



Annual Report 2021-2022

Harlingen Strong





In 2021, we continued efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the City of Harlingen partnered with Valley Baptist Harlingen, Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District, South Texas Emergency Care Foundation, and community volunteers to provide vaccines and boosters at the Harlingen Convention Center.

HARLINGEN STRONG

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Dear fellow residents of Harlingen,

We are excited to present this year's annual report to the citizens of Harlingen! So many great things continue to happen in our City even as we recover from what we hope is the worst of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We're so proud to report that the U.S. Census measured that the City of Harlingen grew by 10.76% compared to Brownsville's 6.69% and Cameron County's 3.36%. Those numbers reflect Harlingen's strong growth pattern over the last 10 years. Our retail sales tax revenues have also more than doubled over the last 10 years from \$14 million to \$29 million, another solid indicator of our growth.



Mayor Chris Boswell

We continued our priority commitment to improving our drainage infrastructure by completing another Master Drainage plan project– the \$2.4 million 9th & 13th Street Drainage Improvements. This is the 27th project completed from our Master Drainage Plan. And the City Commission allocated another \$6 million of CARES ACT funds this past year for additional projects we hope to complete this year.

Our partnership with UT-RGV continues to flourish as we cut the ribbon on the Institute of Neurosciences which houses both research and clinical services for brain health treatment unique to the entire State of Texas.

And our partnership with HCISD and UT-RGV also saw the opening of Collegiate High, the early college campus, which will not only allow our students to complete 2 years of college in High School but to complete 4-year University degrees right here in the City.

We thank the Harlingen Police Department for moving our crime rate lower by 6%. And we are also very proud of what we have been able to do with our COVID Vaccine Clinics, food distributions, and our Financial Hardship Assistance Programs all necessitated by the pandemic.

There are many more accomplishments and milestones for you to read about in this report. I want to personally thank each one of the City of Harlingen employees for a job well-done in 2021.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Boswell".



Office of The Mayor

Harlingen City Commission



Richard Uribe
Commissioner District 1



Frank Puente
Commissioner District 2



Michael Mezmar
Commissioner District 3



Frank Morales
Commissioner District 4



Rene Perez
Commissioner District 5

Meet the City Manager



Gabriel Gonzalez
City Manager, CPM



Craig Cook
Assistant City Manager
External Services



Josh Ramirez
Assistant City Manager
Internal Services

Citizens of Harlingen, Mayor and City Commissioners, Appointed Board Members:

I was appointed City Manager by the City Commission on October 11, 2021. I cannot describe what a tremendous honor and great responsibility this was for me. At the time of my appointment, I had served the City of Harlingen for 20 years as an Assistant City Manager and had a combined 35 years of government experience. I am ready and excited to address the issues of today and the challenges yet to come.

To assist me in this endeavor, I have just hired two Assistant City Managers that bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the City, Craig Cook, Assistant City Manager External Services and Josh Ramirez, Assistant City Manager Internal Services. Rest assured the City of Harlingen is in good hands.

Over these last few months, we have embarked on a journey that will improve drainage, not just in Harlingen but the majority of Cameron County. We have administered COVID Vaccines, help feed those in need, and provided rental, mortgage and utility financial assistance to those most in need. We did this through various City Departments and with the partnerships from Loaves and Fishes and the RGV Food Bank. I want to personally thank these organizations for their unwavering support.

This Annual Report highlights the many great accomplishments the men and women of this stellar organization have accomplished. Multi-family units, residential and retail construction have increased from the year before. Our population is growing, our airport is thriving, and we have created partnerships with TSTC, HCISD, and UTRGV that will ensure our children and young adults will have educational opportunities in Harlingen that are second to none. This is truly a great time to be a resident of Harlingen, Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gabriel Gonzalez".

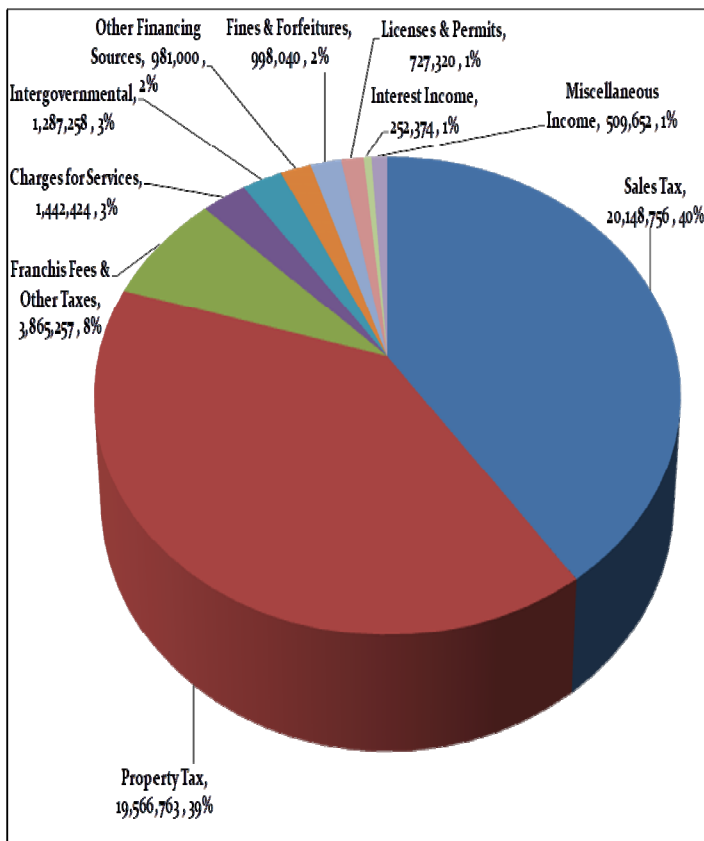
Finance

The City of Harlingen remains financially sound and anticipates finishing FY 2021-2022 with an estimated fund balance of \$24,109,536. The city's largest revenue source continues to be sales and property taxes respectively. Franchise fees and other taxes come in third.

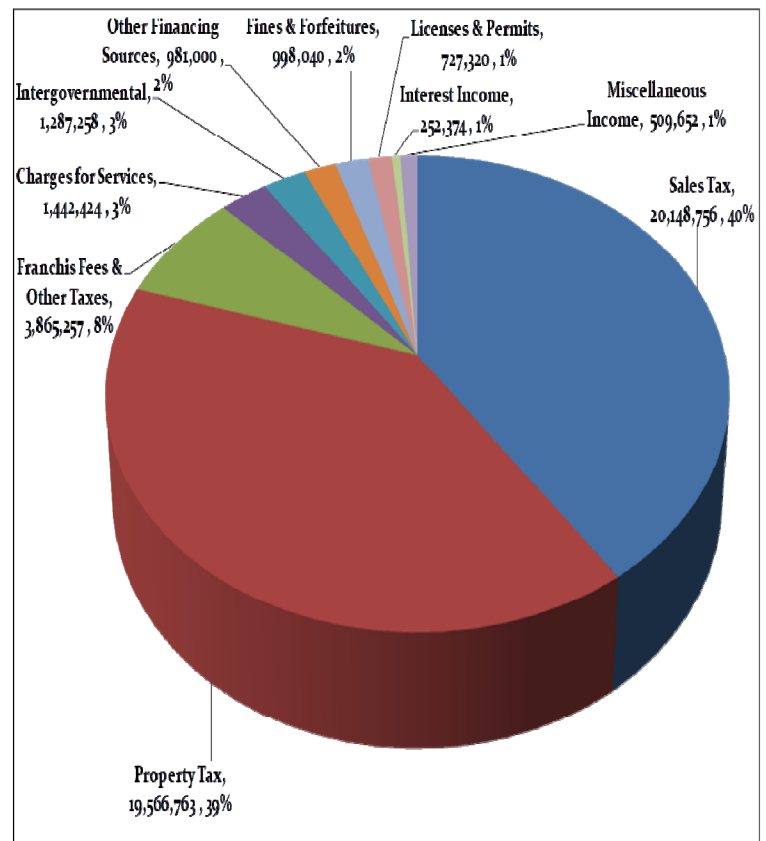
Harlingen's credit rating is an "AA+" which means credit rating companies see the City as having a very strong capability to meet financial commitments. This has been reaffirmed by Fitch Ratings Inc. which reports that Harlingen has solid revenue growth prospect, superior financial resilience, exceptionally strong gap-closing capacity, and moderate fixed costs. Fitch predicts Harlingen will continue to have strong reserve levels with a strong operating performance. Standard & Poor's Rating Services also reports that Harlingen's economy is stable predicting the fund balance will again remain above 30% of expenditures for the current and next fiscal years.

FY 2021-2022 Budget Highlights include \$2.5 million for street maintenance and overlay projects, \$500,000 for road maintenance including the purchase of a street sweeper, \$220,000 for public safety equipment, and \$578,000 in park improvements including restroom facilities in the downtown area and the reopening of the executive nine at the Tony Butler Golf Course.

Proposed Revenues \$49,778,844
General Fund



Proposed Revenues \$49,778,844
General Fund



Grants

\$6.2 MILLION

Texas Water Development Board grant for Regional Flood Protection Study

\$237,774

FEMA Grant for drainage improvements along East Jefferson, N. 13th, and N. 5th,

\$6.0 MILLION

American Rescue Plan allocation for drainage improvements on Jefferson Storm Sewer, Bus. 77 & 13th Storm Sewer, Lozano Detention Pond, and West Commerce Storm Sewer

\$2.8 MILLION

State/CDC funds to increase COVID-19 Vaccination capacity for the jurisdiction

\$1.4 MILLION

Texas Health and Human Services grant award for vaccination efforts

\$600,000

Texas Department of State Health Services funds to expand public health workforce

\$522,136

CDBG Cares Act award to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic

\$495,398

CDBG Cares Act 2nd award to help residents affected by the pandemic

\$237,870

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs Emergency Rental Assistance grant

\$215,700

CDBG funds to renovate Victor Park Pool

\$205,000

CDBG funds for additional parking at Victor Pool

\$185,000

CDBG funds to install Sports Field Lighting at Victor Park Football Field



Sports Lights added at Victor Park.

Grants

\$141,000

MPO Transportation Alternative grant to design trail extension from McKelvey to Hugh Ramsey

\$115,000

HEB Grant to resurface the 14 tennis courts at the HEB Tennis Center

\$112,251

CDBG Funds to purchase dog park amenities including shades and exercise equipment

\$85,932

Texas Parks & Wildlife grant to design a Kayak Launching Facility at McCullough Park

\$10,000

HEB Grant to renovate Historical Building at Harlingen Arts & Heritage Museum



Historical Building Renovations.

\$517,465

12 police grants for equipment, education, and crime prevention programs

\$200,000

CDBG funds for the purchase of a Fire Brush Truck

\$7,000

Enbridge Safe Community First Responders Grant to purchase hose nozzles

\$150,999

E-Rate discounts for network upgrades at the Public Library

\$50,000

Texas Supports Libraries Grant to create cohesive computer lab

\$10,746

E-Rate discounts for Harlingen Library Internet services

\$1,100

Junior League of Harlingen Grant to introduce STEAM Bags Program

COVID-19 Response

As COVID-19 continued to strengthen its hold on the nation and the demand for vaccines grew, the City dedicated more than 100 employees to conduct vaccine clinics in Harlingen.

Working with nurses and staff from Valley Baptist Hospital Harlingen, Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District, South Texas Emergency Care Foundation (STEC), and community volunteers, the clinics were held bi-monthly at the Harlingen Convention Center as the region worked tirelessly to slow the spread of the infectious disease.



Concurrently, the Federal Drug Administration and The Centers for Disease Control cleared the way for more age groups to get the vaccines and then boosters, so to keep up with the demand, the Harlingen Health Department hired two full time nurses and eight additional healthcare personnel to administer vaccines weekly at the Lon C. Hill Building.

To help our homebound population and lend a helping hand at the City Vaccine Clinics, 15 Harlingen Fire Fighters underwent specialized training preparing them to administer COVID-19 Vaccines to Harlingen residents. Together with STEC Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) they've administered hundreds of shots throughout the City helping people with minimal mobility or a form of disability that prohibits them from leaving their homes. Harlingen was the first City in the Rio Grande Valley to implement a homebound vaccination program.



Fifteen Harlingen Fire Fighters volunteered to get specialized training to help administer vaccines to the thousands of people waiting for their turn to get vaccinated.

COVID-19 Response

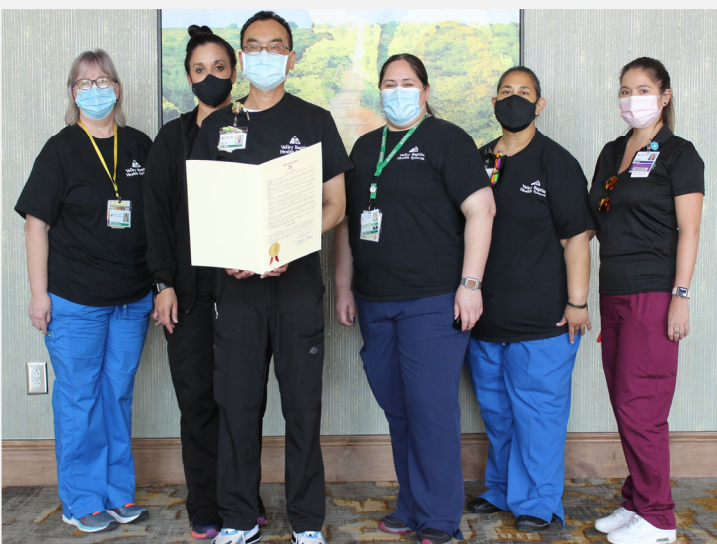
In an effort to get more people vaccinated sooner rather than later, the Harlingen City Commission approved an incentive program in September for first time COVID-19 Vaccines. The City dedicated \$100,000 of the American Rescue Plan Act Funds for this program. For three months, Cameron County residents were eligible for a \$50 gift card after getting their first vaccine. When the program closed on Nov 30, 1,119 incentive cards had been issued.

In 2021, the City held 74 clinics and administered 28,509 vaccines.

Weekly vaccine clinics continue at the Health Department and a monthly clinic at the Convention Center.



In 2021, Harlingen area adults, teens, and children as young as five years old, rolled up their sleeves to get their vaccines and boosters.



Valley Baptist pharmacists and nurses prepared and helped administer the doses.



ECISD nurses administered vaccines indoors and outdoors at the Harlingen Convention Center.

COVID-19 Response



Food Distributions– For almost two years, the City of Harlingen and the Food Bank RGV held monthly distributions at the Harlingen Soccer Complex. Thousands of families in Cameron County have been helped. The food was provided by the Food Bank and distributed once per month by City employees. The effort began in April 2020 when COVID-19 was at its highest levels and many people were out of a job. That year, the City and Food Bank distributed 501,282 pounds of food benefiting 40,115 people. In 2021, 1,117,628 pounds of food was distributed to 88,196 people.



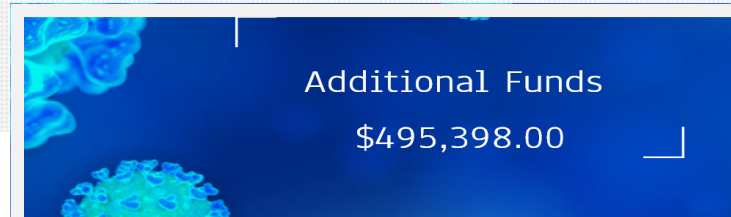
COVID-19 Response

Financial Assistance Programs-The City of Harlingen was fortunate to receive funds to help residents affected by COVID-19 pay rent, mortgage, and utilities.

- ◆ CDBG Funds—\$522,136



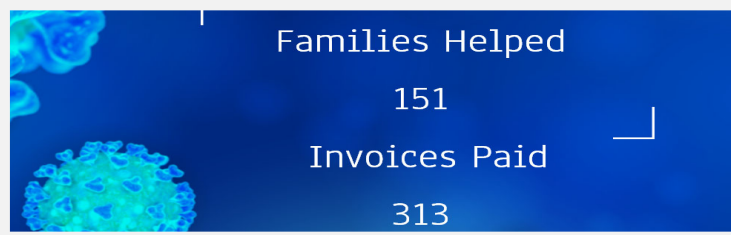
- ◆ CDBG Funds—\$495,398 for 2022



- ◆ Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs – \$237,870.76 in rental assistance.



- ◆ CARES Act Fund administered by Loaves & Fishes—\$232,403.02



Public Safety

Overall Crime Down by 7.7%

Violent Crime 2021 2020

Murder	9	5
Rape	6	23
Assault	1117	1075
TOTAL	1132	1103

Property Crime 2021 2020

Theft	1736	2044
MV Theft	138	124
Burglary	311	310
Robbery	51	69
TOTAL	2236	2547

Violent Crime 5 year comparison

Year Crimes

2021	1132
2020	1103
2019	1217
2018	1272
2017	1306

2.6%
Increase

Property Crime 5 year comparison

Year Crimes

2021	2236
2020	2547
2019	3278
2018	2885
2017	2725

12.2%
Decrease

In 2021, the Harlingen Communication Center received 56,911 9-1-1 calls, 40,666 officer initiated calls, and 49,715 calls for service.



The Harlingen Police Department, under the direction of Chief Mike Kester has an authorized strength of 134 officers.



Dispatcher Moises Cruz receives Life-Saving Award.



HPD Officers take part in the monthly City Food Distributions at the Soccer Complex.

Public Safety

The Harlingen Fire Department, under the direction of Chief Rafael Balderas has an authorized strength of 110 fire-fighters.



Fire Department Training Tower renovated allowing for local training exercises.



December 2021-Fire Chief Rafael Balderas and administration staff welcome 10 new fire fighters after successfully completing their training and acquiring the necessary state certification.



Joint Firefighter & Police Officer Honor Guard for City events. HFD takes part in the monthly food distributions at the Soccer Complex and congratulations to Lt. Alberto Cruz for being named the RGV Firefighters & Fire Marshal's Association Firefighter of the year. He has been with HFD 16 years.

Airport

Valley International Airport is your connection to the world. VIA offers one of the most comprehensive portfolios of destinations with 11 being non-stop.



In March 2021, Southwest Airlines increased seat capacity by 120% in and out of the RGV.



With daily non-stop flights to Dallas, in March 2021, American Airlines added non-stop to Chicago.



In April 2021, VIA welcomed Viva Aerobus Airlines with non-stop to Monterrey, Mexico with connections to more than 30 domestic routes such as Cancun, Guadalajara, and Mexico City.



With non-stop to Denver, in Sept 2021, Frontier Airlines added non-stop service to Las Vegas.



Two months later in Nov 2021, Frontier added non-stop flights to Orlando.

Airport



United Airlines offers non-stop flights to Houston's



Sun Country Airlines offers seasonal service (Nov-April) to Minneapolis.



Delta Airlines offers seasonal non-stop service to Minneapolis.

Coming in 2022, Southwest adding one more daily non-stop to Austin and more seat capacity to Houston and Dallas.

American and United are adding dual carrying service offering coach and business class.

Low-cost carriers adding more frequency and more flights.

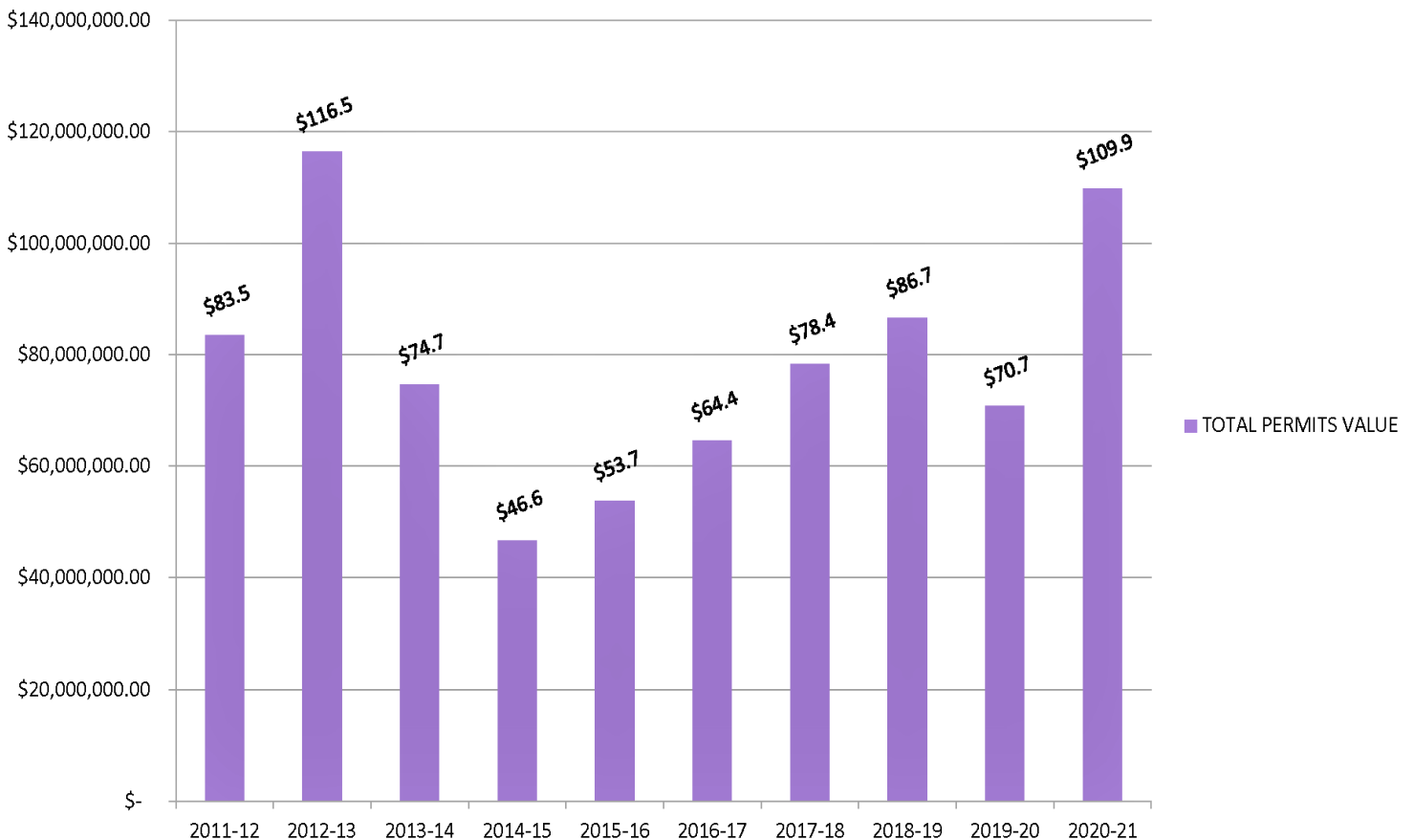


August 2021-NASA Astronauts led by Commanders Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams visit VIA and United Launch Alliance where major components of the Atlas V Rocker are manufactured. #Proudly made in Harlingen, TX, USA.

Permits & Development

- Increase in Building Permits by 55.28% with a construction value of \$109,857,469.53 up from \$70,745,821.00 in 2020.
- Increase in new home Permits by 12.3%. We issued 256 permits in 2021 compared to 228 in 2020.
- Increase in permits for Duplex/Apartments by 530% with a construction value of \$34,586,899 in 2021 compared to \$5,487,000 in 2020.
- Increase in total permits issued by The City of Harlingen in 2021 with 899 compared to 759 in 2020.

City of Harlingen Total Building Permit Values Per Fiscal Year



Permits & Development



Sam's Club invested \$1 million to renovate the store's interior giving it a brand new look. Harlingen's first Food Park is set to open in March 2022 on Jefferson. This \$500,000 investment includes a stage, dog park, volleyball and basketball courts. Additionally, Gillman is investing \$8 million to build a Honda Dealership on the expressway next to Gillman Chevrolet.



A private investment of \$30 million is bringing close to 100 new apartments to the corner of Ed Carey & Lamb. They are set to open mid-summer. dd's Discounts invested \$900,000 to remodel the old Bed Bath & Beyond and is set to open in October 2022.



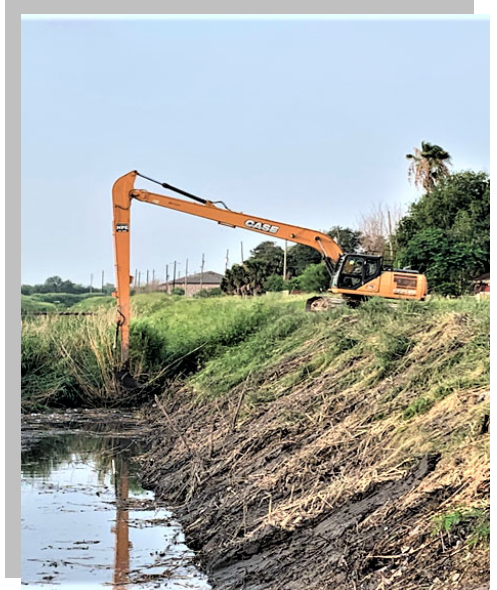
Aguilar's Meat Market is joining the Harlingen community in Nov 2022. The family owned business invested \$750,000 to build the store off the Expressway next to Kubota. Party City is planning to build a \$1.2 million store next to the new TJ Maxx on Dixieland Drive. In the same shopping plaza, Spec's Liquor spent \$500,000 to renovate the old Luby's with a planned opening of March

Improvement Projects

Construction continues throughout the City focused on improving drainage and roadways. In 2021, Harlingen dedicated millions of dollars and obtained millions more in grants to fund current and future projects.

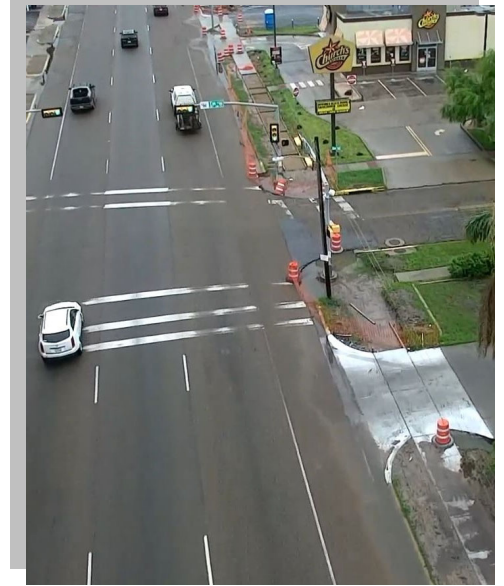


The 9th & 13th Drainage Improvement Project was one of the City's largest in 2021. The goal was to increase capacity and mitigate flooding. The \$2.8 million project is now complete. The cost was shared between the City, Texas Water Development Board, and FEMA. It involved replacing the entire storm sewer system, 14 manholes, and 52 inlets.



In 2021, the City of Harlingen also removed the existing line at the retention pond in the South Christian Circle Subdivision and created more flow and capacity; graded 17,900 linear feet of roadside ditches; and cleaned and cleared 60,683 linear feet of drain ditch slopes throughout the City.

Improvement Projects



In 2021, City crews poured 6,360 linear feet of sidewalk throughout the City. Meantime, the \$3.9 million TxDOT sidewalk project also continued in Harlingen. This grant is adding 13.2 miles of sidewalk to several areas of the City including Business 77, I69E, and Harrison and Tyler – both from Dixieland to F Street.



In 2021, the City of Harlingen collected and transported 62,477 tons of solid waste to the Edinburg Landfill and collected 206 tons of recyclable materials at the Self-Drop-Off center on Commerce. The recyclable materials were transported to the McAllen Recycling Center.

Park Improvements



March 2021-Ribbon cutting ceremony for the all new Lon C. Hill Destination Park on Fair Park Boulevard. Phase 2 is already in the design process and it includes building a special needs ball field and extending the walking trail north across the street to run behind Casa de Amistad.



December 2021-Ribbon cutting ceremony for the new HEB Tennis Center. Located at Pendleton Park, this center now includes a pro-shop, air-conditioned space, and a covered patio. The pro-shop includes an office, training room, restrooms, a spectator viewing area, and a lobby. The cost was \$712,000 with the majority coming from a 2001 Certificate of Obligation Bond and \$115,000 from HEB to resurface all 14 courts.

Park Improvements



July 2021-Commenced new B-Cycle Bikeshare Program with new bike rent stations at Destination Park, McKelvey Park, Museum, and Hugh Ramsey Park. In November, the Library opened the state's first automated 24-hour library by Envisionware at Destination Park. Additionally, this park now has free Wi-Fi. Also in Nov, the City hired a contractor to revamp the bridge on the Executive 9 at the Tony Butler Golf Course.



A Kayak Launching Facility is under design thanks to a grant from the Texas Parks & Wildlife. The facility will be at McCullough Park and allow residents and visitors to kayak up and down the Arroyo Colorado.

Living Strong in Harlingen

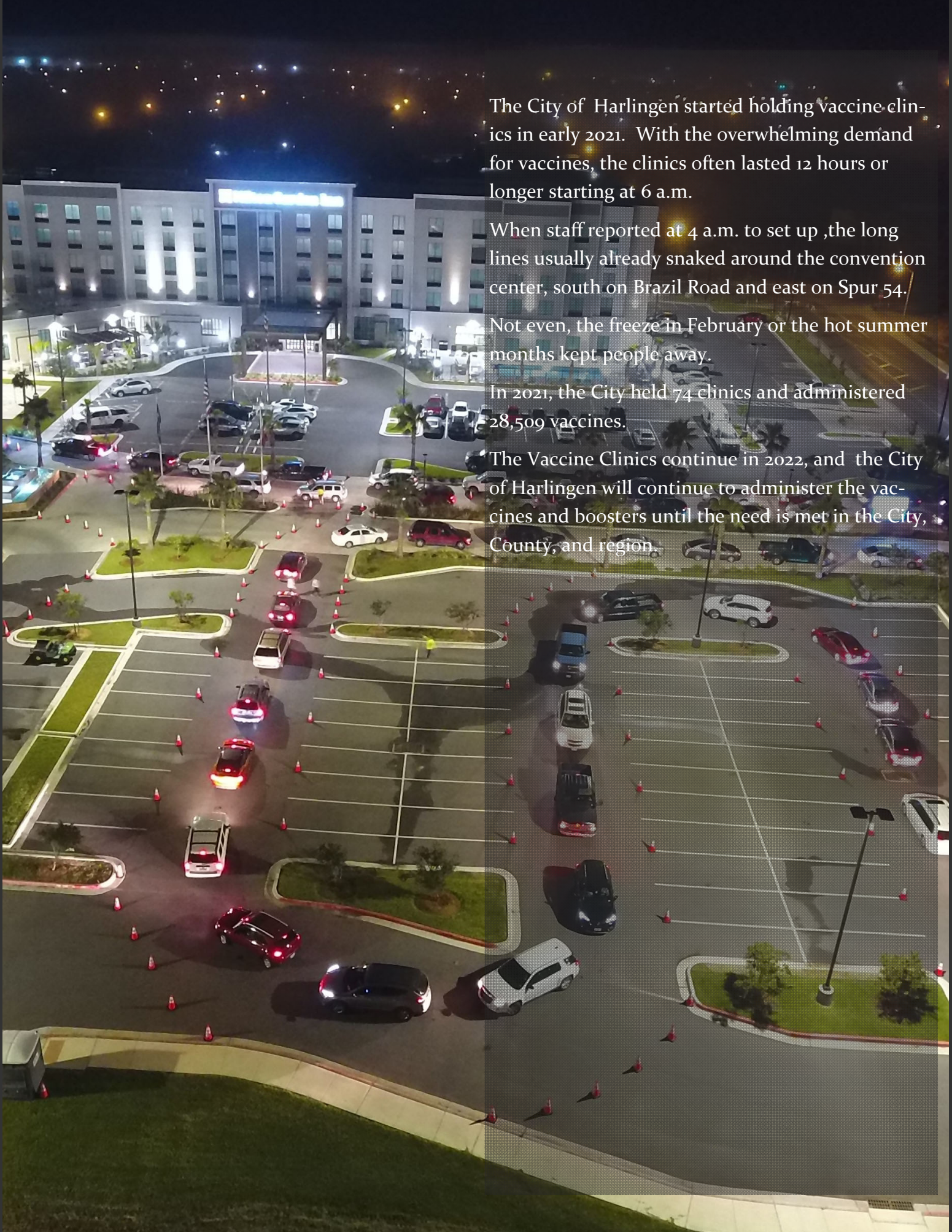


Living Strong in Harlingen



Living Strong in Harlingen



An aerial night photograph of a large parking lot. A long line of cars, including sedans, SUVs, and pickup trucks, is parked in a designated area, separated by orange traffic cones. The cars' headlights and taillights are visible. In the background, a large, multi-story building with many windows is illuminated. The sky is dark with some distant lights.

The City of Harlingen started holding vaccine clinics in early 2021. With the overwhelming demand for vaccines, the clinics often lasted 12 hours or longer starting at 6 a.m.

When staff reported at 4 a.m. to set up, the long lines usually already snaked around the convention center, south on Brazil Road and east on Spur 54.

Not even, the freeze in February or the hot summer months kept people away.

In 2021, the City held 74 clinics and administered 28,509 vaccines.

The Vaccine Clinics continue in 2022, and the City of Harlingen will continue to administer the vaccines and boosters until the need is met in the City, County, and region.

Annual Report

2021-2022

Publication produced by the City of Harlingen
Public Relations Department.



City of Harlingen

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