

Sizing up **FBISD**

Data shows school districts with more economically disadvantage tend to earn lower ratings from the Texas Education Agency.

Houston ISD

2017-18 enrollment: **214,175**

Katy ISD

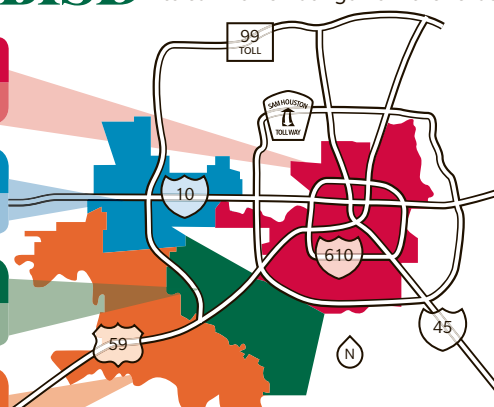
2017-18 enrollment: **77,522**

Fort Bend ISD

2017-18 enrollment: **74,957**

Lamar Consolidated ISD

2017-18 enrollment: **32,051**



2017-18 stats:

Percentage of economically disadvantaged students

74.9%

30.9%

37.3%

41.3%

Accountability ratings

84*

90

89*

87*

*District is not officially rated due to the Harvey Provision.

SOURCES: POPULATION AND SURVEY ANALYSTS, TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Some low FBISD school ratings linked to higher poverty

New district programs attempt to reverse trend of lower accountability scores

BY **CHRISTINE HALL**

Andrea Eusan, president of Briargate Elementary School's parent-teacher organization, recalls when the campus received an Improvement Required rating from the Texas Education Agency four years ago.

"The community felt that Briargate was such an underperforming school," said Eusan, who has two fourth graders at Briargate. "We still have a bad name because of those many problems in the past."

She said some of the factors that led to the rating included low test scores and lack of school staff support as well as the lower socio-economic environment in which some parents struggled to balance full-time jobs with getting their children to school on time.

Along with that rating, Briargate's student population in 2015-16 was 75.4% economically disadvantaged, meaning they qualify for reduced-price or free lunches or other public assistance.

These factors placed Briargate, and other Fort Bend ISD schools, among Texas schools with higher economic disadvantage rates receiving lower state accountability ratings—a trend that is still evident, according to a *Community Impact Newspaper* analysis of TEA school accountability ratings.

FBISD recognizes this and has begun implementing programs—including the Early Literacy Center at Ridgemont Elementary School—to

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Local leaders: More transit options needed for growth

BY **BETH MARSHALL**

As the Greater Houston area population continues to grow, Fort Bend County has kept pace with the region consistently growing by about 100,000 residents every five years since 2000, according to U.S. Census Bureau data.

In response to this local growth as well as regional growth, the Houston-Galveston Area Council in its 2045 Regional Transportation Plan is calling for \$340 million in federal funding for 22 proposed projects to improve transportation in Fort Bend County over the next 25 years. Regionally—spanning eight counties—the H-GAC is calling for \$2.9 billion in federal funding for 193

CONTINUED ON 28

A University of Houston study showed Fort Bend County's population could exceed

2 million by 2050.



SOURCES: UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON, FORT BEND COUNTY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



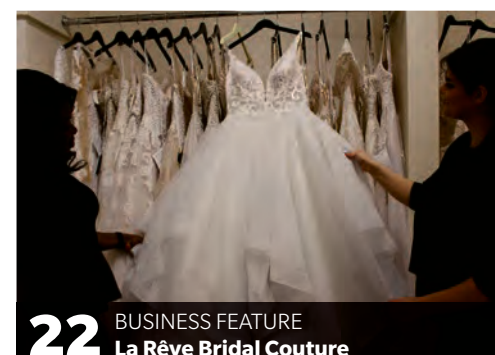
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Now Open, Coming Soon & more



9 TO-DO LIST
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11 TRANSPORTATION UPDATES
Ongoing and upcoming projects



22 BUSINESS FEATURE
La Rêve Bridal Couture



23 DINING FEATURE
Sugar's Cajun Cuisine & Bar

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ABOUT US

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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Stay informed as this school year ends

As summer vacation approaches Fort Bend ISD parents, teachers and students can breathe a sigh of relief now that the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness testing is over for the 2018-19 school year.

The STAAR test is linked to accountability ratings given individually to schools and overall to districts by the Texas Education Agency. Our cover story takes a look at schools in FBISD that struggle to make the grade. Data shows that schools with a higher student population of economically disadvantaged students tend to have lower accountability ratings.

Look at Page 26 to read more about this trend and learn what FBISD is doing to address the issue and close the learning gap in the district.

Looking ahead to our June edition of *Community Impact Newspaper* readers can expect in-depth coverage of the health care industry in our annual Health Care Directory. This will include health statistics for Fort Bend County, a list of area physicians and hospitals in Sugar Land and Missouri City as well as timely news discussing hot health care topics.

What is a health care topic close to your heart? You can let us know at slm@impactnews.com.



Amy Martinez

Amy Martinez
GENERAL MANAGER

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ASK THE EDITOR



Beth Marshall

Beth Marshall
EDITOR
bmarsshall@communityimpact.com

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

Where can readers find election coverage?

Although the May 4 election has just passed and this issue will not feature election coverage, readers can visit communityimpact.com for the latest results.

Reporters and editors cover election night in May and November each year to bring readers live, up-to-date coverage.

As newly elected officials begin settling into their roles on Sugar Land City Council or the Fort Bend ISD board of trustees, be sure to follow along with up-to-date news provided online after school board and city council meetings.

If you have not noticed already, Community Impact Newspaper sends reporters to local government and school district meetings in order to provide timely coverage for readers, build relationships in the community and remain a friendly face in front of council members and board trustees.

If you see us at a Fort Bend ISD, Sugar Land City Council, Missouri City City Council or Fort Bend County Commissioners Court meeting do not hesitate to say hello.

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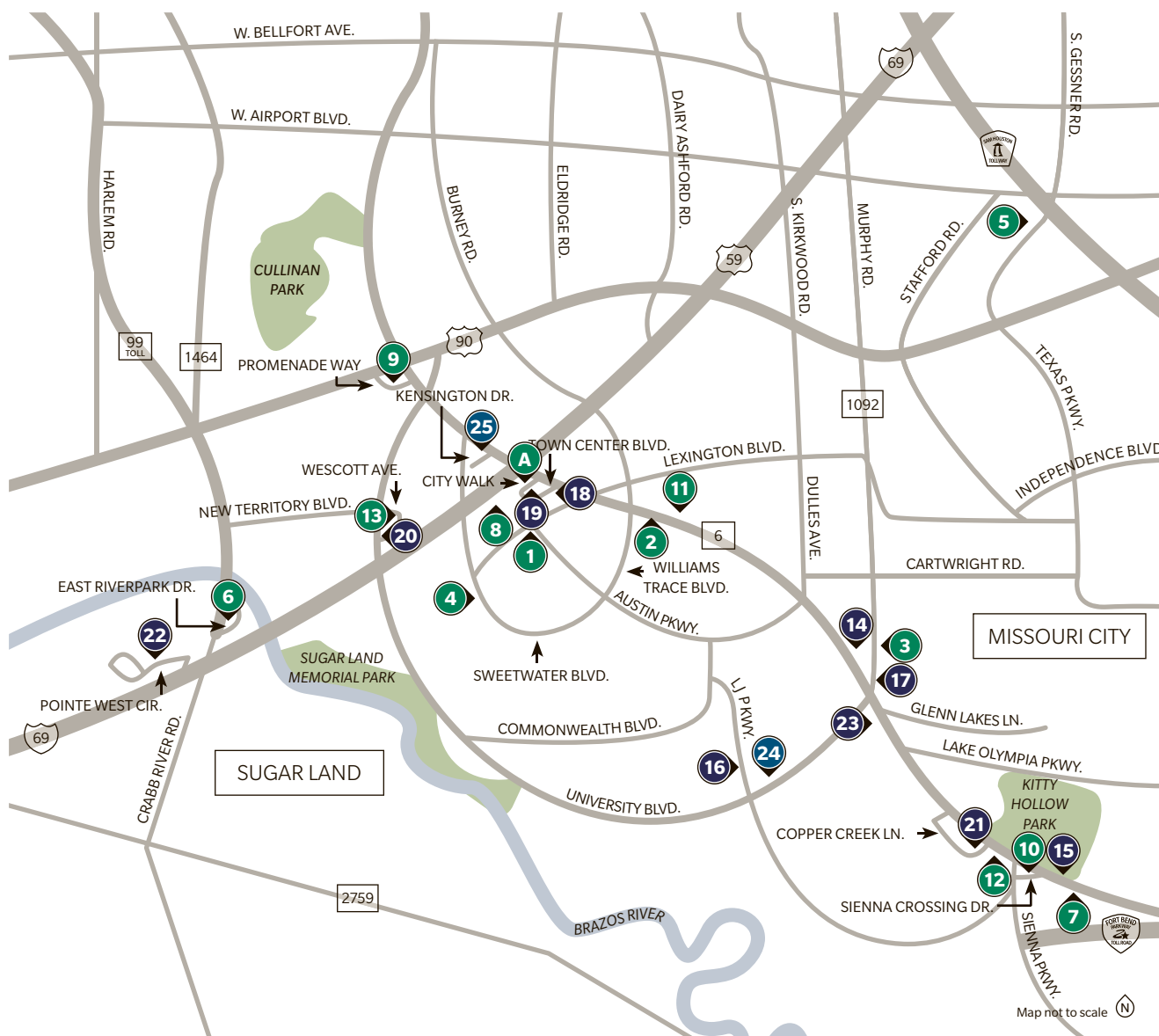
3 Sugar Creek Center Blvd. in Aetna Building | 281.275.5111

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IMPACTS

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



4 The Axelrad Clinic opened an office at 4665 Sweetwater Blvd., Ste. 111, Sugar Land, on April 8. The clinic offers acupuncture, pain management and women's health services, including hormone balance, thyroid and fertility. 713-527-9555. www.axelradclinic.com

5 Minuteman Press opened a location April 13 at 614 Texas Parkway, Ste. 600, Missouri City, according to owner Michael McClure. The shop offers printing, design and promotional items. 832-987-1385. www.missouricity-tx.minutemanpress.com

6 PrimeWay Federal Credit Union opened its branch at 6540 E. Riverpark Drive, Sugar Land, on May 1. PrimeWay provides members with checking, savings, investment and loan options for personal, business and youth accounts. 713-799-6200. www.primewayfcu.com

7 Missouri City Dentistry opened April 1 at 9612 Hwy. 6, Ste. 100, Missouri City. The dental office offers a full array of services for family dental care. It is open until 7 p.m. on Thursdays and every Saturday from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. to accommodate patients' schedules. 281-747-9988. www.missouricitydentistry.net

8 The Blue Fish opened April 7 in First Colony Mall at 16535 Hwy. 59, Ste. 2510, Sugar Land. A variety of sushi and sashimi options can be found on the menu, along with grilled entrees, such as chicken or steak teriyaki. Craft cocktails, wine and sake are also on the menu, and catering services will be available. 281-884-3474. www.thebluefishsushi.com

9 Rush Cycle Sugar Land held its soft opening on April 15 in the Crossing at Telfair development, 350 Promenade Way, Ste. 950, Sugar Land. The California-based franchise offers indoor spin cycling with a trained instructor. The location will host grand opening celebrations May 11 and May 18. 832-683-0131. www.rushcycle.com

10 Smoothie King opened a new location near Sienna Plantation at 9101 Sienna Crossing Drive, Missouri City, on April 1. The shop offers a variety of smoothie flavors that can be customized with ingredients to reach customers' health goals. 281-778-7130. www.smoothieking.com

NOW OPEN

1 BFW Pizza opened Feb. 1 at 16535 Lexington Blvd., Sugar Land. The delivery-only pizzeria is open from Sunday through Thursday from 3-10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 3-11 p.m. The menu features classic favorites, such as margherita pizza and New York pepperoni pizza, as well as other gourmet options. The menu also includes vegetarian, pork-free and beef-free

pizzas. All pizzas are made with organic, premium ingredients and cooked in a mesquite wood-fired Italian brick oven, owner Cliff Phillips said. 832-370-7088. www.bfwpizza.com

2 Teapresso Bar opened April 6 at 3382 Hwy. 6, Sugar Land. Teapresso Bar was established in Honolulu in 2014. The menu offers tea, coffee, lemonades, frappes, slushes and smoothies. The Sugar Land

location also serves mochi ice cream. 281-565-0060. www.teapressobartx.com

3 Reema Lamba opened **The Learning Experience** at 3451 FM 1092, Missouri City, on March 4. It employs more than 30 teachers and staff members to serve about 180 children ages 6 weeks to 6 years old. 832-539-6816. www.thelearningexperience.com

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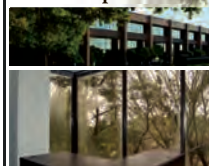


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11 Brightway Insurance Agency owner Aaron McCready opened a location at 3527 Hwy. 6, Ste. 270, Sugar Land, on May 6. The office offers policies on a variety of home, flood, personal items and automobile insurance coverage. 832-532-8179. www.brightwaymccready.com

12 Jersey Mike's Subs opened a location at 8840 Hwy. 6, Missouri City, on May 1. The fast-casual sandwich franchise offers cold and hot subs, signature wraps, sides and desserts, as well as catering options. www.jerseymikes.com

13 Another Broken Egg Cafe opened May 6 at 1912 Wescott Ave., Ste. 250, Sugar Land. The Southern-inspired breakfast, brunch and lunch restaurant offers traditional breakfast menu items as well as seasonal dishes, gluten-free items and brunch cocktails. The Sugar Land location is the seventh Another Broken Egg Cafe location in Texas and the fourth in the Greater Houston area. www.anotherbrokenegg.com

COMING SOON

14 Sacred Leaf Zero will open May 20 at 5201 Hwy. 6, Ste. 575, Missouri City. The CBD store offers products such as capsules, gummies, lotions and edibles. 281-515-8572. www.sacredleafmocity.com

15 Jamba Juice franchisees Hugh and Karen Tillman said their new location at the Shoppes at Sienna Plantation will open May 8 at 9303 Hwy. 6, Ste. 100, Missouri City. Jamba Juice is known for selling smoothies, juices, snacks and more. 281-778-0019. www.facebook.com/Siennajamba

16 Wing Station is slated to open in early May at its new location at 4821 LJ Parkway, Ste. 80, Sugar Land, according to the owner. Wing Station specializes in a unique approach to hand-spun wings, sauces and dry rubs. 346-816-7213. www.wing-station.com

17 Fairfield Inn & Suites Houston Missouri City will open in mid-May at 3533 FM 1092, Missouri City, according to the hotel. Features will include 75 guest rooms, three meeting rooms, complimentary breakfast and a business center. 832-899-8181. www.marriott.com

18 SwimLabs owners Angela and Mehdi

COMPILED BY **BETH MARSHALL**
AND **CHRISTINE HALL**
News or questions about Sugar Land and Missouri City?
Email us at slmnews@communityimpact.com.

Balouchestani said their swim school at 2745 N. Town Center Blvd., Ste. E, Sugar Land, will open by May 15. SwimLabs offers classes for various skill levels and provides instant video feedback that transforms swim instruction. Its facility uses endless pools with water flow and mirrors at the bottom of the pool that allow swimmers to swim in place while coaches analyze all angles of the swimmer's stroke. 281-789-0801. www.swimlabs.com

19 Kilwins Chocolates will open in early June in Sugar Land Town Square at 16029 City Walk, Sugar Land, according to the owner. The northern Michigan-based chocolate shop was founded in 1947 and offers made-in-store Mackinac Island fudge, caramel apples, handcrafted chocolates and ice cream. 888-454-5946. www.kilwins.com

20 U'Maki Sushi Burrito is slated to open in mid-May in the University Commons at 13445 University Blvd., Sugar Land, according to U'Maki's corporate office. This will be the third location in Houston and the first franchisee for the restaurant, known for its giant sushi rolls made to look like burritos. 281-207-6575. www.u-maki.com

21 PetSuites of America has a new location under construction at 8320 Copper Creek Lane, Missouri City, that is expected to open in late June. The business, under the name PetSuites Houston Sugar Land/Missouri City, will provide grooming, boarding, an open play area, a pet spa and day care for dogs and cats. www.petsuitesofamerica.com

22 Home2 Suites by Hilton Rosenberg Sugar Land Area will open an extended-stay hotel at 5350 Pointe West Circle, Richmond, on May 30. The hotel will offer pet-friendly suites with complimentary Wi-Fi, a shuttle, breakfast, and evening socials with beverages and food offerings. 346-843-2777. www.home2suites3.hilton.com

23 Franchisee Maulik Patel is bringing the fast-casual Asian chain **Teriyaki Madness** to Sugar Land at 636 Hwy. 6, Ste. 900. He expects to open the restaurant the week of

FEATURED IMPACT—NOW OPEN



Barbara Gregory expanded her online Etsy shop, **B. Gregory Design**, to a brick-and-mortar store in Sugar Land Town Square on April 16 at 16121 City Walk, Sugar Land. The boutique creates wedding experiences for couples before, during and after their wedding day, including custom wedding invitations, stationery, calligraphy and branding, as well as hand-painted and laser-cut signage. 832-304-0819. www.bgregorydesign.com



May 26. The restaurant offers appetizers and teriyaki bowls that can be customized with meat, vegetables, noodles or rice cooked in signature sauces. www.teriyakimadness.com

RELOCATIONS

24 The Joint Chiropractic-Missouri City relocated to The Village of Riverstone at 18841 University Blvd., Ste. 410, Sugar Land, on April 29 from 5730 Hwy. 6, Ste. 114, Missouri City. The office, led by Nathan Hall and Teresa Le, provides chiropractic services for back and neck pain, allergies, migraines and more. Walk-ins are welcome;



no insurance is needed; and the office is open evenings and weekends. 281-403-9000. www.thejoint.com

25 Sugar Land Counseling Center relocated its business April 22 to 16400 Kensington Drive, Sugar Land, from 4665 Sweetwater Blvd., Ste. 110, Sugar Land. The center provides counseling to individuals, couples and families, as well as conducts evaluations for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism and learning disabilities. The center offers convenient appointment times, including evenings and weekends. 832-876-3232. www.sugarlandcounseling.com

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Stroke Myths: Are you Stroke Aware?

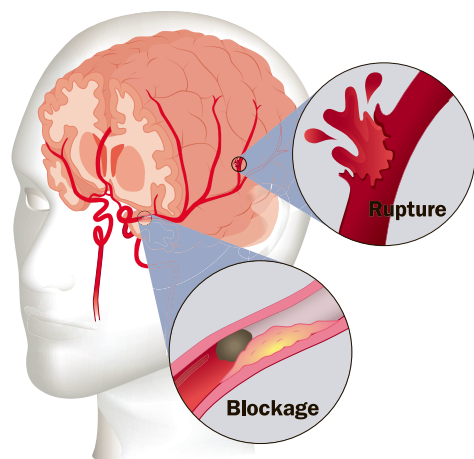
On average, someone in the U.S. has a stroke every 40 seconds. Every four minutes, someone dies of stroke. One of the best ways to combat this killer is to arm yourself with the facts. Memorial Hermann affiliated neurologist **Joseph Cochran, MD**, shares the most common myths he hears about stroke and sets the record straight.

MYTH: A stroke is like a heart attack.

"A heart attack affects the heart; a stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted, depriving brain tissue of oxygen," says Dr. Cochran. "But heart disease and stroke share many of the same risk factors."

MYTH: A stroke is a "brain bleed."

"Yes and no," says Dr. Cochran. "There are two types of stroke, hemorrhagic and ischemic. Hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel in the brain bursts, causing bleeding in the surrounding tissue. Ischemic stroke occurs when a blood clot blocks a blood vessel carrying blood to the brain, cutting off blood supply."



MYTH: Strokes just randomly occur and can't be prevented.

"Not true," says Dr. Cochran. "While family history of stroke increases your chances for stroke, up to 80 percent of strokes are preventable by managing the risk factors, including maintaining a healthy weight and blood pressure and cholesterol levels, exercising and avoiding smoking."

MYTH: The most common sign of a stroke is a severe headache.

The acronym **BE FAST** can help you quickly recognize common signs of stroke and the action to take:

- **Balance** – Is there a sudden loss of balance or coordination?
- **Eyes** – Is there sudden blurred or double vision?
- **Face Drooping** – Is the person's smile uneven or lopsided?
- **Arm Weakness** – Does one side drift downward? Is there weakness or numbness on one side?
- **Speech Difficulty** – Does the person have slurred or garbled speech?
- **Time to Call 911** – Tell the 911 operator you think it's a stroke and when symptoms began.

MYTH: Strokes can't be treated.

"We can treat ischemic stroke with a clot-busting drug called tissue plasminogen activator (tPA), which must be administered within 4 1/2 hours of the onset of stroke. For hemorrhagic stroke, we can administer drugs to reduce blood pressure, to slow down the bleeding, and may perform surgery to repair the ruptured blood vessel," says Dr. Cochran.



Joseph Cochran, MD

MYTH: Little strokes aren't cause for concern.

Small strokes, known as transient ischemic attacks (TIAs), are strong predictors of stroke. A person who has had one or more TIAs is almost 10 times more likely to have a stroke. TIA should be considered a medical emergency.

MYTH: All hospitals are equally equipped to handle strokes.

The Joint Commission certifies hospitals that meet certain standards for care of acute stroke, designating them as Primary Stroke Centers (PSCs) and Comprehensive Stroke Centers (CSCs). Both are advanced designations, but CSCs are the most advanced.

Mischer Neuroscience Institute at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center is a CSC, the first stroke program in the region to meet such standards. In addition, seven Memorial Hermann hospitals, including **Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital** and **Memorial Hermann Sugar Land Hospital**, are PSCs.

To learn more about stroke symptoms and care, visit neuro.memorialhermann.org/stroke

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Hands and Hearts Foundation hosts its annual golf tournament fundraiser and dinner. 10:30 a.m.-7 p.m. \$175. Pecan Grove Plantation Country Club, 3000 Plantation Drive, Richmond. 713-725-8762. www.handsandheartsfoundation.org

MAY 11 **CHECK OUT NEW ARTISTS**
SAWMILL LAKE CLUB

More than 50 artists will display their work as part of the SiennArt on the Lake fine arts festival. In addition, there will be a student show, food trucks, a beverage tent and music. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Sawmill Lake Club, 10323 Mount Logan, Missouri City. 281-778-3866. www.siennartonthelake.com

MAY 27 **HONOR THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED**
SUGAR LAND MEMORIAL PARK

The city of Sugar Land hosts its 10th annual Memorial Day event with educational activities, military exhibits, a flag ceremony and patriotic music. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Sugar Land Memorial Park, 15300 University Blvd., Sugar Land. 281-275-2825. www.sugarlandtx.gov

MAY 09 **LEARN ABOUT INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

The Arc of Fort Bend County hosts the Texas Workforce Commission's Troy Schlag, who will speak about vocational rehabilitation services and how to improve the quality of life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. United Way Fort Bend, 12300 Parc Crest, Stafford. 281-494-5959. www.arcoffortbend.org

10 **BIKE TO WORK AND SCHOOL**
The city of Sugar Land and Shape Up Fort Bend are leading a leisurely group ride from Sugar Land's Memorial Park to Fort Settlement Middle School for the sixth annual Bike to School Day or to Sugar Land City Hall for the eighth annual Bike to Work Day. Food and prizes will also be handed out to participants. 7:30-9 a.m. Free. 281-242-2000. www.sugarlandtx.gov

11 **ENJOY INDIAN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

Renditions of classical Indian music will be played by Indian Music Society of Houston members Sangeeta Panse, Varad Gaikwad and Govind Shetty, featuring the sitar, flute and tabla. 2-3 p.m. Free. Sienna Branch Library, 8411 Sienna Springs Blvd., Missouri City. 281-238-2900. www.fortbend.lib.tx.us

17 **GET A FOOD HANDLERS PERMIT**
Food service employees can now learn about food safety closer to home. The Texas Department of State Health Services is offering its accredited food handlers program at the Fort Bend County Extension Office. The class is a basic overview of good hygiene, cross contamination, and food time and temperature. Participants will learn about foodborne illness, how it is caused and prevention. 9-11 a.m. \$20. 1402 Band Road, Ste. 100, Rosenberg. 281-342-3034. fortbend.www.agrilife.org/fch

29 **LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE**

The health care division of the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce discusses trends, challenges and the future of health care. The panel includes Joe Freudenberger, Oak Bend Medical Center; Richard Ehiers, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center; Malisha Patel, Memorial Hermann Sugar Land & Southwest Hospital; and Chris Siebenaler, Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. \$35-\$500. Safari Texas Ranch, 11627 FM 1464, Richmond. 281-566-2161. www.fortbendchamber.com

JUNE 08 **EAT PANCAKES FOR CHARITY**
Catholic Charities' Sixth Annual Pancake Festival includes all-you-can-eat pancakes, free carnival games, face painting and a jump house. \$5. Mamie George Community Center, 1111 Collins Road, Richmond. 7 a.m.-noon. 281-202-6222. www.catholiccharities.org

MOTHER'S DAY
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- MAY**
- CRAFTS**
11 Mother's Day crafts, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Free, Sienna Branch Library, 281-238-2900.
12 Cake Decorating, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., \$15, Missouri City Community Center, 281-403-8500.
- FOOD**
12 Mother's Day Brunch, 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m., \$39.95, Sweetwater Country Club, 281-980-4100.
- OUTINGS**
11 Mother's Day Soul Music Festival, 7:30 p.m., \$49-\$170. Smart Financial Centre, 281-207-6278.
11 Tea & Targets, 10 a.m., \$15-\$20, George Ranch Historical Park, 281-343-0218.

Find more or submit events at communityimpact.com/event-calendar. Event organizers can submit local events online to be considered for the print edition. Submitting details for consideration does not guarantee publication.



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-  **Comprehensive Stroke Center**
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6720 Bertner Avenue, Houston, TX 77030
-  **Comprehensive Stroke Center**
CHI St. Luke's Health–The Woodlands Hospital
17200 St. Luke's Way, The Woodlands, TX 77384
-  **Primary Stroke Center**
CHI St. Luke's Health–Brazosport Hospital
100 Medical Drive, Lake Jackson, TX 77566

UPCOMING PROJECTS

1 Brooks Street bridge improvements

Design of a small concrete wall on the west side of the bridge to match the east side is underway. Construction is expected to begin in May and will take three months to complete after notice to proceed.

Timeline: May-August

Cost: \$350,000

Funding source: city of Sugar Land

2 Hwy. 6 improvements

This project focuses on widening Hwy. 6 from six to eight lanes by adding an outside lane in each direction from Brooks Street to Lexington Boulevard. Intermittent single-lane closures are expected through August as work crews relocate power line poles. Construction will begin in July and is expected to last about 14 months.

Timeline: July 2019-October 2020

Cost: \$7.5 million

Funding sources: city of Sugar Land, Texas Department of Transportation, Fort Bend County

ONGOING PROJECTS

3 Ludwig Lane widening

Work to reconstruct the two-lane asphalt road to a three-lane concrete road from Dulles Avenue to Brand Lane in Missouri City is slated to be complete in late May.

Timeline: May 2018-May 2019

Cost: \$2 million

Funding source: Fort Bend County

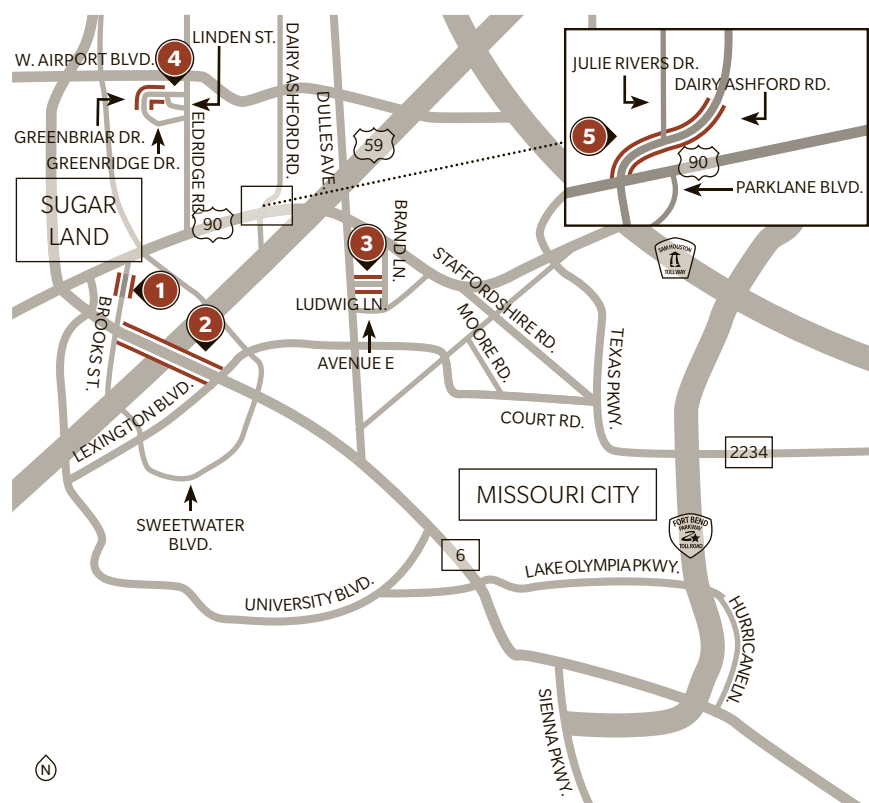
4 Greenbriar Drive reconstruction

Single-lane closures are taking place along Greenbriar Drive, a residential street, from Linden Street to Greenridge Drive for street pavement rehabilitation. Greenbriar is one of four streets identified by the city of Sugar Land for work as part of its pavement management and maintenance program.

Timeline: March-May

Cost: \$450,000

Funding source: city of Sugar Land



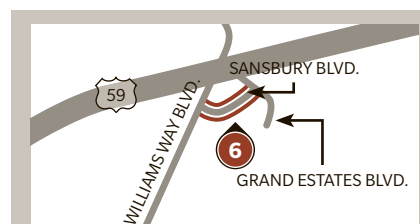
5 Dairy Ashford widening

Work on the north side of Hwy. 90 is underway, including installation of an underground storm sewer system. Union Pacific Corp. worked on the railroad at Dairy Ashford and Hwy. 90 at the end of April in preparation of the road widening, which will include additional turn lanes and an increase of one through lane in each direction north and south from Parklane Boulevard to beyond Julie Rivers Drive. Newly constructed northbound and southbound lanes south of Hwy. 90 to Parklane are complete. Previous work on the project included adding a permanent raised median at Dairy Ashford and Parklane.

Timeline: July 2018-December 2019

Cost: \$5.1 million

Funding sources: city of Sugar Land, Fort Bend County



6 Sansbury Boulevard construction

Weather had delayed this project on Sansbury Boulevard from Grand Estates Drive to Williams Way Boulevard in Richmond, which will feature a four-lane divided concrete roadway. The concrete pavement is near completion. Remaining work includes final road leveling and turf establishment.

Timeline: August 2018-May 2019

Cost: \$4.4 million

Funding source: Fort Bend County



HOW IT WORKS

Proposed bill would double traffic fines on dangerous roadways

A new bill in the Texas Legislature could set up traffic safety corridors and increase traffic fines on the state's most dangerous roadways.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, there has been at least one fatality from motor vehicle crashes on Texas roadways every day since Nov. 7, 2000. While TxDOT has brought awareness to trying to end the streak, an Austin lawmaker has proposed legislation to increase fines in newly created traffic safety corridors.

State Rep. Vikki Goodwin, D-Austin, introduced House Bill 2841 to the Legislature on March 1. The proposed bill would allow TxDOT to designate areas with high traffic fatality rates as safety corridors. TxDOT would determine the zones based on data, according to Goodwin. A sign would be placed at both ends of the corridor, and traffic violations within those areas would bring double the fine to motorists. Revenue collected would go back to supporting law-enforcement efforts in the corridor.

All information on this page was updated as of 4/18/19. News or questions about these or other local transportation projects? Email us at slm@communityimpact.com.



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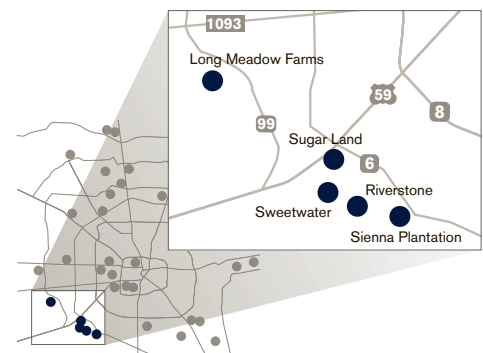
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Full-day pre-K to be 'game-changer' for Fort Bend ISD if state passes House Bill 3

BY CHRISTINE HALL

More 4-year-old students within Fort Bend ISD could get their own full-day prekindergarten class if the 86th Texas Legislature passes House Bill 3.

FBISD has 18 elementary campuses offering morning or afternoon half-day prekindergarten sessions to students who meet certain eligibility requirements, such as being enrolled in free or reduced lunch.

It also offers two full-day programs at Ridgemont and Hunters Glen elementary schools through a collaboration with charter school BakerRipley Head Start, according to the district.

FBISD Chief Financial Officer Steven Bassett shared how the bill, which makes \$9 billion in school finance policy changes, would affect the district at a Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce event March 8.

"This is a game-changer," Bassett said.

School finance reform was declared

an "emergency item" by Gov. Greg Abbott for this legislative session. The Texas House of Representatives passed HB 3 on April 4, and it will now make its way through the same process in the Senate.

State Rep. Ron Reynolds, D-Missouri City, who co-authored HB 3 and has been advocating for full-day pre-K since being elected to the House in 2011, said this legislation is a step in the right direction.

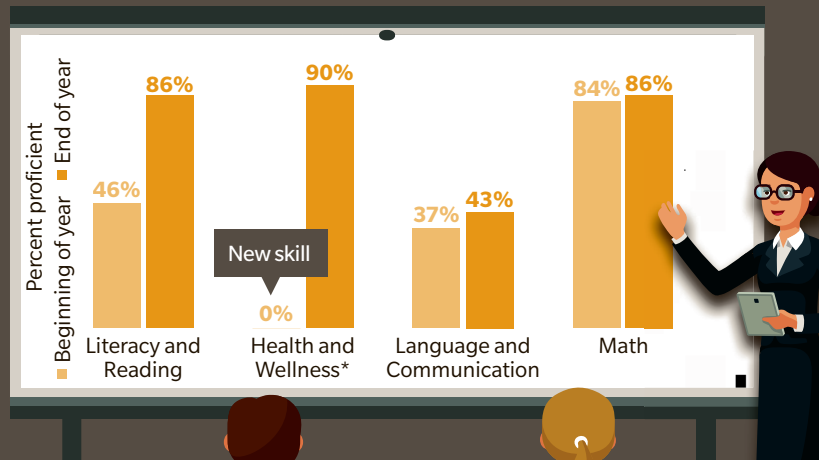
"They will have greater skills and be more prepared for kindergarten," Reynolds said. "It will also benefit children who can't participate in a half-day program because their parents aren't able to pick them up."

Though the bill's future is still developing, Bassett discussed several unknowns associated with accommodating more students in pre-K.

Bassett said 40% of pre-K classes in the district are half day. However, there are not enough classrooms in those 20

Pre-K skills assessment

Fort Bend ISD prekindergarten assessments compare beginning of the year with end of the year results among students enrolled in the 2017-18 school year.



SOURCE: TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

schools to offer more than one class at a time, he said.

"We have plenty of classrooms, but they are not all in one place, so some work needs to be done," Bassett said.

That means while classes would be offered at a child's zoned school, they may be taken to another school where there are classrooms, he said.

In addition, if all classes were full day, Bassett said the district would need to hire between 50 and 200 teachers and aides to meet the demand. He said if the bill is passed, the district would likely be able to fill those jobs in time for the 2019-20 school year to begin.

Another unknown is the cost. A solution designates a portion of HB 3 to help provide funding for the other half of the day by establishing an early reading program that will fund full-day, high-quality prekindergarten for low-income students, according to the bill.

However, the district expects the cost of full-day pre-K to exceed the amount of new revenue, Bassett said. If HB 3 passes as drafted, FBISD would gain \$5.3 million in new funding for early childhood literacy, but the overall additional cost would depend on

enrollment, Bassett said.

Despite the unknowns, state and district education data shows attendance in pre-K is likely to provide positive outcomes for students.

A 2017 Texas Education Agency study that followed prekindergarten students over a 15-year period found that children who attended prekindergarten classes were 16% more likely to demonstrate skills showing kindergarten readiness.

In FBISD, of the 1,212 kindergartners enrolled in 2017-18 who attended a public pre-K program, 22.1% were assessed as kindergarten ready, according to TEA data.

In addition, 86% of pre-K students enrolled at a FBISD school in 2017-18 showed emergent literacy reading skills at the end of the year compared with 46% at the beginning, according to TEA data. Meanwhile, 43% of students were proficient in language and communication skills, and mathematics proficiency grew two percentage points to 86%.

"Establishing this program will help students become more independent learners and enter kindergarten at grade level," Reynolds said. "It will be setting the right foundation."

Who qualifies for pre-K in FBISD?

An eligible child must be 4 years old on or before Sept. 1, be a Fort Bend ISD resident and meet one of the following specifications:

- Have limited English proficiency
- Meet federal Income Eligibility Guidelines
- Be homeless
- Be a part of the U.S. Department of Family and Protective Services conservatorship
- Is a dependent child of an active U.S. armed forces member or one who has been injured or killed while on active duty
- Is a dependent of a police officer, firefighter or emergency medical responder who was seriously injured or killed in the line of duty and who received the Star of Texas Award

SOURCE: FORT BEND ISD/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Experience

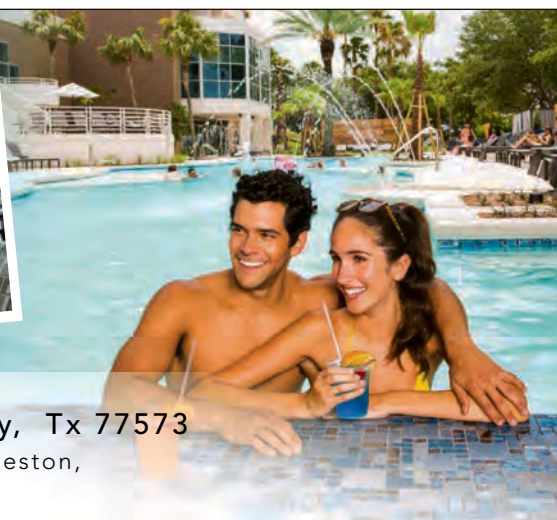
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'For Our Children' bill would help prevent repeat placement in foster care system

BY BETH MARSHALL

House Bill 1536—known as the For Our Children Act—would consist of specialized training tailored to different organizations and departments that help children on their way through the welfare system.

Trauma in children can affect development and behavior. Trauma-informed care aims to address and treat these affects while preventing future traumatization, state Rep. Rick Miller, R-Sugar Land said.

One effect of abuse and neglect in children includes slowed brain development, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Specifically, the temporal lobes that regulate emotion and receive input from the senses are underactive.

"The issue is trauma and the trauma these kids experience and even the adults experience in the process," Miller said. "What we're doing is mandating that anyone who touches the life of a child in the system from the courtroom to the foster home and in between will be trained on trauma and trauma-informed care."

In 2017, Fort Bend County had 737 documented child abuse cases, according to local nonprofit Child Advocates of Fort Bend.

The trauma-informed care training would teach adults involved with these cases how to connect with abused children as well as provide safety and a trusting environment while preventing retraumatization. Statewide, the cost of rolling out the training programs would cost about \$4.5 million, Miller said.

Local organizations like Forever Families in Fort Bend County connects children to adoptive and foster families in Texas. Basic items, such as background checks for potential parents and home visits to check on living conditions, are already in place for adoptive or foster families, Forever Families Chief Marketing Officer Dewan Clayborn said.

A 72-hour training for parents is also required for parents considering adopting or fostering, Clayborn said.

"We talk about the child, their background, different types of emotions to expect," he said. "In some situations a child has been moved around three

or four times, so we help our families understand ... they're hopping on this emotional roller coaster this child has been through already."

CAFB serves children who are victims of sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. The organization has seen a 58% increase in the number of children served through its Child Advocacy Center in the last five years, CEO Ruthanne Mefford said.

Providing trauma-informed care is something CAFB is focusing on, Mefford said.

"We are very focused on implementing trauma-informed care this year and going forward throughout our agencies—that means with our staff and with our volunteers," Mefford said.

CAFB is also paying attention to House Bill 123 and Senate Bill 481 that would provide fee waivers for foster children obtaining birth certificates, drivers licenses and other government documents, Mefford said. House Bill 811 and Senate Bill 424 would also help homeless children and foster care children with behavioral issues by requiring in-school suspension only as opposed to out-of-school suspension, Mefford said.

"That's speaking to the trauma-informed care and being able to understand what children are going through and the precursors and trauma that then may cause them to act out in school or have behavioral issues," she said. "We want them to not have out-of-school suspension but to rather have the educational system approach these children through a trauma-informed lens."

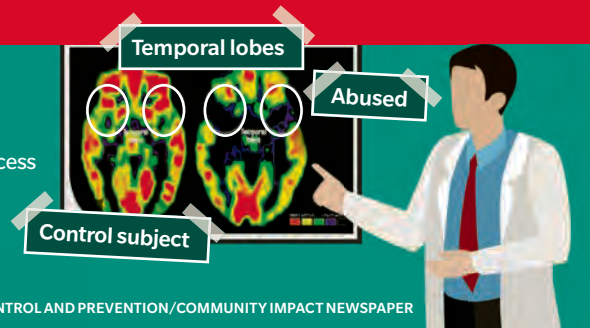
There are 11 Child Protective Services regions in Texas, and HB 1536 would place two highly trained CPS representatives in each region to oversee and teach the trainings, Miller said.

Although the Texas Department of Family Protective Services—the organization that oversees CPS—declined to comment on the For Our Children Act while it is still pending in the legislature, the department did outline more funds for foster care services as a priority during the ongoing 86th Legislative Session.

Training around trauma is being practiced already at Forever Families where 200 fosters and adoptions were

BRAIN MATTERS

When children are abused and their brains are still in the formative stages, the temporal lobes, which process emotion and senses, are underdeveloped and lack activity.



SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

WHAT IS TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE?

Trauma-informed care ensures a person's physical and emotional needs are met in the aftermath of a traumatic event. The concept is meant to prevent retraumatization by continuing care as time goes on and understanding trauma can have lifelong repercussions.

administered last year, Clayborn said.

"I like the [idea] of trauma-informed care because with a parent taking on a new kid, there is never enough information or training that they could go through because it is going to be an adjustment," he said.

Clayborn said he felt HB 1536 could be an unfunded mandate because the organization relies on funds from the state. However, he said he feels having more trauma-informed families will lead to a better outcome.

Mefford said CAFB tries to fund training through grants as much as possible, and since the organization already has some form of trauma-informed care implemented, HB 1536 would not be a huge change to the system.

"We have to look for funding for that, so that would be either grand supported or through general donation funding," she said. "But then what we're doing is we're trying to leverage those dollars by getting people trained internally who then can train the trainers."

As of April 25, HB 1536 was voted out of the House committee on human services with unanimous support from committee members present.

"Once we get this done, we believe and the people that we talked with who work with these children [believe] that these will transform the system," Miller said. "We won't have kids moving as much, we will have foster parents who don't give their kids back. We'll even have the biological parents going through a process getting this training and they'll get their kids back. That's the whole objective. That's why we call it the 'For Our Children' bill."

NUMBERS TO KNOW

200 CHILDREN



Forever Families in Fort Bend County connected 200 children to adoptive or foster parents in 2018.

72 HOURS



Potential parents must complete a 72-hour training to qualify to foster or adopt.

737 ABUSE CASES



In 2017, there were 737 documented child abuse cases in Fort Bend County.

58% INCREASE



The number of children served at the Children's Advocacy Center in Fort Bend County has increased 58% in the last 5 years.

SOURCES: FOREVER FAMILIES, CHILD ADVOCATES OF FORT BEND/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

MOVING THROUGH THE LEGISLATURE

As the 86th Legislative Session's end date of June 16 approaches, House Bill 1536 will continue making its way through the bill stages.

COMPLETED STAGES:



STAGE 1

Bill was filed
Feb. 8



STAGE 2

Bill was passed favorably out of House committee on Human Services **April 23**

FUTURE STAGES:



STAGE 3

House must approve of the bill



STAGE 4

Bill must be voted favorably out of Senate committee



STAGE 5

Senate must approve of the bill



STAGE 6

Governor must take action to approve the bill



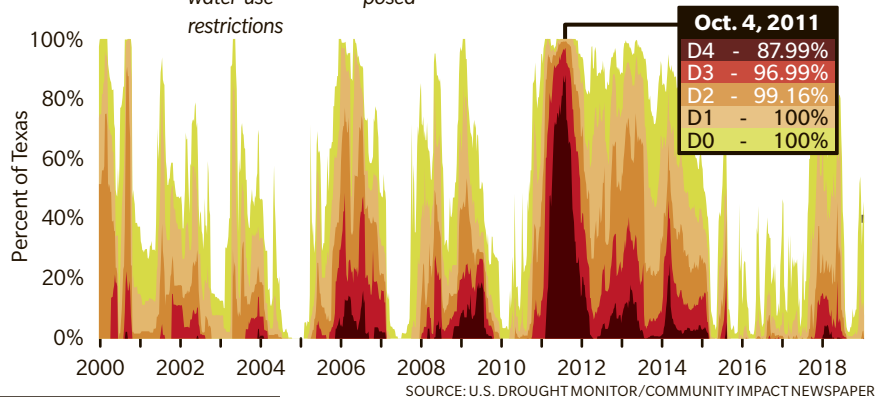
STAGE 7

Bill becomes law

Drought in Texas from 2000-2019

The longest duration of drought in Texas began in 2010 and ended in 2015. In October 2011, a severe drought affected 87% of Texas land, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

Abnormal - D0	Moderate - D1	Severe - D2	Extreme - D3	Exceptional - D4
Short-term dryness, some water deficits, crops not fully recovered	Some crop damage, water shortages developing, voluntary water-use restrictions	Crop loss likely, water shortages common, water restrictions imposed	Major crop loss, widespread water shortages or restrictions	Widespread crop losses, shortages of water creating water emergencies



ENVIRONMENT

Stricter water management rules could affect Missouri City, Sugar Land overuse

BY CHRISTINE HALL

Sugar Land, Missouri City and other local water districts submitted drought contingency plans to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on May 1 knowing something new: that any additional water usage starting May 1 will come with a surcharge.

The TCEQ requires large retail public water suppliers to update, adopt and submit drought contingency plans every five years.

“Water is getting scarce, and so the requirements are getting stricter,” said Shashi Kumar, the Missouri City Public Works director. “If you overuse it, there is the consequences of fines.”

Sugar Land and Missouri City purchase river water, used for anything from drinking to watering lawns, from entities such as the Gulf Coast Water Authority, Missouri City Utilities Manager Dan McGraw said.

Water users are allocated an amount based on the average amount of water used per calendar month for the last three years, McGraw said.

If the TCEQ declares a drought, the city could pay surcharges on the extra water, ranging from \$10,000 to \$120,000 depending on the drought stage, costs that water providers would pass to consumers, McGraw said.

If the city could not get more water from the GCWA, it would work with the Fort Bend Subsidence District to augment the supply with well water, McGraw said.

Sugar Land City Council adopted

its conservation plan at its April 16 meeting. In 2018, the city supplied an average of 20 million gallons per day of potable water, said Brian Butscher, assistant director of public works for the city of Sugar Land, via email.

To offset any surcharges, Butscher said the city has water rights along Oyster Creek and with the Brazos River Authority that are not subject to the GCWA restrictions, as well as a water supply model that uses different water supplies to minimize the impact of drought restrictions.

“Managing drought demands was a big part of the integrated water resources plan,” Butscher said. “The city followed recent changes to the GCWA drought plan closely and built updates into our water supply model.”

The new stricter regulations resulted from the five-year severe drought across Texas that began in 2010, GCWA General Manager Ivan Langford said.

Most drought contingency plans do not have associated financial penalties; however, the GCWA decided it was the best way to get its customers to practice conservation, he said.

“We are the first to admit ours is stricter than most, but at the same time, to be successful in a real drought, we have to have compliance; it cannot be voluntary,” Langford said. “We are taking it much more seriously. If you don’t comply, financially it is going to hit you hard. If you do, it will cost you nothing.”

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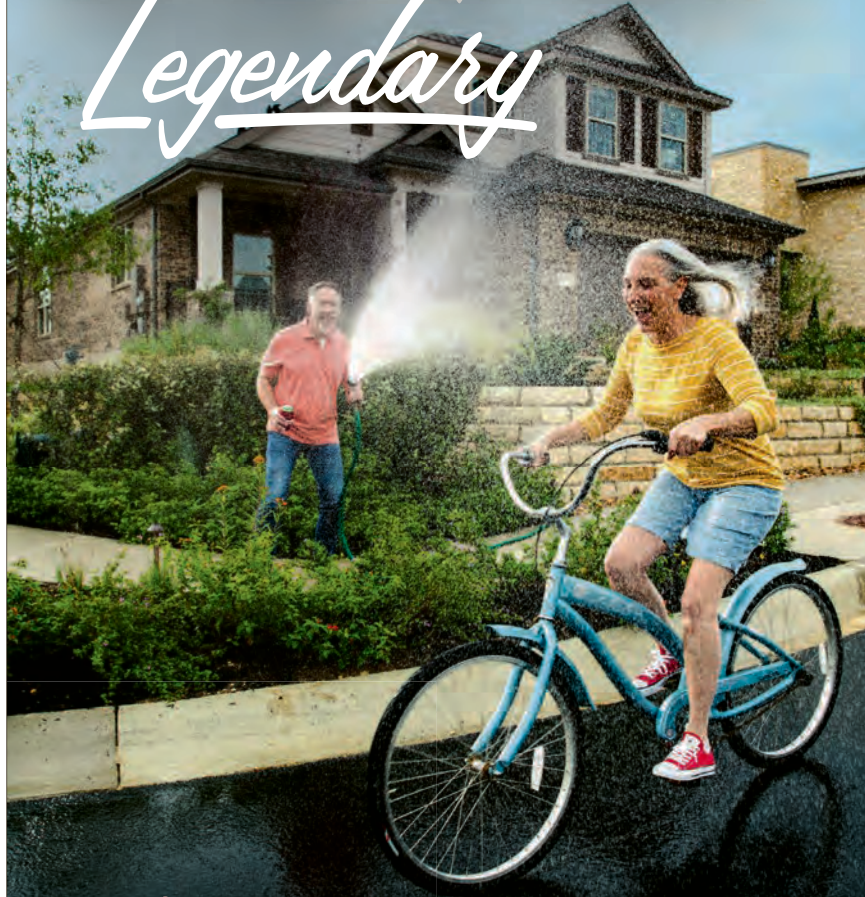
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CITY & COUNTY

Farmers Market Partners moves close to Sienna Plantation, begins hosting weekly food events

MISSOURI CITY Farmers Market Partners LLC is now operating from a new Missouri City home.

The company was approved to begin hosting its Saturday market at 5855 Sienna Springs Way near the Fort Bend County Library Sienna Branch. Missouri City City Council approved the move April 1.

Vendors offer fruits, vegetables, eggs, grass-fed beef, chicken and artisan food.

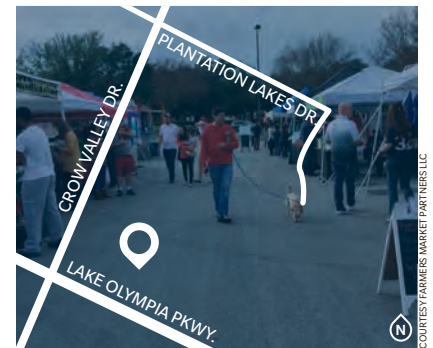
It previously operated Farmers Market by the Lake at 2700 Lake Olympia Parkway Business Center, but under the city's special-event provision was only able to run the market every two weeks under the current policy, said Otis Spriggs, director of Missouri City's development services.

Spriggs and the market appealed to City Council to be able to host the farmers market every Saturday through November.

"This location would not cause the

traffic hiccups brought up last time," Spriggs said. "We are meeting with the applicants to look to come up with a more permanent solution, but for right now, this would make it a seasonal approach."

In addition, the market was approved to add signage, including directional signage at Hwy. 6 and Sienna Parkway and at Sienna Crossing Drive as well as Trammel-Fresno Road to lead into the site.



Farmers Market Partners is now operating near Sienna Plantation.

Houston economy slows; no recession on horizon

HOUSTON Houstonians can expect more employment growth in 2019 but at a slower rate than last year, said Jim Gaines, chief economist at the Texas A&M University Real Estate Center, at the 2019 Economic Outlook Forum on March 29.

And despite the nationwide slowdown, Gaines said he does not anticipate a recession within the next couple years.

"The economy is slowing down, but it's not falling off a cliff," Gaines said.

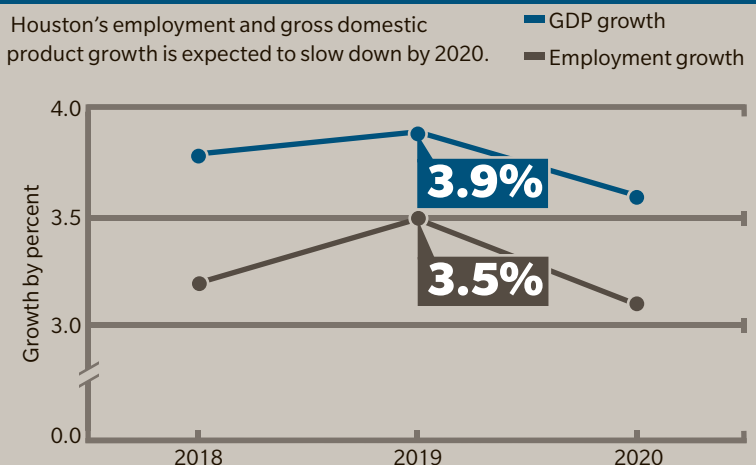
"And that's the part that has to be communicated to people."

Houston has also become more diversified—relying less on the energy sector as the fuel to its economy and more on other sectors, such as manufacturing and health care—meaning it will not be crippled by an oil downturn, Gaines said.

"The Houston economy has become ... enough diversified ... it can offset [a decline in oil prices] and survive and do well," he said.

HOUSTON ECONOMY SLOWDOWN

Houston's employment and gross domestic product growth is expected to slow down by 2020.



SOURCES: TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION, REAL ESTATE CENTER AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Fort Bend County Commissioners Court creates new program on sales, use taxes developers pay

FORT BEND COUNTY Fort Bend County enacted a tax change on March 26 that requires residential development companies that purchase more than \$800,000 annually in materials to pay a use tax instead of a sales tax when they build in unincorporated areas of precincts 1, 2 and 3.

Precinct 4 Commissioner Ken DeMerchant asked that his precinct, which covers areas of Sugar Land and Missouri City, be removed from the program, and the court agreed. He said he feared Precinct 4 would not benefit because the area is nearly built out.

Sales tax is paid at a shop where an item is purchased, while use tax is paid where the item is used, according to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

The new program is meant to give Fort Bend County the tax revenue that would likely have been collected by the city of Houston or the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County

NUMBER TO KNOW

\$1M

Fort Bend County expects to collect an additional \$1 million annually in revenue from the use tax program to spend on local public projects, such as law enforcement and transportation.

when developers buy materials for homes that will be built in Fort Bend County, Precinct 3 Commissioner Andy Meyers, who represents the Katy and Fulshear areas, said in an interview.

He estimates Fort Bend County will collect an additional \$1 million annually in revenue from the program to spend on local public projects, such as law enforcement and transportation.

Meyers said he did not have an estimate for operating the program.

The county has employed the law firm Smith, Murdaugh, Little and Bonham LLP to oversee the program.

Sugar Land Skeeters bring Christopher Hill back to Minor League Baseball team to serve as president

SUGAR LAND Christopher Hill has come back to the Sugar Land Skeeters, this time as president.

Hill, a longtime Minor League Baseball executive and Missouri City resident, was vice president during the Skeeters' inaugural season in 2012.

He has also worked with the Wilmington Blue Rocks, a Kansas City Royals High-A affiliate; the Lake Elsinore Storm, an Anaheim Angels Single-A affiliate; and the Buffalo Bisons, a Triple-A affiliate for the Toronto Blue Jays, franchises.

"Coming home is a rare and exciting opportunity," Hill said in a statement. "To live in such a dynamic community and now represent the best family-friendly venue in the area is an honor. We are going to have an exciting team, develop new and engaging promotions and most importantly, have fun."

The March 27 announcement comes four months after former President Jay Miller announced in December that he would retire.

"We are thrilled that Chris has

agreed to lead our organization," Skeeters owner Kevin Zlotnik said in a statement. "Chris stood out with both his vast minor league experience."

The Skeeters, winners of the 2018 Atlantic League Championship, opened the 2019 season April 25.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Sugar Land City Council

2700 Town Center Blvd. N., Sugar Land
May 7, 21, 28, 5:30 p.m.

Missouri City City Council

1522 Texas Parkway, Missouri City
May 6, 20, 7 p.m.

Fort Bend County Commissioners Court

401 Jackson St., Richmond
May 7, 14, 28, 1 p.m.

Fort Bend ISD board of trustees

16431 Lexington Blvd., Sugar Land
May 6, 13, 6 p.m.

For instant coverage of these meetings, follow us on Twitter:

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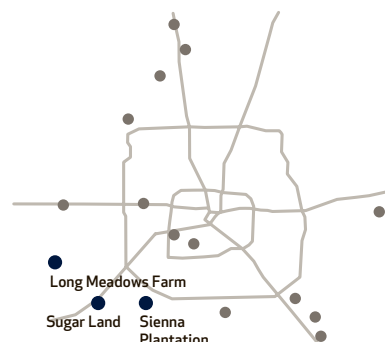


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THE ROAD TO REBURIAL

Fort Bend County and Fort Bend ISD officials have agreed to work together to respectfully rebury the historic remains of the 95 bodies discovered in Sugar Land on FBISD property.

February 2018: Historical remains of 95 laborers are discovered at the construction site.

March 8: State Rep. Rick Miller, R-Sugar Land, files House Bill 4179, which would give the county local control over a cemetery.

April 7: Miller says a substitute draft of HB 4179 is being written to make it take effect immediately with a two-thirds vote in the House and Senate.

Aug. 14: The 2019-20 school year begins in Fort Bend ISD, and the James Reese Career and Technical Center is set to open.

2017

2018

2019

Fall 2017: Construction begins on career and technical center at University Boulevard and Chatham Avenue in Sugar Land.

March 5: Fort Bend County Commissioners Court approves a resolution supporting legislation that would allow the county to own, operate and maintain a cemetery.

April 4: HB 4179 is scheduled for public hearing and left pending in committee.

April 8: FBISD board of trustees discuss the Sugar Land 95 curriculum to be implemented in U.S. and Texas history classes.

LEGISLATURE

SOURCES: FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS LEGISLATURE, FORT BEND ISD/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

FBISD plans Sugar Land 95 curriculum as officials seek local control of cemeteries

BY BETH MARSHALL

It has been more than a year since the remains of 95 bodies were discovered at Fort Bend ISD's construction site for the James Reese Career and Technical Center set to open in August.

Officials with FBISD, Fort Bend County and the city of Sugar Land are working together to support legislation that would allow the county to own, operate and maintain a cemetery on site where the remains were discovered.

"I think this is one of our best steps,"

said Doug Brinkley, Sugar Land assistant city manager.

House Bill 4179 is authored by state Rep. Rick Miller, R-Sugar Land, and co-authored by state Reps. Ron Reynolds, D-Missouri City; Phil Stephenson, R-Wharton; and John Zerwas, R-Richmond. The bill was filed March 8 and was left pending in the County Affairs Committee as of April 25.

"The hearing on HB 4179 went very well," Miller said in an email April 7.

"This will enable the county and school

board to move forward with a sense of urgency to complete this essential action for the Sugar Land 95."

As it stands, only counties with a population of 8,200 or less have the authority own, operate and maintain cemeteries should they choose to take ownership.

"We are saying that we just want to have the same freedom that small counties have," Fort Bend County Judge KP George said.

As progress continues on construction of the new school, FBISD officials are working to implement the Sugar Land 95 into the district's curriculum.

"I'm really proud that we're taking this approach," FBISD trustee Addie

Heyliger said. "I would love to see it go even further than local history."

During an April 8 board meeting, Stephanie Williams, FBISD executive director of teaching and learning, said students learning Texas and U.S. history in fourth, fifth, seventh and eighth grades as well as at the high school level will learn about the Sugar Land 95.

"It would provide for the opportunity to integrate the content into existing units of instruction," Williams said during the board meeting.

The human remains discovered date back to the mid-1870s to 1912, when convict labor leasing, a system that provided prisoners as laborers, was practiced in Texas.

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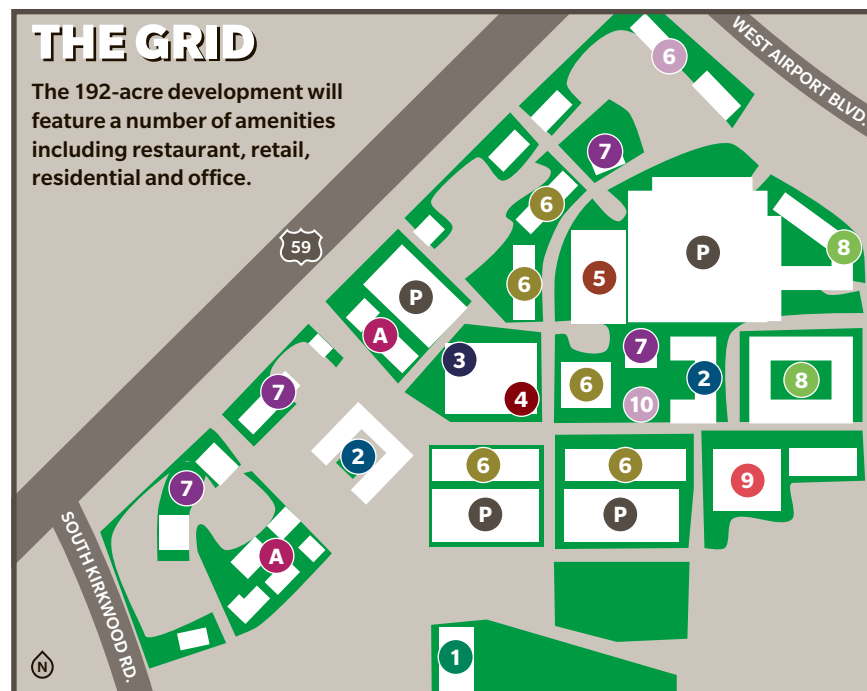
DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS

The Grid

STAFFORD The 192-acre, \$500 million Grid development at the former Texas Instruments campus at 12201 Hwy. 59, Stafford, will bring several amenities to the area, StreetLevel Investments Managing Principal Brian Murphy said.

Murphy gave an update March 28 to the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce highlighting the entertainment, retail, restaurant, office and residential features of the property, including a rooftop patio, a food hall and a popup retail space.

In addition, Aloft and Element hotels will also open a combined 223 rooms in 2020 and will share amenities. In-N-Out Burger will break ground in June and is slated to open by November.



SOURCE: THE GRID/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

COMPILED BY **CHRISTINE HALL**

- 1 Golf entertainment
- 2 Hotels
- 3 Cinema
- 4 Rooftop patio
- 5 Craft brewery
- 6 Retail
- 7 Restaurants
- 8 Residential
- 9 Creative office
- 10 The Lawn
- A Available space
- P Parking
- Grass

\$500M is how much it will cost to complete the project.

192 ACRES of space is available.

The Crossing at Telfair

SUGAR LAND The Crossing at Telfair at Hwy. 90A and Hwy. 6 in Sugar Land is down to its last 36 acres of the 112-acre development, said Inna Radford, principal with Rubicon Realty Group LLC, the project developer.

Many of the tenants are slated to move into their spaces in the next four months, Rubicon Leasing Associate Thad Mai said.

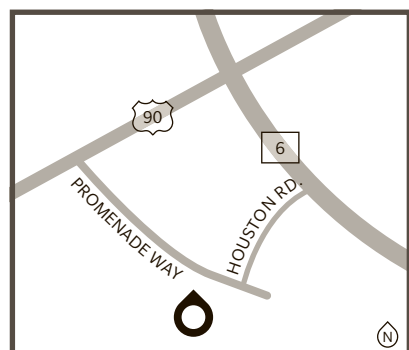
Rubicon itself is moving onto the second floor of Building No. 300 in May, he said. In the same building is Beyond 20/20 Eyecare that is already open, while Toast Breakfast & Brunch will open soon, Radford said.

Tenants still building out include Rush Cycle, Wing Stop, Decadent Coffee and Dessert Bar, The Creamery Teahouse, Yummy Pho & Bo Ne, Unique Nail Salon, Eyelash Studio, and Snails, Frogs & Fairy Tales Children's Center.

Also coming soon are Sozo Japanese Steakhouse, Hampton Inn and Holiday Inn Express, Radford said.



CHRISTINE HALL/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

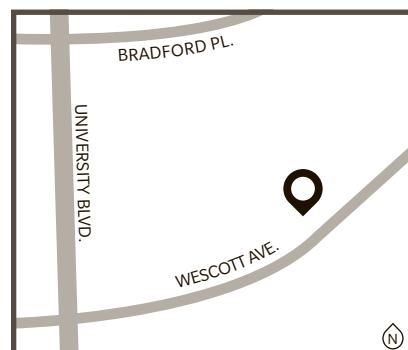


NUMBER TO KNOW

36 ACRES of leasing space is left in the 112-acre development at Hwy. 6 and Hwy. 90A.



CHRISTINE HALL/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER



NUMBER TO KNOW

96% of the shopping center is already leased, and several businesses have already opened.

Wescott Avenue

SUGAR LAND Though the shopping center across from Costco on Wescott Avenue broke ground in May 2017, much of the activity there has happened over the past six months.

The property is 96 percent leased, according to Adam Strauss, director of sales and leasing for New Regional Planning. Capital Bank has been there the longest, opening in May 2018, followed by Great Clips, Fort Bend Learning Commons and Oh My Brows.

Within the past two months, Marco's Pizza, Mon Cheri Macarons and Teapioca opened. Prink and Polish, Burgerim, Pho Ben Noodle and Another Broken Egg are expected to open in May, Strauss said.

Strauss said New Regional Planning has developed two other centers in the area but has seen this one lease the fastest due to Costco.

Not only does Costco generate a lot of traffic from the Telfair area, but also from the surrounding areas, such as Greatwood, Riverstone and Hwy. 6, he said.



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House approves 2020-21 budget

BY CASSANDRA POLLOCK, ALEX SAMUELS
AND EDGAR WALTERS

In Dennis Bonnen's first major test as speaker of the Texas House, the chamber he oversees resoundingly passed a \$251 billion budget in April after a long but largely civil debate—a departure from the dramatics that have typically defined such an affair.

A couple of weeks later, the Senate approved a \$248 billion budget April 9 for the next biennium.

Though lawmakers proposed more than 300 amendments to the spending plan, Bonnen, an Angleton Republican, and his chief budget writer, state Rep. John Zerwas, R-Richmond, finished the night with their budget plan largely intact. After 11 hours of relatively cordial discussion, lawmakers agreed to withdraw the vast majority of their amendments or move them to a wish list portion of the budget, where they are highly unlikely to become law.

The budget passed unanimously on the final vote. The legislation, House Bill 1, now heads to the Senate, whose Finance Committee was set to discuss its budget plan Thursday.

"I'm proud of where we are in the bill that we are sending to the Senate," Zerwas said at the end of the marathon debate. "Each and every one of you should be incredibly proud of the work that you've put in here."

The two-year spending plan's highlight—a \$9 billion boost in state funding for the public education portion of the budget—remained unchanged. Of that, \$6 billion would go to school districts, and the remaining \$3 billion would pay for property tax relief, contingent on lawmakers passing a school finance reform package.

The budget plan would spend \$2 billion from the state's savings account, commonly known as the rainy day fund, which holds more than \$11 billion.

"I'm not here to compare it to previous sessions," Bonnen told reporters after the House budget vote. "But I'm here to tell you we had a great tone and tenor tonight, and I'm very proud of the business that we did."

Some of the more contentious budget proposals floated by lawmakers never reached the floor. An amendment from state Rep. Richard Peña Raymond, D-Laredo, for example, would have asked



From left: Texas House Appropriations Chairman John Zerwas, R-Richmond, talks with House Speaker Dennis Bonnen as the House takes up the budget debate.

members to vote on the issue of across-the-board pay raises for public school teachers. Such a proposal has divided the Legislature this session, with Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick's Senate in favor and much of the House opposed. Raymond withdrew his amendment Wednesday evening, saying he planned to bring up the issue again when the House debates its school finance bill.

Bonnen worked behind the scenes in the days preceding the vote, House lawmakers said, in the hopes of avoiding the discord that has erupted during the chamber's marathon budget debates in past sessions. On Tuesday, top lieutenants for Bonnen met for a handful of informal gatherings to offer concessions in exchange for lawmakers dropping some of their more controversial amendments, according to people familiar with the meetings.

The result was one of the shortest budget debates in recent memory. Lawmakers gave preliminary approval to the two-year spending plan minutes after the clock struck midnight. Under former House Speaker Joe Straus, lawmakers in 2017 and 2015 went home well into the morning, after several explosive exchanges between Straus' allies and the chamber's hardline GOP membership.

"This budget night is unlike any other I have experienced in my time in the House — both in its (sic) shorter duration and civil tone," said state Rep. Matt Krause, a Fort Worth Republican and Freedom Caucus member, in a text message after the debate concluded. "I think Speaker Bonnen deserves the bulk of the credit for creating an environment of civility and decorum. This is how the Texas House should operate when debating the big issues for the state of Texas."

This is an abbreviated article. For the full story, visit www.texastribune.org.

Updates from local legislators

Here is an overview of activity from elected officials in Sugar Land and Missouri City on various legislation so far this session.

Rep. Ron Reynolds

D-Missouri City, 512-463-0494

House Bill 2448

- Reynolds filed HB 2448 with Rep. James White on Feb. 26, relating to a strategic plan to reduce recidivism by facilitating stable employment for persons who are preparing to re-enter the community following incarceration. The bill was referred to the Corrections Committee, and a committee report was distributed on April 15.

Rep. Phil Stephenson

R-Rosenberg, 512-463-0604

House Bill 1829

- Stephenson filed HB 1829 on Feb. 14, relating to the powers and duties of the Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 225 and providing authority to issue bonds and impose a tax. MUD 225's area includes Bryan's Crossing in Rosenberg. The bill went in front of the Land & Resource Management Committee and was sent to the Senate on April 15 with unanimous favor.

Sen. Joan Huffman

R-Houston, 512-463-0117

Senate Bills 20, 1801, 1802, 1803

- Huffman, along with 13 other state senators, filed four bills March 7 related to ending human trafficking in Texas. The bills include investigating illicit massage businesses, helping survivors come forward and creating harsher punishments for offenders. SB 20 was referred to the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee on April 2. Meanwhile, SBs 1801 and 1802 were placed on the local and uncontested calendar April 17, and SB 1803 was left pending in the State Affairs Committee as of April 4.

Sen. Boris Miles

D-Houston, 512-463-0113

Senate Bill 1198

- Miles filed SB 1198 on Feb. 27 relating to the intercollegiate athletic fees at Texas Southern University and authorizing the continued imposition of a fee. The bill was referred to the Higher Education Committee in March and was scheduled for a public hearing on April 17.

NUMBERS TO KNOW



\$251B

Budget approved by Texas House



\$6B

Extra funding for school districts



\$3B

To pay for property tax relief, contingent on lawmakers passing a school finance reform package.

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Follow *Community Impact Newspaper's* Sugar Land and Missouri City edition—@**impactnews_slm** on Twitter or search **#CITxLege** for live legislative coverage throughout the session.



For more information, visit communityimpact.com/capitol.

BUSINESS FEATURE



When brides find their dream dress at La Rêve Bridal Couture, they can photograph themselves with an "I said yes" plaque to commemorate their decision.

PHOTO BY CHRISTINE HALL/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

La Rêve Bridal Couture

Gown shop owner helps brides find dream dress

BY CHRISTINE HALL

When a bride walked into La Rêve Bridal Couture one day, she was crying. Her wedding was a few weeks away, and she had not yet found a dress.

Manager Aisha Osanyin said her staff found a dress for the bride that day and helped secure alterations in time for her wedding. It is those kinds of moments that Osanyin said is why she does what she does.

"We do get moments like that," she said. "It's so rewarding to be able to help them."

Prior to moving into Sugar Land Town Square in 2012, Osanyin owned another wedding shop in Houston and has been in the wedding dress business

for nine years.

In fact, she is keeping it in the family as she grew up helping out at her mother's wedding store, and her husband is a wedding photographer.

Wedding gown styles have changed over the last nine years, Osanyin said. Strapless gowns used to be in, but when Kate Middleton married Prince William in 2011, brides began asking for more gowns with long sleeves, she said.

Big, blingy belts have been replaced by thinner, sparkly versions, and brides are looking for gowns in shades of ivory and champagne rather than white, Osanyin said.

As the wedding industry continues to change, Osanyin said she strives to stay



1

YES TO THE DRESS

- 1 Manager Aisha Osanyin used to help out at her mother's gown shop and has now owned her own for nine years.
- 2 Osanyin and Bayan Al-Ali sort through their wedding gown inventory.
- 3 Osanyin and Al-Ali pull out dresses for clients based on wedding details.



2



3

ANATOMY OF A WEDDING ENSEMBLE

Brides looking for pieces of their wedding ensemble at La Rêve Bridal Couture will find the following items:



SOURCE: LA RÊVE BRIDAL COUTURE/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

La Rêve Bridal Couture

15989 City Walk, Sugar Land

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www.larevebridalcouture.com

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Sat. 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m., closed Sun.

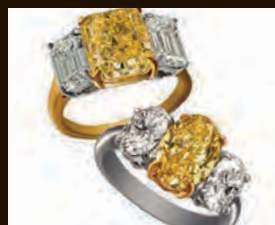


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DINING FEATURE

"THAT'S WHAT WE'RE ABOUT—MUSIC, GOOD FOOD AND A GOOD ATMOSPHERE."

—ADRIANNA BLAIR, SUGAR'S CAJUN CUISINE & BAR MANAGER

Adrianna Blair (center) manages Sugar's Cajun Cuisine & Bar in Missouri City.



Crawfish etoufee (\$18.95) is made with crawfish tails and spicy roux with seasonings served over a bed of rice.



Seafood gumbo (\$11.95) is made with authentic sauce and spices along with a mix of seafood from the Gulf of Mexico.

BY **BETH MARSHALL**

Sugar's Cajun Cuisine & Bar

Local eatery serves Louisiana taste with live entertainment

Sugar's Cajun Cuisine & Bar offers more than food. With a live music lineup featuring jazz on Fridays and rhythm and blues on Saturdays, the family-friendly restaurant offers an entertaining environment.

"That's what we're about—music, good food and a good atmosphere," restaurant manager Adrianna Blair said.

Set to hit its one-year anniversary in July, the staff at Sugar's Cajun Cuisine & Bar has been listening to feedback from patrons on the types of events they enjoy most. Blair said they have tried everything from comedy nights to salsa nights, and jazz and R&B seem to resonate best.

"I think people really enjoy that and the bands that we have," Blair said.

"Some of them are more local, smaller bands, and some of them are really popular bands. We have a couple of really great national artists that come here. It's been a really good experience to see how people are really responsive toward that."

Featuring classic Cajun menu items, Blair said the most popular dishes include seafood gumbo, crawfish etoufee, and fried fish and shrimp platters. Another item that is also a best-seller is the surf-and-turf burger featuring an all-beef meat patty topped with seasoned shrimp, lettuce, tomato, onions and creamy alfredo sauce and served with fries.

A Cajun food connoisseur with a decades-long career in the concert promoting business, owner Darryl Austin

wanted to bring the concept of Sugar's to Missouri City, Blair said.

"His thing was there's no place that does live music with the bands out here," she said. "So, he was thinking, 'What if I have a space that has the ambience, the music and the food all together?'"

Although Austin is the owner and books the musical talent, Blair oversees the restaurant's day-to-day operations. Since opening, Blair said the restaurant has overcome some challenges, and she has gotten to see the business grow.

"We are hiring, [and] we're still in our infancy stages," she said. "That's exciting to me that people see the growth, that the food is really good, and the service is good. We're a new business, and not everything is going

LIVE AT SUGAR'S

Upcoming live jazz and R&B events in May at Sugar's Cajun Cuisine & Bar:

- May 10: Walter Beasley
- May 11: Sugar's Bourbon Street Party Saturdays
- May 17: Flashback Friday
- May 18: Sugar's Bourbon Street Party Saturdays
- May 24: Flashback Friday
- May 25: PJ Morton

Sugar's Cajun Cuisine & Bar

3424 FM 1092, Ste. 290, Missouri City
832-987-1797

www.sugarscajun.com

Hours: Sun.-Thu. 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 11 a.m.-midnight



to run as smoothly as someone who's been in business for 10 years. With that, we know the changes that we need to make, and we're making those changes."

The restaurant offers happy hour specials Monday through Friday from 3-7 p.m., and since opening, frozen hurricanes, frozen margaritas and beer on tap have been added to the drink menu, Blair said. Additionally, everything on the food menu is under \$20 every day, she said.

"It's a comfortable place," she said. "It's family-oriented. This is a community restaurant, and we want people to come in and feel comfortable. Kids are more than welcome to come to the concerts. We want this to be that place where people can just come relax."

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Reid Ryan

President of business operations, Houston Astros

From being a bat boy when his Hall of Famer father Nolan Ryan played for the Houston Astros in the 1980s to seeing the team claim the World Series championship in 2017, Reid Ryan's life is closely entwined with Texas baseball.

Before landing in his current position of president of business operations for the Astros in May 2013, Ryan served as founder and CEO for minor league teams in Corpus Christi and Round Rock.

Ryan spoke with *Community Impact Newspaper* founder and CEO John Garrett on April 2. He said his passion for baseball has led to a dedication to creating a positive experience for employees, guests and players at Minute Maid Park.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

How did you get this job?

I had met [Houston Astros owner] Jim Crane briefly, and he reached out to me. I really wasn't looking to take this job, but the opportunity to come home and be a part of building a World Series Champion in your hometown was pretty special. It was a crazy time because we were going on our third hundred-loss season. Everybody thought we were idiots, and the team was terrible—most days I just had people yell at me.

There was credibility when I walked in the door, and I think that bought me some grace in the eyes of the fans that [said], "Hey, let's give these folks a little bit of time because their plan sounds good. Let's see if they can do it."

We got buy-in from everybody because there were lots of little wins along the way. And then obviously in 2017, we won the World Series.

What has it been like to grow up as Nolan Ryan's son?

I lived every kid's dream. I literally grew up on a ballpark every day, having my own locker from the time I was little until I was playing college ball flying on team charters.

I appreciate it when people recognize what I've done for myself, but I also understand that I've been given a lot of opportunities because of who my dad is. Being Nolan Ryan's son might help get you in the game, but once you're in the game you're either going to be the winner or you're going to be the loser, and there's nobody there helping you so you've got to be ready. I feel like all the years I had building the [Round Rock] Express and the [Corpus Christi] Hooks prepared me for this moment, and we've taken the Astros to a whole other level.

[Winning the World Series] was just



Reid Ryan (right) meets with *Community Impact Newspaper* CEO John Garrett.

a deep sense of satisfaction and pride and accomplishment to know that we were a team that did something not only for all the fans that have loved the Astros for some time, but really for the community with [Hurricane] Harvey.

What was it like to go on the World Series run so close to Hurricane Harvey?

The mayor really led by example and said, "We just need to get back up on our feet. We're going to help these people; let's just get back to normal." We were a part of that, and after our guys went out and did a lot in the community, there was a connection there.

Then we got to the playoffs, and I just felt like this was meant to be; there's no way we're losing. You look at how many times we could have lost, but it all went our way, and

sometimes when fate is on your side, you just have to get out of the way and let it happen.

I love this game of baseball because people leave what's ailing them at home, and they come to the ballpark to spend time with their loved ones, to spend time with people in their community and to be entertained.

There's a real connection with baseball—strangers are high-fiving in this world of so many things that divide us. The fact that I get to bring joy to people's lives on a daily basis is a blessing.

I remind our staff every night at the stadium that this is somebody's first Major League Baseball game. Even if it's a Tuesday night, we're playing the Marlins and there's 8,000 people in the stands, it was still somebody's very first game. You have a chance to create a lifetime fan if you do it right.

HIT OR MISS The Astros have a longstanding history in Houston.



SOURCE: HOUSTON ASTROS/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

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Pointing to performance

On average, schools within Fort Bend ISD with high economically disadvantaged rates scored lower in the state's accountability rating system for 2017-18.

SOURCE: TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY/
COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Accountability scores at Fort Bend ISD

Although FBISD did not receive an official rating in 2017-18 due to Hurricane Harvey, the district would have earned a B average. Here is how the TEA evaluates school districts.

89

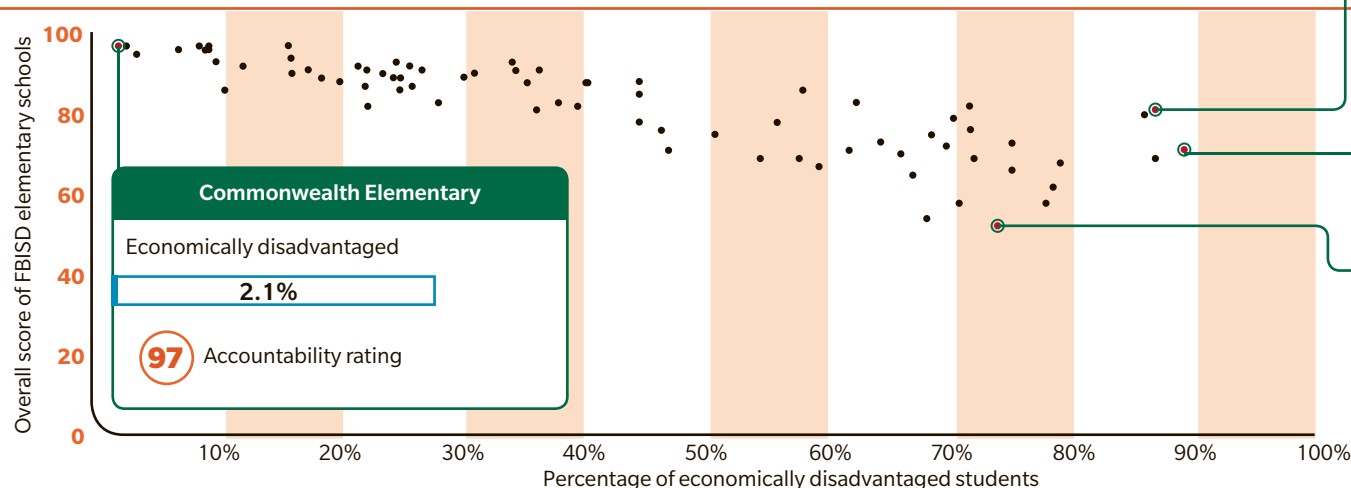
Student Achievement measures whether students have met grade-level expectations based on STAAR test results; college, career and military readiness; and graduation rate.

84

School Progress compares how students performed on the STAAR test versus the previous year and to similar districts.

89

Closing the Gaps measures how well different student populations are performing above state goals.



Briargate Elementary

Economically disadvantaged

86.9%

81 Accountability rating

Ridgegate Elementary

Economically disadvantaged

89.3%

71 Accountability rating

Hunters Glen Elementary

Economically disadvantaged

74%

52 Accountability rating

CONTINUED FROM 1

address the gap, FBISD Chief Academic Officer Diana Sayavedra said.

"We continue to see challenges with low student achievement in schools where a majority of children are economically disadvantaged," Sayavedra said. "We know in order to bridge that gap there is more investment we may need to make in our district."

Of the 75 schools in FBISD given a score in 2017-18, all schools earned the Met Standard label. However, four schools with 80% economically disadvantaged students averaged a 75 rating, while 16 campuses where less than 20% of students are economically disadvantaged received an average rating of 94, according to the data.

MEASURING TRUE ACCOUNTABILITY

Each year, TEA measures academic performance of districts and campuses in three areas: School Achievement, School Progress and Closing the Gaps.

FBISD was not rated overall in 2017-18 because of the state's Hurricane Harvey Provision. However, the district would have received an 89, according to the TEA.

Commonwealth Elementary School has the district's lowest percentage of economically disadvantaged students at 2.1%, receiving an accountability rating of 97 from the TEA. Meanwhile,

Ridgegate Elementary School—the campus with the district's highest level of economic disadvantage at 89.3%—received a 71.

In addition to new programming, Sayavedra said the district is also lobbying for improvements in state accountability measures, including changes to the A-F accountability rating system implemented in 2017-18.

"The reality of the state assessment is if you look at the trend, the vast majorities of As, Bs and some Cs are from more affluent schools," she said. "The other Cs, Ds and Fs, are tied to economic disadvantage. That is telling."

FBISD and other school districts have criticized the TEA's A-F system since it was established in 2017 by House Bill 22 in the 85th Texas Legislature to replace the previous Met Standard/Improvement Required ratings.

TEA officials have defended the system, which is designed to make a district's overall annual progress more easily understood than the previous ratings, said Lauren Callahan, TEA media relations manager.

However, Sayavedra said the rating only partially measures what occurs on a campus.

"A campus might have a D because of what happened in school that one day, but that is not showing the learning gap overcome, the measure of growth or the hours of mentorship from adults over a

year," she said.

Nine traditional school districts statewide received an F rating in 2017-18. Of those districts, six had a higher-than-average economic disadvantage rate, according to TEA data.

Nevertheless, Callahan told Community Impact Newspaper the TEA denies a "strong relationship" between economic disadvantage and ratings.

"We know that while there may be a moderate factor between a child's economically disadvantaged status and results, we here at the agency know there is not a strong relationship between the two," she said.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Across Texas, 58.7% of students are considered economically disadvantaged. In FBISD, 37.3% of students fall into this category, and 49 of its 75 schools exceed the state average.

The challenges for children from lower-income households fall into one of two buckets: academic or non-academic, said Kellie O'Quinn, director of research for Children at Risk's Center of Social Measurement and Evaluation, a Houston-based nonprofit child advocacy group.

On the academic side, a child might start school already behind due to coming from an environment that did not teach early reading skills. Gaps often widen as a result, O'Quinn said.

On the non-academic side, a child may not have access to health care, nutritious and consistent meals or may be exposed to violence at a young age—all of which affect the ability to learn, O'Quinn said.

When it comes to academic success, she said the correlation between poverty and academic performance balances out as time goes by, and a culture of high expectations on campuses will actually inspire students.

"Research on high-performing, high-poverty schools shows children will live up to whatever expectations you set for them and will frequently work to rise and meet them if they also see their teachers doing the work, too," O'Quinn said.

Schools doing well examine data to determine what skills students should be mastering and figure out if that means reteaching skills, O'Quinn said.

In addition, Teresa Edgar, associate dean of undergraduate studies for The University of Houston's College of Education, said teachers should seek out differences in their students when creating lesson plans to incorporate perspectives and needs.

"I train teachers to think about resiliency, and what we can do to be effective teachers and role models by talking about adversity and how students can rise above it," Edgar said.

BRIDGING THE GAP

One skills gap solution implemented by FBISD this school year is already showing progress.

In February, school officials reported that prekindergarten students enrolled in the Early Literacy Center at Ridgemont Elementary School—part of the Willowridge High School feeder pattern—increased their ability to recognize letters and their sounds to 80% from 56% during the five months of the school year.

Over that same period of time, monolingual students increased their mathematics proficiency to 91% from 80%, while bilingual student proficiency grew to 88% from 52%, according to the data.

“We believe that if students have a solid foundation in early literacy developmental skills, they will be able to transfer these skills to other academic content areas,” said Venitra Senegal, instructional officer for the Early Literacy Center via email.

When Nuvia Alviter’s son, Lio Cruz, started kindergarten at the Early Literacy Center this year, she said he did not know numbers or letters, but now counts, recites letters and can read.

Alviter lives in the Ridgeway Elementary area, and said she was happy that Lio was able to participate in the Early

Literacy Center. She said she expects to keep Lio in the program for first grade.

“I have seen the changes in him from day one to today, and he is now excited to learn,” she said.

FBISD plans to expand the Early Literacy Center to other elementary schools with lower literacy scores over the next three years, Sayavedra said.

Meanwhile, Briargate Elementary is now one of the high-performing, high-poverty schools. The school scored an 81 in the 2017-18 school year.

The school’s success is rooted in a support system that includes dedicated teachers, staff and parents providing focused instruction and differentiated learning, Briargate Principal LaToya Garrett said via email. The school also analyzes data and creates individualized student instruction, she said.

Eusan said she agreed that those components have contributed to the school’s success.

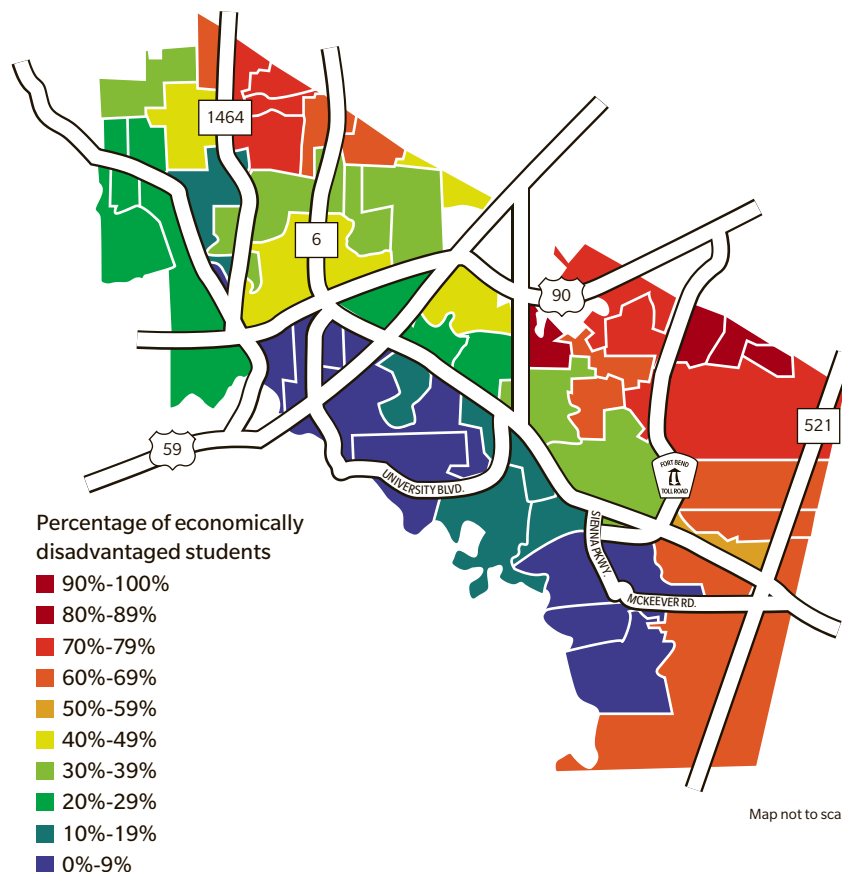
“We see differences in how academics have gone up in terms of testing,” Eusan said. “Parents are very happy with the new staff because they work so well together with our children to increase test scores and get back on track.”



For more information visit
communityimpact.com.

Vantage point

This map shows the percentage of economically disadvantaged students at each Fort Bend ISD elementary school.



SOURCE: TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

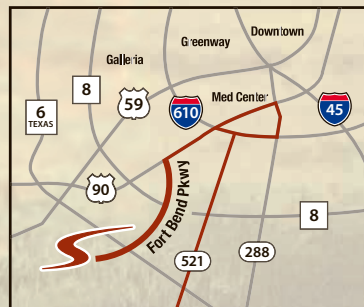


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MAPPING FOR THE FUTURE

Several projects have been proposed in the Gulf Coast region through the Houston-Galveston Area Council's 2045 Regional Transportation Plan. Here are projects that would help alleviate traffic in the Sugar Land and Missouri City area.

Reconstruct Sweetwater Boulevard

Replace road from Town Center Boulevard to Colony Park Drive (\$9 million)

Widen Hwy. 90A

Widen from four to six lanes from FM 359 to the Grand Parkway (\$29.13 million)

Manage access along FM 1092

Expand road to six lanes, add bike lanes, sidewalks and crosswalks from Hwy. 6 to Hwy. 59 (\$1.5 million)

Improve Hwy. 90A at Grand Parkway

Provide intersection improvements (\$17.16 million)

Expand the Grand Parkway

Expand to three north and southbound lanes from FM 1464 to West Airport Boulevard (\$39.8 million)

Restore Williams Trace Boulevard

Reconstruct the four-lane road and add left-turn lanes from Hwy. 6 to Lexington Boulevard (\$5.44 million)

Park and ride at the University of Houston at Sugar Land

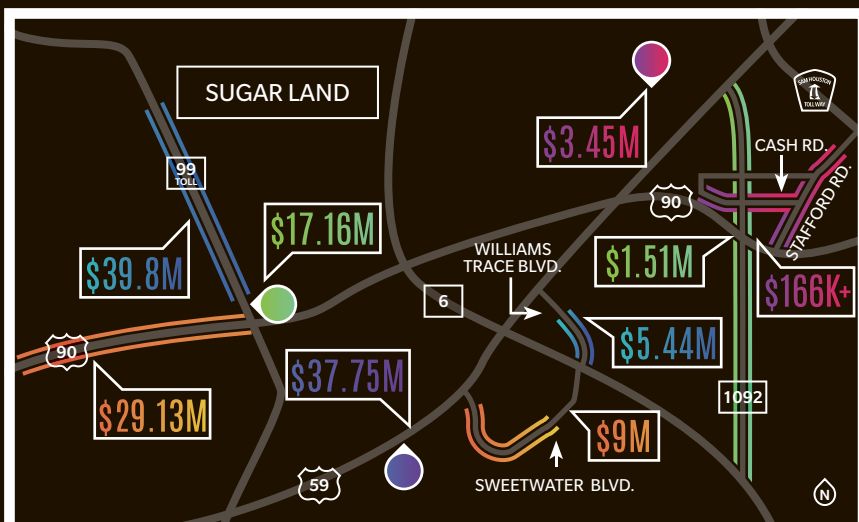
Add a parking garage for park and ride to route to several downtown Houston destinations; construction to begin in 2025 (\$37.75 million)

Meadows Place shared use path

Add walkway from Meadows Place north city limit to The Fountains in Stafford (\$3.45 million)

Stafford sidewalk connectivity

Add access and improve sidewalks on Cash and Stafford roads (\$166.73K)



SOURCE: HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

CONTINUED FROM 1

proposed projects.

"Our transportation system is directly linked to quality of life in our community," Fort Bend County Judge KP George said via email. "We need to have an all-of-the-above, forward-thinking approach as we get to 1 million residents and beyond."

Although most projects proposed involve maintaining, extending or widening major thoroughfares and roadways, talk of more public high-occupancy transit options are not off the table, said Alan Clark, H-GAC

Metropolitan Planning Organization Director, during a meeting at the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce in late February.

"In the transportation area, one of our key jobs is to look to the future and say, 'How are we changing; how are we growing; what are our transportation needs today, and what will they be in the future?'" Clark said. "We have given [automated vehicles] a lot of thought as we think about the future ... Not only are we seeing changes in technology, we are seeing changes in travel patterns and behavior."

TRAFFIC TROUBLES

Fort Bend County is on track to reach 1 million residents by 2022 and could then double to about 2 million residents by 2050, George said.

Missouri City City Manager Anthony Snipes said he agrees multimodal—or diversified—options for transportation is required to keep up with projected growth and address congestion and commuter needs in the H-GAC's eight-county region.

"This includes enhancements to existing roadway networks, transit buses, carpools, light rail, METRO, bike lanes and sidewalks," Snipes said. "Missouri

City would like to see using all these multimodal mass transit options for its residents by 2045."

Snipes said major corridors in Missouri City that have seen significant increases in traffic include FM 1092, Hwy. 6 and Sienna Parkway.

"This is attributed to growth mainly in the Riverstone, Sienna, and Fort Bend Business Park areas located within the city and its [extraterritorial jurisdiction]," he said.

In the last few years, the biggest concern among Sugar Land residents has been traffic, according to an annual survey, Mayor Joe Zimmerman said.

"It's a fact that we will not be able to build enough roads and capacity on the existing systems to accommodate the increase in population," Zimmerman said. "We're going to have to solve some of this with technology."

Sugar Land's traffic control center allows city staff to sense and react to congestion in real time by adjusting traffic signals to help keep cars moving, Zimmerman said.

When it comes to high-volume transit options, Missouri City has an agreement with the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County to provide services connecting the general population to various destinations in the Greater Houston area. The city's 353 Community Connector route and the 364 METRO Flex Route have both seen steady increases in ridership since the transit services began in the last half of 2019, according to METRO data.

"Growth in ridership is more pronounced for the Community Connector, which provides more personalized curb-to-destination service," Snipes said. "Daily ridership during a weekday [in April] averaged 117 rides for the 363 service, and 30 rides for the 364 service."

Sugar Land has an agreement with Fort Bend Transit to contribute about \$80,000 per year to provide services to senior citizens who need to get to the



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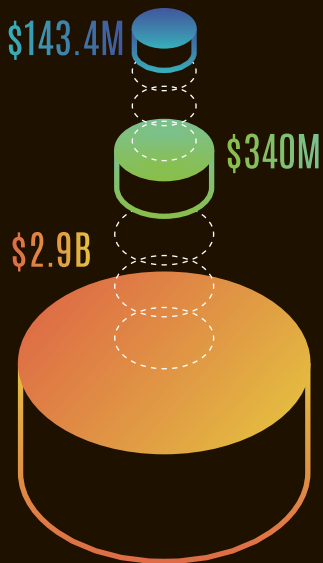
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FINDING FUNDING

The H-GAC has requested \$2.9 billion worth of federal funding for transportation projects spanning across eight counties in the region. About 11% of federal funds would go toward proposed projects in Fort Bend County.

- 193 proposed projects in the Houston-Galveston area
- 22 proposed projects in Fort Bend County
- 9 proposed projects in the Sugar Land/Missouri City Area



SOURCE: HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL/
COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

medical center in Houston. Sugar Land residents voted several years ago to not pay for METRO services and instead redirect those funds for boosting economic development, Zimmerman said.

SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

High-dollar proposed projects in Fort Bend County include work on the Grand Parkway and adding a new Park and Ride center through Fort Bend Transit at the University of Houston-Sugar Land.

"In the short term, we have major

thoroughfares such as [Hwy.] 36, [Hwy.] 99, [Hwy. 59], and Westpark [Tollway] that must continue expanding to meet current demand," George said. "However, a multimodal solution is the only way to plan for the future."

While expanding roadways in the region will help relieve traffic, other solutions that could be implemented throughout the region include adding more bus and rail systems as well as more biking and walking paths.

"I'm supportive of 21st century infrastructure to handle the needs of a 21st century-sized population," George said. "This includes more multimodal transportation options such as high-capacity buses, rail and bike friendly streets."

The vision for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan is to implement a multimodal transportation system that supports a desired quality of life, enhanced economic vitality and increased safety, access and mobility.

"It is pretty clear from H-GAC forecasts that current and projected roadway networks alone cannot accommodate growth to commute residents from the major employment centers. Hence the need for mass transit options," Snipes said. "Residents are expected to use more mass transit options, should they be readily available."

George said the need for roads that can handle the county's population growth is essential, but there needs to also be alternative transit options to decrease dependency on low-occupancy vehicles.

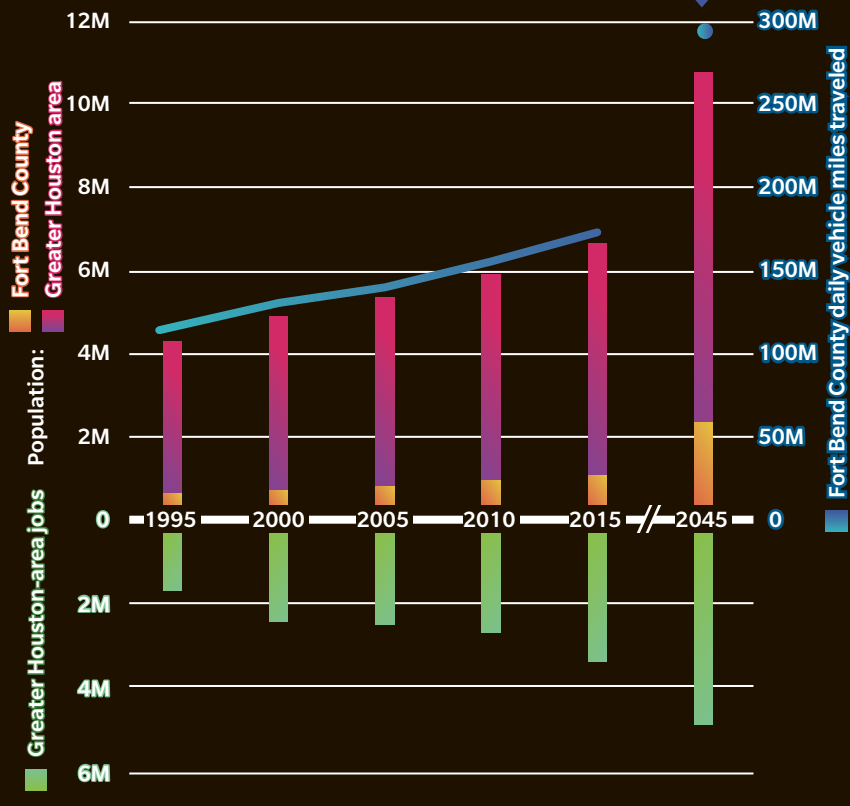
"The Texas A&M Transportation Institute projects that with the increased growth of the region, residents will continue bringing more and more cars which will add to increased idle traffic times and congestion regardless of how many lanes we build," George said.

Most of the federal dollars for the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan will come through the H-GAC and the Texas Department of Transportation, said

ANTICIPATING GROWTH

As the Houston-Galveston region continues to grow in population, job growth and daily vehicle miles traveled is expected to increase.

The daily vehicle miles traveled in Fort Bend County is projected to reach almost 300 million by 2045.



SOURCES: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, FORT BEND COUNTY, HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

Zimmerman, who serves as a member on the H-GAC board.

"Transportation is a broad category—it's rail, it's ports, it's the freeway system, it's parks—anything that is important to the eight-county region comes through the [Metropolitan Planning Organization] and that's where those federal dollars flow in."

Zimmerman said to keep up with growth in the region, more technology is necessary to keep traffic flowing.

"When you look at the 2045 plan, the thing that was clear to me was ... the population is going to increase exponentially," he said. "You look at our

freeway and major thoroughfare system and there's no way we're going to be able to build to that capacity so we're going to have to look at creative ways."

The 2045 Regional Transportation Plan is updated every four years to set investment priorities to efficiently connect people from point A to point B.

"Our residents would use any and all tools including rail and bus to alleviate their traffic wait times and prefer more transportation options than less," George said.

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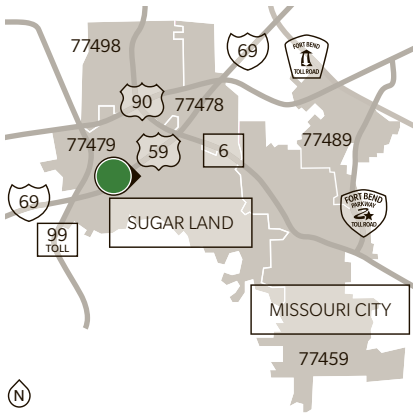
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Fort Bend County 0.44500
Fort Bend Drainage 0.01900
City of Sugar Land 0.31762
Fort Bend LID 11 0.23850
Total (per \$100 valuation) **2.41012**

Median home value

\$333,389

Homes on the market*

75

Homes under contract*

26

Median annual property taxes

\$8,751

Median price per square foot

\$121.74

Average days on the market*

75

*As of 4/14/19
Neighborhood data provided by Alina Rogers
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MARKET DATA

HOMES SOLD (MARCH 2019)

Price range	Number of homes sold/average days on the market				
	77459	77478	77479	77489	77498
\$149,999 or less	-	-	-	4/6	-
\$150,000-\$199,999	2/22	1/5	-	5/7	-
\$200,000-\$299,999	35/42	4/6	16/83	6/300	8/32
\$300,000-\$399,999	35/44	7/0	22/84	-	6/38
\$400,000-\$499,999	15/87	3/67	17/95	-	3/70
\$500,000-\$599,999	10/80	1/129	10/9	-	4/84
\$600,000-\$799,999	5/5	1/7	21/56	-	2/14
\$800,000-\$999,999	2/475	1/288	6/59	-	-
\$1 million +	4/164	1/12	3/102	-	-

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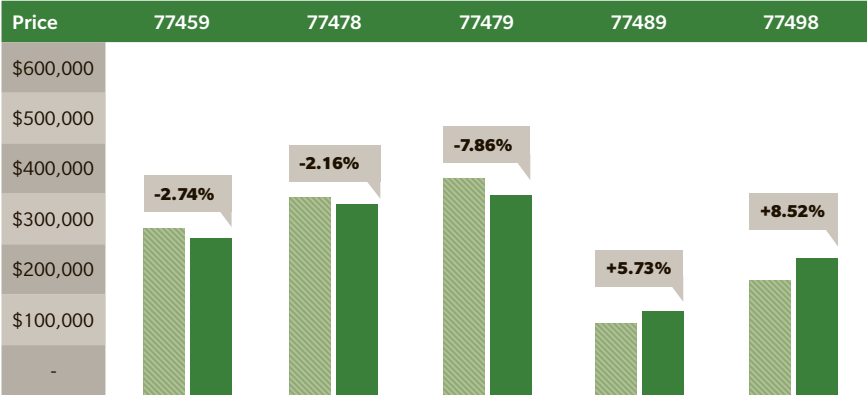
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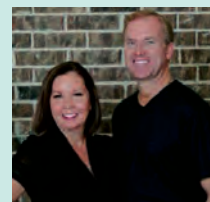
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