



**City of Highland Haven**  
**510 Highland Drive, Suite A**  
**Highland Haven TX 78654-8269**  
**Phone: 830-265-4366 Fax: 512-366-9721**

**AGENDA – PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

**DATE:** April 9, 2026

**TIME:** 6:00 PM

**PLACE:** Highland Haven Community Center, Highland Haven, TX 78654

1. Open meeting and Roll Call to Establish Quorum

Jackie Garrow	Chair	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Lorinda Peters	Vice Chair	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Linda Ray	Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Connie Smith	Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John Novak	Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Recognize Visitors.

4. Presentations/Proclamations

5. Public Comment

*(At this time, any person with business before the P&Z Commission not scheduled on the agenda may speak to the Commission. No formal action can be taken on these items at this meeting. No discussion or deliberation can occur. Comments regarding specific agenda items should occur when the item is called.)*

**ACTION ITEMS**

6. **Consider Consent items:**

*The items listed are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Planning & Zoning Commission and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Commission member so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda prior to a motion and vote. The item will be considered in its normal sequence on the regular agenda.*

- a. Meeting Minutes for Regular P&Z – March 12, 2026

7. **Discussion/Consider Possible Action:** Sign Ordinance (John Novak)

8. **Discussion/Consider Possible Action:** Storage Tanks language (Linda Ray)

9. **Discussion/Consider Possible Action:** Water Wells (Lorinda Peters)

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

10. Discussion – Comprehensive Plan 2026

- a. Review of Section Submitted

11. Discussion – Ordinance Language for 25' Setback and Shoreline (Linda Ray and Connie Smith)

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

12. P&Z Commission Member Comments.

13. Staff Comments.

14. Next Regular Meeting: May 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM (Community Center)

15. Items to be considered for the next agenda must be received by the Chair on or before May 1, 2026.

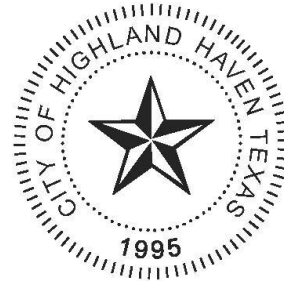
16. Adjournment.

Agenda posted on March 30, 2026

**CERTIFICATION OF POSTING**

I, SARAH COLLARD, CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING AGENDA HAS BEEN POSTED AT HIGHLAND HAVEN CITY HALL, 510 HIGHLAND DRIVE, SUITE A; HIGHLAND HAVEN, TX, ON THE INDOOR AND OUTDOOR NOTICE BOARDS OF CITY HALL, WHICH ARE CONVENIENTLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC AT ALL TIMES, AND THE CITY WEBSITE AT WWW. HIGHLANDHAVENTX.COM ON THE 30<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MARCH, 2026, AND REMAINED SO POSTED FOR AT LEAST THREE BUSINESS DAYS PRECEDING THE SCHEDULED DATE OF SAID MEETING PURSUANT TO THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 551.

*Sarah Collard*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sarah Collard, City Secretary





**City of Highland Haven**  
**510 Highland Drive, Suite A**  
**Highland Haven TX 78654-8269**  
**Phone: 830-265-4366 Fax: 512-366-9721**

**MINUTES – PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

**DATE:** March 12, 2026

**TIME:** 6:00 PM

**PLACE:** Highland Haven Community Center, Highland Haven, TX 78654

1. Open meeting and Roll Call to Establish Quorum – Lorinda Peters, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Jackie Garrow	Chair	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Absent
Lorinda Peters	Vice Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Linda Ray	Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
Connie Smith	Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent
John Novak	Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent

2. Pledge of Allegiance – **Led by Lorinda Peters**
3. Recognize Visitors – **Freddi Franki**
4. Presentations/Proclamations - **None**
5. Public Comment

*(At this time, any person with business before the P&Z Commission not scheduled on the agenda may speak to the Commission. No formal action can be taken on these items at this meeting. No discussion or deliberation can occur. Comments regarding specific agenda items should occur when the item is called.)*

**There were no public comments.**

**ACTION ITEMS**

6. **Consider Consent items:**

*The items listed are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Planning & Zoning Commission and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Commission member so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda prior to a motion and vote. The item will be considered in its normal sequence on the regular agenda.*

- a. Meeting Minutes for Regular P&Z – February 12, 2026

**A motion to accept the Consent Items was made by John Novak, seconded by Linda Ray.**

**Vote: 4-0**

7. **Public Hearing** – Proposed Change of Zoning Classification for Lots 176 and 177 in Shady Acres.
  - a. Open Hearing – **The public hearing opened at 6:04 PM.**
  - b. Public Comments
  - c. Close Hearing – **The public hearing closed at 6:08 PM.**
8. **Discussion/Possible Action:** Recommend to the Board of Aldermen Zoning Classification for Lots 176 and 177 in Shady Acres.

**A motion to recommend zoning classification District R1 for Lots 176 and 177 Shady Acres was made by Linda Ray, seconded by Connie Smith.**

**Vote: 4-0**

9. **Discussion/Consider Possible Action:** Sign Ordinance (John Novak)

**No action was taken on this item.**

10. **Discussion/Consider Possible Action:** Storage Tanks language (Linda Ray)

**No action was taken on this item.**

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

11. Discussion – Comprehensive Plan 2026

a. Review of Section Submitted

12. Discussion – Status Update on Ordinance Items

a. Water Wells (Lorinda Peters)

13. Discussion - Clarification of Ordinance Language for 25' Setback and Shoreline

a. Executive Summary

b. Diagrams

#### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

14. P&Z Commission Member Comments.

15. Staff Comments.

16. Next Regular Meeting: April 9, 2026 at 6:00 PM (Community Center)

17. Items to be considered for the next agenda must be received by the Chair on or before March 27, 2026.

**A motion to adjourn was made by Connie Smith, seconded by Linda Ray.**

**Vote: 4-0.**

18. Adjournment.

**The meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lorinda Peters, Vice Chair

**Attest:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sarah Collard, City Secretary





April 6, 2026

Subject: Item 7 - Discussion and/or Action: Sign Ordinance

To the City of Highland Haven Planning and Zoning Commission,

## **PURPOSE**

Over the past several months, staff and the Planning & Zoning Commission have been working toward updating the City's sign regulations. The primary goal of this effort is to consolidate the City's existing sign rules—currently located in multiple sections of the Code—into a single, clear, and user-friendly ordinance that is easier to understand, apply, and enforce.

This memo is intended to explain the intent of the draft ordinance, summarize the work completed to date, and outline the type of feedback being requested from the Commission at this meeting.

## **BACKGROUND AND APPROACH**

The City's existing sign regulations have developed over time and are spread throughout multiple chapters of the Code of Ordinances. This has made it difficult at times for residents, applicants, and staff to identify which standards apply to a specific sign type or situation.

Through direction from a member of the Planning & Zoning Commission, staff prepared a draft sign ordinance that:

- consolidates all sign regulations into a single chapter,
- organizes requirements by sign type,
- removes redundancy where possible, and
- improves clarity without changing the overall intent of existing regulations unless needed for consistency or enforceability.

As part of this effort, staff reviewed the photo inventory of existing sign types that has been compiled earlier this year and worked to ensure that each sign type observed within the City is addressed in the current draft ordinance to the extent practicable.

## **CURRENT STATUS OF THE DRAFT ORDINANCE**

- The attached draft represents staff's most up-to-date working version of the consolidated sign ordinance.
- The City Attorney is currently reviewing the draft ordinance for legal issues, consistency with state law, and overall defensibility.
- This document should be viewed as a working draft, not a final version.

At this stage, staff is seeking substantive feedback from the Planning & Zoning Commission related to structure, clarity, completeness, and policy preferences before incorporating legal revisions and moving toward a final recommendation.

***more on next page***



## **FEEDBACK REQUESTED FROM THE COMMISSION**

Commissioners are encouraged to:

- Review the draft ordinance in detail;
- Note any sign types, situations, or conditions that may be unclear or missing;
- Suggest edits, additions, or removals they believe would improve readability, fairness, or enforceability; and
- Identify any areas where the intent of the ordinance does not align with the Commission's expectations.

All suggested changes will be tracked and evaluated alongside comments received from the City Attorney before the ordinance is revised and brought back for further consideration.

## **NEXT STEPS**

1. Receive Planning & Zoning Commission comments and suggested revisions.
2. Incorporate applicable P&Z feedback and City Attorney legal review comments.
3. Present an updated draft to the Planning & Zoning Commission for further discussion and potential recommendation to move forward.

Thank you for your continued time and effort on this project. Your feedback at this stage is critical to ensuring the ordinance is clear, comprehensive, and reflects the intent of the Commission and the City as a whole.

Please let me know if you would like any additional information prior to the meeting.

Sincerely,  
Andy Adams  
Highland Haven  
City Administrator  
(830) 265-4366  
cityadministrator@highlandhaventx.com

## **CITY OF HIGHLAND HAVEN, TEXAS**

### **CHAPTER \_\_ – SIGNS**

**Sec. 1. Purpose** The purpose of this Chapter is to:

1. Promote public health, safety, and welfare;
2. Protect property values and the aesthetic character of the City;
3. Reduce visual clutter;
4. Enhance traffic and pedestrian safety; and
5. Establish content-neutral regulations governing the time, place, and manner of signs within the City.

This Chapter is intended to comply with the Texas Local Government Code and applicable constitutional standards governing free speech.

#### **Sec. 2. Jurisdiction**

This Chapter applies to all property within the incorporated limits of the City of Highland Haven.

#### **Sec. 3. Compliance Required**

It shall be unlawful to erect, place, alter, relocate, or maintain any sign except in compliance with this Chapter.

#### **Sec. 4. Enforcement**

- A. The City Administrator or designee shall administer and enforce this Chapter.
- B. Violations constitute a misdemeanor offense.
- C. Each day a violation exists constitutes a separate offense.
- D. The City may remove signs placed within the public right-of-way without notice.

#### **Sec. 5. Definitions**

For the purposes of this chapter the following definitions will be used for signs.

- **Sign** – Any device, structure, display, or object visible from a public place used to communicate information.

All signs regulated by this Chapter shall be classified as either temporary or permanent. The following definitions apply:

- **Permanent Sign** – Any sign constructed of durable materials (e.g., metal, wood, plastic, or similar) and intended for indefinite display, affixed or attached in a fixed manner to the ground, a building or other structure. Permanent signs include, but are not limited to, monument signs, wall signs, and window signs.
- **Temporary Sign** – Any sign constructed of non-permanent or lightweight materials (e.g., paper, cardboard, fabric, vinyl banner, foam board, or similar) and intended for display for a limited duration. Temporary signs include, but are not limited to, event signs, construction signs, real estate signs, and other short-term displays.

Specific sign types include:

- **Construction Sign** – A temporary sign identifying architects, contractors, engineers, developers, or other participants in a permitted construction project, displayed only during active construction.
- **Event Sign** – A temporary sign announcing or directing attention to a private or community event on the premises or nearby, such as a birthday party, anniversary, family reunion, club meeting, garage sale, estate sale, open house, or similar occasional gathering.
- **Monument Sign** – A freestanding permanent sign supported by a solid base permanently affixed to the ground, not attached to any building, and typically used to identify an entrance, development, or street frontage.
- **Mural or Wall Artwork** – A noncommercial painting, graphic, mosaic, or other artistic work applied directly to a building wall, fence, shed, or structure, primarily intended as decorative or expressive art, and not containing commercial messages (e.g., business names, logos, trademarks, product depictions for advertising, telephone numbers, or direct promotion of goods/services). Murals meeting this description are exempt from permit requirements but must comply with general safety, placement, and size rules in this Chapter. Any mural that includes commercial elements or exceeds the size limits in Sec. 13 shall be regulated as a wall sign and require a permit.
- **Warning and Security Sign** – Small signs on private property that provide notice of security measures, hazards, prohibitions, or protections, including but not limited to indications of alarm systems, surveillance, prohibitions against solicitation/peddling/canvassing/trespassing, or common warnings (e.g., "Beware of Dog").

- **Wall Sign** – A permanent sign attached flat against, painted on, or otherwise affixed to the exterior wall of a building or structure, with the wall as the primary background or support. The sign face is parallel (or nearly parallel) to the wall and projects no more than 12-18 inches (structural rules apply).
- **Window Sign** – A sign affixed to, painted on, or placed inside a window and intended to be viewed from outside the building.

**Government Signs** – A sign erected, placed, or authorized by a federal, state, county, or municipal government agency for the purpose of carrying out official governmental functions, including but not limited to traffic control signs, street name signs, regulatory notices, public safety signage, and notices required by law.

**Political Signs** – Signs regulated under Texas Election Code Chapter 259 (Political Signs) and related provisions, including signs containing primarily a political message as described in Texas Election Code § 259.003 and "political advertising" as defined in Texas Election Code § 251.001(16). All such signs on private real property with the consent of the property owner are subject to the limitations and protections of state law, including the required notice under § 259.001.

## **ARTICLE I – GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Sec. 6. Permit Required**

- A. A sign permit is required for all permanent signs except as otherwise exempted.
- B. Temporary signs generally do not require a permit in residential districts unless otherwise specified.
- C. Permit fees shall be established by resolution of the Board of Aldermen. Fees shall be waived for monument signs on properties zoned District B (including Institutional subcategories) that are owned by the City or the Highland Haven Property Owners Association (HHPOA).
- D. All signs installed pursuant to a permit shall display the permit number in a discreet but visible location on the sign structure or face.
- E. **Sign Permit Application Process:**
  - a. **Application Required:** Any person seeking to install a sign requiring a permit under this Chapter shall submit a sign permit application to the City Administrator or designee prior to installation.
  - b. **Application Contents:** Applications shall include:
    - i. Property address and owner authorization;
    - ii. A scaled drawing showing sign dimensions, height, materials, and placement on the property;

- iii. Method of attachment or foundation details;
- iv. Illumination details, if applicable; and
- v. Any additional information reasonably required to determine compliance.

- 1. Engineered Plans for signs may be required if deemed necessary by the City Administrator or their designee.

- c. **Administrative Approval:** The City Administrator or designee may approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application based on compliance with this Chapter.
- d. **Permit Validity:** A sign permit shall be valid for one (1) year from issuance unless otherwise specified and shall expire if installation does not commence within 180 days of approval.

### **Sec. 7. Permit Issuance**

The City Administrator or their designee shall issue a permit upon determination that:

- 1. The sign complies with this Chapter;
- 2. Structural and safety requirements (including building code compliance) are satisfied; and
- 3. Applicable fees have been paid.

### **Sec. 8. Variances**

Variances from the requirements of this Chapter may be requested and granted in accordance with the procedures, standards, and criteria set forth in the City's Zoning Regulations at § 9.02.006 Variances. The Board of Aldermen shall have authority to consider and decide variance applications for signs under this Chapter. Any variance granted shall be the minimum necessary and may include conditions to protect public safety, aesthetics, and the purposes of this Chapter (Sec. 1).

### **Sec. 9. Government Signs**

- A. **Authority:** Government signs may be erected, placed, displayed, or maintained by or at the direction of the City, a governmental entity, or an authorized public agency without a sign permit.
- B. **Purpose:** Government signs may be used for official governmental purposes, including but not limited to:
  - a. Traffic control, regulation, and guidance;
  - b. Street identification and wayfinding;
  - c. Public safety and emergency notifications;

- d. Temporary or permanent hazard warnings;
  - e. Burn bans, drought restrictions, or emergency declarations;
  - f. Construction notices or public works information; and
  - g. Notices required by law.
- C. **Temporary Emergency Signs:** Temporary government signs related to emergencies, disasters, public safety conditions, or time-sensitive governmental actions may be installed immediately and remain in place for the duration of the condition or event necessitating the sign.
- D. **Standards:** Government signs shall be reasonably designed and located to minimize traffic hazards and visual obstruction while effectively conveying the intended message.

## **ARTICLE II – PERMANENT SIGNS**

### **Sec. 9. General Rules for Permanent Signs**

- A. Permanent signs must be constructed of durable materials and securely affixed.
- B. All permanent signs require a permit unless specifically exempted.
- C. All signs installed pursuant to a permit shall display the permit number in a discreet but visible location on the sign structure or face.
- D. Signs shall not obstruct traffic visibility, create safety hazards, or be placed in the public right-of-way.
- E. Illumination, if allowed, must be external, shielded, and directed only onto the sign face (no glare toward roadways, adjacent properties, or the sky). No flashing, animated, or moving lighting is permitted.
- F. Prohibited features include off-premise commercial advertising (except as allowed for certain temporary signs), attachment to utility poles/trees/public structures, and any sign containing true threats, obscene material (per *Miller v. California*), or material inciting imminent lawless action (per *Brandenburg v. Ohio*).

### **Sec. 10. Permanent Signs by Zoning District**

The City's zoning districts are: District A (Agricultural), District B (Planned Unit Development, including all subcategories such as Institutional), District C (Commercial, including all subcategories), District R1 (Single Family Residential 1), and District R2 (Single Family Residential 2). Standards within each zoning district shall be applied consistently to all properties within that district, except where expressly modified by variance or specific authorization in this Chapter.

#### **A. Residential Districts (R1 and R2):**

- Monument signs are generally prohibited, except for approved subdivision or community entry features (max 32 sq ft and 6 ft height; variance recommended for larger or additional signs).
- **Wall signs** may be installed; however, such signs shall be flush-mounted and shall not exceed **8 square feet** in area.
- Window signs are limited to 25% of the window area for permitted home occupations.
- Address numbers are allowed and encouraged (no permit is required if affixed to the house).
  - Address numbers affixed to a monument are considered a monument sign and must go through the permit process to be approved.

**B. District A (Agricultural):**

- Similar to residential for most uses. Monument signs are allowed for the Highland Haven Ladies Club community entrance sign (permit required, fees waived, with written proof of property owner consent on file).
  - The Highland Haven Ladies Club is authorized to affix a temporary sign or banner to the City of Highland Haven sign located at the corner of FM 1431 and Highland Drive (CR 125) for the purpose of advertising the annual Ladies Club Rummage Sale. This temporary sign or banner shall not exceed 48 inches by 96 inches and may be displayed only during the weekend of the rummage sale.

**C. District B (Planned Unit Development, including all subcategories such as Institutional):**

- Monument signs, wall signs, and window signs are permitted.
- Institutional properties, including City-owned sites and HHPOA-owned properties, are authorized to install signs as needed for building or area identification, ingress and egress control, and notice of safety hazards. A sign permit is required; permit fees are waived.
- Number, size, and height limits follow commercial standards below unless otherwise approved.

**D. District C (Commercial, including all subcategories):**

- Allowed types: Monument signs, wall signs, and window signs. Pole signs are prohibited unless approved via variance.
- Number: One monument sign plus one wall or window sign per property (or per building frontage for multi-tenant sites).
- Monument signs: Maximum 32 square feet and 6 feet in height.
- Wall signs: Maximum 1 square foot per linear foot of building frontage, not to exceed 100 square feet total.
- Window signs: Not to exceed 25% of window area.
- Signs advertising for Camp Champions are authorized at the southwest corner of the junction of FM 1431 and CR 125 and at the Camp Champions Road entrance, notwithstanding other limitations, provided such signs are safely installed and maintained.
- Noncommercial murals/wall artwork are encouraged (see Sec. 13).

### **ARTICLE III – TEMPORARY SIGNS**

#### **Sec. 11. General Rules for Temporary Signs**

- Temporary signs must use lightweight, non-permanent materials and be securely installed.
- Signs shall not be placed in the public right-of-way except as expressly allowed in Sec. 18.
- No illumination is permitted for temporary signs.
- Signs shall not obstruct visibility at intersections/driveways or create hazards.
- Temporary signs shall not advertise off-premise commercial activities unless specifically allowed.

#### **Sec. 12. Temporary Signs by Zoning District**

##### **A. Residential Districts (R1 and R2) and similar residential uses in other districts:**

- One (1) temporary sign per lot at any time (max 6 sq ft, max 6 ft height).
- During active construction (valid building permit on file): One additional construction sign (max 24" x 36" or 6 sq ft). Must be removed within 14 days after completion of work.
- **Real Estate Signs** (for sale, for rent, lease, or similar): Maximum two (2) signs per lot (24" x 36" each; one front, one rear/side). Waterfront lots may have one additional

banner up to 32 sq ft facing water. Signs must be professional quality, securely affixed, and removed upon closing of sale/rental. No inflatables, ribbons, or streamers.

- **Event Signs** (including open house signs): May be displayed no more than 4 days prior to the event and must be removed no later than 2 days after the event.

**B. Districts A, B, and C (Agricultural, PUD, Commercial):**

- One (1) temporary business sign per lot (maximum 16 square feet and 6 feet in height) may be displayed for up to 60 consecutive days, after which it must be removed for a minimum of 30 days before a new temporary business sign may be displayed.
- Construction and real estate signs follow residential standards but may be reviewed for appropriate scaling on larger sites.
- Event signs follow the same timing as residential (4 days before, 2 days after) but may be larger (up to 32 sq ft) if tied to a permitted event and approved during permit review where required.

**Sec. 13. Other Permitted Signs (No Permit Required, Except as Noted)**

The following are permitted and do not count toward numerical limits:

1. Address numbers;
2. Government signs , as defined in Sec. 5, including temporary emergency and public safety signage erected by or at the direction of a governmental authority;
3. Safety warnings and security signs (as defined in Sec. 5; max 2 sq ft each, on private property);
4. Noncommercial flags;
5. Decorative signs at entryways (e.g., welcome signs or artistic entry features; up to three (3) per entrance, max 6 sq ft, maintained in good condition, no commercial advertising);
6. **Highland Haven Ladies Club monument sign** at the community entrance on Agricultural-zoned property (permit required; fees waived with written property owner consent on file);
7. **Noncommercial murals or wall artwork** meeting the Sec. 5 definition, provided they do not exceed **100 square feet** in area or **25% of the surface area of the wall**

to which they are applied (whichever is smaller), project no more than 2 inches from the wall, and are maintained in good condition.

#### **Sec. 14. Prohibited Signs**

The following are prohibited:

1. Signs in the public right-of-way (except as allowed in Sec. 18);
2. Flashing, animated, or moving signs;
3. Off-premise commercial billboards;
4. Signs that obstruct traffic visibility;
5. Signs attached to utility poles, trees, or public structures;
6. Signs containing true threats, obscene material (as defined by the three-prong test in *Miller v. California*), or material that incites imminent lawless action (per *Brandenburg v. Ohio*). Such signs may also violate Texas Penal Code §42.01.
7. Political Signs Prohibited by State Law:
  1. In accordance with Texas Election Code Chapter 259, the following political signs are prohibited and may be removed by the City:
    1. Any political sign with a surface area greater than 36 square feet;
    2. Any political sign that is more than eight (8) feet in height;
    3. Any illuminated political sign;
    4. Any political sign containing moving elements, including rotation, animation, or fluttering devices other than the sign face itself; or
    5. Any political sign placed in a manner otherwise prohibited by Texas Election Code § 259.002–§ 259.003.

#### **Sec. 15. Nonconforming Signs**

Signs lawfully existing prior to adoption of this Chapter may continue but shall not be enlarged or structurally altered.

#### **Sec. 16. Severability**

If any provision is held invalid, the remainder shall not be affected.

#### **Sec. 17. Effective Date**

This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption.

## **Sec. 18. Maintenance and Abandonment of Signs**

**A. Maintenance Required.** All signs shall be maintained in good repair at all times. No person shall allow a sign to become faded, damaged, dilapidated, structurally unsafe, or in a condition that creates a hazard to public safety or welfare. This includes keeping sign faces legible, structures secure, and illumination (if any) functioning properly. Ordinary maintenance and repainting do not require a new permit.

**B. Abandonment.** A sign is considered abandoned if:

1. It advertises or directs attention to a business, activity, goods, products, or services that are no longer offered or conducted on the premises;
2. The sign face is blank or without legible content for more than 90 consecutive days;  
or
3. The sign structure requires more than customary maintenance or repair to restore it to a safe and compliant condition.

## **C. Removal Process.**

1. The City Administrator shall provide written notice to the property owner and (if known) the sign owner identifying the violation and requiring correction or removal within 30 days.
2. If the violation is not corrected within the 30-day period, the City may remove the sign and any associated structure at the expense of the property owner and/or sign owner.
3. The City may recover all costs of removal, storage, and disposal (including administrative costs) by billing the responsible party or placing a lien on the property.
4. Removed signs may be stored for 30 days; unclaimed signs may be disposed of by the City.

## **Sec. 19. Measurement Standards**

For purposes of this Chapter, sign area and height shall be measured as follows:

### **A. Sign Area.**

1. The area of a sign shall be the area within the smallest single continuous perimeter enclosing the sign face, including any border, trim, or background surface upon

which the message is displayed, but excluding the sign structure, base, or support poles unless they contain lettering, logos, or other communicative elements.

2. For multi-faced signs, only the largest single face shall be counted toward the maximum area limit unless otherwise specified.
3. For wall signs or murals, the area is calculated as the portion of the wall surface covered by the sign or artwork.

**B. Sign Height.** The height of a freestanding or monument sign shall be the vertical distance from the average finished grade at the base of the sign to the highest point of the sign or sign structure, whichever is taller.

**C. Window Area.** For window signs, the allowable area is based on 25% of the total glazed window surface visible from the exterior.

## **Sec. 20. Signs in Public Right-of-Way**

**A. General Prohibition:** No private sign shall be erected, placed, maintained, or displayed in the public right-of-way except as expressly permitted in this Section. Any violating sign may be removed immediately by the City without notice.

**B. Limited Exceptions for Events and Sales:** Temporary, noncommercial informational or directional signs may be placed only as follows:

1. One informational sign (max 24" x 36" or 6 sq ft) advertising an open house, garage sale, estate sale, or similar event at the intersection of County Road 125 and FM 1431.
2. Generic directional signs (no advertising content) at street intersections to guide to the event.
3. Signs must be professional in appearance; festive adornments in good taste are allowed. No attachment to structures. Display only during event hours and not overnight. No obstruction of visibility or safety features.

**C. Enforcement:** The City may remove violating signs. Responsible parties may be cited.



April 6, 2026

Subject: Item 8 - Discussion and/or Action: Storage Tanks Language

To the City of Highland Haven Planning and Zoning Commission,

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the proposed regulation of private water storage tanks and to explain the approach taken in developing the attached draft ordinance. This item is presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission for review, discussion, and feedback before the Commission considers whether to move forward with a formal recommendation.

## **BACKGROUND AND APPROACH**

Last year, the City encountered a situation in which a resident installed a private water storage tank associated with a private water well. Upon review of the City's Code of Ordinances, staff determined that there were no provisions specifically addressing private water storage tanks, including placement, design, or operational considerations.

The City does currently regulate rainwater harvesting systems. Based on discussions at the Planning & Zoning Commission, it was recommended by the individual member studying this issue that new regulations for private water storage tanks be incorporated into the existing rainwater harvesting ordinance, rather than creating an entirely separate section of the Code. This approach was intended to keep similar systems grouped together and improve overall clarity.

## **DRAFT ORDINANCE OVERVIEW**

Based on the recommendation provided, staff developed a draft ordinance that:

- expands the existing rainwater harvesting ordinance to also address private water storage systems,
- renames the ordinance to reflect both rainwater harvesting and private water storage systems, and
- adds new language to establish basic standards for private water storage tanks.

The attached draft shows how this concept has been incorporated into the existing ordinance framework (all changes highlighted in yellow). New or proposed language has been clearly identified so that changes are easy to review and discuss.

The intent of this draft is to establish reasonable, enforceable standards where none previously existed, while using an ordinance structure that is already familiar and in use.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

- The attached draft ordinance reflects staff's current working version based on Planning & Zoning input to date.
- The City Attorney is reviewing the draft ordinance for legal considerations and consistency with applicable regulations.
- Feedback from the City Attorney has not yet been received and may result in additional revisions.

At this stage, the ordinance should be viewed as a draft under development rather than a final proposal.

*more on next page*



## FEEDBACK REQUESTED FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioners are asked to:

- Review the draft ordinance and proposed structure;
- Provide feedback on whether the proposed standards are reasonable and clear;
- Identify any concerns, gaps, or unintended impacts; and
- Suggest revisions or alternative approaches for consideration.

All comments received from the Planning & Zoning Commission will be evaluated alongside feedback from the City Attorney before returning with a revised draft for further discussion or potential recommendation.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Receive Planning & Zoning Commission feedback on the draft ordinance.
2. Incorporate comments from P&Z and the City Attorney as appropriate.
3. Present a revised draft to the Planning & Zoning Commission for further discussion and direction on moving forward.

Thank you for your continued input on this issue. Your feedback is essential in developing an ordinance that is clear, balanced, and effective for the City.

Please let me know if you would like any additional information prior to the meeting.

Sincerely,  
Andy Adams  
Highland Haven  
City Administrator  
(830) 265-4366  
cityadministrator@highlandhaventx.com

## **Article 4.08 Rainwater Harvesting and Private Water Storage Systems**

### **§ 4.08.001. Definitions.**

Definitions for terms, phrases and words related to this article can be found in article 1.02. (Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II, adopted 2/21/2023)

The following definitions shall also apply:

**Private Water Storage Tank** – Any above-ground or partially above-ground container used to store groundwater produced from a legally permitted private water well located on the same property. This definition applies only to storage tanks and does not authorize the drilling of new wells where otherwise prohibited.

### **Section 1: Rainwater Harvesting Systems**

#### **§ 4.08.002. Permit required; submission of plans.**

(a) Permit required; exceptions.

- (1) Regardless of size, all rainwater harvesting systems are subject to the requirements for storage tank compliance described herein; however, no permit shall be required for a rainwater harvesting system that conveys water to an above-ground storage tank, such as a rain barrel, for gravity flow (hose flow) irrigation distribution only, if the system consists of no more than two storage tanks that cumulatively hold 200 gallons or less in volume.
- (2) It shall be unlawful for any person to construct or install a rainwater harvesting system without having first obtained a permit from the city if:
  - (A) The system consists of more than two storage tanks that cumulatively hold 200 gallons or more in volume.
  - (B) The systems including a connection to an irrigation system using potable water.

(b) Plans and specifications. Adequate plans and specifications, as determined by the permit officer, must accompany each application for a permit.

(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(1), adopted 2/21/2023)

#### **§ 4.08.003. License required; installation by property owner.**

- (a) Any person who connects a rainwater harvesting system to the water supply within the city must hold a valid irrigator's license, as defined by title 30, Texas Administrative Code, chapter 30, and required by V.T.C.A., Occupations Code chapter 1903, or as defined by chapter 365, title 22 of the Texas Administrative Code, and required by V.T.C.A., Occupations Code chapter 1301.
- (b) A property owner is not required to be licensed in accordance with V.T.C.A., Occupations Code, title 12, section 1903.002(c)(1) if he or she is performing irrigation work in a building or on premises owned or occupied by the person as the person's home.
- (c) A home or property owner who installs an irrigation system must meet the standards contained in title 30, Texas Administrative Code, chapter 344 regarding spacing, water pressure, spraying water over impervious materials, rain or moisture shut-off devices or

other technology, backflow prevention and isolation valves.

- (d) The city may, at any point, adopt more stringent requirements for a home or property owner who installs an irrigation system. See V.T.C.A., Occupations Code section 1903.002 for other exemptions to the licensing requirement.  
(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(2), adopted 2/21/2023)

**§ 4.08.004. Inspection and fee.**

It shall be the duty of the city to inspect all rainwater harvesting systems which require a permit to determine that they are in compliance with this article. For such inspection and the issuance of the permit, a fee shall be paid to the city prior to the issuance of such permit. Permitting of a system under 200 gallons is at no cost to the applicant.

(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(3), adopted 2/21/2023)

**§ 4.08.005. Construction and maintenance requirements.**

All rainwater harvesting systems shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with the following requirements:

- (1) Compliance with state and federal law is the responsibility of the producer, provider, and user of such installations.
- (2) In addition to the requirements of this article, all rainwater harvesting systems must be in compliance with any applicable city building code.
- (3) All approved rainwater harvesting systems must be constructed and installed as per the specifications of the manufacturer of that particular system. A copy of these specifications must be submitted to the city along with the permit application.
- (4) Any rain harvesting system that is connected to the city's potable water system must have a reduced pressure zone backflow preventer installed or an approved air gap method utilized to prevent backflow to the residence and the city's water distribution system.

(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(4), adopted 2/21/2023)

**§ 4.08.006. Restrictions and limitations.**

All rainwater harvesting systems constructed and maintained under the provisions of this article shall be subject to the following restrictions and limitations:

- (1) Allowable uses. Allowable uses of rainwater harvesting systems shall be restricted to non-potable, outdoor irrigation and foundation watering only. Systems supplied or supplemented by a water source not specified herein or used for any purpose other than irrigation shall be prohibited.
- (2) Limited service area. The rainwater harvesting system shall serve only the lot upon which it is located.
- (3) Connection of additional water source. Connection of more than one water source to an irrigation system presents the potential for contamination of the potable water supply if backflow occurs. Therefore, connection of any additional water source to an irrigation system that is connected to the potable water supply shall be permitted only if the irrigation system is connected to the potable water supply through a reduced-pressure principle backflow prevention (RPZ) assembly or an approved air gap method. RPZ assemblies must be tested annually and test records must be submitted to city within 30 days of the test date.

- (4) Water source from Lake LBJ. If the irrigation system water source is solely from Lake LBJ with no connection to the city's potable water supply, no RPZ or air gap method is required between the rain barrel and the irrigation system.

(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(5), adopted 2/21/2023)

#### **§ 4.08.007. Setbacks.**

Rainwater harvesting systems shall meet all existing structure setback regulations and the following requirements:

- (1) Front yard. No rainwater harvesting system or any component thereof shall be located in front of the building structure.
- (2) Side or rear yards. The tank must abide by all other setback requirements for side or rear yards.

(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(6), adopted 2/21/2023)

#### **§ 4.08.008. Components.**

Regardless of its complexity, a rainwater harvesting system shall be comprised of the following components:

- (1) The catchment surface from which rainwater is collected. Rooftops are the only allowable catchment surface.
- (2) Gutters and downspouts that channel water from the roof catchment surface to the tank.
- (3) Overhead piping of a rainwater harvesting system shall be more no more than 5 feet from the building structure unless the pipe is supported and the pipe is concealed by a structure matching the home.
- (4) The rainwater catchment conveyance system shall be equipped with a debris excluder or other approved means to prevent the accumulation of leaves, needles, other debris and sediment from entering the storage tank.
- (5) Devices and methods used to remove debris or sediment shall be accessible and sized and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions.
- (6) No more than two approved storage tanks.
- (7) A delivery system, either gravity fed or pumped to the end use.

(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(7), adopted 2/21/2023)

#### **§ 4.08.009. Approved storage tanks.**

Regardless of the size or complexity of storage tanks, the following provisions are required to prevent public health hazards and nuisances:

- (1) Storage tanks must be opaque.
- (2) Storage tanks must never have been used to store hazardous materials.

- (3) Storage tanks must be covered and vents screened to prevent mosquito breeding.
- (4) Storage tanks must be accessible for cleaning and repair.
- (5) Storage tank access openings exceeding 12 inches (305 mm) in diameter shall be secured to prevent tampering and unintended entry by either a lockable device or other approved method.
- (6) Storage tanks are required to have an overflow port and system that will not contribute to the erosion and/or the flooding of property downstream from collection system.
- (7) Storage tanks should be placed on a stable, level surface and it must be capable of holding the maximum possible weight when full.
- (8) Storage tanks shall be no more than 6 feet in height above ground level.
- (9) Rainwater identification. Storage tanks must be labeled "RAINWATER–DO NOT DRINK", "NONPOTABLE WATER–DO NOT DRINK", or with a similar phrase that clearly indicates that the water contained within is not suitable for human consumption.  
(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(8), adopted 2/21/2023)

**§ 4.08.010. Maintenance.**

Any rainwater harvesting system, permitted or unpermitted, shall:

- (1) Not remain in a condition so as to create a public health hazard or a nuisance to the general public;
- (2) Be maintained as required to keep the system functioning as designed;
- (3) Be maintained so as to prevent the accumulation of unwholesome, stagnant, or offensive water;
- (4) Be maintained so as to prevent the attraction or breeding of mosquitoes or other undesirable pests;
- (5) Not be used for the storage of anything other than water or for anything other than its intended purpose as a rainwater harvesting system.  
(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(9), adopted 2/21/2023)

**§ 4.08.011. Abandonment.**

When a rainwater harvesting system is abandoned, all components must be removed.  
(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(10), adopted 2/21/2023)

**§ 4.08.012. Exceptions.**

No deviation from the height, setback or any other requirements specified herein shall be permitted unless allowed by the board of aldermen.  
(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. II(11), adopted 2/21/2023; Ordinance adopting Code)

**§ 4.08.013. Penalty.**

- (a) Civil and criminal penalties. The city shall have the power to administer and enforce the provisions of this article as may be required by governing law. Any person violating any provision of this article is subject to suit for injunctive relief as well as prosecution for criminal violations. Any violation of this article is hereby declared to be a nuisance.
- (b) Criminal prosecution. Any person violating any provision of this article shall, upon conviction, be fined a sum not exceeding that which is provided by state law, except as may be otherwise expressly provided herein or by state law. Each day that a provision of this article is violated shall constitute a separate offense. An offense under this article is a misdemeanor.

(Ordinance 098 Rev. 1, sec. V, adopted 2/21/2023)

**Section 2: Private Well Water Storage Tank Systems**

**§ 4.08.014 Private Well Water Storage Tanks.**

**(a) Permit required.**

(1) Regardless of size, all private water storage tanks shall comply with the requirements set forth herein.

(2) No permit shall be required for a private water storage tank with a capacity of 200 gallons or less.

(3) It shall be unlawful for any person to construct or install a private water storage tank exceeding 200 gallons in capacity without first obtaining a permit from the city.

(4) Storage tanks exceeding 1,000 gallons in capacity shall require submission of engineered foundation or structural support details sufficient to demonstrate the tank pad or base is capable of supporting the maximum weight of the tank when full.

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**(b) Plans and specifications.**

Adequate plans and specifications, as determined by the permit officer, shall accompany each permit application and shall include:

- Tank dimensions and total capacity
- Proposed location on property with setbacks indicated
- Foundation or pad details
- Screening method, if applicable

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**(c) Location and setbacks.**

(1) No private water storage tank shall be located in the required front yard, or in front of the home.

(2) Any private water storage tank visible from the street must be screened.

(3) All tanks shall comply with applicable accessory structure setback requirements.

(4) Tanks shall not be located within utility easements or drainage easements.

(5) Tanks shall be located a minimum of five (5) feet from any property line unless otherwise required by city zoning regulations.

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**(d) Height limitations.**

(1) Private water storage tanks shall not exceed eight (8) feet in height above ground level.

(2) Any variance for a tank exceeding eight (8) feet in height shall require approval by the Board of Aldermen.

(3) Under no circumstances shall a private water storage tank exceed twelve (12) feet in height above ground level.

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**(e) Screening and appearance.**

(1) Any private water storage tank visible from a public street or adjacent residential property shall be screened.

(2) Screening may consist of:

- (A) Opaque fencing; or
- (B) Masonry enclosure;

(3) Storage tanks shall be constructed of opaque material.

(4) Storage tanks shall be neutral or earth-tone in color.

(5) Commercial branding or advertising visible from a public street is prohibited.

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**(f) Construction and safety requirements.**

(1) Storage tanks must never have been used to store hazardous materials.

(2) Tanks shall be covered and vents screened to prevent mosquito breeding.

(3) Tanks shall be accessible for cleaning and repair.

(4) Storage tank access openings exceeding twelve (12) inches in diameter shall be secured to prevent tampering or unintended entry.

(5) Tanks shall include an overflow port and drainage system that will not contribute to erosion or flooding of adjacent property.

(6) Storage tanks shall be installed on a stable, level surface capable of supporting the maximum filled weight of the tank.

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**(g) Cross-connection protection.**

(1) Any property connected to the city's potable water system and also utilizing a private well shall maintain complete physical separation of the systems.

(2) The city may inspect such systems upon reasonable notice to ensure compliance.

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**(h) Maintenance.**

Any private water storage tank shall:

- (1) Not remain in a condition so as to create a public health hazard or nuisance;
- (2) Be maintained to prevent stagnant water;
- (3) Prevent mosquito breeding;
- (4) Be used solely for water storage;
- (5) Be maintained in structurally sound condition.

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**(i) Limited service area.**

A private water storage tank shall serve only the lot upon which it is located.

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**(j) Abandonment.**

When a private water storage tank is abandoned, all components shall be removed from the property.

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**(k) Nonconforming existing tanks.**

Any private water storage tank legally installed prior to the effective date of this ordinance shall be considered a lawful nonconforming structure and may remain in place, provided it does not create a nuisance, health hazard, or unsafe condition.

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**(l) Groundwater regulation.**

Nothing in this section shall be construed to regulate groundwater production, withdrawal amounts, or the permitting of water wells, which are subject to the jurisdiction of the applicable groundwater conservation district. This section shall not be interpreted to authorize the interconnection of private well systems with the City's potable water distribution system.

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**(m) Underground installation.**

- (1) Underground or partially buried private water storage tanks shall require a permit regardless of capacity.
- (2) Underground tanks shall be installed in accordance with manufacturer specifications and engineered installation requirements sufficient to prevent flotation, collapse, or structural failure.
- (3) Underground tanks shall not be installed within drainage easements, utility easements, or flood-prone areas unless specifically approved by the city.
- (4) Venting and access openings shall be screened and secured to prevent mosquito breeding and unauthorized entry.
- (5) The installation of an underground tank shall not alter existing drainage patterns in a manner that adversely impacts adjacent property.

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**(n) Prohibition on storage of city potable water.**

- (1) No private water storage tank regulated under this section shall be used for the storage of water supplied by the City's potable water system unless expressly authorized in writing by the city.
- (2) Pumping, diverting, or conveying water from the City's potable water system into a private water storage tank for the purpose of storage is prohibited.
- (3) The use of City potable water to supplement a private well water storage tank is prohibited.
- (4) Any unauthorized storage of City potable water shall constitute a violation of this article and may result in disconnection of water service in addition to other penalties allowed by law.
- (5) Nothing herein shall prohibit temporary emergency storage of potable water when specifically authorized in writing by the city and protected by an approved air gap or RPZ assembly.



April 6, 2026

Subject: Item 9 - Discussion and/or Action: Water Wells

To the City of Highland Haven Planning and Zoning Commission,

## **BACKGROUND**

Prior to 1989, all homes in Highland Haven, Shady Acres, Nobles, and Camp Champions relied on private water wells. Many of these wells were shallow, located near property lines, and had questionable water quality.

In 1989, Highland Utilities constructed a Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) approved groundwater system to serve these areas, providing a reliable source of safe drinking water. The City of Highland Haven purchased this system in 2008 and continues to provide TCEQ-regulated drinking water within its assigned service area (Certificate of Convenience and Necessity, or CCN). A CCN is a state authorization that both grants and obligates a utility to provide continuous water service within a defined geographic area.

Since approximately 2014, the City has prohibited the drilling of new private water wells, while allowing wells for the municipal water system. This prohibition originated in part due to conflicts between existing wells and septic system requirements. In several cases, older wells were located too close to proposed septic system replacements required by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), resulting in the need to plug wells on adjacent properties to allow compliance.

This policy also reflects the City's reliance on groundwater as its sole source of drinking water and the need to protect that resource. Under Texas law, General Law municipalities are authorized to adopt ordinances necessary to protect public health, safety, and welfare, including the regulation of water systems and related infrastructure. The prohibition on new private wells is consistent with this authority, particularly in managing a shared groundwater resource and protecting the integrity and reliability of the municipal water system.

Following a recent variance request to allow a private irrigation well, the Board of Aldermen denied the request and directed the Planning and Zoning Commission to review the ordinance and consider whether updates or clarifications were appropriate. The Board also directed staff to evaluate water rate structures, including potential impacts related to lot size, as part of the upcoming budget process.

## **DISCUSSION**

As part of this review, research was conducted on how other municipalities address private water wells, particularly those that rely on groundwater for their public water supply. Research indicates that many such communities limit or restrict private wells in order to protect shared aquifer resources and maintain the integrity of municipal systems.

Some communities do allow private wells; however, these are typically areas with larger lot sizes, lower density, or properties not fully served by public water infrastructure. In some cases, these communities also have access to multiple water sources for their drinking water. These differences highlight the importance of tailoring regulations to local conditions.

For Highland Haven, where the municipal water system is entirely groundwater-based, limiting additional private wells helps reduce the risk of potential aquifer contamination, competing withdrawals, and supports the long-term reliability of the system.

*more on next page*



The City's municipal water system is available to all properties within the City limits and certificated service area. As a result, private wells are not necessary to provide water service to any property, which is an important distinction in evaluating the City's approach to groundwater management.

Based on this research, a proposed amendment has been developed to add a clear statement of purpose to the existing ordinance. The proposed language is intended to improve clarity and transparency without changing the current prohibition.

This item is presented for discussion and direction on whether to proceed with the proposed language, consider alternative approaches, or maintain the ordinance in its current form.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT (FOR CONSIDERATION):**

"Drilling of new water wells is prohibited for the protection of public health, safety, welfare and system integrity of the municipal water system."

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends consideration of the proposed amendment as a clarification of existing policy, while addressing property owner irrigation cost concerns separately through the budget and rate review process.

**STAFF RESEARCH NOTE: COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES AND GROUNDWATER CONSIDERATIONS**

A review of comparable Hill Country communities indicates that cities relying on groundwater for their municipal water supply commonly limit or effectively prohibit private wells in order to protect shared aquifer resources and maintain the integrity of their public water systems.

Cities such as Dripping Springs and Wimberley utilize regulatory approaches that significantly restrict or discourage private wells, particularly for properties served by municipal water. While the specific methods vary, the underlying principle is consistent: reducing the risk of competing groundwater withdrawals and protecting long-term water availability.

In contrast, communities such as Johnson City allow private wells more broadly due to different development patterns, including larger lot sizes, lower density, and areas that have historically relied on individual wells rather than a fully built-out municipal water system.

Highland Haven differs in that municipal water service is available to all properties within the City limits and certificated service area. As a result, private wells are not necessary to provide water service, and limitations on new wells serve as a proactive measure to protect the City's shared groundwater resource and the reliability of its water system.

Additionally, the City's groundwater use is regulated by the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District, which currently limits permitted production based on factors that do not fully reflect the size of the City's service area or number of connections. The City has been engaged in ongoing discussions with the District regarding potential rule changes that would allow consideration of a municipality's certificated service area in determining permitted production. In similar regulatory frameworks, a key factor in allowing this approach is the presence of local ordinances that prohibit or severely limit private wells.

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CITY OF  
**HIGHLAND HAVEN**  
EST. 1995

[www.highlandhaventx.com](http://www.highlandhaventx.com) (830) 265-4366

Allowing additional private wells may have a limiting effect on the amount of groundwater the District will permit for the City's municipal system. Maintaining the current ordinance therefore not only supports local groundwater protection efforts but may also position the City more favorably in future discussions regarding groundwater permitting and long-term water supply planning.

Thank you for your continued input on this issue. Your feedback is essential in developing an ordinance that is clear, balanced, and effective for the City.

Please let me know if you would like any additional information prior to the meeting.

Sincerely,  
Andy Adams  
Highland Haven  
City Administrator  
(830) 265-4366  
[cityadministrator@highlandhaventx.com](mailto:cityadministrator@highlandhaventx.com)

# Document Outline

Below is a brief document outline for the Comprehensive plan with some explanations provided.

1. **Table of Contents:** This will be finalized once we get correct page numbers for all parts of the document
2. **Executive Summary:** This will be the first thing that a reader comes across in this plan. It will summarize the entire document into a shorter, and easier to read narrative for those that want a quicker summary of the entire Comprehensive Plan.
3. **Part 1: Foundation:** This begins the meat of the document, and will layout the who, what, when, why of our City
  - a. **Introduction:** This introduction will spell out everything from what a comprehensive plan is, to how to use, to how this plan is organized
  - b. **Community Profile:** This will give a large overview of the city as it currently stands. Everything from location, to current assets will be touched on
4. **Part 2: Topic Sections:** This is the heart of the plan and will go over 11 topic sections in detail. Each section will be layed out in the following format:
  - a. Definition & Overview
  - b. Importance to Highland Haven
  - c. Community Input
  - d. Responsible Entities
  - e. Priorities and Action Plan
  - f. Below is a list of all Topic Sections
    - i. **Community Vision & Values**
    - ii. **Land Use & Development**
    - iii. **Transportation & Mobility**
    - iv. **Water Resources & Infrastructure**
    - v. **Parks, Recreation & Open Space**
    - vi. **Community Character & Design**
    - vii. **Public Safety & Emergency Services**
    - viii. **Infrastructure & Utilities**
    - ix. **Economic Development & Fiscal Sustainability**
    - x. **Community Engagement & Communication**
    - xi. **Intergovernmental Coordination**
5. **Part 3: Implementation:** This will go over how we plan to implement the items brought up in each topic section using the four following sections:
  - a. **Implementation Framework**
  - b. **Priority Action Matrix**
  - c. **Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**
  - d. **Funding Strategies**
6. **Appendices:** We will provide all supporting documentation in the appendices. Everything from survey results to ordinances to maps and technical reports.



# Introduction

# Introduction

## Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-range guide that sets out a community's vision for the next 10 to 20 years. It's not a law or regulation—it's a roadmap that helps city leaders and residents make smart decisions about growth, infrastructure, and services.

This plan shows where Highland Haven is today, where we want to be, and how to get there. It reflects what matters most to our community, based on input from surveys, town halls, and public meetings.

### What a Comprehensive Plan Is and Isn't

#### A Comprehensive Plan IS:

- A vision for Highland Haven's future based on what residents told us
- A guide for decisions about development, infrastructure, and city services
- A tool for planning public projects and investments
- A foundation for zoning and development rules
- Support for grant applications and funding requests

#### A Comprehensive Plan IS NOT:

- A zoning law (those are separate documents that follow this plan's direction)
- A guarantee everything will happen exactly as written
- A rigid set of rules that can't be adjusted
- A technical engineering manual or a city budget

The plan provides direction while allowing flexibility to adapt to changing conditions and new opportunities.

### Why Does Highland Haven Need This Plan?

Even as a small community of 400 residents and 340 homes, Highland Haven faces real planning challenges: maintaining roads and infrastructure, managing development, protecting water resources, and preserving what makes our community special. This plan helps us make better decisions with limited resources—and it's required by state law.

# Introduction

## Key Benefits:

### 1. Protects Our Community Character

Highland Haven's quiet, lakeside residential feel is what residents value most. With 98% of survey respondents opposing multi-family development and short-term rentals, this plan ensures future decisions honor those values.

### 2. Guides Infrastructure Investment

With a small staff (3.5 people) and one of Texas's lowest property tax rates, we must be strategic. This plan helps prioritize road repairs, water system improvements, and other projects that residents identified as most important.

### 3. Supports Strategic Funding

Our community's median income disqualifies us from many grants, and most require matching funds we must have ready. This plan helps identify realistic funding opportunities and strengthens applications when the right fit comes along.

### 4. Provides Consistency

City leaders and staff change over time. This plan ensures continuity in decision-making and makes policies clear to everyone—residents, developers, and partners.

### 5. Coordinates with Partners

Highland Haven works with Shady Acres POA, Nobles Subdivision, Burnet County, LCRA, neighboring cities, and other agencies. This plan helps coordinate efforts and communicate our priorities.

### 6. Supports Better Decisions

When considering zoning changes or major projects, this plan gives the Board of Aldermen a clear framework based on community values—not just personal opinions.

### 7. Engages Residents

The planning process itself strengthens community involvement. Our 30% survey response rate (105 of 353 households) shows strong interest in shaping Highland Haven's future—well above typical municipal survey benchmarks.

The planning process itself strengthens community involvement. Our 30% survey response rate (105 of 353 households) shows strong interest in shaping Highland Haven's future—well above typical municipal survey benchmarks.

# Introduction

## Who Should Use This Plan?

- Board of Aldermen:** Guide policy decisions, zoning requests, and budgets aligned with long-term goals.
- Planning & Zoning Commission:** Foundation for zoning recommendations, site plan reviews, and variance decisions.
- City Administrator and Staff:** Day-to-day decisions, project planning, grant applications, and coordination with agencies.
- Property Owners and Developers:** Understand community expectations and development policies before proposing projects.
- Residents:** Learn about city policies, priorities, and how decisions are made.
- Partner Agencies:** Understand Highland Haven's priorities to coordinate regional efforts.

## A Living Document

This plan is designed to evolve with Highland Haven. While it provides long-term vision, it includes ways to make amendments and updates every five to ten years to stay relevant. The 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan represents our commitment to thoughtful, community-driven planning that preserves what we love while preparing for the future. It's not the end of planning—it's the start of ongoing action to make our shared vision real.

## Why Now?

Highland Haven's last comprehensive plan was adopted in 2004 and revised in 2014—over a decade ago. While many core values remain the same, our community has changed, state laws have evolved, and it's time for an update that reflects today's reality and what residents told us matters most.

## Best Practices Recommend Regular Updates

Planning experts and state guidance recommend cities update their comprehensive plans every 5 to 10 years to stay relevant and useful. At over 10 years since our last revision, we're overdue and ready to get back on track.

# Introduction

## What's Changed Since 2014?

### **Aging Infrastructure Needs Planning**

Our water system, roads, drainage, and public buildings are aging. With a small staff (3.5 people) and one of Texas's lowest tax rates, we must plan strategically to avoid costly emergency repairs. A clear Capital Improvement Program helps us prioritize projects and is required for most grant applications.

### **Water Resource Challenges**

Water supply planning is more urgent than ever. We need to work with the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District to ensure our groundwater permit meets community needs. Currently, our permit doesn't match the actual number of platted lots in our service area—a critical gap we must address.

### **Changing Demographics**

While Highland Haven remains primarily a retirement and vacation home community, more families with children are moving in. About 30% of property owners are weekend or part-time residents, which affects how we plan infrastructure capacity and community communication.

### **Nearly Built Out**

With 375 platted lots and approximately 330-335 existing homes, Highland Haven has minimal vacant lots left. This shifts our planning from managing growth to managing redevelopment, property reinvestment, and infrastructure maintenance in a mature community.

### **New City Administration**

Highland Haven created the City Administrator position in 2024 to professionalize operations and provide continuity. This improves our capacity to implement better planning and management practices, including state-required code enforcement.

### **Regional Growth**

The Highland Lakes region has grown significantly since 2014. FM 1431 is busier, neighboring communities have expanded, and Lake LBJ sees increased use due to water level fluctuations at Lakes Travis and Buchanan. These changes affect Highland Haven even as we remain small and residential.

# Introduction

## Emerging Issues

Residents have raised concerns about topics that weren't as prominent in 2014:

- Short-term rental pressure (VRBO/Airbnb)
- Invasive aquatic vegetation and zebra mussels
- Feasibility of a centralized sewer system
- Construction activity and contractor traffic
- Balancing property tax relief with infrastructure needs
- Emergency preparedness and communication

## Strong Community Engagement

The 2025 community survey received 105 responses from 353 households—a 30% response rate showing residents care deeply about Highland Haven's future. When community engagement is this strong, it's the ideal time to capture input and turn it into action.

## The Right Moment

With new city administration, an engaged Planning & Zoning Commission, and clear community priorities, now is the perfect time to establish a roadmap for the next decade that ensures continuity across future leadership changes.

## The Cost of Waiting

Without an updated plan, we risk:

- Inconsistent decisions, based on personal preference rather than community values
- Missed opportunities, for funding or partnerships because we lack clear policy guidance
- Difficult decisions becoming more contentious, without a framework to evaluate them
- Eroding trust, if city policies don't reflect what residents told us matters

## Moving Forward Together

This plan represents our commitment to proactive, community-driven planning. Rather than waiting for problems to force our hand, we're charting a clear course that preserves what makes Highland Haven special while addressing new challenges and opportunities.

The time is now because our community is ready, engaged, and clear about what matters most.

# Introduction

## Legal Basis

### Authority to Plan

The City of Highland Haven has the legal authority to adopt and implement a comprehensive plan under Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code. While Texas doesn't require cities to have comprehensive plans, state law does require that zoning regulations be made "in accordance with a comprehensive plan." Since Highland Haven has zoning ordinances, maintaining an up-to-date comprehensive plan is a practical necessity.

### Relationship to Zoning and Regulations

The comprehensive plan is a policy guide, not a regulation like zoning ordinances or building codes. However, when the City makes zoning decisions, considers variances, or evaluates development proposals, those decisions should align with this plan's goals and policies. Other city ordinances—including building codes and development standards—should similarly reflect and support the comprehensive plan.

### Adoption and Amendment

This plan will be adopted by resolution of the Board of Aldermen following Planning & Zoning Commission review and a public hearing. Once adopted, it becomes official city policy. The plan can be amended as conditions change. Amendments require P&Z review and recommendation, public notice and hearing, and Board approval by resolution. The P&Z may review the plan annually at the Board's direction, with comprehensive updates recommended every five to ten years.

## What the Plan Does and Doesn't Do

### The Plan:

- Establishes official city policy on land use, development, and public services
- Provides a framework for evaluating zoning decisions and development proposals
- Guides capital improvement planning and infrastructure investments
- Supports grant applications and intergovernmental coordination

### The Plan Does Not:

- Create enforceable rights or obligations for individual property owners
- Guarantee that any specific project will be funded or completed
- Prevent the city from making appropriate deviations when circumstances warrant
- Override existing property rights or vested development rights

# Introduction

## Planning Process

### A Community-Driven Approach

Highland Haven's 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan was built on community input through surveys, town halls, and public meetings. The goal was to create a plan that reflects what residents—both full-time and part-time—told us matters most.

### Timeline

- Fall 2024 - Board of Aldermen directed the comprehensive plan update process
- January 2025 - Community survey distributed to all 353 Highland Haven households
- January-February 2025 - Survey open for response; 105 responses received (30% response rate) with 269 individual comments
- March-August 2025 - City staff analyzed survey results and compiled findings
- September 2025-January 2026 - Town hall meetings held on specific topics for deeper discussion
- November 2025-March 2026 - Plan sections drafted based on community input
- January-May 2026 - Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed and refined draft sections
- June-September 2026 - Public review period and adoption by Board of Aldermen

**Goal: Adopt the plan by September 30, 2026**

## How We Gathered Input

- **Community Survey:** Covered community safety and character, development preferences, infrastructure priorities, water resources, communication preferences, and demographics. Included both structured questions and open-ended comments.
- **Town Hall Meetings:** Provided face-to-face dialogue on specific topics, allowing for clarification and real-time feedback.
- **Planning & Zoning Commission:** Actively involved throughout, reviewing draft sections and ensuring the plan addresses real-world challenges.
- **Ongoing Communication:** Regular updates via email, website, and Board meetings kept residents informed throughout the process.

# Introduction

## Key Themes from Community Input

- **Preserve residential character:** Strong opposition to multi-family development and short-term rentals; support for single-family community
- **Protect water resources:** Deep concern about water supply, conservation, and lake quality
- **Maintain infrastructure:** Recognition that roads, water systems, and drainage need ongoing investment
- **Value natural beauty:** Appreciation for tree canopy, lake access, and low-density character
- **Support transparency:** Preference for clear communication about city decisions and spending
- **Balance fiscal responsibility:** Understanding that some taxation is necessary while valuing efficiency

Every section of this plan is grounded in what residents told us through surveys, town halls, and written comments.

## How to Use This Plan

### A Practical Tool for Decision-Making

This plan is written in plain language and organized around specific topics that matter to Highland Haven. Whether you're a city official, P&Z member, property owner, or resident, this plan provides clear guidance on community priorities.

### For the Board of Aldermen

- **Policy Decisions:** Use the plan when establishing new policies or updating ordinances
- **Budget & Capital Planning:** Use priority action items to guide annual budget decisions and justify capital expenditures
- **Zoning Decisions:** Ask, "Is this consistent with what the comprehensive plan says?" when evaluating zoning changes or development proposals
- **Grant Applications:** Reference the plan to strengthen funding applications
- **Intergovernmental Coordination:** Share the plan with partner agencies to communicate Highland Haven's priorities

# Introduction

## For the Planning & Zoning Commission

- **Development Review:** Evaluate every zoning recommendation, site plan, and variance against the plan
- **Plan Amendments:** Carefully consider whether proposed changes serve Highland Haven's long-term interests
- **Annual Review:** Dedicate at least one meeting per year to reviewing implementation progress
- **Consistency Checks:** Ensure new ordinances align with plan policies

## For City Staff

- **Day-to-Day Guidance:** Use the plan to provide consistent guidance to property owners and developers
- **Project Planning:** Reference the plan when planning capital projects or infrastructure improvements
- **Development Review:** Share relevant sections with applicants during pre-application meetings
- **Grant Writing:** Include plan excerpts in grant applications to demonstrate planning and community support

## For Property Owners, Developers, and Residents

- **Understanding Expectations:** Review the plan before proposing development or planning renovations
- **Pre-Application Planning:** Consult relevant sections early in design to avoid conflicts
- **Participating in Decisions:** Reference the plan in public hearing comments to make input more effective
- **Requesting Amendments:** Submit amendment requests through P&Z if conditions or needs change
- **Holding Leaders Accountable:** Use the plan to track whether city officials follow through on priorities

## For Partner Agencies

- **Coordination:** Review relevant sections to understand Highland Haven's priorities
- **Joint Planning:** Use comprehensive plans as starting points for regional collaboration
- **Technical Assistance:** Provide expertise to help Highland Haven accomplish priorities efficiently

# Introduction

## Finding What You Need

Each topic section follows a consistent format:

1. Definition & Overview
2. Importance to Highland Haven
3. Community Input
4. Responsible Entities
5. Priorities & Action Plan

### To find information quickly:

- Check the Table of Contents
- Review the Executive Summary for high-level overview
- Read Community Vision & Values for foundational principles
- Consult the Implementation Framework for priorities and timelines

## Flexibility and Common Sense

The plan provides guidance, not rigid rules. It allows for:

- **Reasonable Deviations**, when circumstances warrant
- **Plan Amendments**, through proper P&Z and Board process
- **Professional Judgment**, in applying policies to specific situations
- **Evolution Over Time**, through annual reviews and comprehensive updates every five years

The plan is a living document meant to serve Highland Haven's long-term interests while remaining flexible.

# Introduction

## Plan Organization

### Document Structure

The comprehensive plan has three main parts that work together to provide a complete picture of Highland Haven's vision, priorities, and implementation strategies.

### Part 1: Foundation

#### Introduction

Explains the plan's purpose, why we're updating it, legal basis, planning process, how to use the plan, and how it's organized.

#### Community Profile

Provides information about Highland Haven's location, history, demographics, physical characteristics, and current conditions.

### Part 2: Topic Sections

The heart of the plan. Each section follows the same format:

- Definition & Overview
- Importance to Highland Haven
- Community Input
- Responsible Entities
- Priorities & Action Plan

#### The Topic Sections:

1. **Community Vision & Values** - Highland Haven's identity, core values, and guiding principles
2. **Land Use & Development** - Zoning, residential character, development standards
3. **Transportation & Mobility** - Road maintenance, traffic management, intersection safety
4. **Water Resources & Infrastructure** - Drinking water system, lake quality, conservation
5. **Parks, Recreation & Open Space** - Coordination with HHPOA on parks and resident concerns
6. **Community Character & Design** - Building standards, landscaping, property maintenance
7. **Public Safety & Emergency Services** - Law enforcement, fire protection, EMS, emergency preparedness
8. **Infrastructure & Utilities** - Drainage, septic systems, utility coordination
9. **Economic Development & Fiscal Sustainability** - Fiscal health, revenue strategies, grant funding
10. **Community Engagement & Communication** - Transparency, resident involvement
11. **Intergovernmental Coordination** - Working with County, LCRA, neighboring cities, and other agencies

# Introduction

## Part 3: Implementation

### Implementation Framework

Roles and responsibilities, amendment procedures, annual review process, and monitoring strategies.

### Priority Action Matrix

All priorities organized by timeframe with responsible parties, costs, funding sources, and success metrics.

### Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

5-year plan for major infrastructure investments and projects.

### Funding Strategies

Current revenue sources, grant opportunities, and creative financing approaches.

## Appendices

Supporting materials including:

- Survey results and town hall summaries
- Maps and demographic data
- Technical studies and reports
- Public participation documentation
- Ordinances, resolutions, and plan adoption documents
- Glossary of terms
- Resources and contacts

## How Sections Work Together

The plan is designed so each section stands alone while connecting to others. For example:

- **Community Vision & Values** establishes the foundation for all other sections
- **Water Resources** connects to Land Use, Infrastructure, and Fiscal Sustainability
- **Transportation** connects to Public Safety and Infrastructure
- **Community Character** connects to Land Use and Parks

When making decisions, consider how multiple sections may apply.

## Reading the Plan

- **For a Quick Overview:** Read the Executive Summary and Community Vision & Values
- **For Specific Topic:** Jump directly to the topic section you need
- **For Decision-Making:** Review relevant topic sections, then consult Implementation Framework
- **For Comprehensive Understanding:** Read the plan from beginning to end



# Community Profile

# Community Profile

## Location & Geography

Highland Haven is located in southwestern Burnet County in the Texas Hill Country, approximately 7 miles west of Marble Falls along FM 1431. The city sits on the eastern shore of Lake Lyndon B. Johnson (Lake LBJ), one of the seven Highland Lakes. The city is about 18 miles southwest of Burnet (the county seat), 57 miles northwest of downtown Austin, 7 miles west of Marble Falls, 44 miles southeast of Llano, 1 mile west of Granite shoals, and 5 miles east of the unincorporated community of Kingsland.

Highland Haven covers 0.54 square miles (about 345 acres), of which 0.42 square miles is land and 0.12 square miles is water. The community's location on Lake LBJ—one of the few Highland Lakes that maintains constant water levels year-round—makes it a desirable destination for lake living and water recreation.

The city's geographic setting in the Hill Country provides scenic terrain with rolling hills, mature oak and cedar trees, and natural limestone features typical of the region. This location offers residents a balance of peaceful natural surroundings with convenient access to nearby communities including Marble Falls, Granite Shoals, Kingsland, and Horseshoe Bay.

## History

Highland Haven's history reflects the evolution of a lakeside recreational community into an incorporated Texas city.

### Early Development (1960s-1970s)

Highland Haven was originally developed as a private subdivision in 1962 on the shores of Lake LBJ. The development was designed to take advantage of the lake's recreational opportunities and the natural beauty of the Hill Country. The community was marketed primarily as a retirement and vacation home destination.

In 1976, the subdivision transitioned to governance by a property owners association (POA), which managed common areas, facilities, and certain community standards through deed restrictions and covenants.

# Community Profile

## **Incorporation as a City (1995)**

When the original deed covenants expired, residents chose to incorporate Highland Haven as a city in 1995. Incorporation allowed the community to maintain local control over zoning, development standards, and municipal services through elected leadership rather than relying solely on a property owners association.

Since incorporation, Highland Haven has operated as a Type A General Law city under Texas law, with a mayor-council form of government. The city has gradually professionalized its operations while maintaining its small-town character and residential focus.

## **Recent Developments (2000s-Present)**

- In 2004, Highland Haven developed its first Comprehensive Plan, and subsequently updated the plan in 2014
- In 2009, Highland Haven purchased its municipal water system (previously Highland Utilities), becoming responsible for water service to residents
- In 2024, the city created a City Administrator position to professionalize operations and provide continuity as volunteer leadership transitions
- In 2024, the city developed a commercial zoning ordinance to provide future guidance for commercial growth within Highland Haven
- In 2025, voters approved a bond measure to purchase 8.36 acres adjacent to the water system, where two city wells are located

Throughout its history, Highland Haven has remained committed to preserving its lakeside residential character, natural beauty, and small-town quality of life, while neighboring areas have experienced significant growth.

## **Current Demographics**

Understanding Highland Haven's demographics is challenging because a significant portion of property owners use their homes as part-time, weekend, or vacation residences rather than full-time homes. This creates a fluctuating population that varies by season and between weekdays and weekends.

# Community Profile

## Population

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Highland Haven's official population was 418 residents. However, this figure likely reflects only full-time residents and may not capture the full scope of property owners who spend substantial time in the community but maintain primary residences elsewhere.

Based on city records and survey data:

- Approximately 400-450 full-time residents
- Approximately 330-340 total homes/structures
- Approximately 375 platted lots (some vacant, some with structures)
- A substantial number of property owners use their Highland Haven homes as part-time, weekend, seasonal, or vacation residences, though exact figures are difficult to determine

## Age and Household Characteristics

Highland Haven is predominantly a retirement and mature adult community:

- Median age: 71.2 years (significantly higher than state and national averages)
- Most households are couples or single adults without children at home
- While Highland Haven has some families with children, the community remains overwhelmingly retirement-aged and mature adults
- Average household size: approximately 2.07 people per household

## Income and Property Values

Highland Haven residents generally have moderate to upper-moderate incomes:

- Estimated median household income: \$88,500
- Estimated median home value (2025): approximately \$650,000 based on Burnet County Appraisal District data (significant increase from \$145,800 in 2000)
- Home values in 2025 range from approximately \$171,000 to \$2,800,000
- Average appraised home value in 2025 is approximately \$707,000
- The community's income profile disqualifies it from many grant programs targeting low-to-moderate income areas

# Community Profile

## Racial and Ethnic Composition

Highland Haven is a predominantly White community, reflecting the demographic patterns typical of rural Texas Hill Country retirement communities. According to census data, the community is approximately 98% White, with small percentages of other racial and ethnic groups.

## Educational Background

Residents generally have higher-than-average educational attainment, with many being retired professionals, business owners, and skilled workers.

## Demographic Trends

- Gradual increase in year-round, full-time residents
- Some families with school-age children choose Highland Haven for its safe environment and proximity to employment centers in Marble Falls and the surrounding area
- Continued strong appeal to retirees and vacation home buyers
- Aging-in-place of long-term residents

Highland Haven's unique demographic mix—combining full-time residents, part-time residents, retirees, and young families—creates planning considerations for infrastructure capacity, communication strategies, and community engagement approaches.

# Community Profile

## Physical Characteristics

Highland Haven's physical setting features gently rolling Hill Country terrain with mature tree canopy—primarily native live oak, post oak, cedar elm, and cedar—that residents highly value for the community's natural character. The area sits atop the Edwards-Trinity (granite gravel) Aquifer system with limestone bedrock and shallow soils that support individual septic systems but can create challenging building conditions in some areas. Due to proximity to Lake LBJ and seasonal drainage features, some low-lying areas are within FEMA flood zones, and stormwater management remains an ongoing infrastructure concern. Highland Haven experiences a humid subtropical climate with hot summers (low to mid-90s°F), mild winters (upper 30s°F lows), and approximately 31-32 inches of annual rainfall, with periodic drought conditions. These physical characteristics—steep slopes in some areas, mature tree coverage, flood considerations, and groundwater dependency—create both constraints and opportunities for development, redevelopment, and infrastructure planning.

## Current Land Use

Highland Haven is an almost entirely residential community, with minimal commercial or other land uses.

## Residential Development

Almost all the developed land in Highland Haven is single-family residential:

- Highland Haven has two residential zoning districts, but the vast majority of properties are zoned under the primary residential zone, District R-1 (Single Family Residential 1)
- Three larger properties are zoned under District R-2 (Single Family Residential 2)
- Lot sizes vary, with many properties being 0.25 to 1+ acres
- A mix of lakefront homes, lake-view homes, and interior lots
- Housing types range from modest ranch homes to substantial custom homes
- Properties feature a mix of full-time residences, vacation homes, and weekend retreats
- All homes include individual septic systems (no centralized sewer)
- Many lakefront properties have private boat docks

# Community Profile

## Mixed-Use Property

One property is zoned mixed-use, and currently functions primarily as a storage business.

## Agricultural-Zoned Properties

Three properties maintain agricultural zoning:

- These properties have minimal or no development
- Located along FM 1431 at the entrance to the community
- Represent potential future development pressure as the region grows
- The city adopted commercial zoning standards in 2024 to proactively manage potential future development of these properties

## Public and Semi-Public Uses

- City Hall property (approximately 0.5 acres or less) at 510-A Highland Drive
- Water treatment plant property (approximately 0.5 acres or less)
- Pending acquisition: 8.36 acres adjacent to the water plant where two city wells are located (bond measure approved November 2024, purchase not yet completed)
- Community Center (owned and operated by Highland Haven Property Owners Association)
- RV/boat/trailer storage facility (owned and operated by HHPOA)
- Six parks along Lake LBJ (owned and managed by HHPOA)

## Vacant and Undeveloped Land

- Minimal vacant lots remain available for development
- Some platted lots cannot be developed due to existing septic fields from neighboring properties, physical characteristics, or other constraints (LCRA must be contacted to determine location of septic systems)
- Future development will primarily consist of property redevelopment (tear-down and rebuild) rather than new construction on vacant lots

# Community Profile

## No Commercial Development

Highland Haven has no retail, office, or industrial uses within city limits:

- Residents travel to Marble Falls (7 miles) or other nearby communities for shopping, dining, and services
- The city's intent is to remain exclusively residential
- Commercial zoning standards exist only to manage potential development of properties along FM 1431 if they change ownership

## Key Land Use Characteristics

- Almost entirely built out with minimal development capacity remaining
- Strong commitment to maintaining single-family residential character
- No plans or desire for commercial development within city limits
- Property redevelopment (replacement of older homes) is the primary form of "development" activity
- Large lots, mature trees, and low density define the community's character

Highland Haven's land use pattern reflects a mature, established residential community with clear preferences for maintaining its existing character rather than pursuing growth or diversification.

# Community Profile

## Existing Infrastructure

Highland Haven's infrastructure reflects a small, mature community with aging systems that require ongoing maintenance and strategic investment.

## Water System

The city owns and operates its municipal water system, which provides drinking water to all properties within the city limits and its Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) service area.

### System Components:

- Four wells connected to the system, drawing from the granite gravel aquifer (Edwards-Trinity Aquifer system)
- Three wells actively supply water; one well serves as a monitoring well for the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District
- Two 100,000-gallon elevated storage tanks
- Two pressure tanks
- Five distribution pumps
- Water treatment plant facility
- Distribution lines throughout the city

### Age and Condition:

- System established in 1989; infrastructure is 35+ years old
- Water system requires ongoing maintenance, repair, and strategic replacement of aging components
- Storage capacity is adequate for current population but requires monitoring as the system ages

### Regulatory Considerations:

- The city is permitted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for water quality standards
- Groundwater use is regulated by the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District
- Current groundwater permit does not align with the actual number of platted lots in the CCN service area—a critical issue requiring resolution
- The city must balance water conservation with meeting resident needs

# Community Profile

## Wastewater Management

Highland Haven does not have a centralized sewer system:

- All properties use individual on-site septic systems (aerobic or conventional), once approved by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA)
- Property owners are responsible for septic system maintenance and compliance
- The city enforces regulations requiring proper septic system design and installation

## Roads and Streets

Highland Haven has approximately 6-7 miles of roads within city limits:

- Highland Drive (the main thoroughfare) is maintained by Burnet County
- The city maintains approximately 5-6 miles of local streets
- Roads are paved but vary in condition; many need resurfacing or repair
- No curbs or gutters (rural road design)
- No sidewalks or bike lanes
- Street maintenance is consistently identified as a top infrastructure priority by residents

## Drainage and Stormwater Management

Highland Haven has limited formal stormwater infrastructure:

- Most drainage is managed through natural topography and roadside ditches
- Some culverts and drainage structures at creek crossings and low-lying areas
- Drainage improvements are needed in several locations where standing water or erosion occurs
- Flooding can occur in low-lying areas during heavy rainfall events

# Community Profile

## Utilities (Not City-Owned)

### **Electricity:**

- Provided by Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC)
- Generally reliable service with underground lines in some areas

### **Natural Gas:**

- No natural gas service to the community
- Some residents use propane tanks for heating, cooking, or pool heating

### **Telecommunications:**

- Phone, internet, and cable services provided by private companies
- Service quality varies; some areas have limited high-speed internet options

## Public Facilities

### **City-Owned:**

- City Hall (dedicated to past Mayor Roscoe L. Holt) at 510-A Highland Drive
- Water treatment plant facility
- 8.36-acre property adjacent to water plant (bond approved for purchase; acquisition pending)

### **HHPOA-Owned (available to residents):**

- Community Center (located behind City Hall) used for city meetings, social events, and gatherings
- RV, boat, and trailer storage facility
- Six parks along Lake LBJ, including Dove Park with public boat launch

## Public Safety Infrastructure

- No city-owned fire station or fire equipment; Fire protection provided by contract with outside agencies
- No city police department; law enforcement provided by Burnet County Sheriff's Office
- Emergency medical services provided by Marble Falls Area EMS
- The City has one fire hydrant located at the water plant, as well as a \*dry line hydrant system along Blackbird
- Dry line hydrant system: Fire hydrants that are not connected to a constant water supply. They must be hooked up to a water source (like the lake or a fire truck) before they can supply water for firefighting. Highland Haven's system connects to Lake LBJ, where the fire department places a pump in the lake and connects it to the hydrant line.

# Community Profile

## Governance Structure

Highland Haven operates as a Type A General Law city under Texas law, with a mayor-council form of government.

## Elected Leadership

The city is governed by elected officials who serve without compensation:

### Mayor:

- Elected city-wide for a two-year term
- Serves as presiding officer of the Board of Aldermen
- Represents the city in ceremonial functions and intergovernmental relations
- Has limited administrative authority; most decisions require Board approval

### Board of Aldermen:

- Five aldermen elected city-wide for two-year staggered terms
- Election timing is staggered: three aldermen elected one year, two aldermen and the mayor elected the next year
- Aldermen serve as the city's legislative body, adopting ordinances, approving budgets, and setting policy
- Meetings held on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Highland Haven Community Center

### Planning & Zoning Commission:

- Members appointed annually by the Board of Aldermen
- Reviews development proposals, zoning requests, and subdivision plats
- Makes recommendations to the Board of Aldermen on land use and planning matters
- Plays a key role in comprehensive plan development and implementation
- Meetings held second Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM at the Highland Haven Community Center

# Community Profile

## City Staff

Highland Haven has professionalized its operations in recent years, transitioning from a mostly volunteer model to employing more professional staff:

### **City Administrator (full-time, hired 2024):**

- Handles day-to-day city operations
- Manages city staff and contractors
- Implements Board of Aldermen policies
- Serves as city investment officer
- Reduces the operational burden on the mayor and elected officials
- Provides continuity as elected leadership changes
- Licensed Code Enforcement Officer (Officer in Training), as required by state law

### **City Secretary (full-time, state-required position):**

- Records and maintains official city records
- Manages agendas, minutes, and meeting documentation
- Handles public information requests
- Coordinates elections
- Oversees Municipal Court
- Provides administrative support

### **Administrative Assistant/Utility Coordinator (full-time):**

- Manages utility billing and customer accounts
- Handles accounting and financial recordkeeping
- Provides administrative support for city operations

### **Building Official (part-time):**

- Reviews building permit applications
- Conducts and manages inspections for compliance with building codes
- Enforces city development ordinances

**Total Staff:** 3.5 full-time equivalent employees

# Community Profile

## **Contracted Services**

Highland Haven contracts with outside entities for services it cannot provide in-house:

- Legal services (city attorney)
- Engineering services
- Water system operations and maintenance support
- Auditing and financial reporting
- Grant writing and consulting (as needed)
- Fire Protection Services
- Emergency Medical Services
- Basic road maintenance (with Burnet County through interlocal agreement)

## **Highland Haven Property Owners Association (HHPOA)**

The HHPOA is a separate entity from the city government:

- Manages six parks along Lake LBJ
- Operates the Community Center
- Manages RV/boat/trailer storage facilities
- Has no deed covenants or enforcement authority (covenants expired prior to city incorporation)
- Works cooperatively with the city on resident concerns and community initiatives

## **Ladies Club**

The Ladies Club is a separate community organization that plays an important social role:

- Manages social events and community gatherings
- Hosts the annual rummage sale
- Fundraises for community and area needs
- Provides volunteer support for various community initiatives

# Community Profile

## Intergovernmental Relationships

Highland Haven coordinates regularly with:

- Burnet County (law enforcement, road maintenance, emergency management, appraisal district, elections)
- Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) - lake management, water quality
- Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District - groundwater permitting
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) - water system regulation
- Shady Acres and Nobles Subdivisions - adjacent to city and water customers
- Marble Falls Area EMS - emergency medical services
- Neighboring cities (Granite Shoals, Kingsland, Marble Falls) - regional coordination
- Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC) - electric service

## Fiscal Structure

- Highland Haven has one of the lowest property tax rates of any city in Texas
- Highland Haven has only 2 main sources of revenue; Property Taxes and Water Sales
- All other revenue sources are minimal, and the city has no sales tax base from commercial activity
- The city operates on a lean budget with limited financial resources
- Annual budget adoption occurs in late summer/early fall to align with the fiscal year (October 1 - September 30)

Highland Haven's governance structure reflects its transition from a volunteer-run small town to a more professional municipal operation while maintaining its small-scale, accessible character. The addition of professional staff has improved the city's capacity to address complex planning, regulatory, and infrastructure challenges.

## Community Vision & Values

### Definition & Overview

This section establishes who Highland Haven is as a community, what residents value most, and what we aspire to preserve over the next decade. It reflects input from the 2025 Community Survey (105 responses from 353 households, 30% response rate) and town hall meetings.

These values guide all city decision-making—from infrastructure investments to development regulations—ensuring policies align with resident expectations and community character.

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### Importance to Highland Haven

For a small community like Highland Haven, clearly stated values are essential. As the region grows and city leadership changes over time, these principles ensure consistency in decision-making and preserve what makes Highland Haven special. They provide a framework for evaluating development proposals, prioritizing spending, and making difficult choices with limited resources.

Our values also help communicate to developers, partner agencies, and neighboring communities what Highland Haven stands for and what types of growth we will and won't support.

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### Community Input

#### Our Community Identity

Highland Haven is a small, lakeside residential community on Lake LBJ. While official population estimates show approximately 400 full-time residents, we're larger when counting all property owners. Survey data shows 68% live here full-time, 11% part-time, and 19% use Highland Haven as a weekend or vacation home.

#### Key Characteristics:

- **Small-town sanctuary:** Quiet, low-density bedroom community with minimal through-traffic
- **Lake-centered lifestyle:** 3.64 miles of Lake LBJ shoreline providing recreation, natural beauty, and enhanced property values

- **Close-knit community:** One entrance/exit fosters security and neighborliness
- **Retirement and family haven:** Home to retirees (median age 71.2), families, and weekend property owners
- **Self-sufficient culture:** Strong tradition of volunteerism in city governance, Ladies Club, fire department, and neighborhood maintenance

## What We Value Most

### 1. Preservation of Residential Character

Residents overwhelmingly want Highland Haven to remain single-family residential:

- 98% oppose or have concerns about multi-family development
- 96% oppose short-term vacation rentals (VRBO/Airbnb)
- 76% are neutral to strongly opposed to commercial development within the community

*"Highland Haven is a bedroom community - no commerce and close-knit community - aspects of a sanctuary of sorts - don't forget that."*

### 2. Water Quality & Conservation

Water resources are paramount:

- 88% rate water quality and conservation as "very important"
- Concerns about drought, water availability for new construction, and aquatic vegetation
- Strong support for protecting lake water quality and managing stormwater

*"Groundwater issues in Texas are or will be the issue dominating quality of life matters."*

### 3. Safety & Security

Residents feel safe and want to maintain it:

- 98% feel safe or very safe in Highland Haven
- Support for law enforcement presence and traffic control
- Interest in emergency preparedness and evacuation planning

*"Always liked the one way in and one way out, keeps in my opinion the bad guys out."*

#### **4. Infrastructure Quality & Maintenance**

Well-maintained infrastructure is expected:

- Roads are the most commonly cited concern (many rated "fair")
- Strong appreciation for recent water system improvements
- Recognition that maintenance requires adequate funding
- Support for proactive maintenance over reactive repairs

*"It takes money to keep our city at the quality level we expect. Maintenance is a fact of life."*

#### **5. Natural Beauty & Lake Access**

The natural environment is central to Highland Haven's appeal:

- Residents value tree cover, wildlife, natural landscapes, and dark skies
- Strong support for maintaining and improving lake access
- Concern about aquatic vegetation impacting activities and property values

#### **6. Fiscal Responsibility**

Residents appreciate low taxes and expect efficient resource use:

- Highland Haven has one of the lowest tax rates in Texas
- 73% said "maybe" to supporting tax increases for essential infrastructure
- Strong concern about government spending and value for tax dollars
- Support for grant funding and creative financing

*"We are a very small city - our administration and taxes should reflect that status."*

#### **7. Community Connection & Transparency**

Residents want to stay informed and involved:

- 92% prefer email communication
- Strong town hall attendance when issues matter
- Desire for clear explanations of projects, spending, and decisions

*"Just provide the information in easy to read and understand language. Provide topic, details, cost and how and when things are being done."*

## Our Vision for 2025-2035

**A Thriving Residential Community:** Highland Haven remains predominantly single-family residential with protected property values and the peaceful, lake-centered lifestyle that attracted residents.

**Sustainable Infrastructure:** Roads, water system, drainage, and public facilities are well-maintained through proactive planning and efficient management.

**Protected Water Resources:** Active stewardship of Lake LBJ and groundwater supply through conservation, aquatic vegetation management, and water quality protection.

**Balanced Growth Management:** Thoughtful management of limited remaining development to ensure new construction enhances community character.

**Connected & Engaged Citizens:** Residents stay informed, participate in decisions, and continue Highland Haven's tradition of volunteerism.

**Financial Sustainability:** Fiscal responsibility while securing adequate resources for essential services and infrastructure.

**Safe & Secure Environment:** Highland Haven remains one of the safest communities in the Highland Lakes region.

## Areas of Ongoing Discussion

Some topics require continued community dialogue:

- **Commercial Development on FM 1431:** Opinions vary on limited commercial at the highway frontage (37% support, 36% oppose, 31% neutral)
- **Sewer System:** Interest exists (37% very important, 25% somewhat important), but cost and necessity remain questions
- **Tax Increases:** While 73% said "maybe," residents want to understand specific projects and benefits first
- **Parks & Recreation:** Some desire more amenities; others prefer open space (Note: Parks managed by HHPOA, not city)
- **Emergency Access:** Divided opinions on one entrance/exit

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## Responsible Entities

**Board of Aldermen:** Uphold community values in all policy decisions, ordinances, and budget priorities

**Planning & Zoning Commission:** Ensure development decisions align with residential character and community values

**City Administrator and Staff:** Implement policies consistent with community vision; provide transparent communication

**All Property Owners:** Support community values through property maintenance, civic participation, and respect for neighbors

**Highland Haven POA:** Manage parks and facilities in ways that complement city values

**Ladies Club:** Foster community connection through social events and charitable activities

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## **Priorities & Action Plan**

### **Immediate Priorities (Year 1-2)**

#### **1. Adopt Development Standards Protecting Residential Character**

- Finalize and adopt building design guidelines
- Ensure zoning ordinances prohibit multi-family and short-term rentals
- Establish clear process for evaluating variance requests against community values
- *Responsible: P&Z Commission, Board of Aldermen*
- *Timeframe: 2026*

#### **2. Strengthen Communication and Transparency**

- Maintain regular email updates on city projects and decisions
- Hold annual town hall meetings on key topics
- Post meeting agendas, minutes, and financial reports on city website within required timeframes
- *Responsible: City Administrator, Board of Aldermen*
- *Timeframe: Ongoing, 2026 forward*

#### **3. Develop Water Conservation Plan**

- Work with Central Texas Groundwater District on permit alignment
- Implement education campaign on conservation practices
- Evaluate tiered water rate structure to encourage conservation
- *Responsible: City Administrator, Board of Aldermen*
- *Timeframe: 2026-2027*

### **Short-Term Priorities (Year 3-5)**

#### **4. Infrastructure Assessment and Capital Improvement Planning**

- Conduct comprehensive infrastructure condition assessment
- Prioritize road, drainage, and water system improvements
- Develop 5-year Capital Improvement Program with funding strategies
- *Responsible: City Administrator, Board of Aldermen*
- *Timeframe: 2027-2028*

#### **5. Emergency Preparedness Planning**

- Develop evacuation plan addressing single entrance/exit
- Coordinate with Burnet County on emergency communication systems
- Conduct community emergency preparedness education
- *Responsible: City Administrator, Burnet County Emergency Management*
- *Timeframe: 2027-2029*

#### **6. Aquatic Vegetation Management Partnership**

- Partner with LCRA and neighboring communities on Lake LBJ vegetation control
- Support funding for giant salvinia and zebra mussel management
- Educate residents on preventing spread of invasive species
- *Responsible: Board of Aldermen, LCRA*
- *Timeframe: 2027-2030*

### **Long-Term Priorities (Year 6-10)**

#### **7. Fiscal Sustainability Strategy**

- Evaluate revenue sources and long-term fiscal health
- Explore grant opportunities aligned with community priorities
- Assess tax rate adequacy for maintaining service levels
- *Responsible: City Administrator, Board of Aldermen*
- *Timeframe: 2028-2030*

## **8. Community Facilities Planning**

- Assess long-term needs for City Hall and public facilities
- Evaluate potential uses for 8.36-acre property adjacent to water plant
- Plan for future infrastructure expansion or replacement
- *Responsible: City Administrator, Board of Aldermen*
- *Timeframe: 2029-2035*

## **9. Comprehensive Plan Review and Update**

- Review plan implementation progress annually
- Update comprehensive plan comprehensively by 2030
- Conduct new community survey to assess evolving priorities
- *Responsible: P&Z Commission, Board of Aldermen*
- *Timeframe: Annual review; comprehensive update 2030*

## **Ongoing Priorities**

### **10. Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement**

- Enforce property maintenance standards consistently
- Address nuisance properties proactively
- Balance enforcement with community character
- *Responsible: Building Official, City Administrator*
- *Timeframe: Ongoing*

### **11. Coordination with Regional Partners**

- Maintain strong relationships with Burnet County, LCRA, neighboring cities

- Participate in regional planning efforts affecting Highland Haven
- Advocate for Highland Haven interests in regional decisions
- *Responsible: Mayor, City Administrator*
- *Timeframe: Ongoing*

### **Measuring Success**

We will know we're honoring our vision and values when:

- Property values remain stable or increase
- Infrastructure condition ratings improve from "fair" to "good" or better
- Resident satisfaction remains high (85%+ rate city as "good" or better)
- Water conservation goals are met while maintaining adequate supply
- No incompatible development occurs
- Survey and meeting participation remains strong (25%+ response rates)
- Highland Haven remains one of Burnet County's safest communities
- Fiscal health indicators remain strong

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**This section will be reviewed and updated every 5 years to ensure our vision continues to reflect community values.**



April 6, 2026

Subject: Item 11 - Discussion: Ordinance Language for 25' Setback and Shoreline

To the City of Highland Haven Planning and Zoning Commission,

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this memo is to summarize the review of the 25-foot setback requirement from Lake LBJ and to present the recommendation developed by the Planning & Zoning Commission members assigned to study this issue. This item is presented for discussion and feedback prior to developing final ordinance language.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City's Code currently includes a requirement that structures be set back a minimum of twenty-five (25) feet from the edge of water in Lake LBJ when filled to its normal water level of 825 feet above mean sea level. Over time, questions have arisen regarding how this setback should be measured in situations where properties include inland boat slips or similar features extending into the lot from a channel.

Historically, enforcement has measured the 25-foot setback from the nearest point of water, including the interior edge of inland boat slips. This practice has created confusion for property owners and enforcement challenges for staff, as the ordinance does not clearly define the point from which the setback should be measured.

Earlier this year, the issue was brought forward for review, and two members of the Planning & Zoning Commission were tasked with studying the existing language and its application.

## **RECOMMENDATION FROM STUDYING MEMBERS**

Based on their review, the two Planning & Zoning Commission members responsible for studying this issue recommended that the ordinance be clarified to state that:

- the 25-foot setback is measured from the navigable channel of Lake LBJ when filled to its normal water level; and
- inland boat slips, cuts, or similar features are not used as the point of measurement for the setback.

The intent of this recommendation is to create a clear, consistent, and easily enforceable standard that better reflects the original purpose of the setback requirement and eliminates ambiguity when private boat slips are present.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

- Staff is coordinating with the City Attorney to develop legally sound and defensible ordinance language that reflects the recommendation outlined above.
- The draft language has not yet been completed and is still under legal review.
- No formal recommendation has been made by the Planning & Zoning Commission as a whole at this time.

This item is being presented now to introduce the concept, confirm general direction, and gather feedback before final language is drafted and brought back for further consideration.

*more on next page*



## FEEDBACK REQUESTED FROM THE COMMISSION

Commissioners are asked to:

- Discuss whether the recommended measurement approach aligns with the intent of the setback requirement;
- Consider whether measuring from the navigable channel provides clarity and fairness for both property owners and enforcement; and
- Provide any initial concerns or alternative approaches for consideration before draft ordinance language is finalized.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Receive Planning & Zoning Commission feedback on the recommended approach.
2. Continue working with the City Attorney to develop clear and enforceable ordinance language.
3. Present drafted language at a future meeting for further discussion and potential recommendation.

Thank you for your time and input on this item. Clear guidance from the Commission will be helpful as staff works to refine the ordinance language moving forward.

Please let me know if you would like any additional information prior to the meeting.

Sincerely,  
Andy Adams  
Highland Haven  
City Administrator  
(830) 265-4366  
cityadministrator@highlandhaventx.com