



### YOUR FEEDBACK MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Jeff Downes, Vestavia Hills City Manager

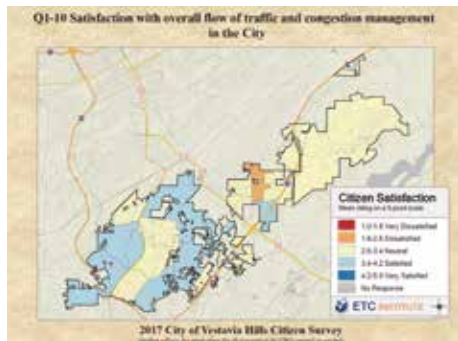
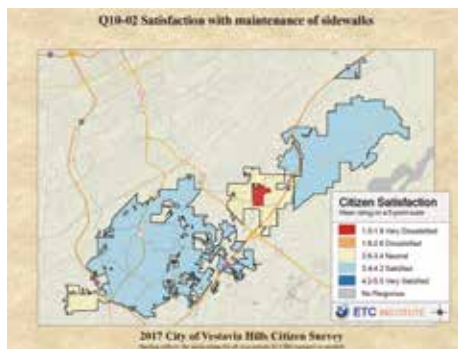
In 2017, the City of Vestavia Hills conducted its biennial citizen survey and some great information came to the City as a part of the feedback. One of the most strongly felt ideas was that improvements were needed along Crosshaven Drive in Cahaba Heights.

These images illustrate responses to two questions regarding sidewalks and traffic congestion. Areas shaded red or orange represent strong levels of dissatisfaction.

Obviously, the improvement of Crosshaven Drive was a priority of our residents. As I write in 2021, a nearly \$6 million project to improve Crosshaven Drive is well underway with completion slated for later this year. Why do I bring this project to your attention? I want to emphasize a couple of strong held philosophies in Vestavia Hills. First, strategic planning has value and produces results. Secondly, part of the strength of local government is in taking a community value proposition from an idea to reality in a reasonable time frame.

In my seven plus years as City Manager, I have been encouraged by the successful collaboration of our elected officials. In our form of government, the elected officials determine the policy, and the City staff executes their will. While easily expressed, my governmental experience has been that oftentimes consensus cannot be reached by the elected body. This has resulted in limited resources being diluted with lesser

accomplishments. Not in Vestavia Hills. The elected leadership have routinely engaged in strategic planning to determine collective priorities and set a clear roadmap for their City staff. As the proud leader of that staff, it is reassuring to have such clarity.



The strategic planning process begins with collecting citizen input, evaluating that input, determining priorities and applying resources to improve the prioritized issue. The 2017 City Council heard the concerns about Crosshaven Drive and acted on those concerns. Fortunately, Crosshaven is just one example – there have been many other issues that have been resolved as a result of this process. As the current

City Council begins its 2021 strategic planning, I hope all of our residents understand that this is a productive effort. When asked for your input, please take a moment to give it. Your input serves as the basis for actions. Not everyone's ideas become a reality, but all input is prioritized and evaluated and could, very well, become a reality. Just ask the respondents to the 2017 survey.

I have always said that local government is the government closest to the people and can be seen for all its glory or failures more readily than any other form of government. This ability to address concerns expressed in the grocery store or ballpark make for

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The events and dates provided are subject to change. Please refer to the calendar on the City of Vestavia Hills website at <https://vhal.org/calendar> for the most up-to-date information.

#### February 2021

- 4** **Annexation Committee,** Council Chamber, 4 p.m.
- 4** **Design Review Board,** Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 8** **City Council Meeting,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 9** **Chamber Luncheon,** Vestavia Country Club, 11:30 a.m.
- 11** **Planning & Zoning Commission,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 11-12** **Council Work Session: 2021 Strategic Planning,** Council Chamber, 8 a.m.
- 15** **Council Work Session,** Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 18** **Board of Zoning Adjustment,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 22** **City Council Meeting,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.



## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Ashley Curry, Vestavia Hills Mayor

We should all be settled in to 2021 by now. Hopefully you are still pursuing the New Year's resolutions that you made.

According to history.com, the ancient Babylonians are said to have been the first people to make New Year's resolutions, some 4,000 years ago. They were also the first to hold recorded celebrations in honor of the new year – though for them the year began in mid-March, when the crops were planted, instead of January.

More currently, as many as 45 percent of Americans say they usually make New Year's resolutions, while only 8 percent are successful in achieving their goals. But that dismal record probably won't stop people from making resolutions anytime soon – after all, we've had about 4,000 years of practice.

Speaking of resolutions, our city has some resolutions for the New Year and we are well on the way of achieving those goals. Let's examine some projects "resolved" to be completed this year.

**Wald Park:** We have already completed the aquatic complex and have almost completed the ball fields. The grand lawn, play areas, multiple pavilions and amphitheater should be completed this spring. Phase three, which encompasses the tennis complex, green spaces and dog park, should be completed this year.

**The Community Building:** Building renovations are well underway. As I toured the facility just before Christmas, I could see the layout of the building taking shape. The Community Building should be near completion by late fall.

**Cahaba Heights Park:** The ball fields, additional parking and improvements for accessibility have been completed. Construction of the "new" New Merkel House is ongoing and should be complete within the next few months.

*Renderings of all of the Community Spaces Plan projects are available at [http://bit.ly/VH\\_CSP](http://bit.ly/VH_CSP).*

**Pedestrian Bridge:** The long-awaited pedestrian bridge that will provide access from Wald Park to the Library in the Forest is close to becoming reality. It is on schedule to be bid during the first quarter of this year. Though it will probably not be completed by year end, it is more promising and worth mentioning after a decade of planning in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Transportation.

**Road Improvements:** This year should see the completion of the widening of Crosshaven Drive and the initiation of the Massey Road improvements.

Finally, during February, we (the Council and City Manager) will hold our strategic planning meetings to set the priorities for the City for the coming year and beyond.

## YOUR FEEDBACK ...

– Continued from page 1

quick feedback and more timely reactions than other governmental responses at other levels. When a local governmental leader faces concerns more acutely, the solutions to those concerns can be extraordinarily productive. At one time, our City leadership were constantly being reminded of the functionally obsolete City swimming pool. We now have a brand-new, state-of-the-art pool. Drivers complained about bumpy roads. We now have a large and sustainable source of funding to keep Vestavia Hills roads paved. Concerns existed over the quality and quantity of ballfields. We now have fields accessible from every part of our city. A highly functioning local government certainly hears you, loud and clear.

We should be proud of the accomplishments that were seen in 2020 and will be seen in 2021. As we embark on the next chapter of improvements, please share your thoughts in a productive and positive manner. Our City government is one that embraces proper strategic planning and will produce results. Let's keep our positive momentum!

### Spring will be here before we know it! A few things to consider when doing your spring cleaning, both indoors and out:

- There is NOT a designated bulk trash pickup day. A request for pickup of large piles of yard debris/bulk trash should be requested via the Action Center or by calling 205.978.0150.
- Landscaping and/or construction debris is to be removed by the contractor performing the service.
- Small amounts of debris, leaves, pine straw, small limbs, etc. should be bagged for collection. Small amounts may be placed in your cart for collection or submit an Action Center pickup request if you have 15 or more bags of debris.
- Materials should be placed no more than 3' from the curb and in an area with no overhead obstructions.
- There are typically two Hazardous Waste Collection Days offered annually in the City of Vestavia Hills. Household amounts of paint, bulbs (including CFLs, fluorescent bulbs and other bulbs that contain mercury) and batteries (lithium and "button" batteries) are accepted. (Some commercial businesses accept these items year-round.)
- Solid medications (no liquids) may be dropped off at the Vestavia Hills Police department at City Hall and the substation located in Cahaba Heights.



**For more information, including a list of what is and is not accepted for collection, visit <http://bit.ly/VH-waste-collection>.**



## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Todd Freeman, Ed.D., Vestavia Hills City Schools Superintendent

Google defines the word *design* as “a plan ... produced to show the look and function or workings ... before it is built or made.” Successful

organizations are always designing for better performance, challenging their processes for doing things, and innovating no matter the present circumstances. At its core, designing is about dreaming of the possibilities for making something better. The opposite – maintaining the status quo – is an infamous phrase most aptly associated with stagnant organizations.

Designing the future in Vestavia Hills City Schools is a continuous process that has been taking place since our inception in April 1970. Throughout its 50-year history, VHCS has been a beacon of excellence because of the desire of its team members to challenge and innovate.

Two years ago, we began a strategic planning process that led to designing goals that focused on academic success through profound learning; confronting the challenges our students face; and strengthening our system’s ability to support students and staff. We also developed statements that describe the picture of success that will be visible if each goal is realized. You can see those by visiting our website at [www.vestavia.k12.al.us/strategicplan](http://www.vestavia.k12.al.us/strategicplan).

Since the plan was completed in 2018, we have been dreaming of the next 50 years in our schools. In 2020, design teams made up of more than 300 parents, community leaders, and educators focused on ideas for providing exceptional learning experiences in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) for grades K-12; optimal mental health supports for every student; capital improvements for academics, arts and athletics; and the safest and most secure learning environments for students and staff. This year, additional design teams will focus on athletics and arts programs.

*Harvard Business Review* has written a number of articles over the years that emphasize the importance of design thinking for progressive and high-performing organizations. They have found that dreams about the future are best formed without limits in mind. This limitless mindset focuses us on how to provide the best education for our students without allowing obstacles to stand in our way. The ideas from the design teams are challenging and innovative. They are also aspirational and achievable when there is a commitment of the community to take our school system to the pinnacle of success.

2021 is certain to be a year of optimism and expectation as we continue our mission to provide every student the opportunity to learn without limits. I look forward to sharing more about this work with you throughout the year.



## ARBOR WEEK IN ALABAMA

February 21-27, 2021

Arbor Day is an annual observance that celebrates the role of trees in our lives and promotes tree planting and care. The City of Vestavia Hills has a longstanding record of caring for trees in our landscape. As such, we encourage you to plant a tree during Alabama’s Arbor Week, February 21-27, 2021.

**The best time to plant is during the winter, while trees are dormant.** Call 811 to check for utilities before planting, and please do not plant in rights-of-way or easements without first consulting the City. Residents are encouraged to consider both good planting technique and appropriate selection of tree type for the site when planting. For more information, visit [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org).

Ask a child what he dreams of doing in the future. His answer brings everything into focus for us.

WE DO WHAT WE DO  
BECAUSE CHILDREN HAVE DREAMS.



Children's  
of Alabama®

DOWNTOWN RUSSELL CAMPUS  
1600 7TH AVENUE SOUTH  
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35233  
(205) 638-9100

VESTAVIA PEDIATRICS  
1936 OLD ORCHARD ROAD  
VESTAVIA HILLS, AL 35216  
(205) 978-3200



# UPCOMING events

## FEBRUARY 2021

**Children** (Birth-Gr. 1) | **Tweens** (Gr. 2-5) | **Teens** (Gr. 6-12)

**Adults** (Ages 18+) | **Tech** (Ages 18+) | **Makerspace** (All ages, unless noted)

ALL PROGRAMS &  
EVENTS ARE  
ONLINE ONLY.

Additional information, including  
online location and registration  
requirements, is available at  
[www.vestavialibrary.org/  
event-calendar](http://www.vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar).

1 **Dial-A-Story Secret Message**, Anytime, 205.584.0600

2 **12 Bel<sup>o</sup>w**, 2pm, YouTube

**Smash Bits!**, 4pm, YouTube

**Eighth of March Book Group: *A Woman is No Man***,  
6pm, Zoom

**Virtual Zumba with Trudy**, 6pm, YouTube



3 **OLLI Presents: How About a Cuppa?**, 12pm, Zoom

**Writing Group**, 4pm, Zoom



4 **Tic-TECH-Toe: Valentech**, 4pm, YouTube

**Chess Club**, 4pm, Zoom

**Read & Feed Book Group: *Valentine***, 6pm, Zoom

5 **What's It?**, 2pm, YouTube

**Open Gaming Goes Online**, 4pm, Discord

9 **Storytime Stars**, 10:30am, YouTube

**Librarians Try to Escape!**, 4pm, YouTube

**Virtual Tour – The Candy Factory: M&Ms**, 12pm, Facebook

**Virtual Zumba with Trudy**, 6pm, YouTube

10 **Among Us**, 4pm, Discord

11 **OLLI Presents: Archaeology in Alabama**,  
12pm, Zoom

**Tara's Creative Corner: Heart Art on Canvas**,  
3pm, YouTube



12 **Book Talks with Pet Pals of Librarians**,  
2pm, YouTube

**Open Gaming Goes Online**, 4pm, Discord



**Library Libations: Shirley Temple &  
Dirty Shirley**, 6pm, YouTube

13 **Valentine Bags**,  
Library, All Day



**Dial-a-Story  
Secret Message (Last Day!)**

14 **Valentine's Day!**

16 **Picking Up S.T.E.A.M!**, 2pm, YouTube

**Lauren's Book Buzz**, 4pm, YouTube

**Virtual Zumba with Trudy**, 6pm, YouTube

17 **Valentangles**, 4pm, Zoom

18 **Tech in Ten: Online Dating Safety Checklist**, 4pm, YouTube

19 **What's It?**, 2pm, YouTube

**Open Gaming Goes Online**,  
4pm, Discord



23 **Storytime Stars**, 10:30am, YouTube

**Doodles with Derek: The Shape Game**, 4pm, YouTube

**Virtual Zumba with Trudy**, 6pm, YouTube

24 **OLLI Presents: Forensic Art**, 12pm, Zoom

**Art Group**, 4pm, Zoom

25 **Kara Recommends: *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone***,  
3pm, YouTube

26 **Book Talks with Pet Pals of Librarians**,  
2pm, YouTube

**Intro to 3D Modeling with SketchUp**,  
3pm, YouTube

**Open Gaming Goes Online**,  
4pm, Discord



VESTAVIA HILLS  
LIBRARY IN THE FOREST

For more information, visit [vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar](http://vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar) or call 205.978.0155.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

**12 Bel<sup>o</sup>w** Features trivia, games, challenges and activities online for school-aged children.

**Among Us** Join us on Discord and see if you can figure out who the impostor is or fool all of your friends! Link available on [vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar](https://vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar).

**Art Group** Enjoy drawing, sketching or doodling? Play drawing games, like Drawful 2, or learn basic drawing exercises you can do at home.

**Book Talks with Pet Pals of Librarians** Watch our librarian's pets talk about their favorite book this week!

**Chess Club** Join one of your peers – a decorated chess champ – and learn to play or challenge other veterans! For students grade 6-12 only (no adults).

**Dial-A-Story Secret Message** Call our Dial-a-Story line at 205.584.0600 and listen for the secret word at the end of the story. Decipher the message, then come to the library and give us the secret message to collect your prize! **The last day to collect a prize is Saturday, February 13.** For all ages.

**Doodles with Derek: The Shape Game** Join us to play the Shape Game – a creative drawing exercise where you create characters and doodles based on the random shapes we share with each other.

**Eighth of March Book Group** *A Woman is No Man* by Etaf Rum

**Intro to 3D Modeling with SketchUp** Learn your way around SketchUp 3D Modeling software in this introductory tutorial.

**Kara Recommends ...** *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone*, the new memoir from best-selling author, psychotherapist and national advice columnist, Lori Gottlieb. This hilarious book takes us behind the scenes of a therapist's world, where her patients are looking for answers (and so is she).

**Lauren's Book Buzz** Looking for a new book to dive into? Check out Lauren's latest Book Buzz to find your next favorite read!

**Librarians Try to Escape!** Your Teen Librarians tackle an escape room! Some of us will be more helpful than others.

**Library Libations: Shirley Temple & Dirty Shirley** Whether your girls are sweet or a little on the naughty side, these festive Galentine's Day cocktails and mocktails are perfect for your girls' celebration.

**OLLI Presents: Archaeology in Alabama** Join us for a broad overview of the state's heritage, as well as specific archaeological sites that highlight Alabama's cultural diversity. Registration required. Register online at [olli.ua.edu](https://olli.ua.edu) or call 205.348.3000.

**OLLI Presents: Forensic Art** Retired Officer Sharron Rudowski will discuss how forensic artists use witness descriptions to apprehend criminals. Registration required. Register online at [olli.ua.edu](https://olli.ua.edu) or call 205.348.3000.

**OLLI Presents: How About a Cuppa?** Why is tea such a staple in all manners of English life? A transplanted Brit, our speaker, will tell us about this relationship, the daily and special rituals of having a cup, and why we should consider adding this routine. Registration required. Register online at [olli.ua.edu](https://olli.ua.edu) or call 205.348.3000.

**Open Gaming Goes Online** Join us on Discord to play Super Smash Bros and Jackbox.tv games. Link available on [vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar](https://vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar).

**Picking Up S.T.E.A.M.!** A special guest brings fun online STEAM-themed activities for all school-aged children. Most activities planned with things you have at home so you can play along!

**Read & Feed Book Group** *Valentine* by Elizabeth Wetmore

**Smash Bits!** We've combined our teen's best Smash Bros plays into one hard-punching reel! Want to make our next highlights? Join us in Open Gaming Goes Online every Friday at 4pm!

**Storytime Stars** Join Ms. Anjie and Ms. Lisa for stories, songs, puppets and learning fun. For ages five and under.

**Tara's Creative Corner: Heart Art on Canvas** Join Tara for her latest unique craft – creating art on canvas with recycled magazine pages. Free Take & Make Bags available while supplies last. Call 205.978.4678 or email [terri.leslie@vestavialibrary.org](mailto:terri.leslie@vestavialibrary.org) to reserve your bag.

**Tech in Ten: Online Dating Safety Checklist** Tech tips in 10 minutes or less! This one is for all you singles out there. Whether you are online dating now or have been considering giving it a try, check out these tips for staying safe in the digital dating world.

**Tic-TECH-Toe: Valentech** Show your special someone how much they mean to you with these tech gift ideas. They're sure to fall in love with them!

**Valentangles** Grab some paper and pens and join our zoom call to learn how to make your own zentangle crafts.

**Valentine Bags** Come by the library and pick up your craft bag full of Valentine's craft ideas and supplies. Bags will be on the table in front of the library from 9am until 6pm. Fun for all ages.

**Virtual Tour – The Candy Factory: M&Ms** Get your chocolate fix with this amazing virtual tour of the Mars Candy Factory. Celebrate Valentine's Day with us by telling us your favorite color M&M on our Facebook page and score a free bag!

**Virtual Zumba with Trudy** Show yourself some love this month and join us for Virtual Zumba with Trudy each Tuesday.

**What's It?** What IS that thing? See if you can guess what the strange object could be! Answers will appear in the following show. Tune in to see if you were right!

**Writing Group** Join our writing group to share ideas and build writing skills while providing feedback to one another.

For more information, visit [vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar](https://vestavialibrary.org/event-calendar) or call 205.978.0155.

**SPRING SPORTS**

It's Groundhog Day! Time to gear up again for spring sports! Each league administers its own registration and operations, so those interested in participating in a sport should contact the league directly. If you have not yet registered for a spring sport, visit our website at <https://vhal.org/recreation> for links to all rec sports offered through Parks and Recreation.



**RECREATION CENTER**

Can't commit to a team for the season? You and your family can exercise at the Recreation Center. Membership is FREE for Vestavia Hills residents!

**Open Play\* at the Recreation Center Gym:**

Sunday	6:00-8:00pm
Monday-Wednesday	7:00-7:30am; 2:30-4:30pm & 8:00-9:00pm
Thursday	7:00-7:30am
Friday	7:00-7:30am; 2:30-3:30pm & 6:00-9:00pm
Saturday	4:00-8:00pm

*\*Open Play times will be adjusted after the basketball season is complete.*

**The walking track at the Rec Center is also open daily:**

Sunday	1:00-8:00pm
Monday-Friday	7:00am-9:00pm
Saturday	8:00am-8:00pm


**COMING SOON!**

New and improved online access to Aquatic Complex membership information, online program and sports registrations (including payment!), directions and information on community amenities, senior adult softball info and so much more!

For a full list of programs and activities currently offered, visit the Parks and Recreation website at <http://bit.ly/VHParksandRec> or call 205.978.0166.



Have you registered to receive the digital newsletter from the City of Vestavia Hills? Sign up today so you won't miss a thing. It's easy! Visit [www.vhal.org](http://www.vhal.org), scroll to the bottom of the home page and simply enter your email address to have the newsletter delivered directly to your inbox!



The Parks and Recreation staff continually to explore new and exciting programming for our residents. Is there a class, program or new sport you would like to see offered? Are there camps or workshops that you wish you or your children could participate in? Is there a special event that you think would be of great interest to you and your neighbors? Please let us know your thoughts and ideas by emailing Jeff Corley ([jcorley@vhal.org](mailto:jcorley@vhal.org)) and/or Sandi Wilson ([swilson@vhal.org](mailto:swilson@vhal.org)).



## CHAMBER NEWS

Karen Odle, Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce President

**Happy New Year from the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce!** We all have been so focused on getting 2020 behind us that our expectations for 2021 may be too lofty. Unfortunately, we still need to operate with caution with masks and social distancing when we are out, at least for the near future. However, in anticipation of returning to somewhat normal, we are making plans for several of major events later in 2021 so be on the lookout for further information on those.

While some of our local businesses closed during the pandemic, there are many businesses that have recently opened or will open soon:

- Altadena Eye Care
- Chick-fil-A (Cahaba Heights)
- Chopt Salads
- Community Bank (Liberty Park)
- Cookie Fix
- Crumbl
- Flower Betty
- Magic City Eye Care
- Milo's (Cahaba Heights)
- Papa Murphy's Pizza
- Publix (Rocky Ridge & Liberty Park)
- Snapper Grabbers (Liberty Park)
- SouthPoint Bank (Liberty Park)
- Stacy O'Sheilds Farmers Insurance Agency
- StoneCreek Dental Care
- Taco Mama
- The Backyard Market
- The Lindsey Building
- The Smocking Bird
- Troup's Pizza
- TrustCare
- Voyage Family Chiropractic

Welcome to Vestavia Hills! If a business has been inadvertently left off the list, please accept my apology and know that we are delighted to have you here!

Stories for the 2021 *Vestavia Hills Living* will be finalized within the next few weeks. If you have an idea for an interesting story that you would like to have considered, please email the idea, along with your contact information, to [kareno@vestavi hills.org](mailto:kareno@vestavi hills.org).

Please continue to shop local, it truly makes a difference to our businesses! It's easier to keep our businesses "in business" than it is to recruit new businesses. As always, we welcome you to drop by and visit us as we continue to strive for "A Life Above" in Vestavia Hills.



### Show Your *Love for Local* this Valentine's Day!

1. Find **unique gifts** at Vestavia Hills boutiques and jewelry stores.
2. Choose a Vestavia Hills **restaurant** for your Valentine's Dinner.
3. Get **fresh flowers** from a Vestavia Hills florist.
4. Pick up **sweet treats** from a Vestavia Hills bakery.
5. Say it with a **card** from a Vestavia Hills card shop.

**SHOP LOCAL**  
in VESTAVIA HILLS



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