



From Mayor Ashley Curry Springing Up in Vestavia Hills

Would you think that it is an April Fool's Day prank if I told you that the pedestrian bridge from Wald Park to The Library in the Forest was going to happen? Well, it is no "April fooling" about the fact that construction bids were solicited and a low bid has been accepted for the construction. You could see construction underway within the next few months. What started as a dream during Mayor Scotty McCallum's tenure will finally come to fruition!

The long-desired walkability from Wald Park to the library and the hiking trails behind the library will be available soon. Coupled with the success of the renovated Wald Park and the Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex, the pedestrian bridge is a significant piece of the long-term vision for the City.

Other opportunities include new businesses on south Highway 31 near the former Day's Inn property that was purchased by the City a little over a year ago. Again, you may think that I was pulling an April Fool's prank if I told you that construction has started for a retail center anchored by a Waldo's Chicken and Beer on one end and a Big Bad Breakfast on the other end, but this is not a prank. This, too, is the culmination of a vision our City has had to enhance the southern entrance to our city. There will be much more to come with the redevelopment in this area.

Also, you will see construction underway at The Bray in Liberty Park. The Bray will be the largest commercial development in our city's history and will come to fruition over the course of the next two years.

There is no "April fooling" about the great things going on in our city. I wish you an early spring and a happy April with no pranks.

Calendar of Events

April 2024

- 4 Design Review Board,**
Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 8 Senior Citizens Association Luncheon,**
Civic Center, Dogwood Room, 11:30 a.m.
- 8 City Council Meeting,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 9 Chamber Luncheon,**
Vestavia Country Club, 11:30 a.m.
- 11 Planning and Zoning Commission,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 15 Vestavia Hills Historical Society
Presentation,** Council Chamber, 2 p.m.
- 15 Council Work Session,**
Council Chamber, 5 p.m.
- 16 Dogwood Prayer Breakfast,***
Vestavia Country Club, 7:30 a.m.
- 16 Parks and Recreation Board,**
Civic Center, 7:30 a.m.
- 18 Board of Zoning Adjustment,** Council
Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 20 Vestavia Hills Garden Club Yard Sale,**
Scout Square, 7 a.m.
(Rain date, April 27)
- 22 City Council Meeting,**
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 27 Wing Ding,*** City Hall, 4 p.m.

** Ticket required*

For additional event dates or to subscribe to the City calendar, visit vhal.org/calendar.



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FitchRatings

RATING ACTION COMMENTARY

Fitch Upgrades Vestavia Hills, AL's GO Warrants and IDR to 'AAA'; Outlook Stable

Thu 25 Jan, 2024 - 2:02 PM ET

Fitch Ratings - New York - 25 Jan 2024: Fitch Ratings has upgraded the following rating for Vestavia Hills, AL:

--City's Issuer Default Rating (IDR) to 'AAA' from 'AA+';

--Approximately \$85 million outstanding GO warrants to 'AAA' from 'AA+'.

The Rating Outlook is Stable.

Capital Expenditures

In 2018, the City Council in Vestavia Hills made a very important decision when it passed Ordinance 2747. This ordinance increased the City's portion of the sales tax by one cent. After a long series of planning meetings, a very elaborate plan, called the Community Spaces and Infrastructure Plan, was adopted as the primary use of these additional City resources. In the adoption of this funding and expenditure plan, the following three pledges were made along with creation of a separate fund to account for and ensure proper use of the funds:

1. Funds would be utilized for debt service associated "Community Spaces" capital expenditures.
2. Funds would be utilized for capital needs of the City to include infrastructure projects.
3. Funds could be additionally utilized for capital needs of the Vestavia Hills City Schools (VHCS) upon the authorization of the City Council.

As we are well into 2024, our city is celebrating the completion of the Community Spaces and Infrastructure Plan. Vehicle operators and pedestrians are safely enjoying a new road and sidewalk network along Crosshaven Drive. Pet owners are taking great advantage of two new dog parks. Athletes are enjoying new venues while we all enjoy our spectacular new Civic Center. And these are just a few of the improvements.

Given the completion of the plan, our City Council is evaluating priorities to satisfy other community needs to include VHCS while remaining attentive to our financial policies and the needs of our city itself.

Financial Health & Discipline

The City of Vestavia Hills prides itself in its financial health and discipline. This has been recently recognized by Fitch Ratings and reaffirmed by Moody's Investors Service. Both financial credit rating agencies have rated the City of Vestavia Hills as a AAA credit risk. This is the best rating a municipality can receive. In fact, only one other city in Alabama has two AAA ratings placing the City of Vestavia Hills in a rare and enviable position. In addition, the City was recently awarded the Budget Excellence Award from the Governmental Finance Officer's Association. Between the City's financial strength and use of budgeting best practices, we are well positioned for long term viability in terms of providing services to our residents and withstanding any unforeseen economic challenges. During the recent strategic planning sessions, our City Council placed its highest priority on retaining its financial strength.

Future Annual Use of "Community Spaces" Funds



Supporting City Schools

During the March 11, 2024 work session of the City Council, Dr. Todd Freeman presented his plans to further the VHCS strategic vision. While resources are limited, he expressed several creative means to accomplish programmatic and safety/security goals. As a means to address safety issues with facilities shared with the City of Vestavia Hills, he asked for the City's commitment to fund a list of improvements at a cost of \$3.5mm over three years. The City Council discussed his priorities and recognized the mutual benefit between both entities. Based upon the completion of the City's Community Spaces and Infrastructure Plan, a future funding commitment in this order of magnitude was deemed feasible by the Council as long as the funding was limited to resources accumulated within the Community Spaces Fund. By doing so, the financial commitment would not present hurdles to addressing other City related capital needs.

From School Superintendent Dr. Todd Freeman

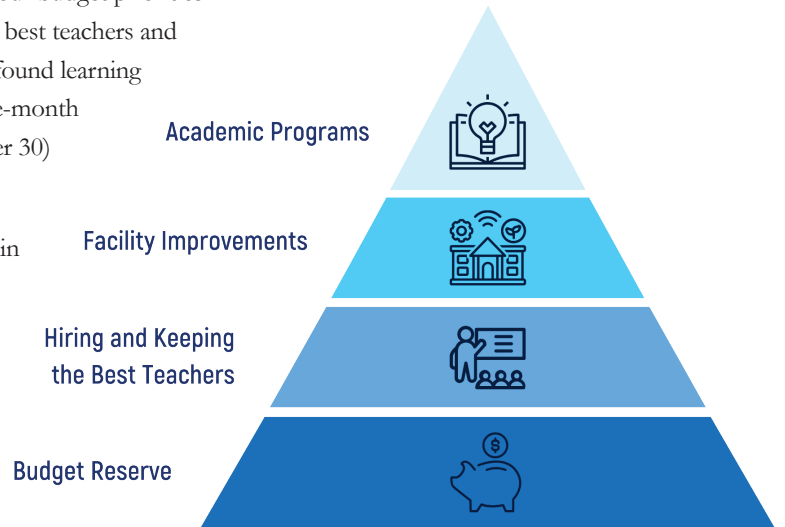


Our future success depends on longstanding partnerships that are the cornerstone of Vestavia Hills. It also depends on developing new and creative partnerships that propel our system forward in a way that meets the expectations of our community. You can see several examples of some of those partnerships in the pages of this newsletter.

Planning for the Future

Vestavia Hills City Schools is planning for the future with a focus on four budget priorities: maintaining a responsible general fund reserve; hiring and keeping the best teachers and staff; maintaining safe, secure and healthy facilities; and delivering profound learning experiences for our students. By law, we are required to maintain a one-month reserve. We estimate finishing the current fiscal year (ending September 30) with 1.4 months of reserve.

More than half our general fund budget is from local revenue, mostly in the form of property taxes. The 10-year average growth in these local taxes is about 4%. The last two years have been above that average which has allowed us to build our reserve while maintaining a focus on priorities that include optimal class sizes, academic programs and support for teachers. However, this revenue trend will likely not continue. Like all businesses, we must be mindful of revenue trends and increases in expenditures.



What are the Shared Spaces Capital Needs?

Location	Project	Estimated Cost
VHHS	Replace football/soccer turf	\$750,000
Dolly Ridge Elementary	Soccer field access/parking	150,000
Pizitz Middle School	Replace gym floor	140,000
Dolly Ridge Elementary	Replace gym floor	140,000
East Elementary	Replace gym floor/goals	165,000
Liberty Park Elementary	Replace gym floor	140,000
West Elementary	Replace gym floor/goals	165,000
Central	Improvements to Shawntel Dixon Jones Track	100,000
Pizitz Middle School	Install football/soccer/lacrosse field turf	750,000
VHHS	Bathroom/concession improvements	1,000,000
TOTAL		\$3,500,000

Unfunded Needs for Existing School Facilities

HVAC/Roofing/Building Envelope

Estimated Cost: \$35,000,000

Estimated Annual Debt Service:
\$2.5 million for 20 years

General Improvements

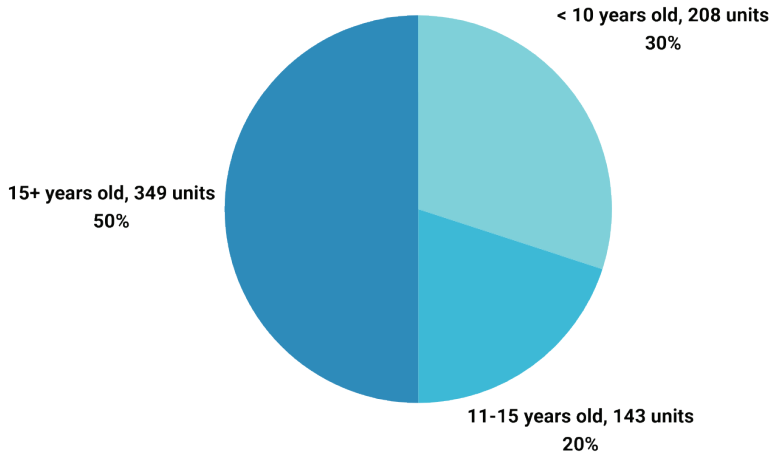
Estimated Cost: \$20,000,000

Estimated Annual Debt Service:
\$1.5 million for 20 years

City Schools Continues Planning for Facility Improvements

VHCS recognizes the value of maintaining safe, secure and healthy facilities for our students and staff. From 2014-2020, VHCS invested more than \$100 million to add classrooms, cafeterias, libraries and two campuses to accommodate a significant increase in enrollment. This investment has given schools the space needed for the foreseeable future. You can see the 10-year enrollment forecast by visiting www.vhcs.us.

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Equipment Age (as of 2024)



for school and recreational activities. Recently, the City Council made a commitment to fund \$3.5 million in needed improvements. Beginning this summer and over the course of the next three years, we will replace field turf at Vestavia Hills High School, create a safer driveway to the field at Vestavia Hills Elementary Dolly Ridge, upgrade the Shawntel Dixon Jones track surface and replace gymnasium floors at Dolly Ridge, Vestavia Hills Elementary East, Vestavia Hills Elementary Liberty Park and Louis Pizitz Middle School. This commitment provides for much needed improvements and allows the school system to focus on academic programs and long-term facility needs.

By late fall, through legislative grants and bonds awarded by the state of Alabama in recent years, we will have completed more than \$10 million in improvements to heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC); roofing; and security systems. **This leaves an estimated \$35 million of remaining work on HVAC replacements; roof replacements; building envelope and insulation improvements; and water efficiency projects.** Annually, VHCS spends some \$3.5 million in utility costs. Along with the important benefit of creating healthier spaces, the savings from energy efficiency upgrades would be significant. Aging facilities also have general maintenance needs related to plumbing, bathrooms, painting and flooring. We continue to explore long-term options for how to best meet these needs.

One long standing partnership we have is with the City of Vestavia Hills. For many years, we have shared ballfields and gymnasiums



Focusing on Character Education

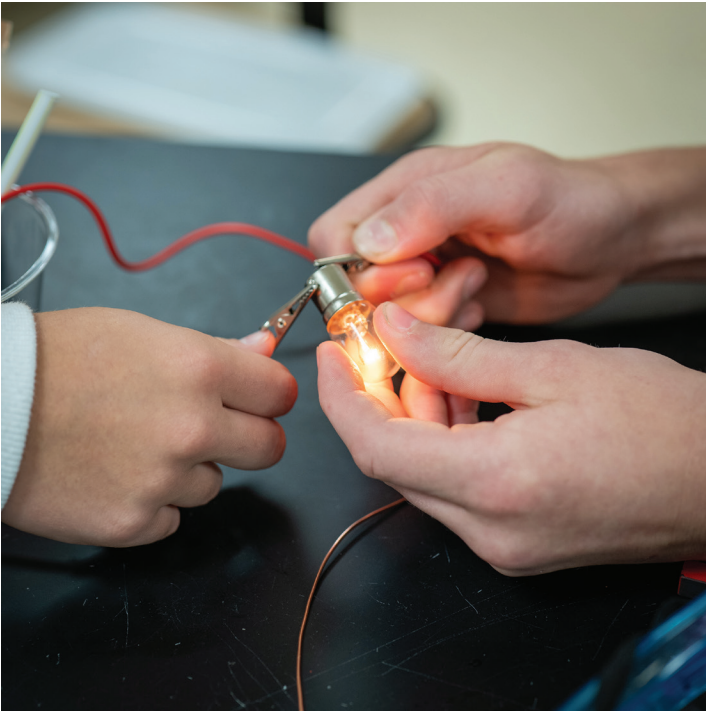
Vestavia Hills City Schools are exposed to an array of academic opportunities throughout their education. Of equal importance is partnering with parents to instill core values that are cornerstones to their growth.

Vestavia Hills City Schools continues to partner with Samford University's Hope Institute to bring character education to life in our schools. Hope Institute provides Vestavia Hills teachers and school leaders with knowledge and resources to create core values — the traits and virtues one would want every child to possess as they leave school and enter the real world. These core values, such as “The West Way: Kindness, Respect and Responsibility” at Vestavia Hills Elementary West, are found in every aspect of the school's culture. From classroom conversations to school behavioral expectations, core values make up the foundation of our schools' approach to character development.



Vestavia Hills Schools excel in character education. Multiple schools, including the district itself, have received “Promising Practices” recognition from Character.org, a national organization advocating for character education in schools. These “Promising Practices” encompass various programs and initiatives started by the schools to create a culture of good character in all aspects of school life. Four schools — Vestavia Hills Elementary Cahaba Heights, Vestavia Hills Elementary East, Vestavia Hills Elementary Liberty Park and Vestavia Hills Elementary West — have been named Alabama State Schools of Character in the past five years. Cahaba Heights, East and West were also named National Schools of Character.

STEM Learning Taking Shape for 2024-25



Vestavia Hills City Schools' mission is to provide every student the opportunity to learn without limits. Our goal is that students find value and meaning in what they learn and that we exceed the expectations of the stakeholders in our community. This compels us to continually improve, adapt and innovate our academic programming to meet the needs of our students, community and local workforce.

We believe that science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) is an important investment in strengthening the foundation for students to be prepared for the next steps in their education and career choices. Vestavia Hills City Schools envisions an innovative and systemic approach to STEM education that meets our students at the nexus of their academic needs and career interests.

Our plan next school year is to elevate STEM programming system-wide. Beginning in the 2024-25 school year, all students in grades K-5 will participate in a STEM class as a weekly "special," similar to art and music classes. Elementary students will meet in STEM class to engage in lessons that connect math and science to real-

world scenarios. In addition, we will offer accelerated math courses in our middle schools for students who progress through the standards at a more rapid pace. Finally, we plan to expand our engineering and health science programs for high school students.

VHCS endeavors to sustain a robust K-12 STEM learning experience for all students through creative partnerships. The school system has secured commitments from three corporate partners – Lathan and Associates, Schneider Electric and Shipt – to support the initial purchases of curriculum, technology, resources and furniture for the STEM classrooms. We look forward to announcing additional community partners in the coming weeks that will help us achieve a goal of \$400,000 for these start-up costs.



Life Is On

Schneider
Electric

Shipt

If your business is interested in partnering with us to make STEM learning a reality for all VHCS students next year, please contact Vestavia Hills City Schools at 205.402.5100.

 VESTAVIA HILLS
CITY SCHOOLS

Smoke Detectors Save Lives

Smoke detectors are one of the most important safety devices in your home and are proven to save lives when minutes matter. Smoke is the most common cause of fire deaths, leading to injuries long before flames can harm you. According to the National Fire Protection Association, more than 1/3 of home fire deaths occur from fires where no smoke detector is present. Following are a few tips to consider to make sure you get the most out of your detectors.

- Install detectors on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area.
- Test all smoke detectors once a month by pushing the test button.
- Change the batteries twice per year. It helps most people to change them when they change their clocks.
- Replace detectors every 10 years.

The Vestavia Hills Fire Department wants you to stay safe in case of a fire. Make smoke detectors part of your fire safety plan. **If your detectors alarm you, exit the structure as quickly as possible, shutting the doors behind you, and do not re-enter for any reason.** Having working smoke detectors and a fire safety plan in place greatly increases the chance of survival in case of a fire inside your home.



Active Adults (55+)

Senior Luncheon

Monday, 4/8 – 12pm; Civic Center

Enjoy a delicious lunch for only \$8 per person. Bring your friends for an afternoon of fun.

Stress Relief Workshop

Thursday, 4/18 – 10am; Civic Center

Right at Home offers monthly educational sessions on various topics, with guest speakers, activities and snacks to go along with the theme. This month's program features tips on how to de-stress!

Lunch Bunch & Trip: Cullman

Friday, 4/19 – 9:30am

Enjoy shopping, historic sights and a delicious lunch at Cullman's famous All Steak restaurant. Meet at the Vestavia Hills Civic Center at 9:30am. Transportation provided.

Family

Spring Fling Family Day

Friday, 4/12 – 6pm; Wald Park

Celebrate the arrival of spring with an all-ages outdoor concert, food trucks, face painting, bounce houses and more! Bring a blanket or chairs and enjoy this FREE family event!

Adult Sports

Corn Hole League

Thursday Nights, 6pm & 7pm; Civic Center

Wine and beer available. For more information or to register (now through April 30), visit <https://bit.ly/vhpr-register>.

Volleyball League

Monday Nights, 6pm, 6:45pm & 7:30pm;
Civic Center

Co-ed men's and women's leagues available. Registration opens April 22. For more information or to register, visit <https://bit.ly/vhpr-register>.

For more information about any of these programs or events, call 205.978.0166 or visit www.vhparksandrec.com

Spring Fling Family Day

Food Trucks | Bounce Houses | Games | Live Music

**Friday, April 12, 6-7:30PM
@Wald Park**



Vestavia Belles

2024-2025



Maria Alfano



Lillie Armstrong



Liv Arns



Emma Kate Ashley



Elise Ball



Photo not available:
Lucy Bazemore



Millie Black



Olivia Carroll



Sadie Chavers



Ann Ellison
Crawford



Eva Davey



Rebecca Evans



Cece Ferguson



Brooklynn Franklin



Ella Guest



Palmer Heilborn



Tana Hengst



Lily Hughes



Hannah Kate Huner



Ella Claire Hunter



Mallory Jonas



Reese Jordan



Reese LaRocca



Ellie Latham



Anna James Litty



Helen Maddox



Courtney Martin



Anne Gait Nall



Hollis Patrick



Maddie Prudhomme



Laine Ann Ramey



Jayanti Ranjan



Nona Richardson



Meredith Robison



Vivian Shi



Ellison Sizemore



Collins Tyus



Bailey Waguespack



Hannah White



Sarah Stewart
Wilbanks



Adele Worthington



Anvitha Yaparla

Vestavia Hills DOGWOOD FESTIVAL

SPRING INTO FUN!

The Vestavia Hills Dogwood Festival is a celebration all of the incredible things Vestavia Hills has to offer!

There is something for everyone during the Dogwood Festival!

APRIL EVENTS

6: Dogwood Dink: Cahaba Heights

Vestavia Hills Civic Center, 8am

6: Dogwood Days: Cahaba Heights

10am-8pm

6: Battle of the Bands

Rocky Ridge Plaza, 5-9pm (Rain date: April 7)

7: Spring Yard Judging Concludes!

12: Spring Fling Family Day

Wald Park, 4pm

13: VHHS RISE Day

VHHS, 4-10pm

15: Historical Society Presentation:

Vestavia Hills Methodist Church

Vestavia Hills City Hall, 2pm

16: Dogwood Prayer Breakfast

Vestavia Country Club, 7-9am

18: Dogwood Days Farmer's Market: Liberty Park

4-7pm

20: Yard Sale: Vestavia Hills Garden Club

Scout Square (Highway 31 North), 7am-1pm (Rain date: April 27)

21: Library in the Forest Concert:

Miles College Golden Voices Choir

Vestavia Hills Civic Center, 3pm

27: Wing Ding

Vestavia Hills City Hall Lawn, 4-7pm

28: Heights Hangout

The Heights Village, 2-7pm

Connect on social!



SCAN FOR DETAILED EVENT INFO

or visit

https://bit.ly/Dogwood_Fest



VESTAVIA HILLS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

presents

Vestavia Hills Methodist Church:

Celebrating 70 Years

Monday, April 15 at 2pm – Vestavia Hills City Hall

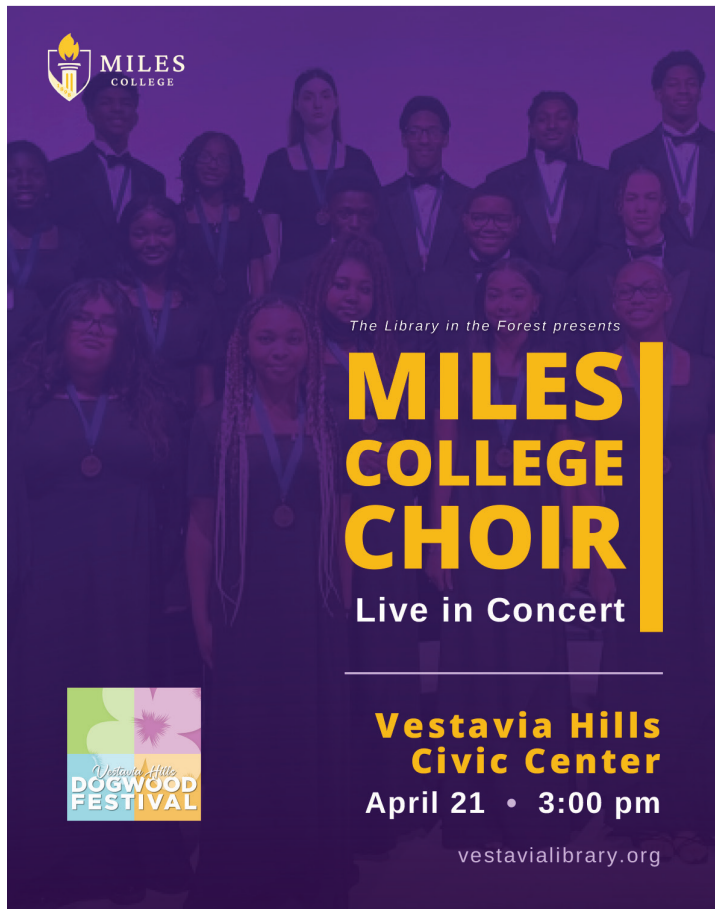
All are invited to enjoy musical entertainment
and to hear the amazing story of VHMC!



COMMUNITY NEWS

1032 Montgomery Highway
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

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The Library in the Forest presents

MILES COLLEGE CHOIR

Live in Concert

**Vestavia Hills
Civic Center**

April 21 • 3:00 pm

vestavialibrary.org

