This publication summarizes the City’s use of the funds we receive from you and your fellow residents. Listed and detailed are many of the projects and day-to-day efforts City personnel undertake to ensure that University Park enjoys safe neighborhoods, high quality emergency services and beautiful parks and green space. Dozens of residents, who serve on numerous boards and committees, also play a vital role in keeping our community an ideal place to live, work and raise families. On behalf of the City Council and our dedicated and professional staff, thank you for spending a few minutes to review this report.

Mayor Tommy Stewart

Budget and Finance

Adopted in September 2023, the Fiscal Year 2024 budget totals $65,817,493, an increase of $4,548,608 or 7.4%, from FY2023. The budget is comprised of the anticipated expenditures of the General, Water and Sewer, Sanitation and Storm Water funds. Each of the budgeted funds has separate and distinct sources of revenue.

In the General Fund, property taxes are the single largest revenue category, amounting to 62% of all revenues. Single-family home market values continued to climb in 2023, increasing 22.7% on average, from $2,009,872 in 2022 to $2,466,515 in 2023. Despite a 3.96% decrease in the tax rate (from 24.5975 cents per $100 of taxable value to 23.6226), the theoretical increase in the city tax levy for the “average” single-family homeowner amounted to $706. Based on the variety of exemptions available, individual tax assessments will vary.

Non-property tax revenues (such as sales taxes, franchise fees, building permit fees and interest revenue) account for the other 38% of General Fund income. Sales taxes (comprised of both traditional sales tax and taxes on mixed beverages) are expected to increase $500,000 or 8.3% in FY2024, due to changes in household buying habits and a continued increase in the overall cost of goods. Franchise fees are expected to increase $75,000, or 4.2% in FY2024, with gains in natural gas fees being offset by decreases in digital services. Building permit revenues are expected to remain essentially flat in FY2024. While most fines and fees are expected to hold steady or decrease slightly in FY2024, Direct Alarm revenue is anticipated to increase by $100,000, or 10%, due to the rollout of new features and services during the upcoming year. Finally, interest earnings are expected to increase $400,000 during the year, due to the higher-than-normal interest rate environment and the continued build-out of a “laddered” investment strategy.

Concerning expenditures, the FY2024 budget continues the longstanding “pay-as-you-go” funding for governmental and utility capital projects by increasing the yearly budgeted contributions from both the General and Utility funds by 5%, while responsibly funding the cost of future equipment replacements through contributions to the Equipment Services and Technology Services funds.
The City remained debt-free from 2002 through FY2021 using the aforementioned model. In FY2022, the City borrowed $15 million under favorable interest terms to finance an ongoing stormwater drainage project in the northeast corner of the City, known as Area of Interest-1 (AOI-1) which is the first part of a multi-part Stormwater Master Plan across the City. This increased the capacity of that portion of the system to handle the flash-flooding typically encountered during a 10-year storm event. To repay the debt, the Storm Water fund will require an increase in the average monthly bill of approximately $2.21 (increasing from $10.06 to $12.27). This increase is the third of five annual increases necessary to ensure the debt is self-supporting.

Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS) costs will increase in FY2024, as the funding rate charged by the system increased from 8.17% of pay to 8.59%, effective January 1. Most City employees are members of TMRS, which is a hybrid, joint-contributory, cash-balance retirement plan. Unlike TMRS, the Firefighters Relief and Retirement Fund (a traditional defined-benefit plan closed to new entrants as of November 1, 2017) no longer funds a "percentage of pay" basis. Instead, as a result of the closure, it has a series of fixed contribution amounts over a 28.5-year closed amortization period, after which no additional contributions should be necessary. The "fixed" amount is generally adjusted every two years due to the differences in actual versus expected performance, noted during the biennial actuarial valuation. In addition to an almost 11% contribution increase built into the FY2024 budget, a year-end lump sum amount (to reach the fixed contribution amount) will likely be necessary. There are no significant changes in FY2024 with regards to healthcare, or other employment benefits, and City Council added Juneteenth (June 19) to the list of observed City holidays.

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is how the City identifies, plans, and funds capital projects. Capital projects are defined as non-recurring, multi-year construction efforts whose costs exceed $50,000. Adopted by City Council resolution in December 2023, the FY2024 capital projects budget of $27,044,000 includes funding for new projects as well as incremental funding for continuing projects, and is the first of a five-year CIP plan. New project spending authorized for FY2024 includes: Parks ($1,986,000), Public Safety ($1,255,000), and Public Works ($23,503,000). The budget also includes a $300,000 addition to a capital project Emergency Reserve. The capital projects budget is generally "amended" after adoption to allow for the "rollover" of unspent project funds from the prior year. The amendment process may continue throughout the year, resulting in the authorization (or cancellation) of projects identified and reviewed during the quarterly Capital Projects Review Committee process. In addition to the previously mentioned "pay-as-you-go" funding method, other sources of CIP funding may come from special budget transfers, one-time revenues, fund balance drawdowns, program/project reimbursements, grants, and interest earnings on unspent funds.

Residential Construction – In 2023, the number of one and two-family dwelling permits issued decreased 31% from the 89 issued in 2022. New single-family detached houses fell 34% from the previous three-year average of 64. Overall, 61 new dwelling permits were issued, comprised of 41 new single-family detached, eight duplex and eight attached dwellings. In 2023, the average floor area for single-family dwellings was 7,620 square feet, 4,170 square feet for duplex dwellings, and 4,050 square feet for single-family attached. Additionally, 107 major residential remodel and addition permits were issued in 2023.

Multi-Family – (classified as commercial) In 2023, the City issued two multi-family dwelling permits. The average square footage for each building was 20,937 square feet with an average of seven units per building.

Commercial Construction – In 2023, commercial construction value of permitted work increased by $24 million to total $123.6 million. All major construction was remodel or addition work occurring on the SMU campus.
Major Projects Completed in 2023

- SMU Life After Ball partnership
- Reservation software implementation
- Curtis Park new playground
- Department featured in NRPA 2023 conference
- Coffee and Caruth Park sports field improvements
- Plant material replacement
- Curtis and Goar Park annual sod installation
- Curtis and Germany Park tennis court resurfacing, furnishings and perimeter fencing
- Williams Pickleball courts – new LED lighting and court signage
- Central overpasses landscape improvements
- Various Eagle Scout projects
- Added new and replaced site furnishings throughout the park systems
- Walt Humann Park sidewalk and new furnishings installations
- Shepherdess sculpture placement at Barns Park
- Second annual Paddle Battle Tournament
- Fee schedule updates/cost recovery implementation
- Lovers & US-75 lot fencing installation
- Flagpole repairs
- New salt generator and controllers, pool furnishings, informational signage, fencing upgrades, and extended pool hours for Holmes Aquatic Center

Recap of 2023 Holmes Aquatic Center Programming

- Pool Passes sold – 2,656
- Pool Parties – 164
- Baby Shark swim lessons - 19
- Shark School swim lessons – 122
- Makos Swim Team – 56
- World’s Largest Swimming Lesson 2023 – 50 participants
- Early and extended swim season for seniors
- Complimentary towel service for all pool patrons
- A Taste of UP – featuring food from 9 local restaurants
- Water Polo instructional program - 23
- Dive-In Movies – 4
- “Senior Splash” water aerobics (June-September)
- Doggie Splash Day – 67 participants
- Makos Swim team participation increased 25%
- Hosted first ever swim meet
- HAC revenues increased almost 20%
- Total visits for 2023 – 32,518

New Park and Recreation events offered in 2023

- Paddle Battle Pickleball tournament
- Pilates in the Park
- Pony Express Football Camp

Major Projects and Enhancements Scheduled for 2024

- Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan adoption
- Curtis Park southeast improvements (pavilion landscaping)
- Curtis Park encroachment reclamation
- Caruth Park playground replacement
- Smith Park playground resurfacing
- United States Tennis Association assessment
- Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation
- Athletic field top dressing
- Burleson athletics field improvements
- Tennis court resurfacing
- Goar Park Master Plan
- Centennial Celebration
- Elena’s Children’s Park renovation
- Entry portal landscape enhancements
- Memorial program review (trees, benches, etc.)
- Tree Inventory
- Germany & Curtis Park tennis courts LED lighting upgrade

In 2024, the Parks Department has fun events planned for residents of all ages. To view the full calendar, visit our website at uptexas.org.

PUBLIC WORKS

The operational divisions of the Public Works Department consist of Engineering, Facility Maintenance, Infrastructure Maintenance, Traffic and Sanitation.

Engineering

During 2023, Engineering Division staff managed the planning, design, and construction of more than $25 million in capital projects. The City annually awards contracts for routine capital projects including street mill and overlays and utility replacement. During the past year, crews were directly involved on these projects:

- Construction of utility replacements associated with the Mile per Year project
- Design of AOI-2 and AOI-3 stormwater improvements
- Design of Snider Plaza roadway and landscape improvements
- Design of Miracle Mile Improvements

The Engineering staff also conducted inspections for new water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer mains associated with private redevelopment projects.
Infrastructure Maintenance
The division is responsible for maintaining and repairing the City's 74 miles of street pavement, 40 miles of alley pavement, 89 miles of water mains, 63 miles of sanitary sewer mains, 25 miles of storm sewer mains, and 510 fire hydrants. In 2023, the division installed 105 water and sewer taps, repaired 49 water main breaks, inspected more than 135,000 linear feet and cleaned more than 397,000 linear feet of sanitary sewer mains.

Traffic Division
The division maintains and repairs more than 6,000 traffic signs, 33 signalized intersections, 120 decorative street lights, school zone flashers, pavement markings, public parking areas, and miscellaneous traffic control devices. In 2023, the division distributed barricades and signs for 67 road closures. The division also oversaw the design of traffic signal improvements at Lovers and Dickens and Airline and University.

Sanitation Division
This division collects residential waste twice a week and residential recycling, brush and yard waste once a week. Commercial waste and recycling dumpsters are emptied up to six times a week. In 2023, crews collected more than 17,000 tons of material. Of that material, 22% was diverted from the landfill for recycling or composting.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

University Park remains a very safe place to live and work. The City's most reported crime in 2023 was Burglary of Motor Vehicles. Many of the 143 victims admitted the items stolen were left in plain sight. Moreover, much of the time, victims acknowledged their vehicles were left unlocked, making wallets, purses, computer laptops and jewelry easy and quick to obtain. UPPD continues to stress that residents should lock their vehicles and take a moment to remove their valuables or place them in the trunk. To further reduce crimes of opportunity, it’s also a good idea to keep all household doors locked and your garage doors down, even when you are at home.

Vehicle Thefts - In 2023, reported vehicle thefts rose slightly from the previous year. While 27 vehicles were stolen in 2022, that figure rose to 31 last year. Here as well, owners are making things easier for thieves, often telling officers they left the keys or the key fob in the vehicle.

Traffic Safety - 127 traffic collisions were reported in 2023. UPPD continues to use targeted enforcement in select locations to help keep that number relatively small.

Other 2023 Crime Statistics
Robberies – 3
Business Burglaries – 5
Residential Burglaries – 14
Bike Thefts – 39

Following budgetary approval by the City Council, starting with the 2022-23 academic year, a UPPD officer is now on-duty throughout the school day on each of the city's HPISD campuses. This includes the continuation of an officer at McCulloch Intermediate School for the D.A.R.E. program.

School Crossing Guards - The City partners with HPISD to provide crossing guard services at 19 locations throughout the city. The City continues to fund this effort, while HPISD personnel oversee its day-to-day operations.

Direct Alarm Monitoring - Business and residential addresses continue to enroll in the City's Direct Alarm Monitoring service that links alarm systems directly to the Police Dispatch Center. At the end of 2023, the City had 3,151 Direct Alarm customers.

Service Calls - In 2023, UPPD answered 16,707 calls for service, which is over 1,400 fewer calls for service than the department recorded in 2022.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Comprehensive Community Risk Assessment Program
The department continues to develop a comprehensive risk assessment program to pinpoint and address local safety concerns, focused on serving residents of all ages. Ongoing programs, including those listed below, are the result of analysis of University Park households and attributes like the average square footage of homes, the percentage of existing household fire suppression systems and the widespread use of home smoke detectors.

- Steps to Fire Safety is a program for older adults involving education on fire and fall prevention
- Residential Knox Box Program gives emergency responders rapid access at homes during 911 calls
• Annual Residential Smoke Alarm Campaign
• Ongoing residential home safety inspections with the introduction of Virtual Home Inspection opportunity
• HPISD School Programs including Fire Prevention Week
• Classes on CPR, Stop the Bleed, AED (Automated External Defibrillator) training
• Car seat installations
• Presentations at church/civic organizations

UPFD Workplace/Equipment Enhancements
• Installation of video boards so personnel can view road closure updates, training tips, community event details and Human Resources Department updates (video boards are being installed in other City workplace locations)
• Installation of new fire bay overhead doors in March 2023
• Following the department’s ongoing replacement plan, a new MICU unit was placed in service, and a new pumper/engine was ordered

Fire Prevention Highlights
• Took over management of EMS and Fire Watch for special events at SMU and HPISD, and are preparing for increased attendance at sporting events due to SMU joining the Atlantic Coast Conference.
• Completed the Community Risk Reduction Plan.
• Implemented a tiered inspections approach according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Code 1730. Any commercial business that has a fire system continues to be inspected on an annual basis, and all other commercial businesses are inspected on a frequency based on their hazard type.
• Reviewed and inspected over 1 million square feet of new and remodeled commercial construction space within University Park and on the SMU campus (777,900 square feet on campus alone).

UPFD Community Event Highlights
• Holiday Tree Lighting in Snider Plaza
• National Night Out on the SMU campus
• Event use of a Sensory Board with interactive displays, including a fire sprinkler and fire alarm equipment
• Dog Walker Watch event with UPPD and SMU PD
• Santa Around Town - 7,260 followers on the Tracker
• 4th of July parade and celebration
• Junior Cattle Baron Event hosted at UPFD
• Hosted 20 birthday parties

UPFD Call Data - Response Area UP/HP/Dallas

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Activity Within University Park

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2023 Highlights

Staff partnered with various City departments on a range of projects. Here are the more noteworthy:
• Partnered with vendor to complete AV upgrades in the Council Chamber, Council Conference Room and Library Meeting Room
• Completed the replacement of the Parks and Recreation Department reservations/pool pass software
• Continued the project to replace the dispatch and records management application used by Police and Fire Departments
• Completed the project to update the Direct Alarm application

Projects slated for 2024
• Deploy tablets for field use for Parks, Public Works and Community Development
• Implement data warehouse with dashboard for City leadership
• Replace obsolete security cameras
• Complete the project to replace the dispatch and records management application used by Police and Fire Departments

COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING

In 2024, the Communications and Marketing team will be working with a new vendor to distribute an updated resident satisfaction survey to help City staff and City Council gauge current satisfaction, attitudes and expectations on a range of City services and programs. The survey will be conducted in late spring.
Featuring 16,000 square feet of user friendly spaces, the library offers a collection of books and other resources that are growing steadily to meet the needs of all patrons, regardless of age. Along with special children’s and teen areas, other features include:

- A local history/conference room housing a collection of books about Texas and Park Cities history. The room has a projector and drop-down screen for staff training and webinars.
- A magazine/quiet study room with magazines and newspapers and comfortable seating.
- Two rooms for study groups and project work.
- Downloadable and streaming media services – Overdrive electronic books, magazines and audiobooks, and Hoopla for ebooks and audiobooks, movies and music.
- A book blog about new materials in the library.
- A customized book concierge service for reading recommendations.
- Curbside delivery of requested books and materials.
- Historical information on most homes and buildings built in the City between 1925 and the mid-1970’s.

Story Times – Children’s Story Times are offered twice per week.

UP @ the Library Family Time – Held one Saturday a month, these programs feature performances that are fun for the whole family. Programs are sponsored by Christine McKenny and Allie Beth Allman and Associates.

Elementary Explorers – Hands-on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) projects held monthly for elementary students.

Create and Chill – A monthly art project using various mediums for elementary school students.

Children, Teen & Adult Summer Reading Programs – Involving more than 600 participants, reading prizes, and weekly entertainment. Program sponsors are the Friends of the University Park Public Library and Christine McKenny and Allie Beth Allman and Associates.

Adult Programs – Featuring author visits and crafting.

Family History at your Fingertips – Ancestry Library Edition is available on library computers. Additional family history databases can be accessed from home through the library’s website.

During FY2023, the City budgeted 261 full-time positions, hired 33 full-time employees and 82 seasonal employees. Within the same budget year, 31 employees left the City resulting in a turnover rate of 12%, 6% less than FY2022.

The Human Resources Department continues to focus on maintaining high quality, cost effective and competitive employee benefits and wages. Other key objectives include properly educating employees about benefits, City-wide policies and procedures, and effective retention and recruitment.

Key accomplishments:
- Updated and revised Administrative Orders on Time Reporting and Leave Benefits, including Military Leave, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace/Testing Procedures
- Reevaluated Risk and Liability Insurance coverages to ensure the most cost effective and extensive coverage for the City
- Conducted a comprehensive compensation study in coordination with Public Sector Consultants
- Enhanced Wellness and Benefits offerings to employees such as the following:
  - On-site dental cleanings
  - Vascular screens
  - COVID/Flu vaccinations
  - Airrosti Lunch and Learns
  - Carter BloodCare blood drive
  - Financial wellness seminars

Established a solid training schedule with the following:
- TMRS/Social Security Seminar
- New Hire Orientations
- DOT Drug and Alcohol Awareness and Testing
- FMLA, Military Leave & Drug Testing
- Fire Department Admin Order Overview
- Performance Management and Performance Evaluation Process
- Inclusivity, Collaboration and Respect Training
- Heat Exhaustion Prevention
- Supervisor Series with multiple classes
- Workplace Violence
- Understanding Generations
- Emotional Intelligence
- Sexual Harassment and Discrimination - in both English and Spanish