



Mayor's Monthly Newsletter

Written by Mayor Andrew Mitcham

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Mayors Newsletter April 2021

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

My time on Council draws to a close next month. It has been one of the biggest honors of my life to be Mayor of my hometown. I want to thank my wife, Michelle, and our two daughters, Jane and Adeline, for their limitless support and hugs. The entire reason I started this public service journey was to make sure Jane and Adeline had the same safe and memorable childhood I enjoyed growing up in Jersey Village.

My top mission on Council since 2015 has been safeguarding the core services that make Jersey Village the desirable community it has been for so long. Since then, we have steadily increased funding for police, fire, and EMS services. We have improved infrastructure and upgraded utilities as listed in the Capital Improvement Plan. We have broken ground on major flood mitigation projects now moving through the city. We have improved our parks, our pool, our golf course, and increased community events.

What I'm most proud of is that we've accomplished all of this without raising taxes. Every budget year, the revenue burden has shifted off of homeowners in a responsible, sustainable manner. In fact, the average property tax bill for JV homeowners is about \$200/year lower than it was just 4 years ago. It took a lot of hard work to build a sales tax base to support these efforts. We used proven economic development policies and tools, such as Chapter 380 agreements, to attract new businesses and employers. Since FY2015, we've almost tripled our sales tax revenue base and used that revenue to accomplish goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan while also passing the savings along to homeowners, just like we promised. We refinanced outstanding debt, saving the City hundreds of thousands a year in interest and putting us on a path to be debt-free. We successfully pursued millions of dollars in federal grants to pay for long-term flood mitigation projects instead of depleting the General Fund.

If we, as a community, wish to preserve our unmatched services, maintain solid infrastructure, fund local-matching for flood mitigation projects, improve quality-of-life for our kids, continue to be a desirable place for families to put down roots, achieve zero debt, lower property taxes even more, and secure a path forward for the next several decades, we must place a high priority on economic development. This is why I and others on Council have worked so hard on the Village Center development that will break ground in the next few months on the south-side of Highway 290.

Forget splash pads, dog parks, golf courses, clubhouses, etc. The cost of simply maintaining our community's infrastructure, paying for street and drainage improvements with cash instead of debt, putting forth local-matching dollars for flood mitigation grants, keeping our police officers' and firefighters' salaries competitive with surrounding agencies will take more than year-over-year property value increases... nor should the burden be placed back on homeowners like you and I. Over the past 6 years, we have shown that our city can thrive as the jewel of the northwest-side without a bigger property tax bill. I know that if we invest in Village Center and cultivate a sustainable, community-driven, mixed-use development that does not add to our flooding woes, we can achieve that secure future and shine even brighter for decades to come.

Jersey Village is the city and community it is today because of our previous leaders' commitment to the Long-Term. I encourage each of you to think about what Jersey Village could be in 20, 30, 50, 70+ years. What will our surrounding region look like? What challenges will future Councils and Mayors face? I encourage you to think about what we can do now to make sure our future leaders— perhaps your children (I was one of them 30 years ago!)— can meet those challenges head on.

Thank you all again for trusting me with such an awesome responsibility. I wish each and every one of you continued success, peace, and prosperity. I'm always available for a beer and a chat in a driveway.

Cheers,

Andrew Mitcham

Mayor