

City Manager Update – 5/7/21

Congratulations to Mayor Joanna Morgan, Councilmember Bill Gordon, Sharon Foerster, Tom Etheredge, and Stan Gerdes on their re-election / election to office. Special THANKS to Mike Kahanek and Rhonda Janak for their many years of dedicated service on the Council. Voter turnout for the [City/SISD election](#) was 15.91% with 1294 votes cast out of 8,132 registered voters. As a reminder, all political signs on private property must be removed within 7-days after the election per Chapter 14 - Zoning, section 3.7.2. Once the campaign dust settles, I would like to hold a workshop to discuss roles and responsibilities, accomplishments, projects, and future plans. I am targeting May 19th for the workshop. I feel the rapport among and between the Council and the City staff has remained strong. Employee morale is high. Sales tax revenues are recovering and the BCAD assessed property values have increased significantly. Infrastructure improvements are being made and businesses on Main Street continue to thrive and more will be opening soon. Multiple development projects are underway and there are as many as 50-75 single-family residential homes that will soon be built. We are making progress and building momentum ahead of growth but there is still much to do.

Here is a list of accomplishments, issues, and planned activities:

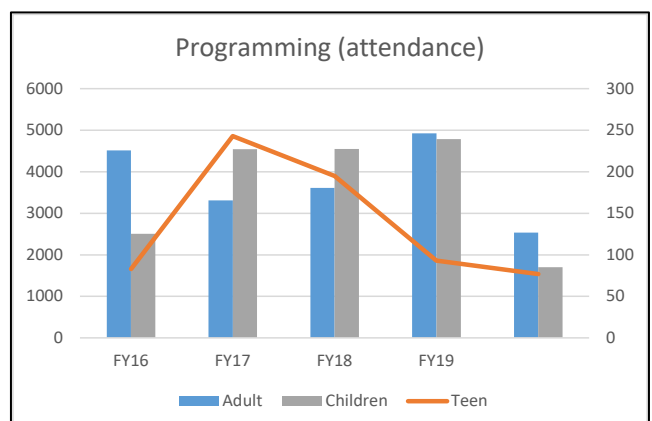
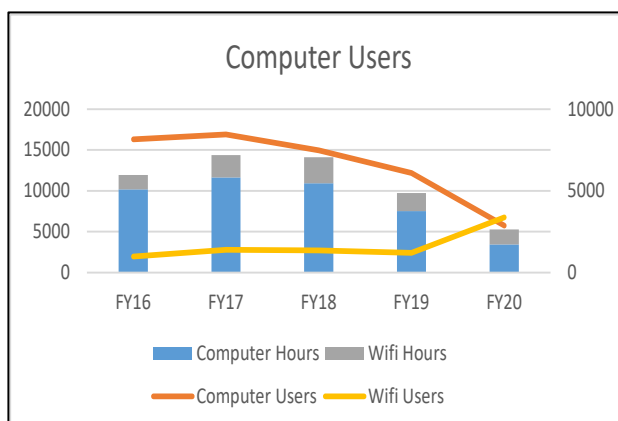
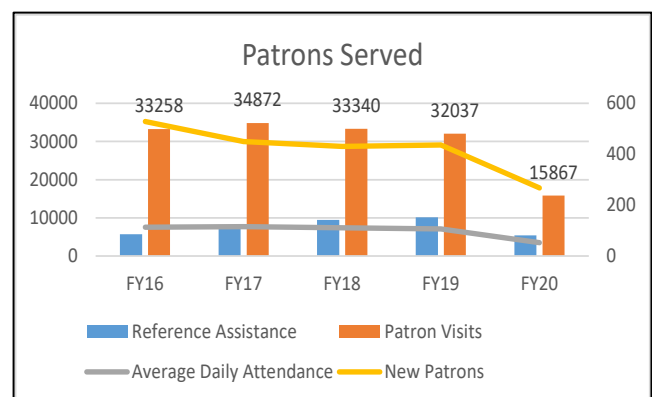
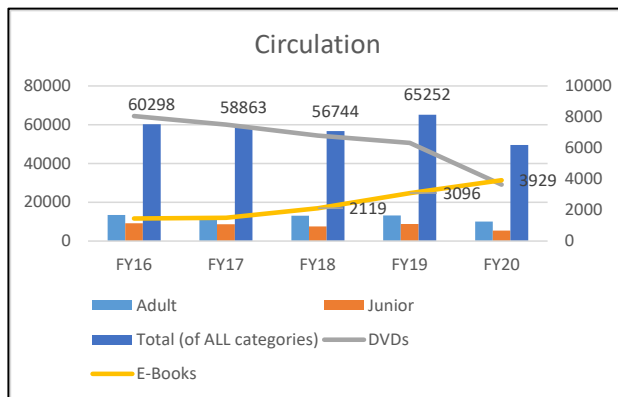
- 1) **2021 Bastrop Central Appraisal District (BCAD) Preliminary Estimate of Assessed Property Values** – The City of Smithville received official notice from BCAD communicating the preliminary estimate of property value(s) within the city limits. The total assessed property value (net taxable minus exemptions) for Smithville in 2021 is \$318,982,470. This represents an 14.64% increase (\$40,724,614) over last year's net taxable value of \$278,257,856. Based on the city's current tax rate of \$0.5491 per \$100 valuation, this could bring in an additional \$223,603 of revenue to the FY21/22 General Fund - barring any adjustments given to citizens who protest and win their appeals, added exemptions, etc. which typically equates to a 2-3% reduction of the total assessed value. Final property values (i.e., the certified tax roll) won't be out until the July/August timeframe. These values are what drive the effective tax rate which is used to calculate the total tax rate.

BCAD Property Valuation & City Tax Rate Comparison - PRELIMINARY						
Year	Preliminary Assessed Valuation	% Change in Value	M&O Rate	I&S Rate	% Change	Total Tax Rate
2021	\$318,982,470	14.64%	TBD			
2020	\$278,257,856	1.17%	\$0.4466	\$0.1024	-3.50%	\$0.5491
2019	\$275,033,703	10.90%	\$0.4525	\$0.1165	0.00%	\$0.5690
2018	\$247,999,239	3.83%	\$0.4455	\$0.1235	5.57%	\$0.5690
2017	\$238,861,226	14.15%	\$0.4166	\$0.1224	-4.77%	\$0.5390
2016	\$209,255,193	5.48%	\$0.4276	\$0.1384	2.28%	\$0.5660
2015	\$198,375,435	9.25%	\$0.4075	\$0.1459	0.00%	\$0.5534
2014	\$181,581,421	1.34%	\$0.3990	\$0.1544	9.37%	\$0.5534

- 2) **Smithville SEE/CLICK/FIX Issue Reporting Performance Ranked #3 in the Nation** - The City of Smithville was ranked #3 in the nation by SEE/CLICK/FIX at the end of Q4 2020 for the local government in the Small Community category (i.e., population ranging from 0 to 10,000 citizens). During 2020, there were 1,198 new requests (work orders) created and 1,172 requests "closed". This represents a 98% closure rate for the 12-month period. SeeClickFix is a user-friendly, cloud-based platform that gives citizens the ability to "connect" with City Hall through a variety of means. Citizens can report issues (e.g., pothole, broken street light, etc.) using their smartphones, Facebook, and/or the City website. The system automatically documents the location via GPS coordinates and creates a work order that is routed to the department responsible for resolving the issue and completing the work. Citizens can also forward photos of the issue to the City. The platform has been tailored to track closure status, work order aging, location, and type of issue being reported. This partnership not only allows Smithville citizens to report problems, but also to view, comment on, and vote to fix problems submitted by their neighbors. Citizens can even create their own "watch areas" to receive notifications about all the issues reported in their community, enabling them to follow the progress of all service requests — not just the ones they report. The SeeClickFix app also keeps citizens engaged during the process by communicating what steps have been (or will be taken) to resolve the issue while providing links to other important information like City News, Calendar, and Utilities. The SeeClickFix mobile app is available for download on Android → [SeeClickFix-ANDROID](#) and iPhone → [SeeClickFix-iPHONE](#). In addition to the mobile apps, citizens can send reports to the City website → <https://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/>. SeeClickFix provides a reliable issue(s) reporting / work order platform to enhance citizen engagement and improve operational efficiency.

City Manager Update – 5/7/21 (continued)

3) Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) Annual Report Submitted – The Smithville Public Library submitted its annual report for FY2020 to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) on April 29, 2021 as required for accreditation. This year, due to changes in the County funding status of the other two public libraries in Bastrop County, the Smithville Public Library has acquired the remainder of Bastrop County with the state-formula determined service population. In other words, through the eyes of TSLAC, SPL now serves 69,167 people. This new “large library” status also brings additional minimum standards to maintain accredited status (e.g., minimum per capita local government expenditures should be \$8.32 per 69K people, or \$576,000, as compared to \$4.51 per 16K people, or \$76,000, our former service population). Based on these increases in required minimums, our library failed to meet accreditation standards. The library will file an appeal to TSLAC for an Alternate Population Assignment, based on the Texas Administrative Code Rule 1.71, Article 10 (Minimum Standards for Accreditation in the State Library System, 13 TAC §1.71-§1.86, <http://tinyurl.com/TACaccreditation>). Ideally, the new service population will align with the Smithville ISD area. Accreditation is very important, as it is how our library is eligible for state-sponsored grants and programs, as well as access to numerous state-wide resources, such as inter-library loans and the TexShare Databases. In comparison to FY2019, almost everything (i.e., circulation - 23% drop; programs offered and attendance - 50% drop) except wi-fi use and e-book circulations went down, but the COVID-19 closures and restricted access account for those trends. E-book circulations increased by 27%, and wi-fi use increased by >150%, especially after the library added a higher capacity router during the closures. Library staff have continued to adapt their services increase their virtual programming presence. Last year, \$309,236 was spent on direct library operating expenditures, with \$307,559 being from local funds (the remainder was non-local grant funding). The City of Smithville’s contribution to that total was \$283,532 (Bastrop County was \$8,500) with the remainder coming from grants, foundations, and individual donations. So, why does this matter? These figures represent the maintenance of effort (MOE) by local government, which demonstrates local commitment to the impact public libraries have on their communities. Individuals who use public libraries directly benefit by gaining knowledge and ideas. Even those who choose not to use their local public library benefit by being part of a more educated community. For more information, contact Judy Bergeron at 512-237-3282 (extension 2424).



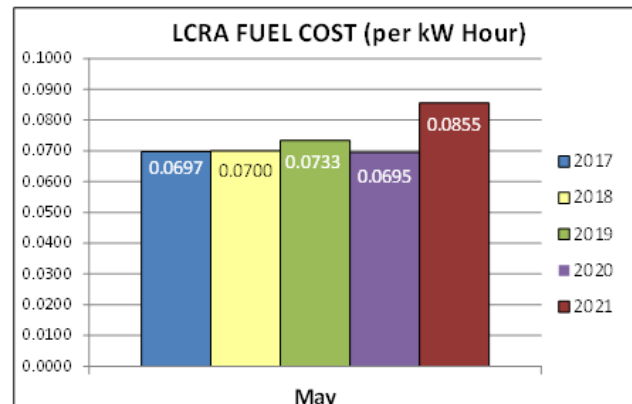
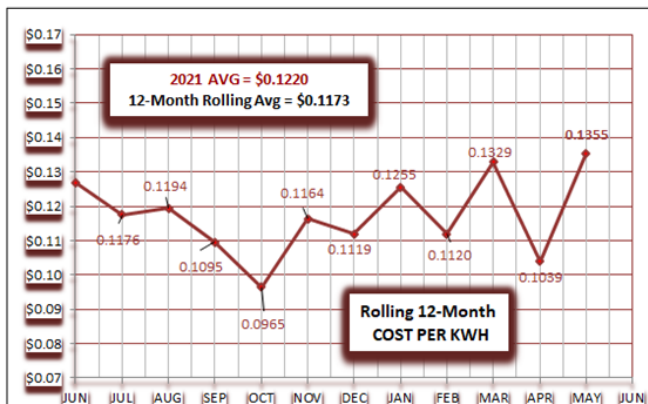
City Manager Update – 5/7/21 (continued)

- 4) **Seidel Estates 380 Economic Development / Annexation Agreement** - Chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes municipalities to offer incentives designed to promote economic development. The terms of this 380 Agreement require SJ2 Development, LLC., to voluntarily annex 7.115-acre tract of land into the city limits. The land is located between Oak Meadows, Quail Run and Riverchase just off of Loop 230 and will be used to construct a twenty-nine (29) home single-family residential subdivision (see concept drawing below). In return, the City of Smithville will provide services (e.g., fire, police, garbage, water, sewer, and electric) and offer approximately \$150k of performance-based incentives in the form of property tax reimbursements, installation of electric infrastructure, and reduced tap fees over the next 5-years. The cost of the incentives will be offset by increased property tax and utility services revenue (water, sewer, electric, garbage, etc.). SJ2 Development, LLC agrees to spend at least \$750k to design, construct, and complete improvements on the property. All water, wastewater, and roadway construction contracts shall contain a one-year performance warranty bond, which shall name the City as an additional insured and be assigned to the City after acceptance. In addition, SJ2 Development agrees to convey (at no cost to the City) a dedicated utility easement for the inspection, maintenance, and service of any and all city-owned utilities constructed therewithin. This will be a topic for discussion and action during the City Council meeting on Monday, May 10, 2021.

Seidel Estates Concept Plan / Annexation



- 5) **Residential Cost Per Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Calculated** – An analysis of LCRA billing data was conducted to determine residential cost per kilowatt hour (kWh) in May. LCRA fuel costs vary month to month and are based upon utility generation, transmission, line loss, and service fees. The LCRA fuel cost per kWh for May is \$0.0855. This represents a **58.54% INCREASE** compared to April's fuel cost of \$0.0539. Adding the City's distribution fee of \$0.0500 and LCRA's \$0.0855 fuel cost, **the cost per kWh for residential service in Smithville during MAY will be \$0.1355**. ERCOT provides energy conservation tips → <http://ercot.com/about/conservation/> to help reduce consumption which in turn will help citizens save money. Below you will find a "rolling" 12-month residential cost per kWh and a fuel cost comparison chart. On average, the cost per kWh for residential electric service in Smithville is between 11-12 cents.

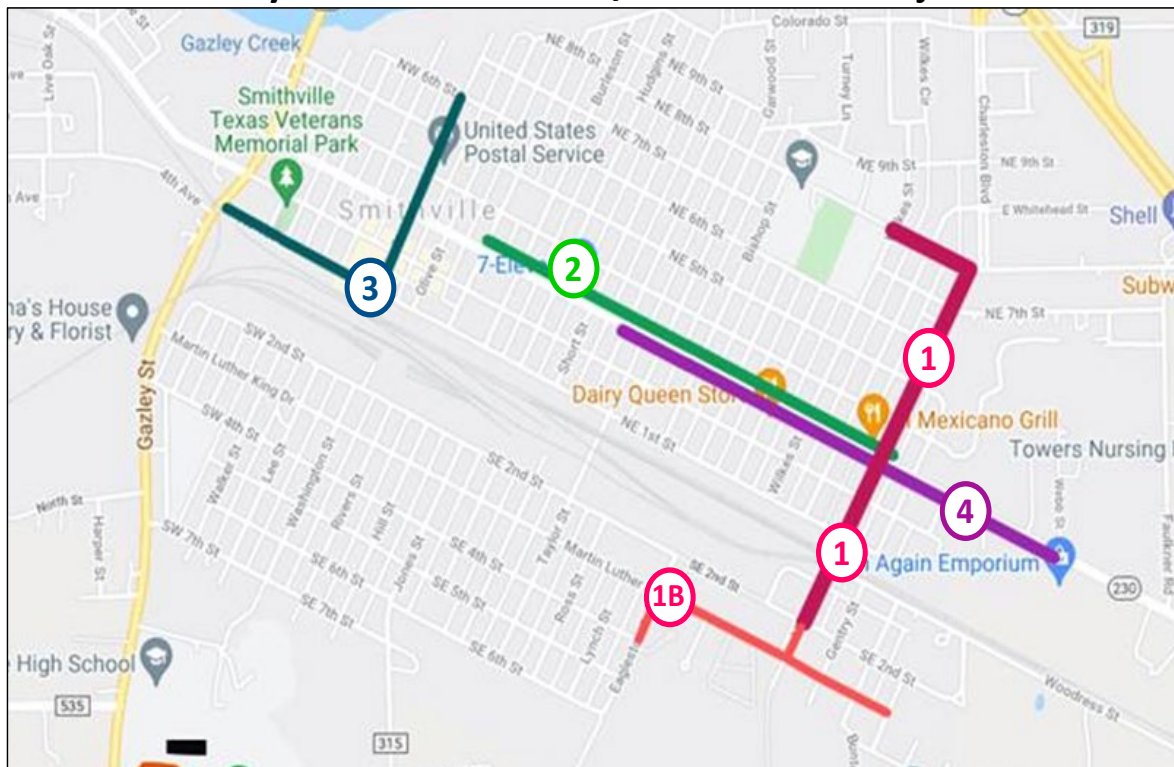


City Manager Update – 5/7/21 (continued)

6) **TXDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA) and Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Program Funding** - The City of Smithville has passed the preliminary stage and has been invited to submit a “detailed application” for the 2021 TXDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA) grant program for sidewalks that would complete the sidewalk network on both sides of Loop 230. The current 2020 TA Set-Aside project funds sidewalks on the north side of Loop 230; this project would provide funds for sidewalks on the south side, connecting sidewalks from Mills to Webb street where the Born-Again Emporium is located. If we are awarded funds for the project, we would be receiving \$850,740 in federal funds. This would cover engineering (\$122,100), construction (\$633,500), and administration (\$95,040). Smithville is eligible for Transportation Development Credits, which is why this project would not require match. The Detailed Application is due June 14, 2021. To date, the City of Smithville received combined total awards from TXDOT for SRTS and TA Set-Aside of approximately \$2.3M. Under SRTS, the City will receive \$878k in funding with NO MATCH for sidewalks from Miller Street to NE 8th Street that will connect with the newly renovated SISD Elementary campus. Under the 2019 TA Set-Aside program, the City received \$619k in funding with a 20% match to construct sidewalks along Loop 230 from Gresham to McSweeney. The \$155k match will be included in the FY21/22 City budget (next year). The FY 2020 TA-Set Aside project (the ADA Ramps/First Street Sidewalks), the 20% match will be about \$135K, and would be included in the FY22/23 City budget (two years from now). The SRTS/TA sidewalk project(s) will greatly enhance pedestrian mobility and safety to/from the Smithville ISD Elementary campus and along Loop 230. As a reminder, the City submitted four (4) projects for consideration of which three (3) have been awarded. See diagram below:

1. Smithville SRTS Sidewalks - \$878k (**PINK LINE - NO MATCH**)
2. TA Set-Aside Sidewalks - Loop 230 (north) from Gresham to McSweeney - \$619k (**GREEN LINE - \$125k MATCH**)
3. TA Set-Aside Sidewalks - Main Street ADA Ramps and First Street Sidewalks - \$600k (**DARK BLUE LINE - \$135k MATCH**)
4. TA Set-Aside Sidewalks - Mills to Webb on south side of Loop 230 - \$850k (**PURPLE LINE – NOT FUNDED YET**)

City of Smithville SRTS/TA Sidewalk Projects



1B - NOTES on SRTS:

The original plan was to avoid any construction at the RR Tracks due to the cost and the time required. However, TXDOT asked that we modify the original plan to include improvements at the RR tracks, although we were not able to change the amount of requested funds to account for the added expense. However, if we encounter a problem in construction at the tracks, funds may be used to provide more sidewalks to extend to MLK to Eagleston to hook into 4th Street sidewalks as originally planned.

PHOTOS (5/7/21):

Mold Abatement @ Rec Center (Water Damage During the 2021 Arctic Blast)



Chamber Office / Visitor Center / Railroad Museum Rebuild



Removing old brush, bushes, and trees from the fenceline @ the Gazley Water Plant



City Warehouse and NE 7th Street Detention Pond (From inside the Beast)

