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May 2025
VOLUME CXII
NUMBER 4

TTC

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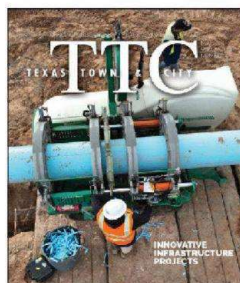


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ABOUT THE COVER

The City of Andrews is among the Texas cities featured in this issue that is proactively addressing critical infrastructure needs.

ABOUT ★ TML

The **Texas Municipal League** exists solely to provide services to Texas cities. Since its formation in 1913, the League's mission has remained the same: to serve the needs and advocate the interests of its members. Membership in the League is voluntary and is open to any city in Texas. From the original 14 members, TML's membership has grown to more than 1,150 cities. Over 16,000 mayors, councilmembers, city managers, city attorneys, and department heads are member officials of the League by virtue of their cities' participation.

The League provides a variety of services to its member cities. One of the principal purposes of the League is to advocate municipal interests at the state and federal levels. Among the thousands of bills introduced during each session of the Texas Legislature are hundreds of bills that would affect cities. The League, working through its Legislative Services Department, attempts to defeat detrimental city-related bills and to facilitate the passage of legislation designed to improve the ability of municipal governments to operate effectively.

The League employs full-time attorneys who are available to provide member cities with information on municipal legal matters. On a daily basis, the legal staff responds to member cities' written and oral questions on a wide variety of legal matters. The League annually conducts a variety of conferences and training seminars to enhance the knowledge and skills of municipal officials in the state. In addition, the League also publishes a variety of printed materials to assist member cities in performing their duties. The best known of these is the League's magazine, *Texas Town & City*. Each issue focuses on a variety of contemporary municipal issues, including survey results to respond to member inquiries.

For additional information on any of these services, contact the

Texas Municipal League at 512-231-7400 or visit our website, www.tml.org.

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TML Intergovernmental Risk Pool

Harlan Jefferson, Deputy City Manager, Burleson

MESSAGE ★ FROM THE PRESIDENT



ALLISON HEYWARD, CMO

Mayor Pro Tem, Schertz
TML President

Dear Texas City Official,

If you made a list of the most important things cities do for their residents, infrastructure has to be near the top of that list. Without superior infrastructure, we wouldn't have thriving cities and we wouldn't have the Texas Miracle. That's why I hope you pay special attention to this issue, where you'll find great articles about future-proofing water supplies, replacing aging infrastructure, using reclaimed water to meet rising energy needs, and much more.

While you're learning about infrastructure, I hope you'll give a few minutes of thought to the final days of the 2025 regular legislative session in Austin. No matter which bills pass or don't pass, I'm already declaring this session a success if for no other reason than I've never seen our League's grassroots members more engaged in speaking out for the authority of Texas cities and towns. From our successful Legislative Action Day in March, to multiple successful legislative webinars, to record numbers of city officials testifying on important bills, it's been a full court press on behalf of local control.

Will we win some, lose some, and possibly face special sessions this summer? Sure, but that will always be the case. What's significant is that we moved the needle in favor of city rights. Over 74 percent of Texans live in TML member cities, and that percentage is likely growing each year. With that growth comes the increasing importance of our special organization. Our residents count on it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allison Heyward".

Allison Heyward, CMO
Mayor Pro Tem, Schertz
TML President



Save the Date: 2025 TML Annual Conference and Exhibition

TML is excited to partner with the City of Fort Worth to host the 2025 Texas Municipal League Annual Conference and Exhibition, October 29-31, at the Fort Worth Convention Center. Look for the conference program online in mid-July at tmlconference.org.

Attendee registration and housing will open on July 29 at 10:00 a.m. (central). Make plans to join TML in Fort Worth for the largest gathering of city officials in Texas!

Apply Now for a Municipal Excellence Award

The TML Municipal Excellence Awards have been celebrating and inspiring municipal excellence and innovation for more than 25 years. Each year, awards are given in two population categories (cities under 25,000 and cities over 25,000) and in five subject categories (city spirit, communication programs, management innovations, public safety, and public works). Winners will be recognized during the TML Annual Conference and Exhibition in October. The deadline to submit online applications is Friday, June 6. Apply at tml.org/210/Municipal-Excellence-Awards.



JUNE 27 • GEORGETOWN

WWW.TMLLEGISLATIVESERIES.ORG

Unlock Key Insights on the 89th Texas Legislative Session

Join the TML legislative team for the Legislative Wrap-Up Workshop on Friday, June 27, from 7:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Hotel & Conference Center to discuss the outcome of the key city-related bills from the 2025 session. You will learn about the impact the laws will have on your city and the dynamics behind the legislative discussions and decisions.

Due to limited seating, the Legislative Wrap Up is open only to registered city officials and staff. Register for the workshop and book your hotel room by May 30 for the best rates. Learn more at tmllegislativeseries.org/workshop.

Update Your Membership Information

Is there someone new at the city, or do you need to update an email address? Now is the time to review the information we have listed for your city. Staying connected to you is our number one priority, and updating your information is simple. Visit tml.org/593/TML-Membership-Update.

List Your City's Festival in TTC

Texas towns and cities hold festivals to celebrate everything from cheeseburgers to crawfish and red poppies to whooping cranes. In the August 2025 issue of *Texas Town & City*, we'll feature select city-hosted events happening throughout the state. If your city is planning an event that takes place in the August 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026 timeframe, we'd like to feature it. **The deadline for submitting your event is June 13.** Learn more and submit your festival at tml.org/FormCenter/Advertising-4/Festival-Listing-Form-46. ★



TML Training Calendar

May-June 2025

May 1

Legislative Webinar #4:
What to Expect in the
Final Days
Webinar

May 7-9

TML Leadership Academy
– Course Two
Round Rock

May 15-16

TML Small Town Confer-
ence
Fredericksburg

May 15

Ethics in Public Service
Webinar

June 4-6

TAMIO Annual Conference
Fort Worth

June 5

Engaging with Civility: A
Conversation Model
Webinar

June 18-20

TCAA Summer Conference
Horseshoe Bay

June 19-22

TCMA Annual Conference
San Antonio

June 27

TML Legislative Wrap-Up
Workshop
Georgetown

Excellence in EngineeringSM



Wastewater Treatment Plant – Sealy, TX



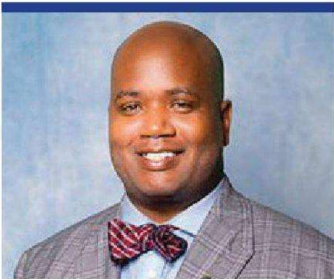
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TEXANS HOLD KEY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

The Texas Municipal League congratulates 19 Texans who hold key leadership positions in the National League of Cities (NLC).

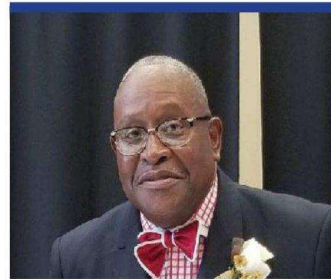
NLC works to strengthen local leadership, influence federal policy, and drive innovative solutions. With more than 2,700 member cities across the nation, the organization celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2024.



Riakos Adams,
Councilmember, Killeen:
NLC Transportation and
Infrastructure Services
Federal Advocacy
Committee Vice Chair,
NLC Military Communities
Council Vice Chair, and
National Black Caucus of
Local Officials Region 11
Director



Andrea Barefield,
Councilmember, Waco: NLC
Board of Directors Member;
and Race, Equity and
Leadership Council Chair
(also TML Board of Directors
Member)



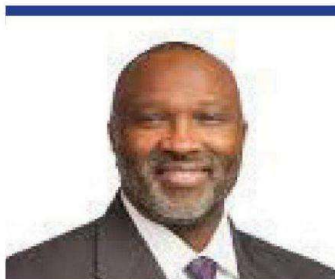
Thurman Bartie, Mayor,
Port Arthur: National Black
Caucus of Local Officials
Chaplain



Adam Bazaldua, Deputy
Mayor Pro Tem, Dallas: NLC
Board of Directors Member
and NLC Hispanic Elected
Officials Second Vice
President



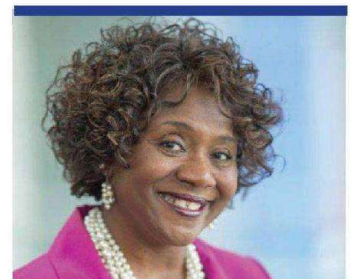
Travis Bruton,
Councilmember, Glenn
Heights: NLC Board of
Directors Member



Jeffrey L. Boney,
Councilmember, Missouri
City: NLC Board of
Directors Member, NLC
Community and Economic
Development Federal
Advocacy Committee Chair,
and National Black Caucus
of Local Elected Officials
Treasurer



Martha Castex-Tatum,
Mayor Pro Tem, Houston:
NLC Board of Directors
Member and NLC
Information, Technology,
and Communications
Federal Advocacy
Committee Chair (also TML
Past President)



Mary M. Dennis, CMO,
Mayor, Live Oak: NLC
Finance, Administration,
and Intergovernmental
Relations Federal Advocacy
Committee Vice Chair (also
TML Past President)



Vanessa Fuentes,
Councilmember, Austin;
NLC Board of Directors
Member and NLC
Transportation and
Infrastructure Services
Federal Advocacy
Committee Chair



Carlie Jones,
Councilmember, Forest Hill;
National Black Caucus of
Local Elected Officials Past
President



Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia,
Councilmember, San
Antonio: NLC Board of
Directors Member, NLC
Women in Municipal
Government President, and
Hispanic Elected Officials
Board Member



Abbie Kamin,
Councilmember, Houston:
NLC Energy, Environment,
and Natural Resources
Federal Advocacy
Committee Vice Chair; and
NLC Large Cities Council
Vice Chair



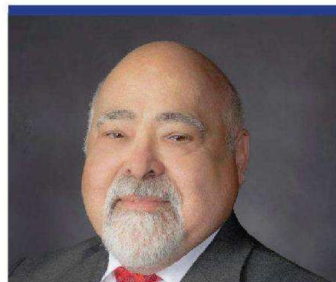
Dr. Dinah Marks,
Councilmember, DeSoto:
NLC Women in Municipal
Government Board Member



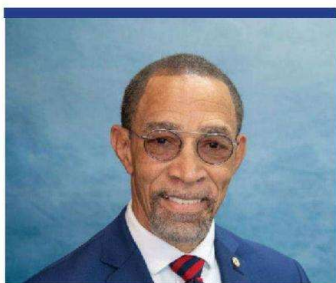
Dr. Barbara Odem-Wesley,
Mayor Pro Tem, Arlington:
NLC Board of Directors
Member



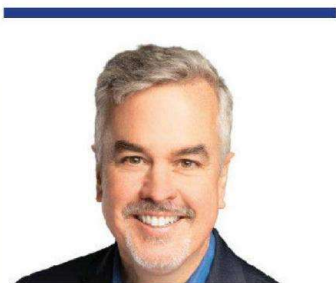
Zohaib "Zo" Qadri,
Councilmember, Austin:
Asian Pacific Municipal
Officials Board Member



Tito Rodriguez,
Councilmember, North
Richland Hills: NLC Advisory
Council Vice Chair (also TML
Past President)



Audwin Samuel,
Councilmember, Port Arthur;
National Black Caucus of
Local Elected Officials Past
President



Bennett Sandlin, Executive
Director, TML: NLC Board of
Directors Member



Mary Sarver, Mayor Pro
Tem, Grandview: NLC Small
Cities Council Chair

For additional
information about
NLC and how your
city can get involved,
contact Ebone Clifton,
member engagement
manager for the
southern region,
at 202-626-3153 or
clifton@nlc.org.

The Political Subdivision Workers' Compensation Alliance: Helping Injured Employees Get their Lives Back

By **Scott Houston**, Intergovernmental Relations Manager, TML Risk Pool

What do local government risk pools do when state-certified workers' compensation provider networks aren't practical or easily accessible by their members' employees and cost too much? They create their own! The TML Risk Pool, along with four other Texas pools*, did just that in 2006 when they created the "Political Subdivision Workers' Compensation Alliance (the Alliance)." The goal is to provide injured public servants with quick access to top-quality healthcare providers. The Alliance – led by Executive Director Phil Hambrick – matches injured employees with top-notch doctors and other providers to get them back to health, back to work, and back to their lives.

The Alliance is different than typical healthcare networks. The Alliance directly contracts with and credentials healthcare providers on behalf of its risk pool members, and the Alliance exclusively serves those pools and the public entities that participate in their workers' compensation programs.

Collectively, the five risk pools represent more than 3,000 public employers and 500,000 employees.

However, rather than trying to be the largest network, the Alliance identifies and contracts with the best and most efficient health care providers. Top quality health care leads to better outcomes for injured employees, and it also saves money through lower overall medical costs, lower prescription drug utilization, and quicker return-to-work for injured employees. The key is an open dialogue among providers, adjusters, injured workers, and employers – this leads to an injured employee getting the right treatment at the right time, which gets them back to their life as soon as possible.

The Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) oversees provider networks, and TDI has consistently ranked the Alliance as among the best. The TDI Workers' Compensation Research and Evaluation Group (REG) publishes an annual "network report card" that evaluates workers' compensation networks. The criteria include: (1) healthcare costs; (2) utilization; (3) satisfaction with care; (4) access to care; (5) return to work; and (6) health outcomes. The REG, among other things, surveys injured workers using the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University.

The Alliance's 2024 network report card showed that it continued to score well in various categories relating to medical care for work-related injuries. Most notable, 77 percent of injured employees using the Alliance indicated that they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that their treating doctor took their medical condition seriously, gave them a thorough exam, explained their medical condition, was willing to answer questions, talked to them about a return-to-work date, provided good medical care that met their needs, and kept them informed about care from specialists. In addition, the report card showed that 63 percent were satisfied with overall health care services.

The TML Risk Pool was originally created because of a dearth of workers' compensation coverage for local governments. The Alliance is just another example of government risk pools leveraging public dollars while providing first-class care to injured employees. Learn more at www.pswca.org.

** In addition to the TML Risk Pool, Alliance members include the Texas Association of School Boards Risk Management Fund, the Texas Association of Counties Risk Management Fund, the Texas Council Risk Management Fund, and the Texas Water Conservation Association Risk Management Fund. ★*

Ten Ways to Get More from TML

1. EXPAND Your Knowledge
2. BUILD Relationships
3. ADVOCATE for Your City
4. IMPROVE Communications
5. Lower EXPENSES
6. OPTIMIZE Revenue
7. Exchange IDEAS
8. GROW Your Network
9. Find RESOURCES www.tml.org
10. ASK questions 512-231-7400





Community Voices Shape Tomball's Future

The City of Tomball hosted a Comprehensive Plan Town Hall that brought together community members, local leaders, and key stakeholders to discuss the City's long-term growth and development. The meeting provided an interactive platform for residents to review future land use maps, proposed zoning changes, and infrastructure layouts, ensuring that community voices play a role in shaping Tomball's future.

Attendees engaged in a hands-on analysis of color-coded maps and detailed planning documents, offering feedback on urban planning, transportation, and infrastructure strategies. City officials and planning consultants were available to answer questions and provide insight into the decision-making process that will guide Tomball's development over the coming years.

The evening featured a presentation that outlined key elements of the Comprehensive Plan, including identified themes, long-term goals, and strategic objectives aimed at promoting sustainable growth.

Throughout the meeting, discussions centered on land use categories, neighborhood growth strategies, and transportation planning, with a particular focus on proposed updates to future land use maps. City officials facilitated these conversations, ensuring that community members had the opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, and contribute ideas.

The town hall underscored the City of Tomball's commitment to transparent planning and public involvement, allowing residents to help shape a vision for the city's future.

Lewisville Landmarks Program to Recognize Historic Buildings

As part of the City of Lewisville's Centennial Celebration, the City launched a new program to recognize buildings of historical significance in Lewisville.

Lewisville Landmarks aims to recognize buildings of historical significance with particular attention to houses in the Old Town Lewisville historic district. The goal is to identify all the historic homes and create a self-guided tour that enhances public awareness about Lewisville's history and expands the public telling of the Lewisville story.

Lewisville Landmark status is ceremonial in nature and does not create any restrictions on the selected properties. Property owners can nominate their home or business now for consideration as a Lewisville Landmark.

A recognition reception will be held in August at the Lewisville Grand Theater. Sites designated as Lewisville Landmarks will receive a plaque to install near the entrance of the building.

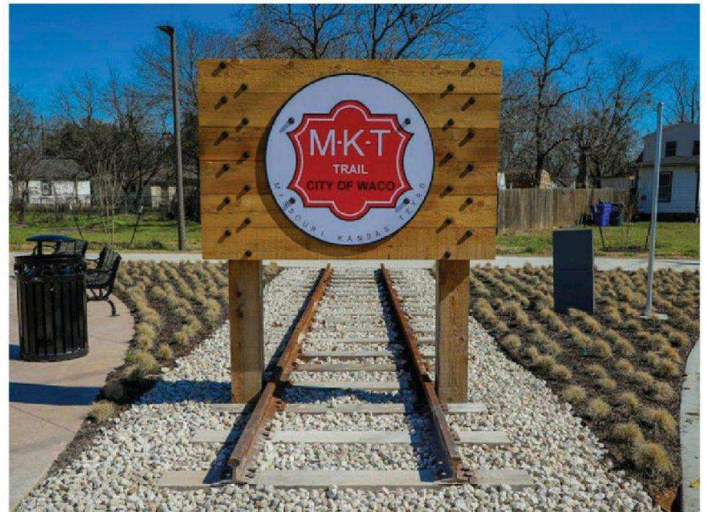
The tour will feature up to 20 sites and will be strictly external. Details about each site will be available online. The tour route could be walked, but most visitors will want to drive portions of it. Details and images from the application will be included in the tour map and website information.

This is one of many Centennial Celebration activities being planned during 2025. Other activities include a citywide picnic, tree-planting, an outdoor photo prop, and recreations of historical Lewisville photos. To learn more about the celebration, visit lewisvilletx100.com.

From Railway to Trailway: Waco Celebrates MKT Trail Grand Opening



The Waco community gathered for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the grand opening of the MKT Trail. This rail-to-trail project converted 1.2 miles of the historic Missouri Kansas Texas railway into a 12-foot-wide, lighted concrete pedestrian pathway. Stretching from Sherman Street to Gholson Road in East Waco, the trail offers a new, non-motorized route connecting neighborhoods to the existing Brazos River trail system.



While most of the rails along the route were removed years ago, some of the remaining segments were unearthed and used for decorative features at trailheads. A central trailhead at Faulkner Lane and Garrison Street has a trail sign that provides some history of the railway.

The trail system also offers:

- Brick-inlaid distance markers installed each half-mile
- New trees and landscaping
- Benches
- Trash cans
- Traffic humps where the trail crosses streets for increased safety

The \$4.3 million lighted trailway project was partially funded by \$4.28 million in federal grant funding, most of which came from the federal Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program grant, which supports converting decommissioned rail lines into trails. Future plans include extending the MKT Trail on both ends.



Brownsville Strengthens Relations with University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

The Brownsville City Commission, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), joined with the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) to strengthen educational programs at the Brownsville campus, enhance workforce readiness, and reduce the need for student travel from Brownsville to Edinburg. The partnership comes after City leadership met with university leadership in 2024 to discuss concerns regarding the need for more academic programming, student engagement, and community involvement in Brownsville.

"Over the last few months, I have worked closely with Senator Adam Hinojosa, Representative Erin Gamez, County Judge Eddie Trevino, and our city commission to advocate for more UTRGV engagement at the Brownsville campus," said John Cowen Jr., Brownsville mayor. "We have been advocating for more in-person instruction, reduced busing to Edinburg, an increase in academic programs offered here, more investment in the Brownsville campus, moving graduation ceremonies back to Brownsville, and

collaborating on future facilities to potentially host more UTRGV sporting events here."

The MOU requires the development of a "Task Force of the Future." The Task Force will be comprised of representatives from the City and the University, and is charged with drafting an action plan that supports the reinstatement and/or development of academic classes and degree programs at the Brownsville campus.

According to the MOU, the Task Force will work in good faith to discuss strategies and space/facilities planning toward improving current and future programming for the Brownsville campus and in Cameron County. The Task Force is scheduled to present its plan in July of 2025 and is expected to outline how UTRGV will reinstate classes or degree programs so that most undergraduate students can achieve their bachelor's degree in Brownsville.

With Brownsville's rapid growth and expanding opportunities in industries such as space exploration, technology, and international trade, this partnership ensures that students remain at the forefront of innovation while contributing directly to their city's success. ★

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SMALL CITIES' ★ CORNER



Legacy of Progress: Kilgore's Award-Winning Health Science Campus Transforms a Vision into Reality

By **Taylor Owings**, Community Relations Manager, City of Kilgore

In 1949, Roy H. Laird proposed relocating Kilgore's hospital from downtown to a new, modern facility as part of his mayoral campaign. His vision was one of progress, aiming to provide the community with a healthcare hub for the future. Laird won the election, and the project began. However, Mayor Laird passed away in 1950, just three months before the hospital's completion. To honor him, the facility, originally planned as Kilgore Memorial, was renamed Roy H. Laird Memorial Hospital during its ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Over the years, the hospital has seen various tenants and faced challenges. CHRISTUS ER served as the primary tenant, while the City managed the property. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, much of the hospital remained vacant. In response, Kilgore College transformed part of

the unused space into classrooms for its nursing program, giving future nurses a unique learning environment.

Despite operating with minimal staff and two tenants, the facility continued to serve residents. However, the looming threat of losing its emergency room—a critical service for the area—pushed the City to take action. Former City Manager Josh Selleck and CHRISTUS President and CEO Todd Hancock led the charge, brainstorming ways to make the facility attractive to new tenants and secure its future. Their efforts highlighted the community's commitment to preserving this essential resource.

The vision for the facility then expanded into a regional training hub. The new concept would not only benefit Kilgore College but also provide critical training for CHRISTUS healthcare staff. This idea mirrored that of a teaching hospital, where healthcare professionals could develop their skills. Kilgore College President Dr. Kays and



This expansion meets the growing healthcare needs of Kilgore and surrounding communities while providing an educational facility to train the next generation of healthcare professionals.

This project represents more than just a building, it is a testament to the resilience and determination of Kilgore. Through collaboration among Kilgore College, CHRISTUS Health, the City of Kilgore, and the Hospital Foundation, the Health Science Campus promises to serve the region for generations to come. It strengthens the healthcare infrastructure, offers new educational opportunities, and exemplifies the power of partnership.

Hancock were instrumental in shaping this vision, creating a space for collaboration and development for healthcare workers across the region.

Amidst rising construction costs and the COVID-19 pandemic, the project faced financial hardships. Fortunately, Selleck secured a 2.5-million-dollar economic development grant, but a shortfall still remained. The budget quickly grew from 13 million to 23 million dollars. To address this, the City redirected lease payments from existing tenants and turned to city-supported debt. Additionally, the Hospital Foundation, a long-time supporter of the facility, contributed eight million dollars to the project, ensuring that the City would not bear any additional financial burden.

The result is a state-of-the-art Roy H. Laird Health Science Campus, offering 24-hour ER services, physical therapy spaces, clinic areas, and provisions for overnight stays.

As the Health Science Campus opens its doors once again, it stands as a testament to Mayor Roy H. Laird's enduring vision. What began as a campaign proposal has blossomed into a vibrant healthcare and educational hub, leaving a legacy for Kilgore and the surrounding region. This project honors Laird's dream and serves as a symbol of hope and progress. It demonstrates that through collaboration, perseverance, and a shared commitment to the future, we can overcome obstacles and create meaningful, lasting change. ★



Q What are the mayor's duties in a Type A general law city?

A In a Type A general law city, the mayor's duties and authority come first from state law and then may be expanded by the city council. *See* TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §§ 22.037; 22.042; and 23.027. A mayor in a Type A city presides over the meetings of the governing body but may not vote unless there is a tie. *Id.* § 22.037. A Type A mayor is also authorized to call a special meeting on his or her "own motion" and "shall call a special meeting or on the application of three aldermen." *Id.* § 22.038.

Section 22.042 of the Local Government Code provides that the mayor: (1) is the "chief executive officer" of the city; (2) must "actively ensure that the laws and ordinances of the municipality are properly carried out;" (3) must "inspect the

conduct of each subordinate municipal officer and shall cause any negligence, carelessness, or other violation of duty to be prosecuted and punished;" and (4) must give to the city council "any information, and shall recommend to the governing body any measure, that relates to improving the finances, police, health, security, cleanliness, comfort, ornament, or good government of the municipality." *Id.* § 22.042. A Type A mayor also has the authority to appoint an individual to a vacancy in a municipal office, other than a member of the city council, subject to confirmation by the city council. *Id.* § 22.010(e).

The mayor also has emergency management authority including: (1) the authority to close public facilities in order to ensure the peace and good order of the city during a riot or unlawful assembly; and (2) the authority to summon a special police force when necessary for the enforcement of city laws, because of riot or outbreak, or because of the threat of serious danger. *Id.* §§ 22.042(e); 341.011. Additional

emergency management powers of a mayor are discussed further below.

The mayor's duties are determined not only by state law. The city council can also prescribe the duties and authority of the mayor, and the mayor must perform these duties as directed by the city council. *Id.* § 22.042.

Q What does “chief executive officer” (CEO) mean?

A Section 22.042 of the Local Government Code provides that “[t]he mayor is the chief executive officer of the municipality.” It is unclear exactly what this language means, but most city attorneys would likely agree that it does not mean that a mayor has the kind of broad authority generally associated with the CEO of a private corporation. The language's origin is a piece of legislation found in Vernon's Revised Statutes, adopted in 1879, which at that time read, “[t]he mayor of the city shall be the chief executive officer of said corporation, and shall be vigilant and active at all times in causing the laws and ordinances for the government of said city to be duly executed and put in force.” TEX. REV. CIV. STAT. ART. 357 (1879). Since then, the language has been revised and recodified into the existing Local Government Code. *Act of 70th Leg., R.S., Chapter ch. 149, Section 1 (1987).*

Q What are the mayor's duties in a Type B or Type C general law city?

A In a Type B city, the mayor is the president of the governing body of the city but is not given more specific duties by statute. LOC. GOV'T CODE § 23.027. Chapter 24 of the Local Government Code, which covers Type C cities, likewise provides no specific guidance. However, the Local Government Code provides what are commonly referred to as the “borrowing provisions.” These provisions state that Type B and Type C cities have the same authority as a Type A city. *Id.* §§ 51.035; 51.051.

Section 51.035 provides:

A Type B general-law municipality has the same authority, duties, and privileges as a Type A general-law municipality, unless the Type B general-law municipality in exercising the authority or privilege or performing the duty would be in conflict with

another provision of this code or other state law that relates specifically to Type B general-law municipalities.

Section 51.051 provides:

(a) The governing body of a Type C general-law municipality with 501 to 4,999 inhabitants has the same authority and is subject to the same duties as a Type A general-law municipality unless the authority or duties conflict with a provision of this code relating specifically to a Type C general-law municipality.

(b) The governing body of a Type C general-law municipality with 201 to 500 inhabitants has the same authority as a Type B general-law municipality unless the authority conflicts with a provision of this code relating specifically to a Type C general-law municipality.

Thus, if there is no conflict with other law, a Type C city has the same authority as either a Type B or a Type A city. However, because a Type B city has the same authority as a Type A city, pursuant to Section 51.035, then a Type C city has the same authority as a Type A city regardless of population.

Q What are the mayor's duties in a home-rule city?

A The mayor's duties in a home-rule city, including whether the mayor has the right to vote on issues before city council, are governed by the city charter.

Q Can a general law city delegate other rights and powers to the mayor?

A The governing body of a city is authorized to delegate by resolution or ordinance the right to perform acts and duties necessary for the day-to-day operation of the city. *Id.* § 22.042(a) (“The mayor shall perform the duties and exercise the powers prescribed by the governing body of the municipality”). The city may delegate authority by ordinance, resolution, or majority vote. *City of San Benito v. Rio Grande Valley Gas Co.*, 109 S.W.3d 750, 757 (Tex. 2003). In the case of delegation of authority, any action taken

beyond what has been authorized by the city council is void. *Foster v. City of Waco*, 113 Tex. 352, 255 S.W. 1104 (1923); *Austin Neighborhoods Council, Inc. v. Bd. of Adjustment of City of Austin*, 644 S.W.2d 560, 564 (Tex. App.—Austin 1982, writ ref'd n.r.e.).

Q Is the mayor the city's budget officer in all types of cities?

A The mayor of any city serves as the budget officer for the governing body, unless the city has the city manager form of government, in which case, the city manager is the budget officer. TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE § 102.001.

Q What is a "strong mayor" in a home-rule city?

A Also called the "mayor-council" form of government, the "strong mayor" structure in a home-rule city allows the mayor in home rule cities to serve in the dual roles of administrator and political head of the city. The concept is not relevant to a general law city.

Q Does the mayor have the authority to cancel a city council meeting?

A State law provides no procedure to cancel a city council meeting. *See generally* TEX. GOV'T CODE Ch. 552. In a general law city, the common practice is for the mayor to cancel a meeting if necessary, but a city is free to adopt written procedures to clarify the "who, when, and how" by which meetings are canceled.

Q Does the mayor have control over what items are placed on a meeting agenda?

A No. There is no state law that directly addresses agenda setting, and a city is free to adopt its own reasonable agenda-setting policy. In a city without an agenda setting policy, neither the mayor nor the city secretary would control the preparation of the agenda for the city council. The attorney general has opined that, absent a written policy, each member of the governing body should be allowed to place items of his or her choosing on the agenda prior to a meeting. Tex. Att'y Gen. Op. No. JM-63 (1983) (stating that the county commissioners court as a whole has the authority to determine its agenda, and not the county judge

or county clerk).

Q Does a mayor in a general law city have veto power over actions taken by the city council?

A No. However, the mayor in a Type A general law city has the authority to require "reconsideration" of an ordinance or resolution passed by the city council. TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE § 52.003. After an ordinance or resolution is passed by the city council, it must be placed in the secretary's office for the mayor's signature. *Id.* § 52.003(a). The mayor may sign the ordinance or resolution, in which case it takes effect, or the mayor may return the ordinance or resolution to the council with objections. *Id.* In the case of a "return" to the city council, the council must reconsider the vote by which the ordinance or resolution was adopted. *Id.* § 52.003(c). If the council passes the ordinance or resolution by a majority vote of the total number of members of the governing body, excluding the mayor, the ordinance takes effect. *Id.* If the mayor neither signs the ordinance nor sends it back to the council, it takes effect after the fourth day. *Id.* § 52.003(b).

In a home rule city, the ability of a mayor to veto actions taken by the city council is determined by the city's charter.

Q Can a mayor file a lawsuit on behalf of the city without the approval of the city council?

A No, unless the city council delegates by resolution or ordinance the right to do so, as discussed above. A city may act only by and through its governing body and acts of the mayor or individual councilmembers are ineffective without express authorization from the governing body. *City of Austin v. Whittington*, 384 S.W.3d 766, 785 (Tex. 2012).

Q Do mayors have emergency management powers and responsibilities?

A Yes. State law provides that the mayor (or the mayor's designee) is the emergency management director for a city. TEX. GOV'T CODE § 418.1015. Generally, the mayor has the same powers on a local level as the governor under Chapter 418 of the Government Code (The Texas Disaster Act). *Id.* For example, the mayor has the authority to order evacuation and other restrictions on movement during an emergency. *Id.* §§ 418.108(f); 418.1015(b); 418.018. The mayor is also the

official responsible for declaring a local state of disaster for the first seven days or requesting that the governor declare a state of emergency. *See id.* §§ 418.108; 433.001. The mayor may designate an emergency management coordinator to serve as an assistant to the mayor for emergency management purposes. *Id.* § 418.1015.

Q May a mayor administer an oath of office?

A Under Section 22.042(d) of the Local Government Code, the mayor of a Type A city may administer oaths to officers of the city. Otherwise, the office of mayor is not on the list of public officials authorized to administer an oath of office under Section 602.002 of the Government Code.

Q Can a mayor act as the city administrator?

A A city council may delegate the duties of most city offices, such as administrator or treasurer, to the mayor. *See City of San Benito*, 109 S.W.3d at 757. However, under the common-law doctrine of incompatibility, the mayor may not

be officially appointed to another city office or position of employment and may not be compensated for any duties delegated to him or her by the city council. *See Ehlinger v. Clark*, 8 S.W.2d 666 (Tex. 1928); Tex. Att'y Gen. Op. KP-418 (2022).

Q If a mayor in a general law city is absent or incapacitated, does the mayor pro tem automatically become mayor?

A No. If the mayor of a general law city is absent or incapacitated, the mayor pro tem does not actually become mayor. *De Alejandro v. Hunter*, 951 S.W.2d 102, 107 (Tex. App.—Corpus Christi–Edinburg 1997, no writ). Rather, the mayor pro tem assumes the duties of the mayor, including presiding at meetings of the governing body. TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE § 22.037(b). When assuming the duties of mayor, the mayor pro tem does not lose the power to vote, even when presiding at the meetings. *De Alejandro*, 951 S.W.2d at 107. In some cities, the presiding officer does not vote as a matter of custom. ★



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GRAHAM PARTNERS TO BRING 'GREEN' HYDROGEN TO NORTH TEXAS

By **Eric Garretty**, City Manager,
City of Graham



The State of Texas is known as the nation's energy powerhouse. In 2023, Texas accounted for 43 percent of the nation's crude oil production and 27 percent of its natural gas gross withdrawals.* In addition to traditional energy sources, the Lone Star State accounts for 28 percent of all United States' wind-sourced electricity. An innovation in the use of wind-sourced electricity, to power the production of an alternative energy source, green hydrogen, is emerging in an unlikely spot – Young County, Texas – home to the small North Texas town of Graham (population 8,732).

Nestled near the Possum Kingdom Reservoir and home to the Food Truck Championship of Texas, Graham has partnered with Plug Power, a leading hydrogen solutions provider based in Latham, New York, to enable an innovative project to supply reclaimed water for hydrogen production—

an initiative that blends the region's deep-rooted energy legacy with cutting-edge technology.

A Vision for Sustainable Energy

The ambitious project began in 2017 when the City of Graham and Plug Power struck a deal to develop infrastructure that would deliver reclaimed wastewater from the City's wastewater treatment facility to a planned hydrogen production plant located about five miles west of town. Traditional hydrogen production often relies on electricity produced by traditional energy sources. The planned Plug facility will be primarily powered by wind-generated electricity, making it a true example of green hydrogen technology.

To make this vision a reality, Graham took on the challenge of constructing its first-ever reclaimed water infrastructure—a \$12 million endeavor fully funded by Plug Power. The project required laying more than six miles of pipeline and building an advanced filtration and pumping system to ensure the reclaimed water met stringent hydrogen production standards. The City provided engineering and construction contracting expertise, while Plug Power provided necessary capital investment funding, thus setting the stage for an innovative and sustainable energy production alternative.

Overcoming Challenges to Build the Future

Construction of the reclaimed water pipeline officially began in November 2023, but the process was far from simple. The pipeline's path along a Texas Farm to Market Road presented numerous geological obstacles, including hard rock formations and unpredictable soil conditions. Plans had to be redrawn multiple times to navigate these challenges and accommodate adjacent landowners.

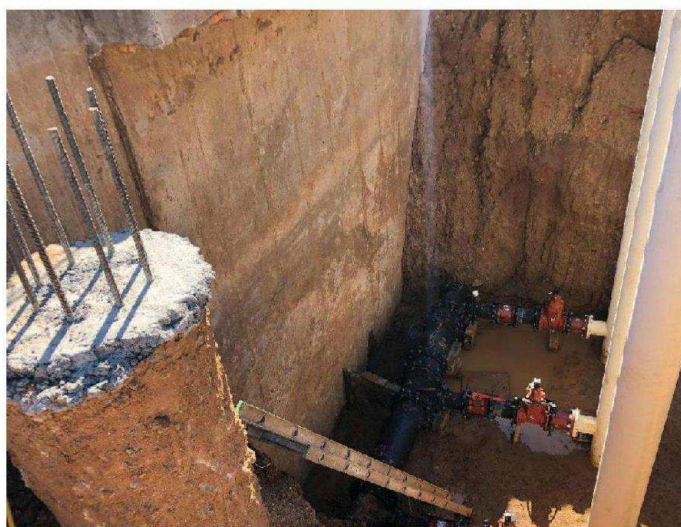
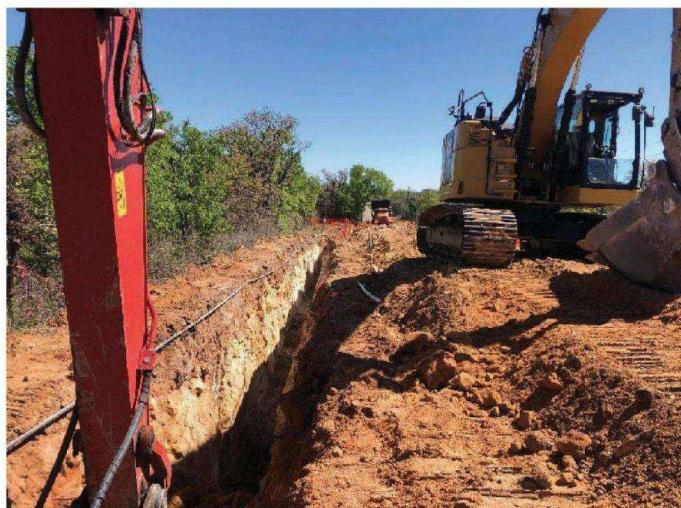
Despite these hurdles, the pipeline portion of the project reached substantial completion in February 2025. Once operational, it is expected to deliver between 350,000 and 500,000 gallons of reclaimed water per day to the hydrogen facility. Meanwhile, work on the filtration and pumping system, which began in January 2024, is set to conclude in May 2025, enhancing the water quality for both hydrogen production and cooling of the hydrogen production infrastructure.

A New Era for Energy in North Texas

With the reclaimed waterline infrastructure nearly complete, focus now shifts to the hydrogen production facility itself. Plug Power is slated to begin full construction activities in late 2025, with completion expected to take several years. Beyond the direct impact of the project itself, the project is poised to boost the local economy. The plant will create jobs for maintenance personnel and transportation specialists who will distribute hydrogen fuel cells to customers in Texas and beyond. Using reclaimed water for production reduces the need for potable water in the production process, which underscores the initiative's commitment to sustainability.

Leading the Charge in Clean Energy

City Manager Eric Garretty sees this partnership as a landmark achievement for Graham and the evolving energy industry: "As Texas continues to lead the nation in population



growth and economic development, energy production is second only to the availability of viable water sources in the Lone Star State. This project embodies the perfect synthesis of those elements. By leveraging reclaimed water to produce green hydrogen, we are working with our energy production partners to help meet rising energy demands while maintaining an environmentally conscious approach."

As evidenced by this innovative partnership, the State of Texas is poised to continue to lead the nation in the production of reliable, sustainable energy. The City of Graham's partnership with Plug Power demonstrates that the alternative energy frontier is no longer on a distant horizon but coming into view right now, in North Texas.

*Source: <https://www.eia.gov/state/print.php?sid=TX> ★



CLEBURNE IS IMPROVING STREETS AND UTILITIES THROUGH RENEWAL PROGRAMS

By **Hope Boyd**, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer, City of Cleburne

As the saying goes, "If you build it, they will come." What they don't tell you is that once you build it, you also need to maintain it. This is a challenge many Texas cities face as they balance the need for new infrastructure while keeping the existing systems in good condition.

Aging infrastructure, budget constraints, and growing populations can put strains on public services and resources. In Cleburne, two annual programs are making significant strides in maintaining and upgrading essential infrastructure: the Street Maintenance Program and the Water and Sewer Line Renewals Program. These initiatives are designed to ensure long-term sustainability and cost efficiency while enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Essentially, the city council allocates a certain amount of funding for these initiatives each year to fix and upgrade street systems and utility lines. The programs use a data-driven, proactive approach to prioritize maintenance and renewal across the city - optimizing spending and minimizing disruptions.

Strategic Investments in Streets

Since its launch in 2019, the Street Maintenance Program has been instrumental in revitalizing Cleburne's roadways. To date, approximately 46.4 miles of streets have been

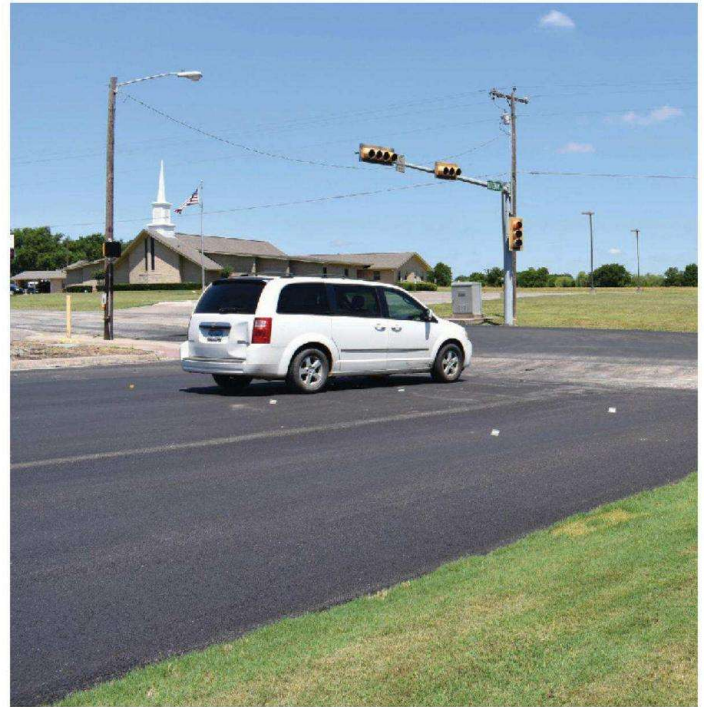
repaired, backed by a total investment of \$15.5 million. The program's strategic approach addresses isolated issues while maintaining the entire street network.

Most cities are familiar with the pavement condition index (PCI). It is a widely used tool for assessing the condition of roads, rating them on a scale from 0 to 100. Higher scores indicate better road conditions, while lower scores signify greater deterioration.

Instead of relying on a "worst-first" mentality, the City uses a comprehensive strategy that considers multiple factors, including—but not limited to—PCI scores, past maintenance, observed conditions, actual failures experienced, traffic counts, citizen concerns, required maintenance availability, location, and opportunities to group projects into neighborhoods.

This broader strategy ensures that resources are allocated effectively, addressing not only the most deteriorated roads but also those that will provide the greatest benefit to the community and the infrastructure network as a whole.

"Keeping our streets in good condition requires careful planning and an ongoing commitment to maintenance," said Jeremy Hutt, Cleburne's director of public works. "Our



program allows us to fix immediate issues and proactively address problem areas. Doing this helps reduce long-term costs and preserve the integrity of our roadways."

A Tactical Approach to Utility Line Repairs

In addition to roadway maintenance, Cleburne invests in its utility infrastructure through the Water and Sewer Line Renewals Program. For 2024 alone, the City replaced approximately 7,800 linear feet of outdated water lines and 6,000 linear feet of outdated sewer lines.

Like the Street Maintenance Program, the utilities program is guided by careful planning and data. The City of Cleburne conducts condition assessments to determine which pipes are most at risk of failure, prioritizing replacements to avoid service disruptions.

"It's not a one-size-fits-all approach," Hutt explained. "We consider the health of the line, operator feedback, opportunities to coordinate with street rebuilds, and whether the line will support future growth. Our goal is to address current issues while proactively preparing for potential future needs."

A Win-Win for the City and Residents

Using a more thoughtful and holistic approach to repairing

and maintaining roads and utility lines reduces the frequency of emergency repairs and minimizes the impact on residents and businesses. Construction is rarely enjoyable for those affected, but a plan to minimize disruptions in a given area can help ease the burden for everyone involved.

Cleburne's approach to infrastructure management offers valuable lessons for cities of all sizes facing similar challenges. Balancing proactive maintenance with fiscal responsibility ensures that infrastructure investments are both strategic and sustainable. Strong support from the city council is also key because it establishes a framework that keeps essential services reliable while maximizing available resources.

Rather than simply setting aside funds for emergency repairs, adopting a strategy that combines quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis can help municipalities better understand infrastructure conditions and prioritize a comprehensive list of repairs annually. Cleburne's commitment to thoughtful planning and consistent investment provides an example of how municipalities can modernize and maintain public assets while keeping long-term costs manageable. ★

THE FATE OF OUR STREETS: A BILLION-DOLLAR JOURNEY AHEAD

By **Michael Kovacs**, City Manager, and **Omar Williams**, Assistant to the City Manager, City of Fate

Nearly \$1 billion in road infrastructure obligations is an alarming number to fathom for a small town. But that's the estimated cost to replace all 103 road miles of streets in the City of Fate over the coming decades. Like many communities, Fate has postponed long-term planning for road repairs as infrastructure was built out. With new road infrastructure development continuing to be added at a rapid rate and older streets nearing the end of their lifecycle, it was crucial to develop a sustainable, strategic plan to address these challenges.

To get ahead of this issue, the City developed the first phase of its Street Replacement Plan that outlines the estimated costs of replacing all its roads, highlights ongoing efforts to extend road lifespans, and identifies conceptual funding strategies to prepare for future maintenance and reconstruction. The goal is to ensure Fate is positioned to meet these infrastructure demands without placing an unmanageable financial burden on future generations.

The City's expansive soils significantly shorten pavement lifespans. This accelerates subgrade failures and edge deterioration, leading to costly repairs and full replacements sooner than expected. Given these challenges, Fate's Street Replacement Plan prioritizes proactive maintenance and strategic funding to extend road life and delay reconstruction

wherever possible. For the purpose of our analysis, we used a 40-year road life span, consistent with our asset life for roads in our annual comprehensive financial report.

Understanding the Cost of Road Replacement

To project future replacement costs, City staff used GIS mapping to determine road lengths and calculated reconstruction expenses based on an estimated \$4.2 million per 12-foot lane mile, as recommended by the city engineer. This estimate accounts for paving, drainage, water and wastewater lines, and other essential infrastructure like sidewalks and/or adjacent roadway trails.

Applying this methodology to Fate's 103 road miles, the total projected cost to replace all roads is \$973,584,729, a staggering number that underscores the necessity of a long-term funding strategy.



Ongoing Maintenance Efforts

Recognizing that preventative maintenance is the most cost-effective way to extend pavement life, the City has ramped up its road maintenance program. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, the budget includes \$1.9 million for road maintenance. Over the past decade, Fate has steadily increased road maintenance funding, understanding that every dollar spent on preservation saves multiple dollars in future replacement costs.

By investing in proactive repairs and maintenance, Fate is working to stretch the lifespan of existing roads and reduce near-term replacement needs. Using new road condition maintenance and asset management software applications, the City is gaining a better awareness of what level of spending and types of treatments are needed as the fiscal year 2026 budget is being considered. It is likely that continued six or seven figure annual increases in maintenance funding will be needed to maintain pavement conditions.

Challenges and Considerations

One of the biggest challenges in planning for road replacement is Fate's development history. Many of the City's existing streets were built with traditional suburban development patterns that do not generate enough tax revenue to support long-term infrastructure obligations. Fate is actively working to align land use decisions with fiscal sustainability, encouraging higher-density, mixed-use developments that contribute more to the tax base per acre. To see the City's new development fiscal analysis tool, go to <https://www.fatetx.gov/473/Fiscal-Analysis>.

Additionally, Fate's expansive soils present a unique engineering challenge. Up to 90 percent of road failures in the city are linked to soil movement, making it critical to incorporate improved materials and design methods in future road construction.

Long-Term Planning and Next Steps

With road replacement costs expected to surge in the coming decades, Fate is taking proactive steps to address long-term funding needs. Fortunately, the city council recognizes that this is not a challenge that can be deferred to future generations and fully supports staff's efforts to further develop a detailed sustainable strategy that will become the second phase of the plan.

To mitigate financial impact and distribute costs over time, several key funding strategies are under consideration:

- **Capital Reserve Funds** – Establishing dedicated savings for road replacement to reduce reliance on debt. Fate has dedicated reserves for water and sewer infrastructure replacement equal to annual depreciation costs in its utility fund budget, but nothing in its general fund budget now for streets.

- **Debt Issuance** – Evaluating options for future bond measures to finance major replacements.
- **Water and Sewer Coordination** – Aligning street replacement with underground utility projects to maximize capital replacement funds.

While these measures do not eliminate the need for significant future investments, they provide a framework for managing costs strategically. To ensure Fate's road network remains viable, the City is committed to a data-driven approach, including phased funding strategies to spread financial impact over time and minimize strain on future budgets.

Conclusion

The City of Fate is at a pivotal point in planning for its street infrastructure future. With a clear understanding of replacement costs, funding challenges, and ongoing maintenance needs, the Street Replacement Plan provides a roadmap for sustainable infrastructure investment. While significant financial commitments lie ahead, the City's proactive approach to maintenance, fiscal planning, and policy development will help manage costs and ensure a well-maintained road network for years to come.

*This image displays a pavement condition assessment map of the City of Fate. The map uses a color-coded system to indicate road conditions:

- Green – Roads in good condition with minimal wear.
- Yellow – Roads showing moderate deterioration, likely requiring maintenance soon.
- Orange/Red – Roads in poor condition, with significant wear, cracks, or structural failures, likely requiring major repairs or full reconstruction. ★





How Better Coordination Can Make Your Water Planning Flow

As our most essential resource, water keeps communities moving.

We drink it, flush it, wash with it, play in it, use it to irrigate — and we have to capture and clean it to continue the cycle. We also have to tame it when it's overabundant and look for more when it's scarce.

Communities can plan more effectively, efficiently and economically to meet their water needs by adopting a comprehensive approach that brings four key facets together:

- Water Supply, Delivery and Management
- Water Treatment and Distribution
- Wastewater Collection and Treatment
- Water Reuse

Here's how:

Water Supply, Delivery and Management

All water sources can benefit our communities if used creatively. While raw water supplies such as lakes, rivers and aquifers traditionally provide our core water supplies, they are

subject to unique limitations, especially during drought. Using these sources and other options conjunctively allows us to economically optimize our water resources to meet needs.

- **Water conservation** increases our efficiency in how we deliver and use water, meaning our resources stretch further.
- **Recycling water** or maximizing sources such as rainwater harvesting or condensate collection at the point of use can reduce the amount of water needed as well as the infrastructure required for delivery.
- **Interruptible water** supplies can even help stretch resources in a drought and bring down transmission costs. Buying local when possible is an effective way to meet water needs in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

Water Treatment and Distribution

Effective planning for water treatment and distribution systems allows providers to ensure safe and reliable potable supplies while maximizing the resilience and value of their assets. These plans protect long-term public health and provide a road map for efficiently managing system growth and infrastructure longevity.

COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLANNING | **A STRONG FOUNDATION**

Building Strong Utilities

- Provides system resiliency
- Mitigates uncertainty
- Provides adaptability
- Converts challenges to opportunities

Building Strong Communities

- Enhances quality of life
- Protects natural resources
- Sustains economic development
- Creates a legacy of water resource management

- Water treatment facilities planning should address asset condition and criticality, existing plant process, and hydraulic performance; evaluate process optimization; and identify rehabilitation needs. It's also important to identify current and future regulatory constraints, such as PFAS rules, and predict growth needs that impact future expansions and improvements.
- Water distribution system planning helps model system performance — current and future — to optimize functions as well as water quality. By providing a digital twin, these models allow system owners to anticipate change and maintain the service levels they need.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment

Effective wastewater collection and treatment system planning protects our environment and public health. These plans help model optimum performance of the collection system and plant, maximize infrastructure reliability and make wise decisions about infrastructure replacement and expansion.

- Wastewater treatment facilities planning can provide dynamic process models of plant performance so owners and operators can identify issues that require addressing and develop solutions for future growth and regulation, infrastructure replacement and process optimization. Effective plans look at liquids and solids treatment together and identify holistic

improvements to meet future needs.

- Wastewater collection system planning can help owners maintain and manage their investments by identifying best practices for interceptor condition assessment programs. Good planning can lengthen infrastructure life and provide dynamic models that eliminate hydraulic constraints and system overflows.

Water Reuse

Water reuse planning, when combined with these other plans, allows owners to make best use of every drop of water at their disposal. Reuse plans can help augment water supplies, provide water for industrial growth, safely irrigate parks and golf courses, and add a level of resilience against drought.

- Potable reuse planning typically consists of evaluations involving indirect potable reuse (IPR) and direct potable reuse (DPR).
 - Numerous cities have shown that wastewater effluent can be purified to drinking standards, and potable reuse continues to gain traction nationally.
 - IPR can augment an available surface water supply or supplement a natural aquifer using aquifer storage and recovery methods.
 - Advanced DPR can safely engineer highly purified water for direct potable use by households, schools and businesses.
- Non-potable reuse has been used for decades in “purple pipe” systems to offset water use by industry or to provide an irrigation source that doesn't tap drinking water reserves.

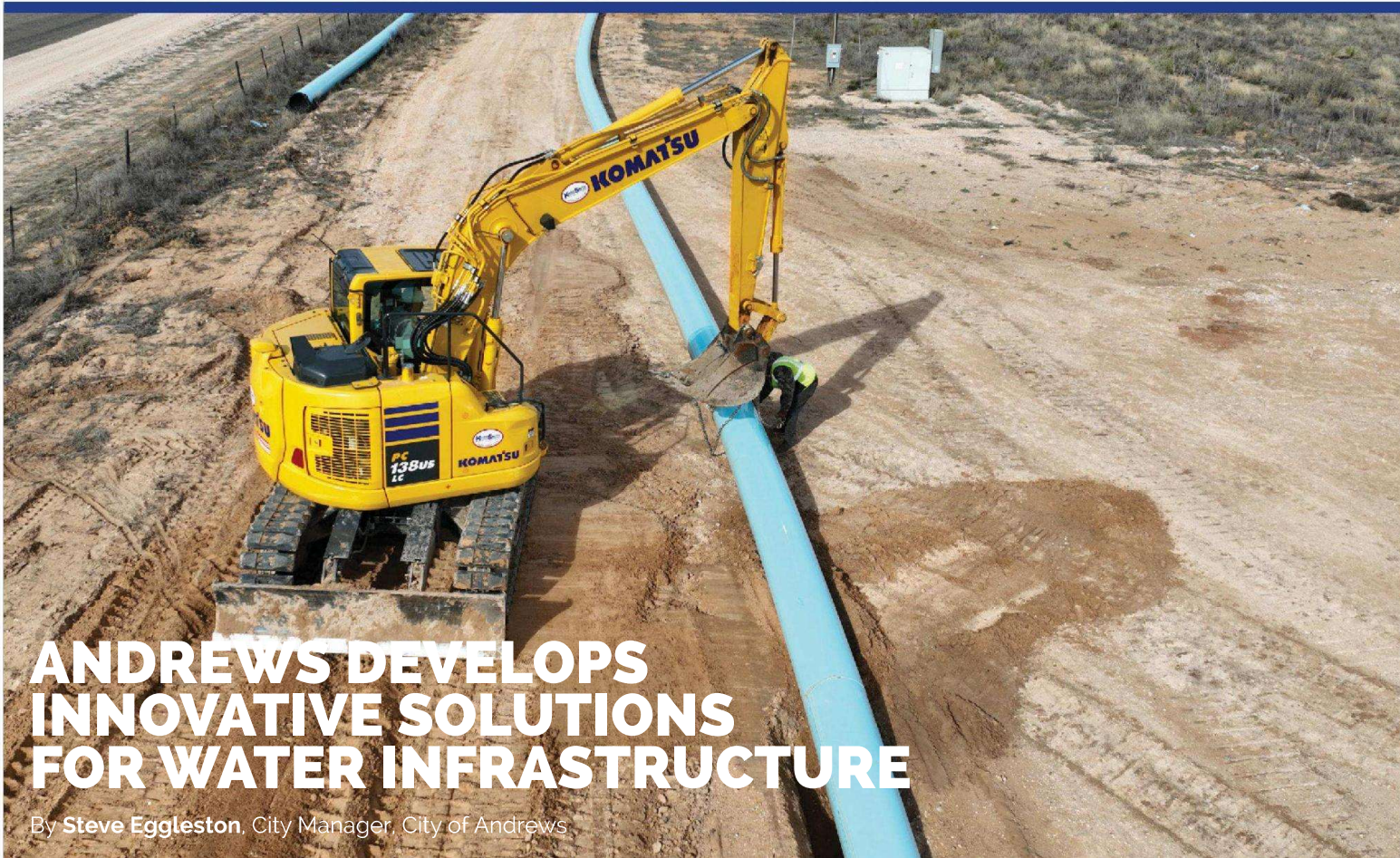
Every Drop Counts

Coordinating your water and wastewater planning with your comprehensive plan can help define a vision, set priorities, maximize dollars and put pieces in place for consistent, reliable service. For best results, aim to develop a plan every 10 years and periodically update your plans at five-year intervals.

How Freese and Nichols Can Help You

We've assisted cities across Texas with planning, infrastructure, funding and many other aspects of meeting their water and wastewater needs.

To learn more, contact David Jackson, david.jackson@freese.com, Jessica Brown, jessica.brown@freese.com, Jason Afinowicz, jason.afinowicz@freese.com, or Wendy Bonneau, wendy.bonneau@freese.com



ANDREWS DEVELOPS INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

By Steve Eggleston, City Manager, City of Andrews

The City of Andrews has long recognized the importance of a reliable and sustainable water infrastructure. Faced with aging pipelines and increasing demands, city leaders took a proactive and innovative approach to ensure long-term water security for their residents. Through strategic planning, forward-thinking financial decisions, and strong partnerships, Andrews has successfully completed a critical water infrastructure project that will benefit the community for generations to come.

Securing Funding Through Alternative Means

A pivotal moment in Andrews' water infrastructure journey came on May 4, 2019, when residents voted in a special election to authorize the use of sales and use tax proceeds collected on behalf of the Andrews Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) – a Type A corporation – for water supply facilities. This decision allowed the City to allocate economic development sales tax funds toward infrastructure improvements, including transmission lines, well field developments, and alternative water supply solutions.

This decision proved invaluable, as it enabled the City of Andrews to fully fund an \$11 million water infrastructure project without requiring additional taxes or debt financing. Because the project met the Texas Comptroller's definition of infrastructure relating to water supply facilities, it was completely funded through these proceeds—demonstrating a fiscally responsible approach that ensured taxpayer dollars were used effectively.

In December 2023, the City partnered with Andrews County and the Andrews County Hospital Board to establish its first Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone. Incremental taxes collected in this zone will be used to fund future water and wastewater infrastructure. The City has also called a special election in May 2025 to allow local taxpayers to support using sales tax proceeds collected by the AEDC to be used for other Type B projects, including water and wastewater projects not included in the 2019 special election.



repairs made in the past. The 18-inch line can provide an adequate supply of water to the City during peak demand; a 14-inch line cannot. When the 18-inch line is taken out of service for maintenance, water restrictions must be considered until repairs occur, especially during high-volume summer months.

The City of Andrews undertook the ambitious task of replacing the aging 14-inch concrete steel cylinder water transmission line with a modern 20-inch fusible Cg00 PVC pipeline. The 10-mile-long line provides a more reliable delivery system and significantly reduces water loss. Unlike traditional gasketed pipelines, the fused PVC system minimizes the risk of leaks and contamination, particularly in an area with extensive oil and gas activity.

Replacing Aging Infrastructure for Long-Term Reliability

All drinking water for the City of Andrews is provided by groundwater from three wellfields located 8-10 miles from city limits. The groundwater produced from the wellfields is transported through two pipelines.

Prior to the aforementioned \$11 million project, the two west wellfields were connected to the City via a 14-inch concrete steel cylinder constructed well over 70 years ago. This line had numerous repairs and ruptures over the years and had deteriorated to the point that all repairs were done by cutting in new pipe sections to make the necessary repairs. In 2020 alone, the 14-inch line had to be repaired seven times. On average, each repair to the line required four employees and 30 hours. Repairs did not adequately provide a complete seal, allowing moisture to enter the pipe, and causing rusting and weakening the pipe structure.

The east wellfield is connected to the City by an 18-inch pipeline made of ductile iron pipe. The estimated remaining life of this east line is in the decades, with no significant

Additionally, the project included the construction of a 500,000-gallon groundwater storage tank in the west wellfield. This additional storage capacity allows the City to optimize well pumping schedules, reducing strain on the wellfield and extending the life of the pumps. Booster pumps were also installed to increase overall pumping capacity and improve system efficiency.

Strategic Pre-Purchasing for Cost Savings and Supply Chain Security

Another critical element of the project's success was the City's foresight in pre-purchasing 10 miles of pipeline years before installation. This strategic move locked in the price with manufacturers, shielding Andrews from the dramatic post-COVID price increases that impacted infrastructure projects nationwide. This decision alone is estimated to have saved Andrews up to half a million dollars.

Beyond cost savings, pre-purchasing also secured a place on the manufacturer's production schedule at a time when demand for water infrastructure materials was at an all-time



high. This ensured the City had the necessary materials on hand when the project was ready to begin, avoiding delays that could have extended project timelines and increased costs.

Navigating Complex Permitting and Land Access Challenges

A project of this magnitude required careful coordination with various stakeholders. The City secured an eight-and-a-half-mile easement from XTO Energy and negotiated agreements to address over 150 crossings of gathering and high-pressure pipelines. Additionally, Andrews County worked closely with the City to facilitate the pipeline's route across county-owned land, including the airport property.

These negotiations ensured that all legal and environmental requirements were met while minimizing potential conflicts with existing infrastructure.

Long-Term Benefits and Future-Proofing Andrews' Water Supply


This forward-thinking project offers numerous advantages to the City of Andrews and its residents:

- **Durability:** The new fusible PVC pipe is expected to last over 100 years, significantly reducing future maintenance costs.
- **Reduced Water Loss:** The seamless system prevents leaks, ensuring more efficient water delivery.
- **Enhanced Contamination Protection:** By eliminating gasketed joints, the risk of contamination from nearby oilfield pipelines is minimized.
- **Increased Capacity and Redundancy:** The new 20-inch pipeline provides additional supply capacity, ensuring water availability during peak demand and system maintenance.
- **Prolonged Wellfield Life:** The new storage tank and booster pumps improve wellfield management, extending the useful life of groundwater resources.

A Model for Other Texas Communities

The City of Andrews' approach to water infrastructure funding and development serves as a model for other Texas communities. By utilizing economic development sales tax proceeds, strategically pre-purchasing materials, and investing in modern, long-lasting infrastructure, Andrews has demonstrated a proactive and fiscally responsible approach to addressing critical water needs.

Thanks to the foresight and strategic planning of Andrews' leaders, residents continue to enjoy the lowest water rates in the region, coupled with a reliable and sustainable water system. As Texas cities continue to grapple with aging infrastructure and increasing demand, Andrews' success story provides valuable lessons in innovation, collaboration, and financial stewardship. ★



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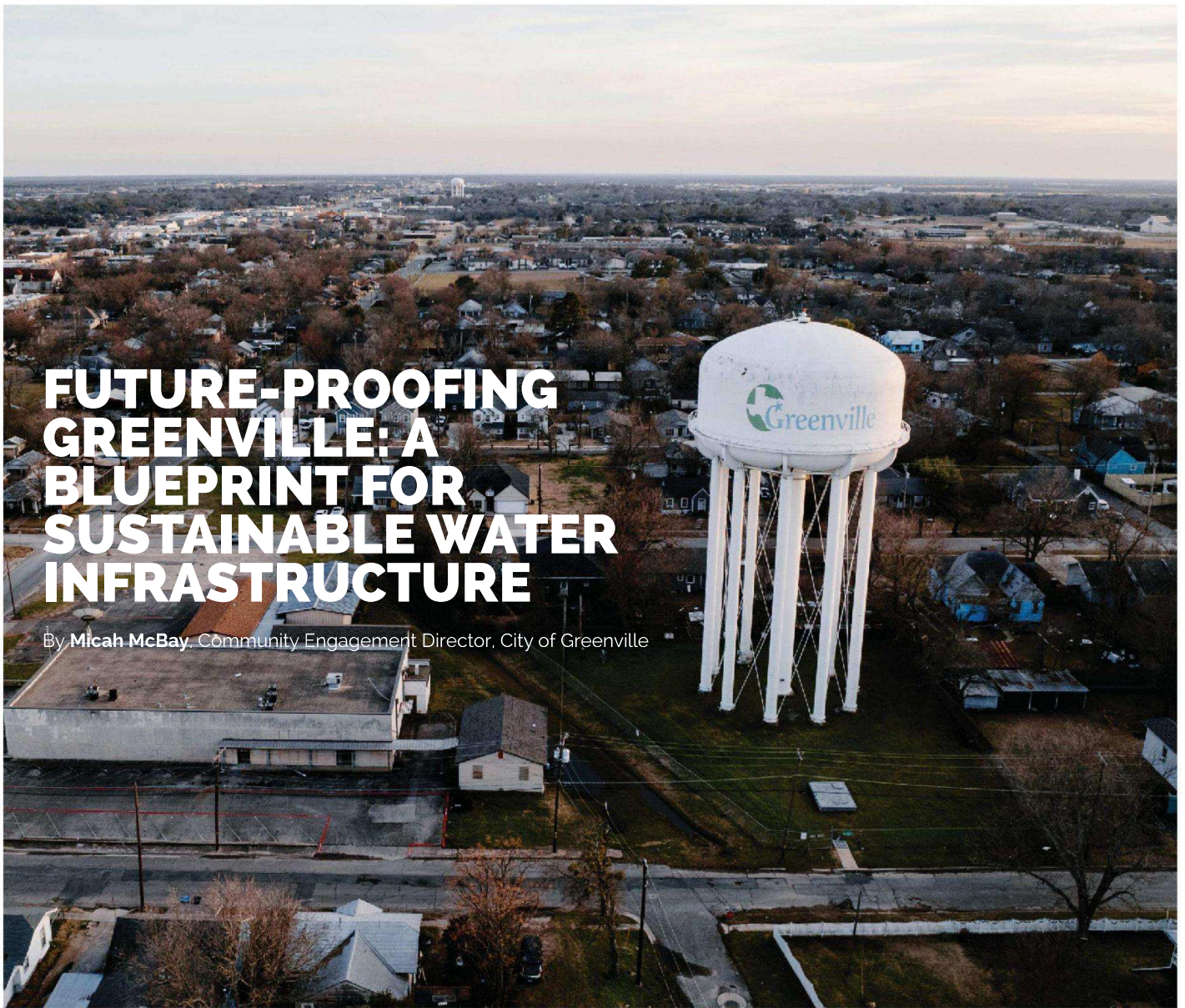


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FUTURE-PROOFING GREENVILLE: A BLUEPRINT FOR SUSTAINABLE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

By Micah McBay, Community Engagement Director, City of Greenville

In the heart of Northeast Texas, the City of Greenville is undertaking one of the most ambitious water infrastructure overhauls in its history. As Texas cities continue to grow, the demand for reliable water and wastewater services has never been greater. Greenville's forward-thinking approach to water system expansion and modernization serves as a model for cities looking to build infrastructure that can sustain rapid development while ensuring long-term resilience.

With over \$270 million in planned improvements across two major phases, Greenville is laying the groundwork

for a water infrastructure system that will serve residents, businesses, and industrial users for decades to come. By expanding water treatment capacity, upgrading storage and distribution, and investing in wastewater management, the City is taking proactive steps to secure its future in an era of increasing demand and environmental challenges.

Preparing for Growth

Greenville is experiencing significant growth, with more than 4,300 new residential units and over 8,000 platted lots expected to reshape the City's landscape. Industrial and commercial development is also on the rise, with projected

water usage reaching six million gallons per day in the coming years. Nearby Caddo Mills anticipates a population increase of over 13,000 residents, further straining regional water resources.

Recognizing these trends, Greenville has prioritized infrastructure investments that will expand capacity, enhance system reliability, and ensure that future demand is met without disruptions. This strategic planning is essential for Texas cities facing similar pressures due to population growth, business expansion, and shifting environmental conditions.

Major Projects Underway

Industrial Park Water System Upgrades – \$40.9 Million

One of Greenville's flagship infrastructure projects is the expansion of its industrial water system. The upgrades include:

- Replacing an aging 500,000-gallon elevated storage tank with a new two-million-gallon tank
- Adding two one-million-gallon clear wells to increase water reserves
- Relocating and enhancing a 4,500-gallon-per-minute pump station to improve distribution efficiency
- Upgrading an 8-inch water line to a 16-inch line to support higher-capacity flow

These improvements will ensure that Greenville's industrial sector has access to the water resources it needs to thrive while also reinforcing supply for residential and commercial users.

Raw Water Main Parallel Pipe Project – \$70.6 Million

To bolster system redundancy and resilience, Greenville is installing a new raw water main parallel pipeline. This multi-phase project will enhance reliability, ensure water delivery remains stable during high-demand periods, and provide a backup system for emergencies.

New Water Treatment Plant – \$90 Million

Greenville's existing water treatment facilities are nearing capacity, prompting the need for a state-of-the-art water treatment plant. This investment will:

- Increase processing capacity to support growth
- Improve water quality and efficiency with modern technology
- Ensure a sustainable, long-term water supply

Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion – \$51.5 Million

As water consumption increases, so does the need for improved wastewater treatment. This expansion will:

- Increase capacity to handle growing residential and industrial waste
- Ensure compliance with environmental and water quality standards
- Upgrade aging infrastructure to improve efficiency and reduce operational costs

Water Meter Upgrade – \$6 Million

Greenville is upgrading its city-wide water metering system to Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI). This \$6 million investment will:

- Replace over 13,000 outdated water meters
- Provide real-time water usage data, leak detection, and remote monitoring
- Improve billing accuracy and water conservation efforts

These smart meters will allow the City and residents to better manage water resources, improving efficiency across the system.

Basin Rehabilitation – \$12 Million

Greenville's water treatment system relies on a critical piece of infrastructure known as the Basin, which helps filter, settle, and clean water before it reaches consumers. Built in the early 1990s, it has undergone routine maintenance but now requires a major upgrade to keep pace with increasing demand.

This \$12 million rehabilitation project will:

- Replace aging materials with modern, durable components
- Upgrade motors and electrical systems to more energy-efficient technology
- Improve drainage and cleaning systems to reduce maintenance time and improve efficiency



By investing in these upgrades now, Greenville is ensuring that its water treatment system remains reliable, efficient, and capable of meeting the City's needs for decades to come.

Phase Two Future Investments – \$9.2 Million

Looking beyond immediate needs, Greenville's Phase Two projects include:

- Replacing aging ground storage facilities
- Dredging sludge ponds to improve wastewater treatment efficiency

These long-term investments will strengthen Greenville's infrastructure, ensuring the City continues to provide high-quality water services as demand increases.

A Model for Smart Infrastructure Investment

Rather than waiting for infrastructure failures, Greenville is taking a proactive approach by securing funding and planning upgrades in advance. By utilizing Water and Sewer Revenue Bonds, the City is ensuring that these critical improvements are funded responsibly while keeping water rates manageable for residents and businesses.

Strategic financial planning and long-term vision have allowed Greenville to balance the need for infrastructure investment with fiscal responsibility—an approach that many Texas cities can replicate as they face similar challenges.

Lessons for Texas Cities

Greenville's approach offers key takeaways for other cities looking to modernize their water systems:

1. Plan for growth before demand exceeds capacity. Population trends and economic development projections should guide infrastructure planning.
2. Prioritize system redundancy and reliability. Investing in parallel pipelines and expanded storage prevents shortages and service interruptions.
3. Use smart funding mechanisms. Revenue bonds and phased funding strategies allow cities to finance upgrades without overburdening ratepayers.
4. Future-proof investments with scalable solutions. Water treatment facilities and storage expansions should be flexible to accommodate future needs.

As Texas continues to grow, sustainable water infrastructure will be a defining factor in a city's ability to thrive. By investing in comprehensive upgrades today, Greenville is ensuring it remains resilient, competitive, and well-equipped for the future. ★



ARE YOU CREATING PUBLIC VALUE?

By **Micah Intermill**, Founder and Principal, GovStrategist, LLC

Early in my public service career, I was introduced to the concept of 'best value' as an alternative to the outdated focus on 'low cost.' This idea resonated deeply with me, especially since I grew up hearing two competing narratives: "The era of big government is over" and "We need to shrink government to the size we can drown it in the bathtub." At the same time, I was taught that government is an instrument of good, designed to ensure that none of us are left behind.

These competing views shaped my understanding of what government should be and highlighted a fundamental tension: are we perpetuating outdated, minimalist views of government, or are we embracing its potential to create meaningful public value? Ultimately, I believe that government exists to provide high-quality services to support a strong quality of life for residents, business owners, and visitors of a given jurisdictional area. Those services must be available, accessible, and a resource to

solve problems and advance the common good.

While the focus on "low cost" emphasizes price, it often sacrifices other facets of the value equation, such as quality, durability, and relevance. This approach is not just short-sighted; it undermines the very purpose of government. If we focus solely on cutting costs, we risk stripping away the value that public services are meant to provide.

The Broader Definition of Public Value

Public value is the value created by government through services, regulations, and other actions that benefit the public as a whole. Unlike private sector value, often measured by profit, public value is measured by its contribution to society. This includes outcomes such as public safety, social equity, environmental sustainability, and trust in government. In essence, public value is about aligning the actions of public institutions with the broader needs and values of society.

The Shift from "Low Cost" to "Best Value"

The concept of "best value" shifts the focus from merely cutting costs to prioritizing outcomes and the voices of government service users—residents, business owners, or visitors. This holistic approach aligns with the true mission

of public service: to create value that resonates with and benefits the public.

I spent two years in the private sector selling software to governments, where I became familiar with the framework of features, benefits, and value. Features are defined by the products—what engineers build. Benefits are defined by the seller—the anticipated impact driven by the features in a given product set. However, the buyer defines value—it's their conception of why those products are important to them.

This framework has a direct parallel in government, though we might think in terms of services, outcomes, and the common good rather than features, benefits, and value. In this context, services are what governments provide. Outcomes are the results we aim to achieve, and the common good is the public value we hope to create.

Creating Public Value from the Start

Most of my career has been spent thinking about, designing, and delivering public budgets. This is really the heart of any serious conversation about what a government will provide its end users. Far too often, budget conversations quickly devolve into questions like, "Could we fund half of that request?" or "How can we do something for each department?" Like "low-cost" procurement, this race to the bottom ultimately serves only to degrade the quality of public services and erode public trust in government.

If, instead, we start by identifying the outcomes we want to achieve and the impacts we want to make broadly, we can work backward to identify which services we should fund. Better yet, if we analyze public desires and identify what they want those outcomes to look like, we immediately root our actions and decisions in public value and advance the common good.

The Expense in Creating Public Value

While public value is far more meaningful than mere cost-cutting, it comes with its own 'expenses.' These challenges represent investments—both financial and intellectual—that are crucial for achieving long-term value:

1. **Measurement.** Unlike financial metrics, public value is difficult to quantify. Governments need robust frameworks to capture both tangible and intangible benefits.

2. **Conflicting Values.** Public value often involves balancing competing interests. For example, policies promoting economic growth may conflict with environmental sustainability. City leaders must navigate these tensions to create balanced outcomes.

3. **Engagement.** Creating public value requires active citizen engagement. Without understanding what the public values through continuous engagement, cities risk implementing policies that may stagnate or miss the mark entirely.

Creating true public value is hard work, it takes time, and the path is often neither straight nor narrow. But none of the challenges listed above are insurmountable.

The Role of Leadership in Public Value

Leadership is critical in the pursuit of public value. Public sector leaders must articulate a clear vision that resonates with the values of the community they serve. They need to be strategic, forward-thinking, and willing to take risks to innovate and improve public services. Effective leadership can bridge the gap between the local government's actions and the public's expectations.

Conclusion

As city leaders, we must ask ourselves whether we truly create public value in our work. Are we focusing on outcomes that matter to the public, or are we caught in the trap of "low cost" thinking that sacrifices long-term value for short-term savings? By moving beyond outdated, 'low cost' thinking and shifting our focus to 'best value,' we can build a city that truly serves the people. ★

Micah Intermill is founder and managing partner at GovStrategist, LLC, a boutique strategic management consulting firm focused on strengthening the business of government. Learn more at www.govstrategist.com.

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