

Community speaks during listening session

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35 people, including parents.

“It’s important to have every voice in this search process,” Ms. Duron said. “It’s a huge value to have this conversation.”

She asked the group to identify:

- GISD’s strengths and challenges, and what would attract a candidate to Georgetown.

- A superintendent’s desirable attributes, expertise and leadership style.

District challenges and strengths

The lists of feedback from those in attendance grew through the nearly two-hour session. The most detailed list — district challenges — reached nearly 30 items. It included district wide issues such as enrollment growth, low-rated schools in the State accountability system, staff retention/salaries, a lack of perceived district transparency and changing demographics.

Some challenges were more targeted

— improving early childhood education, GISD having an administrative staff that is “too lean,” the GISD board being at-large rather than location- or area-based and “upholding faith-based ideals.”

Strengths were positive statements and included the district’s graduation rate, new facilities, community involvement and parent support.

Qualifications

Community members also voiced some of the desired qualities of the next superintendent:

- Attributes — communicator, transparent, focus on all students and possessing a “servant heart.”

- Expertise — Able to lead change, curriculum-focused, track record of raising academic achievement and working with a diverse community.

- Leadership style — Collaborative, visible in the community, sets high expectations and a “non-marketer.”

Next Steps

Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates’s next step in helping GISD trustees hire a superintendent is to synthesize all of the sessions’ input into a leadership profile—a document describing the desired qualities and strengths of GISD’s next superintendent — from which the hiring firm will screen applicants.

The leadership profile will be completed by early June, and it will be posted on the district’s website, www.georgetwonisd.org.

Board President Elizabeth McFarland said in April that trustees are “committed to knowing what the community wants in its next superintendent, to match the right leader with the school district.”

Trustees hope to select a lone finalist for superintendent by July 17 and officially complete the hiring on August 7 — the day before district staff convocation for the 2023-24 school year.

Dickie Dale Sanders

We regretfully announce the passing of Dickie Dale Sanders, on May 16, 2023.

Dick had a difficult battle with Dementia and is now peacefully at home in heaven. He was preceded in death by his brothers, Ray (Tooter) and Billy Earl and also by his loving sisters Linda Hall and Betty Stone.

His youngest brother Rickey Sanders currently resides in Mansfield, Texas.

Dick’s son Brady Dale and his daughters Linda K. Larson and Kristen Grace all mourn his loss and are thankful he is now at peace.

He also leaves behind three grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Dick’s quick wit, charisma and the ever-present way he enjoyed making others laugh will forever be remembered.

He requested that no services take place and to instead gather with loved ones for a smile and a laugh.



186 donated bikes ready for kids with perfect attendance to claim.

Sheriff’s department donates bikes to Purl Elementary

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enforcement and the community.

The department said it hopes to extend this program to other elementary schools

in Williamson County and will prioritize lower income schools. Next year, they hope to give bikes to students at Florence Elementary School, where 90 percent of students qualify for free-or-reduced meals.

Public transportation a hot topic during council workshop

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Past and future steps for city transit services

Elected officials and city staff have discussed public transportation since the early 2000s, when a bus pilot program started out of Sun City, Mr. Waggoner said. A Transit Development Plan — which includes a market analysis, community engagement and review of existing conditions and opens the municipality up to Federal funding opportunities — was conducted and adopted in 2016.

The study resulted in the city funding GoGeo, a fixed-route and paratransit service operated through CapMetro, an Austin-based public transportation provider.

“Since we started that partnership with Capital Metro with GoGeo in 2017, the city has provided about 80,000 rides to folks in our community,” Mr. Waggoner said.

The GoGeo service was disbanded in 2021, and the city now uses CARTS — a CapMetro subcontractor providing limited paratransit services to “qualified people with disabilities and seniors age 65 and older living within the Georgetown service area,” according to the city website.

Services include \$2 rides to eligible users with curb-to-curb service available from 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Ride reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance. Reservations can be made by calling 512-478-7433 or by visiting <https://gogeo.georgetown.org/paratransit-schedule>.

CARTS provided 2,155 total trips to Georgetown residents by March of this year, an increase compared to the 1,540 rides provided by March 2022, Mr. Waggoner said. The city’s share of costs for the service sits at \$345,452 while the remaining is covered via \$230,301 of federal funding.

“In terms of our costs of service to our community, it’s about \$54 per ride,” Mr. Waggoner said.

There are 495 residents registered as CARTS riders, with 145 being ADA subscribers under the age of 65 and 350 being 65 and up. The top 10 destinations for riders include Walmart, St. Helen’s Catholic Church, San Gabriel Senior Village, DaVita Dialysis, St. David’s Medical Center and Aldi.

Moving into the next fiscal year, there is \$514,355 in Federal Transit Funding available to the city, Mr. Waggoner said.

Council provides feedback

Staff asked for feedback on how to plan for transportation services going into fiscal year 2024, presenting three separate options to council.

Options presented were:

- Option A: Continue with existing service and expedite completion of a Transit Development Plan for implementation in Fiscal Year 2025.

- Option B: Modify service in Fiscal Year 2024 and do not complete a TDP, funding 100 percent of the transit services locally.

- Option C: Modify service in FY24 and do not complete a TDP, funding 100 percent of transit services locally.

Option A found favor with District 5 Council Member Kevin Pitts, who also directed staff to look into potential rideshare options. This sentiment was echoed by District 1 Council Member Amanda Parr, who expressed wanting to expand services to provide transit options to a larger portion of the population.

“We have a gap in services and we don’t currently have any type services for our general population that for whatever reason is not able to have reliable transportation and that’s concerning to me,” Ms. Parr said. “My dream would be that we could find one service that would fit all three of these niches so that we would have a paratransit, a senior service and we would also have a program that would work for all of our population that needs transportation for whatever reason that is.”

District 6 Council Member Jake French strongly supported an option including a TDP.

“We need to do the TDP regardless of what options we select because we need the data and we need the information in order to select which way works best,” he said.

The Transit Development Plan would be put together in partnership with CapMetro, the city and a third-party contractor if the city decided to pursue it.

Meanwhile, District 3 Council Member Mike Triggs voiced support for Option B.

City staff will continue to look into feasible transit options and will bring findings back to council during future meetings, Mr. Woolery said.

Additional information about available services can be found online at <https://gogeo.georgetown.org>.

Georgetown Public Library is now KultureCity Certified

Frequent visitors of the Georgetown Public Library may notice new signs about the building, including “Headphone

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Ann Evans

Zone” or “Sensory Bag Available Here.” Why did the Library put these signs out and what do they mean? They are part of the Library becoming a KultureCity Certified Sensory Inclusive Organization.

KultureCity is a nationally recognized nonprofit that works to effect change for those with sensory needs in the community. The U.S. Census shows that about one in six individuals have a sensory sensitivity or similar invisible disability. Sensory sensitivities or challenges with sensory regulation are often experienced by individuals with autism, dementia, post-traumatic stress disorder and similar conditions. KultureCity offers several programs aimed at creating accepting and inclusive communities for those with sensory sensitivities, like the Sensory Inclusive program the library recently completed.

Individuals with sensory sensitivities can get overstimulated due to things like noise, which can regularly be part of events or services at venues like the library. With this new certification, the library is better prepared to create a comfortable and accommodating experience for patrons with sensory sensitivities. Other area Sensory Inclusive Certified venues include Dell Diamond, Q2 Stadium and the Moody Center.

To become certified, library staff completed training on recognizing those with sensory needs and how to handle a sensory overload situation. The new “Headphone Zone” signage in the library is part of wayfinding to assist patrons in locating areas that may be noisier than other spots throughout the building. Signs at each service desk indicate where patrons can check out a KultureCity Sensory Bag, which is equipped with noise-canceling headphones, fidget tools and verbal cue cards. A Calming Room is available inside the children’s room to act as a quick sensory sanctuary for patrons experiencing over stimulation. The room is equipped with soft furniture, soft lighting and other tools to provide a soothing atmosphere for someone before they are able to exit and continue enjoying the Library. Sensory Bags and the Calming Room are available for all ages.

Prior to their visit, families and individuals can download the free KultureCity App where they can view available sensory features, where they are located

and how to access them. The library also has a Social Story, which is a customized visual preview of what to expect when at the Library. You can also view the Social Story online here: <https://venue.kulturecity.org/venues/georgetown-public-library>

“I am very excited that the Georgetown Public Library is certified as a Sensory Friendly library through KultureCity,” said Bethni King, the library’s youth services librarian, who led the effort towards certification. “The certification, along with the Comfort Room and Sensory Storytime, are ways we are making the library more accessible to community members of all ages with sensory challenges. I really want everyone who visits the library to be comfortable and to feel welcome.”

We hope to see everyone in the library soon!

Ann Evans is the Adult Services Librarian at the Georgetown Public Library.

What’s going on in the library?

May 2- May 31: Happy 175th Birthday Georgetown Card Display (lobby)

May 16-June 18: Gretchen Peterson Johnston: Impressions of Georgetown (first floor café gallery)

May 16-June 18: Williamson County Art Guild: The Flavors of Texas (second floor galleries)

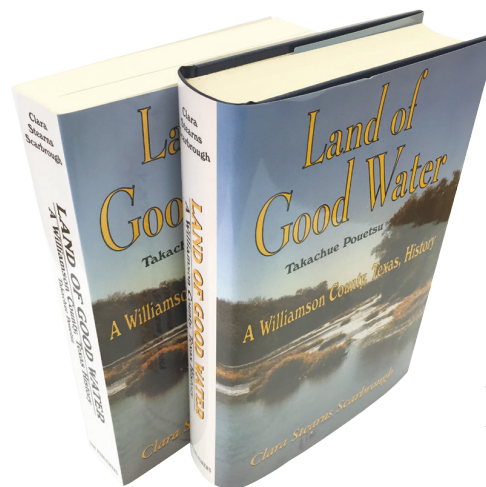
May 24, 11 a.m.: Dementia Conversations with Alzheimer’s Association

May 27, 2 p.m.: Write a Book “How To” A to Z: San Gabriel Writer’s League

May 29: Library closed in observance of Memorial Day

For more information about Library events, visit library.georgetown.org/events-calendar or call 512-930-3551.

A Must Read!



~~\$25~~
SOFTCOVER

~~\$35~~
HARDCOVER

\$20 +Tax

\$25 +Tax

Land of Good Water by Clara Stearns Scarbrough

“The Bible for Williamson County history.”

— Bob Banta, Austin American-Statesman

Winner! Best Regional History of 1973, Texas State Historical Association

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