

Williamson County Commissioner Terry Cook

N E W S L E T T E R

December 2020 Volume 4 Issue 12

HELLO HOLA KONNICHIIWA G'DAY

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The Message



Enough said!

So, looking forward to 2021. I am truly happy that I have another four years to advocate for, work towards, and succeed at doing good things for the residents of Williamson County. And there's much to be done.

Redistricting – I expect Precinct 1 to grow some around the edges as Precinct 2 and 3 have grown so very much. As you know, one aspect of redistricting is to create 4 precincts with nearly same populations based on the census data – and then growth takes off.

Atlas 14/FEMA Mapping of entire county – Halff Engineering is tasked with generating/collecting all rainfall data (Atlas 14), then updating FEMA (floodplain) maps for the county. We have provided matching funds with grant money to pay for this. These maps will help direct appropriate development areas and dissuade ill-advised activities, as well as provide much more accurate information for flood control measures.



Robinson Ranch – Well, a 193-acre Wilco section of it, bordered from the rest of the ranch by SH 45 to the south, CR172 to the east, and McNeil Rd on the North, has gone on the market. It is within Austin's extra-territorial jurisdiction and control. We'll all sit back and observe that bidding war.

The Austin Business Journal

2019 Bond Program – Many of these projects are moving very rapidly; right-of-way is being acquired in every precinct. Hard to believe we are expected to double in population around 2040, I believe.

North Mays Street Extension – Yeehaw – it's done and is beautiful! You can partake in our virtual ribbon cutting through facebook or YouTube – go all the way to the end to see all the talented people it took to do this under COVID-19 conditions – music was all separate tracks – the very talented Merel Bregante, producer, pulled it all together and was very excited about the quality. I drove on it to court last week singing all the way.

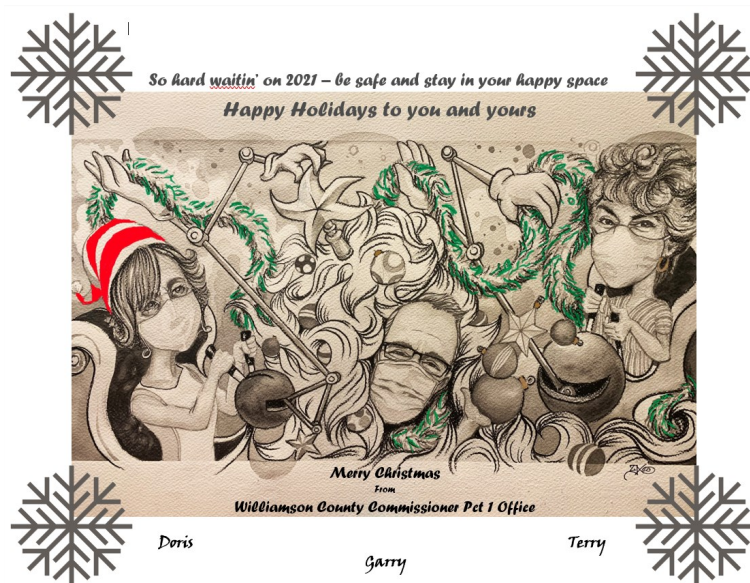
[Williamson County, Texas - Government | Facebook](#) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uv1wehvvEnc>

CARES Act Funding – Good news is that the December 30, 2020 deadline for distributing money to offset the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic costs and losses is now extended to December 31, 2021. For us in Williamson County, this means that current programs can be extended such as rental & utility assistance, and aid to food banks (assuming our non-profit partners don't collapse under the load) and old and new aid projects can be funded. Bad news is that no new federal dollars were in the bill to bolster them currently. The jousting continues in Congress. I'm very proud of the work Wilco has done to get these funds distributed appropriately and efficiently. Here's the status on distributions as of December 22, 2020:

CARES Act CRF Funding Report					
CARES Initial Funding to County:	\$93M				
Category	Budget	Spent	Committed	Est. Future	Total Cost
Wilco Equipment	\$ 5,665,000.00	\$ 2,758,435.01	\$ 2,534,599.03		\$ 5,293,034.04
Wilco Personnel	\$ 700,000.00	\$ 493,860.70			\$ 493,860.70
Wilco Supplies	\$ 1,695,160.00	\$ 1,426,455.63	\$ 35,670.82		\$ 1,462,126.45
Wilco Prof Services	\$ 464,603.00	\$ 458,773.00	\$ 3,820.00	\$ 2,010.00	\$ 464,603.00
Wilco Other	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 184,419.44	\$ 362.20		\$ 184,781.64
Total Wilco	\$ 8,824,763.00	\$ 5,321,943.78	\$ 2,574,452.05	\$ 2,010.00	\$ 7,898,405.83
Small Business Grants	\$ 35,000,000.00	\$ 34,320,393.44			\$ 34,320,393.44
City Reimbursements	\$ 8,000,000.00	\$ 1,171,233.33		\$ 667,323.04	\$ 1,838,556.37
WCCHD	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 125,032.71		\$ 445,898.81	\$ 570,931.52
Bluebonnet Trails	\$ 1,424,125.00	\$ 500,000.00		\$ 924,125.00	\$ 1,424,125.00
ESD Reimbursements	\$ 1,700,000.00	\$ 898,495.50	\$ 15,315.64	\$ 786,188.86	\$ 1,700,000.00
YMCA	\$ 1,562,000.00	\$ 309,722.11		\$ 1,252,277.89	\$ 1,562,000.00
WCAD	\$ 43,729.62	\$ 43,729.62			\$ 43,729.62
School Reimbursements	\$ 12,000,000.00	\$ 9,308,441.88			\$ 9,308,441.88
Food Banks	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 140,214.13			\$ 140,214.13
Rent/Utility Assistance	\$ 4,081,000.00	\$ 2,533,199.65	\$ 75,297.04	\$ 1,472,503.31	\$ 4,081,000.00
Radios	\$ 51,000.00	\$ 50,531.76			\$ 50,531.76
We Are Blood	\$ 63,351.00			\$ 63,351.00	\$ 63,351.00
Life Steps	\$ 9,782.00			\$ 9,782.00	\$ 9,782.00
Lone Star Circle of Care	\$ 424,145.00			\$ 424,145.00	\$ 424,145.00
Total Outside	\$ 65,859,132.62	\$ 49,400,994.13	\$ 90,612.68	\$ 6,045,594.91	\$ 55,537,201.72
TOTAL	\$ 74,683,895.62	\$ 54,722,937.91	\$ 2,665,064.73	\$ 6,047,604.91	\$ 63,435,607.55

2,330 families were helped in rent/utility assistance by 12/22/2020. This funding only provided for 3 months of assistance. We do need to look at that restriction. Of course, the families had to prove their inability to pay for rent and utilities was due to job and income loss due to COVID-19. We fully expect an audit by the federal government of all these disbursements above. The Wilco approval team was diligent in acquiring complete documentation with each reimbursement request.

Finally, if our Precinct 1 Holiday card did not reach you via email, here it is – you'll always remember what year this represented!





IN COMMISSIONERS COURT

After 20 years of service to Williamson County, Jay Schade, our Chief Information Officer, is retiring. He has seen an explosion of growth with the county and has put together an exceptional IT staff in those 20 years. We are sorry to see him go, but we all wish him well on the next chapter in his life. Thanks Jay for all of your work!



WILLIAMSON COUNTY
HISTORICAL COMMISSION



The Williamson County Historical Commission is looking for few, new appointees to serve a 2-year term starting in January. They are looking for a wide range of people– age, ethnicities, geographic diversity, etc., who have an interest in the preservation of the history of Williamson County. The Commission is needing, especially, a person or two who lives in Round Rock.

Meetings are held at 4:00pm on the 2nd Thursday of every month. Currently, the meetings are held virtually.

You can learn more about what the Historical Commission does and find an application [HERE](#). Please send completed applications to your precinct commissioner:

Precinct 1 Commissioner1@wilco.org
1801 E. Old Settlers Blvd., Ste. 110, Round Rock, TX 78664

Precinct 2 clong@wilco.org
350 Discovery Blvd., Ste. 201, Cedar Park, TX 78613

Precinct 3 comm3@wilco.org
100 Wilco Way, CO 201, Georgetown, TX 78626

Precinct 4 russ.boles@wilco.org
3001 Joe DiMaggio Blvd., Unit 1300, Round Rock, TX 78665

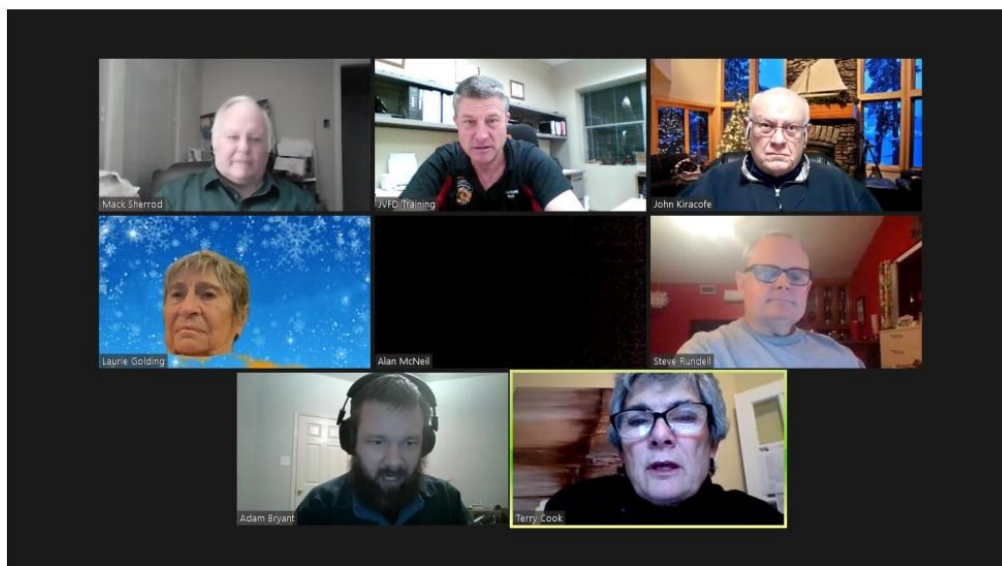
New commission members will be appointed in early 2021, so get your application in today!



DID YOU KNOW that you can see the events that were attended by Commissioner Cook on her official Williamson County office's web-site? You'll also be able to read her poems, too. Although she's not attending anything in-person right now, you can see all past events [here](#).

Where is Commissioner Cook?

**Mack Sherrod and Adam Bryant's Swearing In Ceremony
as Board Members for the
Williamson County Emergency Services District #1
By Williamson County Commissioner Terry Cook
December 16, 2020**



FIREWORKS

Most jurisdictions have city ordinances prohibiting the use of fireworks within or near the city limits. If you are unsure of the ordinances, it is always safer to check with the city or local fire department prior to the purchase or discharge of fireworks. Please be safe!

For recommended safety tips from the Williamson County Fire Marshal, click [HERE](#).

You can check the interactive county map with the fireworks free buffer zone area to find out where fireworks are allowed [HERE](#).

The map can be a little confusing. Most municipalities have an ordinance that extends a fireworks free zone outward of 5000 ft. from their city limits. As you'll see, Liberty Hill and Taylor do not have that buffer, although they restrict fireworks within their jurisdictions like the other cities. You can zoom in on the map to see your area.

Commissioner Cook: Juvenile justice transformed, youths and community safer

Four years ago, Williamson County's juvenile system was based on punitive measures but thanks to a great judge and juvenile justice staff, today it is focused on youth rehabilitation and development.

Appointed to the 277th District Court in October 2013 by former Gov. Rick Perry, Judge Stacey Mathews, as the county's juvenile Judge, is fulfilling her goal to ensure that both juveniles and young adults are treated supportively but not enabled to continue unlawful behaviors.

In Texas, children ages 10 to 17, and those over 17 alleged to have committed an offense that has a statute of limitations that exceeds juvenile age, can be processed through the juvenile court. The Juvenile Justice Code — in the Texas Family Code — is a hybrid system providing resolution for legal conflicts through both civil and a few criminal procedures.

Almost all cases begin with law enforcement bringing a child into the juvenile detention center. A prompt detention hearing is held to determine if the child is a likely danger to him/herself or the public, and if probable cause (a set of circumstances leading a prudent person to believe a person is subject to the charge) exists.

Mathews says, "We only want to hold a child in detention as a last resort and only when there are no viable programs or services readily available to provide support and ensure youth and community safety."

Most commonly, youths are brought before juvenile court so that Williamson County Juvenile Services can formally provide support services to the youth and family.

Under our current COVID-19 restrictions, a child will be accompanied by a facility supervision officer in the Juvenile Justice Center courtroom. Others attending include the judge, defense attorney, juvenile prosecutor, parent or guardian, witnesses and probation officer. However, during the pandemic, everyone involved must attend virtually.

Texas law requires all youths to have legal representation at all court hearings, and almost 85 percent of juvenile cases qualify for a court-appointed attorney. Wilco currently has about 20 attorneys on the juvenile appointment list.

Evidence is admitted through the typical process of questioning witnesses. If the defense attorney must consult with the client during a hearing, the virtual hearing is temporarily muted or paused. The attorney consults with the client via phone or virtually. Court coordinators are instrumental in keeping this process operating efficiently.

At detention hearings, the judge decides only whether a child should remain in detention or released based on certain conditions that help ensure the child will return safely to court later to address the charges through an adjudication and disposition. The juvenile judge will routinely order substance abuse treatment, mental health services and/or counseling, often requiring family participation.

Some of the counseling and other services are state- and county-funded. Juvenile Services counseling staff can provide all services virtually. Occasionally a parent with sufficient funds or insurance hires private providers.

At the final stage of the juvenile court process after adjudication (finding of delinquency) and before disposition (determination of appropriate conditions to support rehabilitation), a "treatment team" involving the family, a case manager, counselor, attorney, mentor and input from the education team or other service provider make recommendations to the court.

While the virtual process provides many advantages regarding efficiency, Mathews says she misses in-person juvenile court, an environment difficult to reproduce in a virtual setting. There is no substitution for personal interaction where youths and their families can witness firsthand the collaboration and care dedicated to their individual cases.

Wilco's juvenile court avoids pandemic-related backlogs as Mathews continues holding detention hearings, adjudications, dispositions and modifications of probation virtually.

In 2019, many of the 660 referrals to juvenile court were released administratively without a detention hearing, increasing efficiency.

Also, Mathews' court completes both agreed orders (agreements by all parties) and trials she decides with regularity because fewer than 5% of all juvenile cases result in a jury trial.

Mathews says it is rewarding to be the judicial leader who, with her team, has brought everyone together — prosecutors, defense, juvenile staff, community partners and probation officers — to work toward a common mission.

She believes supporting youths and families coming from hard places through a trauma-informed approach involving a balance between structure and nurture is the right thing to do.

According to Mathews, nearly 85% of all youths whose cases are adjudicated and disposed through her court do not reoffend.

I rest my case!



Christmas Tree Recycling!

Cedar Park– Saturday, January 9, 9:00am—12:00pm at the Cedar Park Recreation Center at 1435 Main St. Receive a free seedling while supplies last! If you don't have time to dropoff, you can schedule [Boy Scout Troop 233](#) to pick up your tree and bring it to the recycling center for you.

Georgetown- Texas Disposal Systems customers in the city limits of Georgetown can put Christmas trees on the curb for collection on your regular yard trimmings pickup day. Trees seven feet in length or less can be placed at the curb uncut. Longer trees should be cut into sections. Christmas trees will be accepted at the City of Georgetown Transfer Station, 250 W.L. Walden Drive, from Dec. 26-Jan. 31 at no charge.

Leander– Saturday, December 26—January 10, 6:00am—10:00pm at Robin Bledsoe Park at 601 S. Bagdad Rd. If you don't have time to dropoff, you can schedule [Boy Scout Troop 233](#) to pick up your tree and bring it to the recycling center for you.

Round Rock– Saturday, January 2, 9:00am—6:00pm at the Round Rock Recycling Center at 310 Deepwood Dr. However, the City of Round Rock says that residents may bring their Christmas tree to the recycling center during any regular operating day. If you go on Jan. 2 though, you'll receive a small tree seedling for your efforts (first 100 people, 1 per vehicle). Round Rock residents only.

Williamson County Landfill– December 26 through January 19 at 600 Landfill Rd. in Hutto. Any Williamson County resident can dispose of their Christmas trees for free.

NOTE FOR ALL SITES: All decorations, including lights, tinsel, and ornaments, and tree stands must be removed before tree being dropped off, and no site can take flocked trees.



N. Mays Street is now open between Round Rock and Georgetown!

No more having to take I-35 to go between Round Rock and Georgetown! This project is another example of the great relationship between the City of Round Rock and Williamson County.

To celebrate this momentous occasion, we held a virtual ribbon cutting ceremony. Click on the picture on the right to watch it, and be sure to see it all the way to the end!



ROAD UPDATES

Mays St. extension– OPENED ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 16! SEE THE VIRTUAL RIBBON CUTTING ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE!

620 at Railroad/Chisholm Trail– Underground work continues for water, stormwater, and wastewater. In addition, the north side of 620 from Sonic to Deep Wood Dr. has been widened and paved with additional paved lanes being constructed. This is a City of Round Rock, Wilco & TxDOT project. Estimated completion date is Summer 2022.

Great Oaks Bridge at Brushy Creek Rd.– AT&T has begun their relocation work and anticipates being complete in January. Oncor is working on design with relocation to be complete in February. Relocation for Charter and Grande lines is expected to be complete in January. Don't hold your breath! Preconstruction discussions with BCMUD regarding tree protections will take place soon. The old bridge will remain in use during construction. The construction is anticipated to begin early 2021 (pending utility moves) and take 18-24 months to complete. Learn more [HERE](#).

Hairy Man Rd./Brushy Creek Rd. Safety Improvements– Learn more about this project at this [website](#). Bids for this project were received and reviewed, and Commissioners Court awarded the project to DeNucci Constructors, the firm also working on the Forest North drainage project and the widening of University Blvd. This is a 100% county job. Construction start is anticipated January 2021.

Pond Springs Road Area Drainage Improvements– A meeting took place on December 3 with the City of Austin to discuss design and submittal requirements. The agreement terms between the County and the City of Austin continue to be refined. Once completed, the updated copy will be sent to TxDOT. An assessment has shown that there are a number of utility conflicts, so a plan is being drafted to minimize impact. Construction start is still anticipated Spring 2021.

Forest North Drainage Improvements Phase III– Limited rehabilitation and reconstruction occurred along Perthshire St. in the Braes Valley Zone. Hydro-mulch seeding was sprayed and a soil retention blanket was installed in the Braes Valley Zone. Work continues on installing an 8" water line on Newberry St. in the Woodvale Zone. Concrete driveway work continues on Stillforest in the Norchester Zone. Final asphalt work continues in the Baes Valley Zone. Substantial completion is anticipated in early 2022.

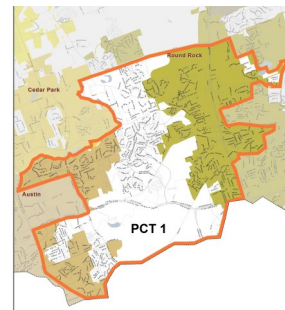
Sam Bass Rd. Interim Signal Project– Interim traffic signals will be installed at the intersection of Sam Bass Rd. and Walsh Ranch Trail/Arrowhead Circle and at Sam Bass and Great Oaks. Construction of the interim traffic signals at these intersections do not include road improvements such as crosswalks. The construction on the new road design for Sam Bass Road itself will include items such as crosswalks, but it is not anticipated to begin before 2022 because of utilities. (Sam Bass Road became designated officially as a corridor road on the 2016 Corridor Map of the county's Long-range Transportation Plan.) Supplies expected around January 4, 2021 to began construction. Cost for temporary lights is almost \$320k—not cheap, but needed.

O'Connor Drive Traffic Signals– Surprise, surprise (read sarcastic), excavation at the intersection of Morgan Hill at O'Connor revealed existing utilities. Crews worked around those to install conduit for the signals. Installation of conduits also began at Avery Ranch Blvd. Hopefully, lights will become operational in February 2021. Cross your fingers.

University Blvd. widening from IH-35 to Sunrise Rd.– Notice to proceed on the project was issued last month, but there is always a slow down in projects during the holidays. Hopefully, we'll get word soon on when physical work is being undertaken. This is the city's project for which the county has contributed \$5M. Project is slated to finish in early 2022.

Wyoming Springs @ Smyers Lane–A left turning lane will be created by removing a section of the median and 4 trees. This is in response to many near and actual accidents for those trying to turn into Walgreens. As it turns out, TCEQ does not require a Water Pollution Abatement Plan (anytime you add impermeable surfaces). Finalized plans have been submitted for review and construction start is anticipated in early 2021.

The Mission, Vision, and Value Statements of the Williamson County Commissioner Precinct 1 Office



MISSION

To lead pro-actively on the Williamson County Commissioners Court while advocating for the constituents of Precinct 1 and the county at-large from a foundation of collaboration and respect.

VISION

To transform Williamson County government into a more accessible, responsive, transparent, and well-managed organization for our residents, so that we become the community recognized as the best in Central Texas to live and enjoy.

VALUES

Accountability, commitment, integrity, and respect form the values that guide the Williamson County Commissioner Precinct 1 office.

CONTACT US!

LOCATION: Williamson County Jester Annex
1801 E. Old Settlers Blvd., Suite 110

MAIN PHONE: 512-244-8610

EMAIL COMMISSIONER COOK:
commissioner1@wilco.org

COMMUNICATIONS/SCHEDULING: Doris Sanchez
512-244-8610, doris.sanchez@wilco.org

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: Garry Brown
512-244-8615, garry.brown@wilco.org

SEE US ONLINE!!!

Williamson County's Website! - www.wilco.org

Our office's web site- [Terry Cook, Commissioner Pct 1](#)

Non-Emergency Phone Numbers

Austin Fire Department
512-974-0130

County Judge Bill Gravell
512-943-1550

Jollyville Fire Department (ESD 1)
512-258-1038

Round Rock Fire Department (ESD 9)
512-218-5590

Sam Bass Fire Department (ESD 2)
512-255-0100

Williamson Central Appraisal District
512-930-3787

Williamson County Landfill
512-759-8881

Williamson County Regional Animal Shelter
512-943-3322

Williamson County Sheriff's Office
512-864-8282

Want to know even more
about what's happening in
Williamson County?

Sign up for the WILCOunty
Line E-newsletter! Click
[here](#) to sign up!

Commissioner Cook
keeps meeting with many
MUD Boards and HOAs.
To invite her to your
meeting, contact Doris at
doris.sanchez@wilco.org

**In case of
Emergency
DIAL 911**