



This is not your typical State of the City and I sincerely hope you will take the time to review it. I promise if you do, you'll be inspired to hold elected officials accountable and understand what will happen if you don't. My commitments to you:

- End Wasteful Spending and Restore Fiscal Health
- Protect and Invest in Our City Assets
- Leadership for Responsible Growth
- Restore Trust Through Transparent Communication Bringing Greater Accountability

END WASTEFUL SPENDING & RESTORE FISCAL HEALTH

The fiscal health of our City is the foundation for future success. One of the most concerning realizations was that most of utility profits were used to operate city government. Therefore, gas, electric, water and wastewater utilities never had the money to invest in necessary upgrades and critical maintenance. In addition, everything was expensed to the general fund leaving no way to make financially sound decisions.

After establishing a transparent honest budget, this administration was able to turnaround a City from a \$6M deficit (requiring over 50% of utility profits) to a fiscally self-sustaining state in three years. In addition, we are now paying expenses out of the same funds for which it was generated.

Expenses are now paid out of the same fund for which it was generated, and our Utilities and City budgets financially operate independently setting the foundation for future prosperity. Because the City relied on half of the Utility Department's net profit to pay for government expenses, important upgrades and necessary annual maintenance of Wastewater, Water, Electric and Gas were ignored. It was critical to focus on creating a self-sustaining City budget so our Utility Department could reinvest its profits in long-overdue infrastructure upgrades. As of FY2020, which began on October 1, 2019, this practice has ended.

To put this in perspective, if we continued hiding City operating expenses in the Utility budget and transferring profits to pay government expenses, the City would have falsely reported massive surpluses each year.

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
City Surplus	\$4,861,460	\$4,216,218	\$3,936,051

This shows you how much better we are financially comparatively in addition to what we have been able to keep in utilities to continue needed upgrades.

Hired a new outside attorney for litigation and land-use planning tasked with settling long-term lawsuits, preventing potential lawsuits in the best interest of taxpayers, and charging an hourly rate covered by our insurance. This change lowered legal fees for litigation and planning by 54%!

Unfortunately, the Council-appointed City attorney expense has been increasing while the level of service and accountability have declined. He has proven to be a bias, political appointment who has a serious conflict with me. An ethical issue I hope can be addressed next term.

	Change Since Last Term	Manged By
City Legal: Litigation, Planning & Misc	-54%	Mayor
Utility Department	-21%	Mayor
City Attorney	30%	Council

Hired **professional directors** to fill in experience needed to reduce City and Utility liability and established collaborative planning for department improvements.

Discontinued the practice of Mayor drawing two salaries (one for Mayor and one for Superintendent of Utilities). Forgoing \$60k of the \$90k historically paid to the Mayor, I was able to put this towards hiring & paying an experienced Utility Operations Director who has put in place a strategic long-term plan to fully upgrade all utilities.

Discontinued offering new hires free family insurance – practice that has been in place for many years. This was simply not financially sustainable for taxpayers. I influenced Council to discontinue offering this for hires. We value our employees and remain very competitive.

However, Council passed an ordinance give free family insurance to future elected officials! I vetoed the ordinance stating it lacked transparency with the wording “The Mayor and members of the City Council will have the option of participating in the City of Fairhope's Group Health Insurance Plan Option I” Option I was the old option no longer available. There is no cost attached to this option because they did not want you to know.

Understand, serving as a councilmember is a part-time job. The family insurance package benefit value was \$17,200 in 2017 and \$15,576 in 2019. Unfortunately, Council overrode my veto and here is the total benefit council and mayor had last term, this term and next term.

<u>Total Annual Benefit</u>	<u>2012-2016</u>	<u>2016-2020</u>	<u>2020-2024</u>
Mayor	\$90,000	\$32,400	\$85,000
w/ Free Family Insurance	\$107,200	\$47,976	\$100,576
Council	7,200	\$9,600	\$12,000
w/ Free Family Insurance	\$24,400	\$25,176	\$27,576
Council President	8,400	\$10,800	\$13,200
w/ Free Family Insurance	25,600	\$26,376	\$28,776
<i>Value of free family insurance \$17,200 in 2017 and \$15,576 in 2019</i>			

- Reduced contract engineering expenses by 68% by hiring in-house engineers for Public Works Director, Operation Director and Electric Superintendent. The real savings, however, is significantly reducing exposure to liability.
- Successfully transitioned to Munis software streamlining utility billing, purchase orders, fine-tuning the budget process, creating an objective hiring process, and increasing overall productivity and efficiency.
- Instituted an honest budget where expenses are paid out of the same fund for which it is generated to determine opportunities for improvement.
- Increased lodging tax, an expense which does not affect citizen's pocketbook.
- Streamlined processes for acquisitions and purchasing.

For the first time in Fairhope history, the 2020 City Budget proposal requires zero dollars of utility profits to balance.

The City was finally self-sustaining financially last year and can operate independently from our Utility Department. There are ZERO Utility dollars paying for government operating expenses. I'm not sure how many ways I can articulate it, but this is a very good thing and something to be celebrated!

And in case anyone tries to tell you "it's all City money", know this is patently false. City operates with tax dollars. The Utility Department operates with rate fees. These budgets must operate separately, or we will end up in the same place as we were before I took office. The City required over half of utility profits to operate which prevented necessary annual maintenance and critical upgrade needs in each

utility (gas, electric, water and wastewater). Utilities could not afford both, so, the City budget was presented each year as if it were fiscally healthy when in fact, it was running at around a \$6M deficit.

Since there has been some confusion about what this really means, I want to show you how the City and Utility financials would look if we made no changes. The City would have robbed the Utility Department \$4.86M in 2017, \$4.2M in 2018 and almost \$4M in 2019.

The City was running at an almost \$6M deficit annually before this term. During the last three years, the City has taken over 100% of its own expenses leaving the utility department in a position to afford its long overdue upgrades and rehabilitation. **The co-mingling of money is what put our utilities in the state they're in today.**

This Administration has exceeded budget goals every year this term while at the same time paying off debt, increasing cash funds and creating a City budget requiring zero utility profits to pay government expenses. From the last presentation, here is what the City financials would look like if **no corrections were made in reporting expenses in appropriate departments:**

IF THIS ADMINISTRATION INAPPROPRIATLY REPORTED FINICIALS LIKE BEFORE, THE CITY WOULD SHOW A FALSE SURPLUS.

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
City Surplus	\$4,861,460	\$4,216,218	\$3,936,051
Utility Surplus	\$2,148,709	\$2,504,961	\$2,995,084

But this gives you a comparison of how much better the City is doing financially. Utilities can now afford maintenance and needed upgrades. With all these significant financial improvements to both Utility and City financials, citizens must hold elected officials in the future to keep these budgets independent and also consider a Utility Board.

It's also important to note that the Economic & Community Development and Fairhope Docks were newly created departments this term. In spite of Council not funding the Econ/Comm Dev department to operate in its full capacity, this department has secured millions of dollars of funding for

Police Jurisdiction

I have also communicated over the years the fact that the Police and Fire Department cannot financially sustain their respected jurisdictions without equitable funding from the County due to population growth.

Our Police Jurisdiction is over 80 square miles which is not financially sustainable or manageable. A planned transition with the County to reduce this to City limits would better serve the citizens who are paying the lion’s share of the expenses. It would also indirectly incentivize those who are contiguous to annex into the City. The Police Department was grossly understaffed for many years. The City has increased the PD budget by 37% this term and we are now fully staffed for City limits. It would require much more to adequately manage the current police jurisdiction and the expense to do it would financially strain the City because the revenue collected from the PJ does not offset its portion of expenses.

It is not fair to those who live inside the City (municipal voters) to continue to subsidize this service to the greater jurisdiction.

POLICE JURISDICTION IS NOT SUSTAINABLE				
POLICE DEPARTMENT EXPENSES				
FY20	FY19	FY18	FY17	FY16
\$7,498,796	\$6,154,254	\$5,914,850	\$5,345,629	\$5,716,485
POLICE JURISDICTION REVENUE OFFSET				
	FY19	FY18	FY17	FY16
License Fees	\$90,000.00	\$88,206.00	\$89,921.00	\$83,700.00
Cigarette/Tobacco Tax	\$27,500.00	\$45,710.00	\$45,944.00	\$43,588.00
Liquor/Beer/Wine Tax	\$39,400.00	\$59,086.00	\$71,316.00	\$47,504.74
Lodging Tax	\$426,140.00	\$388,748.00	\$454,258.00	\$460,148.61
Sales/Use Tax	\$745,100.00	\$747,983.00	\$647,633.00	\$616,537.77
Total	\$1,328,140.00	\$1,329,733.00	\$1,309,072.00	\$1,251,479.12

Volunteer Fire Department

The City of Fairhope has an incredibly dedicated [Volunteer Fire Department](#). Its jurisdiction includes over two-thirds of the County; however, County ad valorem taxes collected each year have not been used to help offset its growing needs. Like the Library, the City funds most of the operating expense and can no longer afford to do so without these expenses being shared by the County.

Volunteer Fire Department Expenses Paid by the City			
2017	2018	2019	2020
\$477,389	\$900,959	\$881,645	\$739,012

This expense does not include building maintenance & liability insurance paid by the City. I requested a copy of audited financials. We have received unaudited Tax Returns and still waiting to receive audited financials. We all want the very best for our Fire Department. There are defined restrictions for which your tax dollars can be used. Since the fire jurisdiction is mostly located in the County, the City needs help in funding needs.

Significantly Reduced Contractual Engineering Expenses

This term's average annual savings in engineering expenses over last term is \$425k/year and \$460k savings in 2019. Savings like this have enabled us to balance the budget and invest in critical needs. I'd like to thank our Professional Civil Engineers "The RICHARDS" for their huge contribution in this area. Before this term, the City and Utility Departments contracted out every single dollar of engineering service.

ENGINEERING EXPENSES					
	PLANNING	PUBLIC WORKS	CAPITAL PROJECTS	UTILITIES	TOTAL
2013	\$ 16,182	\$ 50,446	\$ 61,005	\$ 386,578	\$ 514,210
2014	\$ 27,339	\$ 251,481	\$ 125,142	\$ 304,019	\$ 707,982
2015	\$ 66,553	\$ 148,941	\$ 221,196	\$ 276,000	\$ 712,690
2016	\$ 48,385	\$ 260,806	\$ 201,144	\$ 36,579	\$ 546,914
2017	\$ 35,036	\$ 31,513	\$ 46,955	\$ 81,421	\$ 194,925
2018	\$ -	\$ 9,166	\$ 126,700	\$ 95,932	\$ 231,798
2019	\$ 313	\$ -	\$ 84,725	\$ 74,717	\$ 159,755

\$460,694 2019 Savings over last term
\$424,956 Average Savings over last term

Even with Hard Work for Fiscal Responsibility, Council Decided to Ignore this Plan

With the new balanced budget, we were also able to significantly increase our cash fund balances for infrastructure upgrades for the City. There is no question we have a list of critical needs and priorities had not been defined yet by you.

I am completely against spending your tax dollars without your knowledge and input. These decisions have unfortunately been happening this term. Which is why it is so important to participate in the Comprehensive Land-Use Plan starting this summer and giving input on capital priorities.

There's the notion that Council President and I oppose each other's agendas. I guess this would make sense if I pushed for objectives behind closed doors. The difference between us is I propose intentions through inclusive, collaborative communication and he believes decisions should be made exclusively by Council.

After the 2020 budget was proposed – the first balanced budget without the use of utility profits for government services – Council decided to purchase 117 acres of parkland for \$2.65M! Money we could not afford out of impact fee fund balance and would need the cash fund balances this administration worked so hard to establish. I proposed parkland in town off Twin Beach Rd that could fully be paid by impact fees over a three-year period without using your tax dollars and would also give a shot in the arm economically in an underserved area. Council turned this down months before because it did not appraise for the asking price.

Ironically, Council approved the purchase of the 117 acres of land on the corner of 13/32 with an appraisal that was far worse than Twin Beech property. Every "deal" negotiated this term has been accomplished with Councilman Jack Burrell self-appointing himself to do these deals and ALL have not been negotiated with you in mind.

This particular "deal" was purchased based on the following appraisal COMPS:

Comp 1	Comp 2	Comp 3	Comp 4
SE Cor of Hwy 32 and Co Rd 13	16222 Co Rd 13	Hwy 32	Old Pierce Rd
Fairhope	Fairhope	Fairhope	Fairhope
Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama
7/13/2018	1/31/2017	Pending	Active Listing
\$1,150,000	\$1,250,000	\$969,000	\$1,200,000
77.00	98.00	41.00	57.00
\$14,935	\$12,755	\$23,634	\$21,053
Actual Sale	Actual Sale	Pending Sale	Listing Only
\$17,508	\$14,718	\$22,452	\$20,842

Have you ever purchased property based on a pending sale or a listing? Neither have I! This appraisal was done in June 2019. As of June 7, 2020, almost a year later, Comp 3 is showing as a listing. It never sold. It's outrageous and it happened. The only valid comp was the first one which was right across the street that sold for \$15k. Council was willing to "overpay" for this property but NOT for the closer property on Twin Beach which served a higher purpose of improving the quality of life in an underserved area.

In addition, this purchase was:

- Not in the 2020 budget and would deplete our capital fund balances needed for other priorities.
- Not budgeted to be paid in full by impact fees which was the goal from the beginning.

- Rushed without a public hearing for no reason. There are plenty of opportunities available East of 98 for many years to come.
- Did not wait to be included in the Comprehensive Land-use Plan starting this summer.
- Not recommended by the T National Park Service. In fact, NPS recommended Twin Beech location because of its walkability and connectivity.

INVEST IN AND PROTECT OUR CITY ASSETS

Invest in our City Employees

Last term our population increased 33% while the number of employees decreased! Investing in hiring employees in all departments to keep up with services our citizens expect was a big challenge. While doing this, I became aware of the inconsistent job descriptions and lack of competitive pay comparable to other neighboring municipalities.

I proposed invested in a comprehensive personnel study with Auburn University, to ensure employees are being paid competitively to ensure the City can hire and retain quality employees. The year-long process for updating all job descriptions and pay grades will be complete in September 2020.

We are self-insured and this expense continues to increase each year. To maintain this expense and continue offering City employees the most competitive benefits package, we must incentivize health and wellness. Establishing a policy requiring employees to complete a biometric screening at the Annual Employee Health and Wellness Fair is something many municipalities and counties do, and it pays off for everyone.

Quail Creek Golf Club

New enhancements to the Clubhouse have been a huge improved service for citizens and visitors. We will continue this effort as we have the funds for the interior. The greens are in the best condition they've ever been, and overall playability of the course is significantly improved because of investing in professional training and experience.

Fairhope Docks

The 30-year lease of the city's marina property at the foot of Sea Cliff Drive expired October 14, 2017. Since the property was in deteriorating condition, I successfully influenced Council to take back the management of this important asset in the best interest of our citizens. We've improved the physical condition, its efficiency of operation and environmental stewardship.

It paid off in a short period of time. It was the right decision. Long-neglected maintenance and capital projects have been completed with more budgeted this year. The dredging of our waterway is finished, a new fuel dock has covered the operational expenses. Because of the recent closure of the fuel dock at the Grand, Fairhope Docks is already seeing an increase in fuel sales. The 2020 budget includes the purchase of dredging equipment to maintain our boat slips that will pay for itself after its first job.

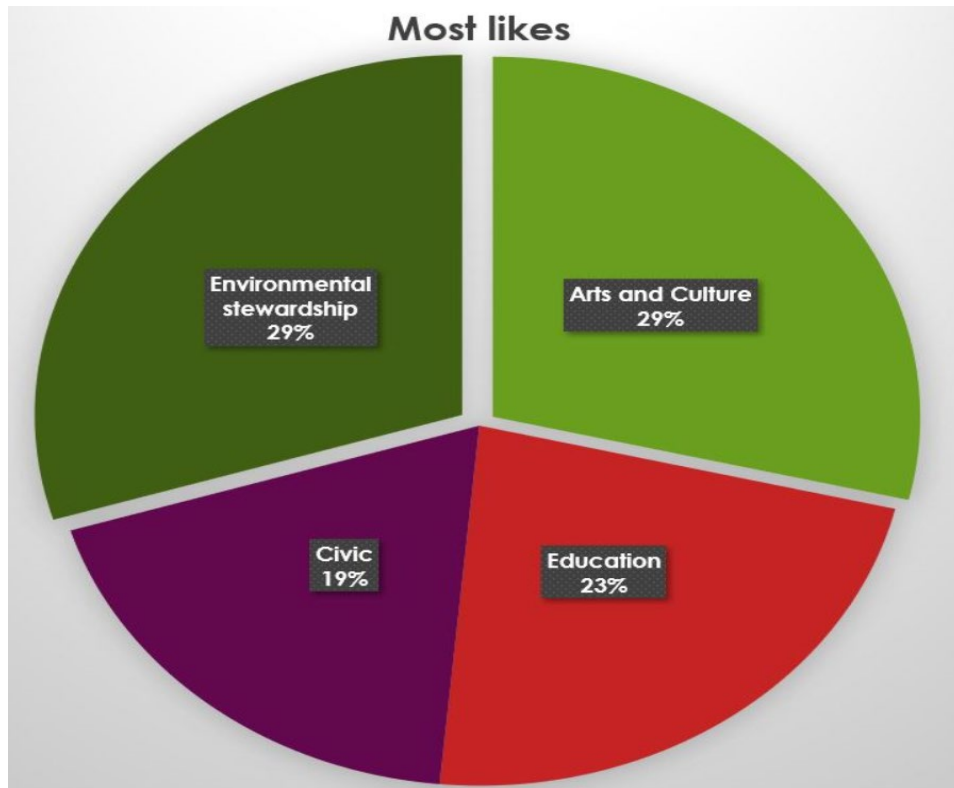


Dry storage will be looked at in the next year to accommodate the high demand for boat owners.

K-1 Center

We've talked about it for over 10 years and finally purchased of the K-1 Center in 2019. Because of our new fiscal health, we were able to pay cash for most of the acquisition and there is only one payment left for the rest in 2021.

Because there are so many ideas about its future life. Multiple third parties were already planning with Council help and without you. I made certain the future desire of this important purchase remained with you – the taxpayers who purchased it. We started the initial steps through a citizen-engaged meeting and survey to obtain feedback on desired use and a mission statement.



Mission Statement: “The K-1 site will offer a safe, comfortable, attractive space for community fellowship encompassing education, conservation, entertainment, cultural growth and other concerns for the citizens of Fairhope.”

The next step is putting together the plan which will be included in the 2021 budget! It will need to be comprehensive in nature, public vision driven (incorporating what has already been communicated) integrated with public utilities and services and consider environmental sensitivities.

Library

The library runs as a component of the City with an appropriation. I proposed making the Library a department of the City to save in administrative costs, manage expenses and increase the funding for books and programs. This idea was met with great push back. In 2019 City funded \$1,039,183 or 96.2% of the total operating which increases every year.

As we all know, the infrastructure improvements for the library have been put off for over 10 years. With every passing year, the problems got worse and the cost to fix it increased. This year, the project which cost over one million dollars was finally completed.

Fairhope Public Utilities

A plan is in place, is two years into the five-year timeline and is funded to fully upgrade our Sewer System, Water, Electric and Gas! This is 50 years in the making and way past due! We could no longer afford to kick the can down the road.

Now that profits are being used for the right purpose, in 2022 most of the expensive upgrades should be completed. We MUST STAY THE COURSE and elect accountable leaders that understand this priority.

The total budget estimate is over \$40M. Because I proposed the following RESTORE-funded projects, \$11M of this total budget will go towards Sewer System rehabilitation and SSO Prevention Plan.

Fairhope Sewer Upgrade: \$10 million Awarded

The implementation of this project will protect the water quality of Mobile Bay, an impaired body of water. The project will reduce the pollutant loading and improve discharges to Mobile Bay by reducing the number and frequency of sanitary sewer overflows that occur within the City of Fairhope's public sewer system.

Eastern Shore Sanitary Sewer Overflow Prevention Plan: \$1 million Awarded

The purpose of this project is to minimize or altogether eliminate sanitary sewer overflows on the Eastern Shore resulting from insufficient capacity, inflow, and infiltration from excess stormwater. In addition, the project aims to improve the overall water quality of Mobile Bay by protecting runoff to the Bay from sanitary sewers and sediment from stormwater erosion.

Health of Mobile Bay

Doing our part to improve the health of Mobile Bay has been a priority since 2016. City and Utilities Departments have worked together identifying projects to contribute to this goal. For detailed information about the last three-and-a-half years, click on FAQ from the front page of our website.

Sanitary Sewer Overflows have decreased this term and will continue to do so as sewer infrastructure upgrades are completed, and our goal is to eliminate SSOs through a \$1M RESTORE-funded competitive engineering solution. Many understand the health of our bay is much broader than the City of Fairhope and the fix is complex and multifaceted. City Directors and I have met with State officials to discuss the need for a holistic approach to make meaningful impacts.

The City of Fairhope is doing its job; however, my concern was it will only be a drop in the bucket (pun intended!). Other municipalities and private citizens need financial help in addition to the need for shareable water quality data obtained over many years of research.



As a result of our outreach, I am proud to report the City's role in the bipartisan legislation for amending the WATER QUALITY GRANT PROGRAM BILL drafted in November 2019 by Senators Doug Jones and Rick Scott. This legislation will require the support from the entire State to address the Mobile River Watershed, the second largest in the Country. (makes up 2/3 of the entire State of Alabama)

The drafted amendment includes establishing a competitive grant program like **Innovative Communities by Design** presented during last year's State of the City (and below under Leadership for Responsible Growth)

Parks

This administration sought out a grant which was awarded to work with the National Park Service for help developing a comprehensive planning for connectivity and walkability. We must thoughtfully invest in enhancements for current parks and fund acquisition for additional parkland. With this in place, we will now incorporate this into the Comprehensive Land-use Plan starting summer 2020.

This administration has focused a great deal of time, planning with you, and investing in the parks you love. There has never been a time in Fairhope history where more is being accomplished.

Young Street Community Park

This historic park was once used by South Fairhope residents and eventually became a part of the Boys & Girls Club. Local Rotary Clubs took over and now it's known as Fairhope Rotary Youth Club. After much community engagement, citizens South of Fairhope felt as though the park became exclusive to the club and community use decreased considerably. It is time to give this area their park back! The comprehensive plan is in place and phase I is starting Summer 2020.



PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN

Young Street Community Park

- FULL BASKETBALL COURT
- 3 HALF COURTS
- WALKING TRAILS
- TWO PAVILIONS
- BUS PARKING
- 1,500 SF ADDITION SPACE
- GARDEN
- NEW PLAY AREA
- RESTROOMS
- EXERCISE EQUIPMENT



Volanta Park

The City is adding four more baseball diamonds to Volanta Park to keep up with capacity for up to ten more years.

South Park / Municipal Pier

The Fairhope waterfront evokes a sense of pride and nostalgia for many people along the Eastern Shore of Baldwin County. Over many years, personal relationships have formed with the place to create a deep history that residents and visitors hold dear.

FAIRHOPE WORKING WATERFRONT AND GREEN SPACE PROJECT

\$6.2 million

Part of the \$18M this administration secured from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill will be invested in enhancing community engagement at South Park, its shoreline, and the Municipal Pier. This green infrastructure project will include a South Beach Park bluff stabilization which will include a “Sunset Seating Gallery”, improvements to our Bayfront shoreline, upgrades to drainage infrastructure that will provide new opportunities for our community and visitors to engage with the Bay at our Municipal Pier, an area that is our unofficial “town center”.

The project includes upgrades to drainage infrastructure, storm-water management facilities, construction of shoreline structures (breakwaters, jetties, and groins) and upgrades to seawalls.



Among the goals stated in the proposal awarded, the project will also seek to:

- Restore and protect natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region
- Mitigate damage to fish, wildlife, and natural resources
- Implement a federally approved marine, coastal or comprehensive conservation management plan
- Aid in workforce development and job creation
- Promote tourism in the Gulf Coast region, including recreational fishing

Quail Creek Golf & Club House

- ✓ Completely renovated the exterior of the clubhouse including all new windows
- ✓ Built out the existing patio to achieve twice as much seating capacity for all the special events and tournaments held at the club
- ✓ Bought new dining furniture for the patio
- ✓ Created conversation areas for your relaxing pleasure after a round of golf
- ✓ Completely replaced the tired old landscaping at the clubhouse
- ✓ Replaced the entire roof of the clubhouse
- ✓ Repainted the interior of the clubhouse
- ✓ Started a new agronomy program resulting in muchly improved greens
- ✓ Repaired several drainage areas on the course
- ✓ Started a better definition program between fairway and rough
- ✓ Leased whole new fleet of golf carts to trade out every four years

It's important to point out that all these very expensive capital improvement accomplishments over the last 3 years were accomplished without borrowing funds because of the significant improvement in our financial health.

To prevent expensive purchases and bring about vision to all the possibilities we have,

(note – the parkland on Twin Beech was to be paid out of impact fees over a 3-year period. The Volanta Park expansion would have to start end of 2020 to cash flow. However, it would still allow purchase of additional parkland close to town and solve the immediate ballpark capacity needs and not be touching capital funds)

Jan 2020 - Council approved the purchase of parcel less than 1000sf on the corner of Section and Fairhope Ave in partnership with FSTC for \$525k (City's share \$265k). Because Council President Burrell took over negotiations on his own without consulting with me, I made certain our City attorney knew about the buried gas tanks that needed mitigation. As a result, thankfully, we ordered a study. The preliminary findings just received beginning of June 2020 from the study:

“The City should carefully consider plans to purchase this property. The costs associated with the investigation and cleanup of this site cannot be estimated, because the full extent and maximum concentration of contaminants is not known. Nor can the time required for cleanup of the site be known, but a minimum of 12 – 24 months is reasonable based on GMC’s experience with similar projects.”

Mar 2020 – Met with all directors to postpone any expenditures unless critical due to Covid-19. The only projects moved forward were funded by grants, impact fees or RESTORE funds until we get a better idea of where we are after the pandemic.

5-25-20 7-month budget review. Because of the early intervention with budget cuts and postponements, this administration will exceed our projected operating budget goal. However, due to the unplanned purchase of parkland for \$2.65M there will be a realized deficit:

YEAR TO DATE & PROJECTED YEAR END BUDGET

(58% through the year - 7 months)

Mayor’s Budget (without parkland purchase)

Revenue = 62% (4% over projected budget)

Expenses = 46% (12% under projected budget)

End of year projection SURPLUS \$1,086,733

Council Budget (last minute purchase of parkland \$2.65M)

Revenue = 62% (4% over projected budget)

Expenses = 65% (7% over projected budget)

End of year projection DEFICIT \$1,506,735

RESTORE TRUST THROUGH TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY

Keeping citizens engaged and up to speed with what is going on in their community promotes accountability and prevents local government from planning and making decisions without you. Establishing transparent communication with more opportunities for community input was essential in restoring trust.

and public dialogue. I have also filled open and expiring positions on boards/committees with diverse backgrounds to comprise a better sampling of our community.

My business card reads, "My door is always open," and accessibility to communication is at its highest level employing quarterly newsletters enclosed in utility statements, weekly email, instant text messaging through Everbridge Notification System and a broadened social media outreach. Live streaming every meeting has been incredibly impactful.

Our kids are our future. Involving them in local government not only ensures their needs are met but increases the likelihood of their serving our City in the future. During my annual meetings with local students in each school, I expressed my desire to create a Junior City Council which was met with overwhelming interest. In October of 2018, the first 10-member Junior Council was established serving as the voice for Fairhope's young adults.

Launched Fairhope 311 to substantially improve citizen services and communication with the City and Utility Departments.

LEADERSHIP FOR RESPONSIBLE GROWTH

There was no strategic plan in place and the City was allowing developers to define our future. With over 44% population growth from 2010 to 2018, it is no surprise that leadership for responsible growth and development was the number one concern. There is only one Fairhope. Protecting its character and our quality of life required immediate action starting with dramatic changes in the Planning Commission and redefining the approval process with increased community and developer communication

The new Comprehensive Land-Use plans ties in all city services, environmental impacts and smart growth objectives which will serve as a true roadmap for our future. The \$650k RESTORE-funded, community-engaged plan will start this summer.

This project will engage our community to determine policy priorities relating to the impacts of this rapid growth, including, but not limited to utility infrastructure, traffic, pedestrian Circulation, impact on schools, environmental concerns, job markets and public amenities.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE GROWTH?

Planning is now a collaborative approach among staff of various departments. This collaborative approach early in the development process has resulted in better coordination and several cost share agreements with developers to upgrade adjacent, but off-site City Infrastructure, such as drainage and utilities to better serve the larger areas.

The refined application review process now includes an interdepartmental Development Review Meeting with key staff from Public Works, Utilities, Building Inspections, Economic and Community Affairs and others. A comment letter noting any deficiencies, comments, or concerns is provided to the applicant, prior to a full DRC meeting that is held in an open format where any issues are discussed between applicant and staff. If the comments are satisfactorily addressed, the development application is placed on the Planning Commission agenda.

Two-thirds of the area that makes up “Fairhope” is un-zoned. Therefore, pretty much anything can be developed and affect your quality of life. Planning must include enforceable regulations for development through a comprehensive land-use plan. Contiguous property, if annexed, would enable the City to fully enforce a standard for which property owners, developers and their neighbors will benefit.

Regulatory Amendments

- A newly proposed review process for Planned Unit Developments,
- which, among other things, introduces an expiration clause, has
- favorably passed Planning Commission and awaits final vote of the
- City Council.
- Modifications and modernization to uses within M-1 zoning district.
- Clarification/amendments of setbacks on waterfront lots.
- MOPs now require both a preliminary and final plat process
- for approval.
- Amended/clarified parts of the zoning ordinance related to lot
- coverage, non-conforming structures, fences/walls, and driveways.

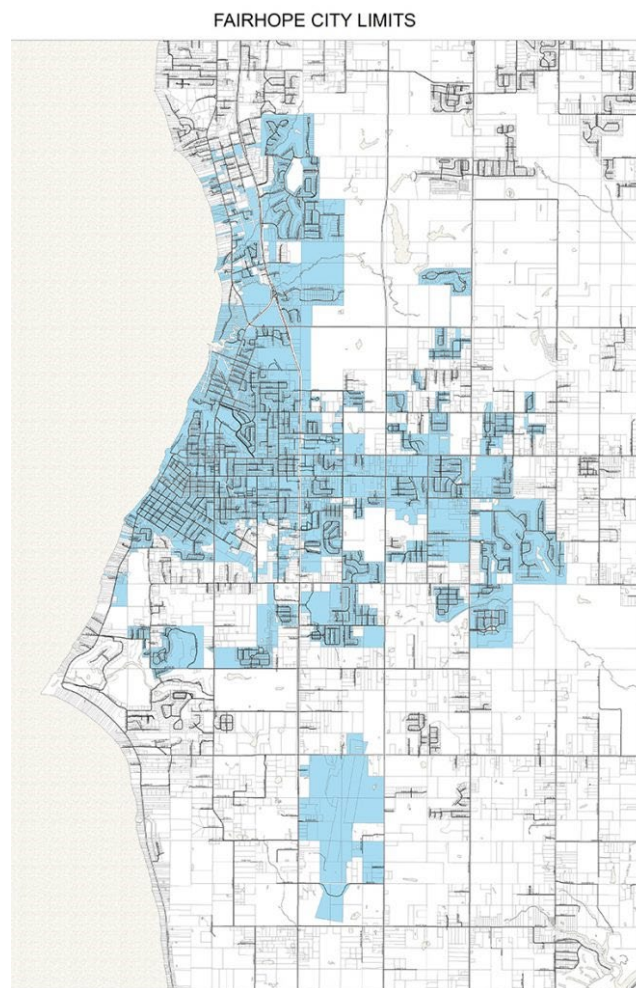
Regional Collaboration

- Meet monthly with other planning departments around Baldwin
- County to share ideas and solutions.
- Attended the initial meeting of, and continue to support, a group of

- Baldwin County GIS Users in a collaborative effort to collect and analyze data.

Zoning Code Enforcement

- Began enforcing the new short-/long-term rental ordinance, which
- has resulted in 595 new business license applications. In addition, the
- new employees hired in 2018 increased the City's ability to better
- enforce both existing and new codes.
- Moved inspections away from paper and into a database, which allows
- us to better track progress.
- To improve water-quality, outreach began to assist property owner
- associations better understanding retention/detention maintenance.
- Initiated a water testing/sampling program for our local watersheds.



Blue shaded area INSIDE City Limits. Most of the White shaded area known as Fairhope is located OUTSIDE the City limits which also makes up over 80 square miles of our Police Jurisdiction

To start this process, there must be a value for those who live outside the City limits. Otherwise, there is no incentive to change anything. The map below shows the blue areas inside and white areas outside our City limits. The Airport is the non-contiguous South parcel. As you can see, developers have a great deal of flexibility to do what they want in most of the area that makes up our great City.

Proper planning encourages those who own contiguous property to annex into the City and become part of a bigger more collaborative development plan. Because this has not been in place for so long, developers are defining our future.

In order to manage the growth and ensure the quality of life you enjoy, the mindset must shift from "I want to be able to do whatever I want with my property" to "I want to be a part of a bigger plan that elevates us all." We all benefit from planned growth – land & homeowners, developers, and our neighbors! Otherwise, the very things we love about living here will change and change quickly.

INNOVATIVE COMMUNITIES BY DESIGN

The most recent RESTORE project I have proposed is funding for Innovative Communities by Design studio. The City of Fairhope is the rainiest city in the Country (as a suburb of Mobile) and the fastest growing City in Alabama in the 11th fastest growing metropolitan area in the Country.

We are in a unique position to utilize innovative planning strategies to create and deploy a new process of collaborative research that will help us implement ideas for a more resilient future.

An innovative design studio would address issues and needs for appropriate and cost-effective solutions as well as serve as a resource for other coastal communities.

- Drinking Water Management
- Wastewater Management
- Stormwater Management
- Water-Quality Management
- Quality of Life Management

And serve as a resource for other coastal communities. The proposal for this center was inspired by and will be modeled after **Rebuild by Design** with a consortium of universities, government and private enterprises using innovative technologies, regulatory modifications, testing options, education, and training of citizens/professionals. We have also obtained cooperative agreements in support of the design studio from:

- **Rebuild by Design**, founded by Henk Ovink, Special Envoy for International Water Affairs, Netherlands
- University of South Alabama and The Coastal Engineering Department

IN A FEW SHORT YEARS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH \$4-6M ANNUALLY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT?

If the City and Utility Departments continue to financially operate independently, what could the City of Fairhope do with \$4-6 million ANNUALLY for community development? In a few short years after utility infrastructure is completed, the profits formerly used to pay for government services will allow citizens the ability to help make this decision. We must stay the course though.

The Best
IS YET TO COME!



Mayor Karin Wilson