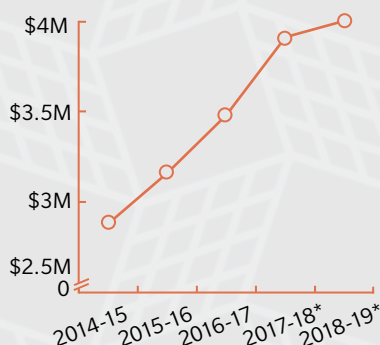


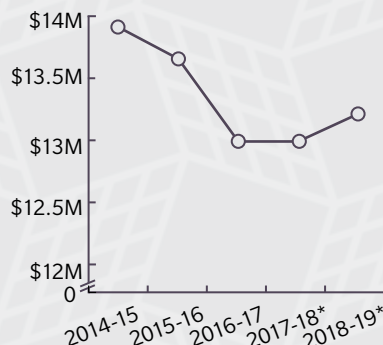
NEW FUNDING TRENDS

The city of Humble has experienced a fluctuation in the amount of sales tax revenue it has received over the past five years. During that time, the city has begun increasing its property tax rate, which increased how much it receives in property tax revenue.

PROPERTY TAX REVENUE



SALES TAX REVENUE



PROPERTY TAX RATE

2014-15	\$.20
2015-16	\$.20
2016-17	\$.21
2017-18	\$.23
2018-19	\$.25

The city plans to slowly raise its property tax rate to \$0.35 per \$100 valuation.

HOMEOWNER TAX BURDEN

City of Humble residents will have higher tax bills after the city increased its property tax rate from \$0.23 to \$0.25 per \$100 valuation.

HUMBLE ANNUAL TAX BILL FOR THE OWNER OF A \$150,000 HOME



*BUDGETED AMOUNT
SOURCE: CITY OF HOUSTON/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Humble raises tax rate, eases its sales tax reliance

Officials plan to slowly increase rate to 35 cents

BY **ZAC EZZONE**

In September, the city of Humble raised its property tax rate for the third year in a row as it plans for the future and attempts to ease its reliance on sales tax revenue.

Humble City Council approved a property tax rate of \$0.25 per \$100 valuation for fiscal year 2018-19, 5 cents higher than the city's 2015-16 property tax rate, at a special meeting Sept. 20. Despite this increase, the city of Humble maintains the third-lowest tax rate out of the 22 cities within Harris County, according to county data.

Based on the new rate, the owner of a \$150,000 home will pay about \$375 in property taxes to the city, a \$30 increase from the \$345 paid on a \$150,000 home last year.

CONTINUED ON 18

County shelters redouble efforts to save dogs, cats

Shelters report higher live-release rates amid Montgomery County investigation

BY **WENDY CAWTHON, ZAC EZZONE, KELLY SCHAFER AND HANNAH ZEDAKER**

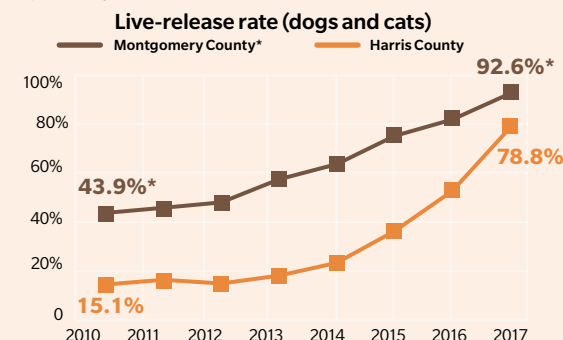
Over the past decade, Harris and Montgomery County animal shelters have implemented programs and partnerships with rescue groups as a means to increase the number of dogs and cats that leave their shelters alive.

Both shelters report they have more than doubled the live-release rates of animals from 2010-17, although Montgomery County Animal Shelter's director is under

CONTINUED ON 21

REPORTED LIVE-RELEASES

Harris and Montgomery counties' animal shelters have reportedly increased their live release-rates since 2010.



*DATA COMES FROM MCAS, WHOSE DIRECTOR IS UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR ALLEGEDLY IMPROPERLY EUTHANIZING 78 ANIMALS IN AUGUST.
SOURCE: MONTGOMERY COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

LAKE HOUSTON HUMBLE KINGWOOD EDITION

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 6 | OCT. 1-NOV. 4, 2018

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16 BUSINESS FEATURE
Humble Market



17 DINING FEATURE
Grind Break eSports Cafe



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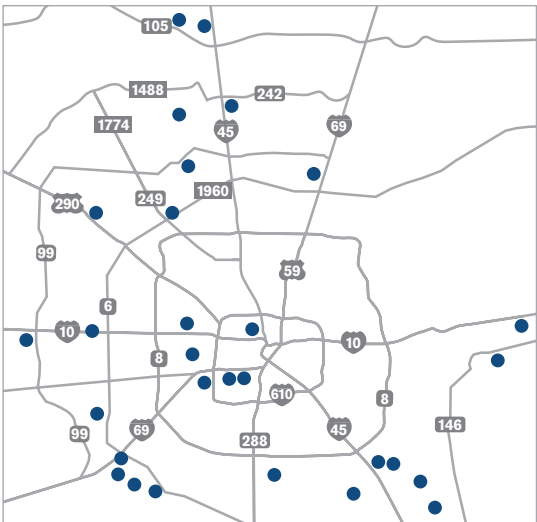


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John and Jennifer Garrett began *Community Impact Newspaper* in 2005 in Pflugerville, Texas. The company's mission is to build communities of informed citizens and thriving businesses through the collaboration of a passionate team.

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Preparing for November elections

Happy fall, friends! As we move into October, not only is the weather going to give us a reprieve from the summer heat, but we also have a lot of exciting things happening in the community—most importantly, the upcoming November elections.

In this issue of *Community Impact Newspaper*, we have reached out to the candidates running in national, state and local elections for a brief Q&A to ensure voters have a fair tool on hand as they cast their ballots Nov. 6.

Additionally, in one of our cover stories our editorial team has provided an in-depth look at the city of Humble's plan to increase its property tax

rate over the next few years. Our team looked at why the city has decided to increase its rate as well as how the increase will affect homeowners.

In September, Montgomery County Animal Shelter Director Aaron Johnson was placed on paid leave for allegedly improperly euthanizing 78 animals in August. While the investigation into the incident is ongoing, our second cover story looks at the steps Montgomery and Harris counties have taken to increase the number of animals that leave their shelters alive.

In the story, we also look at how local nonprofit groups are helping animals find homes.



Hayley Merrill

Hayley Merrill
GENERAL MANAGER

hmerrill@communityimpact.com

ASK THE EDITOR



Zac Ezzzone

Zac Ezzzone
EDITOR
zezzzone@communityimpact.com

Do you have a question about how local government works or something going on in town? Send it to lhk@communityimpact.com.

What is the state of Texas doing to improve its election security?

According to a report released by the U.S. Committee on House Administration-Democratic Office in July, Texas is one of 18 states most vulnerable to election interference. However, according to the office of Secretary of State Rolando Pablos, there is no evidence Texas voting systems were compromised prior to the 2016 election or in any following elections.

Pablos' office received \$23.25 million in grant funding from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to improve the state's election system infrastructure earlier this year. In July, Pablos sent the commission a letter detailing how his office plans to use the funding over the next three years.

Of the total funding, \$475,000 will be used to purchase new voting equipment; \$475,000 will be used to improve voter registration systems; \$4.75 million will be used to fund election auditing; \$11.4 million will be used to enhance cyber security; and \$6.15 million will fund other election applications, such as candidate filing and election canvassing improvements.

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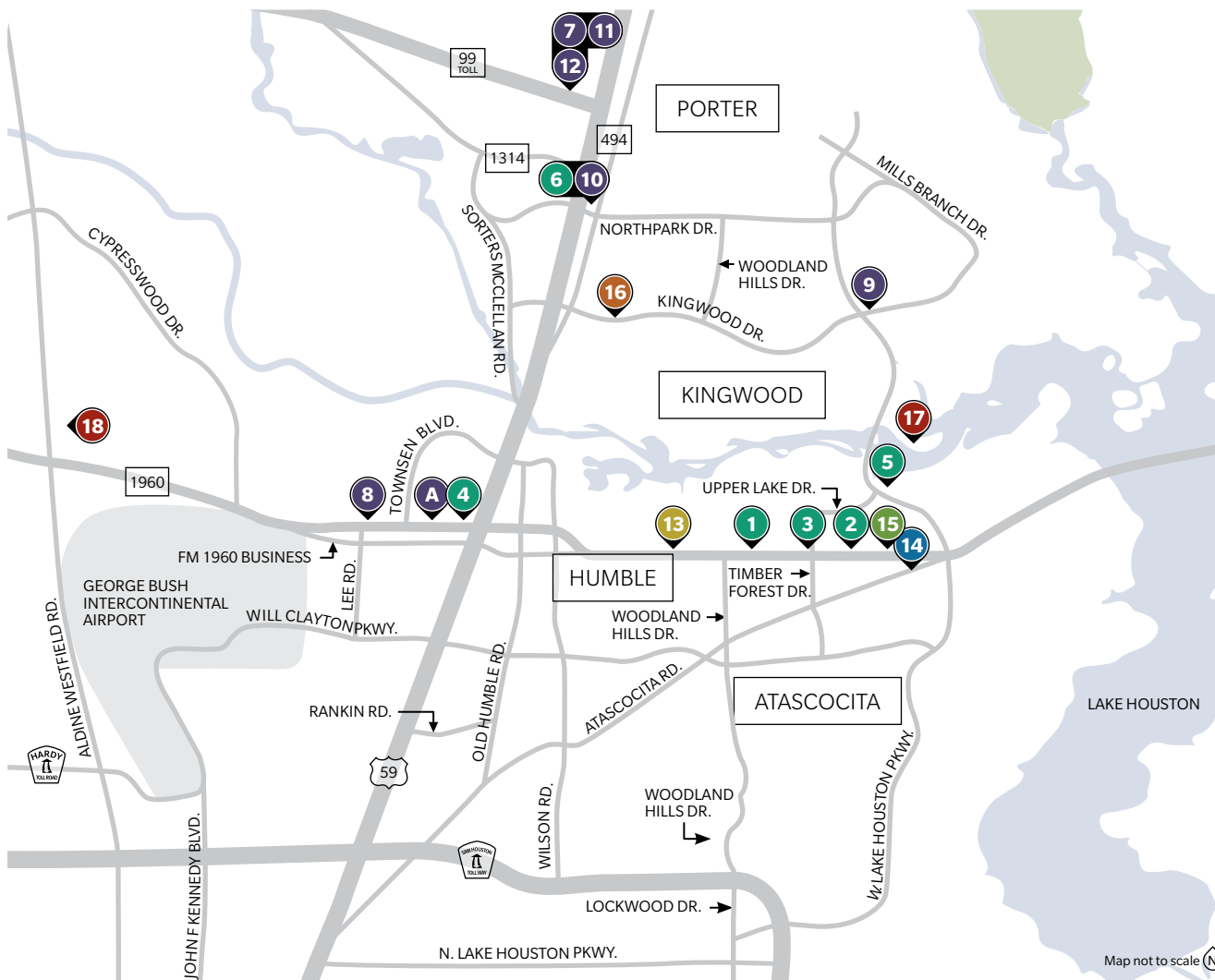
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IMPACTS

Businesses that have recently opened, are coming soon, relocating or expanding.



NOW OPEN

- 1 Bellin's International Grocery** opened in July at 4451 FM 1960 E., Humble. The grocery store sells tropical produce such as pana, Jamican beef patties and other items from different regions of the world including Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. 281-623-6016. www.facebook.com/atacscitabig
- 2 Cobo's LLC** opened in September at 6030 FM 1960 E., Atascocita. The restaurant serves barbecue staples such as beef brisket, homemade sausage and chicken.

It also offers sides such as potato salad and beans. 713-384-4067. www.facebook.com/cobosque

- 3 Picture Perfect Interiors and Gifts** opened in September at 5360-A FM 1960 E., Humble. The store sells a variety of items and accessories customers can use to decorate their homes. The store also offers custom silk floral arrangements. 832-533-2012. www.ppinteriorsandgifts.com
- 4 Black Bear Diner** opened in August at 9510 FM 1960 Bypass Road W., Hum-

ble. The full-service, California-based restaurant chain serves breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as homestyle comfort food in a bear-themed atmosphere. This is the second Black Bear Diner to open in Texas after a location opened in Katy earlier this year. 281-446-8122. www.blackbeardiner.com

- 5 Texas Children's Urgent Care** opened at 20031 W. Lake Houston Parkway, Ste. 200, Kingwood, this summer. The urgent care clinic treats common pediatric conditions such as ear pain, fever and the flu. The clinic also performs

some common procedures such as X-rays, antibiotic injections and care for fractured bones. 281-812-1704.

www.texaschildrensurgentcare.org

- 6 Supercuts** opened at 300 Northpark Drive, Ste. 200, Kingwood. The nationwide hair salon chain offers haircuts for men, women and children. Additionally, the salon offers color and styling services and waxing at more than 2,600 locations across the U.S. 281-623-5187. www.supercuts.com

COMING SOON

- 7 Yummy Tummy Pastries** will open in Valley Ranch Town Center at the intersection of Hwy. 59 and the Grand Parkway in November. Yummy Tummy Pastries specializes in custom cakes and cookies for events such as birthday parties and weddings. Cake flavors include coconut cream, red velvet, Italian cream and German chocolate, among other options. This will be the pastry shop's second location in addition to its original location in Humble on FM 1960. 281-446-0450. www.yummytummypastries.com

- 8 Krispy Kreme** will open at 8460 FM 1960, Humble, this fall. Krispy Kreme offers a variety of glazed, sprinkled and powdered doughnuts along with items like apple fritters and eclairs. Krispy Kreme shops also offer seasonal doughnuts throughout the year. 1-800-457-4779. www.krispykreme.com

- 9 Zoe's Kitchen** will open this fall at 4505 Kingwood Drive, Ste. 100, Kingwood. The fast-casual restaurant chain serves a variety of Mediterranean menu items such as pitas, pasta salads, and steak and shrimp kabobs. www.zoeskitchen.com

- 10 MOD Pizza** will open at 300 Northpark Drive, Kingwood, this fall. The pizzeria offers customizable pizzas with toppings, such as pepperoni, sausage or vegetables, as well as salads. The restaurant also offers a preset menu of specialty pizzas. All pizzas are made-to-order. 888-770-6637. www.modpizza.com

- 11 Buffalo Wild Wings** will open in



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Valley Ranch Town Center at the intersection of Hwy. 59 and the Grand Parkway in December. The sports bar and restaurant offers a selection of chicken wings, burgers, wraps and salads. Since opening in 1982, Buffalo Wild Wings has opened at least one restaurant in every state. 1-866-704-0777. www.buffalowildwings.com

12 James Avery Artisan Jewelry will open in Valley Ranch Town Center at the intersection of Hwy. 59 and the Grand Parkway in February 2019. The Texas-based retailer offers a selection of jewelry, including necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings and charms, in sterling silver and gold. 1-800-283-1770. www.jamesavery.com.

ANNIVERSARY

13 Humble Market celebrated its one-year anniversary at 2803 FM 1960 E., Humble, in September. The business includes an indoor space where cabinets, trinkets, tools and toys are sold as well as an outdoor market that features local vendors who sell local items such as candles, books and handcrafted decor. 936-714-5346. www.almostforgottenvintage.com

NAME CHANGE

14 MW Cleaners at 7203 Atascocita Road, Ste. 100, Humble is now a **Tide Dry Cleaners** location, after Texas-based MW Cleaners announced it was joining the company earlier this year. The business offers standard dry cleaning services where customers can drop off and pick up their items. 281-812-8375. www.tidedrycleaners.com

CLOSING

15 Department store **Palais Royal**, located at 7063 FM 1960, Humble, closed in August. The location will reopen under new ownership by Gordmans—which is a department store that sells clothing, shoes and other goods—in November. www.gordmans.com

COMPILED BY **ZAC EZZONE**
News or questions about Lake Houston, Humble or Kingwood? Email us at lhknews@communityimpact.com.

RENOVATION

16 Marble Slab Creamery reopened in August at 1542 Kingwood Drive, Kingwood after sustaining flood damage during Hurricane Harvey in August 2017. The business features more than 75 flavors of ice cream, mix-ins, cakes, cupcakes, sundaes, shakes and smoothies. www.marbleslab.com

IN THE NEWS

17 After preparing the site in August, the **Army Corps of Engineers** began dredging a portion of the West Fork of the San Jacinto River Sept. 20 to remove sedimentation and debris deposited in the river during Hurricane Harvey. The Corps hired the Great Lakes Dredge and Dock to complete the project after the Federal Emergency Management Agency tasked the Corps with removing 1.8 million cubic yards of debris from a 2-mile stretch of the West Fork of the San Jacinto River near West Lake Houston Parkway earlier this year. The dredging is slated to be completed in May 2019. www.swg.usace.army.mil

18 Harris County Precinct 4 officials announced Sept. 18 the **Baldwin Boettcher Library** will reopen next year at 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble. The library sustained significant damage from flooding during Hurricane Harvey in August 2017. The county is reopening the library in its original location next to Mercer Botanic Gardens; however, it will reopen as a joint-use facility that acts as an entrance to the gardens. Edward Melton, Harris County Public Library director, said this will allow the library and park to collaborate on services and programs they offer. Construction on the library is expected to begin in early 2019, and the library is scheduled to open by the end of the year. www.hcpl.net

FEATURED IMPACT —NOW OPEN



Kealoha's Hawaiian Kitchen opened at 8790 FM 1960 Bypass Road W., Ste. 100-A, Humble in July. The restaurant serves traditional Hawaiian food options for lunch and dinner. Menu items include the Hawaiian-style garlic shrimp and kalua pork and cabbage, which includes slow-roasted pork toast wrapped in banana leaves. 346-616-5784. www.facebook.com/khkhouston2018



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To-do list

Your ultimate local guide for events, business openings, meetings and more in the months of October and November

Find more or submit events at communityimpact.com/lhk-calendar.

Event organizers can submit local events online to be considered for the print edition. Submitting details for consideration does not guarantee publication.



Lake Houston 10k/5k
THANKS TO ALL OUR SPONSORS!

OCT. 13

Run in a 5K, 10K

The Lake Houston Chamber of Commerce hosts its ninth-annual race, which begins at Kings Harbor. There will also be a 1K for children 12 years old and younger. \$25-\$40. 7:30 a.m. (10K starts), 7:45 a.m. (5K starts), 9 a.m. (1K starts). 1660 W. Lake Houston Parkway, Kingwood. 281-446-2128. www.lakehouston.org

COURTESY LAKE HOUSTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

School board meetings

October

9 The Humble ISD board of trustees meets at 7 p.m. at 20200 Eastway Village Drive, Humble. 281-641-1000. www.humbleisd.net

15 The New Caney ISD board of trustees meets at 6:30 p.m. at 21580 Loop 494, New Caney. 281-577-8600. www.newcaneyisd.org

NOV. 2

Attend a festival honoring law enforcement

Different law enforcement departments will show off rescue vehicles for attendees to tour and take photos. The event also features live music, food and drinks. Free. 6-9 p.m. 1660 W. Lake Houston Parkway, Kingwood. www.facebook.com/turnkingsharborblue

OCT. 6

Attend festival, buy plants

Residents can purchase nectar and pollinator plants, while also participating in lawn games or creating their own pollinator-themed scarecrow for a contest. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. Mercer Botanic Gardens, 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble. 713-271-4166. www.hcp4.net/community/parks/mercer

OCT. 13

Eat, shop at a fall food truck festival

Showcase Kingwood hosts this festival where residents can listen to live music, eat food from a variety of food trucks and shop at a vendor market. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Free. Town Center Park, 8 N. Main St., Kingwood. www.showcasekingwood.com

OCT. 9, 22

Register to vote, early voting begins

The last day to register to vote in the Nov. 6 general election is Oct. 9. Registered voters can begin casting their ballots when early voting begins Oct. 22. See Pages 11-15 to learn more about the candidates running for election.

NOV. 3

Participate in a walk to fund research

The American Heart Association hosts its Greater Lake Houston Heart Walk, which funds research on cardiovascular diseases and strokes. The three-mile walk begins at Lone Star College-Kingwood. 8 a.m. 20000 Kingwood Drive, Kingwood. 1-800-242-8721. www.heart.org

OCT. 6

Listen to Elvis Presley tribute artists

Vince King and Riley King perform a selection of songs from Elvis Presley's career, after the group "Shake, Rattle & Roll" perform as the opening act. 7 p.m. \$35. Charles Bender Performing Arts Center, 611 Higgins St., Humble. 281-446-4140. www.humblepac.com

OCT. 20

Eat German food, listen to Polka music

The third annual Kingwood Oktoberfest takes place at Holy Comforter Lutheran Church and features children and adult activities, as well as food, drinks and live music. Noon-5 p.m. 1901 Woodland Hills Drive, Kingwood. 281-358-6500. www.kwoktoberfest.org

COURTESY THE KINGWOOD OKTOBERFEST



LOCAL MATTERS

abc 13 EYEWITNESS NEWS

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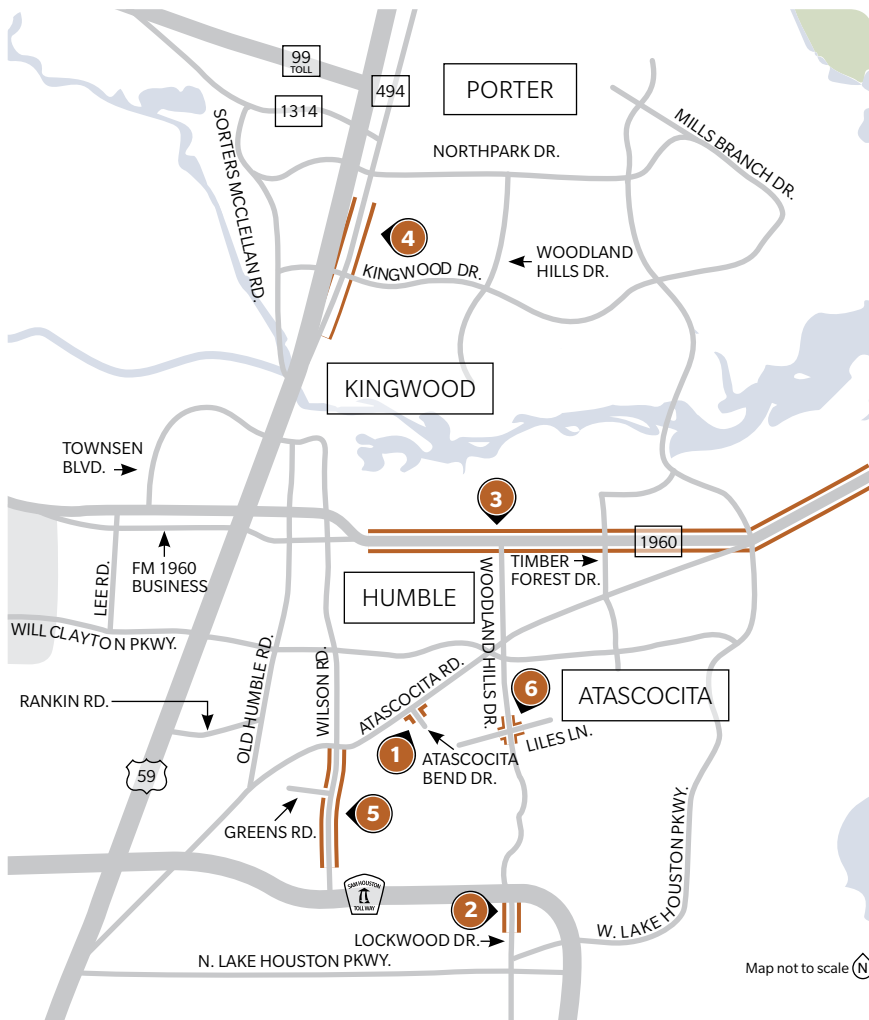
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RECENT UPDATES

1 Atascocita Road traffic signal

Harris County Precinct 4 is installing a traffic signal at the intersection of Atascocita Road and Atascocita Bend Drive in Humble. The transportation project is a public-private partnership with Elan Development. Earlier this year the precinct issued a notice to proceed with the construction effort in July.

Timeline: July-end of September

Cost: \$270,000

Funding sources: Harris County Precinct 4, Elan Development

2 Lockwood Drive

McCord Development is designing the expansion of Lockwood Road between Beltway 8 and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks to four lanes. The project includes drainage and railroad crossing improvements. The expansion is a joint project between Harris County and McCord Development. The county will send the project out for bids during the fourth quarter of 2018.

Timeline: TBD

Cost: \$1.8 million

Funding source: Harris County Precinct 4, McCord Development

3 FM 1960 Widening

The Texas Department of Transportation is studying the expansion of a portion of FM 1960. The four-lane undivided highway could be converted to a six-lane divided highway between FM 1960 Business and Lake Houston. TxDOT officials said they need to adjust utilities and acquire land before beginning to accept bids for construction in 2021 or 2022.

Timeline: TBD

Cost: \$98 million

Funding source: TxDOT

4 Loop 494 widening

TxDOT is expanding Loop 494 from two to four lanes between Sorters McClellan Road and Northpark Plaza Drive. The agency plans to send the project out for bids this fall, and construction could start later this year or early next year.

Timeline: fall-TBD

Cost: \$15 million

Funding source: TxDOT

5 Wilson Road expansion

SER Construction Partners began work on the expansion of Wilson Road in January. The road will be expanded to four lanes between just north of Beltway 8 and Atascocita Road. The planned construction will also include the installation of a sidewalk extension between Park Lakes Elementary School and Viscaro Lane.

Timeline: January 2018-October 2019

Cost: \$9.9 million

Funding source: Harris County Precinct 4

6 Woodland Hills Drive traffic signal

Harris County Precinct 4 is installing a traffic signal at the intersection of Woodland Hills Drive and Liles Lane. The project is in the design phase. The county plans to issue a notice to proceed with construction in 2019.

Timeline: 2019-TBD

Cost: \$220,000

Funding sources: Harris County Precinct 4



HOW IT WORKS

When can you use a cell phone while driving?

The Texas Legislature in 2017 passed a statewide ban on texting while driving.

The law prohibits texting, reading or writing emails, using social media or other distracting uses of cell phones while driving.

Exceptions include: using the phone hands-free, using the phone while the vehicle is at a full stop, accepting or denying calls, using GPS navigation and using a phone for an emergency.

Penalties for texting while driving include a fine of up to \$99 for a first offense and up to \$200 for subsequent offenses.

Prior to 2017 several laws relating to cell phones were already on the books in Texas, according to the Texas Department of Transportation. Those laws include: Drivers under age 18 are not allowed to use handheld or hands-free cell phones; drivers are prohibited from using cell phones hands-on to call or text while driving in school zones; and bus drivers are prohibited from using a cell phone hands-free or hands-on while driving.

All information on this page was updated as of 9/19/18. News or questions about these or other local transportation projects?

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Harris County OKs \$200M in flood prevention grants, \$18M in law enforcement raises at Sept. 11 meeting

HARRIS COUNTY The grant process for several flood prevention projects and home buyouts is slated to move forward after receiving approval from the Harris County Commissioners Court at its Sept. 11 meeting.

The largest item was an amendment to an agreement for \$81.7 million from the Texas Department of Public Safety for Federal Emergency Management Agency Hurricane Harvey home buyouts with a \$32.3 million county match.

On Aug. 25, voters approved a \$2.5 billion bond package for HCFCD, including matching funds for various state and federal grant programs.

According to a press release from FEMA, the \$81.7 million will help the county acquire 502 flood-prone homes damaged by Harvey-related flooding, including some homes in the Lake Houston area. The land will be maintained as open space in the future, according to the press release.

This is the latest allocation of

funding the federal agency has provided to Harris County. In April, HCFCD submitted a grant application to the state and FEMA requesting \$163.5 million—with the county matching \$54.5 million—to buy out 1,000 homes. In June, FEMA awarded the county with \$76.67 million in grant funding to purchase 463 homes.

Commissioners also approved a total of \$9.4 million in infrastructure repairs relating to HCFCD projects at the meeting, and an application for \$62 million from Texas Department of Public Safety for Poor Farm Ditch and White Oak Bayou projects with a \$21 million county match.

LAW ENFORCEMENT RAISE

Commissioners also approved a raise for constable and sheriff's office detention, communications and law enforcement officers. Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, who spoke at the meeting, said the raises total nearly \$18 million.



Harris County Commissioners Court approved flood grants at its Sept. 11 meeting.

Harris County Budget Officer Bill Jackson said at the meeting that about 5,300 officers across the county will receive raises.

"We [should] consider this adopting [as] the first step," Precinct 2 Commissioner Jack Morman said. "I don't think we are competitive with surrounding law enforcement agencies."

Precinct 1 Commissioner Rodney Ellis agreed and said he believes all county employees should be better compensated in light of increasing poverty levels, which he said are increasing in Harris County at a greater rate than those nationally.

"It's a first step, but it's a big step," Ellis said. "[Pay raises] ought to be a

first step for Harris County employees in general."

Ellis also said he would place an item on a future agenda for commissioners to consider a paid family leave policy for county employees.

Precinct 4 Constable Mark Herman said the raises will increase the annual salary for his starting deputies from \$44,000 to \$50,000, and it will provide 3-to-5 percent raises for other deputies. Herman said in a phone interview he appreciates the commissioners found space in the budget for law enforcement raises.

"After everything we've been through in the last year, I was amazed they were able to find the money for our first responders," Herman said.

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More than 500 Harris County inmates outsourced to Louisiana jail could return to Texas, officials say

HARRIS COUNTY Harris County commissioners on Sept. 11 approved an agreement that will allow Sheriff Ed Gonzalez to move some of the 550 county inmates being detained in Jackson Parish, Louisiana, to Fort Bend County Jail.

The sheriff's request came about because a number of inmates awaiting trial have been housed in Louisiana since Hurricane Harvey caused a backlog in cases in Harris County last year.

A total of 719 inmates are currently outsourced from Harris County jails, including 550 inmates in Louisiana, Gonzalez said at the meeting.

The arrangement came about because the Louisiana location is the most cost-effective option, he said. However, outsourcing creates problems for attorneys who need to visit with clients in person as well as for family, various speakers said at the meeting.

Gonzalez said he had stopped the regular practice of outsourcing after he took office in 2017, but after Harvey, the slowdown in courts required some outsourcing, and the Louisiana facility was able to take a large number of inmates at once.

Housing inmates in-state costs nearly twice as much as housing them in Louisiana, Gonzalez said, which was another consideration in choosing the facility in Jackson Parish.

After the meeting, Gonzalez said the goal is to eventually bring all of the inmates back in-state.

"We're trying to find [other jails], and as soon as we can get the court moving, we'll try to bring everyone back. We're trying to find closer locations," he said.

In other portions of the discussion about Harris County Jail, Emmett said the county should consider allowing contact visits in the future to mitigate the long-term effects of incarceration on families.

Montgomery County approves \$344.4M budget, flat property tax rate for fiscal year 2018-19

MONTGOMERY COUNTY Montgomery County Commissioners Court approved a fiscal year 2018-19 budget with an overall budget increase of 4.8 percent, while also maintaining the county's existing property tax rate of \$0.4667 per \$100 valuation.

Following two public comment hearings, the budget was approved unanimously during a special Commissioners Court meeting Sept. 5. The budget is balanced with expenditures and revenues totaling \$344.4 million each.

The budget funds the addition of 34 new county positions—17 of which are in law enforcement or the county courts. A little less than half of the budget—44 percent—funds law enforcement, county courts and other related activities.

The budget also includes \$55 million in spending on public facilities, including the Montgomery County Fairgrounds, precinct parks, the Spring Creek Greenway Nature

Center and the county jail.

Montgomery County Judge Craig Doyal said while this year's budget rose 4.8 percent from last year, it remains under the rate of population growth and inflation, which rose by 5.9 percent.

"This means Montgomery County is accomplishing the goals of conservative leaders who have called for the state and other governments to restrain spending below the rate of population and inflation," Doyal said in a statement.

QUOTE OF NOTE

"WE ALL TALK ABOUT HOW IMPORTANT FAMILIES ARE, BUT OUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM DOES A LOT OF THINGS THAT DESTROY FAMILIES. ANYTHING WE CAN DO TO HELP MAINTAIN CONTACT BETWEEN INMATES AND FAMILIES, I THINK, IS A GOOD THING."

—ED EMMETT, HARRIS COUNTY JUDGE

Humble City Council approves \$111.62M budget, 2018-19 property tax rate

CITY OF HUMBLE Humble City Council approved its fiscal year 2018-19 budget—which consists of a 12 percent decrease in the city's general fund, compared to the city's fiscal year 2017-18 budget—at a Sept. 13 meeting.

The budget consists of \$111.62 million in expenditures with the largest allocation of \$36.15 million dedicated to the city's general fund, which funds the city's maintenance and operations.

However, despite the overall decrease in the city's general fund, some

departments received additional staff members that city officials said were necessary.

The budget includes \$632,979 to fund the addition of six new positions at the city's fire department and \$106,157 to fund one new detective position within the city's police department.

The budget also includes funding for a number of capital projects the city placed on the 2017-18 budget, but delayed after Hurricane Harvey hit the area in August 2017. One such project

is a new senior activity center, which is slated to cost \$1.2 million.

Along with the six new positions, the fire and emergency medical service department received more than \$500,000 of funding for capital projects. This includes \$290,000 for a new ambulance and \$105,563 for new priority dispatch system software.

Humble City Council also approved the city's 2018-19 property tax rate of \$0.25 per \$100 valuation at a special meeting Sept. 20.

MEETINGS

Humble City Council meets at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 11 and 25 at 114 W. Higgins St., Humble. www.cityofhumble.com

Harris County Commissioners Court meets Oct. 9 and 23 at 10 a.m. at 1001 Preston St., Ste. 934, Houston. www.harriscountytexas.org

Montgomery County Commissioners Court meets Oct. 9 and 23 at 9:30 a.m. at 501 N. Thompson St., Conroe. www.mctx.org

For instant coverage of these meetings, follow us on Twitter: [@impactnews](https://twitter.com/impactnews)

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2018 VOTER GUIDE



First day of early voting: **Oct. 22**
Last day to apply for ballot by mail: **Oct. 26**

Last day of early voting: **Nov. 2**
Election day: **Nov. 6**

COMPILED BY **ZAC EZZONE**

CANDIDATES

SOURCE: TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE OFFICE'S WEBSITE; WEBSITES FOR TEXAS POLITICAL PARTIES, CANDIDATES/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

★ INCUMBENT

D DEMOCRAT

G GREEN

I INDEPENDENT

L LIBERTARIAN

R REPUBLICAN

STATEWIDE

U.S. senator

★ **R** Ted Cruz

D Beto O'Rourke

L Neal M. Dikeman

Governor

★ **R** Greg Abbott

D Lupe Valdez

L Mark Jay Tippetts

Lieutenant governor

★ **R** Dan Patrick

D Mike Collier

L Kerry Douglas McKennon

Attorney general

★ **R** Ken Paxton

D Justin Nelson

L Michael Ray Harris

Comptroller of public accounts

★ **R** Glenn Hegar

D Joi Chevalier

L Ben Sanders

Commissioner of the General Land Office

★ **R** George P. Bush

D Miguel Suazo

L Matt Piña

Commissioner of agriculture

★ **R** Sid Miller

D Kim Olson

L Richard Carpenter

Railroad commissioner

★ **R** Christi Craddick

D Roman McAllen

L Mike Wright

LOCAL

U.S. HOUSE

Representative, District 2

★ **R** Dan Crenshaw

D Todd Litton

L Patrick Gunnels

See Page 11 for Q&A

Representative, District 8

★ **R** Kevin Brady

D Steven David

L Chris Duncan

Representative, District 18

★ **D** Sheila Jackson Lee

R Ave Reynero Pate

L Luke Spencer

I Vince Duncan

TEXAS SENATE

Senator, District 15

★ **D** John Whitmire

R Randy Orr

L Gilberto Velsquez Jr.

See Page 11 for Q&A

TEXAS HOUSE

Representative, District 3

★ **R** Cecil Bell Jr.

D Lisa Seger

Representative, District 127

★ **R** Dan Huberty

L Ryan Woods

See Page 11 for Q&A

HARRIS COUNTY

Judge

★ **R** Ed Emmett

D Line Hildago

L Eric Gatlin

See Page 13 for Q&A

Commissioner, Precinct 2

★ **R** Jack Morman

D Adrian Garcia

See Page 13 for Q&A

Commissioner, Precinct 4

★ **R** Jack Cagle

D Penny Shaw

See Page 13 for Q&A

Treasurer

★ **R** Orlando Sanchez

D Dylan Osborne

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Judge

R Mark Keough

D Jay Stittleburg

See Page 13 for Q&A

NEW CANEY ISD

Board of trustees, Position 3

Alan Moreau Jr.

Andrew Riddick

Wendy Allen Sharp

Board of trustees, Position 4

Chris Wootton

Ricky Warwick

Board of trustees, Position 5

Andrew A. Clarence

Chad Turner

Yavonne Q. Martinez

LONE STAR COLLEGE

Board of trustees, Position 2

Ernestine M. Pierce

Matthew Wheeler

Board of trustees, Position 8

G. Puente

Mike Sullivan

See Page 15 for trustee Q&As

POLLING LOCATIONS

Registered voters can cast their ballots at any polling location during early voting. Election Day polling locations are organized by precinct.

HARRIS COUNTY EARLY VOTING

Atascocita Branch Library

19520 Pinehurst Trail Drive, Humble

Kingwood Community Center

4102 Rustic Woods Drive, Kingwood

Octavia Fields Library

1503 S. Houston Ave., Humble

HARRIS COUNTY ELECTION DAY VOTING

0885: Atascocita Middle School

18810 W. Lake Houston Parkway, Humble

0590: Bear Branch Community Center

3215 Cedar Knolls Drive, Kingwood

0659: Church of Christ Lake Houston

8003 Farmingham Road, Humble

0612: Creekwood Middle School

3603 W. Lake Houston Parkway, Kingwood

0670: Deerwood Elementary School

2920 Forest Garden Drive, Humble

0447: Eagle Spring Elementary School

12500 Will Clayton Parkway, Humble

0118: Fall Creek Elementary School

14435 Mesa Drive, Houston

0199, 0469: Foster Elementary School

1800 Trailwood Village Drive, Kingwood

0340: Good Sheperd Episcopal Church

2929 Woodland Hills Drive, Kingwood

0357: Hidden Hollow Elementary School

4104 Appalachian Trail, Kingwood

0599: Humble Elementary School

20252 Fieldtree Drive, Humble

0388, 0967: Humble Middle School

11207 Will Clayton Parkway, Humble

0459: Kingwood Community Center

4102 Rustic Woods Drive, Kingwood

0635: Kingwood Park High School

4015 Woodland Hills Drive, Kingwood

0469: Kingwood United Methodist Church

1799 Woodland Hills Drive, Kingwood

0776: Lake Houston Church of the Nazarene

5616 FM 1960 E., Humble

0964: Lakeshore Elementary School

13333 Breakwater Path Drive, Houston

0083, 0840 The Light of the World Christian Fellowship

16161 Old Humble Road, Humble

0674, Oak: Forest Elementary School

6400 Kingwood Glen Drive, Humble

0658: Oaks Elementary School

5858 Upper Lake Drive, Humble

0108: Octavia Fields Library

1503 S. Houston Ave., Humble

0847, 0799: Park Lakes Elementary School

4400 Wilson Road, Humble

0351: Pine Forest Elementary School

19702 W. Lake Houston Parkway, Humble

0334: Ramada Inn

6115 Will Clayton Parkway, Humble

0888, 0666, 0979: River Pines Elementary School

2400 Cold River Drive, Humble

0546: Riverwood Middle School

2910 High Valley Drive, Kingwood

0960: Sierra Meadows Apartments

9835 N. Sam Houston Parkway E., Humble

0764: Timbers Elementary School

6910 Lonesome Woods Trail, Humble

0363: Whispering Pines Elementary School

17321 Woodland Hills Drive, Humble

0760: Willow Creek Elementary School

2002 Willow Terrace Drive, Humble

0421, 0968: Woodcreek Middle School

14600 Woodson Park Drive, Humble

MONTGOMERY COUNTY EARLY VOTING

East County Courthouse Annex

21130 Hwy. 59 S., New Caney

ELECTION DAY VOTING

07: New Caney Elementary School

20501 FM 1485, New Caney

14: Crippen Elementary School

18690 Cumberland Blvd., Porter

26: East County Courthouse Annex

21130 Hwy. 59 S., New Caney

37: Friendship United Methodist Church

22388 Ford Road, Porter

52: New Caney ISD Annex

22500 Eagle Drive, New Caney

53: Woodbranch City Hall

58-A Woodbranch Drive, New Caney

54: Peach Creek Baptist Church

25963 FM 1485 E., New Caney

82: White Oak Middle School

24161 Briar Berry Lane, Porter

93: New Caney Middle School

22784 Hwy. 59, Porter

94: Faith Family Baptist Church

23915 Hwy. 59 S., Kingwood

95: Kings Manor Elementary School

2111 Royal Crossing Drive, Kingwood



Candidates were selected based on the elections taking place within this newspaper's coverage area. More election coverage can be found online at communityimpact.com/vote.



For information regarding voter ID laws, go to the Secretary of State Office's website, www.votetexas.gov/register-to-vote/need-id.html.

U.S. HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 2

DAN CRENSHAW

Occupation: retired, U.S. Navy

Experience: military legislative aide, U.S. Navy SEAL lieutenant commander

Top priorities: flood mitigation, economic growth, border security

832-834-3128

www.crenshawforcongress.com



TODD LITTON

Occupation: nonprofit executive/consultant

Experience: civil defense lawyer, financial advisor

Top priorities: health care and drug prices, infrastructure, flooding, education and jobs

www.toddlitton.com



PATRICK GUNNELS

Occupation: mathematician

Experience: "I have precisely zero political experience. I am doing this because I don't trust any other politician to stand up for [President] Trump."

Top priorities: providing Trump support in the House of Representatives

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WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MOST CRITICAL PROJECT OR INITIATIVE TO PREVENT FUTURE FLOODING IN DISTRICT 2?

Crenshaw: The most critical need for flood mitigation in [District 2] is action. We need action on dredging. We need to begin building a third reservoir and regional detention ponds. We need to build more tainter gates in Lake Houston. ... My detailed plan for what I will do in [Washington] D.C. to help mitigate flooding can be found ... [on my website].

Litton: The most important project will be the third reservoir needed to protect the Cypress Creek and Spring Creek watersheds from future flooding. This project also protects the Addicks area to the south and Kingwood/Lake Houston area to the east. That makes it a maximum point of leverage to prevent future flooding in multiple parts of [District 2], which should put it at the top of the list.

Gunnels: Any issue that is unique for a particular district should not even be handled by the federal government. So there are two major issues: first, continued federal encroachment of government function that rightly belongs on the local or state level, and second, the fact that we have a nest of vipers in the House of Representatives.

STATE SENATOR, DISTRICT 15



JOHN WHITMIRE

Occupation: attorney

Experience: state senator since 1983

Top priorities: health care, education, criminal justice reform

713-868-5000

www.johnwhitmire.com



RANDY ORR

Occupation: retired

Experience: Republican party delegate

Top priorities: school financing, safety infrastructure, water issues

713-806-1333

www.randyorr.com



GILBERTO VELASQUEZ JR.

Occupation: marketing

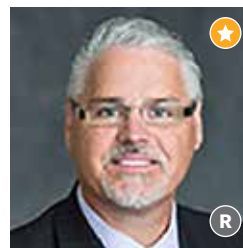
Experience: worked for the cities of Bryan and Houston

Top priorities: infrastructure, reforming public education, reducing business regulations

713-609-2215

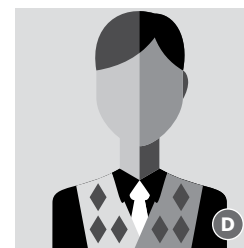
gil@gilbertvelasquez.com

STATE HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 127



DAN HUBERTY

Huberty did not respond before press time.



RYAN WOODS

Woods did not respond before press time.

Answers may have been edited for length. For longer versions of these interviews, go to communityimpact.com/vote.

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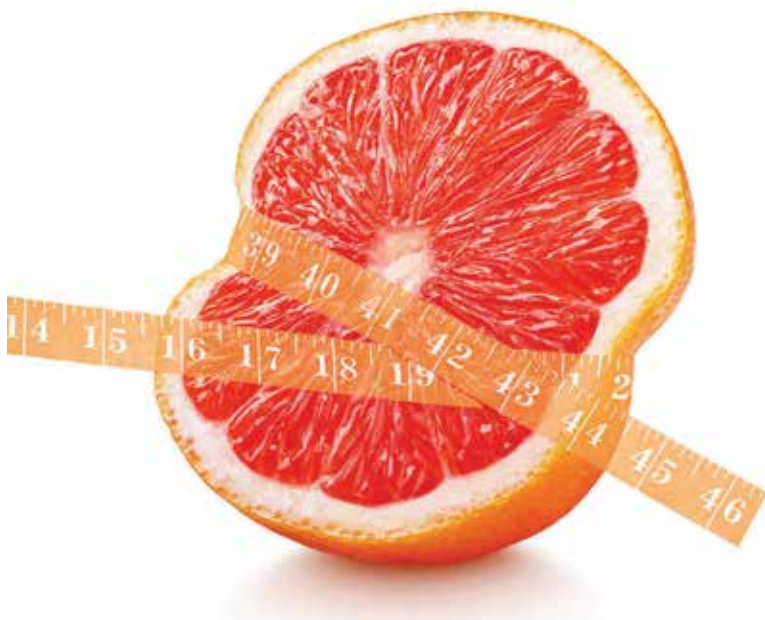
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COMPILED BY WENDY CAWTHON, VANESSA HOLT AND JAKE MAGEE

HARRIS COUNTY JUDGE



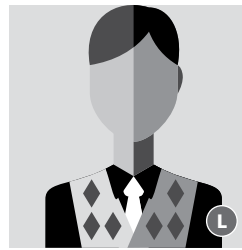
ED EMMETT

Occupation: Harris County judge
Experience: county judge since 2007, Texas House of Representatives for eight years
Top priorities: flood mitigation, mobility, juvenile justice, mental health initiatives
 832-474-9608
www.edemmett.com



LINA HIDALGO

Occupation: advocate
Experience: working with vulnerable populations in criminal justice reform, health care access and other issues
Top priorities: flood control, criminal justice reform, transparency, health care access, transportation
www.linahidalgo.com



ERIC GATLIN

Gatlin did not respond before press time.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY JUDGE



MARK KEOUGH

Occupation: state representative, District 15
Experience: two terms as state representative
Top priorities: reducing county spending, developing comprehensive county plan, law enforcement, government transparency
www.keough4texas.com



JAY STITTLEBURG

Occupation: oil and gas industry project manager
Experience: more than 14 years in U.S. Navy, project management for 11 years
Top priorities: addressing population growth, public safety, flood mitigation, mobility, limiting spending
www.jaystittleburg.com

HARRIS COUNTY PRECINCT 2 COMMISSIONER



JACK MORMAN

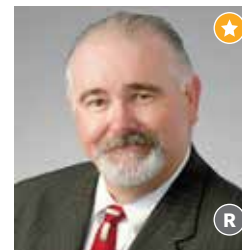
Occupation: Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner
Experience: commissioner since 2011
Top priorities: flood control, infrastructure, economic development
 832-937-8183
www.jackmormancampaign.com



ADRIAN GARCIA

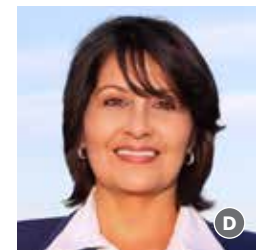
Occupation: management consultant, public servant
Experience: former Harris County sheriff, former Houston police officer
Top priorities: education, jobs, families
 281-782-2721
www.adriangarcia.com

HARRIS COUNTY PRECINCT 4 COMMISSIONER



JACK CAGLE

Occupation: Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner
Experience: civil court judge, private law practice
Top priorities: Public safety, preparing for population growth
 713-838-8553
www.commissionerjackcagle.com



PENNY SHAW

Occupation: attorney
Experience: 16 years as a U.S. congressional legislative advocate
Top priorities: flood prevention and preparedness, transparent county spending and reporting, pay and gender equity
 713-493-4688
www.voteppennyshaw.com

Answers may have been edited for length. For longer versions of these interviews, go to communityimpact.com/vote.

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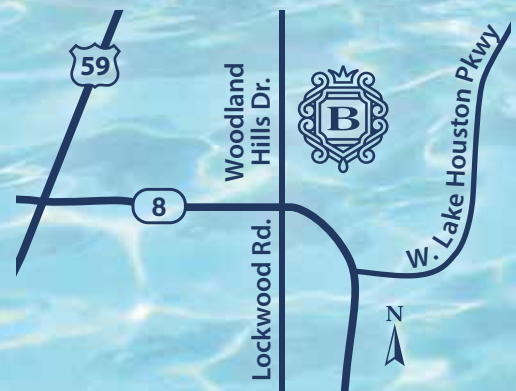
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NEW CANEY ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES, POSITION 3

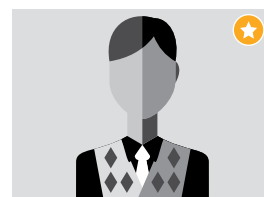
**ALAN MOREAU JR.****Occupation:** maintenance supervisor**Experience:** served on NCISD board for more than nine years**Top priorities:** attract and maintain quality teachers, continue NCISD's legacy of success, grow career and technology education program
admoreau70@gmail.com**ANDREW RIDDICK****Occupation:** self-employed**Experience:** served on East Montgomery County Sports Association board**Top priorities:** school funding, improving education standards, smart investments713-829-2928
andrew.riddick@yahoo.com**WENDY ALLEN SHARP**

Sharp did not respond before press time.

NEW CANEY ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES, POSITION 5

**ANDREW A. CLARENCE****Occupation:** Humble ISD public control accountant**Experience:** six years in public education**Top priorities:** increase number of students enrolled in advanced courses, improve graduation rates

480-720-5576

**CHAD TURNER**

Turner did not respond before press time.

**YAVONNE Q. MARTINEZ****Occupation:** clinical pharmacy specialist**Experience:** former assistant professor and middle school teacher**Top priorities:** supporting staff to explore alternative programs, improving district scores

ymartinezforncisd@gmail.com

NEW CANEY ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES, POSITION 4

**CHRIS WOOTTON****Occupation:** owner of Wootton Financial Group**Experience:** served on NCISD board for three years**Top priorities:** school funding, local control and governance, student and teacher assessment and accountability

chris4ncisd@gmail.com

**RICKY WARWICK**

Warwick did not respond before press time.

LONE STAR COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, POSITION 2

**ERNESTINE M. PIERCE****Occupation:** retired teacher, adjunct professor
Experience: more than 40 years in higher education
Top priorities: affordable education, student and staff retention, workforce programs

www.ernestinepierce.wordpress.com

**MATTHEW WHEELER****Occupation:** construction management**Experience:** campus director, after-school program director**Top priorities:** increasing access to non-traditional degrees, providing more low-cost child care to students

281-236-6128

LONE STAR COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, POSITION 8

**G. PUENTE****Occupation:** adjunct professor of decisions and marketing**Experience:** more than three years of teaching**Top priorities:** bring football to Lone Star College, lower taxpayers' contributions, start classes for veterans

713-351-9200

**MIKE SULLIVAN****Occupation:** business executive**Experience:** served as Humble ISD trustee and Houston City Council member**Top priorities:** workforce and certificate programs, affordable education

www.mikesullivancampaign.com

Answers may have been edited for length. For longer versions of these interviews, go to communityimpact.com/vote.**PRINTING** IS OUR *passion***LET US PRINT YOUR NEXT PROJECT:**Recreational programs • sport programs • direct mail • culture books
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The 5-acre market consists of about 12 rotating vendors who sell antiques and handmade items.



Vendors sell various items, such as toys and furniture.

MONTHLY THEMES

Every month the market is decorated based on different themes, which are often seasonal and feature activities for shoppers to participate in.



During October, the market will set up a large area for kids to play in.



During November, the market will hold an event where shoppers can catapult stuffed turkeys for prizes.

Humble Market

Year-old business draws families to antique furniture, vintage goods

BY KATHLEEN SISON

Theresa and Scott Padon opened Humble Market in September 2017 on a 5-acre plot near a historic site on FM 1960 called Moonshine Hill, where families in the 1900s lived in tents circling wooden oil derricks that brought income to the area. Today, connoisseurs of antique and vintage furniture from the 1800s to the 1980s flock to the Padons' old-timers' market.

"I have an antique store and a vintage store, and everything in the antique store belongs to me," Theresa Padon said.

Customers can explore the air-conditioned shop of cabinets, trinkets, tools and toys and stroll through the covered outdoor market. On weekends, 10-12 local vendors reserve a spot in the outdoor market and sell local wares such as candles, books, makeup and handcrafted decor, Padon said.

"We have expanded a lot since we opened," she said. "I have paid close attention to what my customers are purchasing, so it tells me a lot about what they are looking for [and] the reason why they came in to visit."

Robby White—a carpenter from Huffman—operates his workshop, Robby's Backyard Decor and More, at Humble Market on Wednesday through Sunday, where he sells outdoor bars, ice chests, tables and birdhouses that he has built and refurbished.

"People love the birdhouses on a stick," White said. "Repeat customers and word-of-mouth customers bring in their diagrams with specifications of what they want built."

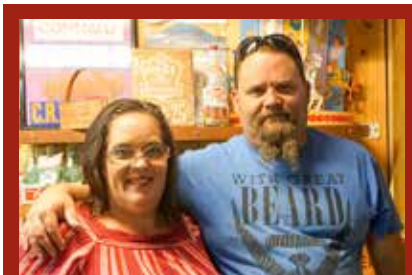
Padon said she attributes her love for refurbished and antique items to her great-grandmother and uncle.

"I was raised in the country by my

uncle, who restored old Victorian homes," she said. "He brought home all the old stuff the homeowners didn't want—a grandfather clock, a piece of furniture—and we would refurbish it together."

Padon said she then went on to study history and political science at the University of Tennessee, and she has always pursued her fascination for historical items of value. Now, Padon said she knows every article in her inventory intimately and is happy to be able to share her finds with the community.

"We have a lot of things people have never seen before," she said. "My customers keep telling me, 'Thank you for the trip back in time. My great aunt or my grandmother has this, and it brings back wonderful memories of that person.'"



Theresa and Scott Padon opened Humble Market in September 2017.

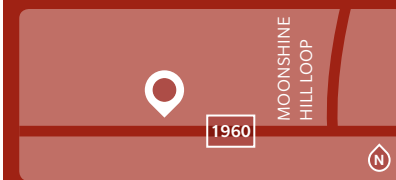
Humble Market

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Grindbreak eSports Cafe

Cafe nourish customers in space catering to video gamers

Combining his passions for coffee and video games, Davy Qin opened Grindbreak eSports Cafe in Humble at the corner of FM 1960 Business and Hwy. 59 in 2016 as a place for video gamers to hang out, eat a healthy meal and have fun.

"I've always loved coffee and have always wanted to open a place that had good coffee and fresh and nutritious food," Qin said. "That was the backbone of this place. And me, being a gamer, I wanted to cater to that crowd."

Customers can rent the game room in the back of the cafe for meetings and birthday parties. From the game room they can order food options, such as hamburgers, vegan burgers and hot panini sandwiches.

On nights when professional tournaments for the multiplayer first-person shooter video game "Overwatch" are televised—which happens a few times a year—Grindbreak hosts a watch party for fans of the video game to dine in and watch the tournament on the cafe's large, flat-screen TV.

For breakfast, Grindbreak serves scrambled eggs, bacon, oatmeal and several gluten-free dishes. For lunch, burgers, pizza-dillas—which are similar to a quesadilla, with pizza bread dough used in place of a tortilla—and sandwiches are served with organic greens and a bag of kettle chips. The cafe also sells individually wrapped pastries from Japanese bakeries in Houston, Qin said.

The cafe's beverage mainstays are hot and iced coffee and tea, with classic drinks, such as cafe lattes, cappuccinos and latte macchiatos. But Qin said customers also order cold-brewed coffee and java concoctions with names, such as Bulletproof, Texacano, Limit Breakr, Golden Milk and Coffee Cola.

"Our baristas have recommended drinks that became customer favorites," Qin said. "The person behind the counter might not be a gamer, but he or she can make you a good coffee, tea or smoothie."

PHOTOS BY KATHLEEN SISON/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



THREE DISHES TO TRY

Turkey Sammich (\$5.95) This sandwich consists of turkey, a hard-boiled egg, all-natural cheese, organic greens and a house sauce on a sweet bun.



Breakfast bowl (\$4.95)

For this breakfast option, a bowl of scrambled eggs is mixed with mashed hashbrowns, turkey sausage, mozzarella cheese and diced tomatoes.

Aioli Chicken Pizza-Dilla (\$6.95) A quesadilla made with pizza dough is filled with grilled chicken and cheese, and served with an aioli sauce.



Grindbreak eSports Cafe

114 First St. W., Humble

281-913-5045

www.grindbreakcafe.com

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-5 p.m.



Davy Qin opened Grindbreak eSports Cafe in Humble in 2016.

Local News MORE OFTEN

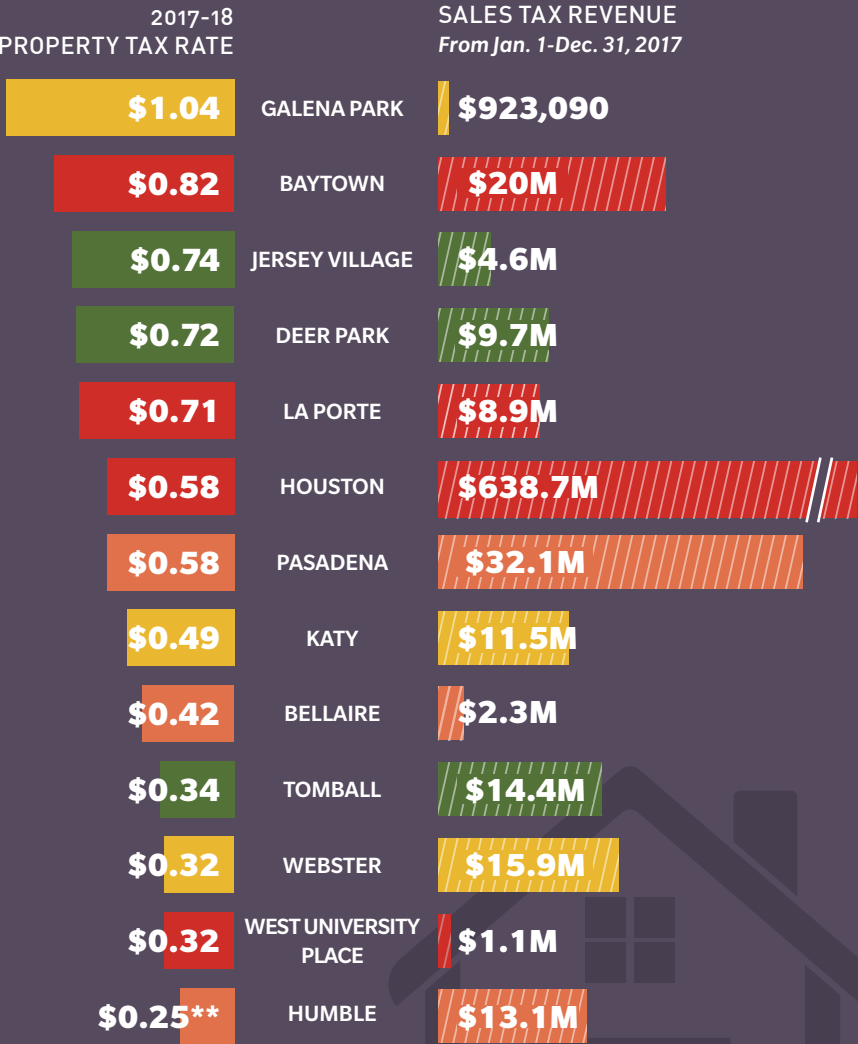
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COMPARING CITY REVENUE

The city of Humble receives more sales tax revenue than many other cities in Harris County, and because of this, the city has been able to maintain a low property tax rate.*



*HARRIS COUNTY CITIES WITH A POPULATION LESS THAN 5,000 ARE NOT LISTED.
**CITY OF HUMBLE'S 2018-19 PROPERTY TAX RATE
SOURCES: CITY OF HUMBLE, TEXAS COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

CONTINUED FROM 1

Humble City Manager Jason Stuebe said he anticipates the city will continue increasing its property tax rate over the next five or 10

years until it reaches about \$0.35 per \$100 valuation. Although Stuebe could not provide specific long-term projects, he said the increase will allow the city to improve

services to residents through a long-term strategic plan as well as prepare it for future complications that could affect its sales tax base. Additionally, it prepares Humble for future state legislation that could limit the city's ability to increase property taxes in the future. "If we are going to put ourselves on a course that is sustainable and provides the services at the level we need them, then ... we've got to get the revenue ... to a more appropriate level," Stuebe said.

PROPERTY TAX INCREASES

Property tax revenue is the city of Humble's second-largest funding stream behind sales tax revenue—which comprises almost half of the city's operating revenue, according to city budget documents. Bennett Sandlin—executive director of Texas Municipal League, which provides services and advocates for the interests of cities—said this is uncommon in Texas as most cities rely more heavily on property tax revenue than sales tax funding.

"We do a survey every decade or so of revenue," Sandlin said. "And our latest survey shows about 35 percent of an average [Texas] city's revenue comes from property tax, and then about 30 percent from sales tax." According to Humble's budget, the city's operating expenses for FY 2018-19 are \$33 million—a 12 percent decrease from the city's FY 2017-18 operating expenses. Meanwhile, revenue to fund city operations is estimated at \$29.39 million.

Stuebe said the city had to decrease its operating budget by 12 percent in order to get it more in line with its budgeted revenue. Even with this decrease, the city will have to fill that roughly \$3 million gap to cover operating expenses by pulling money from the city's reserves—which is

something city officials would rather avoid, he said. "Our reserves have precipitously gone down year over year over the last five years, and quite frankly we just can't do that anymore," Stuebe said. Increasing the city's property tax rate to \$0.35 per \$100 valuation in the next 5-10 years could help generate additional revenue and prevent officials from pulling from the city's reserves in the future.

Additionally, increasing the property tax rate will allow Humble to branch out from the core services Humble now offers, and it will fund what comes out of the city's first long-term strategic plan, which officials will begin working on in October. "We'll be able to start branching out from core services and invest in things, such as quality of life and parks and recreation, programs and things like that," Stuebe said. "Because if you look at trends and high-performing cities, ... it's those ... that place an emphasis on [quality-of-life services]."

SALES TAX RELIANCE

In addition to making the city more sustainable and preparing for its long-term plan, increasing Humble's property tax rate will lessen the city's reliance on sales tax revenue, which can be inconsistent, Sandlin said. "The difference between [the revenue streams] is that property tax is controllable and sales tax is volatile," Sandlin said. "It's easier to predict [property tax revenue] and create a steady revenue stream to pay for services, such as public safety."

The city of Humble has experienced some fluctuations in sales tax revenue over the past five years. In FY 2014-15 the city received \$13.83 million in sales tax revenue, but it fell to \$13 million in FY 2016-17. However, Stuebe said the city's sales tax revenue will

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— JASON STUEBE, HUMBLE CITY MANAGER

likely increase in FY 2017-18, and he expects it to reach close to \$14 million when the fiscal year ends Sept. 30.

Stuebe said he is unsure what caused the increase, but suspects part of it may be attributed to residents purchasing goods to repair their homes after Hurricane Harvey hit in August 2017.

This increase in sales tax revenue occurred despite more than 50 businesses flooding within the city during the storm.

"I don't know if that is going to go back down and level out at the \$13 million mark," Stuebe said. "The bigger question is 'This the normal, or is this kind of a small bubble?'"

Mark Mitchell, president of the Lake Houston Economic Development Partnership, said increasing its property tax rate could also help the city prepare for any local retail disruptions.

"Amazon ... is now placing distribution facilities everywhere ... and so that is really changing the landscape relative to how the footprint stores operate," Mitchell said.

LOOKING AHEAD

Along with fluctuations in the city's sales tax revenue, officials are also preparing for other changes that could affect Humble's revenue streams.

Stuebe said the city is concerned about the future of an agreement Humble—along with 14 other cities in Harris County—has in place with the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County. Because of this agreement, METRO—which receives 1 cent of the sales tax within the city—provides Humble with half of the revenue it collects within the city's limits.

METRO spokesperson Laura Whitely said through this agreement, the transit authority allocated \$6.6 million to Humble during FY 2017-18, which is in addition to what the city received in local sales tax revenue.

Stuebe said the funds the city of Humble receive from METRO through

this agreement must be used on road projects.

The agreement is on a contractual 10-year basis and is up for renewal in 2024. Stuebe said increasing the city's property tax rate will help the city cope if the agreement is not renewed.

"We don't know what is going to happen after 2024," Stuebe said. "In our opinion, I think we would be comfortable in saying, 'Hey, is there a legislative fix to ... make it permanent?'"

Along with the uncertainty surrounding the future of the city's agreement with METRO, Humble Mayor Merle Aaron said he is concerned about the state seeking to cap how much cities can increase their property tax rates.

During the previous legislative session in 2017, some state legislators—including State Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston—filed legislation that would have required cities to hold an election for residents to approve or reject a proposed tax rate if it would increase the city's property tax revenue by more than 4 percent from the previous fiscal year.

Sandlin said he believes lawmakers will pursue similar bills when the next legislative session begins in January.

"The truth is those cap bills only apply to cities and counties, which is interesting because the real problem with property tax is the state's overreliance on property tax [to fund public education]," Sandlin said.

Aaron said if any such bill does become a law, it would prolong the time it takes for Humble to increase its property tax rate to \$0.35 per \$100 valuation.

"We're pretty well convinced there's going to be some measure of property tax caps hitting the cities across the state," Stuebe said. "Such a thing would seriously hinder our ability to get to where we need to be."

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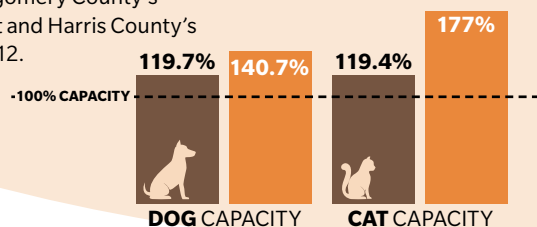
THE STATE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

Harris and Montgomery County animal shelters have taken measures to decrease the number of animals they euthanize; however, both facilities face capacity challenges due to limited space and high intake numbers.

KEY: ■ Montgomery County Animal Shelter ■ Harris County Animal Shelter

OVERCAPACITY

Data shows Montgomery County's capacity in August and Harris County's capacity on Sept. 12.



investigation for allegedly improperly euthanizing animals in August.

MCAS reportedly increased its live-release rate—or the percent of animals that leave the shelter alive—from 43.9 percent in 2010 to 92.6 percent in 2017. However, MCAS Director Aaron Johnson and one other employee are under criminal investigation for allegedly euthanizing 78 animals outside of established shelter procedures, according to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.

The Harris County Animal Shelter increased its live-release rate from 15.1 percent to 78.8 percent from 2010-17.

"We try to do everything we can to not put an animal down," White said. "But when you have so many animals confined in a small space, you have a larger chance of disease spreading."

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

The Montgomery County's Sheriff's Office released an official statement Sept. 20 following the announcement that two Montgomery County Animal Shelter employees were placed on paid leave earlier in the week.

According to the statement, 84 animals—60 cats and 24 dogs—were found at the home of a Conroe resident who could not efficiently care for them. An animal rescue group contacted the shelter, and the animals were voluntarily surrendered by the owner Aug. 17. Six dogs were deemed healthy, taken to the shelter and placed for adoption.

Jordan Gentry, chief veterinarian with the shelter, reported to MCSO the remaining 78 animals were euthanized outside of established procedures after their arrival at the shelter Aug. 20.

According to the MCSO statement, Gentry said he spoke with Johnson following the euthanasia and reported the incident to MCSO on Aug. 24, at which time the investigation began.

Laura McConnell, president of The

Woodlands-based animal rescue group Lone Star Animal Welfare League, said the nonprofit has worked with the shelter in the past on spaying and neutering programs and as a rescue group.

"[If true], it would be disturbing that the multitude of animals brought in from a hoarding case were not seen by the vet before euthanasia or if a plea was not put out to rescues," McConnell said in an email.

OVERCAPACITY

Prior to the investigation, Montgomery County Animal Shelter officials said they struggled with capacity issues. The shelter—which normally takes in 14,000 animals per year—has to house two dogs in each kennel to meet high intake numbers, Johnson said in a July interview before he was placed on paid leave. In July, the shelter housed 900 animals while only having 545 kennels at the facility.

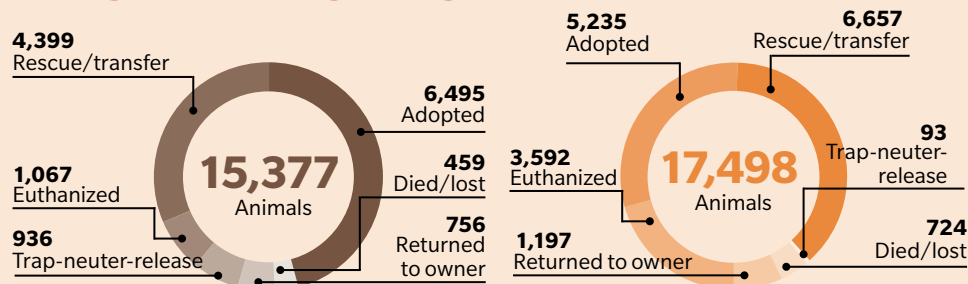
The Harris County Animal Shelter is dealing with its own capacity issues in a facility built more than 30 years ago.

When the Harris County Animal Shelter was built in 1986 in Houston, it was designed to handle 12,000 animals annually. Last year, the shelter handled more than 18,000 animals. White said to make up for the lack of space, the shelter often houses multiple dogs together in one kennel.

"To me, [housing four or five dogs together] is totally unacceptable, but the only alternative we have is to euthanize," White said.

To address the capacity issue, Harris County is opening a larger animal shelter behind its existing location late in 2019. The facility is being funded by a \$24 million bond referendum that voters approved in 2015. White said

2017 SHELTER STATS

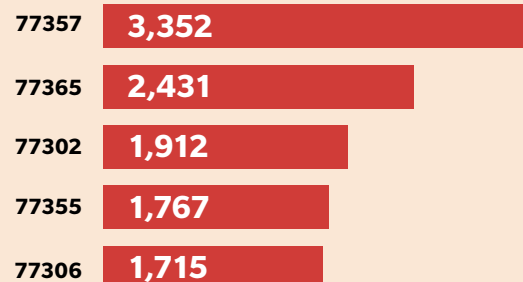


78

Two MCAS employees are under criminal investigation for allegedly euthanizing 78 animals in August outside of established procedures.

ANIMAL INTAKE IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The Montgomery County Animal Shelter took in more animals from ZIP code 77357, which includes New Caney, than any other ZIP code in the county between 2013-17.



SOURCES: CITY OF HOUSTON, CITY HUMBLE, HARRIS COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER, MONTGOMERY COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER, MONTGOMERY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

preconstruction work at the site has delayed the opening of the facility.

Maria Langford, intake director for Kingwood-based nonprofit Twyla's Friends, said she has seen an increase in stray dogs in Kingwood over the past six years since she became the director. The foster care network does not have a shelter but works with 15 foster homes to shelter stray dogs found around Kingwood. On average, the organization helps more than 120 dogs get adopted each year.

"I think people come here from other areas and dump their dogs in Kingwood, thinking we are a suburban area and that we have all these people who want dogs," Langford said.

NEW PROGRAMS

Both county animal shelters have focused on implementing new programs and developing partnerships to increase their live-release rates over the last decade.

Joe Guidry, animal control director for the Montgomery County Animal Control Authority, said one change Montgomery County has made is instructing officers to scan for microchips in the field to try to return animals to their owners first.

Since May 2016, staffers have used the trap-neuter-return method—the process of humanely trapping, neutering, vaccinating, removing the ear tip and returning cats to their original locations—to decrease the number of stray cats arriving at the shelter.

Since implementing the program,

Montgomery County Animal Shelter reported that it returned 20 percent of cats that entered the shelter in 2017 back into the county.

White said a similar program implemented at the Harris County Animal Shelter a few years ago has been instrumental in increasing the live-release of cats from the facility.

In addition to the cat program and other new measures, the Harris County Animal Shelter has increased how often it works with rescue and foster-care groups, White said. One rescue organization the shelter works with is Houston Pets Alive, which pulls dogs and cats from the county's euthanasia list almost daily.

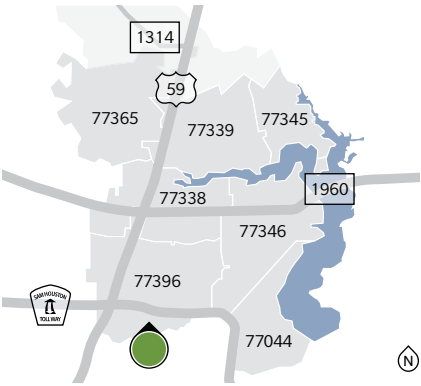
The organization houses some of these animals in its own shelter, but the majority of the cats and dogs are housed in foster homes until they are adopted, said Suzanne Zutter, Houston Pets Alive director of development.

"People think [animals] can survive on their own, and so if they don't want [an animal] they just dump it somewhere," Zutter said. "People dumping their animals is a huge issue throughout the [Greater] Houston area."


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Property taxes (in dollars):
Humble ISD 1.52
Harris County WCID No. 96 0.84
Harris County 0.42
Harris Health System 0.17
Lone Star College System 0.11
Harris County ESD No. 10 0.10
Harris County ESD No. 11 0.10
Harris County Flood Control District 0.03
Harris County Department of Education 0.01
Port of Houston 0.01
Total (per \$100 valuation) **3.31**




Median home value

\$305,000




Homes on the market*

102




Homes under contract*

24




Median annual property taxes

\$10,096




Median price per square foot

\$102.32



Average days on the market*

109



*As of 9/13/18
Neighborhood data provided by Jill Henderson
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MARKET DATA

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\$149,999 or less	6/28	-	7/9	4/33	18/9	7/8	8/9
\$150,000-\$199,999	24/46	3/16	29/24	17/23	25/18	26/24	31/27
\$200,000-\$299,999	28/73	23/35	60/58	8/45	4/72	25/44	22/50
\$300,000-\$399,999	16/47	13/43	22/49	13/53	-	3/68	9/24
\$400,000-\$499,999	6/32	5/71	8/90	7/91	-	1/17	2/13
\$500,000-\$599,999	-	-	1/42	5/36	-	2/27	1/143
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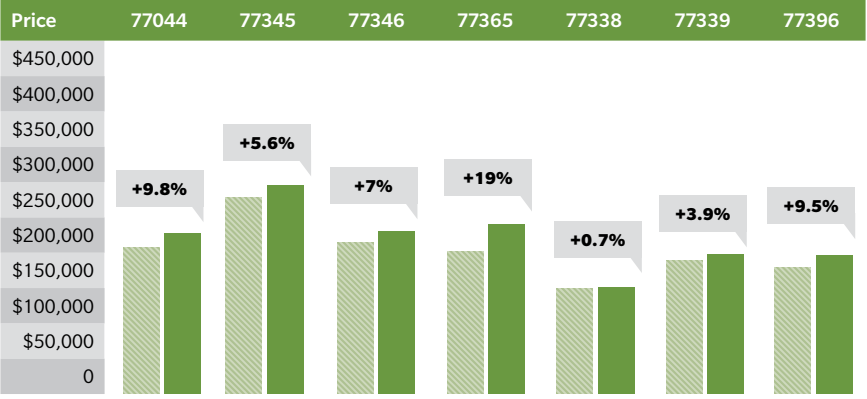
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Wild Birds Unlimited - Kingwood	26
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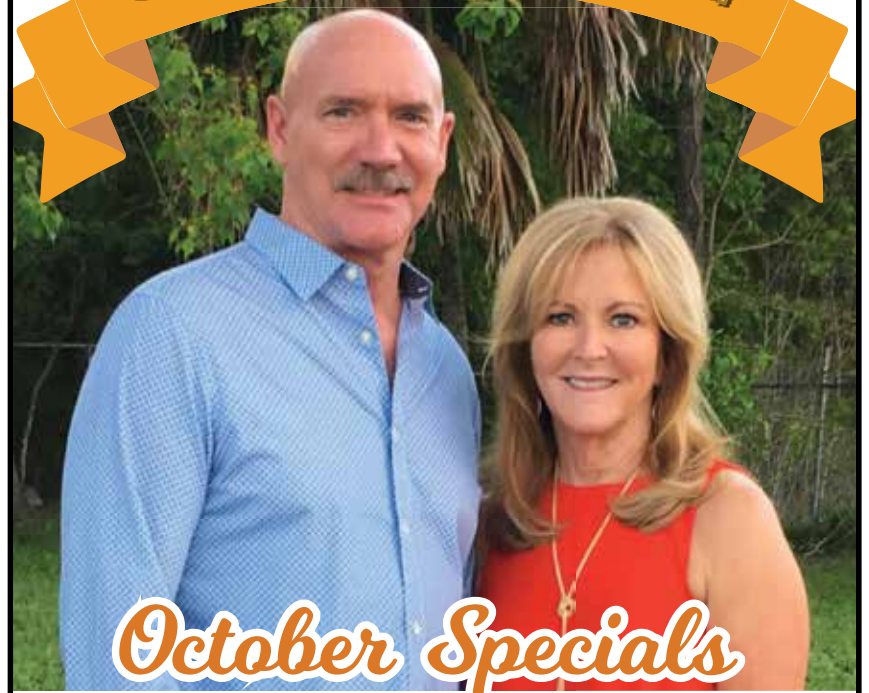


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- *Fun coding center for kids ages 7-14
- *Gain ninja coding skills from white to black belt
- *Drop-in learning, birthdays, camps, and more





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77084

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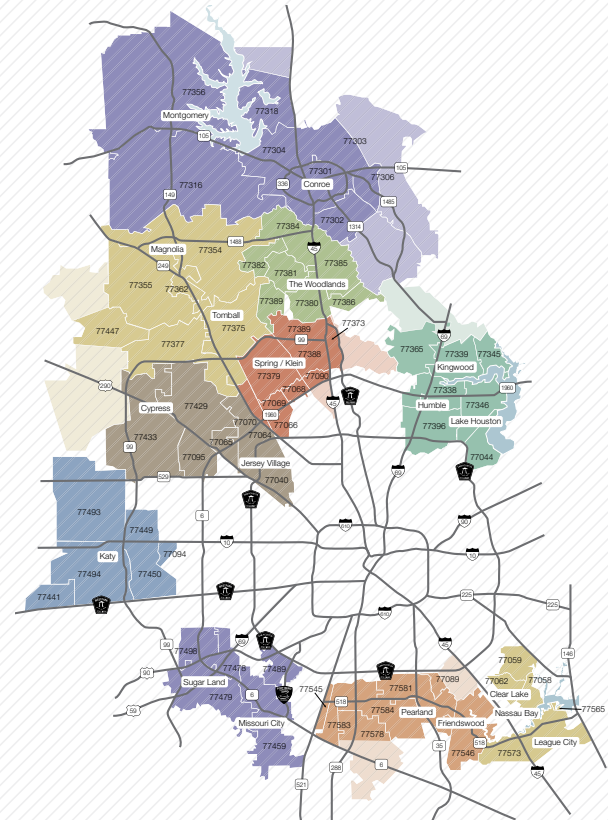
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