetation Management Division

Stormwater and vegetation management is needed to protect our community and environment from the potential impacts of storm water runoff, such as flooding, erosion, damage to aquatic habitat, and pollution of streams and rivers. In 1992, the City took a proactive stance and created a new Municipal Drainage Utility to better serve the community. This new utility was designed to protect the citizenry from the loss of life and property caused by surface water stagnation and to maintain and improve existing water drainage facilities belonging to the City. Upon completion of the Drainage Master Plan in 2016, the City began implementation of a dedicated Stormwater/ Vegetation Management Program that is funded by the Municipal Drainage Utility fees. This program began operations in July of 2019 and is tasked with maintaining City-owned drainage channels and rights of way, clearing brush and invasive vegetation, keeping streets and storm sewer systems clear of debris, and improving drainage infrastructure to minimize flooding.

During the 2020 fiscal year, Stormwater/Vegetation Management crews focused on improved maintenance of public ROW and drainageways, clearing debris from storm sewer inlets, and erosion repair and prevention. Additionally, crews have trimmed and removed tree and brush from approximately 25 lane miles of powerlines, alleyways and roadways allowing for better vision and less power outages. Crews also mowed approximately 10 lane miles of ROW and City-maintained detention pond along with the installation of storm sewer improvements at Old Fair Park.

Looking forward to FY2021, the Stormwater/Vegetation Management program will continue to expand with a focus on tree trimming in and around power lines, clearing City-owned or maintained areas along Town and Barons Creeks, for possible future walking or hiking trails and picnic areas along these creeks. Crews will also assist in the installation of storm sewer improvements along Industrial Loop and Beverly Drive. The Department will also continue large-scale erosion repair and prevention projects and begin to plan for high priority drainage projects included in the City's Drainage Master Plan.

Lady Bird Johnson Golf Course

January 1st of 2020 arrived with the same excitement that we have every year at the turning of the page, with all the possibilities ahead of us. Then came the news of the virus spreading in the far-East, yet still the future seemed bright. As the days passed and Spring loomed on the horizon, some uncertainty entered the picture as to what would happen next. By the time Spring Break began in Texas, it became clear that things were about to change in a way none of us had ever experienced before. Out of an abundance of caution, Lady Bird Golf Course closed its doors on April 2nd, with no real clear plan as to what would happen next.

As May rolled around, there was still so much uncertainty in the world, but the one place that seemed safe to be was outside! When Lady Bird GC reopened its doors on May 1st, we were met with a rush of excitement for golf that has not been seen in decades. The golf course was “the place” to be as golfers young and old, beginners and experienced saw the greens as an escape from the indoors and began to spend more and more time on the links. In retrospect, 2020 was a year for the record book in terms of rounds of golf played nationwide and at our own Lady Bird.

Golf would be played differently than it had in the past, but it was played with an exuberance possibly never seen. Lady Bird staff went to great lengths to ensure the safety of all our players; carts were single rider use only, masks were worn in the parts of the building allowed to be open and oh, the sanitization... everything in sight was wiped with bleach and treated in a manner to eliminate any potential spread of this virus we had all come to live with.

The year progressed without our highly anticipated junior golf clinics sponsored by the Junior Golf Foundation of Fredericksburg. Many of the annual events like St. Mary’s Annual Tony Knopp Memorial and the Chamber of Commerce’s fall event, were canceled. Our ability to host young Billie golfers in their quest towards Regional or State competitions was denied in the name of safety as well. Yet on we played. Golf was not only the highlight of a year filled with anguish and uneasiness, but it became a force that brought people together when they needed each other the most!

2020 was in fact a successful year for the operation of Lady Bird GC, which set the stage for some exciting things to happen in 2021. However, the real success of Lady Bird in 2020 was the fact that the golf course was there for so many to enjoy! Sure, the grass was greener than it has ever been, and the tee sheets were full of golfers. The accomplishment most enjoyed this year was one that we set out in pursuit of when we first took over the operation, and that was to make Lady Bird the center of the community.

Parks and Recreation Department

The City of Fredericksburg Parks & Recreation Department is made up of nine parks encompassing about 323 acres. Due to the virus in 2020, some of the major projects were delayed or cancelled. One project that was completed was the RV campground improvement project. These improvements started in 2016 and all utilities and cable upgrades were finished in 2020. In addition, street improvements were made in the pecan orchard and horseshoe loop. In 2021, the final street work will be completed in the upper loop.

Several projects were also completed at Marktplatz. New electrical pedestals were built by city crews for the Christmas decorations and special events. Oktoberfest and Kinder Halles as well as the arbors all had some damage or rotting which was repaired prior to them being repainted. Several decorative lights poles had been damaged over the years so those were also replaced on the Square. The City also received a grant from the Pedernales Creative Arts Alliance which allowed us to build and install sixteen new picnic tables at Marktplatz.

The new restroom replacement facility for the upper camping area at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park was delayed due to the virus.

The Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center also completed some improvements to the bird blind at the nature trails at LBJ Park. The parks crew built a new bridge to the nature trail on the other side of Live Oak Creek as well. The Morning Rotary Club completed the new basketball pavilion and playground at Old Fair Park. The new playground is inclusive and includes a large barn play structure, merry-go-round, four bays of swings, and two interactive games: Sutu and Memo.

A new full time Parks Office Manager position was created, and the city hired Marsha Strickland to fill this position. This has improved the operations at park headquarters.

Even with limited capacity due to the virus, both swimming pools had a busy summer. The City and the Wellness Center continued to work together to jointly use lifeguards so visitors would not have to be turned away.

Very few special events were hosted in the parks in 2020 due to the virus. The city was still able to hold the Swap Meet and the July 4th Fireworks Show at LBJ Park.

Total rentals at all parks in 2020, was down significantly due to the virus. The total reservations were as follows: Marktplatz: 82 days rented, Tatsch House: 58 days rented, Pioneer Pavilion: 12 weekend rentals, open pavilions: 55 days rented, Town Pool attendance 31,077, Park Pool attendance 8,350.

Reservations for the RV Park were down slightly in 2020 versus 2019. Reservations were not accepted in part of the spring due to the virus. After the City started taking reservations again, four of the last five months of 2020 were higher than 2019. Rates were also increased for the first time in four years for RV camping.

In 2020, 22,046 people visited the RV park and stayed a total of 15,299 nights which is an annual occupancy rate of about 57%. This was only down slightly versus 2019. May, which is typically one of the busiest months, was the slowest in 2020. The occupancy rate was 19% that month. February was the busiest month with an 84% occupancy rate. About 83% of the visitors were from Texas while visitors from Colorado, Florida, Oklahoma, and Minnesota rounded out the top five states with the most visitors to the park. We also had some visitors from Canada and the Netherlands stay at the RV Park in 2020.

Fort Martin Scott

Fort Martin Scott is a City of Fredericksburg Park. Originally established as a U.S. Army fort in 1848, Fort Martin Scott is also linked to the Texas Rangers and was the Braeutigam family farm until 1959, when the City of Fredericksburg purchased it. The historic site contains one original garrison building, which has been restored, one late 1800s old farm shed and three reproduction garrison buildings. The military fort was in operation from 1848 to 1853 by the U.S. Army. It was known as the “Guardian of the Texas Frontier”. Texas Rangers used the site as a camp, both before and after military occupation. During the Civil War, the Confederate States Army occupied the fort for a brief period. Later abandoned and then purchased and used by the Braeutigam family as a farm and site of the first Gillespie County Fair, the property was purchased by the City of Fredericksburg in 1959. Fort Martin Scott is currently operated as a self-guided tour of the historic site.

The fort has been recognized at both the state and national levels. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 under multiple categories: It was designated as a State Antiquities Landmark in 1988 which requires approval for changes from the Texas Historical Commission.

The year 2020, noted some enhancements at the historic site including the addition of a stabilizing material to the granite gravel trail to help with erosion control. The Fort was also established as a local historic landmark.

Due to the virus outbreak, most of the events scheduled at the Fort were cancelled in 2020. This included the quarterly Saturday Living History events and the Spring Break activities conducted by the Site manager and volunteer reenactors.

The utilization of volunteer Park Hosts continued and is an important part of Fort operations. The Park Hosts are given an RV site for free in exchange for volunteering 25 hours per week in the Visitors Center and helping with routine cleaning of the grounds and buildings. This saves funds that can be spent on other maintenance projects at the Fort. The Park Hosts are overseen by a part-time Site Manager. Administrative duties and oversight are performed by the Director of Parks and Recreation.

The Fort buildings are open five days a week with the remainder of the week being available for a self-guided walking tour. Visitor Center hours are Thursday through Monday, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. The park grounds are also open from dawn to dusk for self-guided tours.

The Fort was closed March 24, 2020 through May 20, 2020, due to the virus. Even with this closure, the Fort had a great year for attendance. Approximately 8,175 people signed into the Fort during the Visitor Center's open hours in 2020. An average of about 60% of the monthly Fort visitors also stayed overnight in Fredericksburg.

Special Events

The Parks & Recreation Department began the new year by stocking the creek at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park with rainbow trout through the Inland & Coastal Fisheries Division of Texas Parks & Wildlife. A free, family-oriented kid fish was held on January 25th and included education stations that taught little anglers how to identify a rainbow trout, how to safely bait a hook, and cast their rods and reels. Over 50 children and 150 people attended the event. Many anglers caught rainbow trout and came back the next day to continue fishing.

The inaugural Daddy Daughter Dance "Fairytale Ball" was held on February 7th at the Pioneer Pavilion at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park. Over 200 participants attended the event and had a wonderful time dancing, eating, and spending time together.

In October 2017, City Council approved the Morning Rotary Club's proposal to build a new basketball pavilion at Old Fair Park. The Morning Rotary Club raised fund over two years and a ribbon cutting held on February 21 at 4:00 p.m. to officially open the courts. The Parks & Recreation Department hosted "Party in the Park" in conjunction with the ribbon cutting and included basketball games and contests, exercise demonstrations by Camp Gladiator, Pickleball and refreshments.

In March, the coronavirus reached the United States, and many spring and summer events were canceled due to social distancing regulations including the city's 3rd annual Open House & Touch-A-Truck Event.

As we approached Independence Day, Fourth of July parade organizers worked tirelessly to develop a plan to host the parade while following health & safety protocols, including social distancing. Unfortunately, holding the downtown parade did not happen due to the inability to social distance. However, city council gave the green light to move forward with the annual fireworks display at Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park. A 20-minute fireworks show lit up the sky and gave us back a little bit of normalcy for the time being.

Just a few days after Independence Day, the City received notification that the 40th anniversary of Oktoberfest had been canceled. Just a few days after that, the Gillespie County 4-H Leaders BBQ also made the tough decision to cancel for 2020. Later than month, City Council issued a moratorium for outdoor gatherings of 75 people or more and for special events that was effective August 1-November 1, 2020. That meant that the Gillespie County Fair Parade, Cross Trails Ministry Fall Festival, Fredericksburg Morning Rotary's Kraut Run, Texas Mesquite Arts Festival, Bestfest and the 30th annual Fredericksburg Food & Wine Fest, and the Fire Department's Halloween Open House were canceled for 2020.

Towards the end of October, City council had some tough decisions to make when it came to holiday events. Event organizers were forced to plan using social distancing, masks and healthy sanitation and hygiene practices to safely conduct their events. The traditional Christmas tree and German pyramid lighting could not take place safely due to the number of participants. Therefore, the CVB, in partnership with the City, created a new event called “55 Nights of Fredericksburg Lights.” Every night beginning on November 12, 2020 through January 6, 2021, an automated, pre-recorded program with music, Christmas carols, and the history of the Christmas tree and German Pyramid was played for the visitors at Marktplatz. The program concluded with a 10-second countdown, ending with the lighting of Market Square.

The day after Thanksgiving, Eisbahn, Heritage School’s annual winter fundraiser was able to open an ice-skating rink at Marktplatz. Heritage School developed a health & safety policy that limited capacity on the rink and required the use of face coverings and safely operated the rink through the first Sunday in January 2021. To end 2020, the two city-sponsored New Year’s Eve events were canceled.

Fire EMS and Emergency Management

The Fredericksburg Fire EMS Department consists of the following elements: Fire Operations, Volunteer Fire Department, EMS, Fire Prevention, and Emergency Management.

The Fredericksburg Fire EMS Team responded to 3,324 calls in 2020. Those calls included responses to structure fires, vehicle collisions with injuries, Enchanted Rock rescues, trauma calls, lift assist, transfers, vehicle pedestrian accidents, medical emergencies, smoke alarm activations, and other miscellaneous calls. The Fredericksburg Fire EMS system is staffed with seven on-duty personnel daily, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The backbone of the department is the Volunteers who respond alongside our on-duty staff. The department provides assistance in the form of mutual aid to all five neighboring County fire departments, and they in turn provide assistance to Fredericksburg. The ambulance service provides response to the entire county with assistance from first responders in each County Fire Department.

COVID 19 Pandemic impacted the Department significantly. It resulted in added responsibilities, response time and operational techniques. Examples include additional calls, added time for decontaminate ambulances, operational changes for staff safety, shift staffing challenges due to illness and exposure contacts, elimination of most face-to-face training, staff and volunteer meetings virtually only, and limited community fire safety programs.

Fredericksburg Fire EMS operates out of three fire stations. The Central Station is located at 124 West Main Street. The South Station is located at 221 Friendship Lane, and the North Station located at 99 Frederick Lane. The Central Station houses two Engines, two State Licensed Mobile Intensive Care Ambulances, one Ladder Truck, three Brush Trucks, one Tender, and three Rescue Trucks. The South Station houses two State Licensed Mobile Intensive Care Ambulances, one Engine, one Brush truck, and one Tender. The North Station currently serves as a location for reserve equipment.

The Fire EMS Team remains committed to serving the needs of our community with integrity, leadership, quality customer service, and a sense of community.

In 2020, the Office of Emergency Management was successful in obtaining an Emergency Management Program Grant of \$28,000. A disaster declaration was declared on March 19, 2020 for both the City of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County which brought many changes to day-to-day operations. There were many hours spent by employees determining how to best protect the citizens of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County from the effects of COVID-19. The Office of Emergency Management, Fredericksburg Fire/EMS, and other state resources conducted 23 days of mass COVID-19 testing sites and assisted with nursing home testing, totaling over 9000 COVID-19 tests. We were given credit for one full scale exercise during the first mass COVID-19 testing with the National Guard. FEMA provided 9 hours of continuing education for three employees related to the CARES Act.

We reviewed all emergency plans and annexes for currency and National Incident Management System compliance. In the process we updated 6 of the annexes. Two discussion-based exercises were performed, one was a cyber security seminar and the other was training for a vaccination distribution site.

Police Department and Animal Services

The Fredericksburg Police Department is an accredited law enforcement agency that is responsible for protecting the citizens and visitors of the City of Fredericksburg by faithfully enforcing the laws of the State of Texas and the City of Fredericksburg while protecting the core values and heritage that makes Fredericksburg unique.

Goals and Objectives:

- To continue to provide the best possible service and protection to the community.
- To maintain our unique bond and trust with the community and its citizenry.
- To determine new procedures to help reduce crime and improve traffic safety in Fredericksburg.

In order to meet this goal, we will:

- Continue to be proactive in our security needs for the citizens of Fredericksburg, through increased technology advances.
- Continue to train our officers in the new threats that we are faced with and to maintain a level of professionalism and proficiency that is needed for the security of our citizens.
- Continue to sponsor programs and events that link us to the citizens, such as our Citizen's Police Academy, Summer Youth Program, and Blue Santa Program. These programs allow us to build better relations with our citizens by building friendships and trust.
- Maintain a policy of accountability and transparency in our daily operations, by applying the principles of Community Policing in our organization.

What we accomplished in 2019-2020:

- Maintained a proactive Police Department through our vigilant efforts to create a safe environment in our city.

- Successfully recruited and hired multiple officers to fill our vacancies.
- Worked closely with our local Crime Stoppers board to increase tip information.
- Maintained an active social media presence to release accurate and timely information to the public.
- Received over 430 pounds of prescriptions drugs this year through the Police Department's Drug Take Back Program, aimed at reducing prescription drug abuse.
- Hosted our Blue Santa program for the community, where the Police Department provided a Christmas meal for approximately 150 deserving families.
- Ranked in the top 50 safest City in Texas by several organizations.
- Maintained accreditation with the Texas Police Chiefs Association, Best Practices Program.

What we plan to accomplish in 2020-2021:

- Will implement the new Police Records Management System to keep up with the latest technology and High Police demands.
- To continue to grow as a department to better support the needs of the community through excellent police service, with qualified and motivated employees who support the goals of the citizens of Fredericksburg.
- COVID-19 caused the department to temporarily discontinue many of our community outreach programs. This fiscal year we plan to continue to re-implement our Summer Youth Program, the Citizen Police Academy, Fredericksburg Volunteers in Police Support, and community education.
- Complete the Re-Recognition process for the third time to maintain the Department's accreditation status through the Texas Police Chief's Association, which occurs every 4 years.
- Implement a developmental plan for our officers to help them grow as police officer so they may better serve the community.

Our Animal Control division brought on a new employee this year which has enabled us to increase operation hours to Saturdays. We continue to see an increase in our adoptions since we began operation at the new facility with 223 animals adopted in 2020. Throughout the year, 183 dogs and 12 cats were reunited with their owners. Three dogs and four cats also went to rescue groups.

Giving to the community is a big part of the things the Fredericksburg Police Department does every day. We will continue to provide these services every day and ask you to remember it's your community and it requires a commitment from us all.

Gillespie County Economic Development

In a year that most economies were decimated by the COVID-19 pandemic, many aspects of the Fredericksburg economy fared well. Sales tax receipts for the 2020 reporting year (November 2019 through October 2020) totaled \$6,200,529 in the City and \$3,080,830 in the County, increases of 1.32% and 0.49% respectively over 2019, setting new records for both the City and County. For the City, sales tax receipts increased 7.1% during the last six months of the reporting year compared to 2019.

Lodging businesses were hit hard in the first half of 2020 but began to turn around in late Spring. Third quarter gross lodging receipts in Gillespie County totaled \$22,186,117, up 29.9% from the third quarter of 2019. For the twelve-month period ending September 2020 gross lodging receipts were down only 0.65% compared to the twelve-month period ending September 2019.

The local real estate market was the real economic standout in 2020. The dollar amount of real estate sold in Gillespie County (as reported through our MLS) totaled \$411,365,865 in 2020, compared to \$256,109,642 in 2019 – a 60.6% increase and a new record. The number of residential and land sales also set new records in 2020 as did the dollar amount of residential and land properties sold.

The pandemic did nothing to throttle back home prices. It was quite the opposite as home prices in Fredericksburg set a record in 2020. The average sales price of all homes sold in the City of Fredericksburg increased by \$67,154 in 2020 – from an average of \$390,150 in 2019 to an average of \$457,304 in 2020. On a per square foot basis, the average increased from \$213.62 per square foot in 2019 to \$237.39 per square foot in 2020, also a record high.

The number of residential building permits (as reported by the City's Department of Development Services) set a new record in 2020. In 2020, 196 residential building permits were issued in the City – a 15.3% increase over the 2019 total of 170 and a 20 permit Improvement over the previous record of 176 set in 2018.

Not surprisingly, area employment was hard hit by COVID-19. We began 2020 with record low unemployment in Gillespie County of 2.1% (December 2019). The first full month of the pandemic, April, saw the Gillespie County unemployment rate soar to 10.3%. Fortunately, that number steadily declined over the balance of 2020 as much of Fredericksburg reopened for business. The Gillespie County unemployment rate as of December 2019 was 4.1%.

Prospects for continued job growth remains strong. Despite the downturn in the national economy, the Economic Development Commission continues to track numbers of robust projects currently under construction, development or planning in our community that will add significant numbers of jobs and create additional demand for employees. Over the past ten years (March 2010 - March 2020), the number of jobs in Gillespie County grew by 2,125 jobs from 8,935 to 11,060 - a 23.8% Increase.

As the City, County and Hill Country region continues to grow, the Economic Development Commission will continue to assist with efforts to positively manage that growth including community priorities such as additional housing and improved broadband.

Finance Department

The annual budget guides the City's plan for providing the services, facilities, and infrastructure for the citizens of Fredericksburg. The FY 2021 budget has been developed with the goal of continually increasing the quality of life for the citizens of Fredericksburg in accordance with the stated goals and priorities of the City Council. The City budget helps identify future needs, sets objectives for the coming year, and defines the purposes and resources to achieve those objectives.

- The adopted FY 2021 budget for the City of Fredericksburg is \$63,392,208, a 5% decrease from the FY 2020 amended budget of \$66,741,764. The City's Governmental and Enterprise budgets remain strong as we continue to meet the goals and expectations for the City's mission statement.
- The 2020 total property tax rate for the City of \$.220775 per \$100 of valuation is a 2.86% decrease from the 2019 total property tax rate of \$.227284. This will generate an additional \$26,920 in General Fund operating revenues due to new properties added to the tax roll, and an increase in property values over the past year.
- Sales tax revenues are projected to be \$5.5 million, up 5% from last year's amended budget and the ad valorem tax revenue projection is up 0.58% to \$4.96 million.
- Operating revenues from utility enterprise funds are budgeted to decrease by \$54,567, a decrease of 0.24% from last year. There are no utility rate increases for the Electric, Water, Wastewater, Solid Waste, or Drainage fund in the FY 2021 budget.

Gillespie County Health Division

The Gillespie County Health Division (GCHD) began the year of 2020 as a normal year inspecting food and beverage establishments along with daycare centers and special events. This normalcy quickly changed in March of 2020 due to the onset of the pandemic of COVID-19. Our department quickly switched duties from inspecting establishments to assisting establishments with their preparedness and response to COVID-19. It was our responsibility to navigate and disseminate through the ever-changing State executive orders. This was accomplished in the beginning going door to door handing out signage and other informational documents. As the pandemic continued, so did the changing regulations. GCHD continued to assist establishments and the public by answering questions, keeping timely information updated on our website, and notifying through mass e-mail distribution. Our department continues to update our customers on information as the pandemic continues through the year.

The GCHD is staffed with a Director and a Food Safety Inspector with a masters degree in Food Safety, both of whom are Registered Sanitarians with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. The division now licenses and inspects 265 retail food and beverage establishments and over 23 institutional facilities including daycares, school cafeterias, and the county jail. Even though most of our events were cancelled during this year, our department still issued 88 temporary health permits and 39 mobile food unit permits.

The Gillespie County Health Board is an active part of the GCHD. The board is a nine-member advisory board that provides oversight on health matters and gives advisory opinions and policy recommendations to the City and County. This past year the board assisted with e-mails to local elected officials in support of a local mask mandate. This was done in an effort to reaffirm guidance from CDC and Texas Department of State Health Services, in order to help keep our community safe. As a combined division, during an unprecedented time, the Gillespie County Health Division continues to prevent disease and promote the health and welfare of citizens.