

CITY

CONNECTION

Volume 13, Issue 1

October 2016

Calendar

October 2016

- 4 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 5 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 6 - Planning Commission -
City Hall at 12 p.m.
- 11 - State of the City Address
- 12 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 18 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 19 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 20 - Planning Commission -
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 26 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste

November 2016

- 1 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 2 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 3 - Planning Commission -
City Hall at 12:00 p.m.
- 8 - ELECTION DAY**
- 9- Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 15 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 16 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 17- Planning Commission -
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 23 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 24-25 - City Closed - Thanksgiving
Holiday
- 30- Yard Waste Trimming Collection

Submit requests for Heavy Trash pick-up
before noon on Wednesday,
the week prior to pick-up,
at 294-5796.

Learn more about
City events at
www.huntsvilletx.gov

Huntsville Bond Election Frequently Asked Questions

You have questions, we have answers! Please see below and visit www.huntsvilletx.gov/Bond for the entire list of FAQs or email us at bond@huntsvilletx.gov to submit your own questions.

How did the City arrive at the amounts of the bond propositions?

During 2015 and 2016, the City hired industry experts to complete professional, unbiased, objective studies on almost every piece of City infrastructure. Between the months of March and August 2016, the City Council carefully reviewed each study and identified projects needing the most significant attention. Not all of the infrastructure elements studied are candidates for funding with the bond proposals. The City Council selected the projects with the highest need and best available funding sources.

How will the City pay the debt payments on the bonds if the bond propositions pass?

Between now and 2021, the City will pay off a significant amount of debt that is currently on the books. There are also identified additional revenues that will be used to pay off new debt. *The City Council has stated publicly that property taxes and utility rates will not be increased to pay the principal and interest on the debt issued as a result of one or more of these bond propositions passing.*

If the propositions pass, will there be continued communication about the status, cost, etc. of the approved propositions and the status of the projects approved?

Absolutely. If one or more of the propositions on the November 8 ballot pass, the plan is to commence design on the project(s) approved by the voters. Depending on the project and the availability of expiring debt, work may begin very soon (which is the case with some of Proposition 3). In other instances, the City may not begin work until 2020 or 2021 (which the case with Proposition 2). The first phases (design) of Proposition 1 will likely begin in late 2017 or early 2018.

Regardless, any expenditure of more than \$50,000 will require public action by the City Council at a posted meeting. Also, any decision to issue debt will have to occur at a public meeting after advertising, opening bids and evaluating the best financing method available. Finally, any decision to award a contract(s) for work to be completed will also need to be considered and awarded at a public meeting after some competitive selection process for the work. So it isn't as if the bond will be approved and you won't know anything until the facilities are constructed (or improvements made). On the contrary, there will be considerable discussion and transparency after the election is completed and throughout the following processes.

When will the bonds be issued (money be borrowed) if the bond proposition(s) pass?

The plan is to complete design on the project before the debt is issued. This will allow the City to know how much debt is needed to pay for a project. Then, as the current debt that has been identified to pay for these projects is paid off (or very close to paid off), new debt may be issued at the discretion of the City Council.

So, the short answer is that increments of debt will be issued depending on what proposition(s) pass and when projects are ready to be paid for.

Continued on page 4...

November 8, 2016 General Election

Voting information, key dates

Dates to Remember

Last day to register to vote or make name/address changes

October 11

Early voting begins

October 24

Last day to apply for ballot by mail (application received, not postmarked)

October 28

Early voting ends

November 4

Election Day

November 8

7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

EARLY VOTING INFORMATION/VOTACION TEMPRANA POR ASPECTO PERSONAL

Early voting will be conducted at the Walker County Annex, 1301 Sam Houston Avenue, Suite 101

October 24 through November 4, 2016 - Monday through Friday

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

There will be two twelve - hour days during early voting:

Tuesday, October 25 and Tuesday, November 1 – Early Voting Hours 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Branch Early voting will be conducted at the Walker Co. Storm Shelter, 455 SH 75 N

October 24 through October 28, 2016 - Monday through Friday

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

There will be one twelve - hour day during branch early voting:

Tuesday, October 25 – Branch Early Voting Hours 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

CITY POLLING LOCATION/SITIO DE VOTACION

All qualified registered voters of the City of Huntsville will vote at their voting precinct location on Election Day.

Visit <http://www.co.walker.tx.us/department/division.php?fDD=25-113> to find your precinct.

Photo ID Required for Texas Voters

Voters are required to present one of the following forms of photo ID when voting in person:

- (1) Texas driver license issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)
- (2) Texas Election Identification Certificate issued by DPS
- (3) Texas personal identification card issued by DPS
- (4) Texas concealed handgun license issued by DPS
- (5) United States military identification card containing your photograph
- (6) United States citizenship certificate containing your photograph
- (7) United States passport



With the exception of the U.S. citizenship certificate, the identification must be current or have expired no more than 60 days before being presented for voter qualification at the polling place.

The voters name on the identification presented must match or be “substantially similar” to the name on the official list of registered voters (poll list). Additional information, including material on further exemptions, is available through the Texas Secretary of State’s office at www.votetexas.gov.



Huntsville Bond Election 2016

Visit www.huntsvilletx.gov/Bond to learn more information about Propositions 1, 2, & 3. You can also view the full bond election video, as well as see an extensive list of frequently asked questions.

When is Election Day? (Cuando es el Dia de Eleccion?)

Tuesday, November 8, 2016 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Martes 8 de Noviembre del 2016 de 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Am I registered to vote? (Estoy registrado para votar?)

In order to vote in this election, you must be a registered voter.

The last day to register to vote for the November 8 election is October 11, 2016.

If you are not sure if your voter registration is current you may call (936)436-4959 or visit:

<https://teamrv-mvp.sos.texas.gov/MVP/mvp.do>

(Para poder votar en esta eleccion tiene que ser un votante registrado. Si no esta seguro si su registracion para votar esta vigente puede llamar (936)436-4959 o visite nuestra pagina de web arriba.)

Where do I go for early voting? (A donde voy para votar temprano?)

There will be one Early Voting Polling Place for all entities:

Walker County Annex, 1301 Sam Houston Avenue, Suite 101, Huntsville, Texas.

Branch Early Voting: October 24-28, 2016 will be at the Walker County Storm Shelter: 455 SH 75 N

(Habrá solamente un lugar para votacion temprana para todas entidades que será localizada en el Walker County Annex. Rama de Votacion temprana será en el Refugio de Tormenta en el Condado de Walker.)

**Remember to Vote the Back to make your voice heard
in City elections!**

PLEASE CHECK YOUR BALLOT!

Please be sure you have received the correct ballot before you vote it. There is information on all November 8, 2016 early voting and election day dates, times, and polling locations on the City website at <http://tx-huntsville.civicplus.com/Elections>. Information is also on the Walker County website at http://www.co.walker.tx.us/egov/documents/1472136205_24237.pdf.

Identificación con Foto se Requiere para Votantes Tejanos

Ahora tiene que proporcionar una de las siguientes formas de identificación
con foto cuando vota en persona:

- (1) Licencia de Conducir de Texas expedida por el Departamento de Seguridad Publica
- (2) (DPS, según sus siglas en inglés)
- (2) Cédula de Identificación Electoral de Texas expedida por DPS
- (3) Tarjeta de Identificación Personal de Texas expedida por DPS
- (4) Licencia de Texas para Portar un Arma de Fuego Oculta expedida por DPS
- (5) Cédula de Identidad Militar de los Estados Unidos con fotografía de la persona
- (6) Certificado de Ciudadanía Estadounidense con fotografía de la persona o
- (7) Pasaporte de los Estados Unidos

Con la excepción del certificado de ciudadanía estadounidense, la identificación deberá estar vigente; si no la está, debe haberse vencido hace 60 días o menos en el momento de presentarla para calificar como votante en el sitio electoral.

El nombre del votante en la identificación presentada debe hacer juego o ser "considerablemente similar" al nombre en la lista oficial del certificado de votantes (lista de encuesta).



As for the building projects, wouldn't it be cheaper and/or more cost effective to repair or renovate what we have?

Prior to calling the bond election, the City completed professional assessments by licensed architects on each of the facilities. The architect was charged with comparing the cost effectiveness of repairs and renovations with constructing new facilities. One overriding feature that complicates repairs and renovations are the 2012 Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) which governs the elimination of architectural barriers for persons with disabilities. It requires that any constructed, renovated or modified building or facility used by the public to be in compliance with the TAS if funds from a municipality are used. Essentially, anything other than cosmetic or routine maintenance work necessitate a full review of the building for TAS compliance.

As a result, for instance, even a 10,000-square foot addition to the Police Department at an estimated cost of perhaps \$1,500,000 would result in an accessibility review for the entire PD facility and would include renovated restrooms, widening hallways, and elevator access to the basement floor. Each of the possible ADA modifications necessitates additional square footage and likely significant cost because (for instance) there is no logical place to put an elevator. So the sample renovation discussed above might well end up costing almost as much as a new facility (on a cost per square foot basis). Furthermore, the disruption to the entire facility would likely require moving to a different location during the renovation.

It is likely, given their locations, that the City will be able to sell the existing facilities and use the proceeds to put towards the cost of the new facilities. Furthermore, depending on the buyer, the location of the current facility may be put back on the tax rolls. Along with the opportunity to use debt rolling off to pay for these projects, the Council decided to propose the construction of new facilities.

What happens if projects end up costing more than what the debt can pay for?

Since Propositions 1, 2, and 3 are specifically worded as “not-to-exceed,” the City may not issue more than the stated amounts. The first step the City will take to insulate itself against cost overruns is to design as much of the project as possible before issuing the debt. This will help the City identify priorities and associated cost estimates before work is contracted for and before debt is issued. Much of the work envisioned lends itself to phasing, so the City should be able establish and work on priorities with funds as available. Furthermore, City staff will also recommend the use of alternative procurement methods such as sealed proposals, Construction Manager at Risk, and perhaps even Design-Build. In the case of the Town Creek Drainage Project, the Construction Manager at Risk process is proving to be a valuable way to deliver a cost-effective project for the community.

How does the City know it will be able to issue debt and not raise taxes or utility rates?

The chart of retiring debt and other revenue sources, available at www.huntsvilletx.gov/Bond, illustrates annual principal and interest payments on existing debt (or in the case of new revenue, the annual amount). All of the debt (and associated principal and interest payments) are being paid at current tax or utility rates. At such time that the Council elects to issue debt as a result of the November bond election, the Council will be able to match old debt payments with new debt payments.

If the City ends up issuing too much debt, what happens to the excess funds?

Excess funds can be used to make principal and interest payments in future years. In most cases, this is done towards the very end, right as the debt is about to be paid off.

\$128 million? That seems like an awful lot. Are we taking on too much debt?

The decision about how much debt is appropriate is a matter of personal choice. However, one way to review this issue is compare ourselves with other cities. City of Huntsville staff reviewed the budgets of thirteen other cities in the state of Texas with populations similar to Huntsville (not more than 20% larger and not more than 17% smaller). An interesting observation about that analysis:

- Bonded Debt Per Capita – The City's bonded debt per capita stands at \$939.09 (as per the population from the 2010 census). That is the lowest among the cities compared. Even if the population is adjusted down by 11,500 residents (in recognition of prison and student population counted in 2010 census), the City's bonded debt per capita would still rank 4th lowest among the cities compared. To put the issue in perspective, the highest among the cities surveyed (Schertz and Burleson) carry over \$3,100 and \$3,600 debt per capita respectively. Even if all three propositions pass, the bonded debt per capita would still be less than Schertz and Burleson, or about \$400 more than average of the cities surveyed.

