



ARANSAS PASS CITY NEWS

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ARANSAS PASS' POST HARVEY FINANCIAL RANKING IS NOW "STABLE"

Standard and Poors (S&P), the nation's leading credit rating agency, has revised the Aransas Pass financial outlook to "stable" and the City continues to maintain its credit rating with the possibility of a stronger rating.

Immediately following Category 4 Hurricane Harvey, the City of Aransas Pass was reviewed by S&P. There was concern over the impact Harvey had on the City's financial stability. Following the 2017 review, the City was able to maintain its AA- rating, but it was put on a negative watch for two years. 66% of the cities that are placed on the negative watch, have a credit rating downgrade. Aransas Pass will not be downgraded. At the time of the review, it was pointed out by the credit rating agency that Aransas Pass had a long pre-Hurricane history of weak budgets, so they were concerned about the City's ability to recover financially from the storm.

Since the 2017 review, Aransas Pass has approved several first-time financial policies as well as revising existing financial and budgetary procedures. Importantly, the City has worked to build its General Fund Balance. A General Fund Balance, which represents the General Fund's total assets minus its liabilities, is a good indicator of the City's overall financial health. Prior to and immediately after the hurricane, the General Fund Balance was in the low single digits. A minimum level generally is 25%. With the involvement of the City Council and department heads, that General Fund Balance has risen from the low single digits to approximately 15%. This is a financial measurement that will take some time to improve, but significant progress can now be seen.

As a result of the City's effort to strengthen its financial standing, in a August 21, 2019 letter, S&P revised the Aransas Pass fiscal outlook by removing the City from the negative watch and rating it as stable. This decision follows the S&P 2019 follow-up review. Further, the City is again able to maintain its current AA- credit rating.

"This is excellent news for Aransas Pass" said City Manager Gary Edwards. "It shows that the hard work of the City Council, Department Heads and the Finance Director during the past two years to improve the budget is paying off. But there still is more work to do. We will work to reach the 25% and higher General Fund Balance level."

S&P informed City officials that if the local economy were to continue growing and developing, S&P would consider raising the current rating. At the same time it emphasized that financial and budgetary stewardship must continue in order to remain stable.



WORK ON THE CITY'S ELEVATED WATER TOWER IS UNDERWAY

During the week of August 19th, Landmark Structures began prepping the area where the half-million gallon elevated water tank foundation will be placed (see photo below). On August 23rd of that week, concrete was poured for the foundation (see above photo). The Aransas Pass water tower was toppled by Hurricane Harvey in August of 2017. 90% of the replacement costs are being paid by **FEMA**. The City's match is 10%, which is being paid by the **Rebuild Texas Fund**.





Aquatic Center Season coming to a close

The Aransas Pass Aquatic Center lifeguards and managers received over 28,000 guests this summer. The Aquatics Center will be open Labor Day Weekend. September 7th will be the last day for the water park. It will be closed for general swimming after that date. After the 7th, on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, the Aqua aerobics and Lap Swim will take place from 8 am until 11am on those days through September. Children may swim at these times in the competition and warm-up pools if accompanied by an adult. Private lessons and lifeguard training are available through September.

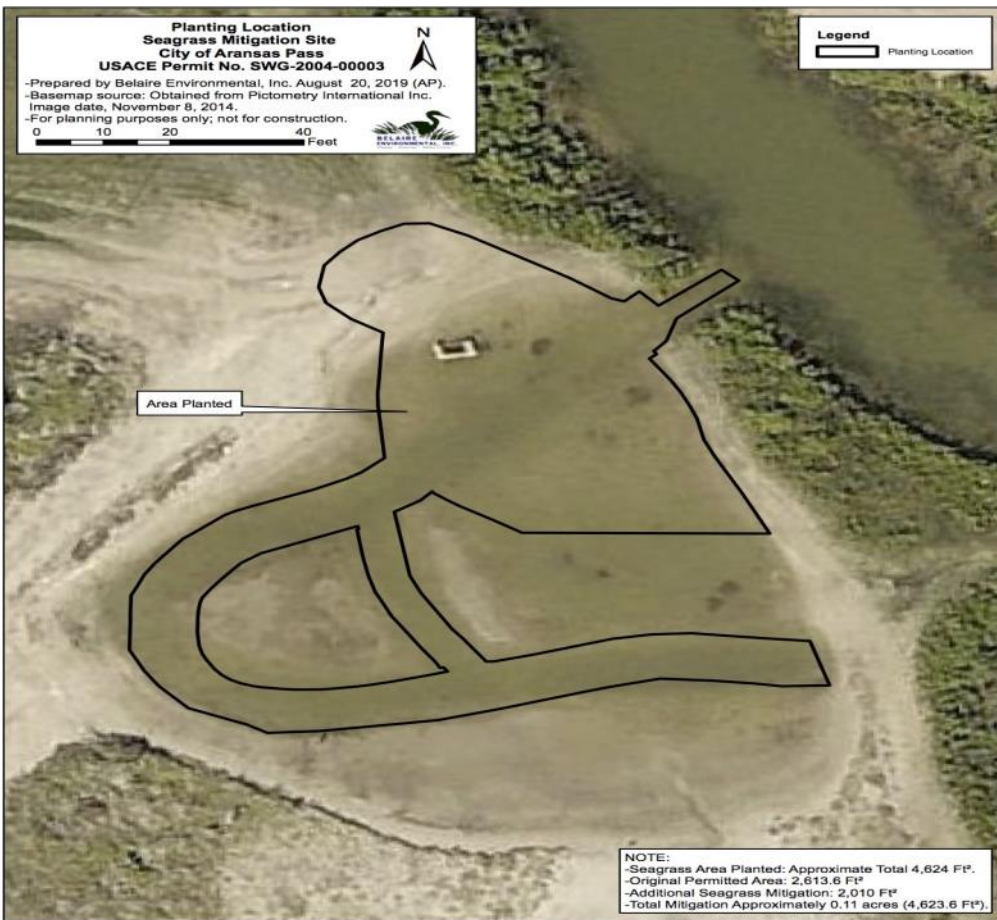


Four Park Benches (see above pic) have been installed along the Harbor Point Park bulkhead. They were provided by the Lion's club. This post-hurricane work is part of the small park that was planned for the current budget. A local garden club will be building garden space in this general area.



Construction Estimated To Begin In March On Conn Brown Roads

During an August 26th meeting between City officials and Dannenbaum Engineering of San Antonio (see above pic), an estimated timeline was given for improvements to Conn Brown Harbor. The improvements include rebuilt roads and an adjacent bike/walking path throughout the harbor. When completed, the biking/walking trail will be the longest dedicated facility in the immediate region. The engineering/design plans will be 90% complete this December and 100% complete by January 10, 2020. Bids are tentatively scheduled to be opened in February 2020 and construction to begin in March, 2020. The project should take 9 to 10 months to complete depending on weather. As currently designed, the project will have lighting along the road and the bike/walking trail. Also at the entrance to Conn Brown, where Allen, Bigelow and Huff streets meet, there will be a large Roundabout to more effectively handle the heavy traffic at that location. Funding for this project comes from a \$5 million grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) under the United States Department of Commerce.



The Corps Of Engineers Mandated Seagrass Mitigation Now Is Complete

Approximately 5 years ago, when work on the Conn Brown Harbor boat ramps and Pier were undertaken by commercial contractors, it was discovered by the United States Corps of Engineers that some seagrass had been inappropriately disturbed. Consequently, by law, the disturbed seagrass had to be mitigated (replaced). In this case, the new seagrass plants are located within walking distance of the City's Aquatic Center. Working with Belaire Environmental of Rockport, Tx, one of the nation's leading seagrass specialists, and The Corps of Engineers; the City of Aransas Pass has spent the past several years, following a complex and time-consuming seagrass replacement process. The City completed the mitigation site construction on June 28th of this year. The actual planting at the construction site was completed on August 19th, also this year (see above pic). In an August 20, 2019 letter to the Corps of Engineers, Belaire Environmental states that the City has completed the seagrass mitigation work and is in compliance with the Corps of Engineer's requirements. The only remaining work on this project is setting up a schedule to monitor the plantings until they take root.

Contact Us

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