

# **STATE OF THE CITY AND GOALS FOR 2026**

## **CITY OF STAFFORD, TEXAS**

JANUARY 28, 2026

### **BY MAYOR KEN MATHEW**

My fellow Staffordians, about two and half years ago you trusted me to be your Mayor, making history in Stafford. I am deeply honored to be your Mayor. I can assure you that I am not a typical politician. I strongly believe that all elected positions are to make the community better, not for self-serving.

I welcome all those who are here in person, especially, Hon Mayor Pro-Tem, Mr William Bostic, Hon Council members – Ms. Virginia Rosas, Ms. Alice Chen, Mr. Xavier Herrera, Mr. Tim Wood and Mr. Wen Guerra.

Let me also welcome our Legal Counsel, Mr. Jeffrey Lubritz of Olson & & Olson, Mr. Bob Jones of Jones Engineering and Mr. Bryan Blaum of FMssquared.

The most valuable assets of the City are its employees. These departments are managed by the Police Chief, Richard Ramirez; the Fire Chief, Jose Magana; the City Secretary, Ms. Roxanne Benitez; CFO Ms. Alka Shah; Public Works Director: Mr. Chris Riggs; HR Director, Ms. Shanell Garcia; IT Director, Mr. Ryan Young; Multimedia Director, Mr Robert Frith; Court: Hon. Judge Debra Sinclair; Court Director, Ms. Nicole Nguyen; Civic Center & Stafford Center: Ms. Susan Ricks and the Stafford Center contractor Mr. Bryan Blaum. All our City employees are dedicated, efficient, productive and cost conscious.

Let us now glance through the different departments:

**Police Department:** The Police Department under Chief Richard Ramirez had a productive year.

- . Received appreciation from residents and businesses for enhanced police visibility.
- . Replaced old patrol vehicles with new ones. These new vehicles provide a significantly safer platform for our officers and are equipped with updated technology to better support patrol operations.
- . The Criminal Investigation Division continues to achieve strong results. The division cleared a 22 year old murder case by executing an arrest warrant for Capital Murder.

**Fire Department:** This Dept is headed by the Chief, Jose Magana.

- . They had 4253 incident responses
- 58% EMS related & 42% Fire related
- . Average turnout time (dispatch-enroute) 1:23
- . Average lights-and-siren dispatch - arrival 6:39
- . Overlapping calls - 1491 (35%)
- . Mutual aid : 127 given / 41 received
- . Incidents per day average 13.44
- . Mutual aid given 127 and received 41
- . Property value/loss snapshot (as reported) :  
  \$460,000 pre-incident value / \$225,000 losses

**Information Technology (IT):** This Dept is headed by Mr Ryan Young. The department implemented:

- Core switching replacement
- Access layer switching replacement
- New network monitoring system
- An end-point monitoring and management system

IT has an ambitious implementation schedule which includes the following projects:

- The replacement of the remainder of the City's access layer switching
- Replacement of the City's virtual server hosts
- Implementation of new technology for the City's network storage needs
- Replacement of the two existing card access system with one unified that integrates with panic buttons and cameras
- Implementation of a satellite based emergency Internet connection system
- Replacement of the existing phone system servers with new hardware
- Replacement of many aging police MDT systems
- Testing to find any existing network weaknesses that have not already been identified

**Finance Department:** The Finance Department is headed by Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Alka Shah and is responsible for Budget Preparation, Budget Management, Payroll, Procurement, Grant Management, Accounts Payable and Receivable, Investments, and overseeing the Financial Audit.

The City has received an 'Unmodified' or 'Clean' audit opinion, which is the highest level of opinion we can achieve. This reflects not only our commitment to transparency but also our strong,

conservative financial management practices.

As a result of our diligent efforts, the City has successfully maintained its A2 bond rating. This is a testament to the hard work everyone has put in and the effective guidance provided by our elected officials.

Additionally, I want to highlight the outstanding performance under the leadership of our Chief Financial Officer, Alka Shah, and her team. Thanks to their strategic initiatives, the City earned an impressive \$2.1 million in additional investment income over the past year.

As per the unaudited Financial data as of 9/30/25, provided by our CFO, we had a total revenue of \$35.1 million and a total expense of \$32.9 million, leaving a surplus of \$2.2 million. Our Cash & Investment, both Restricted and Unrestricted, equal to \$47.48 million.

Furthermore, In FY25, the City expended over \$1.8 million funded through various grant sources. We extend our sincere appreciation to Ms. Merchant for her dedicated efforts in securing grants to support the City.

These accomplishments reflect our collective commitment to financial responsibility. Thank you all for your continued hard work and dedication.

**Administration Dept:** This department is managed by the City Secretary Ms Roxanne Benitez with the help of Assistant Secretary Ms Renote Cross and the Administrative Services Coordinator Ms Richelle Worthington.

This Dept maintains all City Ordinances, Resolutions, Historical Records as well as processes public information requests. They also put together agendas and minutes for all City Council, Stafford Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) and Council Committee meetings.

In addition, the Administration Dept is responsible for all City

Elections. Ms Benitez serves as the Election Official. The City Secretary and her staff have done an excellent job of continuing to streamline the processes.

As a result of their increased productivity they are able to reduce the expenses. They continue to be successful in effectively communicating with the public and citizens of Stafford.

**Human Resources:** The HR Dept is headed by Ms. Shanell Garcia and is responsible for a variety of functions which include Employee Relations, Compensation & Benefits, Employee Training & Safety, Recruiting and Performance Management.

HR is committed to fostering employee engagement and continually seeks creative and innovative ways to connect with staff. In 2025, the employee engagement team successfully organized the City's first-ever Public Service Recognition Week and conducted several educational and training events, such as Estate Planning workshops and TML Manager/Supervisor Training.

Currently, we have a total of 254 employees. The employees are our real asset of the city. They go above and beyond to make things happen.

**Stafford Civic Center:** The Civic Center is managed by Ms Susan Ricks. The 38 year old building can accommodate 900 guests. Ms Ricks also manages the Swimming Pool, which offers pool parties and swim lessons during the summer.

**Stafford Centre:** The Stafford Centre is entering its 21st year of operation. Ms. Susan Ricks is also managing the Stafford Centre along with the contractor, Mr. Bryan Blaum of FMsquared. Several national and international artists perform at this center. In 2024, the City of Safford hosted our inaugural Juneteenth Celebration and continuing to do every year.

**Stafford Economic Development Corporation (SEDC):** The SEDC is headed by the President, Mr. Randy Krahn. Other members of SEDC are the Vice President, Mr. Damon Leonetti; The Treasurer, Ms. Gwen Goodwin; The Secretary, Mayor Protem William K Bostic; Mayor Ken Mathew; Councilwoman Ms. Alice Chen; Previous Council member Mr. A J Honoree.

**Planning & Zoning Commission:** Dr Mathew Vairamon is the Chairperson. Other members are: Mr Clint Mendonca, Vice Chairman; Mr Greg Holesapple, Secretary; The Commissioners are - Mr Aldrin George, Mr Kenneth Grant, Ms Sadie Williams, Ms Irene Lozano. This body is the one recommending to grant permits based on the zoning regulations.

**Multimedia Communications:** The Multimedia Dept, under the leadership of Director Mr Robert Frith, has continued its strong growth, communicating important information about safety and security. The City's website is constantly updated, keeping the public informed, along with consistent posting of vital information on the website, social media and City's municipal TV channel SMETV and have reinstated the City's Emergency Radio Station, and can now broadcast live from City Hall's Emergency Operations Center in times of crisis. They tirelessly update and maintain the City's Video, audio and transmission equipment and have done so with no impact to the budget. Director Frith and Houston Community College representatives renegotiated and restructured the interlocal agreement the City had with HCC for decades, which resulted in significant savings for the City annually. The Multimedia Dept. has also moved Master Control from HCC to the City Hall, offering more accessibility to manage our SMETV signal in cases of failure and maintenance.

**Public Works:** This Dept is led by Mr Chris Riggs. Their emphasis is to provide excellent and effective services to the residents and businesses. He along with Mr Scott McElrath, Mr Ian Sargent,

Ms Laura Morales, and Ms Silvia Boliver are responsible for helping Stafford carry on its Planning and Development Mission. The Department is comprised of Permits, Inspections, Planning, Zoning and Economic Development services.

The following are the highlights:

- . Issued permits and collected \$1.7 million in fees.
- . Commercial & Residential Projects include:

Target, 5 Guys Burgers, Portillos, Black Rock Coffee, Hop Doddy, Cava, Sugar Grove Business Park, Stafford Center Business Park, Failla Landing @ Murphy, Alliance Industrial @ Ellis, Global Supply @ Stafford Center Dr.

180 Homes constructed in Parkhill Villas Subdivision, Retreat at Stafford, Enclave at Stafford Oaks.

Phase 4 Davy Apartments @ Grid, Oak Loft Apartments, Leno at the Grid.

- . Engineering Projects:
  - Pike Road extension, \$1.033 million street repairs were completed.
  - Code Compliance Team is led by Mr. Scott McElrath and made up of Animal Control, Consumer Health, Residential Rental Inspections and Code & Zoning Enforcement. Highlights for the Code Compliance Dept. include: Partnered with Houston Humane Society to maintain a 99% live rate with recovered cats and dogs, Permitted 240 Food Establishments, Permitted 300 Residential Long-Term Rentals.

### **Municipal Court Department:**

Judge Debra Sinclair presides over the Court and Ms. Nicole Nguyen along with her staff facilitates the daily operations. The Municipal Court is a legal forum for a person who is accused of violating the Texas Motor Vehicle laws, class C misdemeanors

under the Texas Penal code and City Ordinances. The Court Department operates on a full schedule court date, collects fines on judgments, issues warrant ordered by the judge and handles proper disposition of each case filed in the court.

The Court Department mission is to ensure citizens have an opportunity to resolve the court cases in a timely manner and the court staff is always available to answer questions during court hours, which are Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm and evening dockets are on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 5:00 pm.

### **SMSD:**

As we all know the school is a component entity of the City. The theme "We are One" is very appropriate. The gem of the school is STEM Magnet Academy where there is a waiting list to get admitted. The Superintendent of SMSD is Dr Robert Bostic. Under his leadership and guidance, the school has been doing better and better.

## **2026 Goals**

- Maintain Zero Property Tax:**

Since 1995, for over 30 years, the City has done away with Property Tax. Looking at the Fund Balance, there is no urgency for reimposing the Property Tax.

If we did not have property tax in 2021 what is the justification for imposing property tax now?

- Infrastructure:**

Maintain the streets and sidewalks in a better condition and improve the drainage system to reduce flooding and standing water.

- **Attract Sales Tax generating businesses:** like retail businesses. Sales Tax is the lifeline of our City.
- **Support New subdivisions** to attract young families. That will be beneficial for the school and the City. Their children mostly will choose to go to SMSD and mostly they will shop locally which will bring more Sales Tax to the City.
- **Revitalize the Island Area.** The island area is the Capital of the City of Stafford. Looking clean and beautiful will increase the image of our City.
- **Eliminate Wasteful Spending.** There are areas where we can find wasteful spending in governmental bureaucracy.
- **Diversity:** Our City can take pride in having all the major races proportionally balanced. All major races are around 25%. It is better to have that balance. We are very proud to be in Stafford

## CONCLUSION

Let us all stand together as united for the purpose of building a still better future for our beloved City. It is the people who have given us that responsibility. We should not disappoint them. As we have seen from the numbers that I have provided, our City is not broke. Our unique City is well and vibrant.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all 254 employees. They are the ones doing the work, making the City better. I appreciate their dedication, their hard work, their efficiency.

Let me thank all the people in Stafford, all Staffordians, for giving the entire City Council the opportunity to serve you all.

**LET US STAND UNITED, LET US STAND TOGETHER.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Mathew".

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**Ken Mathew, Mayor**  
**City of Stafford**