



## City of Horseshoe Bay – 2020 State of the City Report

“To serve and protect our citizens while preserving our heritage and planning for the future.” This motto guides the actions of the City of Horseshoe Bay Mayor, Council, and Staff. In all City work, the quality of life and future sustainability of our community standards are a priority. The current state of your City reflects successful strength in this commitment.

**Unique CoVid Challenges:** The year 2020 has been one of challenge as a global virus forced us to socialize, church, dine, shop, and engage in daily life differently (often remotely). As a community we were blessed to be less impacted, largely due to the responsible actions and care of citizens. While there were just over 100 to date cases of CoVid confirmed locally in the Horseshoe Bay area, with the sad loss of 2 lives (residents of the nursing care facility), most all confirmed cases experienced minor infection and quarantined safely. With a vaccine in sight and gradual return to healthy engagements – we can take pride in our proactive response to this national challenge and sustaining practice of protecting each other. **The City of Horseshoe Bay modeled exemplary preparation and response.**

**Quality of Life focus:** All actions of the City operate with a commitment to ‘world class’ living. Under the umbrella recognition as a **Gold** certified “*Scenic City*”, Horseshoe Bay is also a designated an *International Dark Skies Community*, carries the Mayor’s *Monarch Pledge*, and is blessed to be centered in among the top 100 North American recognized lifestyle resorts. Aside from the breadth of amenities provided through the beautiful Horseshoe Bay Resort for members, the City supports active living with the Hiking Trail, Nature Park, Martin Park/Pickleball, and multiple events held annually in collaboration with POAs and area businesses. The onset of developing the new Nature Park on Golden Nugget (through a Private Foundation) offers opportunities for the community to come together to financially and physically support hiking, wildlife conservation/education, dog-walking, and outdoor activities.

Ordinances are in place to ensure high standards of building at all businesses and homesites. Security of mind is provided through the exceptional work of our first responders in full time police, fire, and water treatment safety programs. This past year’s fire scare of over 400 acres in the Trails was a test of our ability to respond quickly and effectively, and the Emergency Management team effort proved fully ready and able. **This year City staff demonstrated responsive top performance in:**

- 954 calls to the Fire Department /37 involving fires + thousands of hours of advanced training
- 7300 calls to the Police Department with 53 arrests/multiple diffused engagements
- 85 new residential building permits for FY 2020 (over 200 other ancillary permits) w/57 custom and 29 speculative homes under construction as of Sept. 30, 2020 in a high sales year as ‘city folk’ realized the blessing of small town living
  - New developments emerged including the opening of the Tuscan Village, The Brixton at Horseshoe Bay Nursing Home & Rehabilitation Center, Value Bank and individual retail and service businesses.
- Animal control managed nearly 300 animal removals with 123 deer carcass removals beyond the annual trappings; 1800 calls were handled for varied requests
- Several **thousand** service calls by the field operators in Utilities, in addition to the major upgrade projects; with near completion of the \$6 million wastewater treatment to serve for 30+ years

- The city migrated its internal technology systems to connect all departments to maximize efficiency and quality service responses
- 8 miles of road were seal coated, in addition to the \$2.2 million dollar State and City collaborative resurfacing of Hwy 2147 w/turn lanes and the addition of a traffic signal at the major intersection at Hwy 71....in addition to over 2+ miles of internal City resurfaced roads. The new year will add an additional 1.6 + mile of upgraded streets with ribbon curbing to aging roads along with many miles of seal-coating as scheduled.
- City staff (through contracted services) mowed approximately 4,000 lots, maintaining clear underbrush and low grass levels for safety. Care was given to allow for some growth in areas where butterfly friendly Milkweed is blooming through June to increase feeding/reproduction for migrating Monarch butterflies. The City also coordinated with TXDOT the planting/seeding of bluebonnet seeds along Hwy 2147 with hopes of a Spring bloom.
- City Secretary's office processed hundreds of City Council agenda items, open records requests, codified ordinances, and converted over 20,000 pages of records to electronic format to make them more accessible to the public.
- The admin/finance/HR staff managed the daily workings of employees, over \$10 million in funds, bill payments, investments, collections, and government compliance processes

**Financial Standing:** The fiscal year of 2020-21 ended with Horseshoe Bay in excellent financial standing, carrying a AA+ rating, a unique level of recognition for a city of our size, along with a *Transparency Star* and *Distinguished Budget Award* for the last three years. The conservative fiscal efficiency and transparent accountability has ensured that all daily actions necessary for the expected level of service are in place. The market environment for investments alongside our excellent rating allowed us to secure a low (less than 2%) interest bond to provide for over a mile of new ribbon curbed paved roads in 2021, as well as three years of seal coating of established roads. The needs for staff, materials /equipment, and training for each department have been met while maintaining the prior tax rate of \$0.27, the lowest tax rate by far of all area cities (see Budget Video). The City has a secure fully vested General Operating Fund balance (keeping our rating and our ability to respond to emergencies high) and is nearing the completion of a full fund balance reserve in the Utility Fund as well.

Of the taxes paid by homeowners annually, only 16% is directed to City support, with the remainder serving the Llano and Burnet school districts, the County, and the Emergency Service District/ambulance service. The sales tax revenue this year was impacted by the CoVid 19 business limitations, but typically provides about \$1.4 million to the City budget. **Your City is in excellent financial shape.**

**Communication** remains a critical priority in our mobile community. Multiple venues have been established to help share information and give access to citizens for full transparency, including:

- Continually updated website with posted videos of budget details, overview of statistics of Horseshoe Bay department activity, and seasonal 'tips' of important area actions
- Posting of all required public meetings, financial records, and agenda documents
- On-line access to Civic Ready, a resource for receiving messages about multiple city topics (you choose) and emergency alerts on phone – including WarnCentralTexas weather alerts
- Monthly Mayor newsletter issued to all POAs for distribution on current city news

- Annual meetings with key stakeholders: POA presidents (quarterly), Business Alliance, Faith leaders, Highland Lakes Realtors, Homebuilders Members, HSBay Resort (monthly), and Key communicator special interest groups (see: *Things to Do in Horseshoe Bay* on website)
- Citizens Academy offered bi-annually to provide deep dives into each department in the City. With the completion of the 7 academies, the community now has over 100 neighbors who can assist in answering questions, clearing up misinformation, and providing feedback to the City. Any interested citizen may sign up for the next Academy via the City website in 2021.
- CERT/*Certified Emergency Response Team* training provided to a citizen group who stand ready to act immediately in case of an emergency for behind the scenes actions such as setting up temporary emergency shelters, assisting in communication, helping with special needs citizens/pets, and utilizing specialized training support as appropriate. These citizens also serve as a conduit for sharing vital information during stressful emergency times – as well as offering information to City staff regarding needed information communication and/or trainings.
- Seasonal workshops around home maintenance, health, safety precautions, and special focus areas (ex: self-monitoring of water usage on *WaterSmart*)
- Citizen service on multiple committees and advisory boards that bring the extensive experience and talent of the local citizens into a collaborative decision making process in areas of planning, special projects, zoning, etc.
- Annual Community Forum for community to provide for updates and Q&A for concerns/ideas.
- Telecare volunteer team reaching out to fragile seniors daily to ensure safety/support
- Provision of local CoVid testing site at Fire Station to support rapid response practices

**Future Planning:** The completion of nearly all objectives of the 2017 Long Range Plan allows us to move to the newly presented 2021 Long Range Plan. Over 1000 citizens responded to survey questions and nearly 100 interviews were conducted with business leaders, citizen representatives, and community leaders. The resulting feedback was sorted and categorized and will be presented to the City Council at its January workshop. The Long Range Planning Advisory Board gave enormous amount of time to this important work that will shape decisions in planning and budget for the coming years. The priority categories continue to emphasize desires for: internet viability, managed growth, environmental protections of natural assets, quality of life activities, and communication. **It is clear the citizens of Horseshoe Bay value their ‘city of choice’ and want to keep its lifestyle character – avoiding any move towards typical ‘suburban’ characteristics.**

#### **Reflecting on the year 2020:**

The City of Horseshoe Bay is a unique gem – a blend of high quality lifestyle with a small town approach to good neighbors, slow paced living, and effective (but minimal) government. With over 7000 citizens, a staff of about 100 highly qualified employees address all needs quietly and efficiently at low tax rate levels. There is a pride by all in this “Scenic City” committed to full support for each citizen/neighbor. The coming 2021 promises to be an exceptional year as we return to ‘normal’ and re-connect in social events and total engagement in the plentiful activities and blessings of this community.

Check out the City website ([www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov](http://www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov)) calendar for events and notices monthly.

Happy New Year (2021)