



10 Year Strategic Plan – Industrial Development & Economic Development

Over the years, the City of Harlingen and the Harlingen Economic Development Corporation have conducted various strategic planning sessions. From those sessions, several plans have been produced which have helped guide our efforts to accomplish our vision and mission. In February 2020, HEDC began an update of the 2016 Strategic Plan, but little did we know that within about a month, everything that we thought was “normal” would be turned upside down with a global pandemic.

At that time, we identified our vision and restated our mission statement to read as follows:

Vision: Inclusive economic development for citizens of Harlingen.

Inclusive economic development means giving all entities (individual or collective ventures) equitable opportunities to succeed and to profit.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Harlingen Economic Development Corporation is to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Harlingen through the creation of wealth, jobs, and investment.

Economic development at its core is the creation of wealth.

Inclusive economic development is more than a catch phrase for us. It means that our programs need to be accessible to as many businesses as possible within the confines of our statutes and our resources. The criteria for accessing those programs must be transparent.

Our mission statement has not changed in several decades as the mission statement generally repeats the definition of what economic development truly represents. Economic development is a process. HEDC and its partners have the ability to influence the process or creation of wealth.

The California Association for Local Economic Development has a great definition for economic development: *“Economic development is a concerted effort on the part of the responsible governing body in a city or county to influence the direction of private sector investment toward opportunities that can lead to sustained economic growth.”* CALED also says that it is important to note that economic development is not community development. Community development is a process for making a community a better place to live and work. Economic development benefits the employer directly, and because of limited resources, our efforts need to be directed to projects that have the largest impacts on the creation of local wealth.

In this plan, our focus is on how we can help influence the creation of wealth specifically in the industrial and commercial sectors in Harlingen. Some may question why we would limit our focus to these sectors, and without going into a long discussion, we will summarize by stating that primary job creation is not only one of the main goals of the economic development sales tax legislation that created this organization, but it is also in broad economic terms, one of the sectors in the economy that produces the highest rates of return in terms of multiplier effects. Generally, a manufacturing job helps create or sustain 5 to 6 indirect jobs in the community.

GOAL 1: INVEST IN HUMAN CAPITAL THROUGH SPECIFIC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES, THUS CREATING A MORE DIVERSE WORKFORCE.

STRATEGY:

- Continue work with Workforce Solutions – Cameron and the Workforce Development Board to identify pools of ready-to-work people and job openings in Harlingen.
- Continue to work with TSTC, TSC and others to enhance our local workforce.
- Develop an Internship/Apprenticeship Program much like SA WORX
- Attract new educational providers such as the FAA Academy or Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University to VIA/Harlingen Aerotropolis

TASK	Responsible Parties	Timeline
1.1 Complete benchmarking	HEDC	
1.2 Identify high-demand occupations and other areas of opportunity for grants, and pursue funding	HEDC TSTC UTRGV HCID Workforce Solutions HMA STMA TSC Top 10 private sector employers	Ongoing, however, we look towards Workforce Solutions – Cameron to provide us with a list of high-demand occupations for each year.
1.3 Budget a minimum of \$100,000 per year per organization for grants to others to build up our workforce.	HEDC HCIB	
1.4 Review grant requests for workforce development initiatives	HEDC Board	
1.5 Build a facility for aeronautical education	VIA, HEDC, City TSTC, UTRGV Embry-Riddle P3	
1.6 Establish Workforce Development Ad Hoc Committee	HEDC Board City Commission	
1.7 Work with TSTC on locating new programs for EVs	TSTC City HEDC	

GOAL 2: INCREASE HARLINGEN'S INDUSTRIAL BASE

STRATEGY:

- Using the "Guiding Principles" of the HEDC, lead in the recruitment of new business and the expansion of existing business.
- Market the community aggressively through various media and personal visits to facilitate the creation of new "primary" jobs through the retention and expansion of existing business and the recruitment of new business.
- Call on the corporate headquarters of local branch operations.
- Maintain information on programs and assistance available to local employers.
- Follow up with firms on problems/opportunities identified and act as a key resource for existing industry.
- Coordinate support efforts with the South Texas Manufacturers' Association.
- Maintain contact information for firms currently located near the border in Mexico.
- Continue direct contact to inform these firms of the advantages of a Harlingen location.
- Develop and/or maintain relationships with economic development officials in Mexico to promote Harlingen as a location of choice.
- Provide input regarding zoning issues to protect future business/industrial areas
- Promote and fund spec building program and other 3P opportunities

TASK	Responsible Parties	Timeline
2.1 Complete benchmarking	HEDC	
2.2 Refine BRE (Business Retention and Expansion) program	HEDC	
2.3 Review industrial sites and identify sites – Asset Mapping	HEDC Contract Labor	
2.4 Refine marketing plan for industrial recruitment	HEDC	
2.5 Enhance and promote Spec Building Program	HEDC	
2.6 Implement PID (Public Improvement District) for Industrial Park enhancements	HEDC City County	
2.7 Review incentive programs and identify opportunities to enhance programs	HEDC City HCIB	
2.8 Identify and pursue additional funding sources for property development for Roosevelt Business Park, Harlingen Industrial Park, Harlingen Aerotropolis and Port of Harlingen	HEDC VIA Port City	

2.9 RFQ for Engineering Services for Roosevelt Business Park	HEDC	
2.10 Acquire additional land for future industrial development or help promote measures to protect land for future industrial development	HEDC City	
2.11 Help Port of Harlingen enhance rail on their existing land	Port of Harlingen HEDC City County	
2.12 Begin process to build or cause to be built a large hangar to support an MRO operation by utilizing our spec building program.	HEDC VIA City	
2.13 Begin process to build or cause to be built – large Class A industrial building (100K+) by partnering with private developers	HEDC	
2.14 Create a revenue stream to fund future economic development efforts	HEDC City	
2.15 Establish a manufacturing incubator and/or makerspace.	HEDC UTRGV TSTC	
2.16 Explore opportunities to partner with others to improve infrastructure		

GOAL 3: ADVOCATE FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

STRATEGY:

- Identify and prioritize transportation routes necessary for industrial development.
- Support efforts to improve FM 509 from the Los Indios Bridge north beyond its terminus to a new route connecting with I-69E/US77.
- Support efforts to improve the Port of Harlingen's capacity.
- Support and participate in efforts by the Alliance for I-69 Texas, TBIC and other similar organizations.
- Support Valley International Airport's efforts to expand US Customs presence at the airport permanently, and to provide additional flights to various destinations.
- Support intermodal transportation hub development and more efficient rail service in Harlingen.
- Work with Cameron County to promote the Free Trade International Bridge at Los Indios.
- Work with the State of Tamaulipas to encourage improvements on the Mexico side of the border.
- Work with others promoting the Matamoros to Mazatlan Highway Corridor for development of truck and trade routes for agricultural products and more.
- Work with CCRMA and/or RGVMPPO to enhance roadways around VIA and Harlingen Aerotropolis, specifically FM 509 and Grimes Road.
- Advocate for improvements to I-69E north of the interchange to Raymondville
- Promote the Outer Parkway to the 2nd Causeway
- Work with Port of Harlingen and rail providers to enhance rail service in Harlingen

TASK	Responsible Parties	Timeline
3.1 Complete benchmarking	HEDC City	
3.2 Identify near shovel-ready transportation projects	City CCRMA RGVMPO	
3.3 Assist in funding near shovel-ready projects such as FM 509 from Bus. 77 to the Harlingen Aerotropolis	City County CCRMA City of San Benito HEDC	
3.4 Produce transportation marketing collateral for Harlingen	Port VIA HEDC City	
3.5 Support infrastructure projects along Expressway 83/I-2	City HEDC	

GOAL 4: INCREASE RETAIL SALES TAX REVENUES AND RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS

STRATEGY:

- Encourage growth within the Bass Pro Shops/Cameron Crossing project.
- Participate in International Conference of Shopping Centers trade shows and similar events.
- Conduct direct mail and personal follow up activities to potential developers and retailers.
- Develop the “No Build Zone” and “Orphan” properties for retail or mixed use.
- Use third-party assistance program for data gathering and recruitment
- Develop training webinars for online marketing for small businesses
- Develop long-term emergency revolving loan fund with participation from other funding sources
- Develop plan for enhancing existing large retail centers
- Participate with City and Harlingen Waterworks in extending infrastructure to sites with potential for large scale retail potential such as southeastern part of City.

TASK	Responsible Parties	Timeline
4.1 Complete benchmarking	HEDC	
4.2 Review use of a third-party to assist in research and recruitment program	HEDC	
4.3 Revise budget as needed to provide funding for Task 4.2	HEDC	Done
4.4 Attend events sponsored by ICSC and other entities	HEDC	
4.5 Promote HELP for Small Business to assist in pandemic recover	HEDC	
4.6 Promote Commercial Recruitment Program	HEDC	
4.65 Review incentive programs and consider revisions	HEDC City HCIB	
4.7 Develop plan for properties adjacent to Bass Pro Shops	HEDC City Developers	
4.8 Pursue other funding sources for incentives for small businesses	HEDC City	

4.9 Coordinate retail recruitment efforts with large retail centers	HEDC Valle Vista Mall Harlingen Corners Sun Valley Mall	
4.9I Coordinate infrastructure plan for additional potential retail sites	HWWS City HEDC	

GOAL 5: INCREASE HEALTHCARE FACILITIES AND OFFERINGS

STRATEGY:

- Work with UTRGV and others on future growth needs of the medical school or other related academic needs.
- Work on efforts to encourage continued expansion of medical, educational, and other commercial facilities and entities related to the medical industry.
- Work with developers of medical office properties

TASK	Responsible Parties	Timeline
5.1 Complete benchmarking	HEDC	
5.2 Develop database of medical facilities	HEDC	
5.3 Develop database of doctors serving the area	HEDC	
5.4 Adopt a plan for development of 30 acres along Hale and Victoria and surrounding properties	HEDC City Private sector property owners around site	
5.5 Identify properties suitable for future MOB development	HEDC Local RE brokers Property Owners City HMC VBMC	
5.6 Advocate for additional funding for UTRGV SOM	Legislative Consultants City HEDC	
5.7 Develop marketing collateral for healthcare facilities recruitment	HEDC City CVB Hospitals UTRGV	

GOAL 6: DEVELOP A ROBUST ENTREPRENEURSHIP/INNOVATION HUB

STRATEGY:

- Encourage small businesses to use HEDC as a resource
- Provide one-stop services
- Assist with resiliency programs
- Offer variety of entrepreneurship programs, such as Kaufmann
- Develop other small business training programs
- Build an incubator

TASK	Responsible Parties	Timeline
6.1 Complete benchmarking	HEDC	
6.2 Enhance Commercial Recruitment Program	HEDC City	
6.3 Implement Harlingen Matching grant program	HEDC City	
6.4 Develop new HEDC office	HEDC	
6.5 Research funding options for incubators	HEDC	
6.6 Develop FAB LAB or similar facility	HEDC TSTC & UTRGV	
6.7 Expand Kaufmann training courses	HEDC UTRGV	
6.8 Develop training webinars for marketing for small businesses	HEDC UTRGV TSTC	
6.9 Complete phase II of UTRGV incubator feasibility study	UTRGV HEDC	