

LIBERTY HILL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

3 Year Action Plan



MARCH 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation intends to pursue the continued growth and sustainability of the city and county's vibrant economy. The city is in a strong position for success with a dynamic local business base, excellent transportation access, a diverse workforce, and nestled in an area filled with new opportunities. Recognizing the need to prepare to take Liberty Hill to the next level in its evolution, Liberty Hill leaders undertook an in-depth and intentional forward planning process for economic development.

This Economic Development Action Plan sets forth achievable and aggressive economic development action steps for the LHEDC. The Plan identifies specific goals and actions which build upon Liberty Hill's unique strengths and distinct character with an abundance of assets to promote.

The Plan's purpose is to articulate a set of measurable strategic actions to facilitate development and expansion within Liberty Hill and to provide guidance to staff on where to spend their time and resources. This Action Plan is not meant to be an exhaustive outline of the LHEDC's strategic agenda, but rather is intended to provide guidance and direction. In addition, the Plan is meant to be fluid in that it should be reviewed periodically to determine if there is a change in priorities or if resources need to be shifted. The LHEDC is critically aware that it needs to adapt to the changing needs of business, residents, and a global market in order to stay relevant and retain its position as a growing and thriving community.

In addition, the LHEDC is aware that their return on investment has different measures than the private sector. A financial return is expected in the form of increased property values from development and redevelopment, but that the tangibles (increase in jobs, capital investment, increase in residents, small business growth etc.) and the intangibles (transformative development, change in perception of the area, sustainability of existing businesses, etc.) are equally as important.

A key aspect of this Action Plan is to assure the mechanisms are in place to be a catalyst for growth, big or small, in Liberty Hill, Texas. We will continuously realign the resources and policies of the LHEDC to meet the goal of retaining Liberty Hill's competitiveness in a domestic and global market, attract and grow talent to meet the needs of new and expanding businesses, provide a robust environment where small businesses can thrive and create a dynamic quality of place in which Liberty Hill's diverse population can grow to its fullest potential.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation initiated the forward planning process in the Fall of 2022 by securing the services of Lorie Vincent, CECD and President of ACCELERATION by design.

The desired outcomes were:

- Affirm the vision for the future of the Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation;
- Develop an Action Plan to further this vision;
- Identify objectives & initiatives for the LHEDC in order to achieve its vision;
- Identify top economic development/redevelopment priorities; and
- Determine the role of the LHEDC in economic development priorities, while maintaining the vision and accountability of the LHEDC's mission.

Underlying this effort was the desire to provide guidance to staff on the priorities for the LHEDC and to identify the resources needed to utilize and achieve the vision. The strategic planning process began with 38 personal meetings with the LHEDC Board Members, City of Liberty Hill City Council, City of Liberty Hill Staff, Planning & Zoning Board Members, Park and Recreation Board Members, the Liberty Hill Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Revitalization Committee, TxDot Representatives and Williamson County Representatives. The meetings were designed to provide “level setting” and to gain an understanding of their perspectives of the LHEDC, priorities for projects/initiatives in the community, the role of the LHEDC in economic development/redevelopment, existing challenges, potential partnerships, use of financing tools, and how to define success.

This was followed up by a Forward Planning Working Session with the LHEDC Board of Directors and elected officials. The major themes that came out of the interviews and the Planning Meeting were:

- There is a strong desire for a shared vision that everyone can support with a plan to achieve it.
- The primary role of the LHEDC is, and should remain, business development, resulting in the creation of primary jobs and capital investment.
- The retention and expansion of existing businesses remains a strategic pillar of the LHEDC.
- Liberty Hill is in a position of tremendous opportunity, but also significant challenges; including the need for additional marketable sites, workforce/talent development, transportation projects, infrastructure and desire for a stronger identity.
- There is a strong desire for more collaboration between the governing entities, standing committees, Chamber of Commerce, education and business leaders.
- The LHEDC is in need of additional business and commerce sites for development and promotion.
- The LHEDC, City and Chamber should support more aggressive programs that encourage small business development, including initiatives that encourage diverse entrepreneurship opportunities.
- The LHEDC considers Liberty Hill's premier location and proximity to high-growth urban areas, two strong strategic opportunities.
- Long-term sustainability of the LHEDC organization is a priority;
- There is strong support for initiatives and efforts that will enhance the aesthetics in the City of Liberty Hill, including downtown revitalization efforts.

From these discussions, the main goals and strategies were derived and are the basis of this Action Plan.

ABOUT THE LIBERTY HILL EDC

The Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation

The Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation is an organization dedicated to the growth and economic development of the City of Liberty Hill, Texas. The LHEDC works to create economic opportunity for the citizens of Liberty Hill, Texas by attracting and retaining investment from corporations, small businesses, entrepreneurs and an abundance of local and regional commerce. These companies provide primary jobs for local residents and stimulate the economy, creating a higher quality of life for the community. It is the mission of the LHEDC to promote and represent Liberty Hill, Texas as the ideal location for business investment and economic success.

Vision

A prosperous, charming, lifetime destination.

Mission

Help Liberty Hill prosper by facilitating positive, healthy, and self-sustaining growth.

Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors

Tiffany Stillwell, Board Chair
Demetrice Gonzales, Secretary
Steven Schiff, Board Member
Amy Gandy, Board Member
Landon Smith, Board Member
Greg Parma, Board Member
Robert Baughn, Board Member

Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation Staff

Mary Poche | Executive Director



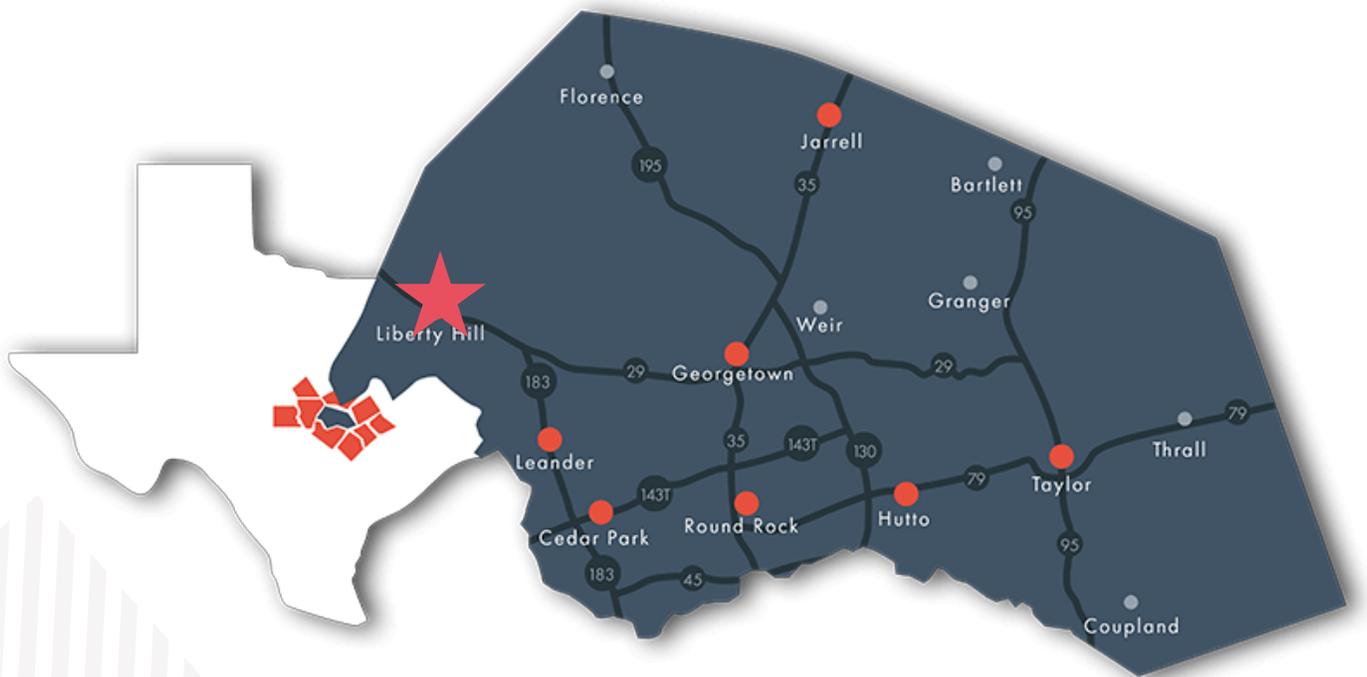
STRATEGIC LOCATION

Located in a Corridor of Activity...

As the economy in the State of Texas continues to be robust, entities from around the United States and internationally continue to investigate the opportunities available in our great state.

Nestled in the heart of Central Texas and the Hill Country, Liberty Hill boasts a robust arts and music scene, growing retail and entertainment amenities, the renowned Liberty Hill Independent School District, a quaint and historic downtown, beautiful places to explore the outdoors, and so much more. Located in the northeast corner of the state's Hill Country, Liberty Hill is nestled between the San Gabriel River's North and South forks. Over the past 175 years, families and businesses have located in the area for the Shin Oak Ridge's rolling hills, outstanding schools and opportunity.

Transportation includes U.S. 183 and State Highway 29 that connects Liberty Hill to Interstate 35, 14 miles east. Capital Metro. Liberty Hill's location in the five-county Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area affords access to a labor force of more than 1.3 million people. Liberty Hill draws from Williamson and Burnet Counties for an estimated labor pool of 378,000, while Liberty Hill's labor force numbers more than 2,500. The community boasts more than 65 Primary Employers with three industrial clusters: construction, metal fabrication and wood products manufacturing. Experience in management, business, science and art occupations are most prevalent in Liberty Hill.



Map Source: Williamson County Economic Development Partnership

ASSETS, NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIC LOCATION

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport is 42 miles to the Southeast and Georgetown Municipal Airport 19 miles east. Highway transportation includes U.S. 183 and State Highway 29 that connects Liberty Hill to Interstate 35, 14 miles east. Water transportation is provided by the Port of Houston, roughly 218 miles Southeast.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Nestled in beautiful central Texas, Liberty Hill is blessed with an abundance of natural resources which allow for a high level of work and play. From nearby entertainment venues, agri-business ventures, to the amazing hiking trails and boating opportunities. Liberty Hill enjoys striking hill country views, waterways, biking and recreation opportunities for all. And the weather is pretty good too!

PROXIMITY IN ALL DIRECTIONS

Beyond the growing population of Liberty Hill, statistics of "Reverse Commuting" throughout the USA support the growing trend of residents commuting to/from suburban areas for their livelihood or enjoying the flexibility of working from anywhere. Workers continue to look for residential areas in cities with an abundance of amenities, high quality of life and excellent school systems. Liberty Hill is in a great position to not only capture jobs, but to welcome workers from across the USA.

MARKETABLE SITES

The City of Liberty Hill continues to benefit from the organic growth taking place in the region. To put yourself in a position to direct that growth, marketable sites should be immediately identified and promoted. In order to be competitive with surrounding cities for job creating projects, the LHEDC needs to have property that is shovel-ready and price controlled. New and expanding businesses are aggressively looking at this region. Liberty Hill is in a great location to capture this growth with competitive sites.

AFFORDABILITY

Residing on the edge of Williamson County, Liberty Hill, TX is rapidly becoming the community of choice for families in search of an escape from the challenges of urban living. With that migration, Liberty Hill has experienced aggressive population growth. Subsequently, Liberty Hill is positioning itself to attract a highly skilled and diverse workforce. Housing costs, while rising, still remain below the average of the surrounding cities, giving residents both proximity and affordability.

LOCAL INCENTIVES

Potential incentives include:

- Performance-based incentives through the City of Liberty Hill's Type B Sales Tax Corporation
- Abatements/Rebates
- Fast track approvals
- Reimbursement of allowable project fees
- Training dollars for new employees
- Chapter 380 and 381 incentives
- Facade & Building Matching Grants
- and more...

PUBLISHED BENCHMARKS



2020 LIBERTY HILL , TX
POPULATION*

3,646



2020 WILLIAMSON COUNTY
POPULATION*

609,017



2021 LIBERTY HILL
MEDIAN INCOME

\$94,718



2021 LIBERTY HILL
MEDIAN AGE

38.0



2021 LIBERTY HILL
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE %

93.8%



2020 LIBERTY HILL
MEDIAN HOME VALUE

\$296,915

MILES FROM LIBERTY HILL TO DALLAS

179

MILES FROM LIBERTY HILL TO AUSTIN

34



AVERAGE COMMUTE FOR
LIBERTY HILL RESIDENTS (IN MINUTES)

36.0



LIBERTY HILL
RETAIL SALES 2020

\$64 MIL

FORECASTED BENCHMARKS



JAN 1, 2022 LIBERTY HILL , TX
ESTIMATED POPULATION*

8,777



JAN 1, 2022 WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TX
ESTIMATED POPULATION*

663,405

*IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THESE DEMOGRAPHIC AND POPULATION NUMBERS DO NOT CONSIDER SANTA RITA RANCH OR OTHER SURROUNDING MUDDS. THESE COMMUNITIES ARE POSITIONED TO HAVE THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS WHO WILL UTILIZE LIBERTY HILL ROADWAYS, BUSINESSES, AND UTILITIES.

Sources: Texas Demographic Center, Texas Comptroller, Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency, ESRI and 2020 US Census Bureau

LIBERTY HILL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Objectives and Action Steps

Eight strategic initiatives have been defined in response to stakeholder input and our analysis of Liberty Hill's economy and ecosystem. These initiatives address how the LHEDC, as a whole, engage with business in a proactive and customer-centric manner.

The goal of each initiative is to improve Liberty Hill's business climate and promoting the city as welcoming and open for business. Each section specifies the objectives and action steps involved in executing the initiative.



OBJECTIVES & ACTION STEPS

Identify Viable and Marketable Sites

Local and regional economies cannot thrive without bringing in new companies, investment, and talent. A focused approach to recruit companies with site selection requirements that are compatible with Liberty Hill's infrastructure and resources can yield immediate positive results for the region. This is especially important given the high level of business expansion and relocation activity taking place across the Williamson County, Central Texas and the Southern United States. The emphasis in this area should be focused on attracting businesses that provide family wage jobs or are in high demand by Liberty Hill residents. Efforts in this area should include effective marketing, superior customer service and the timely provision of the information prospects, brokers, site selectors and high-level industry representatives need to make location decisions. Partnerships also bring exceptional leverage to this initiative, as the pipeline of leads originate from a diverse range of organizations and individuals. But you have to have a product to sell. Growing the inventory of shovel-ready marketable sites is a critical need for Liberty Hill at this time.

Action Steps

- Inventory the existing marketable sites and gather all information regarding the site, boundaries, owners, water, utilities, costs, permitting, zoning, barriers, neighbors, traffic counts, ingress, egress, distance to highways, rail, air, etc.
- Conduct a site identification search to find tracts of developable property with good transportation access. Gather utility and community stakeholders to assess whether the property's infrastructure can meet the demands of one or more industries.
- If the site has potential, then target the weaknesses of the property and determine the costs and schedule to mitigate these weaknesses. The shortcomings of the site may be environmental contamination, wetlands present on-site, poor road access, uncooperative ownership groups, incompatible zoning, inadequate utility infrastructure, etc.
- Manage the political process within the community. To encourage transparency and avoid the perception of secrecy, make stakeholders such as elected officials, state agencies, partnership cooperatives, neighboring industries, utility providers, media, property owners, school systems and neighbors feel included in the process.
- Begin to identify and secure sources of funding to assist with site preparations.
- Be cautious about proactively extending infrastructure. Different industries have different needs. Also be mindful to insure that infrastructure easements do not break up contiguous, developable acreage.
- Stay connected to the brokers, realtors and private developers in the region and the state while gauging how your sites may impact their efforts.
- When your sites are ready to be marketed to prospects, launch a marketing campaign and present site information to the appropriate audiences (partnering economic development agencies, utility partners, state economic development agencies, existing industries, site consultants and, of course, directly to targeted companies). Marketing materials should coordinate with site signage and branding should be consistent.
- Continually evaluate the site development strategy to ensure the plan is in line with market demands. Do not be afraid to pivot and evolve the plan to meet changes in the marketplace.
- Continue to monitor the changes in ownership, property auctions and real estate transactions.
- Continue to develop and nurture relationships with land management companies
- Identify potential sites in non-traditional industrial areas, but with adequate potential zoning capabilities.
- Meet with area bank trust departments and area brokers regarding property that may soon become available.

OBJECTIVES & ACTION STEPS

Support Infrastructure and Transportation Enhancement Projects

Infrastructure affects growth through several supply and demand-side channels. Investments in energy, telecommunications, and transport networks directly impact growth, as all types of infrastructure represent an essential input in any production of goods and services. In addition, infrastructure can also reduce the cost of delivered goods, facilitate the physical mobility of people and products, remove productivity constraints, and increase competitiveness.

Action Steps

Work with City of Liberty Hill, Williamson County and TxDOT representatives to complete an assessment of Infrastructure deficiencies in the industrial areas, downtown area and commercial districts.

Identify strengths in infrastructure and transportation outlets that can be used in marketing, such as traffic numbers, traffic access, water availability, high speed internet, rail access, etc.

Ensure water/sewer main capacity for all identified marketable sites.

Create an Implementation Plan in partnership with the City of Liberty Hill to address prioritized Infrastructure deficiencies, along with a specific budget and timeline.

Create a multi-year financial allocation plan, through the EDC, that will direct EDC collected funds to priority projects.

Identify desired uses for EDC identified sites in the industrial areas and ensure that current infrastructure and zoning allows for those desired uses.

Support preferential zoning areas that support the desired business types.

OBJECTIVES & ACTION STEPS

Small Business Development and Entrepreneurial Support

Small businesses play a critical role in Liberty Hill's business landscape. They provide key goods and services to the city's firms, residents, and workers. Small businesses also provide a ladder of opportunity for many segments of the population. Given the breadth and diversity of Liberty Hill's small business community, a partnership model is most effective. Further, emphasis will be placed on fostering small businesses that enhance the City and County's competitiveness by providing goods and services most desired by businesses, workforce and residents. This initiative focuses on ensuring that business development services reach all segments of the community and support the community's identified small business needs.

Action Steps

- Support access to high-speed internet throughout the community.
- Maintain a database of available commercial and retail properties.
- Promote entrepreneurship by serving as a “connector” between local entrepreneurs and the necessary resources they seek (e.g., talent, capital, networks).
- Encourage local school districts and other local K-12 educational institutions to incorporate entrepreneurship courses into their academic curricula. Samples will be provided.
- Link small business growth to the city and county's existing large corporations.
- Create a central database for RFPs from existing Liberty Hill corporations seeking subcontracting or vendor services. Make the database available to all companies in Liberty Hill, providing opportunities for young and emerging companies.
- Liberty Hill, Texas small businesses could become “prequalified” to serve as a vendor to large corporations.
- Create an “Innovation District” in Liberty Hill.
- Prioritize public policies (e.g., zoning and land use regulations) and infrastructure investments that make the commercial district more attractive to entrepreneurs and startups.
- Designate a special “fiberhood” in a commercial or downtown district, with access to ultra-high-speed internet to attract technology startups and entrepreneurs. Create marketing efforts that target specific types of businesses to expand and relocate into this district.
- Identify and assist in the outreach and recruitment of specific businesses to reduce retail leakage.

OBJECTIVES & ACTION STEPS

Small Business Development and Entrepreneurial Support

Action Steps (continued)

- Sponsor an Information Packet for interested small business owners and entrepreneurs. Provide ready information for discussions that include business plan information, available sites and buildings, market information, funding sources, agency assistance and more.
- Sponsor workshops and programs delivered by SBA, Small Business Development Centers and local professionals on business plans, taxes, legal issues, workforce, marketing, administration, etc. If these activities are already taking place, be aggressive about promoting and supporting them in the community. If they aren't, consider sponsoring a series of Lunch-N-Learns, Beers with Peers, or BLT Educational Programs.
- Establish a Revolving Loan Fund specifically for small businesses or downtown businesses. Apply for funds through USDA and EDA as they have one-time use funds available for these types of projects. Work with the City or County to be the sponsoring host, establish the criteria and make an application. Samples of various funds can be provided upon request. Don't reinvent the wheel!
- Promote your Facade and Signage Program. This program is a critical factor to the aesthetics of your local business districts. This is the first impression of your communities and can determine viability and sustainability.
- Sponsor a "Big Idea" contest for students and adults. This is a great way to support the entrepreneurial spirit. These are a success in every community we have implemented them. Consider stringent criteria, worthy prizes and big promotion. Samples of multiple contests and initiatives can be provided.
- Consider supporting or sponsoring potential co-working, shared space or Accelerator/Incubator space for small businesses in their infancy. Sometimes you just need to be with people. Out of your house. Or help with shared expenses. New workers, remote workers, traveling workers and new companies can benefit from shared or incubator space. Case studies provided.

OBJECTIVES & ACTION STEPS

Support of Liberty Hill's Existing Business Base

Engaging and assisting businesses to stay and grow in the City of Liberty Hill will continue to be the primary function of the LHEDC and its closest partners. Business retention is a well-recognized best practice that consistently provides a high return on investment for economic development organizations. Effective retention and expansion results require building face-to-face relationships and providing superior customer service to existing businesses and should be complimented by effective incentives, business-friendly services and thoughtful coordination with local, regional and state partners.

Action Steps

Structure BRE initiatives to serve several purposes:

- Establish a comprehensive list of ALL companies located in Liberty Hill and the surrounding area.
- Educate the companies about the LHEDC and its services through meetings, business events and targeted communications. Samples are available.
- Collect answers to a standard series of questions in order to quantify issues the companies are facing and determine trends and common challenges within the overall business base.
- Identify opportunities to aid local businesses that are facing challenges, thereby retaining those companies in the City/EJT/County.
- Inquire as to staffing and skills needed to operate at full capacity.
- Identify companies that are expanding operations within and outside of Liberty Hill.
- Probe supplier attraction opportunities that would benefit existing companies.
- Identify companies considering relocating outside of the community.
- Capture testimonies from local companies about why they have chosen Liberty Hill, Texas as their business location.
- Facilitate introductions and/or provide information that is requested or deemed helpful.

Business Retention and Expansion Guiding Principals

- BRE is a relationship building effort that strengthens the linkages between the public and private sector in your community.
- BRE activities are the cornerstone of your economic development efforts.
- Implementing BRE is flexible and cost-effective. It is the economic development initiative that can garner the largest impact.
- BRE is one of the most important attraction tools you can have for economic development
- There is no one way to do BRE - the program you develop is specific to your community needs and resources.

- A complete inventory of your businesses and resources is needed to start a BRE program
- Retention interviews need to be targeted toward business sectors that show either the greatest need or the greatest promise.
- Credibility is built by responding to needs and producing results in a timely manner.
- Existing businesses should take precedence over companies seeking incentives to relocate.
- You have a strong base in Liberty Hill upon which to build an effective BRE program.

OBJECTIVES & ACTION STEPS

Targeted Economic Development Outreach

The Central Texas region is experiencing a very high rate of economic growth at this time. This allows for a tremendous opportunity for all of the cities in the region to gain population, new residents, suppliers, amenities, service industry and more. Based on the location and assets possessed by Liberty Hill, the ability to attract specific companies and targeted industries is high.

Action Steps

- Develop and maintain a list of recent announcements and project developments taking place within a 70 mile radius. (example, Leander, Lampasas, Killeen, Cedar Park, Georgetown, Round Rock, Pflugerville, etc.)
- Develop a "hot list" of both companies and domestic markets that fit your desired attraction profile. And then be very systematic and aggressive in working "the list". Always be prepared for people who contact Liberty Hill for information, but also don't sit back and wait. Be proactive and getting the word out and making connections regarding your opportunities.
- Proactive outreach can be done through digital communications, traditional communications, face-to-face meetings, trade and industry events, fam tours, contests, editorials, etc.
- Develop a digital and printed marketing campaign specifically touting Liberty Hill's strategic location and amenities that can be shared with targeted company representatives. Include a map and information on sites, housing, education, retail, transportation and quality of life.
- Develop and maintain relationships with the economic developers in the surrounding communities. Each city is using data from the entire region when responding to prospect proposals. They all may want the project, but realistically understand that they cannot house, educate, feed and provide services for the entire labor force needed. Keeping abreast of their needs will help Liberty Hill stay relevant in the economic growth of the region.
- Implement an ongoing social media campaign touting the message "Freedom to Grow in Liberty Hill."

OBJECTIVES & ACTION STEPS

Support Downtown Liberty Hill's Revitalization Efforts

For generations, small towns have served as the cultural and economic centers for surrounding rural areas. Their physical and social fabric reflect the community's unique history and identity. Changing economic conditions and demographics create challenges for rural downtowns. Despite these challenges, some communities remain vibrant places, attractive to residents and visitors alike, by leveraging their physical, cultural and economic assets and investing in a Community Based Vision, Attractive Streetscapes, a Variety of Uses, and Effective Marketing.

Downtown Liberty Hill is the heart of the community. Recent major reinvestment taking place in several buildings, new businesses relocating to the downtown area and dynamic city-led aesthetic projects make this the perfect time to support the coordinated and aggressive downtown revitalization program for the benefit of the residents of Liberty Hill and visitors alike.

Action Steps

- Support the existing efforts of the Downtown Liberty Hill Committee with partnerships in infrastructure projects that will benefit the entire community. This is a critical need in Liberty Hill and should be a priority.
- Stay focused on transportation projects that affect the downtown flow of traffic and participate financially, when feasible.
- Consider logistics for parking, pedestrian flow, connectability, crowd gathering, restroom access, fire safety, human safety, noise, lighting etc. when determining future investment in downtown enhancements.
- Focus on the development of specific sites that will leverage the downtown area and reach a wide audience.
- Assist in the development of green space, gathering space and pedestrian friendly avenues.
- Maintain consistent communications with the City of Liberty Hill and the Downtown Revitalization Committee in order to monitor where the EDC can assist, support or create initiatives to further develop the downtown region. Avoid redundancy and promote collaboration.
- Develop and promote small business and entrepreneurship programs that are geared specifically for the downtown region.
- Promote the aesthetic programs that already exist and expand on programs that will create enthusiasm for investment in the downtown region.
- Include the downtown efforts and existing businesses in all marketing efforts regarding Liberty Hill's business opportunities, testimonials, available sites, events, projects and improvements.

OBJECTIVES & ACTION STEPS

Tell the Story of Liberty Hill, Texas

The overarching objective of this marketing plan is to generate quality prospects, positive attention and remind the locals citizens of the assets located in the Liberty Hill, Texas region. The purpose of economic development marketing is to lead to new investment and job creation. These marketing priorities concentrate on target industries that, based on our research, have the most advantages for locating here.

Action Steps

You Have a Story to Tell...

Cities, counties, regions and states can thrive only when they are open to a sustainable long-term development trajectory by inviting the best minds and businesses to work together. This is achieved by communicating the opportunities for growth that are available for new residents, skilled workers, and businesses. The narrative that is built to attract these drivers of growth determines the future of these places.

There is very little information located on Google (and other search engines, Tourism Sites and Texas Sites) about Liberty Hill, Texas. The opportunity to create an exciting and dynamic digital presence exists. Remember, if I couldn't find information before my first visit, how would a prospect, a potential resident, a potential remote worker or a tourist find you? Being a "best kept secret" is the worst economic development marketing tactic in the world.

A Sample Social Media Marketing Campaign is located in the Appendix.

Guiding Principals

- The Quality of Place narrative should accompany actual development – both social and economic.
- Quality of Place branding gives an opportunity for cities to reimagine and reposition themselves: possibly overcoming an invisible image, unfavorable image or difficult past. It is a chance to drive growth on your own, favorable terms.
- With effective storytelling, Quality of Place branding can build a sense of belonging among new residents and locals alike.
- Honesty is the best (communications) strategy. Being honest and realistic about the opportunities available or offered in the Liberty Hill, Texas region helps to attract the right talent and to drive economic development.
- Quality of Place narrative is built on what a region, county or city aspires to be. This, in turn, prompts stakeholders to work towards becoming what is being projected and ensures development efforts are aligned with the overall direction (the big picture or vision).
- Quality of Place branding focuses on certain verticals like talent attraction, tourism or economic development. Those often still operate in silos. Storytelling and place narrative can help to connect the dots and to bring different players together around a shared vision and theme.

“ The Quality of Place is all of those features of physical environment and qualities of life that make a location a desirable, competitive, and economically vibrant place to live.

~Lorie Vincent, CECD~

OBJECTIVES & ACTION STEPS

Elevate the Internal and External Profile of Liberty Hill, Texas

Is the LHEDC included in critical conversations about the future of Liberty Hill? Does the LHEDC get invited to give presentations to local civic groups or regional groups? Does Liberty Hill immediately come to mind when site selectors, brokers or state and regional economic development agencies are presented with a prospect? If the answer to these questions is no, then it is time to aggressively increase the profile of the LHEDC among lead generators, decision makers, stakeholders, residents, existing businesses, realtors, elected officials, supporting agencies and site selectors.

Action Steps

- Develop a series of communications about Liberty Hill, available sites, workforce availability, education, cost of living, amenities, proximity etc, and distribute it to the important players on a regular and consistent basis,. This can be done In the form of editorials, newsletter, checking in emails, blog posts etc.
- Join and participate in pertinent organizations that involve strong stakeholders in the community, region and state.
- Post photos on social media when attending important events, conferences and meetings. It is important that the Liberty Hill EDC is shown as busy, engaged and working on behalf of the community.
- Develop a short VIP List of people who "need" to know when something impactful happens, such as the availability of a new site, a new workforce initiative, a company expansion, nearby announcements, new housing developments, school bonds for new facilities, favorable utility or road expansions, etc. This list would include elected officials, lead generation groups, site selectors and regional promoters.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Potential Partners and Positive Impact of Initiatives on Liberty Hill

Identify Marketable Sites	Increase number of sites available for prospecting and local development.	LHEDC, RE PZ, RE	JC, TB, INF TR, BD, SD
Support Infrastructure & Transportation	Support the City of Liberty Hill in infrastructure projects, with a focus on downtown and heavy traffic Intersections.	LHEDC, City DRC, TxDOT, Wilco	INF, TR, DR, CS
Create Small Business Development Initiatives	Develop and Support Small Business Trainings, Matching Grants, Revolving Loan Funds, etc.	LHEDC, BUS CHB	JC, TB, DR BD, MK, CS
Support Liberty Hill's Existing Business Base	Identify, meet and survey the existing business base of Liberty Hill to determine needs, offer assistance and show appreciation.	LHEDC, BUS CHB	JC, TB, CS DR, BD
Targeted Economic Development Outreach	Develop aggressive and dynamic outreach initiatives to growing companies who are a positive fit for Liberty Hill.	LHEDC, RE	JC, TB
Support Downtown Revitalization Efforts	Support Downtown Revitalization efforts by partnering with the City on much needed infrastructure which will impact the entire area.	LHEDC, City DRC, PR, BUS CHB	JC, TB, DR INF, MK, CS
Tell the Liberty Hill Story	Produce a strong website and facilitate marketing campaigns that inform others about the assets and opportunities in Liberty Hill.	LHEDC, LHISD CHB, DRC City, WICo, PR	MK, BD, DR CS
Elevate Liberty Hill's Profile	Build a strong presence and identity within the local Liberty Hill community, regional brokers, regional stakeholders and with state agencies.	LHEDC, City CHB	MK, BD, CS

Potential Project Partners

City | City of Liberty Hill
 CHB | Liberty Hill Chamber of Commerce
 DRC | Downtown Revitalization Committee
 TxDOT | Texas Department of Transportation
 WilCo | Williamson County
 LHISD | Liberty Hill ISD
 BUS | Business Community
 RE | Real Estate Developers & Brokers
 PR | Parks & Recreation Committee
 PZ | Planning & Zoning Committee

Impact on Community

JC | Job Creation
 TB | Building Tax Bas
 DR | Downtown Revitalization
 INF | Infrastructure
 TR | Transportation
 BD | Business Development & Entrepreneurship
 MK | Marketing
 SD | Site Development
 CS | Community Support

TIMELINE OF PRIORITIES

Focus on Specific Objectives from 2023 thru 2025

In this period of rapid growth and the ramping up the LHEDC organization and efforts, it is important to lay the foundation for long-term success. While all of the identified priorities are critical to the overall success of the EDC and its many objectives, it is also important to focus on a specific order of objectives to achieve the maximum positive impact on the city of Liberty Hill.

2023 | Year One

Year One is a foundational year. A year to build the effective organizational processes, identify marketable sites, create needed community response and outreach information, determine potential incentives, performance criteria and more.

- **IDENTIFY** marketable sites for future development and recruitment opportunities
- **SUPPORT** critical infrastructure and transportation projects
- **SUPPORT** downtown revitalization efforts
- **IMPLEMENT** targeted outreach strategies
- **BUILD** basic marketing tools including an effective website, infographics, maps, traffic numbers, retail information and more

2024 | Year Two

In addition to continuing the priorities of Year One, Year Two is when Liberty Hill's story comes alive. LHEDC will now be in a strong position to be reactive to new opportunities while being able to proactively approach developers and prospects regarding targeted business development. Year Two is when aggressive focus on Business Retention and Expansion initiatives are implemented. Year Two is also the time when programs for New Small Businesses, Entrepreneurship and Workforce Training are developed and introduced.

- **IMPLEMENT** aggressive outreach efforts to existing and expanding businesses
- **PROMOTE** small business and entrepreneurship initiatives, such as a revolving loan program, facade improvement programs, job creation programs, business training programs, etc. for Liberty Hill's small business community
- Continue strong **SUPPORT** for downtown revitalization efforts
- Aggressively **PROMOTE** identified marketable sites to LHEDC target markets

2025 | Year Three

In Year Three, the LHEDC will be hitting its stride and operating on full cylinders. With an overall effective organization in place, the LHEDC can begin major marketing campaigns, taking the Liberty Hill story to new audiences and elevating the identity of Liberty Hill to a regional, statewide and national level. Aggressive branding and marketing initiatives will, in essence, be the icing on the cake you have been baking for two years.

- **ELEVATE** Liberty Hill's profile and exposure on the regional, state and national level
- **TELL** the Liberty Hill Story of assets, amenities, business environment, quality of life and heritage.
- **STRENGTHEN** Partnerships that will enhance the effectiveness of the LHEDC

IN SUMMARY

This Action Plan is intended to guide the LHEDC's economic development efforts while maintaining the spirit of the LHEDC's commitment to innovation and inclusiveness. In Liberty Hill, we want economic development to foster business growth in a way that enhances community vitality through the creation of jobs and revenue.

One additional suggestion for increased effectiveness would be to create some physical separation between the City and the Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation. While it is critical that the City and the EDC continue to work together on their shared goals of strength and economic prosperity for Liberty Hill, Texas, our research shows that the perception of the LHEDC as an independent organization with a separate and specific purpose is clouded by the close proximity to the City as a government entity. A separate space would allow a welcoming and comfortable business atmosphere for interaction with prospects, businesses, entrepreneurs, brokers, developers and more. These stakeholders are, most often, reluctant to have private business conversations regarding property, finances, plans, etc. under the umbrella (or roof) of a government entity. The perception is that every conversation is or could be open to public meetings and open records requirements, even though, in reality, that is not true. Please take this as something to consider when you are making future plans and the LHEDC continues to expand its scope of work and activity.

In addition, with the population of Liberty Hill rapidly increasing, you are quickly exceeding a workload for a one person economic development office. As you consider future needs and budgeting resources, please consider what tasks could be allocated to an additional staff person on the LHEDC team or what items could be outsourced for maximum effectiveness.

Further, economic development should shape the place, talent, and resources that influence business creation, expansion, retention and attraction while maintaining alignment with Liberty Hill's values to be a vibrant, livable, inclusive, resilient and sustainable region.

You have all of the pieces of the puzzle. Let's get them all put together.

There are bright days ahead for Liberty Hill, Texas.

A Small Town with a Big Heart. 

LIBERTY HILL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Appendix



MODEL CITY CASE STUDIES

JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

The city of Jonesboro, AR has experienced a period of 23% growth in population and a marked increase in industrial jobs and capital investment in the last decade. As the largest city in northeast Arkansas, Jonesboro serves as a hub for the region and surrounding cities. Upon comparison, the Jonesboro region boasts very similar assets as the Liberty Hill, Texas region.

Transportation outlets, business parks, educational facilities and diverse outdoor amenities are all assets both locations share. The target markets are the same. Two mild differing factors: Jonesboro has strong & marketable business park sites in their inventory and have been involved in an aggressive approach to the aesthetics of the city and a multi-year downtown revitalization plan.



GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

The City of Greenville, South Carolina has experienced a strong resurgence as a tourism destination and quality place of choice for new residents. The city successfully adopted and completed a 10 year Redevelopment Plan for the center city of Greenville that included infrastructure, policy, zoning, parking, building codes and reconstruction, new development, retail & small business recruitment, green space enhancement, arts & culture, special events, entrepreneur incentives, housing experts, streetscapes, landscaping and more.

The Revitalization Committee consisted of city officials, architects, planners, developers, lenders, marketing experts, economic development professionals, philanthropists, art curators and chamber representatives. While the population is much larger than Liberty Hill's, the premise for creating a destination is the same. And they started in very poor condition. Liberty Hill is at a much higher starting point.

MODEL CITY CASE STUDIES

FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS

Fredericksburg, Texas, delivers the very best experiences in the hill country!! Explore what the city has to offer: hotels, B&B's, restaurants, live music, an afternoons of wine tasting on the 290 Wine Road, whatever your heart desires. The beautiful Hill Country is the perfect backdrop for a visit.

Explore why Fredericksburg is such a popular getaway! Their vibrant art and live music scene will entertain you. Their shops and restaurants will entice you. Their wine and spirits tours will relax you.

Following a 25+ year visionary plan to maintain their population, grow their business base, improve their infrastructure, promote their heritage and build a unique identity...this is a city whose long-term visionary plan was a resounding success. It did not come easy or without challenges, but it did come to fruition. The leadership of this dynamic small city will tell you that it took extensive planning, big imaginations, strong partnerships, big risk and a commitment to the investment needed to reach their dreams.



MANHATTAN, KANSAS

After consistently making a short list for business and corporate expansion, but coming up short, the City of Manhattan made the deliberate decision to expand their site offerings, spec buildings and shovel-ready land for new and expanding businesses. Their focus was to build first, put in all necessary infrastructure and then aggressively recruit their targeted businesses. It was a formula that paid off for their efforts.

The Manhattan Business Park is a 190 acre state-of-the art Business Park with access to a four lane highway and minutes from an Interstate. While it is not rail-served, it is located adjacent to their regional airport, which provides an expansion of targeted opportunities for business recruitment. This new park is now more than 50% leased with more tenants on the horizon.



MODEL CITY CASE STUDIES

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

The City of Grand Junction, Colorado is experiencing a period of strong growth due to a focus on small business development, innovative services and the creation of a downtown filled with vibrant commerce and activities. Nestled in the heart of Colorado's Grand Valley, Grand Junction boasts over 300 days of sunshine a year and a wealth of nearby outdoor recreation.

Their downtown is home to dozens of outstanding locally-owned shops, music venues, restaurants, and galleries. Tree-lined, pedestrian-friendly streets showcase public art, fountains, and historic buildings – along with tantalizing local cuisine, unique gifts, and relaxing family fun. Grand Junction made the conscious decision to make their community a place their residents would enjoy and then the tourists and new residents would follow.



LAUREL, MISSISSIPPI

In 1901, the Laurel Mercantile Co. opened in downtown Laurel and was a bastion of commerce in their city, supplying dry goods and work wares until the 1930s. Many decades have passed and "The City Beautiful" is seeing a revival as a haven for entrepreneurs, artists, and makers. In early 2016, a partnership was formed between the Raspberry family, Napier family and the Nowell family.

They used their combined expertise in history, design, historic preservation, organizational management, finance and accounting to reopen Laurel's bygone hometown store. The doors of the new Laurel Mercantile Co. opened on Front Street in December 2016, not long after HGTV's Home Town began filming Season 2. In 2018, the group expanded with a second retail location in Laurel with the addition of the Scotsman General Store & Ben's Woodshop. These projects served as a catalyst to a complete revitalization of the City of Laurel, MS.

TOPICAL CASE STUDIES

HEALTH & WELLNESS CLUSTERS

ERetailers and health care providers have responded to the evolving health needs of consumers for over a decade, but there is enormous room for improvement. There is not a single approach to retail health, wellness and medical retailization, however, with its neighborhood access, each project has the opportunity to create economically vibrant clusters focused on lifestyle.

Retail owners should be cognizant of the health and lifestyle driven formula by combining healthy dining options, wellness services, medical services and personal services. This fresh combination of retail use cannot be replicated in an online format.

Reimagining and transforming dated centers into one-stop health and wellness centers provides retail investors stable tenants with favorable lease terms.

TARGETED MARKETING

Camfil USA, Inc., a leading manufacturer of premium clean air solutions, announced plans to build a new manufacturing facility in Synergy Park located in Kilgore, Texas. Working closely with Site Selection Group, LLC and KEDC (Kilgore Economic Development Corporation), Camfil plans to invest more than \$50 million in the facility, which will add more than 200 new jobs within five years. This new manufacturing facility will be Camfil's seventh in the USA and will be equipped to produce a full range of air filtration products. The 350,000-square-foot facility will occupy 43 acres and is scheduled to open in late 2023. Camfil's expansion into Kilgore aligns with KEDC's mission to enhance a business climate that is conducive to job creation and retention while improving the standard of living for Kilgore residents. This was a competitive state-wide lead that was specifically looking for a shovel ready, utility served site.



www.thewellnessstoresm.com



www.kilgore-edc.com/eds/property/synergy-park-672-acre-business-park



FACT:

To attract customers, businesses should have attractive facades. In fact, 70% of first time sales are generated by customers drawn inside by the building's appealing exterior.

TOPICAL CASE STUDIES

TALENT ATTRACTION

The Amarillo Economic Development Corporation has been recognized for the *Take Root In Amarillo* initiative. The community website gives businesses, job seekers, students, and individuals looking to learn more about city life a special look into the rich cultural, economic, and social benefits of living and working in Amarillo. As an employment resource, the website has a live job board section, where employers can post local job opportunities that offer a salary of at least \$45,000 a year. In addition to jobs, internship positions for students and community members are posted by local companies. *Take Root In Amarillo* is an effective workforce program because it has the ability to be utilized by community partners in order to promote talent recruitment, retention, and economic development in the Amarillo area. Since its launch, the *Take Root In Amarillo* job board gained 342 new job postings from 21 local companies, totaling 1,135 job views and 103 apply clicks on postings sent through the job portal.



www.takerootinamarillo.com

SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM

The EforAll entrepreneurship program is fast-paced, fun community event that helps early-stage entrepreneurs gain valuable exposure and feedback on a business idea. It's a great opportunity to network, validate a business idea, and compete to win a cash prize. It is free for entrepreneurs to apply and free for all to attend. Pitch Contests are lively two hour events that offer entrepreneurs the opportunity to share their business ideas with a friendly audience.

- A pre-selected group of entrepreneurs get to pitch their idea to the audience including a group of judges and also set up a table to showcase their product/service. A pitch must be no longer than 2.5 minutes.
- The judges award three of the four cash prizes while the audience will vote on who will win the fourth cash prize.
- A group of entrepreneurs who are not selected to pitch will get an opportunity to set up a table to showcase their business idea. Attendees will vote to see if one of these entrepreneurs will also get the opportunity to pitch their idea.
- This is also a great program for high school students.



www.eforall.org/pitch-contests



FACT:

85% of managers believe that having teams with remote workers will become the new norm.

TOPICAL CASE STUDIES

BUSINESS PARK DEVELOPMENT

While millennial migration continues to saturate large downtowns across America, some smaller cities and developers are reimagining business parks to attract innovative companies and workers. One example is the new Keystone Innovation Industrial Park in Vista, CA. The Keystone Innovation Industrial Park, which opened in late 2019, is comprised of two buildings totaling 77,860 square feet. The Park - surrounded by five acres of permanent open space - will include contemporary amenities and expansive views over Carlsbad to the Pacific Ocean. There are seven suites total, ranging from 5,045-to-18,188 square feet. Keystone provides a tenant amenity area, which includes a basketball hoop and an outdoor area complete with a BBQ and seating area overlooking the canyon, plus a fire pit in the outdoor patio area overlooking the canyon with views toward the ocean. This innovative approach to combining industrial workspace with networking & relaxation space has been a winning formula for this Business Park.

ENTREPRENURIAL SUPPORT

The Nebraska City Small Business Incubator is a collaboration with the SCC Entrepreneurship Center Business Incubator, American National Bank (ANB) and Nebraska City Area Economic Development Corporation. Their vision is to develop and nurture a positive and safe environment for entrepreneurs to flourish and grow. Amenities include: one-on-one coaching, brainstorming with partners, strategic business planning, partnerships, networking with other successful entrepreneurs, access to business resources, monthly group coffee, monthly NBDC program on various topics, access to 1-Gig internet service, below market-rate rent, and a location that will help build business credibility while in the early stage. Business Accelerators are geared to speeding up the growth and success of startup and early stage companies. Entrepreneurs who have utilized this concept have a much greater rate of long-term success.



www.badieedevelopment.com



www.nebraskacityareadcc.com/grow-your-business/small-business-incubator/

TRENDS:

Top Five Most Active Industries In 2022: Biotech and Life Sciences: 67% | Advanced Manufacturing: 48%
Transportation and Logistics: 42% | Food and Beverage Processing: 40% | Software and IT: 23%

TOPICAL CASE STUDIES

CO-WORKING SPACE

CoLab Working Space is located in Vancouver, Washington. With the ability to work in a more mobile fashion, many businesses are utilizing co-working facilities to provide professional and productive workspace, shared amenities and affordable costs. Renovated existing buildings are most often used for these projects meaning a double bonus for the community. The concept was originally created for start-ups, small businesses, gig workers and travelers. Pre-pandemic, many were driving out of Liberty Hill to work, but now have the ability to complete some, if not all, of their work obligations from their home. But many prefer a work atmosphere as opposed to home, making co-working space the perfect alternative. There are multiple reasons to consider it a worthy community asset. The investment is minimal, with the most important offerings being a pleasant atmosphere with high speed internet access. These are funded on a daily-rate or membership basis.

www.heycolab.com



FOOD TRUCK PARKS

A community can thrive on the company of food trucks gathered in a circle around a communal seating area. If not for Austin food truck parks, where else would people quickly stop for a bite to eat after lounging around Zilker Park all day? Food truck parks offer a wide variety of cuisine, open-air seating, a sense of community, and affordability, so there's no reason not to love these outdoor food courts. Closest to Zilker Park and Barton Springs Pool, The Picnic Food Truck Park is BYOB and surrounded by Austin favorites, like Habibi, the inventive The Mighty Cone, Have a Taco, Cannone Gelato Italiano AND Cannone Cucina Italiana, The Burger Truck, Coat & Thai, and The New Orleans Original Po-Boy and Gumbo Shop truck. There's even a Dog Treat Truck for the good boys. Across the street, shop jewelry, baby clothes, and localized gifts from trucks, too! A favorite among Austinites, food truck parks are here to stay.

www.thepicnicaustin.com



TOPICAL CASE STUDIES

BUSINESS ACCELERATOR

Brenham | Washington County Economic Development and Main Street Brenham announced a collaboration with YellowTruck LLC to develop a retail incubator in Downtown Brenham. The incubator, YellowTruck Market, is housed at 101 E. Main Street.

The incubator team recruited businesses within a 60-mile radius of Brenham already selling their products online or through a social media presence. Selection criteria includes products that fill downtown retail business gaps like men's and children's items; jewelry makers, bakers, merchandise designers, leather or wood crafters, or other emerging artisan/maker businesses; and minority-owned businesses. The retail incubator assists participating businesses with training, cost-sharing, rent, and promotion.

YellowTruck Market is dedicated to filling retail gaps in Downtown Brenham, and to products designed, crafted, built, and made in their region of Texas.

YOUTH ROBOTICS PROGRAMS

Robotics has become a catalyst for inspiring and motivating students to learn more about science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

In its 26th year, CCISD nurtures and grows students through the exploration and cultivation of hands-on robotics teachings and produces award-winning results from competitions across the world.

Whether its in a class at the elementary E-STEM schools, or through the Robotics specialty program at the high school level, students learn about the mechanisms, construction and programming that goes into building industrial, educational and competitive robots. Embedded at all grade levels, students are designing, building, programming and documenting their findings. Roughly 135 Robotics teams across CCISD's 45 campuses are committed to developing skill sets both inside and outside the classroom through year-round competitions.



www.yellowtruckllc.com



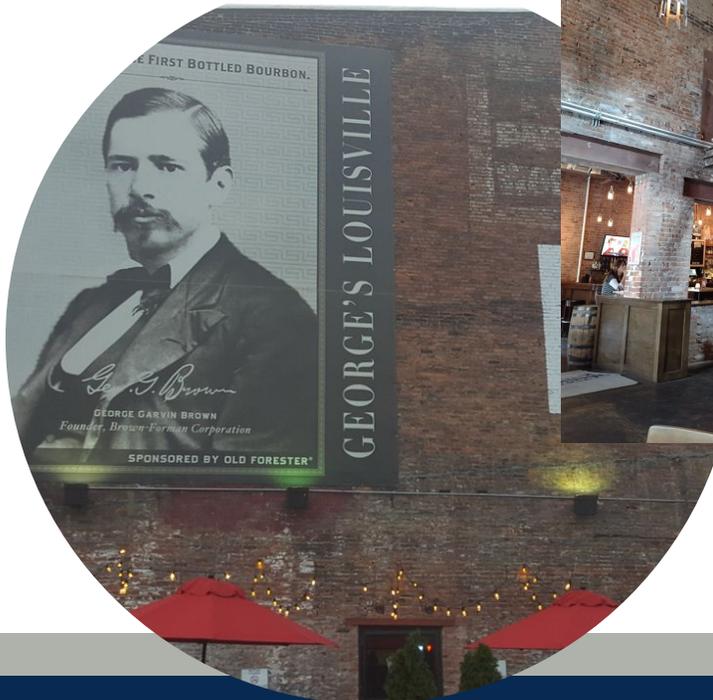
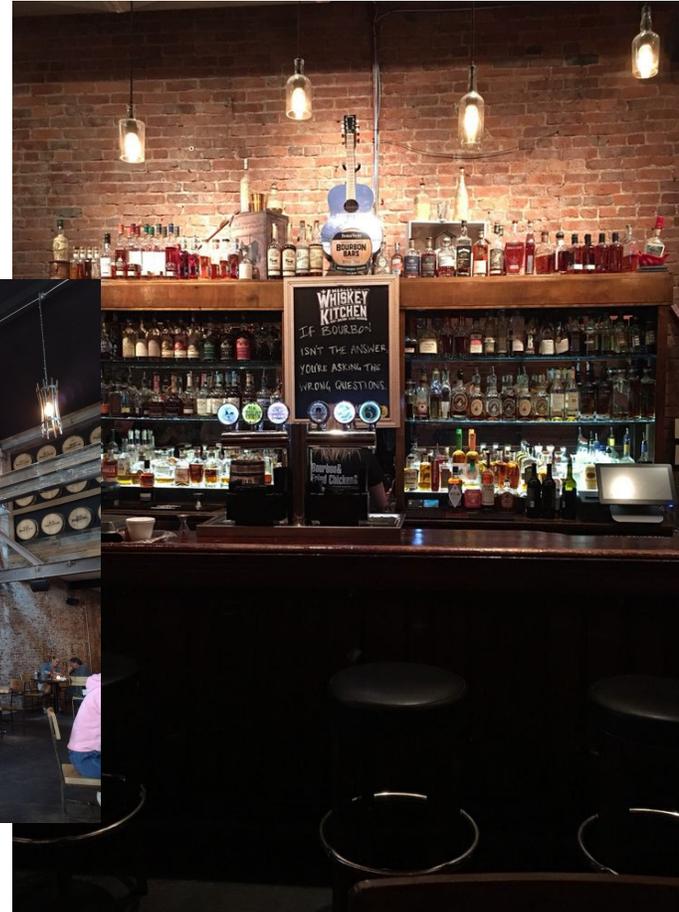
www.ccisd.net/robotics



TRENDS:

Top three issues facing Employers & Industries in 2022: 1) Staffing & Workforce; 2) Cybersecurity; and 3) Logistics.

CASE STUDY



Merle's Whiskey Kitchen Louisville, Kentucky

Merle's Whiskey Kitchen is a toe-tappin' classic whiskey hall located in Downtown Louisville on Whiskey Row. Featuring an award-winning menu of Southern/American cuisine and hand-crafted cocktails. They host live music from local, regional, as well as national artists.

When you enter through their open-air vintage doors, you'll be transported to a classic western whiskey hall. The historic interior features belt-driven fans and a bar built in the 1920's. They'll have you making new friends and having good times. Whiskey Kitchen: Memories are made there!

www.merleswhiskeykitchen.com

CASE STUDY

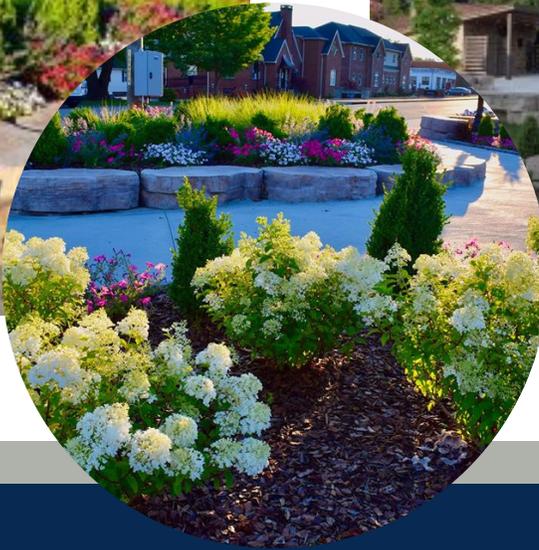


473 Bar & Backyard Tulsa, Oklahoma

The bar's name is an homage to the building it occupies, which was once a nationally registered historic place: Phillips 66 gas station No. 473, one of the early businesses in the first suburban development of Tulsa. The location was also unique in that it allowed for more patio space, creating a more organic social atmosphere. Beyond being nestled in a lovely neighborhood, 473 draws in patrons with well-crafted, affordable cocktails. Providing a venue for local acts—comedy, music, poetry, etc.—also means that 473 is truly a community gathering space. Niki and Andrew were able to accent the neutral colors of the World War II-era building and create a clean, inviting space. The bar's minimalist approach to decor ensures that the smaller inside area never feels too overcrowded.

Right across the way from American Slayer and Cabin Boys Brewery, 473 is yet another testament to the increasing vibrancy of the Tulsa community! Though the many bars and breweries in this district cooperate more than compete, 473 aims to separate itself from the pack by having a deeper commitment to the city's blossoming music scene.

CASE STUDY



Town Center London, Kentucky

Town Center Park is located in the heart of downtown London, Kentucky. The lush green and inviting space boasts a unique performance stage area, parking, and restrooms. This park serves as a gathering space throughout the year for picnics, entertainment, holiday events, health and fitness programs, food trucks, children's events and much more. Located at the end of Main Street, it serves as an anchor for the business district.

<https://londonky.gov/towncenter/>

CASE STUDY



Farm to Table Event Oroville, California

Every Spring and Fall you can join your neighbors for a very special evening of dining in Downtown Oroville. Celebrate local farms and restaurants at their Seasonal Farm to Table dinner. Held in the beautiful outdoor setting of Historic Downtown Oroville, this multi-course, family-style dinner is prepared by chefs from the local restaurants. This lovely evening under the stars features locally sourced food, live music, beer, and wine. Each ticket includes one complimentary glass, one drink ticket, and a 3-course meal. Proceeds are shared with local charities.

www.downtownoroville.com/events

CASE STUDY



Community Marketing Campaign Bryan, Texas

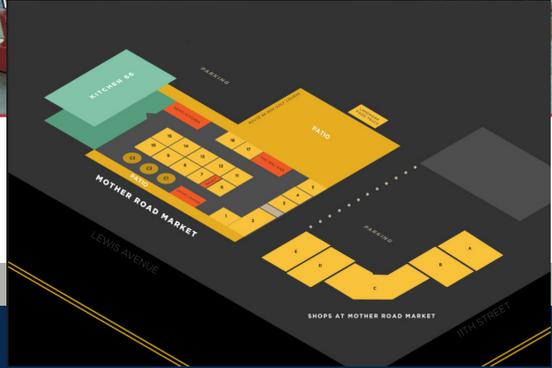
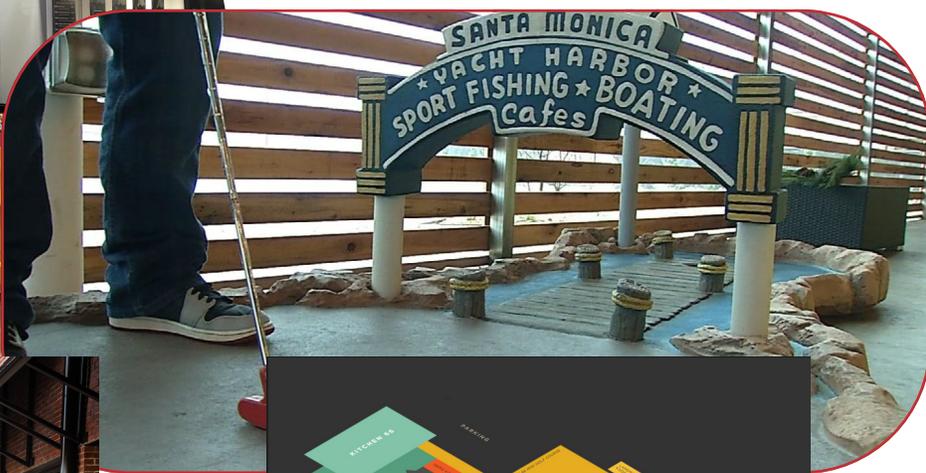
22 Things to do in Bryan, Texas in 2022

Take time to discover Bryan, Texas. They are a vibrant, diverse community home to extraordinary people, great food, exciting events, and fun things to do all year long. They developed a list of 22 Things To Do and marketed each event, venue, experience, etc. for 22 weeks. Then they went back through the list with photos of people enjoying the items that were on the list. It was an organized and aggressive way to bring attention to their amenities and events. I say Let's do a 23 Things to Do in Liberty Hill in 2023! Your 2023 Liberty Hill Bucket List!

www.destinationbryan.com

CASE STUDY

MOTHER ROAD MARKET



Mother Road Market Tulsa, Oklahoma

Eat! Sip! Shop! Mother Road Market is Oklahoma's first food hall! They are focused on good food, unique retail and offering Tulsa a vibrant space for their community to gather. Foodies, artists, musicians, travelers and YOU have a space to try local food and shop for unique finds plus you might even find a cooking class going on in their demonstration kitchen or a beer tasting happening at The WEL Bar! Did we mention the huge back patio with ample seating, live music and Route 66-themed mini golf? On top of all this, they are also a nonprofit focused on allowing entrepreneurs the opportunity to test out their latest food and retail concepts without the financial risk of opening their own space. They are supporting LOCAL, right on Route 66, so check them out at the corner of 11th and Lewis in Tulsa!

www.motherroadmarket.com

TARGET MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Your Identity

Determine the brand logo that will be used across all marketing platforms to create consistency, recognition and community pride.

The Message

Create a collection of Tag Lines to be used with the branding depending on the audience. Samples will be provided to the LHEDC staff. One of my favorites is "**LibertyHillisAlive**". You can attach many different nouns to this which will make it even more effective.

The Strategy

The marketing strategy focuses on generating growth, with a focus on growing existing Liberty Hill's businesses, attracting new Liberty Hill businesses and growing Liberty Hill's livability. To this end, the marketing plan outlines tactics to reach:

- Business and retail developers in-state and in the five surrounding states
- Young professionals with an affinity for the outdoors who currently live in the South and Southeast
- In-state influencers such as elected officials, news media and industry associations

Key Messages

Shaped by the brand mantra, "**LibertyHillisAlive**" Liberty Hill's key message boils down to this: Liberty Hill is not a sleepy, tired rural town. It's alive with new neighborhoods, alive with business, alive with opportunities, alive with outdoor recreation, etc. Here, you can make a life, a living, a profit ... and be a part of a city that is "alive" with dynamic growth.

Marketing Tactics

There is no silver bullet in economic development marketing. Instead, the plan outlines an integrated marketing approach, with a focus on earned and owned media given budget limitations, but also envisions what would be possible if additional funding is allocated.

Earned Media/Public Relations

The plan recommends pushing out a steady stream of positive Liberty Hill business news to targeted in-state, trade and national media through proactive pitching; hosting press familiarization tours; and working to get more business-related content in regional and statewide media, tourism outlets and resort publications.

Create New www.LibertyHillisAlive.com Webpages

Using this URL, the Liberty Hill EDC needs to add and build a new website portal to tell Liberty Hill's success stories and provide a hub for content that inspires people to live, work and start or grow a business in Liberty Hill. This portal can easily be added to the existing EDC website.

Owned Media - Digital/Social Media

LHEDC's digital strategy should encompass a strong presence on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook, as well as the launch of a "Digital Ambassadors" program, which harnesses the social media networks of people who are passionate about Liberty Hill, to spread positive messages to key target audiences. The plan also recommends a new **LibertyHillisAlive** e-newsletter and planting success stories in existing Liberty Hill e-newsletters.

COMMUNITY BASED MARKETING

What is a Community Based Marketing Campaign?

A community-based marketing campaign is a set of strategies used to achieve specific goals, such as building brand awareness, providing information to prospects, tourists or potential residents or promoting a new event, site or initiative.

Successful marketing campaigns not only have a clearly defined goal, but they also choose the right platform to try and reach it. Facebook may be used to market a community, available sites and quality of life to someone who has just landed on the site, while a search engine (SEO) campaign aims to drive consumers direct to your website or social media by matching search intent. No matter what platform a campaign is launched on, the aim should always be the same: to hit the campaign's goal. The good news is that although choosing the best marketing campaign platform for your goal takes time, it will always have the same components.

Components Of Successful Marketing Campaigns:

- ✓ A goal: Do you want to promote your community to outside prospects, tourists or residents or are you reminding your local citizens about everything that is great about your community. These are examples of different goals. Once you decide what you want the marketing campaign to achieve, it's easier to create a singular goal to strive for.
- ✓ An offer: Are you offering anything? A free meal? A local gift by a craftsman? A night at a hotel or a dinner at a local restaurant? Your offer will pave the way your marketing campaign is communicated to your audience. The offer serves as a hook for interest and to build a prospect list.
- ✓ An audience: Are you advertising to a working list? Or are you building a new ones? The target audience for your marketing campaign will impact everything from its goal to its messaging.
- ✓ A clear message: What are you selling? Your traffic count? Your business environment? Your housing? Your downtown? Your small businesses? Creating brand awareness? Giving away some freebies? Deciding on a clear message and sticking to it throughout the marketing campaign is essential to its success.

Yes, design assets and messaging are crucial, but if you launch a marketing campaign on a platform that your target audience does not use, you will not be rewarded for your efforts. Before you even get to the creative phase of a marketing campaign, you need to choose what type of campaign you will run.

12 types of marketing campaigns:

- **Brand awareness campaign**
- Rebranding campaign
- Search engine marketing campaign (SEO)
- **Social media marketing campaign**
- **Email marketing campaign**
- **Public relations campaign**
- **Product/Event/Site launch campaign**
- Referral marketing campaign
- Partner marketing campaign
- Conversational marketing campaign
- **Influencer marketing campaign**
- **Video marketing campaign**

COMMUNITY BASED MARKETING

SAMPLE CASE STUDY

Sample Social Media Campaign - 23 Reasons Liberty Hill Is Alive in 2023

- Set Up Social Media Accounts Called **LibertyHillsAlive**
- Host a Weekly Campaign for 23 weeks - Start in July 2023
- Invite people to follow your campaign on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram
- Invite people who are following to participate in your suggestions and posts a picture of them on any of the social media pages with the hashtags **#LibertyHillTx, #2023LibertyHillsAlive and #WhyLibertyHillTx**
- At the end of the campaign (around holiday time) draw some winners from the photo submissions for some local prizes.

Sample Branding Campaign Topics:

- Strategic Location
- Vibrant Downtown
- Transportation
- Education
- Pro-Business Environment
- Small Business Programs
- Workforce Ethic
- Summer Activities
- Housing
- Liberty Hill Cost of Living
- Nearby Amenities
- Traffic Counts
- Available Sites
- LHEDC is here to help
- Perfect Location for Events
- Natural Resources/Outdoor Amenities
- Parks/Library
- Health Care
- Civic Organizations
- Parks & Recreation
- Youth Activities
- Outdoor Amenities
- Holiday Events

COMMUNITY BASED MARKETING

CASE STUDY : MANCHESTER, TENNESSEE | MOREMANCHESTER

Video Campaign

Here's a pretty amazing fact: people retain 95% of a message when they watch it on video compared to 10% when they read it as text. No wonder video has quickly become THE go-to medium for marketers who want to connect with customers, build pipelines, and better engage audiences. Visual sample campaigns will provided to GMED staff.

Reasons to implement a video campaign include:

- Increase the ROI of your content marketing
- Target key prospects more effectively with personalized insights from video viewing data
- Improve your conversion rate and build pipeline by combining video engagement, analytics, and marketing automation
- Ask each person in the video the same question. You will get diverse answers which is what you want.
- When posting the videos, always use your established hashtags **#MoreManchester**, **#WhyManchesterTN** and **#ManchesterTNRocks**

Sample Video Campaign "Why Manchester?":

- Local business owner testimonies
- Employees who live in Manchester
- Employees who commute into Manchester
- Residents who work in Manchester
- Residents who commute daily to work somewhere else, but choose to live in Manchester
- Children and Teenagers
- Elected officials
- Community volunteers
- Truck Stop & Convenient store reps
- Hotel representatives
- Young families
- Arts & Culture representatives
- Special event videos
- Teachers & School administrators
- Medical representatives
- First Responders
- Veterans
- Senior Citizens
- Park officials
- New families
- Long-time Manchester residents

BEING PREPARED

In order for an organization to be effective in both internal and external initiatives, it is important to develop and maintain a set of community, county and regional information that is used in decision-making, prospecting, prospect responses, small business development, marketing outreach, measurability of initiatives and more. These records should be updated on a regular basis and be stored in a manner that allows them to be accessed quickly, digitally and in a professional reporting format.

Suggested Files to Develop and Maintain

- Workforce Availability Numbers for City, County and Region
- Job Skills required in Existing Businesses
- Classes provided locally or regionally that are considered job skills
- Average Number of High School Graduates
- List of schools, colleges, technical schools, education programs and higher education within 150 miles
- Available Housing and costs (listing specific types)
- List of Local and Regional Realtors and Brokers
- List of available Commercial Property (with condition, owner/realtor, price, etc.)
- List of available greenfield sites (with condition, utilities, owner/realtor, price, etc.)
- List of available downtown/retail sites (with condition, owner/realtor, price, etc.)
- List of existing businesses located in the city & county, along with status, owner and type
- List of target industries
- List local, county and regional transportation options (highways, rail and air)
- List of local, regional, state and federal elected officials who represent your city, county and region
- List of potential incentives (internal document)
- List of available programs & incentives (external document)
- List of monthly sales tax revenues and allocations
- List mileage distance to pertinent benchmark cities
- Number of water hook-ups and planning & zoning requests
- Estimated traffic numbers on major intersections and roadways
- List of all utility providers that serve the region
- List of all events (dates and locations) that are offered in the region
- List of local and regional civic groups
- Contact information for representatives from important state and federal agencies
- Archive all outgoing marketing
- Archive all request for information from local or outside sources
- Maintain all pertinent records for banking, employee, land contracts and GEDC obligations
- Maintain Cost of Living Reports
- Maintain results from all social media, digital and traditional marketing campaigns
- Maintain a list of all who have requested information about Goliad
- Maintain files of all outgoing proposals
- Maintain files of all mentions of Goliad and the Goliad EDC by outside sources
- Maintain files of various maps to be used in presentations and proposals
- and more....

RELATIONSHIPS & PARTNERSHIPS

One of the critical elements of the future success and sustainability of the Liberty Hill EDC and economic growth of the city lies with the array of relationships you maintain with a variety of partners, resources, elected officials, existing business leaders, community volunteers and more. Make it a priority to build and maintain these relationships at the local, regional, state and federal level. It will pay dividends.

Suggested relationship & partnership building goals:

- City Council
- Planning & Zoning Commission
- County Commissioners
- Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Revitalization Committee
- Parks & Recreation Committee
- Independent School District and ISD Board Members
- Local Youth Groups
- Local Senior Groups
- Local Business Civic Groups
- Surrounding Colleges and Universities
- Nearby Skills Training Centers
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Texas Department of Economic Development/Governor's Office
- Texas Historical Commission
- Texas Workforce Commission
- Texas Downtown Association
- Texas Film Commission
- Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs
- Texas Department of Agriculture
- Texas Economic Development Council (State Association)
- Association of Rural Communities in Texas
- Texas Rural Funders
- Local and Regional Realtors and Brokers
- Regional, State and National Site Selectors
- Local and Regional Utility Representatives
- Regional Rail Representative
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Economic Development Agency-EDA (Federal Agency)
- And more...

POTENTIAL INCENTIVES

Federal Programs

- The Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZone) Program | www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/hubzone-program
- Opportunity Zones | <https://opportunityzones.hud.gov/>
- USDA Programs | <https://www.rd.usda.gov/tx>
- EDA Programs | <https://eda.gov/programs/eda-programs/>
- SBA 504 Program | <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/504-loans>
- New Markets Tax Credit Program | <https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/programs/new-markets-tax-credit>
- Federal Rehabilitation Tax Program | <https://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/preservation-tax-incentives/federal-rehabilitation-tax-credit-program>

State of Texas <https://gov.texas.gov/business/page/incentives>

- Texas Enterprise Fund Program
- Texas Product/Business Funds
- Texas Enterprise Zone
- Texas Leverage Fund
- Texas Industry Development Revolving Loan Program
- Skills Development Fund
- Texas Historic Tax Credit Program | <https://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/preservation-tax-incentives/federal-rehabilitation-tax-credit-program>

Potential Local Incentives

To encourage revitalization, Liberty Hill Economic Development Corporation's incentive programs would be part of an overall strategy to leverage investments, lower the cost of doing business, and level the playing field for business owners choosing to invest in their properties and in the Liberty Hill Business District. The following is a description of potential programs that could be offered by the LHEDC. All Incentives should be considered along with Performance Agreements, Matching Funds or a Rebate, Refund or Forgiveness AFTER certain performance is met. The recipient should always have "skin in the game".

- *Expansion & Relocation Grant Program*
- *Low Interest Revolving Loan Fund (USDA)*
- *TIF Zones*
- *TERZ Zones*
- *Reinvestment Zones*
- *Opportunity Zones*
- *Rent Forgiveness*
- *Downtown Programs*
- *Facade & Sign Programs*
- *Job Creation Programs*
- *Chapter 380 Agreements*
- *Tax Abatement Program*
- *Gap Redevelopment Grant Program*
- *Second Floor Development Grant Program*
- *Security Enhancement Grant Program*
- *Utility and Sales Tax Rebate Programs*
- *And more....*

A DYNAMIC EDC WEBSITE

An economic development organization's website is its most effective marketing tool, followed by "planned visits to corporate executives" and "media relations/publicity." With nearly two thirds (66%) of executives and locations advisors indicating they were likely to visit an EDO's website during their next site search—an increase of 18% since 2011—it's more important than ever to make sure your EDO's website is effective in marketing and providing information on your community. Whether you're in the midst of making touchups or are considering a total site overhaul, here are some best practices to make sure your EDO website is at the top of its game.

1. Keep Demographic Data Up-to-Date

Site selectors, executives and other decision makers want to know if your community has the workforce needed to support their business. That's why it's important to include the most recent data sourced from a third party. For best results, make it easily accessible (1-2 clicks) from the homepage.

2. Highlight Key Industries

Location advisors want to know what your region does best. Tout your top business sectors with a dedicated page for each. Clearly identify the sector's strategic advantages and list or provide success stories for the top employers in the region to demonstrate a robust industry network. This brings us to our next item...

3. Showcase Leading Employers

Showcasing your community's leading employers is a great way to show decision makers, not only that other major companies are already thriving there, but that strong business and industry networks exist in the area. Include a dedicated page for leading employers and provide additional information (i.e. description of company operations and current employment) on at least five of the top employers. For bonus points, include links to company success stories.

4. Provide Comprehensive Contact Information

If a contact form or general email is the only way to contact your organization, your community will miss out on big opportunities. Location advisors and corporate executives are most likely to contact EDOs for the first time following the development of a shortlist in order to request specific information or to arrange a visit. When they're ready to make that call, a decision maker wants to be able to get on the phone with the right contact—ideally with the phone number easily found within one click from the homepage. Make sure to provide comprehensive contact details (direct phone, e-mail, title) for key members along with a photo so site visitors know exactly who they're talking to. They do not fill out forms.

5. Put Incentives Front and Center

Be sure to provide a comprehensive overview of state and local incentives—again, ideally within 1-2 clicks from the homepage.

6. Info on Available Sites

Information on available sites is something every comprehensive EDO site should have—whether it's a dedicated page or a link to a separate provider. Using graphics and maps is a plus.

7. Share the Latest News

Keep visitors up-to-date on what's going on in your region by posting all the latest announcements, events and accolades. Try to post at least one update per month (if not several) and make sure external news (i.e. company relocations and expansions) outweighs internal news.

8. Consider User Experience

You may have noticed the "1-2 clicks" rule is becoming a pattern. As an exercise, have a colleague or peer who is unfamiliar with the site do a test to see if he or she can find everything a site selector might need within 1-2 clicks of the homepage. If not, your site could be causing visitors unnecessary frustration and a navigation makeover may be something to consider. Another absolute must for a successful EDO website: responsiveness across mobile devices. Now try the "1-2 clicks" exercise from a smartphone.

9. Keep Design Modern and Fresh

While this best practice may be considered somewhat subjective, there are a few good rules of thumb for making sure your site is looking its best. For one, using large, crisp images is a great way to dress up any site. Increasingly, "retina-quality" images—roughly 300 or more pixels per inch—are becoming the web industry standard. High-quality images, balanced with an appropriate amount of "white space," bold colors and text is a great recipe for modern, fresh web design.

10. Don't Let Your Content Get Lost

It's widely accepted that if you're not in the top two or three Google search results (in this case, when a user enters your community followed by "economic development"), you're losing out on site viewers. That's why SEO is arguably one of the most important aspects of web design.

With these 10 tips, you're ready to let your EDO website shine.

SAMPLE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

ATTRACT DINING, ENTERTAINMENT & NIGHTLIFE

- Facilitate Open Houses for empty businesses
- Conduct parking & lighting assessment for pedestrian friendly business atmosphere
- Develop strategic outreach strategy for targeted businesses to expand into Liberty Hill
- Develop site sheets on available spaces to assist in outreach marketing

FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC SITES

- Work with the City on potential needed infrastructure improvements
- Current building owner outreach
- Town Hall Meetings with building owners and interested buyers
- Develop an Expert Team of Architects, Engineers, Designers, Lenders, etc.
- Other building opportunities as they materialize
- Work with Planning & Zoning Committee to create smart development

DEVELOP DOWNTOWN GREEN SPACE

- Initiate Community Survey of Downtown Space Needs
- Explore pros and cons of green space options
- Consider ideal permanent and temporary options for outdoor green and gathering space
- Consider traffic flow, parking, lighting and permitting
- Consider best space development for desired events, activities, arts, culture and entertainment

SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Information Packets for Small Businesses
- Facilitate Training Workshops
- Obtain sample business plans for popular potential downtown businesses
- Host a "Big Idea" Business Plan Contest for students and adults
- Create a Facade and Signage Matching Grant Program
- Create a Revolving Loan Fund for Downtown

DOWNTOWN MARKETING STRATEGIES

- Aggressive Social Media Outreach
- Campaigns Developed for Specific Audiences (Locals, Tourists, Workers, Brokers, Etc.)
- Local Transparency about Downtown Revival
- Support Chamber and Tourism events

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SALES TAX

TEXAS TYPE A & TYPE B ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

OVERVIEW

The Development Corporation Act of 1979 gives cities the ability to finance new and expanded business enterprises in their local communities through economic development corporations (EDCs). Chapters 501, 504 and 505 of the Local Government Code outline the characteristics of Type A and Type B EDCs, authorize cities to adopt a sales tax to fund the corporations and define projects EDCs are allowed to undertake.

Type A EDCs — Developing Industries

Type A EDCs are typically created to fund industrial development projects such as business infrastructure, manufacturing and research and development. Type A EDCs can also fund military base realignment, job training classes and public transportation.

Type B EDCs — Developing Industries & Cultivating Communities

Type B EDCs can fund all projects eligible for Type A, as well as parks, museums, sports facilities, and affordable housing. However, Type B EDCs are subject to more administrative restrictions than Type A.

Allowable Costs

There are some limitations on how sales tax revenues can be used to fund a project. Eligible expenditures include:

- acquisition of land;
- machinery and equipment;
- construction costs;
- planning and professional services related to the project;
- financial transactions and reserve funds; and
- administrative and other necessary expenditures.

Primary Jobs Requirement

The main requirement is that the businesses bring new money into the community. In 2003, the Legislature voted to require that certain projects create or retain primary jobs. A primary job is one at a company that exports a majority of its products or services to markets outside the local region, infusing new dollars into the local economy. Primary jobs are further limited to specific industry sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing and scientific research and development. Those industry limitations can be found in Local Government Code, Chapter 501.

Performance Agreements

EDCs cannot simply give sales tax proceeds to businesses. An EDC must enter into a written performance agreement with any business enterprise that it funds directly or makes expenditures that benefit an eligible project. At a minimum, the performance agreement must contain:

- a schedule of additional payroll or jobs to be created or retained;
- the capital investment to be made by the business enterprise; and
- the terms for repayment of the EDC's investment if the business fails to meet the performance requirements specified in the agreement.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SALES TAX

TEXAS TYPE A & TYPE B ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (CONTINUED)

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

Type A Sales Tax

Any city located in a county with a population of less than 500,000 may impose a Type A tax if the new combined local sales tax rate would not exceed 2 percent. Some cities located in counties with a population of 500,000 or more (Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, Hidalgo, Tarrant and Travis) may also use Type A for economic development efforts but a city's eligibility varies from county to county. For information on which cities are eligible in these counties, call the Comptroller's Local Government Assistance section at (800) 531-5441, ext. 3-4679.

Type B Sales Tax

All cities are eligible to adopt the Type B sales tax if the combined local sales tax rate would not exceed 2 percent.

- a schedule of additional payroll or jobs to be created or retained;
- the capital investment to be made by the business enterprise; and
- the terms for repayment of the EDC's investment if the business fails to meet the performance requirements specified in the agreement.

ESTABLISHING THE CORPORATION

Development Corporations

For both Type A and Type B, the Development Corporation Act requires cities to establish a corporation to administer the sales and use tax funds. The corporation must file a certificate of formation with the Secretary of State. The articles of incorporation must state that the corporation is governed by the Development Corporation Act of 1979 found in Chapters 501-505 of the Local Government Code.

Board of Directors

The boards of directors of both Type A and Type B EDCs serve at the pleasure of the city council and may be removed and replaced at any time and without cause. All funding agreements approved by an EDC must also be approved by the city council. The composition of a corporation's board of directors and the length of a member's term differ between Type A and Type B.

Under Type A

The city council must appoint a board of directors with at least five members to serve terms up to six years. The statute does not specify qualifications for Type A corporation board members.

Under Type B

The city council must appoint a board of seven directors — up to four of whom can be employees or officers of the city or city council members — to serve two-year terms. If the city's population is 20,000 or more, the directors must be residents of the city. For cities with fewer than 20,000 residents, directors must be residents of the county where the majority of the city is located, or reside within 10 miles of the city and in a county

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SALES TAX

TEXAS TYPE A & TYPE B ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (CONTINUED)

OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

Administration Expenses

Type A and Type B EDCs are authorized to pay the administrative expenses (including staff) to implement projects. These may include administrative expenses for the acquisition, construction, improvement, expansion and financing of projects. Cities that perform some of the administrative functions for Type A or Type B corporations may be reimbursed for administrative expenses for projects overseen by city staff. An EDC also may contract with a private corporation or other entity.

Training

The EDC administrator, the city attorney and the city administrator or the city clerk of the municipalities creating Type A and Type B corporations are required to attend an economic development training seminar within 90 days of taking office. The seminar must be repeated every two years. Corporation funds may be used to pay the costs of attending the seminar. The Comptroller's office may impose a penalty of up to \$1,000 for officials who fail to attend the required training seminar. EDC training can be obtained from the Texas Economic Development Council.

Open Meetings and Public Hearings

Type A and Type B EDCs' boards of directors are subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act, found in Chapter 551 of the Government Code. A Type B EDC serving a city with fewer than 20,000 residents is exempt from holding public hearings for projects eligible under Type A rules. However, these small cities must give the resolution at least two separate readings if the funding agreement is for \$10,000 or more.

All Type B corporations, regardless of city population, must hold public hearings on all other types of projects. In addition, all Type B corporations must wait 60 days from the first public notice of the nature of a project before providing funds.

Type A corporations are required to hold public hearings only when considering an election to authorize a Type B project.

Open Government training can be obtained from the Texas Office of the Attorney General.

Reporting Requirements

The Development Corporation Act requires all Type A and Type B corporations to file an annual report with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts by Feb. 1 of each year.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SALES TAX

TEXAS TYPE A & TYPE B ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (CONTINUED)

HOW TYPE A SALES TAX REVENUE CAN BE USED

The Type A sales tax is primarily intended for manufacturing and industrial development. EDCs may use Type A revenue to fund land, buildings, equipment, facilities expenditures, targeted infrastructure and improvements for projects including:

- manufacturing and industrial facilities, recycling facilities, distribution centers, and small warehouse facilities;
- research and development facilities, regional or national corporate headquarters facilities, primary job training facilities operated by higher education institutions, job training classes, telephone call centers and career centers not located within a junior college taxing district;
- certain infrastructure improvements that promote or develop new or expanded business enterprises;
- aviation facilities;
- commuter rail, light rail or commuter bus operations;
- port-related facilities, railports, rail switching facilities, marine ports, inland ports; and
- maintenance and operating costs associated with projects.

With voter approval, Type A EDCs may fund projects eligible under Type B without voting to abolish the Type A tax and impose the Type B tax. In this situation, a Type A EDC must publish notice of its intent to fund a Type B project, hold at least one public hearing and conduct a special election.

Type A EDCs also may seek voter approval to spend Type A sales tax funds to clean up contaminated property. A Type A corporation cannot assume, or pay principal or interest on, debts that existed before voters agreed to establish the EDC.

HOW TYPE B SALES TAX REVENUE CAN BE USED

The Type B sales tax may be used for any project eligible under Type A rules and several other project types, including quality of life improvements. Type B corporations may pay for land, buildings, equipment, facilities, targeted infrastructure and improvements for:

- professional and amateur sports and athletic facilities, tourism and entertainment facilities, convention facilities and public parks;
- related store, restaurant, concession, parking and transportation facilities;
- related street, water and sewer facilities; and
- affordable housing

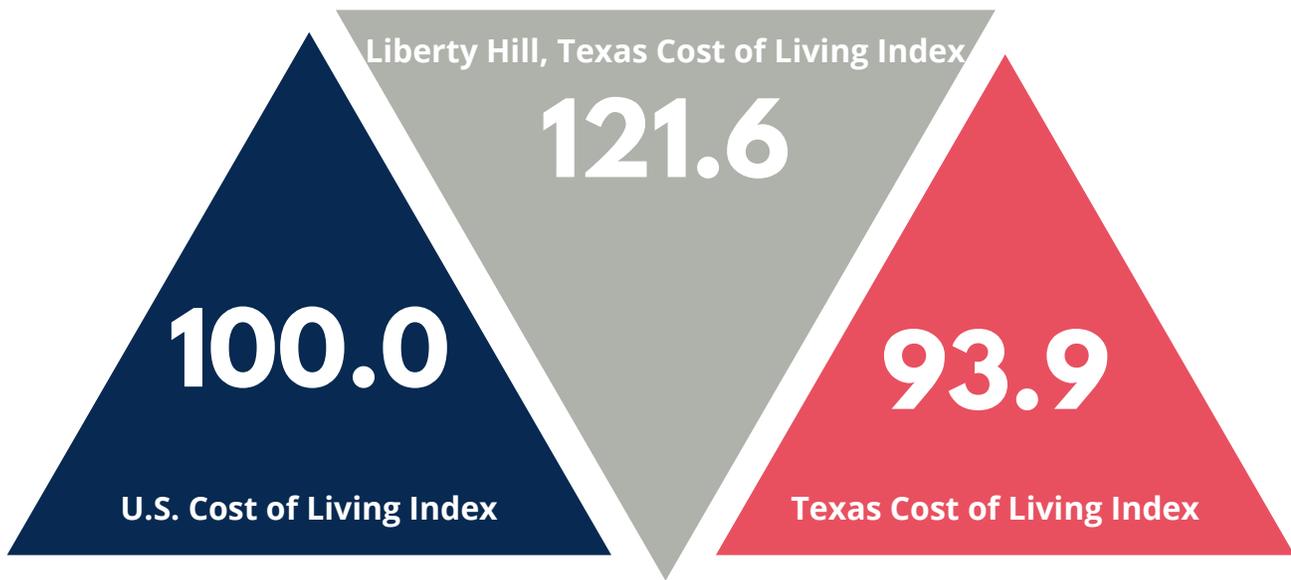
To promote and develop new and expanded business enterprises that create or retain primary jobs, a Type B EDC may fund:

- public safety facilities;
- recycling facilities;
- streets, roads, drainage and related improvements;
- demolition of existing structures;
- general municipally owned improvements; and
- maintenance and operating costs associated with projects.

Type B EDCs also may seek voter approval to spend Type B sales tax funds for a water supply, water conservation program or cleanup of contaminated property.

Source: Texas Office of the Comptroller

COST OF LIVING COMPARISON



Cost of Living scores and indexes are a way to compare the overall price of goods and services between different areas of the United States. The national average is 100, so when you look at a place's COL Index you can instantly see how much more or less you'll have to pay to live there. If a place has a cost of living index of 135, then it is 35% more expensive to live there than the national average. If a place has a cost of living index of 85, then it is 15% cheaper than the average for the entire country.

The biggest factor in Cost of Living is housing costs – buying a house or apartment, or renting one. Cost of living comparisons include **housing, food, utilities, transportation, healthcare costs (including premiums and common surgeries), taxes, and child care prices.**

Liberty Hill has higher than average housing costs, but not out of line with other cities in Williamson County. Other factors are at, or below, the US cost of living averages.

Sources: *us census bureau, bestplaces.net and texas.gov*

9 PILLARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The The 9 Pillars of Economic Development in Growing Cities By Lorie Vincent, CEcD

Please join me as I share the 9 Pillars of Economic Development in Growing Cities. With 30+ years in the economic development industry and having worked with more than 250 communities, these pillars have emerged as necessary environments for a community, regardless of population, to experience growth, vitality and sustainability. The Pillars are Education, Housing, Infrastructure, Collaboration, Growth Strategies, Livability Factors, Memorable Marketing, Attitude and Vibrant Downtowns. All Pillars are important, regardless of order of the following articles.

Economic Development Pillar #1: We can't Build for Tomorrow without Education

The first Pillar is **EDUCATION**. It may seem cliché to say, “our children are our future”, but it’s true. Our children ARE our future...our future labor force, future entrepreneurs, future public servants and future leaders. It is our obligation, as a community, to provide them with the best tools and learning environments to reach their maximum potential.

In economic development, we look at the Educational Environment in three capacities: 1) as a measure of a healthy community; 2) as a quality-of-life issue; and 3) as a recruiting tool for growth.

As a professional economic developer, I would pose these questions to the citizens of Liberty Hill...is your school system an asset to the community? Is it a viable and healthy environment for learning? Is it a safe and engaging atmosphere for the students, teachers and administration? What is the physical condition of your facilities, food service, parking, HVAC and technology? Is the Liberty Hill ISD able to recruit and retain a superior level of teaching professionals? Is your school environment competitive with other school systems and other employers in the region? Do the schools in Liberty Hill provide the highest level of technology needed in today's digital world? Is the Liberty Hill school system a reason people live in your community or is it the reason people leave your community? Do school activities serve as a driver to bring the community together? Do extracurricular activities serve as a catalyst for bringing outside tourism into Liberty Hill? Can your schools absorb a growth in population and additional students? Is there a vision for administration to make it the best it can be?

A strong educational system is a critical Pillar for economic growth and prosperity. The underlying objective of economic development is to create jobs, create capital investment, increase the tax base and grow the population to support your existing and new business base. If economic development efforts are to be successful, the excellence of the school system will have played their part.

Lesson Learned: I have often said, that if a downtown is the HEART of your community, then the school system is your BRAIN. We must all feed and nourish our education system to the best of our ability.

After all, our children are our future.

9 PILLARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Pillar #2: Housing is a Need, not a Want

The second Economic Development Pillar is **HOUSING**. The lack of quality and affordable housing is a critical need that is prevalent throughout Rural America.

But not all housing is created equal. Therefore, when a community gives the rallying cry of “we need housing,” an abundance of questions must be answered. Technically, there are at least seventeen types of housing including single family starter homes to rent, single family starter homes to buy, single family custom homes, multi-family residential to buy, multi-family residential to rent, duplex/four-plexes to rent, townhomes/condos to buy, townhomes/condos to rent, senior active 55+ multifamily rental, senior active 55+ garden homes to buy, independent living, assisted living, modular homes, mobile home parks, mixed-use rentals/lofts, portable worker housing, vacation rentals and more. These housing initiatives require a different level of investment, have different incentive programs available to developers and constitute a very diverse level of affordability.

One of the biggest mistakes I see in communities across the USA is the investment in housing that a community wants, instead of the type of housing that a community needs. I’m highly supportive of pro-actively investing in the types of neighborhoods that match the vision of a community, but only if the overall economic development plan aggressively supports the efforts to create jobs at a salary that can support that type of housing. Otherwise, you will be left with empty homes, mad developers and you will have not solved your problem of providing housing that meets your immediate needs.

A strong housing market helps families build wealth, attend good schools, and live in communities that are more conducive to long-term success. So when you are ready to discuss the “need for housing” in your community, be sure and drill down to identify your actual needs. And don’t forget that housing availability is a chain reaction. In developing your housing flow chart, be sure and consider that inserting new housing opportunities at any level of the inventory will start a domino effect opening up housing at a different level. A well-planned and maintained housing forecast is critical to the viability and sustainability of a community.

Lesson Learned: Give serious thought about your actual market when identifying your housing needs and be willing to invest dollars into the resurgence of historical and long-standing neighborhoods to increase the overall quality of life in your community.

9 PILLARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Pillar #3: Do you Have Good Bones?

The third Economic Development Pillar is **INFRASTRUCTURE**. In economic development, we consider infrastructure the “bones” of your community. Do you have good strong bones? Or are they weak, fractured or at risk?

When considering the health of your infrastructure, we are talking about many different facets. All elements are critically important in their own way. A community checklist of infrastructure includes water, sewer, roads, bridges, drainage, curbs and gutters, ADA accessibility, sidewalks, drainage, electric, gas, telecommunications, internet, broadband, WiFi access, rail, airport/airstrips and more.

Like good strong bones, all types of infrastructure should have periodic and in-depth assessments. The maintenance of infrastructure is ongoing and should be consistently budgeted so that a weakness never evolves. Our Texas cities are now 100-150 years old. The roads, water lines, utilities, curbs and gutters, sewer systems and other functioning bones must be maintained, replaced, and renewed to provide a vibrant and modern quality of life for your citizens and prospects. There are numerous funding programs available to assist in the maintenance and replacement of needed infrastructure, but there is heavy process involved, so they are difficult to access in emergency situations. Knowing and keeping up with the various infrastructure programs will greatly benefit the city, county, schools, hospitals and all who are involved in the installation and maintenance of your bones. Everything wears out at some point and new technologies, equipment and materials make it much easier to provide a strong foundation for your community's economy.

When economic development efforts are operating at a highly effective level, the taxes generated by new and consistent sales tax, ad valorem tax and fees are a good investment for the community when used efficiently and effectively for the installation and maintenance of your infrastructure. After all, your citizens deserve safe, clean, strong and effective bones.

Lesson Learned: Being aware of your bones' condition and making a strong multi-year plan for replacement, repairs and new installations are critical to the health of your community. It is much more budget effective to do regular assessments of your infrastructure than to deal with an emergency. If your community is growing, you will want to be proactive in making sure all your infrastructure bones remain strong, resilient and in great working condition. Just as we do what we can to keep our own bones healthy, so we should do with our community's infrastructure.

9 PILLARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Pillar #4: Two is Better than One

The fourth Economic Development Pillar is **COLLABORATION**. It is also the hardest. We are all wired to be singularly focused on our own tasks at hand, primarily the objectives of OUR organization and OUR mission. In fact, in today's business world, it seems that is all we would ever have time for. In short, it is simply not sustainable to pursue economic growth alone.

Why is it that some communities have a long history of economic development success and prosperity while others with similar economic assets suffer with continued failure and disinvestment? All communities have economic strengths and weaknesses, but successful ones share an organizational characteristic that eludes the unsuccessful: they are able to manage the two primary economic development functions, leadership and execution, and present them as a single face. Leadership is key in that they establish the framework and plan for successful economic development. The staff plays an important role by executing that plan.

Both leadership and execution of various entities operate as a cross-functional team that manages the community's economic development process from end-to-end. This can prove to be a difficult relationship, however. Even long-established programs can routinely fail to manage conflicts between the various entities' leadership and staff, thus spending unproductive time and resources on turf battles.

Successful communities have boosted cross-functional collaboration and team spirit between several entities and their staff, while unsuccessful communities have allowed the two functions to build independent silos that are sluggish, lack communication, and create zealously guarded roles that hinder collaboration.

Leadership includes elected, professional, and volunteer individuals who provide the sustainable organization structure, the physical infrastructure, a shared community vision, a clearly defined direction, and funding to foster and facilitate execution. Their role includes but is not limited to: basic knowledge of economic development, political will to maintain a predictable pro-business climate, strategic focus and passion for results and a legacy of successful public/private partnerships.

The execution team, which includes professionals and staff, provides the ability to execute a fully integrated economic development plan. Their role includes, but is not limited to: the ability to develop business prospects and economic opportunities, the empowerment to make decisions and commit the community, the agility and quickness in response capabilities, and the ability to organize and function in collective and collaborative efforts.

Lesson Learned: Some communities have attempted to break down conflicts between the two functions and build cross-functional collaboration but have failed. Though it appears to be logical and easy to make cooperation happen, it is actually very difficult. Getting an economic development organization, a city, a county, a school ISD, a hospital district, a chamber and industry to all agree and pursue a common outcome is tricky, but possible. A familiar roadblock is who gets credit for successes. Communities that have achieved economic development successes know that success generates enough credit that all functions can share equally and collaborate for the best interest of the community.

9 PILLARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Pillar #5: Are you Growing Weeds or Flowers

The fifth Economic Development Pillar is **GROWTH STRATEGIES**. Yes, it is possible to experience organic growth. Organic growth appears with no effort from the community at all. It may happen because of your geographic location, your natural resources, your proximity to nearby industry expansion, global market needs or other reasons. However, organic growth is not sustainable. It is out of your control. When a piece of property is for sale and a prospect purchases it and creates jobs, it is considered growth. But was that the highest and best use of that property? Would you have been able to cluster that new business with others in order to maximize profits? Is your available property zoned properly? Does your residential and commercial growth feel haphazard? Are you marketing your city to prospects that would bring the kind of salaries that would enhance the growth of your community? How will they impact housing, schools and social services?

Every City needs a plan. Every County needs a Plan. Every Economic Development Corporation needs a plan. Every Chamber, Hospital District and School ISD needs a plan. And in the most successful cities, those entities work together to ensure that their plans complement each other and lead towards the same growth goals. At the very least, they make sure they are not conflicting or redundant. At best, they align with one other and each entity is supportive of objectives that relate to economic growth. After all, if the EDC is recruiting or expanding an existing industry that creates 50 jobs, you have to ask yourself...Where are they going to live? Will they have children in our schools? Can our hospital accommodate the growth? Can our city and county roads accommodate the additional truck traffic? Are there jobs available for trailing spouses or partners? Can the local businesses accommodate the construction needs, materials and labor? Are there even 100 people available to fill those jobs with the appropriate skill set? All things to think about...

When planning for economic development, the goal is to create and maintain a strong, vibrant local economy. Local government economic development planning is part of a region's overall economic development strategy and involves intergovernmental coordination. The economic development plan provides a comprehensive overview of the economy, sets policy direction for economic growth, and identifies strategies, programs, resources and projects to improve the economy.

The top six reasons why a strong economic development plan plays a critical role in any region's economy. 1) Job Creation; 2) Business Diversification; 3) Business Retention and Expansion; 4) Economic Fortification; 5) Increase in Tax Revenue; and 6) Improved Quality of Life for your residents.

Lessons Learned: You wouldn't build a house or take off for a vacation without a plan, so why would you leave the future of your community at risk with no plan? A blueprint for economic growth will help you achieve directional and intentional growth, resulting in the quality of life you desire. Organic growth is good, but controlling, pursuing, funding and marketing for an economy that enhances your community's vision is even better and much more sustainable.

9 PILLARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Pillar #6: Livability Really is a Thing

The sixth Economic Development Pillar is **LIVABILITY**. These are factors that are measured as defining reasons why someone chooses or does not choose to live in a specific city or region. The most common livability factors are adequate housing, access to medical care, quality education and connectivity. In recent years, two additional livability factors have risen in importance, fresh water and safety. In other words, it doesn't do anyone any good to work on other factors if your strongest livability factors are in peril, declining or non-existent. A city, chamber, county, school, hospital district and EDC can all be working on additional quality of life initiatives simultaneously, but these livability factors are the drivers that measure a city's health and sustainability.

Livability blooms locally, not centrally. It cannot be planned but must be tended to organically. It requires the fertilizer of local initiatives and the cultivation of civic responsibility. Livability for all is an equitable distribution of housing, jobs, health care, education and respect.

Livability and livable places are defined as how hard people—local people—are willing to work to make their community a better place. A community must define for itself what livability means. Without the ability to earn a decent income and provide dignity through gainful employment, there is no livable place for the left out or left behind.

Many believe that place triggers action: people's love of place and sense of place leads to a desire to fight for enhancing their place. The impact of the built environment on public health, civic pride and responsiveness, and economic well-being is critical. Place is also unique: every community, large or small, has a distinctive character resulting from its history. Natural and man-made physical elements, social makeup, and combinations of public and private institutions both create and constrain opportunities for expanding and maintaining quality of life.

A community that satisfies the full range of its residents' needs is more attractive as a place to live, work and do business and, therefore, more likely to be economically successful. Believe the glass is half-full, not half-empty. This philosophy of looking at opportunities instead of problems is essential for community change. An optimistic, entrepreneurial approach to problem-solving rather than mere problem-study or moaning and gnashing of teeth is essential to allowing goodwill, collaboration and sense of confidence to enable long-term problems to be addressed. Action speaks louder than planning.

Lessons Learned: Declare success frequently. Nothing spells growth like success and nothing has a better chance for success than a situation in which people can participate, contribute and claim ownership of good civic ideas. Stop and smell the roses. As in any long march, there has to be places of rest; places where there is cause for celebration to acknowledge achievement and to renew determination to succeed. A small victory every six months must be built into a program to create the pleasure of success, the determination to continue, and points for new people to join, be trained, and to be offered opportunities for participation in civic activities.

Your livability factors depend on it.

9 PILLARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Pillar #7: Memorable Marketing is a Critical

The seventh Economic Development Pillar is **Memorable Marketing**. Economic Development Marketing and Branding is a vital part of economic development. It's the shorthand that communicates who you are to people both inside and outside your community. When it works, it emotionally resonates with stakeholders by inviting them to see why you are different and why people should invest, work and buy in your community.

Here are five principles to drive your strategic and creative work with branding and marketing for economic development.

Principle #1: Understand your stakeholders. Start by acknowledging that the audiences in economic development branding are often more complex than product branding. You are both representing your community and trying to reach targets far beyond your area. That means you have one foot that is local and the other foot that is independent.

Principle #2: Understand your goals. Once you understand your targets, focus on what you want your outcomes to be. Economic initiatives can vary dramatically, from attracting more diverse businesses to creating jobs to stabilizing a downtown or driving tourism. The strategy behind your branding and marketing efforts should connect to exactly what your goals are, and some of them may actually be conflicting.

Principle #3: Differentiate and define. Economic development efforts tend to use the same words and appeal to the same feelings no matter the geographic area. Just look at how everyone talks about the quality of life. That's not a differentiating point. Instead, drill down deeper and define what makes the quality of life special in your area.

Principle #4: Get true community buy-in. Work to get community buy-in, but know that it's also important to challenge your community. While your brand should be believable and authentic, that does not mean boring. You want the community to understand that when it comes to economic development, you cannot market on what feels ordinary and safe. Aim to stand out.

Principle #5: Put actions behind the brand. Economic development is not about nice pictures and words. It goes far beyond an engaging slogan. Instead, aim to live the brand through actions. If your brand is about small-town living with a nostalgic feel, your storefronts should reflect that and your hospitality and retail workers should be welcoming. If your economic development brand is about diversity, your recruitment efforts for businesses should welcome people of all colors and genders. If your efforts are focused on tourism, invest in the attractions that make people want to come to your area over and over.

Lesson Learned: Sadly, when budgets are tight, when the economy is down or when apathy exists in a community, the first thing that gets cut is the marketing budget. But that's when it is more critical than ever to tell your story. Pitch your assets. Brag about your business climate. Promote your existing businesses. Creating consistent, engaging and memorable marketing is what will get you to the front of the line. Without memorable marketing, you aren't even in the game, because no one will know about your city.

Remember, people don't know what they don't know. You have to tell them.

9 PILLARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Pillar #8: Pursuing Growth is an Attitude

The eighth Economic Development Pillar is **ATTITUDE**. This one is simple: To have a growing community filled with opportunities for all, thriving businesses, affordable housing and strong infrastructure you have to want it. And work at it.

I have been studying more than 300 rural communities across the USA for more than three decades. In that research, there are many tangible factors that can dictate whether a community grows or declines in population. There are many tangible reasons a community can grow including regional industry growth, strategic geographic location, strong organizational efforts, effective marketing etc. All of these factors are measurable. It's the intangibles that are harder to pinpoint. But almost all of the soft reasons a city grows or declines is based on attitude. Attitude of the leadership. Attitude of the residents. Attitudes of the business community. If industry attraction or closures occur, if overall economic condition improves or declines or if a community is considerable "healthy" or not, it all comes down to attitude.

I can't begin to tell you how many prospects that I have taken to visit communities that were perfectly matched on paper. It should have been a slam dunk for the community. But the attitude of the community clearly came through on the visit. Skepticism, distrust, lack of enthusiasm, lack of organization, lack of cohesive talking points, lack of vision, and the very dreaded "we don't want change" clearly comes through. If there is a hint of negativity about the community, it's people or its future, it will show through like a flashing neon light. And the discussion will be over. There are more than 17,000 communities in the USA of 10,000 people or less. This is your competition for residents, teachers, policemen, first responders, medical caregivers, small business owners, retail, industry, and service providers. You are not the only game in town. It is imperative, for the growth of your community, for everyone to embrace a solid plan for growth that everyone can support that will do two things: maintain the personality, character, heritage and history of the city/county while also priming itself for new and expanded business, entrepreneurship, state of the art educational facilities, strong infrastructure, available housing and medical care.

Lesson Learned: Communities that grow and thrive do not do it by accident. It doesn't happen overnight through osmosis. If you love your community, then show it. If you don't love your community, then take steps to fix the issues through positive action. The best way to make sure everyone is on the same page is to keep the channels of communication open, keep the visionary discussions going, practice your message, strengthen your marketing and BELIEVE IT. When I ask someone, anyone, why they love where they live and they can tell me without hesitation or negativity, then I know that there is some magic to work with. You have a great community with immeasurable potential. What are you going to do with that gift?

9 PILLARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Pillar #9: A vibrant Downtown is critical to healthy community

The ninth Economic Development Pillar is **DOWNTOWN**. Everyone deserves access to a vibrant neighborhood – a place that has a thriving local economy, is rich in character, and features inviting public spaces that make residents and visitors feel that they belong. Yet, we know that many Americans, whether in small towns or big cities, miss out on these benefits.

The need for downtown revitalization initiatives grew out of a recognition that a community is only as strong as its core. In an era when many people had given up hope about the commercial and cultural viability of downtown, and when suburbs, shopping malls, and big box retailers were dominating the American landscape, this seemed like an unlikely proposition. But, over the last four decades, time has proven that downtowns are the heart of our communities. We need a healthy heart, not one on life support.

Communities set their own destinies. It is not someone else's job to come in and save your downtown. While revitalization is challenging work, there are many models and case studies that offer a road-map for locally-owned, locally-driven prosperity. Across the country, thousands of communities have transformed their downtowns resulting in expanded economies, social interaction, vibrant gathering spaces, dynamic entrepreneurship, increased tourism dollars, needed green space, expanded activities, leveraged local leadership, and improved overall quality of life.

Understandably, people often don't like change. But change is inevitable. Technology, the economy, demographics, population growth, market trends and consumer attitudes are always changing and they will affect a community whether people like it or not. There are really only two kinds of change in the world today: planned change and unplanned change. You can plan a vibrant downtown or you can leave it to chance. We all know what can happen when the future is left to chance.

To assist in the development of a blueprint for downtown revitalization, I urge you to consider the following:

1. **Capture** the vision of your revitalized downtown;
2. **Develop** a serious and aggressive Action Plan that includes responsibility, accountability and measurability;
3. **Forge** healthy private/public partnerships;
4. **Assess** the condition of buildings, infrastructure, lighting, parking, accessibility, utilities, traffic flow, etc.
5. **Establish** business improvement districts and other non-profits dedicated to downtown improvements;
6. **Identify** the organization responsible for implementation;
7. **Identify** an entertainment/hospitality district, as their needs maybe different then traditional retail;
8. **Develop** policies for second story living, residential rentals and food/vendor/retail trucks and pop-ups;
9. **Develop** a local-serving retail strategy and entrepreneurship programs;
10. In addition to business development, also **consider** clean-up/demo days, safety issues, aesthetics, etc.
11. **Insure** every segment of your population is involved in the revitalization plan; and
12. **Tell** the world everything you are doing. Every improvement project. Every activity. Every partner. Every business. Every contributor. Every result. **Tell. The. World.**

Lesson Learned: Downtowns Matter. Downtown is the heart and soul of any community. You can create jobs without a healthy downtown, but you can't sustain a long-term vibrant community without one.



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