



# WEEKLY REPORT

APRIL 9, 2021

TO: MAYOR FLETCHER AND COUNCIL MEMBERS  
FROM: BRYAN LANGLEY, CITY MANAGER

THE CITY OF  
**BURLESON**  
TEXAS

# Weekly Report | April 9, 2021

## I. Council Schedule

### Meetings

**Monday, April 12:** City Council Meeting, City Hall Council Chambers. 141 W. Renfro St., 5 p.m. The meeting will be conducted in the council chambers and is also available via live stream, <https://www.burlesontx.com/watchlive>

### Work Session Items/Report & Discussion Items

#### April 12

- Receive a report, hold a discussion, and provide staff feedback regarding the conceptual designs for Shannon Creek Park. (Staff Presenter: Jen Basham, Director of Parks & Recreation)
- Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction on the financial overview of the General Debt Service Fund, and receive any additional direction from City Council regarding the annual budget for fiscal year 2021-2022. (Staff Presenter: Martin Avila, Finance Director)
- Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding the proposed five-year general government Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

## II. General Information and Status Updates

### A. State of the City

Mayor Chris Fletcher, along with assistance from Burleson city councilmembers, presented the 'State of the City' through video on April 2, 2021.

Mayor Fletcher highlighted the ways Burleson managed the COVID-19 pandemic, along with how the city reduced the tax rate and lowered water fees for city customers.

"The city of Burleson has a lot to be proud of when we look back at 2020," stated Mayor Fletcher. "It was an incredibly difficult year, but as always, our community pulled together and took on the challenges that faced us."

Mayor Fletcher's presentation highlighted how the City of Burleson assisted during the pandemic by implementing a COVID-19 hotline, making over 4,000 calls to senior citizens, starting a local COVID-19 testing facility and through multiple channels of communication to provide ever-changing information.

Businesses were assisted through various new programs that provided grants and personal protective equipment to companies at no cost.

The city continued with regular businesses during 2020, including the opening of Mayor Vera Calvin Plaza and adapting recreational programs for participants.

The city also opened its first disc golf course at Bailey Lake. The construction for Fire Station 16 began, and the city is partnering with a developer for a public-private project located on Ellison Street, next to Mayor Vera Calvin Plaza.

"What a busy year we had, with a lot of things to be proud of, and I can tell you that 2021 has a lot of great things in store as well," said Mayor Fletcher. "My passion is for all of us to learn ways we can serve each other. I look forward to continuing working with all of you to make our city great. Remember Burleson. We are all in this together."

[View the 2021 State of the City video](#)

**B. April Sales Tax Information**

Below is the information from the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts in reference to the City of Burleson Sales and Use Tax Collections for the most current period.

April 2020	April 2021	Diff \$	Diff %	FY 2020 YTD	FY2021 YTD	Diff \$	Diff %
\$1,542,468	\$1,467,923	-\$74,545	-4.83%	\$6,885,145	\$ 7,311,527	\$426,382	6.19%

Note: April sales tax amount represents sales incurred in February 2021. If you remember, the city experienced a major winter weather event in February 2021 that shut down most of the town for several days. Staff believes this is the reason for the decline in sales tax collections for this month.

**C. Community Job Fair**

In response to discussions with local employers in the retail and manufacturing industries over difficulties in hiring, the Burleson Economic Development Department has partnered with the Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce to host a Community Job Fair.

The job fair will be free for job-seekers in the area and held on Monday, May 24, from 2 - 7 p.m. at the Burleson Recreation Center.

All Burleson-based businesses and current Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce members are eligible to reserve a booth for the event. Booth space is limited. Booth fees are \$50 for Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce members and \$100 for all others.

The Community Job Fair will be free for job-seekers.

Beginning Friday, April 9, you may reserve a booth space by contacting the Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce at [GSoliz@burleson.org](mailto:GSoliz@burleson.org)



#### **D. Outdoor Warning System to resume testing**

The Outdoor Warning System (OWS) is set to resume its regular testing schedule this week. For the month of April, the test will be done on Wednesday, April 14. Beginning in May, the sirens will perform tone testing on the first Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. The city's Emergency Plan requires this type of testing and testing has been reinstated due to the severe weather season approach. The OWS was temporarily suspended in order to mitigate unnecessary panic during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **E. Senior Center COVID-19 updates**

Dr. Martin met with senior center staff in regards to proposed changes to the Senior Center protocols. He has given his approval to all of the following:

- Open up capacity to 50%. For the front room near the kitchen, this would be 50 people. For the large activity room in the back, staff would split the room with 25 people each.
- Allow walk-ins for most activities, keeping with capacity limits. For more popular programs that may reach capacity, staff will require registration.
- Resume volunteer program with the same mask policy as City staff.

For face coverings, Dr. Martin would like staff to continue to require masks for visitors at the Senior Center unless actively eating or drinking. This would be comparable to what restaurants were doing when the mask mandate was in place. Once seated at a table for an activity, visitors may remove their masks to eat or drink.

The updated changes are set to go into effect May 1, 2021.

#### **F. Burleson Memorial Cemetery Expansion Design**

The Cemetery Board met Tuesday, April 6, 2021, to review design elements for the Burleson Memorial Cemetery Expansion. The elements included in the review are: plantings, shelter design, fountain design, quantity of columbarium, salt rock finished concrete vs. clay pavers and the size of the various graves for final plotting. The presentation and board comments can be found on page 9.

#### **G. Legislative Update**

Burleson Public Safety has provided testimony for two potential legislative pieces. Chief Billy Cordell provided two written letters in support of a child witness ordinance and a policy to implement policies and procedures for calls that include strangulation. You can see the letters starting on page 18. *This is consistent with city council's legislative program that states, "The city will support legislation that would:.....Impose a penalty enhancement in family violence cases where there is a child witness. Require police departments to adopt policies and procedures to require peace officers to document and address cases of domestic violence with evidence of impending breathing (strangulation).*

Casey Davis, assistant fire chief, also testified in front of the criminal justice committee in regards to the medical side of the impending breathing legislative. You can watch his testimony here:

[https://tlcsenate.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=49&clip\\_id=15663](https://tlcsenate.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=49&clip_id=15663) move to eh 1:06:12 mark.

**H. Bunny Daze & National Walking Day**

Burleson Parks and Recreation held Bunny Daze on Saturday, April 3 and had a fantastic crowd who enjoyed an egg hunt and games. Participants were encouraged to enjoy the BRiCK's outdoor walking track on National Walking Day, Thursday, April 8. View more photos on the [city's Flickr account](#).



**I. Feel Good Friday**

HOPE volunteers recently removed a large tree and repaired a backyard gate for a local senior citizen in our community. The HOPE program (homeowner outreach for positive empowerment) is a partnership with the code compliance division and local volunteer groups to assist citizens in our community that need help to maintain their properties.



**J. Fort Worth, Burleson and Kroger Health partner for vaccinations to homebound**

The cities of Fort Worth and Burleson, along with Kroger Health, have created a dynamic partnership to administer COVID vaccinations to the homebound clients of Meals on Wheels of Tarrant County.

Nationwide, approximately 2 million people are either partially or fully homebound, recent studies estimate. Homebound individuals, who are among the country's most at-risk, currently have a smaller chance of receiving a vaccine if not for the commitment of public-private partnerships.

"This partnership is an excellent example of the ways the city is innovative in our efforts to break down the barriers that might keep people from getting a vaccine," said Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price. "Meals on Wheels of Tarrant County is an organization that already does incredible work in our community year-round, and having the Fire Department working with them to bring vaccines right to the homes of members of our most vulnerable populations just makes sense."

Approximately 400 Meals on Wheels clients, who have no family and are living alone, are receiving the vaccination through this initial effort. The Fort Worth Fire Department is administering the vaccine through home visits.

### III. Upcoming Road Construction/Closures

<b>UPCOMING ROAD CONSTRUCTION / CLOSURES</b>			
<b>Projects &amp; Limits</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Traffic Affected</b>	<b>Estimated Completion</b>
Turkey Peak Ground Storage Tank Construction & Brushy Mound Tank Demolition at existing City Facilities	General Contractor is at both Turkey Peak and Brushy Mound Sites.	Intermittent construction traffic to and from both sites. Anticipated Routes include: NW Renfro, SW Brushy Mound Rd, SW Alsbury Blvd, NW Summercrest Blvd, Nicole Dr & NW Jayellen Ave.	Fall 2021
Traffic Signal at Hidden Vistas / Hidden Creek Parkway Intersection	Traffic Signal installation complete and fully-functional.	None anticipated	April 2021
Fire Station #16	Work on building at finish-out stage.	None anticipated	
Elk Drive Pedestrian Mobility	Work underway. Awaiting handrail delivery.	None anticipated	May 2021
Irene/Gardens Safe Routes to School	Construction underway	Outside lanes of Gardens, Irene, Gregory & Johnson Ave will be closed in areas of construction. Closures to move with construction progress	November 2021
SH174 (Wilshire) Landscape Enhancements	Construction scheduled to begin week of April 12. Flashing message boards are in place.	Construction will require temporary daytime lane closures as necessary. These closures will only affect the inside lanes. Remaining lanes, including left turn lanes will remain open at all times.	July 2021

#### IV. Events

- **Spring 2021 Trash-Off**  
April 10, 9 – 11 a.m., Citywide  
Materials drive-through pickup, 9 a.m. at Warren Park
- **Far Out Family Campout**  
April 10 – 11, 1 p.m. - 8 a.m. at Bailey Lake
- **Vietnam Veterans Celebration**  
April 10, 2 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Plaza
- **Drug Take Back Event**  
April 24, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. in the Wal-Mart Supercenter parking lot, 951 SW Wilshire
- **BRiCk Open House**  
April 26, All day event starting at 8 a.m. at the BRiCk
- **Texas Heritage Festival**  
May 1, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Russell Farm Art Center

#### V. Attachments

- Burleson Police Department monthly top 10 most wanted.....p. 8
- Cemetery Expansion Design update.....p. 9
- Legislative Update.....p. 18

# TOP 10 MOST WANTED

**AS OF APRIL 1, 2021**

The Burleson Police Department is seeking the community's help in locating these wanted subjects. If you have any information on their location, please contact **BPD** at **817-426-9903** or [top10@burlesontx.com](mailto:top10@burlesontx.com). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can call **Crime Stoppers** anytime 24 hours a day at **817-469-TIPS (8477)**. These subjects may be armed and dangerous. **DO NOT** attempt to apprehend these individuals yourself.



**Jael ABDELKHALEQ**  
AGG. ASSAULT



**Marcia AZOCAR**  
FORGERY



**Steven BARRETT**  
FORGERY



**Richard BEAVER**  
FRAUD



**Brandon CHILDS**  
ASSAULT



**Curtis GOLDSMITH**  
POSS CS



**Juanrico GUEVARA**  
Fail to Reg. Sex Offd.



**Christian MUSSELMAN**  
Fail to Reg. Sex Offd.



**Chassidi PAINE**  
POSS CS



**Aria WRIGHT**  
FRAUD

The Burleson Police Department Top 10 Most Wanted is updated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month and available online at [www.burlesontx.com/bpdmmostwanted](http://www.burlesontx.com/bpdmmostwanted)

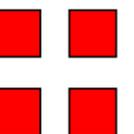
# Cemetery Board Meeting #3

April 6, 2021

Burleson, Texas

## **BURLESON MEMORIAL CEMETERY DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

Tim Hansen, ASLA  
Landscape Architect



# Agenda

I. Introductions, Purpose of Meeting

II. Cemetery Design

- I. Planting
- II. Shelter – Plan and Elevations
- III. Water Feature – Plan and Elevation
- IV. Columbarium
- V. Paving and Irrigation
- VI. Grave Sizes

III. Discussion

- I. What is next
- II. Schedule

# Plant Design

- Trees

- Red Oak
- Chinquapin Oak
- Saucer Magnolia
- Chinese Pistache
- Nellie P Stevens Holly

- Shrubs

- Purple Diamond Loropetalum
- Purple Wintercreeper
- Rose of Sharon
- Carissa Holly

\*Plantings are adaptive to the area



Red Oak  
Street Trees



Chinquapin Oak  
Shade Trees



Saucer Magnolia  
Planter Trees



Purple Diamond Loropetalum  
Hedge behind Baby Spaces



Purple Wintercreeper  
Groundcover



Chinese Pistache  
Ornamental Trees - north



Rose of Sharon  
Shrubs at Columbaria

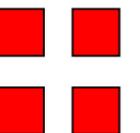


Nellie R Stevens Holly  
East and south buffer



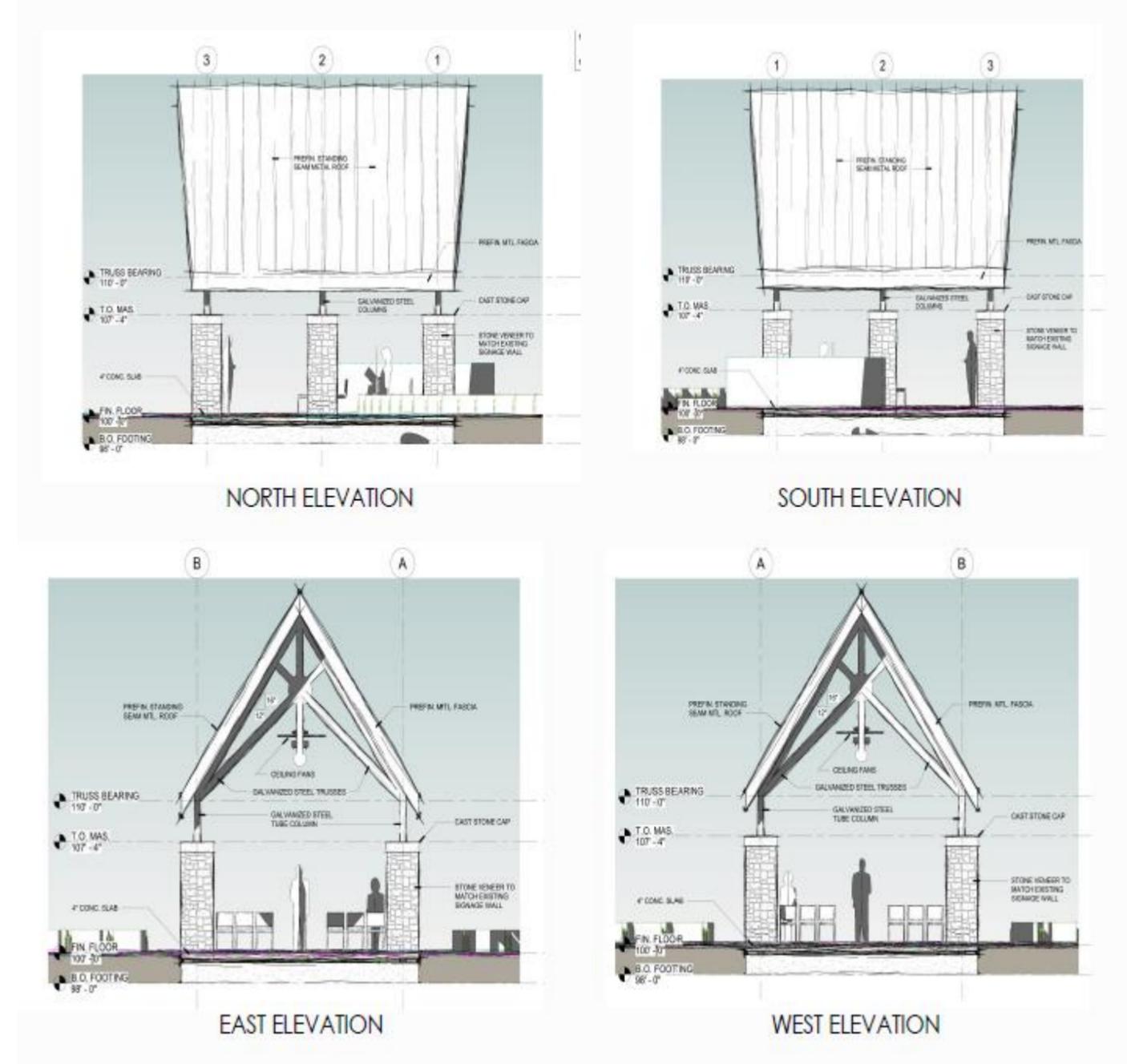
Carissa Holly  
Small hedges

\*Cemetery board requested adding Crepe Myrtles to the landscape plan.



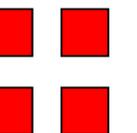
# Shelter Design

- 20x24
- Steel frame
- Stone wrapped columns
- Overhead fans
- Chapel feel



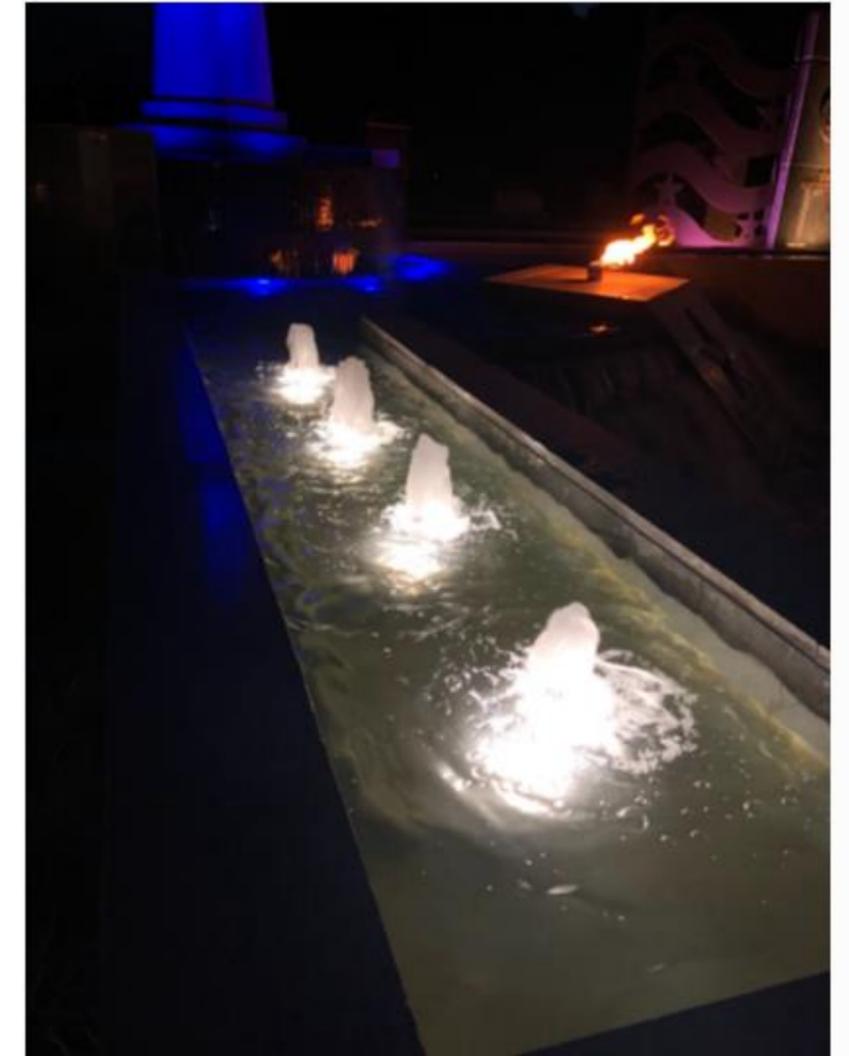
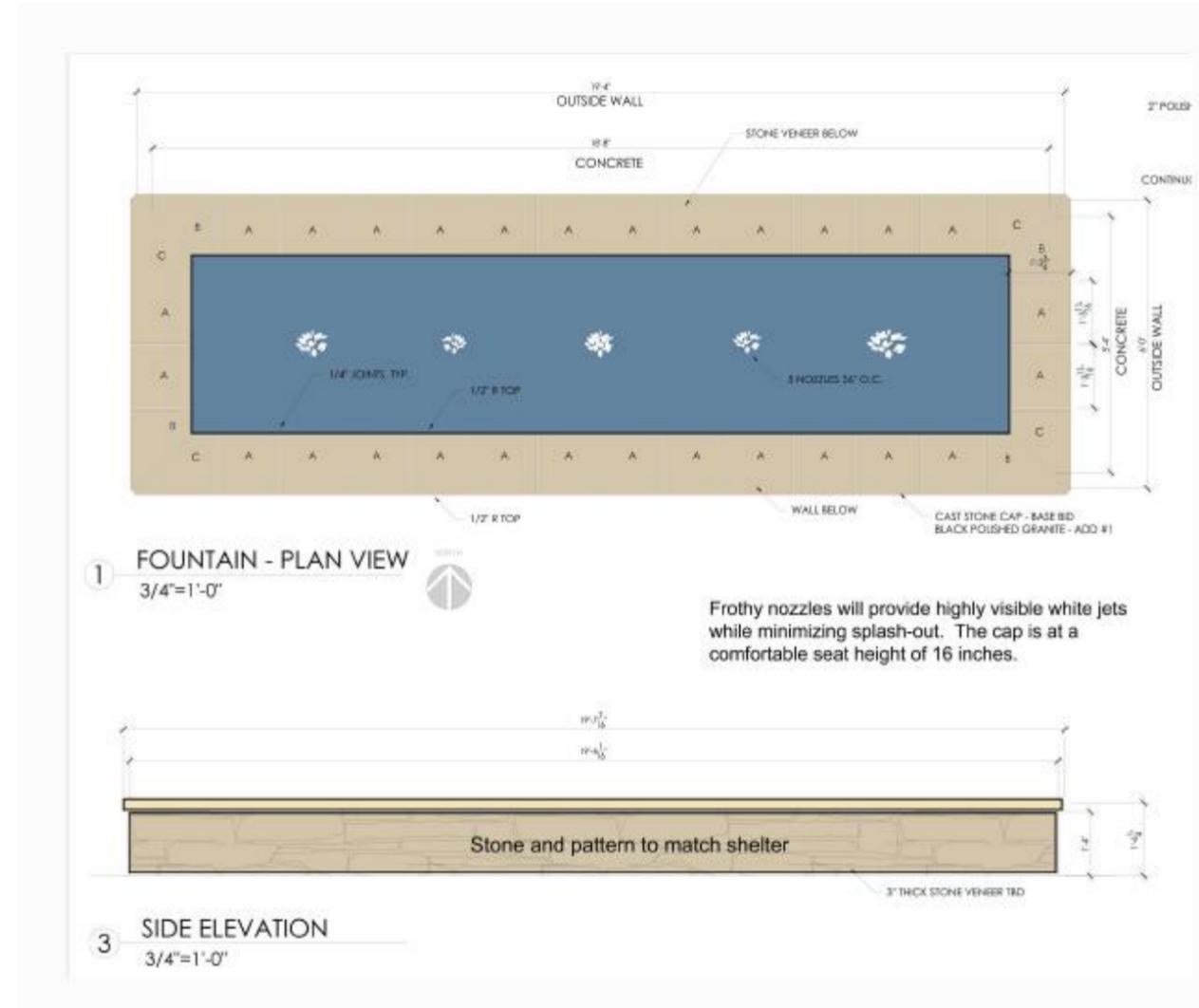
\*Cemetery board supported the shelter design as presented

**Tim Hansen, ASLA**  
**Landscape Architect**



# Fountain Design

- 6'x19' with surrounding seat wall
- Low profile with bubbling mounds
- Ability to be lighted for evening services



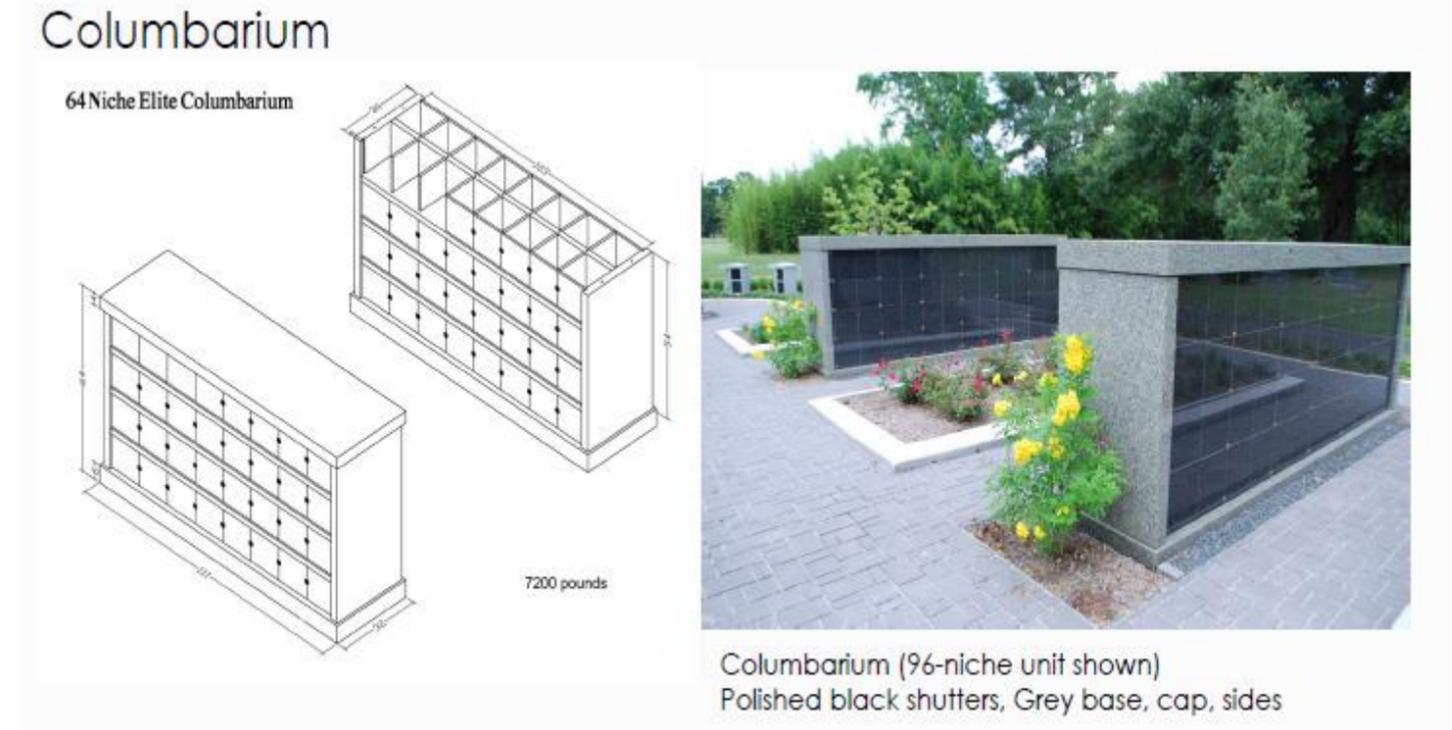
Proposed Frothy Jets  
 (Lighted only if the shelter is used at nighttime)

\*Cemetery board supported the fountain design as presented

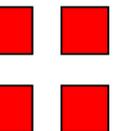
Tim Hansen, ASLA  
 Landscape Architect

# Columbarium

- 64 niche elite units
- 96 niche units
- Polished black shutters
- Grey base, cap and sides



\*Cemetery board supported the add alternate of 4 columbarium if the budget allows. 2 columbarium are in the base budget



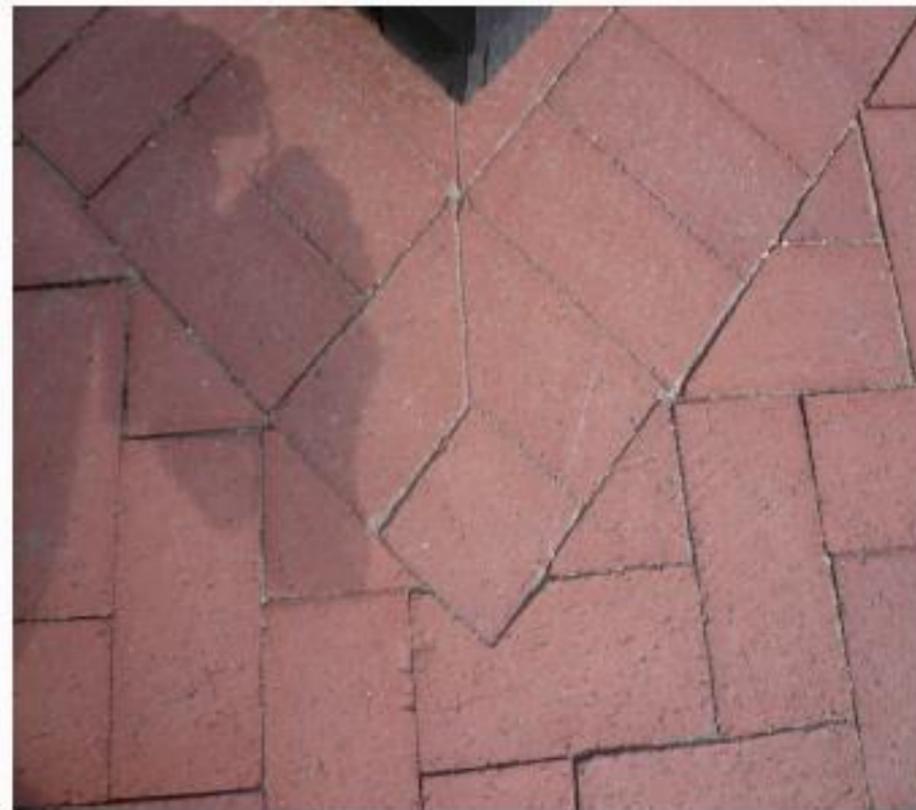
# Paving vs Pavers

- Proposed base bid concrete with a salt rock finish



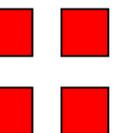
A rock salt finish is appropriate for pavement that is not rectangular since it has no pattern.

- Add alternate-clay pavers (anticipated \$12 sq ft more than concrete)



Clay Pavers also offer an infinite variety of patterns that can respond to the particular area. Add Alternate 3.

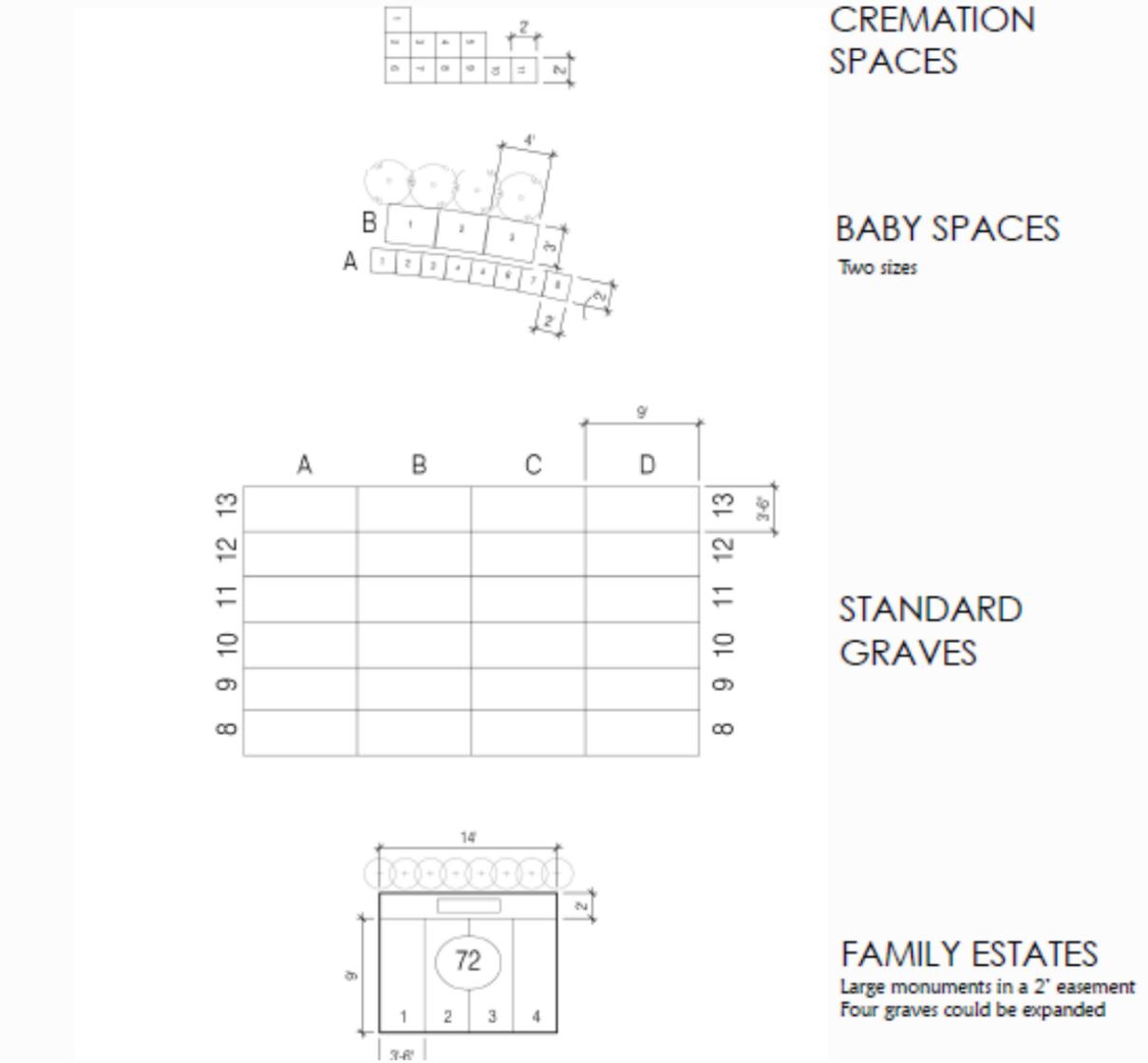
**Tim Hansen, ASLA**  
**Landscape Architect**



\*Cemetery board supported the add alternate of pavers if the budget allows.

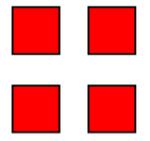
# Grave Sizes and Numbers

## GRAVE SIZES and NUMBERING



\*Cemetery board supports the grave sizes as presented.

Tim Hansen, ASLA  
Landscape Architect



# Next Steps

1. Cemetery Board feedback
2. Revisions based on feedback
3. Final design plan set 60%
4. Staff review
5. Final design plan set 90%
6. Staff review
7. Final Design complete
8. Project bid
9. Project awarded
10. Construction

Timeline – [note: tasks may overlap or not be consecutive]

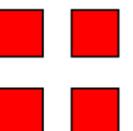
• Task 1 – Project Design Coordination	0.5	Months
• Task 2 – Survey	0.0	Months
• Task 3 – Geotech	1.5	Months
• Task 4 – Construction Documents	2.5	Months
• Task 5 – Bidding Phase Services	1.5	Months
• Task 6 – Construction Phase Services	6.0	Months <sup>1</sup>

We are  
here

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Project Timeline - 12.0 Months

<sup>1</sup>Rough estimate - Dependent upon materials availability and contractor schedule





Date: April 08, 2021

The Honorable James White  
Room 4N.5  
PO Box 2910  
Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78768

RE: House Bill 2895

Dear Chairman White,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on HB 2895. As the Chief of Police in Burlleson, I am speaking in support of this important legislation. Our officers see the fear, confusion, and uncertainty displayed by a child witness to domestic violence within their home. Research supports that a positive impact can occur when a trained police officer engages the child witness. However, left unchecked, the child can suffer long-term trauma. This legislation will have far-reaching positive outcomes.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood and can extend into their adult life. One in six adults experienced four or more types of ACEs. Five of the top ten leading causes of death are associated with ACEs and preventing ACEs could reduce the number of adults with depression by as much as 44%. Finally, a child witnessing violence is fifteen hundred times more likely to commit violence if untreated.

Based on the research and partnership of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Yale Child Study Center, and in conjunction with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, a toolkit for law enforcement was developed. Enhanced Police Responses to Children Exposed to Violence outlines specific steps officers can take to engage children that witness violence. The City of Burlleson developed training curriculum based on this research and police officers engage children on the scene with parental consent.

The City of Burlleson passed an ordinance, Protection of Children Exposed to Unjustified Violence in September 2017. Training was conducted for all Burlleson officers, teaching them how to engage the child based on the research and toolkit. We recognize that the officer's actions to engage the child can have a profound effect on their psychological being. Follow-up through our Victim's Assistance Coordinator in conjunction with school counselors ensure the child receives continued support. In 2020, Burlleson identified 190 child victims that identified violence, representing a 54% increase over 2019 cases. That reflects approximately 1.5% of Burlleson children under 18 years of age.

Feedback from patrol officers regarding a parent's receptiveness to allowing officers to speak to the child, as well as the child's behavior offered the following:



- When an officer was able to communicate effectively with parents, the outcomes were better. However, officers don't always have the ability to speak with them in a volatile situation.
- When officers explained the ordinance to a parent and the potential impact on the child, the parents were generally remorseful.
- The prevailing attitude among officers surveyed across all three shifts was the parent was indifferent to the intervention.
- It was estimated that approximately 25% of the time, parents were appreciative.
- The majority of children were upset and fearful due to the circumstances and uncertainty of the outcome.

Victim's Assistance staff follow-up to contact the victims of domestic violence and check on the child. The coordinator will contact the counsellor from the school district to ensure they are aware of potential behavioral changes. These relationships have fostered a level of trust between agencies in the best interest of children. In 2020, Victims Assistance notified the school of one hundred nineteen children exposed to violence.

In addition to the ordinance, a partnership was established between Burleson PD, One Safe Place, Burleson ISD, Cook Children's Hospital, and the Tarrant and Johnson County Departments of Family Protective Services to ensure a coordinated effort exists in the best interest of children. Communication between these agencies allow us to better manage what is occurring. For example, the stay at home order closing schools enhanced risks for abuse. Schools represent the largest reporting mechanism for suspected child abuse and school closures did not allow close contact with teachers. During one of the partnership meetings, a discussion led to raising awareness with teachers on potential abuse while children were at home and asked teachers to look for indicators of abuse.

Protecting children extends well beyond the family and we can make a difference. This legislation does not add to the burden of a family in crisis and requires minimal cost to train officers. Reputable research supports the need for an intervention from trained police officers and the toolkit serves as the model for consistent training. Texas law enforcement agencies are in a position to replicate this opportunity with minimal effort and potentially maximum benefit. This is a path for officers to have positive interactions with children in crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chief Cordell".

Billy J. Cordell, Chief of Police  
Burleson, Texas

# Vitalsigns<sup>TM</sup>

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Preventing early trauma to improve adult health



Want to learn more?  
[www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces](http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces)

**1 in 6**

1 in 6 adults experienced four or more types of ACEs.

**5 of 10**

At least 5 of the top 10 leading causes of death are associated with ACEs.

**44%**

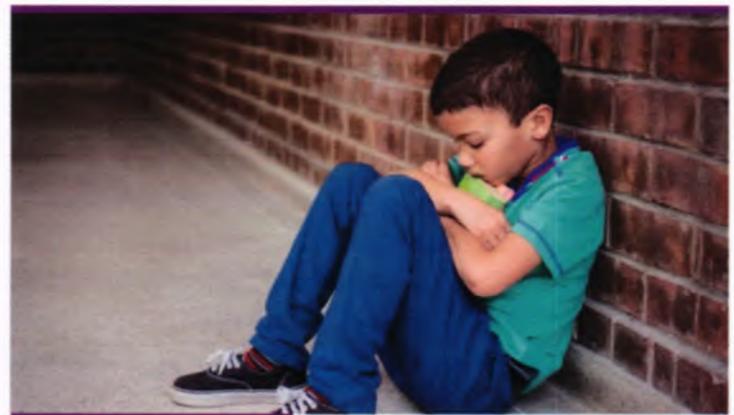
Preventing ACEs could reduce the number of adults with depression by as much as 44%.

### Overview:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. ACEs can include violence, abuse, and growing up in a family with mental health or substance use problems. Toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and affect how the body responds to stress. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. However, ACEs can be prevented.

### Preventing ACEs can help children and adults thrive and potentially:

- Lower risk for conditions like depression, asthma, cancer, and diabetes in adulthood.
- Reduce risky behaviors like smoking, and heavy drinking.
- Improve education and job potential.
- Stop ACEs from being passed from one generation to the next.



### PROBLEM:

## Adverse Childhood Experiences impact lifelong health and opportunities.

### ACEs are common and the effects can add up over time.

- 61% of adults had at least one ACE and 16% had 4 or more types of ACEs.
- Females and several racial/ethnic minority groups were at greater risk for experiencing 4 or more ACEs.
- Many people do not realize that exposure to ACEs is associated with increased risk for health problems across the lifespan.



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

## Preventing ACEs could reduce a large number of health conditions.



UP TO

**21 MILLION**  
CASES OF  
DEPRESSION



UP TO

**1.9 MILLION**  
CASES OF  
HEART DISEASE

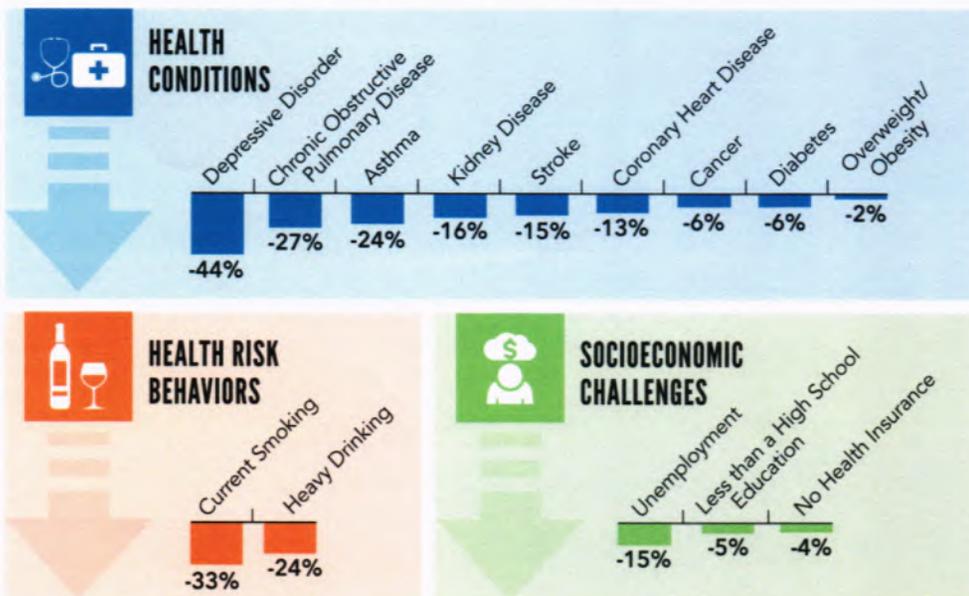


UP TO

**2.5 MILLION**  
CASES OF  
OVERWEIGHT/OBESITY

SOURCE: National Estimates based on 2017 BRFSS; Vital Signs, MMWR November 2019.

## Potential reduction of negative outcomes in adulthood



SOURCE: BRFSS 2015-2017, 25 states, CDC Vital Signs, November 2019.



## Raising awareness about ACEs can help:

- Change how people think about the causes of ACEs and who could help prevent them.
- Shift the focus from individual responsibility to community solutions.
- Reduce stigma around seeking help with parenting challenges or for substance misuse, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
- Promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments where children live, learn, and play.

## THE WAY FORWARD

### HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS CAN:

- Anticipate and recognize current risk for ACEs in children and history of ACEs in adults. Refer patients to effective services and support.
- Link adults to family-centered treatment approaches that include substance abuse treatment and parenting interventions.

### EMPLOYERS CAN:

- Adopt and support family-friendly policies, such as paid family leave and flexible work schedules.

### STATES AND COMMUNITIES CAN:

- Improve access to high-quality childcare by expanding eligibility, activities offered, and family involvement.
- Use effective social and economic supports that address financial hardship and other conditions that put families at risk for ACEs.
- Enhance connections to caring adults and increase parents' and youth skills to manage emotions and conflicts using approaches in schools and other settings.

### EVERYONE CAN:

- Recognize challenges that families face and offer support and encouragement to reduce stress.
- Support community programs and policies that provide safe and healthy conditions for all children and families.

<http://go.usa.gov/xVvqD>

### For more information

1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 | Web: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30333

Publication date: November 5, 2019



Date: April 08, 2021

The Honorable John Whitmire  
Criminal Justice Chair  
PO Box 12068  
Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711

RE: Senate Bill 664

Dear Chairman Whitmire,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on SB664. As the Chief of Police in Burlleson, I am speaking in support of this important legislation. Significant research demonstrates the element of strangulation as an indicator of the escalation of violence and is associated with increased risk of serious injury or death.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) adopted a resolution, Increasing the Awareness of the Lethality of Intimate Partner Strangulation on October 21, 2014 at the 121<sup>st</sup> annual conference. The resolution recognizes that strangulation is an indicator of escalation of violence, one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence and sexual assault, and that anoxic brain injury may occur within seconds and death within minutes. Furthermore, according to the International Institute for Strangulation Prevention, victims of intimate partner violence related strangulation have an increased risk of homicide and are almost seven and one half times more likely to die at a later time from their abusers.

The signs and symptoms of strangulation are challenging to identify and victims are often reluctant to seek medical attention (Cole 2004). Often, no external injury is noticed and the victim does not voluntarily raise that element of the assault. In strangulation, loss of consciousness can occur within 10 seconds from a pressure of only 11 pounds per square inch, and brain death can occur within three to five minutes at this pressure. The extreme risk to the victim is likely unknown as most police agencies do not ask the right questions or require any medical response to educate the victim on risks from strangulation.

The City of Burlleson passed an ordinance, *Effective Response to Strangulation* in February 2018, mandating a medical response when strangulation was an element of the offense. Since this was the first ordinance of this kind, a task force was created ahead of the ordinance seeking feedback from stakeholders. Those stakeholders included Burlleson PD and FD, MedStar Ambulance, the Medical Director, the Tarrant and Johnson County District Attorney's offices, and members of the One Safe Place Family Justice Center. Through the collaborative effort, training curriculum was developed based on an elaborate checklist created by the IACP. All Burlleson police officers and fire fighters were trained to ask the appropriate questions.



An analysis of Burleson police family violence reports in 2019, 2020, and the first three months of 2021 are displayed in the below chart. As you can see, impede breathing (strangulation) has been identified on multiple occasions. Furthermore, two female victims of 2017 homicides were the result of strangulation.

	2019	2020	2021*
Impede Breathing Reports	38	34	4
Family Violence Reports	273	292	66
% of FV Reports that were Impede Breathing	13.9%	11.6%	6.1%

From the prosecution aspect, having the District Attorney’s offices participate in the development of the ordinance, protocols, and attending training on strangulation raised awareness within their offices. My investigations sergeant presents at all grand juries in Johnson County and they are now getting felony indictments for impeding breathing that would have been prosecuted at a misdemeanor level.

In my thirty-six years in law enforcement, I was never trained to consider strangulation as an element of an assault and I certainly was unaware of the lethality caused by this power-driven act. However, after reviewing research, talking with medical professionals, and observing the Burleson statistical data, I am convinced law enforcement can better protect victims through this important legislation. The roadmap for training has been established and the efforts are minimal compared to the value of protecting a victim. Please consider the importance of a state-wide approach to protecting victims of family violence by passing this legislation.

Sincerely,

Billy J. Cordell, Chief of Police  
Burleson, Texas



*INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE*

# RESOLUTION

Adopted at the 121st Annual Conference  
Orlando, Florida  
October 21, 2014

**Increasing the Awareness of the Lethality of Intimate Partner Strangulation**

*Submitted by: Victim Services Committee*

VIC.004.T14

**WHEREAS**, strangulation is an indicator of the escalation of violence and associated with increased risk of serious injury and/or death in cases of intimate partner violence;<sup>1,2,3</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, strangulation has been identified as one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence and sexual assault;<sup>4</sup> and is used to exert power over a victim by taking from them control of their own body;<sup>5</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, when strangled, unconsciousness and anoxic brain injury may occur within seconds and death within minutes; and

**WHEREAS**, oftentimes, even in fatal cases, there is no external evidence of injury from strangulation, yet because of underlying brain damage due to the lack of oxygen during the strangulation assault, victims may have serious internal injuries or die days or even weeks, later; and

**WHEREAS**, many first responders lack specialized training to identify the signs and symptoms of strangulation and often focus on visible, obvious injuries like stab wounds or contusions. This lack of training has led to the minimization of this type of violence, exposing victims to potential serious short- and long-term health consequences, permanent brain damage, and increased likelihood of death; and

<sup>1</sup> Allison Turkel. "And Then He Choked Me: Understanding and Investigating Strangulation." National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse. Update. Volume 20, Number 8, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Gael B. Strack and Casey Gwinn. "On the Edge of Homicide: Strangulation as a Prelude." Criminal Justice. Volume 26, number 3, Fall 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention and the California District Attorneys Association. The Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases. 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Allison Turkel. "And Then He Choked Me: Understanding and Investigating Strangulation." National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse. Update. Volume 20, Number 8, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention and the California District Attorneys Association. The Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases. 2013.

**WHEREAS**, there is a need to develop more experts in the field of strangulation and to use those experts in court proceedings to educate juries and judges so that they understand the signs and symptoms associated with this crime, and the severity of this crime;<sup>6</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, some jurisdictions nationwide have taken legislative measures to address the brutality and lethality of strangulation assaults, many states, to date, still do not adequately address strangulation in their law enforcement training and/or criminal statutes, underestimating the significance of the act of strangulation and potential lethality;<sup>7,8</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, lacking specific legislation and specialized training, many near-fatal strangulation cases are prosecuted as misdemeanors crimes. However, given the lethality of strangulation, offenders should be held accountable with a penalty that is commensurate with the nature of their crimes which is the equivalent of attempted homicide or serious felonious assault;<sup>9,10</sup> now, therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the International Association of Chiefs of Police assembled at its 121st Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, supports statutes and legislation that hold perpetrators accountable for the potentially lethal strangulation assaults, and, be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the International Association of Chiefs of Police supports training efforts, documentation forms and processes, and multidisciplinary partnerships for law enforcement that specifically address the occurrence, signs, symptoms, effective investigation, and the increased lethality of the power and control dynamics of strangulation assaults in cases of domestic and sexual violence.

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<sup>6</sup> Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention and the California District Attorneys Association. The Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases. 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention and the California District Attorneys Association. The Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases. 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Strangulation in Domestic Violence Cases: Overcoming Evidentiary Challenges to Reduce Lethality, Melissa Paluch, Development in New York State Family Law, Spring 2013

<sup>9</sup> Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention and the California District Attorneys Association. The Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases. 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Strangulation in Domestic Violence Cases: Overcoming Evidentiary Challenges to Reduce Lethality, Melissa Paluch, Development in New York State Family Law, Spring 2013.

## Response to Non-Lethal Strangulation Report Review Checklist

Are your officers aware of the state's **strangulation statute/law**, if applicable?

- Does the report **thoroughly articulate the elements of the strangulation crime** that occurred?

Does the report include all needed **information**?

- How was the strangulation case received?
- Is the time of the call recorded (including time of incident, time of dispatch, time of arrival)?
- Is the relationship of the parties identified?
- Is there a valid protection order in place?
- Are the events that took place pre and post strangulation documented?
- Has strangulation occurred in the past?
- Was information about previous incidents (strangulation, domestic/sexual violence, threats, stalking), including frequency, documented?
- Were all witnesses interviewed and documented?
- What was used to strangle the victim (one hand, two hands, forearm, other body part, ligature, etc.)?
- Were other weapons involved?
- Did the strangulation take place from the front or from behind?
- Was the victim wearing jewelry?
- Was the suspect wearing jewelry? Gloves?
- Is the suspect right or left handed, if known?
- How long did the strangulation last? How many times was the victim strangled?
- Was the victim also smothered?
- Was the victim also shaken while being strangled?
- Was the victim's head pushed into a wall, floor, or other surface? Was there property damage?
- Did the victim attempt to protect themselves?
- What was the emotional state of the victim (what did they report they were thinking and feeling)?
- Did the suspect say anything to the victim before/while/after the strangulation occurred?
- Did the victim say anything to the suspect before/while/after the strangulation occurred?
- What was the suspect's demeanor before, during and after the incident?
- Did the victim describe what the suspect's face looked like during the incident?
- Why and how did the suspect stop strangling the victim?
- Was medical attention provided?
- Is the scene(s) concisely described/diagramed?
- Are all crimes that co-occurred with the strangulation thoroughly documented (sexual assault, kidnapping, property damage, etc.)?

Did your officers ask about and capture details regarding **non-visible injuries** that can occur from strangulation? *Officers can use a scale of 1 - 10, 10 being the most extreme pain, with victims and include this information in the report.*

- Difficulty breathing/unable to breathe, hyperventilation
- Raspy voice, hoarse voice, coughing, unable to speak
- Trouble swallowing, painful to swallow
- Neck pain
- Nausea, vomiting,
- Involuntary urination or defecation
- Dizziness, fainting/light-headed
- Headaches, head "rush", ears ringing
- Loss of consciousness (how long?)
- Change in mental status (disoriented, combative, memory loss, "spaced out")

Did your officer ask about and document **visible injuries** from the strangulation?

- Petechiae (pinpoint red spots above the area of constriction)
- Hemorrhaging, bruising
- Scratch marks, scrapes, abrasions
- Bloody nose, broken nose
- Finger nail impressions
- Swelling of the neck or face
- Pulled/missing hair, bumps on head
- Skull fracture, concussion
- Swollen tongue, swollen lips
- Is a diagram of injuries included with the report?
- Were there any existing (old) injuries?

Did your officer gather and document comprehensive information about the **suspect**?

- Was an arrest made?
- Did the suspect have any injuries? Were injuries identified on the suspect that may have been caused by the victim in self-defense?
- Could the suspect see the victim's face during the strangulation?
- What was the emotional state of the suspect (what did they report they were thinking and feeling)?
- Are there any active warrants out for the suspect?
- Have there been protection orders taken out on the suspect in the past?
- Was the proper protocol followed if the suspect was not on the scene?

Did your officer **discuss** the following with the victim?

- The need for follow-up photos.
- Receiving medical attention. Symptoms and injuries can occur days or weeks after the strangulation, including miscarriage if pregnant.
- Information about local service providers.