

Dear City Manager:

The city has raised water and sewer rates, our water lines need replacing, and our roads are in bad shape, yet the city replaces sidewalks on Main Street instead of doing the priority work of water, sewer, and streets. It doesn't make sense.

Thank you for your question. The city is working towards enhancing our water system and examining ways to fund road reconstruction. We are very aware of our priorities and know that they need to be addressed, that is why we are being as creative as possible with funding sources. The sidewalk on Main Street was a grant-funded project that was approved and designed in 2021. The funds for the sidewalk did not come from our water fund or general fund. It was not a tax-based capital project. Grants come from federal funding, and yes, federal funding comes from taxes, but please understand that grants are not disappearing, and in fact, more and more grant opportunities are added every day. Please understand that grants are funded, and our federal taxes pay for the funding, so either the City of Palacios can apply and receive some of that money or as a matter of principle, we can refuse to apply, and our taxes will pay for another city to receive that money. So why not us? We apply for grants through a detailed, time-consuming, sometimes frustrating process to get funding to do projects the city cannot afford to do. Right now, we have grants approved for city-wide drainage improvements, which were applied for and designed many years ago, but we finally received the green light to move forward with the grant and will be going out for bid soon. We also received a grant for Bethany Park drainage improvements, the natural oyster shell breakwaters that will be placed in the bay, grants for the police department, parks, and other improvements that are coming soon. We get grants for the Airport, the Fire Department, Administration, and Equipment. We have applied for grants for street repair, sidewalks, and waterlines, but with grants, it's a waiting game. It takes time, a lot of time. We want to do more projects with cash so that they move along faster, that is why we teamed up with the Economic Development Corporation for the Commerce Street Sewer Line Project and Lift Station Improvements and the Main Street Drainage Improvements. Some grants move along faster than others, it all depends on the funding source and the obstacle course of red tape. The City is more transparent than ever on the budgeting process, grant process, expenses, and projects. Check out our website page for projects and you will be able to see the funding source and projects planned to begin. We are all impatient to start seeing dirt turn in town and work getting done on the things we need to do, but never fret, once dirt starts turning, everyone will be tired of seeing dirt because it will start and not stop for years with all the plans and funding sources we are working towards. As always if you have any questions, please feel free to give us a call at city hall.