

LAGO VISTA, TEXAS

FAST-GROWING AND BUSINESS-FRIENDLY

Blessed with inspiring natural assets, Lago Vista residents want to 'live like you are on vacation'

AT A GLANCE

LAGO VISTA, TEXAS

WHAT: Dynamic and fast-growing city with business-friendly initiatives to meet anticipated growth

WHERE: Hill County, Texas

WEBSITE: <https://www.lagovistatexas.gov/>



“I think that we can all agree that we live in one of the most beautiful areas of Texas that could ever exist,” Tracie Hlavinka, City Manager of the dynamic city of Lago Vista commences.

It would be very difficult to dispute this description of Lago Vista. In fact, one can easily go one step further and remark that it offers residents and visitors an unparalleled experience, not just in what outdoor splendor may be on Lago Vista's doorstep, but also in the dynamic plans that the city has in the works to cater to its valued citizens.

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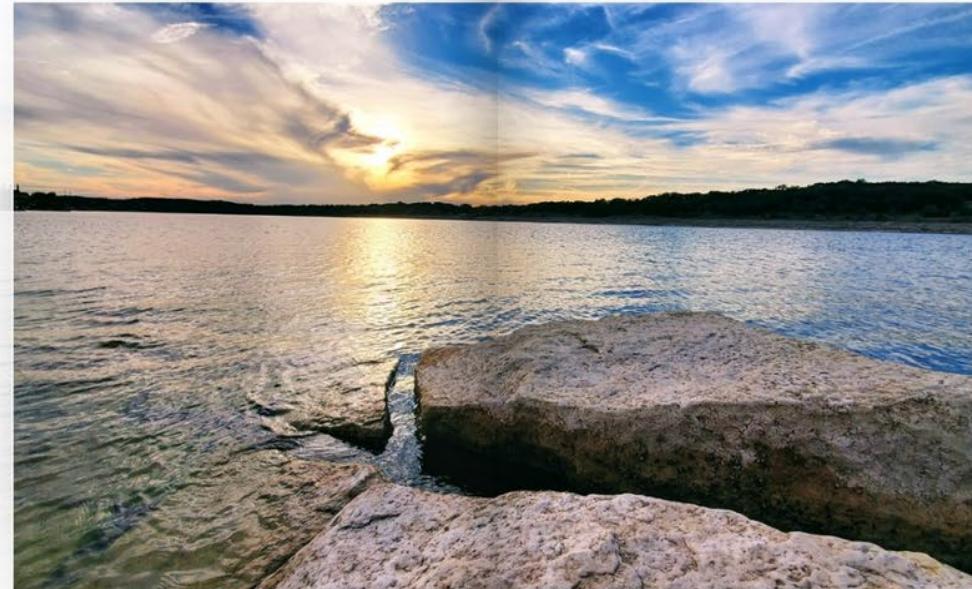
All of this is happening against a backdrop of remarkable growth. Lago Vista is embracing new residents as it carefully determines its top priorities ranging from infrastructure upgrades to a host of business attraction initiatives. In short, Lago Vista is a city rising to meet its expansion.

Hlavinka continues to describe the sheer beauty of the area when we had a chance to catch up with city officials recently.

"We are in Hill County, so we are full of outdoor activities such as the lake [Lake Travis] and the Balcones Canyonlands Wildlife Refuge," she begins. "We have anything and everything to do with kayaking and trails. It is just such a wonderful place to be; if you are an outdoors person, this is where it is at."

A city adapting to growth

Not to miss out on the pivotal aspect of



growth in the area, Hlavinka adds, "The other thing to mention is that Lago Vista is a growing community."

"As Lago Vista grows, it's a work in progress as to how we understand and balance the people that have found out how beautiful we are- it is probably the worst kept secret now- and people are coming in droves because they want to get out of Austin and are coming to us, recognizing that it's a wonderful place to be," she expands.

Aware of the need to be flexible when contending with 'growing pains', Hlavinka articulates that any kinks or difficulties that may arise with rapid growth will smooth themselves out eventually like "a teenager going through an awkward stage. They eventually grow out of this stage and evolve into a beautiful individual that went through all the bumps and bruises along the way."

This is a fitting analogy for a city that is learning which initiatives to prioritize and how to manage growth with the continued

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need to maintain the small-town charms and community feel that it is proud of.

"The City is very young and so it is starting to really understand the dynamics- what happens when you get growth. We have good planning in place and good processes as well," Hlavinka relays.

"We want to work with our community and our businesses so they see us as a resource, not a political entity that they may not want to have anything to do with."

Hlavinka and her colleagues admit that Lago Vista has always been viewed as more of a sleepy little town with a significant retirement base; however, this is all changing, and changing rapidly.

"We now have young families coming in and they are bringing children into our schools which are bursting at the seams. There is



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a real change going on right now and it is really cool to be a part of it," she ascertains.

Businesses are eying the charms of Lago Vista

Part of the success the City is experiencing when managing the changing dynamics of the area boils down to its determination and commitment to listening to its local businesses and residents- what may be high on their priority list.

This ability to listen, coupled with the commitment to collaborate with key partners such as the Economic Development Advisory Committee and the North Lake Travis Chamber of Commerce, has also been key to its success when navigating through the city landscape.

The pandemic put this collaborative spirit to the test and served as a catalyst for these efforts, as businesses were looking to the City for guidance during that time.

"During the pandemic, we really saw this city come together," Norma Owen, Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Committee, reflects.

"From the Economic Development Advisory Committee perspective, we started looking at what we can do to enhance those families coming into our community and helping to bring a balance so, if anything, COVID actually served to propel us forward in terms of the businesses."

"We really came together and there was more of a focus on how we help our small businesses survive and there was a 'take care of our own' perspective," Owen details.

One local business established three years ago in Lago Vista is All In Pool Supply. The company's President relays that it was able to thrive throughout COVID and into this year due in large part to the supportive atmosphere that the city has provided as part of its small business approach.

"In our business, we just wanted to serve the community, be more involved and take the time to get to know our customers and our community, helping to empower them with their particular surroundings in their pool," Marni Fidler, President of All in Pool Supply recalls when looking back over the three years in the community, half of which was spent during the height of the pandemic.

When asked about how she would characterize her relationship with the city, Fidler is quick to respond enthusiastically.

"The city officials that I've been able to meet have been so supportive. I am a huge networking community supporter so the very first thing we did once we got our business registered was to become part of the Chamber of Commerce."

"Lago Vista really has been a great new home for me," she insists.

The City's key partnerships with entities including the North Lake Travis Chamber of Commerce have helped to lay the business-friendly groundwork to draw in new business to the area as well as retain the existing ones.

"We want to make sure that we are keeping our

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businesses here and keeping businesses here that are convenient for our residents," Jennifer Sandoval, Executive Director of the North Lake Travis Chamber of Commerce, explains.

"As far as workforce development is concerned, one of the biggest goals across the board remains that we are making sure that we are offering training and we are offering things within the high school," she continues.

Eric Zeno, Economic Development Director with the City, agrees with Sandoval and cites a new Lago Vista-based business that has been greeted enthusiastically by residents as a prime example of the types of businesses the city is actively trying to attract.

"Brookshire Brothers was a huge success for us. It is our second grocery store in Lago Vista and the first one in Travis County."

"Their grand opening on the first day reached record-breaking numbers. It is just a tremendous

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success for our community," he expands.

The City is looking to also bring in a new boutique hotel and is actively looking at bringing in a mobile healthcare system. Zeno points to several healthcare facilities that may fit into the City's needs through grant writing mechanisms to secure the grant money needed to bring these welcome additions to the city.

"We are attracting those businesses right now by having great partnerships with the chamber, the school district, and all of our other partners," Zeno states.

"We also have a 'Keep Lago Vista Beautiful' organization committed to the beautification of the city. We are all working together for one Lago Vista."

Paving the way with infrastructure

When all is said and done, with Lago Vista's current and anticipated growth and ongoing business attraction initiatives, the need becomes even more urgent to ensure that the city's infrastructure is up to speed.

As several residential developments are in the planning and zoning phases and a master-planned housing development is in the works on the west side of the city, pressing infrastructure upgrades have been pushed to the top of the City's agenda.

"When we were moving into being an incorporated city, we had some extremely aging infrastructure, and it continues to age. We are at that tipping point where we really have to take care of our infrastructure," Hlavinka says.

"Our council will be considering future certificates of obligation (CO) bonds. They want to aggressively repave almost 95% of the roads in Lago Vista in a three-year period and



they are also looking at our water and wastewater infrastructure. We are actually looking at increasing our water capacity and our water treatment facilities."

"We are doing a traffic safety analysis right now," Hlavinka says. "We want good roads because we have people coming and going with our local businesses and we want to make sure our traffic flows."

"We are always looking at our capital improvement projects to make sure that we are dealing with those things," she notes. "There is lots of planning, but there are some great things happening so that we can provide that infrastructure."

The city view ahead

One initiative that the City is particularly fond of is its rebranding efforts. With a view to the beauty of the area the City has adopted the fitting tagline "Live like you are on vacation".

The City is also focusing heavily on its business approach which includes an upcoming 'better business friendly program' due to kick off in September.

With this in mind, the City can look forward to a bright future and Hlavinka summarizes it best.

"My City council recognizes that we should take care of the businesses and make our processes work for them."

"We are only as good as our last success."

Something tells us that Lago Vista is in for a number of future successes as we view the City's prospects.

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