

September 2021



The Castle Hills **Reporter**

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A bi-monthly newsletter for the residents of the City of Castle Hills published by Neighborhood News, Inc.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



I hope that you and your families had a relaxing summer. Things have been very busy around the City as we have had several Special City Council / Budget Sessions in preparation of FY 2022. City Council and staff have spent a lot of time preparing for the numerous upcoming Capital Improvement Projects (CIP).

The end of August marks the beginning of the Banyan and Carolwood project. This is Phase II and by far the most significant CIP. The intersection of Banyan and Carolwood floods frequently due to the poor drainage thus resulting in stalled vehicles, accidents, etc. Aside from being dangerous for anyone passing through, it presents major problems for our first responders. It is my hope that this next phase will address the drainage issues that have been a blight to our community for many years. In addition to drainage projects, we are also planning in October to break ground and begin the way overdue street maintenance to almost 20 residential streets.

Sanitation

One of the most prevalent topics during these Special City Council / Budget Work Sessions has been sanitation. As of late, there has been a lot of frustration regarding sanitation pickup and brush issues due to Storm Uri and the heavy rains. I sincerely apologize for any inconveniences that occurred. I will not make excuses for our lack of communication, but I would like to share, what we, as a City are up against and tell you what corrective actions are being taken.

The amount of trash and recycling that Castle Hills produces has gone up substantially with COVID. We have been home more than usual and we all have been finding ways to keep ourselves busy. We are cooking more and doing more projects around our homes, resulting in more city rubbish. The increase rubbish has resulted in a heavier workload on our Public Works crew. We have also faced a shortage of able and willing workers. This has led to our team having to do more with less. You, couple that with industry standards that we must adhere to, cost increases in landfill fees, and low wages; we have a recipe for disaster on our hands.

Amidst all the frustration, I have heard repeatedly "just tell us what we have to do and how much we will have to pay." An overwhelming majority of people enjoy the elevated level of service that we strive to provide in Castle Hills. Our sanitation department is no different; we offer 4 services. General trash service 2x a week, recycling 1x a week, and brush service 1x a week. On more than one occasion it has been questioned if we should switch to a commercial contractor. Let me paint a picture of what that service would look like for Castle Hills.

Switching to a "more economical" commercial trash service would likely result in us receiving service 1x a week, no brush pickup, and no alley service. The automated articulating arm that picks up the trash would not be able to access the containers in the alleys. This would mean residents would now have to place their containers in the street and more than likely the utilization of a 96-gallon container.

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CITY COUNCIL

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Mayor

Joe Izbrand
Mayor Pro-Tem, Place 1

Frank Paul
Place 2

Kurt May
Place 3

Jack Joyce
Place 4

Douglas Gregory
Place 5

CITY STAFF

Ryan Rapelye
City Manager, (210) 293-9673

Zina Tedford
City Secretary
(210) 293-9681

Lara Feagins
Finance, (210) 293-9674

James "Jim" Ladewig
Fire Chief
(210) 342-2341, ext. 217

Steven Zuniga
Police Chief
(210) 342-2341

Rick Harada
Public Works & Animal Control
Department Director
(210) 293-9676

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Monthly Meetings

All meetings are held at
City Hall unless otherwise posted.

City Council
2nd Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Architectural Review Committee
1st Wednesday, 7:00pm
Upon Request

Board of Adjustment
4th Monday, 5:30 p.m.
Upon Request

Zoning Commission
1st Tuesday, 7:00pm
Upon Request

**Crime Control & Prevention
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3rd Monday, 5:30pm
Quarterly or as needed



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Solutions

One of the most common questions that I hear is “what makes Castle Hills different than San Antonio.” My goal is to continually improve the quality of life in Castle Hills. In that same vein, I’d like to consider offering many of the frequently requested services that we have enjoyed recently. First off, we added excess brush drop off at City Hall. We were plagued with a couple of weather events this year, but the reality is storms result in fallen branches and/or excess leaves. The addition of roll off containers behind City Hall was a huge success in collecting over 20 tons of brush/leaves that were on curbs and sidewalks. I’d like to see us continue to offer this service going forward. As well as the addition of a bulk item drop off once or twice a year.

I also asked City Manager Rapelye and Public Works Director Harada to research the feasibility of adding a receptacle tipper. A receptacle tipper is a hydraulic attachment that goes on the back of the garbage truck. The driver can place the receptacle on the lift and dump the containers without physically having to lift the 40 lb. garbage container. This is important for a number of reasons. We have seen the physicality of sanitation, specifically garbage service, can turn off some potential employees. Aside from recruitment, there is also an issue with workers compensation injuries. This hydraulic system would help our valued sanitation workers avoid painful back injuries and days away from work. But wait, there’s more! An added nicety is that this could allow us to accept larger containers, if they are the appropriate size/weight

These are some of the issues that City Council and staff have been discussing. At the end of the day, the solution is COMMUNICATION! Staff has already taken corrective measures by sending out a mailer that outlines all guidelines for garbage, recycling, and brush service.

ERCOT

We had the inaugural meeting for the Texas Municipal Officers ERCOT Advisory Board on June 29th. We had a long briefing on ERCOT services as it relates to end users. One of the key takeaways is that ERCOT is planning on using conservation alerts more frequently. There are concerns that the alerts are a sign that the grid is unstable. This is not the case; the alerts are a tool that ERCOT has used and plans to use more frequently going forward. When you receive an alert, please do your part to help conserve energy.

Castle Hills Growth

One of the last things that I would like to share news about is the rapid business growth that we are experiencing in Castle Hills.

In the last 3 months, we have had a several businesses that have chosen to set their roots in Castle Hills. The first one is Tu Asador at the Castle Hills Village Shopping Center. Tu Asador is family run Mexican style steakhouse that is delicious! Next up we have SoHo Wine and Martini Bar, you may remember SoHo from their downtown location. In September SoHo is moving North to the Hills! Lastly, we have Dutch Bros Coffee that is scheduled to open in October. I am proud to have the aforementioned businesses investing in the City of Castle Hills.

As a City, we strive to provide extraordinary leadership and deliver exemplary municipal services in a professional, cost-efficient manner to citizens, businesses and visitors to facilitate economic growth and provide an exceptional quality of life and workplace consistent with our small-town values and character.

With all the upcoming Capital Improvement Projects, new businesses, and families investing in our City, there is no better time to be part of Castle Hills than now..

As always, if I can be of service, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Yours in service,

JR Treviño, Mayor

jtrevino@castlehills-tx.gov
210-559-5940



MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

By Ryan D. Rapelye, City Manager

Proposed FY 2022 Budget and City Infrastructure Projects!

Proposed FY 2022 Budget

Over the last two months, staff has been working on the development of the Proposed FY 2022 Budget and have had several Special City Council Meetings/Budget Work Sessions on the development of the Proposed FY 2022 Budget. This also provided citizens an opportunity to provide input and comment.

As we prepared the Proposed FY 2022 Budget we continue to be mindful of the impact and on-going challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has changed not only our lives, but how we operate as a City. Despite all of the challenges with the support of citizens, City Council and staff, we pushed through and found ways to sustain city operations during the current fiscal year. By all means, it is not perfect, a lot of trial and error, but we pushed forward and continue to learn and live the “new normal”. Even though City hall’s doors were closed to the public for majority of last year. All City staff met the challenges head-on. City staff worked remotely from home or at city hall using technology to assist customers and yet taking every precaution to reduce exposure to COVID-19 to the citizens, co-workers and their families.

Local cities, counties, and school districts budgets have been impacted since the beginning of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in mid-March 2020 and continuing through April 2021. During this time, the City was the recipient of the CARES Act grant funds in the amount of approximately \$245,000. These funds subsidized many projects around the City including business relief grants to ten business, city related COVID-related expenses including the renovation of the City’s Fire Department. The Fire Department renovation was necessary to reduce close-proximity person to person contact by building stand-alone living quarters for our First Responders. At the time of this writing, the City is awaiting additional grant funding from the American Rescue Plan Act in the amount of approximately \$1,100,000. These funds will subsidize a

(Continued on page 4)

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(Continued from page 3)

number of infrastructure projects and make up for revenue lost as a result of the pandemic. This unprecedented year has brought many unexpected challenges and opportunities. The City stands prepared to address these challenges and opportunities regarding public health, safety, and fiscal responsibility.

As City Manager, I had a number of goals to review and discuss as part of the Proposed FY 2022 Budget which included a long-term strategy for our sanitation services, establishing funds for development of a beautification program for monthly maintenance of the City's assets and ROW's in and around our community, address necessary improvement to the City's Information Technology infrastructure and evaluating the compensation plan for City employees. Over the last year, City staff has continued to monitor revenue and expenditures within our current Adopted FY 2021 Budget and the potential long-term impact of COVID-19. As many entities, the City did lose programmed revenue in certain areas of the general fund. However, we are very optimistic in the growth of sales tax, commercial permitting and the addition of new businesses to the community this year.

As an economic indicator, we are able to program and project further increases in sales tax revenue and will continue to monitor the potential impact this may have on current and future City operations. In preparing this year's Proposed Budget, we recognized that the City exists in a new financial environment where both residents and businesses are facing different challenges related to COVID-19. Unfortunately, COVID-19 is expected to have a continued financial impact to the City which will require us to exercise additional controls over expenses to offset decreases in revenues. This year's proposed budget focuses on maintaining the current quality level of City services.

Over the last year, our leadership has taken monumental steps to tackle long-term infrastructure needs by issuing Certificates of Obligations (CO's) to address streets and drainage issues. As part of the Proposed FY 2022, staff anticipates the completion of two major capital projects, Banyan/Carolwood Drainage and the \$3 Million allocated to reconstruct over ten city streets.

Below are key budget principles and General Fund Highlights:

Key Budget Principles:

The proposed budget has been developed following the Key Budget Principles listed below:

- Basic services will be maintained at current levels and will be adequately funded.



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- Reserves will be maintained at adequate levels, which protects the city from future uncertainties.
- Revenues will be established at reasonable levels, utilizing historical data.
- Department and program costs will be budgeted at a reasonable level, which parallels the cost of providing services.
- Employee benefits and salaries will be budgeted.
- Budgets for the American Rescue Plan Act funds

General Fund Highlights:

The Proposed General Fund budget is fiscally conservative and balanced. The Proposed FY 2022 budget is based on the ad valorem rate of \$0.524899 per \$100 of valuation, which is the M&O voter approval tax rate. The I&S portion is .044280. The General Fund is the largest fund for the City and accounts for the general service and operations (police, permitting/planning, public works, and administration) as well as all City employee salaries. The proposed General Fund revenue budget totaled \$7,109,814 million and the expenses budget totals \$7,109,814 million.

Things to note in the Proposed FY 2022 General Fund Budget:

- Does not include does not include any additional personnel in the organization.
- Includes a cost-of-living adjustment for employees. There was a decrease to the City's contribution to TMRS – Employee Retirement line item.
- Includes an increase to the line item to address code compliance abatements, as well as additional mowing of certain right-of-way areas around the community. This will allow the city to engage an on-demand contractor to address abatements as an alternative extending the Public Works Department.

(Continued on page 5)



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On August 9, 2021, the Proposed FY 2022 Budget was filed with the City Secretary. The Proposed FY 2022 Budget is been available for review on the City's website. City Council recognizes that long-term street and drainage repairs are needed throughout the City.

The Street Maintenance, Drainage-Utility and Supplemental Street Funds are revenue sources for future infrastructure projects. These funds and Certificates of Obligation. Costs for the two major capital projects have been reflected in the Proposed FY 2022 Budget.

During the development of the Proposed FY 2022 Budget process, City Council and staff's primary goal was to ensure that the city continues to maintain and provide excellent municipal services to citizens, businesses, and visitors while maintaining stringent fiscal controls.

The FY 2022 Adopted Budget covers core services such as Public Safety (Fire, Police and Dispatch), sanitation/streets within our Public Works, Municipal Court and Administration. As City Manager, I will continue to recognize and applaud our employees. The City of Castle Hills has great employees who are knowledgeable, talented and dedicated to their respected positions within the organization. The City of Castle Hills is privileged and unique to have a dedicated staff and public safety team which encompasses fire, police and dispatch.

I wish to extend my appreciation to City Council for their contribution by attending our Special City Council Meetings/Budget Work Sessions, reviewing budget documents and providing guidance in development of the proposed budget. I also want to express my appreciation to City Staff for their input and hard work in striving to maintain the highest level of service to the citizens and businesses of our community.

City Infrastructure Projects:

As part of the FY 21 Adopted Budget, the City will begin two major projects. Phase III of the Banyan/Carolwood drainage project and the comprehensive street reconstruction totaling \$3.3 million dollars. The reconstruction project is scheduled to begin early October and will involve the reconstruction of ten streets, this will take approximately eight months to complete. The Banyan/Carolwood drainage project is underway as well as the installation of drainage culverts just past Gardenview on Banyan and around the corner to the bottom of Carolwood at Banyan intersection. This project is expected to take approximately seven months to complete. We will keep you updated as we get more information from the contractors.

As part of our City's street maintenance program, a contractor will begin the microsurface project of over fifteen streets later this month. We have appropriated funds in the FY 2022 budget to continue this program. Another future drainage project is the Watershed II Phase I -Mimosa and Krameria Drainage Improvements, this project is scheduled to go out for bids towards the end of the year.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at rrapelye@castlehills-tx.gov or at 210.293.9673.

"The statements and facts contained in newsletter articles from the Mayor and City Council Members are their own personal views and should not be considered official city sponsored statements or facts and should not be relied upon as such."



COUNCIL COMMENTS



JOE IZBRAND

PLACE 1
Mayor Pro-Tem

Dear Neighbors,

As we enter the fall season, activity is picking up on the next round of street improvements to enhance the quality of roads throughout Castle Hills.

Among the projects on tap to begin this fall and winter are Phase II of the Banyan/Carolwood drainage and street reconstruction project, which began in late August, and reconstruction of portions of Atwater, Bluet, Shalimar, Travertine, Trillium, Lemonwood, Honeysuckle, Fox Hall Lane and Roletto, beginning in October. Both of these projects are being funded through the certificates of obligation approved by the city council.

Street maintenance is slated for Castle Gardens, Dani Lane, Elizabeth Ann Ct., Martha Lynn Ct., Tamworth, Dogwood, Herweck, Prinz, Riviera, Waydele Cir., Vuewood, Antler,

(Continued on page 6)



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Calladium, Cas Hills, Lou Jon, Wickford Way, Gardenview and S. Gardenview. This work is part of our street maintenance program and is funded through our regular city budget.

This month, the city council approves a new city budget for fiscal year FY2022, which begins on January 1. The projected new budget totals \$7.1 million, compared to \$6.94 million for the current year. The council has worked very hard to hold the line on spending while, at the same time, recognizing areas in need of additional resources to ensure the continued high caliber of city services.

A one-time federal funding allotment from the American Rescue Plan is helping to fill gaps left by the reduction in revenue from our court operations and other budget areas during the height of the pandemic, even as sales taxes have remained steady and strong.

The upcoming budget includes \$2.3 million for street and drainage work, \$2.7 million for the police department, \$1.9 million for the fire department, \$888,000 for public works, and \$1 million for administration, which encompasses municipal court, code compliance and permitting. Another \$266,000 will go towards debt service on the certificates of obligation.

This month, we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of Castle Hills. The newly formed Castle Hills Historical Society is doing an exceptional job researching and preserving our history, including hosting our Founders Day commemoration. Meanwhile, focusing on the future, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee will be holding a series of meetings this fall and winter to help map out a next generation vision for Castle Hills.

Also this fall, the new Dutch Bros. Coffee will be opening in the H-E-B shopping center on West Ave. and Loop 410, and the new SoHo Martini and Wine Bar is opening its doors in the Castle Oaks Village shopping center on West Ave. and Lockhill Selma. Golden Chick is also opening a new quick service restaurant at the intersection of NW Military and Lockhill Selma. We continue to work hard to attract new, quality businesses to Castle Hills and are very optimistic about the city's economic outlook.

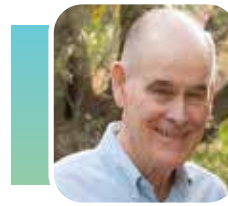
Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its disruptions, there is a great deal of positive momentum in Castle Hills. I am appreciative of the opportunity to represent you on the city council and work for positive change. As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions on how we can continue building a stronger community, and I invite you to stay in touch with me and keep up with the latest Castle Hills news at www.facebook.com/izbrandplace1.

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FRANK PAUL
PLACE 2

For this issue of the Reporter, I asked Luis "Louie" Zamarron, Assistant to the City Manager to provide an update on the economic growth in Castle Hills and provide insight to some of our new businesses.

Let's not overlook business activity in 2020. In spite of the crippling pandemic, the Permits Department issued thirty-three new commercial certificates of occupancy. These businesses range from retail establishments to professional services to new restaurants, just to name a few categories. This year, 2021, we have had more exciting business additions to our community.

The trendy and buzzy coffee bar, Dutch Brothers Coffee, has chosen to build their first store in the entire San Antonio metro area right here in Castle Hills at the corner of West Ave and Loop 410 Access Road.

Tu Asador Restaurant recently opened in the Castle Oaks Village shopping center at West Ave and Lockhill-Selma and is getting raving reviews.

SoHo Wine and Martini Bar, a high-end establishment with an extremely favorable fifteen-year reputation in downtown San Antonio, will be relocating to Castle Hills and has also chosen to hang their shingle at Castle Oaks Village.

Golden Chick restaurant has taken over the old Jack-In-The-Box location at NW Military Highway and Lockhill-Selma and is currently undergoing extensive remodeling. We look forward to their ribbon-cutting ceremony.

As we all know, in a small city like Castle Hills, sales tax revenue helps the City attain additional revenue to assist with infrastructure and quality of life improvements for everybody. The City is very optimistic of the sales tax growth for the rest of this fiscal year and projections look even better for the upcoming fiscal year. A portion of the sales tax (0.5%) is designated for the repair and maintenance of existing city streets and another portion of the sales tax (0.25%) is designated for the Crime Control and Prevention District (CCPD) for the costs of personnel, administration, expansion, enhancement and capital expenditures for the police department and law enforcement related programs.

We anticipate seeing the impact of increased sales tax in the quarters following the openings of the various businesses. A special thank you goes out to our Permitting Department and our Building Plans Inspectors and/civil engineering partners for their important work with helping all of these projects become a reality.

Let's all join the Mayor and City Council in welcoming these new businesses and all newcomers to Castle Hills and wish them Good Luck!

Luis "Louie" Zamarron

Assistant to the City Manager
210.293.9680



KURT MAY
PLACE 3

Plans for Celebrating the Castle Hills' 70th Anniversary

Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 26. That is the day the city will celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the founding of Castle Hills. The Castle Hills Historical Society, with the collaboration of the Castle Hills Community Organization (CHCO), will be hosting two events. The first will be held at the Castle Hills City Council Chambers, from 11am to 3pm and is free to the public. It will feature displays and information gathered over the last several months by the Castle Hills Historical Society, documenting the history of our city and its development. This event will feature 1950s classic cars, a taco truck, Mr. Diablo, for those who want to purchase lunch on site, and birthday cake. Come for the history. Stay to celebrate our community together.

The second event will be in the evening of the 26th, at the Veranda. Tickets are required, and may be purchased through the CHCO, for a catered dinner. We will have a 1950s themed menu and cocktails, and the opportunity to tour the Slimp estate property, which comprised the area later incorporated as the City of Castle Hills. We will also hear from the grandson, Bryant Slimp, of the original owners about life in Castle Hills, before it was a city. Everyone is welcome to come in 1950's dress attire for a fun evening. I look forward to presenting the researchers who are busy documenting the city's unique history, prominent citizens and ongoing projects. Tickets for this event may be purchased at: <https://castlehillscommunityorganization.org/castle-hills-historical-society/>

The formation of the Castle Hills Historical Society continues to take shape as members of the Board of Directors and Officers will be selected in the coming weeks. Please contact me, if you would like to join our planning committee, or contribute information for CHHS's history document.

Kurt May
City Councilman, Place 3
210-273-8134



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Neighborhood News, Inc.
3740 Colony Drive Suite LL100
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JACK JOYCE
PLACE 4

Friends and Neighbors,

Following last issue's update on progress with the Comprehensive Plan, I'm excited to tell you that we are approaching the most important phase of the Plan, that is, the interactive workshops. These will be held on October 14 and 18 at 5:30 PM in Council Chambers and will be facilitated by LPA Architects, our comprehensive planning consultant. These sessions will allow us to truly influence our City's future by commenting on questions related to critical issues such as infrastructure, land use and zoning, green spaces and transportation. The consultants are planning workshops that will be engaging and fun. All are welcome and we are hoping for a good turnout. If the virus is still a concern, we'll do the workshops via Zoom.

We are grateful to those 240 citizens who took the time to complete the questionnaire sent out in February. The results were revealing, providing insight into what's really important to them. A few highlights are worth looking at: When asked what they love about their area of Castle Hills, the top responses were:

- The trees, country feel, rural atmosphere of our City (92 responses)

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- Public Services, Police, Fire and Sanitation (54 responses)
- Large Lots (48 responses)
- Friendly people, neighbors (47 responses)
- Central location (45 responses)

When asked what they want to preserve or improve in their area, the top responses were:

- Improve streets (alleys too) (44 responses)
- Preserve trees, natural beauty (38 responses)
- Improve community space, i.e., park, playground, pool (28 responses)
- Preserve large lots, rural environment (26 responses)
- Improve walkability – sidewalks, crossings, bike trails (20 responses)

There were a number of overarching themes that ran through the survey, including:

- Citizens value the heavily treed, rural appearance of our neighborhoods, our public services, large lots, central location, and quiet neighborhoods.
- Citizens worry about street maintenance, crime, traffic issues, poorly maintained yards and homes.
- Citizens would like to see responsible development, whether business, commercial or residential.

A full summary of the survey may be found on the City's website www.cityofcastlehills.com. You'll find a section devoted to the comprehensive plan.

Hope to see you at the workshops!

JJ

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SHRED EVENT

City of Castle Hills will be hosting a paper shredding event on **Saturday, October 9, 2021 at City Hall, 209 Lemonwood Drive from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.** or until the truck reaches capacity.

Identity theft and fraud crimes continue to be of great concern for all of us. The City of Castle Hills would like to help you avoid becoming a victim of identity theft and fraud, by keeping your personal information away from the hands of identity thieves. One of the methods identity thieves use to steal your information is combing through recycling and garbage for sensitive information that has been thrown away.

For this reason, the City of Castle Hills recommends and encourages citizens to use a shredder (preferably cross-cut) for sensitive documents, such as credit card statements, financial statements, pre-approved credit card offers, old IRS tax forms, bank checks, household bills, and other documents that may contain sensitive information.

Community Shred event will be on site with one commercial-sized shredding truck for this event. Items no larger than staples and paper clips may be attached to the papers. **Because of the popularity of this event each vehicle will only be allowed eight (8) standard size Banker style boxes of documents to be shredded.**

This event is not for business documents. It is for personal documents only that contain personal information that if thrown out could lead to identity theft.

Service will be on a first come, first served basis and limited to the capacity of the commercial-sized shredding truck. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause should the capacity be reached.



COMING SOON TO THE CITY OF CASTLE HILLS

New I-INFO Electronic Communication System

The City of Castle Hills City Council approved the use of i-INFO, an emergency notification system as the source of providing community news, information, user tips, and emergency information. I-INFO will assist in providing local residents with a way to receive critical and important information about the community.

In addition to emergency notifications, residents will be able to receive local information that impacts their lives and their community, and receive it in the way they choose - by text and/or email... and during emergencies by telephone if desired. The new system allows local agencies to offer a variety of information to the people who live and work in their area and who want to be informed of critical emergency information as well as other key information about the City of Castle Hills.

The service is free and is provided by the City of Castle Hills. It is part of a larger, regional effort made up of several counties in the area. We will begin service in the near future.

The registry information is managed by the i-INFO system, a highly secure system that is used by thousands of organizations to manage their information and keep it safe. Likewise, i-INFO allows residents to securely access and manage their own information.

For additional information regarding I-INFO, please contact City Secretary Zina Tedford at 210-293-9681.

Need a Passport?

City of Castle Hills
209 Lemonwood Dr.

CityofCastleHills.com



The City of Castle Hills is accepting paperwork for
U.S. passport applications at city hall.

**Passport applications will be scheduled
Tuesday through Saturday
by appointment only.**

To schedule an appointment call
(210) 293-9675 or (210) 293-9674.

For more information regarding how to apply for
or renew your passport, please visit the
U.S. Department of State website at:

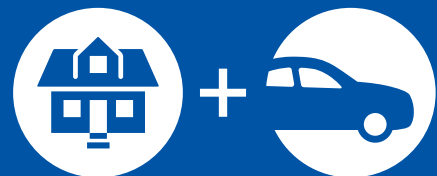
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html>

Code Compliance Corner

By Luis Zamarron, Assistant to the City Manager

Hello. I hope everyone had a pleasant, safe and healthy summer. This month I would like to discuss two areas of the code; high grass and weeds and maintenance of alleys. Section Sec. 26-117, "Prohibition of weeds, high grass, and debris", is wide ranging in its requirements for properties to be free of all aspects of the title. Succinctly, the code states that any person in control of any lot or premises, whether vacant or improved, will not allow the property to be covered, in whole or in part, with any weeds or high grass. The section also discusses debris and other materials. The maintenance of alleys is covered in two areas of the code. Section Sec. 26-120 states that "it shall be unlawful for both the owner and the tenant of any property in the city abutting upon a public alley or way to permit any weeds, grasses, or other vegetation whatsoever to grow therein to the center line to a height of greater than five inches." Sec. 40-238 discusses the duty of property owner to maintain an easement (alley) by keeping the area "across, over, or under this easement clear of any structure, debris, vegetation, trees, shrubs, or landscaping whatsoever". Sec. 48-136 specifically identifies the area of property owner responsibility as the "center line of an alley if private property abuts both sides of the alley or, if private property abuts only one side, the entire alley...". How high trees have to be maintained over a public right-of-way including alleys is found in Sec. 48-137 (b). This section states that a full 14-foot vertical clearance between the surface of all portions of an alley shall be maintained and under all weather conditions and circumstances. The reason for these codes should be abundantly clear; the safety of our Public Works personnel as well as the various infrastructure contractors is paramount and is also common human courtesy. Please make sure you are in full compliance with these sections of the code. Thanks for your time!

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BE HALLOWEEN Safe

Halloween is a fun, and spooky, time of year for kids. Make trick-or-treating safe for your little monsters with a few easy safety tips.



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HALLOWEEN FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- »» **When choosing a costume**, stay away from long trailing fabric. If your child is wearing a mask, make sure the eye holes are large enough so he or she can see out.
- »» **Provide children** with flashlights to carry for lighting or glow sticks as part of their costume.
- »» Dried flowers, cornstalks and crepe paper catch fire easily. **Keep all decorations** away from open flames and other heat sources like light bulbs and heaters.
- »» **Use a battery-operated** candle or glow-stick in jack-o-lanterns. If you use a real candle, use extreme caution. Make sure children are watched at all times when candles are lit. When lighting candles inside jack-o-lanterns, use long, fireplace-style matches or a utility lighter. Be sure to place lit pumpkins well away from anything that can burn and far enough out of the way of trick-or-treaters, doorsteps, walkways and yards.
- »» **Remember** to keep exits clear of decorations, so nothing blocks escape routes.
- »» **Make sure** all smoke alarms in the home are working.
- »» **Tell children** to stay away from open flames including jack-o-lanterns with candles in them. Be sure they know how to stop, drop and roll if their clothing catches fire. (Have them practice, stopping immediately, dropping to the ground, covering their face with hands, and rolling over and over to put the flames out.)

If your children are going to **Halloween parties** at others' homes, have them look for ways out of the home and plan how they would get out in an emergency.

Did you know?



Decorations are the first thing to ignite in **900** reported home fires each year. Two of every five of these fires were started by a candle.

For emergencies:

Dial 9-1-1



Your Source for SAFETY Information

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169



CITY SNAPSHOTS



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**Do you own a business and need
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**Have you been injured as a result of the
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and we are ready to help you with your legal needs.

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