

Tourism Report to Council Meeting Date:

July 14, 2026

Council Members,

Please review the following updates regarding tourism operations, public communication, short-term rental implementation, emergency readiness, IT support, cybersecurity, and related administrative initiatives.

Tourism, Events, and Community Updates

Tourism operations continued to move forward through regular coordination with Administration, CSR, Finance, Beach & Parks, Public Safety, and community partners. Much of this month's work focused on keeping projects organized, supporting committee operations for both Historical and Tourism, improving public access to information, and helping ensure that residents and visitors receive timely and accurate updates. Tourism Committee support also continued through agenda coordination, meeting preparation, posting assistance, and work to make committee sign-up information easier for residents to access.

We welcomed a new member to the Tourism Committee thanks to y'all's appointment, and I have already received another application, I am excited to rebuild the committee so we can meet quorum. The recently acquired city-owned property adjacent to the Waterfront Stage area and City Hall has been mowed thanks to council direction, Thank you Toby. Those items are part of the broader effort to keep tourism-related public spaces, committees, and community priorities moving through the proper public process.

I also continued supporting community volunteer and beach-related coordination. This included planning assistance for the Family Life Church beach cleanup, coordination with Toby Bolinger, and awareness of beach conditions, flooded-road concerns, Fort Velasco conditions, seaweed concerns, and beach-access considerations during weather impacts.

We are also exploring positive tourism media opportunities. A Travel Texas/MMGY representative, Amanda Cripe, reached out regarding a possible Surfside Beach visit by journalist Amanda Ogle. The proposed timing discussed was between July 20 and August 21, and we have expressed interest in discussing logistics and how Surfside Beach may be included in that opportunity.

STR, HOT Fund, and Tourism Operations

The STR / RentalScape implementation remained a major focus during this reporting period. Work continued with CSR, Finance, Administration, and related project partners on the Short-Term Rental rollout, including FullPayment gateway setup, merchant account information, RentalScape planning, CSR coordination, digital presence priorities, Stahlman Park items, and HOT project touchpoints. The recurring coordination structure has helped keep key project owners aligned and has allowed us to surface questions and issues as the implementation progresses.

This project remains important not only for permitting and registration, but also for customer-service workflow, complaint tracking, payment coordination, and long-term HOT fund stability. I will continue ensuring the different pieces are moving together so the Village can transition as smoothly as possible and provide better service to property owners, visitors, and staff. Of note, the portal is now LIVE for STRs. I would like to recognize Amber as she deserves the full credit, in my opinion, for knocking this one out of the park.

Marketing and advertising research also continued. I am evaluating advertising vendor options for an upcoming pilot campaign and reviewing tourism advertising opportunities so that decisions can be made with clear pricing, expected value, and appropriate procurement considerations in mind. A Texas Monthly proposal was also received and reviewed as part of this broader tourism marketing evaluation.

Public Communication, Website, and Administrative Support

Website and public communication support continued throughout the reporting period. This included posting council-related materials, supporting public records follow-up, posting public-facing information to the website and Facebook, adding a committee forms button to simplify resident sign-ups, and publishing public notices related to City Hall closure, training, RO system status, and meeting access.

During weather monitoring for Invest 90L / Tropical Storm Arthur, I supported public information and emergency-readiness communication. This included helping draft and refine public-facing messaging, posting approved updates to the website and Facebook, supporting FEMA ICS Form 214 documentation readiness under the incident name “2026 – Tropical Storm Arthur,” and serving as the point of contact for an on-camera update with KPRC2.

The weather event, flooding concerns, and planned power interruptions created overlapping operational challenges. To help address those issues, I coordinated internally with staff, confirmed VOIP call-routing continuity, published approved weather-readiness information, distributed fillable ICS documentation, restored network service after the outage, and continued documenting support through the Help Desk process so work remained visible and organized.

IT, Network, and Operational Support

IT support continued daily across departments. A major item this period was preparation for planned City Hall power interruptions. I helped coordinate staff reminders to shut down and unplug equipment, reviewed phone-system continuity, confirmed VOIP call routing, safely powered down equipment before the disruption, and brought the system back online afterward.

The Help Desk process continues to improve visibility and follow-through on technical issues. Since June 9, recent examples included patrol printer support, Police Department footage assistance, BitLocker lockout recovery, citywide internet/network restoration after planned outage activity, Clover user/PIN support, special agenda posting, Workforce clock-in troubleshooting, staff-meeting microphone setup, Police Department computer support, Zoom stability improvements, printer cleanup, monitor setup, City Secretary email setup, email signature help, PDF assistance, and meeting/Zoom link support.

Clover/POS support also remained active. This included adding a booth worker to the Clover system and setting up four new Clover devices on July 1 so the Village could better support beach booth operations during the busy season including July 4th.

I also continued supporting QuickBooks Workforce and timekeeping needs, including staff clock-in troubleshooting and continued enrollment/support work. These efforts are part of the larger goal of helping staff and directors use the tools more consistently and reducing preventable administrative friction.

Cybersecurity, Microsoft 365, and Compliance

Cybersecurity and Microsoft 365 administration remained a priority. I completed account-security actions for a user account, including signing out active sessions, blocking sign-in, changing the password, and providing recent sign-in information. I also continued responding to urgent Microsoft 365 and Scalefusion MDM needs.

The H-GAC cybersecurity review also required follow-up. Andrew Alabede requested additional information after the site visit, including items related to the employee manual, MDM dashboard/configuration, encryption evidence, cybersecurity training documentation, and the draft AI usage policy. I coordinated with Janet Solis and others to respond accurately and transparently to the requested items.

This process reinforced the importance of formal documentation, training tracking, and continued progress on cybersecurity and AI policy compliance. I am continuing to partner with HR on required AI and cybersecurity training so the Village can better document completion and meet its legal obligations moving forward.

I also began looking into a potentially unauthorized Facebook page impersonating the City and will continue working through appropriate steps to protect the Village's online presence and public trust.

Looking Ahead

In the coming weeks, I will continue: supporting the STR / RentalScape, CSR coordination, HOT-related project touchpoints, tourism marketing options, public communication needs, website updates, and committee support, and meeting technology needs. I will continue for the upcoming Surfside, Sunset, and Sound events. Securing advertising for a pilot campaign. We will be charging \$15 which is the price of a "Temporary Vendor Fee" in the Village as the Village will be the Master Vendor in this case and vendors, as per standard procedure, will have to fill out the appropriate form(s) to apply.

On the IT side, I will continue prioritizing Help Desk items involving staff access, Workforce and Clover support, Police Department hardware, meeting-room audio, website postings, network follow-up, Microsoft 365 administration, and cybersecurity documentation. I will also keep working with HR on AI and cybersecurity training tracking and with staff on practical technology improvements that help the Village operate more efficiently.

I greatly value the opportunity to work with the people of Surfside Beach and remain open to hearing the Council's and citizens' ideas regarding the future of our Tourism and IT departments.

~David Calhoun
Tourism/IT Director

