



Pearland's government entity will measure its success as a trusted resource for citizen-focused decision-making by making sure that our practices exhibit transparency, quality-control, community outreach, public involvement, leadership development opportunities for citizens, sound business practices, and accessible public facilities and services.

These practices and outcomes make up some of the aspects of Pearland's local government that demonstrate how citizens in this expansive cosmopolitan suburb, who have a multitude of perspectives and backgrounds, are the focus of our work. Providing effective two-way communication between the citizen and the government entity, and setting high standards for responding to the needs of residents are just a few ways the City fulfills its commitment to citizens. At its best, our City government works with partners in the public and private sectors and looks ahead to citizens of tomorrow while exceeding the expectations of today.

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FY22 White Paper

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CC: Michelle Graham, Human Resources Director
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RE: Modernizations for Alternative Service Delivery in the Pandemic World and the Future



Remote Work

Prior to early 2020 local government across the USA operated primarily with the classic mentality that 'how work was done' demanded physical presence in a predetermined location, during a prescribed time period. As a governmental organization the expectation was that every employee, *regardless of role*, needed to be at their designated workplace during certain hours for 'the show to go on' and services to be provided.

COVID-19 entered our world and disrupted a variety of social norms including how we interact with each other and our work.

After months of adapting how and where work can be done, that classic mentality has changed as alternatives prove otherwise. We are now presented with a unique opportunity to adapt and evolve by continuing to reimagine how work can be done in an environment that meets both customer expectations and employee needs.

Gallup research has shown, that highly engaged employees perform at a higher level and have better customer engagement. Benefits also include healthier employees, lower regrettable turnover and fewer employee accidents that can otherwise be costly. To measure this, the City of Pearland conducts an annual employee survey designed to take a snapshot of feedback in areas impacting employee engagement. One of the 'basics' question relates to employees feeling as if they have **work life flexibility**. The 2019 survey results indicated there were opportunities for improvement in addressing employee's responses to feeling as if they have the flexibility to balance work and personal life. The 2020 survey conducted in July only improved slightly in this area. At quick glance, however, the departments that showed an increase in this area are also departments that had employees reporting successfully working remotely since the beginning of the pandemic.

Due to necessity, we adopted the remote work policies and for many they have proven effective. Now would be the ideal time to take what has been successful during the emergency and implement a more permanent program where and when it makes sense. We would be able to easily adapt the current emergency remote policy. But we would also want to research and explore policies, impacts, management, etc. to make sure we get ahead of unexpected issues. Before confirming the implementation, we would need to establish criteria/guidance to be used by managers as well as develop and document processes needed to have in place. It will be critical that we have answers related to accountability and productivity to ensure we maintain

public trust. In addition, we will also need to identify technology needs or gaps, any potential cost impacts, ensure network security, etc. to make sure service levels do not decline.

Virtual Court

As indicated above, COVID-19 created a disruption in norms and the Court system was turned upside down. A system which primarily functions and depends solely on in-person processes required significant changes to overcome the impact. Quickly adjusting to the new set of normalcy the Office of Court Administration acquired teleconferencing licenses across the entire State of Texas to restore court proceedings. Pearland Municipal Court along with the IT Department expedited the implementation working through new procedures and workflow for onboarding defendants and attorneys as well as presiding judges, prosecutors, and City staff.

The Pearland Municipal Court was able to restart services with the teleconferencing software but early on it was at a diminished capacity: virtualizing jury trials not being an ideal setting or platform. The court is conducting the vast majority of their dockets utilizing the new platform with exceptions on Thursdays and every other Friday. Thursdays are designated for Prosecutor appointments while Friday’s are scheduled for in-person dockets using both courtrooms to accommodate the social distancing protocols with a maximum capacity of 75 defendants. Current docket schedule is as follows:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9 AM Show Cause Docket (Virtual)	9 AM Arraignment Docket (Virtual)	9 Am Arraignment Docket (Virtual)		9 AM Initial Resets (In-Person Docket)
1:30 PM Pre-Trial Docket (Virtual)	Judge Trial Docket/ Property Hearings/ Expunctions/ Bond Forfeiture	1:30 PM Attorney Pre-Trial Docket (Virtual)	By appointment only with Prosecutor (In-Person)	1:30 PM Show Cause Fail to Pay Docket (Virtual)
3 PM Juvenile Docket (Virtual)	Hearings/ Nuisance Abatements (Virtual)			

Jury trials have been paused since March 2020 and based on the Office of Court Administration guidance will not restart until after January 2021 at the earliest. Jury Trials continue to get backlogged; however, staff is working on a plan to restart them as soon as possible.

Enhancing the technology required to operate both Court Room A and B is critical to accommodate the growing court dockets due to the court system ceasing operation during the pandemic. The current technology was installed when the facility was constructed 10+ years ago and lacks significant functionality. Audio recording is not available in Court Room A and there is no technology in Court Room B. In order to effectively and efficiently manage the increasing caseload, it is necessary for the City to operate out of both rooms. The Information Technology Department along with the Court Administrator reviewed current and future needs for the court system and obtained a cost estimate based on the requirements. The estimated cost to install the new equipment and replace/upgrade the existing technology is \$95,500. The technology enhancement is critical to the City’s court system and essential given the significant backlog in cases.

Court Room A requires audio recording equipment as well as video display replacement to accommodate the new standards in video format (16:9 or wide screen). The sound reinforcement (speakers) as well as the microphones will be reused with the new technology acquisition to reduce cost. Content and video control components will match the current technology standardizations utilized by the City (ex. Emergency Operations Center, PD Large Training Room, Public Works Service Center) offering a seamless approach to the technology with a focus on the user interface.

Court Room B also requires audio recording equipment as well as video displays to accommodate operating the court system in either of the court rooms or both simultaneously. Sound reinforcement (speakers) and microphones will be reused and integrated into the complete solution. Content and video controls will match the City's technology standards and allow for flexibility between court rooms as well as emergency operations if required. The City utilized Court Room A during Hurricane Harvey to conduct a council meeting which this system could be programmed to accommodate in the future. Assisted Listening devices are required in both court rooms to support the hearing impaired.

Alternative Recreation Programming

On Friday, March 13, 2020, the City of Pearland shut down indoor recreation facilities and playgrounds in response to COVID-19. By Monday, the team pulled together and launched what would become the pivotal playbook for the foreseeable future. What resulted was a shift in delivery, but the vision remained – build a healthy, connected, and vibrant community that enriches lives through safe, malleable, inclusive, and engaging experiences.

When COVID-19 made it impossible for community to gather at our welcome center's doorstep, Pearland Parks & Recreation decided it would bring everything we do to theirs. The department was virtually everywhere. They pivoted services, offering an alternative of virtual programming, innovative socially distanced special events and programs, and doorstep delivery of resources, supplies, smiles and meals.



Objectives – For Community

- Create experiences that are engaging and safely connect the community, within parameters of official guidelines and health recommendations,
- Prepare for, and protect the community at our parks, trails and green spaces so they can safely connect to nature,
- Remove any known barriers to ensuring the community has access to the benefits and offerings of Parks & Recreation throughout the pandemic.



Creativity and Adaptability – Staff were reallocated to special projects and new assignments as the needs were constantly shifting. In certain periods, lifeguards assisted parks maintenance crews in managing and preparing green spaces for increased activity in parks and trails. Instead of cancelling all operations, the department offered a programming pivot. Bringing services safely to the citizen instead of the citizen coming to the recreation facilities.

Volunteer Support - We safely plugged volunteers in where we could, either remotely through wellness calls, meal deliveries, creative projects and critical translation services. The translations assisted the communications department with expanding their new COVID-19 signage and awareness pieces for the community. Languages including Spanish, Chinese, Hindi, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. These signs were used on the cities COVID-19 information center on the website, as well as in facilities. Volunteers also gathered under the leadership of our volunteer coordinator to make sure that Pearland had a Merry very bright Christmas holiday. These efforts included responding to 250 Santa letters and assisting the Parks team with decorating Independence Park. A total of 435.5 volunteer hours captured the work between March through November.

Community Partnerships and Resources – As with all face to face programs, we still utilized alternative funding sources, sponsors, community partners, donors, and resources from other city departments. Operations were shifting, but we still remained good stewards of budget dollars and kept in touch with our key partners who help us realize our vision.

Boredom Buster Bags – When schools closed, and kids were home for the long haul many parents were looking for ways to keep their children entertained but faced barriers like non-essential deliveries being delayed and online items out of stock. Pearland Parks & Recreation launched the first Boredom Buster Bag Giveaway fully stocked with sidewalk chalk, bubbles, puzzles, and card games. The team was blown away by the response – over 75,000 reached via social media! The Parks & Recreation team then worked fast to secure additional funding to create more bags and deliver to more children. In all, the team contactless delivered 400 giveaways to Pearland families. The giveaways gained the attention of local news channels and was a perfect depiction of ways the department got out of their own way, tried something so simple resulting in a program with enormous reach.



Number of people reached via Facebook 75,000

Total giveaways delivered 400

Delivering Senior Meals - So much with COVID-19 began as such a mystery. However, one thing known was the danger it carried for the senior community. Like many who were struggling to meet basic needs in the midst of a global pandemic, the same could be said for our members at the Melvin Knapp Activity Center (KAC), as their facility doors were shut down in an effort to keep them safe.. Day 1, staff started routine wellness check phone calls to members. On average, 160 seniors visit the KAC each day, many of which depend on the meals served at the facility as their one hot meal for the day. Through an existing partnership with ActionS of Brazoria County Pearland Parks & Recreation was able to alter the existing meal services to provide a box of five frozen meals every week. A temporary drive-thru operation was established for contactless pickup, as well as deliveries made directly to the members' home, with the assistance of staff and volunteers. *Nearly 4,500 meals have been served since March 2020 and counting!* This number is not inclusive of other special meals prepared by local restaurants and gifted to the program. Volunteers are heavily utilized within this program, as many groups various City department staff including the amazing Pearland Police Department reach out to snag a coveted route and safely and humbly serve their community by doorstep.

4,500 meals delivered since March 2020

Senior smiles doorstep delivery – In addition to the meal program, staff and volunteers continue weekly wellness checks on 660+ registered members. In addition to meals, the calls help connect to resources, provide accurate and up-to-date information about status of the pandemic in Pearland and an opportunity for social interaction and connection by phone. During a very critical time in the pandemic, the days for the seniors were growing longer. The isolation was wearing on so many. Reports of battling depression, “brain fog” or memory loss were common phrases shared. The team was pushing out amazing content through Knapp Connected, the KAC’s private Facebook group, where a host of virtual planning efforts are concentrated, emphasizing online fitness classes, virtual field trips and extra engagement efforts. There is still no replacement for real human connection. The KAC jumped into action and launched “Senior Smiles”, a simple concept with a mega impact. This program ensures Pearland seniors do not spend a birthday, bad day, or milestone alone. Senior smiles drops off donations of hand written cards, balloon bouquets sponsored by a local balloon artist, singing birthday-grams, sending well wishes through a window or screen door. This program has both provided through the window comfort in mourning, through grief and loss, and celebrated birthdays, wellness, milestones, and more!

350 deliveries since April 2020

Adventure Hunt -In May 2020, Pearland Parks & Recreation hosted Adventure Hunt – a city wide virtual scavenger hunt designed for entire families to enjoy from wherever they chose to play. Over 100 teams joined the adventure in completing over 130 mission over a total of 10 days. A variety of challenges were available for teams to accept and complete at 16 different contactless and operational check-in locations around the city. The team received an outpouring of messages from participants expressing gratitude for the event and even personal testimonies of COVID related stressors they were enduring and what this game, and it’s timing, meant to them. This feedback resulted in a 2nd run in September. This program has gained a significant following from the community, and recently secured a sponsor for 2 additional hunts in 2021.

200 Total Participants Registered

Fitness Class To-Go Packs – Keeping with the effort to encourage physical activity in the community, the department created workout videos for all fitness levels on Facebook. As the team learned how difficult it was for people at home to get their hands-on simple weights and resistance bands, they first offered ideas for alternative at home items to use, and then hit their contact list and secured equipment to get into the hands of the community. The team packaged the equipment and sold the items at low cost to the community.

Adaptive Recreation – Part of the department’s objectives through COVID-19 is to ensure all people have access to the benefits of Parks & Recreation. Pearland’s Adaptive Recreation Specialist helped meet this objective by introducing an ongoing Cooking and Crafting at Home program. Staff worked with group homes, caregivers, and previous program participants for a virtual focus group to assess the most needed services for the department to offer. Families used the department’s series of virtual fitness videos to remain active, and the adaptive recreation specialist was welcomed into their homes virtually with cooking, crafts and art activities with Araceli. Though eager to get back into the facility for this bi-monthly outing, reports of faces beaming when Araceli welcomes them through the computer screen is the next best thing!

Number of people reached via Facebook 17,097

Number of online engagements 617

Campers Gonna Camp...At Home. Some of the tough decisions to make was respecting the quick-shifting line between what is safe to pursue and launching an alternative. With so much uncertainty about the virus still looming, the department made the decision to cancel summer camp early on to allow families adequate time to make necessary arrangements. As an alternative, the youth development division launched “Camp at Home”... With each week ranging from 1,000 to 4,000 online, even virtually, the Pearland Community showed how much they love any Pearland camp program! Each interaction incorporated common household items for games, crafts and fun recipes to create at home. The series gained such an incredible following from Pearland families, the City used this platform for informative messaging and video, “How to Make a Mask” to help prepare the community for the mandatory mask orders. In this video, the department’s Youth Development Coordinator led viewers through step by step instruction to sew a fabric mask. This one post alone reached over 6,000 social media viewers.

Number of people reached via Facebook 40,000

Number of online engagements 2,388

Sunset Cinema – The Events Division had plans to roll out a movie series in the park in FY20 with a traditional sit -in option however, the evolving COVID-19 situation forced the team to pivot and offer a drive-option. The drive-in version of Sunset Cinema provided a much-needed respite for the community, and a safe way for families to get out of the house and spend quality time together. Sunset Cinema received a tremendous response from the community and ultimately sold 402 of the 520 available tickets (approx. 77% of program capacity through the 9-week series). To further show the community’s enthusiasm of the drive-in Sunset Cinema, week 1 featuring *Jurassic Park* sold out in only 19 minutes!! And since then we have maintained an 86% sellout average.

Number of people reached via Facebook 98,290

Number of online engagements 8,985

402/520 tickets sold



Nature's Definitely Not Cancelled! – As with many other indoor recreation facilities, in an effort to protect the citizens of Pearland and the animals, the Delores Fenwick Nature Center (DFNC) closed its doors to the public in March 2020. Our DFNC team jumped into action and within hours were inviting the community to join them online for up close encounters with Edu-Katie, Pearland Parks and Recreation's Park Naturalist, Katie Boughal, and Outdoor August, the department's Outdoor Recreation Specialist, August Vandiver. The dynamic duo entertained and educated through a series of Facebook live alligator feedings, art and craft projects, virtual trivia nights, distance learning programs that highlighted Sherb the 2.7 year old, 3 toed box turtle, frogs, crawfish, bats, snakes, fish, ducks, and more!

Adventures with Edu-Katie, an environmental education video series created through a collaboration with the Natural Resources Division and the Communications Department, premiered. Since March 2020, four episodes have been released on Facebook and YouTube, with a combined total of over 4,500 views. In September of 2020, Adventures with Edu-Katie, Episode 2: Benefits of Nature, was entered into the 3rd Annual Wild About Houston Green Film Festival and was selected as the 2020 Fan Favorite Film.



Number of People Reached via Facebook 129,872
Total Number of Programs Offered 151

Evidence of Success

The evidence of success is in the faces of those served. For every motivational social media post, email message of gratitude, “virtual” air hug or high five, it means we helped keep someone healthy and connected. It means that their experience with Pearland Parks & Recreation was exceptional, and the team’s efforts helped enrich lives. Evidence is in our increased park usage, and sweet messages on hidden rocks along the trail system. The evidence is in fortified relationships with other service providers within the community, or 600% increase of social media traffic on department sites.



Parks, Recreation & Events

The City of Pearland strives to be a regional destination by providing exceptional recreation and cultural programming and quality facilities for residents and visitors alike. Success in this area is based on how well our City meets residents' expectations for quality of life experiences from Parks and Recreation programs, cultural activities, parks, and City facilities.

Travel and tourism are elements of our City's vibrancy. Attractions bring economic and marketing value to our community, allowing visitors to contribute to the local economy while giving residents recreation and entertainment opportunities right here in Pearland. Business visitors have vibrant restaurants and entertainment to meet and gather. Our hotels, restaurants, locally sponsored events, sports and recreation facilities, and shopping centers must be designed and built with the features that attract visitors and citizens. Our organization actively works to support and enhance the diverse network of cultural and recreation opportunities in our City.

