

# H O M E



**City of Benbrook  
2019 Annual Report**



MESSAGE FROM YOUR

# City Council

Thank you for taking time to review this annual report. This marks the fourteenth consecutive year that Benbrook is providing a written update on the state of our city. Although we are now into a bright and prosperous new year, it is important to also reflect on our past, honor our heritage, and learn from the accomplishments and challenges we've encountered in previous years. We hope these pages successfully highlight the key activities of 2019 and capture the spirit of our community.

Our *Small Town, Big Backyard* is entering a new era. In 2019, the City embarked on the monumental task of updating the Benbrook Comprehensive Plan (see page 4). The Plan lays the groundwork for Benbrook's future land use, development, and infrastructure considerations. The challenge is to plan for future growth while retaining the small-town appeal that our residents, visitors, and business owners appreciate. An appointed committee of citizens was assigned to review, revise,

and make recommendations, and the public was invited to share their thoughts as well; the work was truly a community effort. You can review the completed 2020 Comprehensive Plan on the City's website: [benbrook-tx.gov](http://benbrook-tx.gov).

Benbrook is experiencing unprecedented opportunity. Added rooftops, increasing commercial interest, improved mobility, and vital infrastructure improvements are all part of our growth story for 2019. We continually strive to fairly balance your desire for increased retail choices and quality-of-life amenities with the regulations needed to manage development and protect our citizens.

By choosing to make Benbrook your home, you, too, are investing in your community. Choosing schools, buying a home, or opening a business here points to your willingness to partner with city leaders to invest in our success. Whatever your investment, we hope to match your enthusiasm for our community by always serving you with integrity and commitment.

Thank you for calling Benbrook home, and thank you for Building a Better Benbrook.



# PLENTY TO Cheer About

In 2019, we put on our gloves and got to work Building a Better Benbrook—with many enthusiastic citizens working right alongside.

**S**trange as it may sound, people and cities have things in common.

Most people, for example, start each year with a mix of firm goals and good intentions. Some goals may not be completely achieved, but there's usually a few others we can say we knocked out of the park.

2019 was like that for the City of Benbrook, as we enjoyed great success toward achieving many of our goals for the year.

One example is “street overlays”—laying asphalt over roads that over time have become

worn. In 2019, the City **completed overlays on 13 Benbrook roads**. Worth noting, the City does this work in partnership with Tarrant County, **saving Benbrook taxpayers thousands of dollars**.

We also made progress on our ongoing **street light work**. New lights were installed on portions of Bellaire and Watercourse streets, making them both more attractive and safer. Funding for this work came from a Community Development Block Grant.

Significant progress was made on **Vista Way** in 2019, with the road being extended from Mercedes Street to the south-side frontage road of I-20. Work continues in 2020, as the section going under I-20 is converted from one-way to two-way.

North of I-20, where the street becomes Old Aledo Road/Old Benbrook Road, the intersection with Benbrook

Boulevard/U.S. 377 will be moved slightly north and a traffic signal installed. In the final stages, **sidewalks and on-road bike lanes are proposed**, allowing pedestrians and cyclists to safely travel beneath the freeway. This Tax Increment Finance (TIF) project is expected to be completed in 2022.



“We are starting a family and Benbrook’s schools were a big selling point. The neighborhood is well-kept and quiet, and everyone has been very welcoming. Plus, we love having sidewalks to run and walk our dog!”

- Matt and Jacy George

**New development and construction** moved forward in 2019. The City issued a total of 1,289 building permits, including:

- 59 for new residential homes;
- 45 for residential remodeling or additions;
- 8 for new commercial buildings;
- 29 for commercial additions and/or alterations; and
- 1 multi-family permit, issued for the Aura Apartment complex on Vista Way.

The apartment complex began leasing in February 2020.

Construction of the **Clear Fork Emergency Access Bridge** also began in 2019. The bridge will be just north of I-20; it will be available for use by first responders, and will dramatically reduce the time they need to reach surrounding neighborhoods. Work is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

**Drainage systems**, while not glamorous, are essential to the safety of our community. In 2019, the City began several major drainage improvement projects, including one at the intersection of **Chapin Road and Van Deman Drive** and another near Chapin and Westerly Road. These projects were completed in January 2020. Money for all



Vista Way has been extended north, and the new apartment complex has begun leasing units.



To introduce proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan, the City held an open house, inviting citizens to review the proposals and ask staff questions. Information was also posted on the City website.

drainage projects comes from the City's Storm Water Utility Fund.

Another major accomplishment for this year was **updating the City's Comprehensive Plan**. This document serves as a "roadmap" for the City's future growth and land-use plans; the first draft was written in 1969, and it was updated in 1977; since then, numerous revisions have been made.

In 2019, City Council appointed a committee to engage in a full-scale review of the document, and make recommendations. The committee relied on critical input from citizens, and, throughout the process, expressed a vision to "make Benbrook your hometown." The updated document is expected to be approved in 2020.

Other accomplishments:

- **Three parks** got new shade structures: South Benbrook, Timbercreek, and Twilight.
- **New swingsets** were installed at Rolling Hills, South Benbrook, and Timbercreek parks.
- **The Fire Department** purchased a new 2020 Spartan engine, and will take delivery by April 2020. The Department also purchased a new radio system (see Page 9).

- Seven ballfields at Dutch Branch Park received **new dugouts**, with each dugout roof a different color. The dugouts also have new benches, courtesy of the Benbrook Youth Baseball and Softball Association.

- Nets and striping were provided to accommodate **Pickleball games** at Dutch Branch Park.

## Economic Growth

The **Benbrook Economic Development Corporation** (BEDC) also enjoyed several achievements this year, starting with the opening of **Benbrook's first full-service restaurant/bar**, Hoffbrau Steak & Grill House. This project took several years, but hopefully, will entice other restaurateurs to our market.

Just down the road, a Braum's Ice Cream & Dairy Store is scheduled to open this year. This project was made possible after the BEDC purchased the property in 2018. BEDC also made improvements to land west of Cracker Barrel.

In May, BEDC partnered with Benbrook Plaza to fund improvements to the façade. BEDC also purchased the current Foot Works Performing Arts Center at the corner of Benbrook Boule-



**Left: At Dutch Branch Park, nets and striping were provided for Pickleball. Right; Western Hills High School is undergoing a major renovation, including receiving a 4,000-square-foot addition.**

vard/U.S. 377 and Westpark Drive. BEDC now owns all of the commercial tracts on this very desirable corner and is carefully considering its retail options.

To the relief of almost everyone, the Texas Department of Transportation’s work on **Benbrook Boulevard/U.S. 377** is largely complete. In 2020, the City, using BEDC funds, will add the final touches, completing irrigation lines, landscaping and signage, all of which will help make the road more attractive.

Through the **Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program**, BEDC offers area businesses free advertising, technical assistance, and a **Storefront Improvement grant**, while the BEDC/Chamber of Commerce annual Benbrook Business & Community Showcase welcomes hundreds of visitors.

Also in 2019, the board of directors updated the BEDC Strategic Plan, outlining projects, programs, and principles for continued economic growth.

## Schools

Benbrook is in the **Fort Worth Independent School District** (FWISD). Their highlights include:

- **Western Hills High School** will undergo major renovations, including an approximately

4,000 square-foot addition for their programs in the arts and in Career and Technical Education.

- **Benbrook Middle High School** is receiving a competition-grade gymnasium with bleacher seating and dressing areas.

- A new addition to the high school will house the Band Hall, orchestra, choir, STEM classes, and collaboration space.

Expected completion dates for these projects is 2021.

Using land provided by the City, the ISD also completed construction of a new **baseball/softball complex at Dutch Branch Park**. The complex includes an announcer booth, batting cages, spectator bleachers, changing rooms/restrooms, concession stand, and outdoor lighting. One of the park’s existing softball fields was also upgraded.

## On the Horizon

While 2019 was clearly a productive year, the 2020 to-do list includes these projects:

- The Whitestone Crest and Whitestone Heights subdivisions are expanding. Whitestone Crest will add 82 residential lots; the Whitestone Heights expansion should be completed in two phases, totaling 107 new residential lots. Construction of both developments is anticipated to

begin around mid-2020.

- Installing street lights along portions of Crosslands Road, and sidewalks along Crosslands and Bellaire Drive.

- The Parks and Recreation Board will be updating the park master plan. Citizens will be able to share their input through an online survey and open house.

And farther down the road, we hope to replace two aging fire trucks.

An ambitious list? Yes. But we are confident it is worth every bit of effort. It’s all part of our larger goal of serving our citizens, and keeping Benbrook the ideal place to live, work, play—and call home.



**“When** I opened my business here, people were friendly and encouraging, they welcomed me. Benbrook is a growing city, in an ideal location. I hope that my stay will be long and beneficial to the community.”

- Dorothy Martin  
Dorothy’s Inspired Sewing



From top: National Night Out, Trash Bash, photos with Mr. and Mrs. Claus, Heritage Fest, and City staff participating in the weekly reading program at Benbrook Elementary School.



## Benbrook's robust community spirit

So what exactly does it mean to have “community spirit?” Benbrook’s citizens may have different opinions. But one thing they would all agree on: We are people who like to play—and serve—together.

The City of Benbrook knows this, and throughout the year, we offer a variety of ways for people to show their community spirit. For example, each spring, you’ll find kids filling their baskets at the Police Officers Association **Easter Egg Hunt**, and then see many of those same kids admiring police cars and other public safety vehicles at the **Touch-A-Truck** fundraising event.

In the fall, police, fire and emergency service teams bring their equipment out again to mingle with residents and build partnerships at the **National Night Out** event. Fall also welcomes the **Heritage Fest “Cowboy Roundup,”** with hundreds of guests gathering to celebrate our Western heritage with music, food and games.

Our year goes out with a bang (literally) at the **Christmas Tree Lighting and Fireworks Show**. The Fire Department kicks things off the night before, offering **photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus**. After the show, residents enjoy the twinkling lights of **Winter Wonderland**.

We also show our spirit through community service and good stewardship. Each fall, adults and children come out to pick up litter and debris at the **Benbrook Trinity Trash Bash**, and participate in environmental events to dispose of hazardous and electronic waste.





# Community

brings us out ... and keeps us Home

The City also joins hundreds of residents to participate in the Benbrook **Relay for Life**, benefitting the American Cancer Society. The **Citizens On Patrol (COPs)** help keep our neighborhoods safe, and **homeowners' associations** help ensure they run smoothly. **Vital Link**, run in collaboration with the Fort Worth ISD, allows students to spend a week with City staff, learning about the "link" between school and work, while the **Benbrook Community Gardens** allows gardeners of all ages to grow their own vegetables and flowers.

Throughout the year, the **Senior Citizen Center** and the **Benbrook Community Center/YMCA** provide opportunities for recreation, education, and fellowship

To be sure, it makes for a busy year. But we know our citizens wouldn't want it any other way. Because for them, Benbrook isn't just a place on a map; it is Home. And *that* is the true definition of community spirit.

See more fun photos on our Facebook page. To learn more about our events and services, please visit our website or call 817-249-6087.



From top: The fireworks show, Christmas party at the Senior Citizen Center, Hazardous Waste collection event, and Mayor Jerry Dittrich (chef's hat) speaking at the annual appreciation dinner for members of the City's boards and commissions.

"I love how Benbrook still has a small-town feel right outside of the big city. It seems no matter where I go, I know someone, and I like that there's a real sense of community here."

- Shani Butler





# Face Time

The Police Department looks out for us by frequently looking in

## For the Record

|  | 2019       | 2018      |
|--|------------|-----------|
| Part 1 Crimes*   | 426        | 460       |
| Calls to Patrol & Criminal Investigation Section for service | 15,171     | 14,869    |
| Total Dispatches for Service                                 | 4,865      | 3,886     |
| Average Response Time  | 2.64 mins. | 2.87      |
| Arrests  | 1,296      | 1,229     |
| Citations Issued   | 8,503      | 7,048     |
| Stolen Property Value  | \$899,885  | \$580,818 |
| Hours of Training Completed                                  | 20,317     | 20,626    |
| Total Accidents Investigated                                 | 299        | 265       |
| Major Accidents with Injuries                                | 124        | 89        |

### Citizens on Patrol Activity

|                      |        |        |
|----------------------|--------|--------|
| Total Service Hours  | 1,515  | 1,996  |
| Service Miles Logged | 10,800 | 14,000 |
| Reports Filed        | 478    | 586    |

\*Part I Crimes include homicides, assault, sexual assault, robbery, auto theft, and arson.

In addition to a great quality of life, Benbrook continues to enjoy one of the lowest crime rates in Tarrant County.

For example, from 2018 to 2019, the number of “Part I Crimes” (the most serious types) **dropped about 8 percent.**

This reflects both the quality of the community and the quality of the police force. Not surprisingly, the nationally recognized department focuses on finding top-notch officer candidates. These efforts continued through the year and into 2020.

The Citizens on Patrol (COPs) remained a key asset, logging hundreds of service hours and **filing nearly 500 reports.**

It all adds up to make Benbrook a great place to live, work, and play—safely.



“We have lived in Benbrook since 1970. The City services are fantastic, the Fire Department is great and you always know the Police are out on the road. Benbrook is just a great place to live.”

- Steve Adams

# PULLING Together

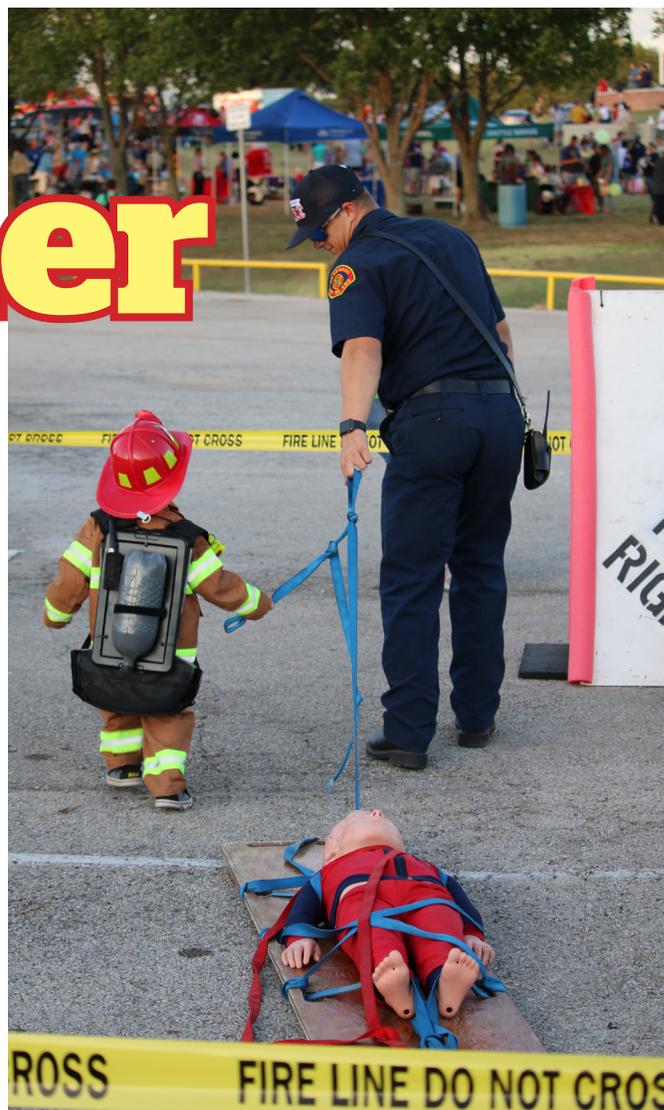
Benbrook firefighters continue to excel, proving again that no job is too big for them. Or too small.

**F**irefighting is only one part of the job. The Benbrook Fire Department also performs rescue operations, controls hazardous spills, conducts fire inspections, and enforces fire codes. The department also manages Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and provides classes on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and other life-saving techniques.

All this work is done by 31 full-time staff, one part-time employee and three volunteers. All of the full-time firefighters are EMS-certified and staff the ambulances as well. In 2019, the department:

- Responded to **3,528 total calls** for service, 31 fewer than the previous year.
- The Fire Division responded to **1,065** calls, 192 less than 2018.
- The EMS Division responded to **2,753** calls for service and transported **1,913** patients to area hospitals. 2018 statistics: 2,573 calls, 1,788 patients transported.
- Total fire loss was \$2,202,140; the previous year, the loss was \$5,464,697.
- Fire and EMS personnel jointly responded to **230** calls for service, 38 fewer than 2018.
- Inspected **158** businesses.
- Provided approximately **477** hours of fire prevention education.
- Completed **1,953** hours of training.

The department made several significant purchases in 2019, including a new **800-megahertz radio system**. This system is a significant upgrade, allowing our crews to directly coordinate their efforts with neighboring firefighters. Notably, the



The National Night Out event was held in October.

department received a grant from Tarrant County 911, **saving the City over \$300,000 on the purchase.**

The department also purchased four new sets of firefighting bunker gear, a new fire hose, new swift water rescue equipment, structure firefighting gloves and hoods, wildland firefighting gloves, and two Lucas CPR compression systems for the ambulances.

Average response times to calls for service within Benbrook city limits increased last year, from 5.55 minutes to 5.95. However, the average response time for calls for service within unincorporated Tarrant County decreased from 10.7 minutes to 9.3.

The Fire Department performs many duties. But all of it is done in support of their main goal: Protecting lives and property in Benbrook from fire and other emergencies.



## 2018-19 was another year of fiscal responsibility—including a tax cut for 2020

- The property tax rate for FY 2019 **remained the same** at 64.00 cents per \$100 valuation.
  - For each dollar, 3.25 cents was allocated toward the payment of debt for streets, parks, and drainage, and 60.75 cents financed general operations.
  - General Fund and Debt Service Fund unaudited expenditures for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019 totaled \$22,583,668.
  - **Police Department** expenditures represented 31.22% of total expenses, and **Fire Department** expenditures were 17.03%.
  - Total unaudited revenues for the 2018-2019 fiscal year were \$22,650,378.
  - General Fund revenue was 97.02% of the budget projection.
  - **Property taxes** accounted for 63.06% of total revenue collected.
  - Moody's once again gave Benbrook a strong credit rating of **Aa3**, while Standard and Poor's again rated the City as **AA+**.
  - The high ratings are the result of the City's ample reserves, proven financial controls, and professional staff, and reflect the private sector's positive view of Benbrook's **solid financial condition and optimistic future prospects**.
  - The City's annual financial report earned a **Certificate of Achievement** for Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). This is the **35th consecutive year** Benbrook has received this recognition.
  - The GFOA again presented Benbrook with the **Distinguished Budget Presentation Award** for excellence in municipal budgeting.
  - In September 2019, City Council adopted the budget for the 2019-2020 fiscal year based on **lowering the property tax rate** from 64.000 cents to 62.777 cents.
- A 2018-2019 financial summary follows.

2018-2019  
**Financial Summary**

| REVENUE Source               | Amount              | % of Total     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Ad Valorem Taxes             | \$14,282,365        | 63.06%         |
| Sales and Other Taxes        | 2,704,500           | 11.93%         |
| Franchise Taxes              | 1,475,000           | 6.51%          |
| Transfers                    | 1,189,888           | 5.25%          |
| Charges for Current Services | 929,850             | 4.11%          |
| Fines and Forfeitures        | 788,000             | 3.48%          |
| Licenses and Permits         | 499,775             | 2.21%          |
| Revenue from Other Agencies  | 480,000             | 2.12%          |
| Use of Money and Property    | 273,000             | 1.21%          |
| Other Revenue                | 28,000              | 0.12%          |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>\$22,650,378</b> | <b>100.00%</b> |

| EXPENDITURE Source           | Amount              | % of Total     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Police                       | \$7,051,139         | 31.22%         |
| Fire and EMS                 | 3,843,782           | 17.03%         |
| General Government           | 2,338,360           | 10.36%         |
| Public Works                 | 2,172,664           | 9.62%          |
| Debt Service                 | 1,561,424           | 6.91%          |
| Transfer and Use of Reserves | 1,150,000           | 5.09%          |
| Staff Services               | 1,116,767           | 4.95%          |
| Public Services              | 1,098,596           | 4.86%          |
| Parks and Recreation         | 1,044,265           | 4.62%          |
| Community Development        | 854,443             | 3.78%          |
| Municipal Court              | 261,052             | 1.16%          |
| Code Compliance              | 91,176              | 0.40%          |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>\$22,583,668</b> | <b>100.00%</b> |

**Helpful Numbers**

Police Emergency Dispatch:  
817-249-1610

Police Administration:  
817-249-2752

Fire Department: 817-249-1727

Animal Rescue: 817-249-1610

Atmos Energy: 888-286-6700

Benbrook Economic Development  
Corporation: 817-249-6990

Benbrook Water Authority:  
817-249-1250

Code Compliance: 817-249-6078

Municipal Court: 817-249-6083

ONCOR Electric: 888-313-4747

Republic Services: 817-953-7214

Senior Citizen Center:  
817-249-6300

Transportation for the Elderly  
and Disabled: 817-336-8714

**City Hall: 817-249-3000**

- City Manager
- City Secretary
- Community Development
- Public Services
- Budget and Finance
- Economic Development
- Visitors' Center

**2020 City Council**

- Jerry Dittrich, Mayor
- Renee Franklin, Place 2
- Larry Marshall, Place 3
- Dustin Phillips, Place 4
- Jim Wilson, Place 5
- Laura Mackey, Place 6
- Jason Ward, Place 7



**“If** I had to describe Benbrook in just one word, it would be ‘opportunity.’ When I started my practice, the only thing north of me was the old Waffle House, and across the highway was Stum’s Bait & Tackle. I’ve been in this same building for 33 years, and I think there’s still great opportunity here.”

- Eddie Rettstatt, D.C.



**City of Benbrook**

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**What's the Scoop? Here's the City of Benbrook 2019 Annual Report.**

*Two young volunteers at our Trash Bash. Details on this event and much more inside!*

**Key Dates for 2020!**

- Benbrook Business & Community Showcase: 3-7 pm Thursday, March 5
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event: 9-11 Saturday, March 14
- Touch-A-Truck: 6-8 pm Monday, March 23
- E-Waste Disposal and Document Shred Event: 8 am-Noon, Saturday, April 18
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event: 9-11 Saturday, Aug. 22
- Trash Bash: 8:30-11:30 am Saturday, Sept. 19
- Heritage Fest "Cowboy Roundup:" Saturday, Oct. 17
- Christmas Tree Lighting and Fireworks Show: Saturday, Dec. 5

**Stay connected! Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Next Door. Subscribe to news flashes and other announcements on the News Flash page of our website, [benbrook-tx.gov](http://benbrook-tx.gov).**

