

Remember the “Seguin ’13” initiatives? Nothing in my memory has generated more positive change to our city than those initiatives. Nothing has generated more civic pride to our residents. Nothing has brought more positive attention from outside our community. Here’s my closing quote from a column back in 2013 about the initiatives.: “Yes, there are many other things in this town that need fixing, but right here and right now, these bond initiatives will kick-start the greatness that is lying dormant in our wonderful City of Seguin.”

The people of Seguin realized what Seguin ’13 would do, and boy, did it kick-start things! OK, I’ll use some clichés – It was the “game-changer, the “turning point”, the “Big Mo”.

This column is about keeping that momentum rolling.

The Seguin ’13 initiatives helped show the world that we are a great city. Great cities have attractive, walkable public spaces and recreational venues. Great cities demonstrate respect for their history and a cultural richness. Great cities have intellectual sophistication, and care deeply about educating their young people, and also their adults.

Can you imagine our city now without Park West, the new Seguin Public Library, the Walnut Branch trail, or our beautiful new Seguin High School? Every one of these venues was either built or improved by the Seguin ‘13 initiatives. Every one of them are important to us becoming a great city like I mentioned above.

Now on to keeping the momentum...

It’s about the Seguin ISD and 2 things – perception and safety.

Let’s take perception first. Deservedly or not, for years Seguin was perceived to be in the educational backwater. That perception has now changed since the building of our new high school, a dramatic turnover in the SISD school board, and the arrival of Dr. Matthew Gutierrez as superintendent of SISD.

Incredible, positive changes have been made in curriculum, personnel, and every other aspect of the educational experience. We are now out of the backwater, and swimming hard with the current. Developers and newcomers are noticing, and most of the new houses being planned for development now will be in the Seguin ISD.

Here’s what’s looming in the SISD that can change the positive perception - The SISD has several empty buildings, aging buildings, unsafe buildings, and a stadium that is the laughing stock of the district. This is no way to build a perception of excellence.

Now let’s look at safety.

We’ve got some aging, leaking, unsafe elementary schools. We’ve got an obsolete, unsecure middle school that can be effectively made secure and like new for half the cost of a new school. It is an absolute necessity that something be done for the safety of our kids.

We’ve got schools that have been lying empty for years, costing thousands of dollars a month just to maintain. That is a completely unsustainable situation, and by necessity, should be remedied.

Then finally, there’s the stadium. The turf is worn out, the track is a mess, and is non-standard. The stands are completely non-compliant with ADA. And yes, this includes the press box, which is more like a chicken coop than a press box. An elevator is also required to make the press box ADA compliant. The stadium’s 30-degree ramps are dangerous and impossible for wheel chairs and many older people to climb. It is completely non-compliant with bathroom facilities. The aging aluminum structure has been sitting in the elements for 60 years, and is put together with nuts and bolts. It looks like it could collapse at any time. It is a human tragedy waiting to happen. It is an embarrassment to the city, and has to be replaced. It is a heaping pile of code violations.

To put it simply, if the stadium is not replaced, it will probably be condemned. Did I make that clear enough?

I am so proud of what this city has done for itself in past few years. There is a dynamism in the air that is palpable. If we don’t fix the facilities at the Seguin ISD, there is a danger of losing our positive momentum, and drifting back into the backwater. Please don’t let that happen. I support the SISD bond initiatives, and I hope and pray that you do as well.

Gosh, I love this town!