

**Mayor Maxton's Message  
May 2022**



**Public Works Making an Impact**

Grant Watanabe, P.E., is the Director of Public Works and Engineering Services for the City of Fair Oaks Ranch. He has only been working with the city for about a year now, but in this short time has made a big impact. Overall, with Grant and his exceptional team, they are making a difference in maintaining and upgrading the infrastructure for our city.

The normal routine of day-to-day operations keeps the Public Works Department busy. Operating our water and wastewater systems daily is a continual process, which includes maintaining, inspections and repairs on all aspects of our plants, lines, lift stations and the 43 water wells. The team is also responsible for the daily laboratory testing to ensure our water and wastewater systems meet minimum TCEQ standards. Additionally, the Public Works team is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of our city streets and our storm water drainage system. In all aspects, the Public Works team has always done a great job responding to resident calls for assistance and they have continued this over the past year.

While providing quality essential services to our residents, the Public Works Department is also responsible for ensuring quality construction is being accomplished throughout the city. This includes the enforcement of International Building and Life Safety Codes which has teams out consistently inspecting all the new and rehabilitation construction going on across the city. For a small city, we are fortunate to have two licensed Professional Engineers working on staff, Grant Watanabe and Katherine Schweitzer, whose expertise has been a tremendous benefit.

Keeping the city infrastructure operating at a high level is no easy task for a Public Works Department of 31 employees. From my observations, this team does a phenomenal job and has risen to the task every time they are needed. Above all, they enjoy what they are doing and demonstrate a friendly and respectful attitude with residents.

While operating the city infrastructure, Grant has focused his teams on making monumental accomplishments on tackling many of the capital improvement projects needed throughout the city.

This summer and fall, we will see significant upgrades to the roads throughout the city. About 25-30% of the city roads will receive a roadway preservation method called micro-resurfacing. It is a long lasting and high-performance treatment that is similar in preservation to chip seal but does not include the large aggregate that wears off in the future. A few other streets will be treated with fog seal, and some will go through a mill and overlay process. The type of treatment was determined due to the wear on our streets and the appropriate preservation method needed to bring them back to desirable levels.

Along with the street preservation, street striping, placement of reflective markers and new signage will be installed. The street striping will include areas that were not striped during the street resurfacing operations last year. Placement of reflective markers and new signage will be

in areas, primarily in the northern part of our city, where added safety measures are needed during hours of darkness. Additional signage and striping has been looked at for golf cart crossings along Fair Oaks Parkway, where golf carts cross while using the golf course.

Grant and his team have designed and contracted for the realignment of the Chartwell and Saddle Song streets intersection with Dietz-Elkhorn. These are the two streets by the Fair Oaks Ranch Elementary School. The current offset of these two streets creates a safety issue for individuals crossing Dietz-Elkhorn which includes children going to school, the sporting events on the field and those that use the area for recreation. The realignment will move Chartwell so that it is directly across from Saddle Song where they intersect Dietz-Elkhorn. The Boerne Independent School District is assisting in the funding of this project.

Water Plant #2 is currently under construction to upgrade its capability. This project was the highest priority in the water capital improvement plan as the number of water user connections on the south side of the city was about to exceed the plant's capacity. This upgrade will meet future demands. This project will be completed in June or July this year.

We have several major waterline projects being worked this year. There is an exposed water main that crosses over Balcones Creek which will be replaced. The Public Works team is also working replacement of waterlines along Willow Wind Dr/Red Bud Hill, Rolling Acres Trail, and Old Fredericksburg Road. Design for these projects is in progress or complete and waterlines should be replaced within the next year.

The upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant has been contracted and we should see construction begin soon to install the dewatering screw press. This will eliminate the drying bed process in our wastewater treatment and the \$350,000 a year the city was paying to haul off wet sludge. As a result of the savings, we will see a return on this investment in three years. This project will also help resolve the odors that were coming from the treatment facility. The new dewatering screw press system is scheduled to be operational in October or November of this year.

Our Public Works department is also working with a consultant to determine the long term needs and possible solutions for our wastewater treatment requirements. Possible solutions being reviewed are upgrades or expansions to the current plant, adding an additional plant or building a new plant. Our current wastewater treatment plant will not meet the future needs of the city, and we need to start working now on what is the best way to expand this service.

Storm water runoff is a big problem within our city, creating safety issues and has flooded individual homes. This year, Grant and his team are addressing several of these areas. Flooding over Silver Spur Trail, on Tivoli Way, across Fair Oaks Parkway, Rolling Acres Trail and Rocking Horse Lane are the top projects. These are all major endeavors to address the storm water runoff in these areas. Currently, the design for these projects is being finished with a focus to complete the improvements in the next year.

The residents of Fair Oaks Ranch have a Public Works and Engineering team that is making significant steps to ensure the quality of essential services is maintained throughout the city. The daily operations of our Public Works employees is a thankless job, because without issues, we do not realize all of the behind the scenes work they accomplish every day. In

addition to daily routines, they are tackling some of the toughest issues that face our city in needed capital improvements and making accomplishments. A big thanks to our City Staff for continuing to provide quality services to our residents every day while also taking on these big projects.