

introduction



INTRODUCTION

The Brownsville Comprehensive Plan provides a foundation for guiding the future growth and development of the City that is consistent with the vision and goals of the community. The plan consists of core elements and smart growth/sustainability elements. The four core elements include land use (including public facilities and parks), downtown, economic development, and mobility/infrastructure. The core elements are supported by six smart growth/sustainability elements: Civic, Education, Equity, Healthcare, Emergency Management, and Environment.

This report is organized in four general sections: Planning Process; Vision and Challenges; Comprehensive Plan Elements; and Implementation Plan.

PLANNING PROCESS

Section 1 outlines the comprehensive planning process details, including the public participation elements, planning workshops, and the creation and organization of the planning Task Force. The Task Force was organized into five dimensions (Economic, Infrastructure, Environment, Social and Civic) in a tiered structure consisting of three levels: Task Force Chairs, Dimension Chairs, and Sub-Dimension Chairs. The Task Force organizational structure is presented in Figure 1. A list of the Tri-Chairs is presented in the Acknowledgements section.

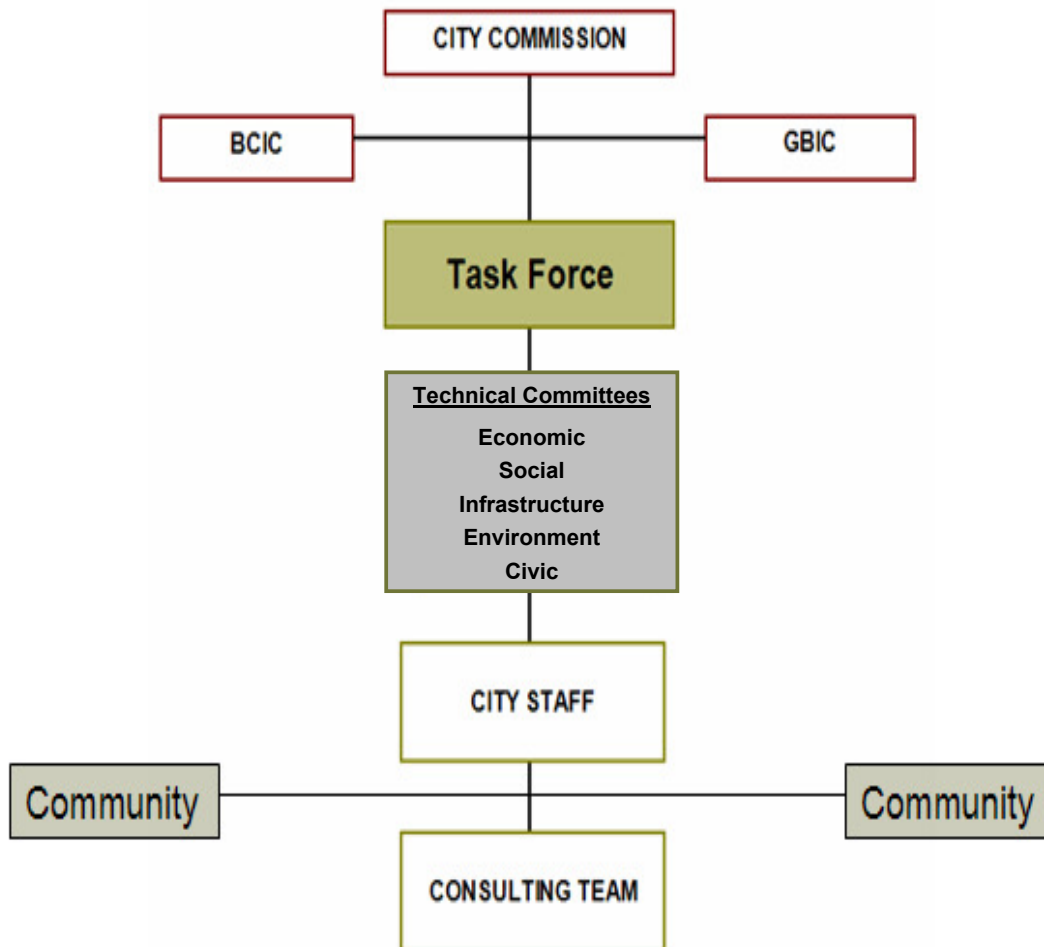


Figure 1. Original Task Force Organizational Structure



VISION AND CHALLENGES

The community vision and goals statement and the associated challenges and opportunities are presented in Section 2. The vision and the associated outcome objectives are the foundation for the development of the comprehensive plan. They articulate the direction and form in which the community wants Brownsville to grow; provide a basis for the development, selection and ranking of the strategies to be employed to move the City along the direction established by the Vision; and establish a mechanism for tracking the City's progress towards its goals.

The vision and goals were developed through an extensive public participation process that was centered on the Task Force and involved over 250 participating individuals. The Task Force developed over 180 goals, objectives and sub-objectives and prioritized the top three objectives within each of the nineteen sub-dimensions. A detailed statement of community Goals and Objectives is presented in the Appendix.

A vision statement was developed from the set of goals generated by the Task Force and summarized into twelve themes:

- A PROSPEROUS community with low poverty rates based on targeted industrial clusters that offer good jobs paying livable wages and offer sustainable employment opportunities for future generations;
- An EFFICIENT community with a public sector that provides high quality levels of services and competitive tax rates;
- A FUNCTIONING and MOBILE community with efficient and well maintained infrastructure (streets, drainage, utilities, telecommunication) systems that support economic development and provide high levels of service at competitive rates;
- A SAFE and PREPARED community with adequate police, fire, EMS and Emergency Response personnel and equipment;
- A TALENTED community with a critical mass of individuals with high levels of educational attainment and workforce skills;
- A HEALTHY community with low disease rates

and affordable access to health care with a focus on prevention;

- A VIBRANT community with a revitalized downtown core that provides a strong sense of place, preserves its historic resources and provides diverse arts and cultural entertainment venues;
- A LIVABLE community with neighborhoods that preserve open spaces and promote parks, walking/bike trails and walkable, pedestrian-friendly streets;
- An ENGAGED community of civically minded individuals that supports and mentors qualified leaders;
- A COLLABORATIVE community with strong institutions that work cooperatively toward the community's vision;
- An EQUITABLE community whose residents enjoy fair and non-discriminatory access to quality of life and economic development benefits uniformly throughout the City;
- A SUSTAINABLE (GREEN) community that protects and maintains its environmental resources and promotes environmental awareness and responsible resource use and recycling.

The twelve themes summarize a vision that is necessary for planning the future of Brownsville. While the vision provides a set of desired outcomes that define where the City wants to go, it does not provide a blueprint for how to get there. Moving from vision to blueprint requires the following general steps:

- First, make the vision operational through the use of indicators, so that you can measure and identify the gaps between the vision and the current reality;
- Second, understand the key root causes of the gaps – the constraints that prevent the community from realizing its vision; and,
- Finally, develop strategies targeted specifically to overcome the constraints and root causes.

Indicators serve a number of important planning and operational functions:

- Provide a snapshot of the baseline condition of the community relative to the vision outcomes;
- Pinpoint key gaps between the vision and

actual conditions;

- Identify and understand the root causes for the gaps and to develop strategies to bridge them;
- Prioritize strategies and identify areas of need;
- Provide a foundation to support benefit/cost analyses for comparing and ranking alternative strategies; and
- Track the community's progress toward reaching its vision.

Figure 2 lists the set of outcome indicators that have been developed for the plan together with the associated vision theme, attribute measured, and the current baselines, benchmarks, target values and scorecards as available. A sample scorecard is presented in Figure 3. Each scorecard includes the lower and upper bounds for the indicator, baseline values, target/benchmarks, and the associated scores between 0 and 100. A relative score of 70 can be considered a passing value.

Scorecards for each of the indicators are presented in the appendix. The scorecards for the indicators were selected to provide a parsimonious, practical set of measurements sufficient to provide key insights without being burdensome to maintain. This is an initial set of indicators. It can be amended as the plan develops and is implemented. In addition to modifying the outcome indicators, strategic indicators can also be added in the future to track the progress of strategic initiatives.

Brownsville has the fortune of having many unique strengths. The most significant of these include its proximity to Mexican markets, multimodal (land, air, sea) ports of entry, a sophisticated cross-border manufacturing hub, a growing four-year university, a municipally owned electrical utility, and a rich natural resource environment. They provide the City with a strong foundation for supporting a healthy, diversified and sustainable economy that is so critical to the well being of the community.

Figure 2. Indicator Table Note: Significance is degree of concern relative to the target and/or benchmark

Dimension/Vision Theme	Attribute Measured	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Benchmark	Target	Significance	Score
ECONOMIC/Prosperous	Economic Growth	Per Capita Income	\$11,161	McAllen: \$17,552 Texas: \$23,294 US: \$26,178	\$18,000	HIGH	10%
ECONOMIC/Efficient	Municipal Level of Service	General Fund Budget per Capita	\$480	McAllen: \$692 Corpus: \$616	\$550	HIGH	37%
INFRASTRUCTURE /Functioning and Mobile	Adequacy of Capacity	Years of Available Electrical Capacity	10		15	MEDIUM	61%
INFRASTRUCTURE /Functioning and Mobile	Adequacy of Capacity	Years of Available Raw Water Supply Capacity	8		15	MEDIUM	50%
INFRASTRUCTURE /Functioning and Mobile	Rate Competitiveness	Average utility costs (Water/WW/Elec.)	\$146.26	\$162.80 (McAllen)	\$172.00	LOW	81%
INFRASTRUCTURE /Functioning and Mobile	Vehicle Transportation	Travel delay per capita per day (minutes)	3.5	5	3.5	LOW	70%
	Street Maintenance	% Lane Miles Maintained Annually	3%	25%	10%	HIGH	21%
	Street Maintenance	% of Lane Miles Inspected Annually	5%	33%	25%	HIGH	14%
	Drainage	% of developed areas within floodplain	15%	0%	5%	HIGH	23%
	Surface Transportation ROW	% planned ROW Acquired Annually	5%	25%	20%	HIGH	18%
	Adequacy of Capacity	Police Personnel per 1000	1.38	1.8	1.8	HIGH	54%
INFRASTRUCTURE /Functioning and Mobile	Public Wireless Internet Availability	Availability of public wireless hot spots-Wi-Fi Locations (locations / 1000)	0.1	McAllen: 0.3 Harlingen: 0.3 Austin: 0.4	0.3	MEDIUM	23%
Social/Planned	Municipal Revenue	% of General Fund Budget generated by Ad Valorem Taxes	20%	70 to 80%	50%	HIGH	18%
SOCIAL /Safe and Prepared	Crime	Total Incidence of Crime per 1000	60	46	46	MEDIUM	41%
SOCIAL /Safe and Prepared	Crime	Total Incidence of Property Crime per 1000	55	41 (TX)	40	MEDIUM	45%
SOCIAL /Safe and Prepared	Crime	Total Incidence of Violent Crime per 1000	5.1	5.2 (TX)	2.5	LOW	71%
SOCIAL /Safe and Prepared	Adequacy of Capacity	Fire/EMS Personnel	170	252	252	HIGH	47%
SOCIAL /Safe and Prepared	Adequacy of Capacity	EMS Response Time (minutes)	7	<8	5	LOW	70%
SOCIAL /Safe and Prepared	Adequacy of Response	Fire Response Time (minutes)	5	4-5	5	LOW	70%
SOCIAL/Talented	Educational Attainment	% population >25 yrs with at least HS education	58%	McAllen: 74% Texas: 79% US: 84%	75%	HIGH	54%
SOCIAL/Talented	Educational Attainment	% population >25 yrs with at least BS degree	15%	McAllen: 26 % Texas: 25% US: 27%	25%	HIGH	42%
SOCIAL/Talented	Educational Attainment	% Professional degrees	5.1%	McAllen: 8.5%	8.5%	MEDIUM	17%



Dimension/Vision Theme	Attribute Measured	Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Benchmark	Target	Significance	Score
SOCIAL/Talented	Facilities	Number of Residents per High School	34000		24000	MEDIUM	41%
SOCIAL/Talented	Facilities	Number of Residents per Middle School	15600		16000	LOW	72%
SOCIAL/Talented	Facilities	Number of Residents per Elementary School	5100		5000	LOW	69%
SOCIAL/Healthy	Obesity	% of population that is obese	52%	US: 27%	27%	HIGH	12%
SOCIAL/Healthy	Diabetes	% of population with diabetes	25%	US: 8%	8%	HIGH	16%
SOCIAL/Healthy	Capacity	Physicians per 1000	1.9	2.25	2.15	HIGH	62%
SOCIAL/Healthy	Capacity	Nurses per 1000	4.8	US: 7.85 Texas: 6.57	5.5	HIGH	61%
SOCIAL/Healthy	Access	% of population with health insurance	52%	Texas: 75%	75%	HIGH	6%
SOCIAL/Vibrant	Parks and Open Space	Acres of Parks and Open Space per 1000	4.8	McAllen: 2.1 Harlingens: 4.5 NRPA: 10	5	MEDIUM	67%
SOCIAL/Livable	Walkability	Hike / Bike Trails (miles / 1000 population)	0.1	0.1 (NPRA)	0.1	LOW	70%
SOCIAL/Vibrant	Downtown Vacancy	Existing Upper Floor Area Space Downtown that is occupied	13%		40%	HIGH	23%
CIVIC/Engaged	Voter Participation	% registered voters	67%	Texas: 72%	72%	MEDIUM	59%
CIVIC/Engaged	Voter Participation	% of registered voters who voted in last election	6%	Texas: 14%	15%	HIGH	28%
CIVIC/Leadership	Perception of Leadership Quality	% of surveyed community members who perceive the quality of local elected leadership to be "high" or "very high"	7%	N/A	30%	HIGH	16%
SOCIAL/Equitable	Prosperous	% of families living below poverty level	37%	McAllen: 23% Texas: 13% U.S.: 12.3%	20%	HIGH	11%
ENVIRONMENT /Sustainable/Green	Resource Management and Conservation	% of solid waste stream recycled	< 1%	San Antonio: 13% College Station: 25% U.S.: 30%	20%	HIGH	4%
ENVIRONMENT /Sustainable/Green	Resource Management and Conservation	% of electrical production from renewable energy sources	0%	Texas: 1%	5%	HIGH	0%
ENVIRONMENT /Sustainable/Green	Resource Management and Conservation	% of water supply reuse	0%	Texas: 2.55%	5%	HIGH	0%
ENVIRONMENT /Sustainable/Green	Resource Management and Conservation	Per capita water use (gallons / person / day)	126	167	126	LOW	70%
ENVIRONMENT /Sustainable/Green	Resource Management and Conservation	Per capita solid waste production (lbs/capita/day)	5.2	4.4	4.4	HIGH	35%
ENVIRONMENT /Sustainable/Green	Automobile Use	Average vehicle miles traveled per capita	12.6	24	11	LOW	61%
ENVIRONMENT /Sustainable/Green	Habitat Quality	Annual loss of habitat area	2.50%	1%	0%	HIGH	12%
ENVIRONMENT /Sustainable/Green	Air Quality	Days above moderate levels for PM 2.5	59	McAllen: 63	59	LOW	70%

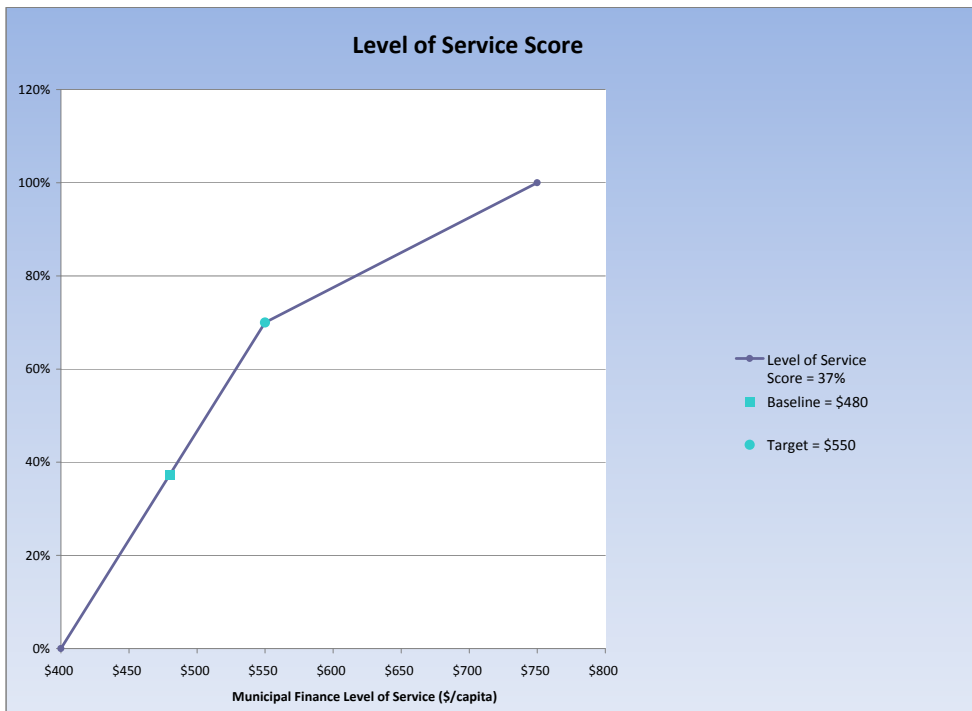


Figure 3. Sample Scorecard

However, along with these assets and opportunities, Brownville faces a number of significant challenges to achieving its vision as suggested by the number of low indicator scores presented in Figure 2. An analysis of the indicator data reveals that Brownsville is in a state of economic decline and eroding competitiveness. The region lags behind peer border regions, the state of Texas, and the U.S. in a number of critical economic performance indicators and the trends are not encouraging. The most critical of these include:

- Per capita income and its growth rate are one of the lowest in the country, lower than even border peer communities. If current trends continue, McAllen's per capita income will be almost three times Brownsville's within the next generation.
- Educational attainment is inadequate for the community to be competitive. More than 40% of the population 25 years and older has less than a high school education and 85% has less than a Bachelor's degree.
- Brownsville's unemployment rate (official rate: 8.5%) is one of the highest in Texas and the U.S. If we correct for the lower percentage of adults in Brownsville that are economically active (labor force participation rate) the actual rate of unemployment is 21%. More importantly, the population growth rate is greater than the job creation rate and will result in doubling the number of unemployed individuals over the next 25 years.
- Fewer adults in Brownsville are economically active relative to the U.S. and Texas. Those who are employed are working in low paying non-traded industries and are supporting a relatively larger dependent population; and three quarters earn less than the State median.
- The fastest growing jobs are in non-traded low paying industries. 73% of the jobs in Brownsville pay less than \$12 per hour and the two fastest growing industries pay less than \$8 per hour.
- The percentage of families living below the poverty level (37%) in Brownsville is four times higher than the U.S. average and three times higher than the Texas average. The poverty rate is projected to increase to 60% in the next 25 years. Even more significant 45% of

families with children live below the poverty line.

- The City's municipal level of service (General Fund Revenue per capita) is low (\$480) compared to other cities (McAllen \$692) and is indicative of the City's struggle to provide adequate levels of municipal services (e.g., streets, drainage, public safety).
- Ad Valorem tax revenues contribute only 20% of the General Fund revenue compared to a target of 70 to 80%. This "tax gap" creates an overreliance on less reliable and lower quality sales taxes revenues and subsidies. This leads to higher municipal debt levels, the use of sales tax revenues for basic services at the expense of economic development and quality of life initiatives, and increasing pressure to raise taxes to maintain existing levels of service.
- Strong overdependence on Mexico's less stable and less productive economy versus the stronger and broader US economy.

There are other troubling gaps between Brownsville's Vision and reality. These include habitat and open space loss, high obesity and associated incidences of chronic diseases, low recycling and reuse rates, and low voter turnout, among others.

But the fundamental challenge that Brownsville faces in bridging the reality gap is economic. Brownsville is unable to compete effectively in today's global economy largely because it is a "Factor Driven" economy. As opposed to more advanced economies that are driven by investment and innovation, Brownsville's economy is underpinned by location and labor factors, specifically its location along the Border with Mexico and its ability to supply low cost labor.

Brownsville's location along the US/Mexico border has positioned it to extract economic value from the movement of goods through the area especially between the US and Mexico. However, the volume of trade is constrained by regional transportation factors imposed by outside interests and the lack of internal demand generators. This has made it difficult to achieve the economies of scale needed to realize competitive costs and generate sufficient revenues to expand the



needed supporting infrastructure to be globally competitive.

At the same time, low cost labor, although previously a competitive advantage, is now vulnerable to competition from an increasing number of foreign factor-driven economies as international trade barriers continue to be removed from the global economy.

As global trade barriers continue to fall, and more of the production of goods and services becomes less location dependent, the previous advantages of location and low cost labor become increasingly unsustainable due to competitive pressures from economies across the world that can provide even lower labor costs.

There are a number of additional causative factors that exacerbate these symptoms and trends including:

- Chaotic, undefined urban growth patterns characterized by urban sprawl. These lead to mixed investment signals, low value capture and associated Ad Valorem revenues, low levels of service and high municipal service costs.
- Although there are significant examples

of successful planning efforts within a given planning dimension (e.g., MPO transportation planning), there is a lack of sufficient and sustained inter-institutional planning and cooperation, especially among critical cross-dimensional planning efforts involving economic development, education, infrastructure and land use.

- A deteriorating downtown core with a dissipating sense of place.
- An increased loss of natural habitat and its associated critical ecological functions and potential economic value capture.

MOVING FORWARD

Moving away from current trends towards a sustainable competitive community will require nothing short of a transformation of the current economy from its factor-driven form to one that leverages its competitive advantages and opportunities to become a sustainably competitive economy.

Given the globalization of competition, creating a successful community requires an overall strategy that promotes both economic development and quality of life to create the clustering of competitive traded industrial capacity, aggregation of human

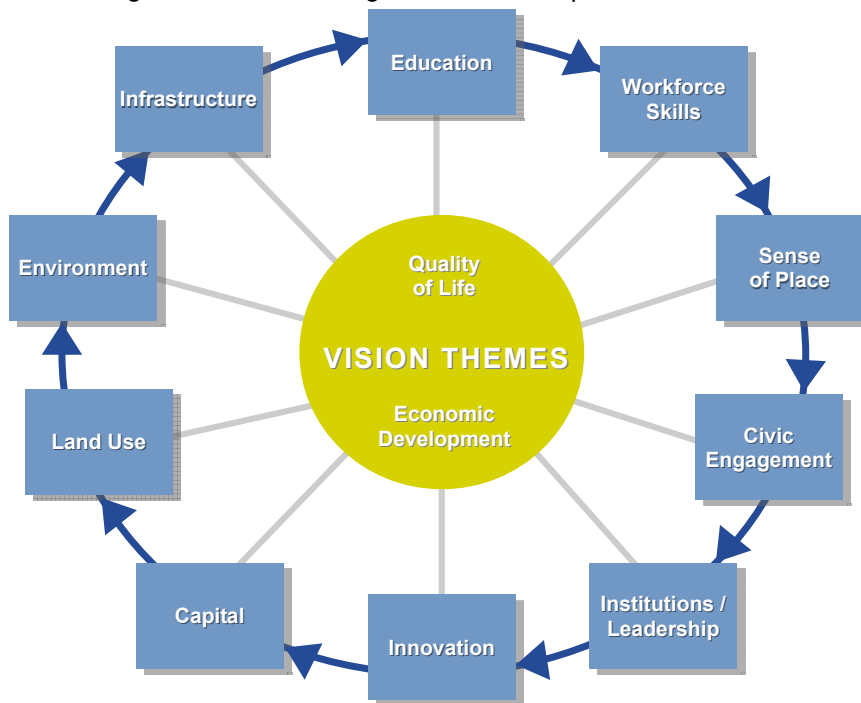


Figure 4. Pillars of Sustainable Competitiveness

talent and supporting infrastructure improvements to attract the necessary private capital to move the community towards its vision.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The overall strategy for reaching Brownsville’s vision involves improving Brownsville’s competitiveness. The foundation for sustainable competitiveness consists of ten supporting pillars working together (See Figure 4) to create a community with high levels of quality of life and economic development consistent with Brownsville’s vision. Each pillar is necessary, but alone each is insufficient to sustain the community’s level of competitiveness.

The integration and coordination of the supporting pillars is the purpose of the Brownsville Comprehensive Plan.

PLAN ELEMENTS

- Land Use Plan

Land Use is a key element of the foundation for improving Brownsville’s competitiveness. Land use is often viewed as a lifestyle choice. But in reality, land use, working together with transportation, utilities and economic policies, plays an essential and critical role in determining a community’s competitiveness and level of economic development.

Vision Themes Related to Land Use Element:

	DIRECT	INDIRECT
PROSPEROUS	•	
EFFICIENT	•	
FUNCTIONING	•	
SAFE		•
TALENTED		
HEALTHY		•
LIVABLE	•	
VIBRANT	•	
ENGAGED		
COLLABORATIVE		
EQUITABLE		
SUSTAINABLE	•	

The Land Use plan provides primary support for the EFFICIENT, FUNCTIONAL, VIBRANT, LIVABLE,

and PROSPEROUS vision themes, and secondary support for the HEALTHY and GREEN themes. It does so in various ways.

First, it provides a foundation for the creation, capture and transfer of land value to increase property tax revenues to reduce the Tax Gap, support higher levels of service, and lower pressure to increase tax rates.

Second, it reduces costs of municipal services by promoting infill and reducing urban sprawl.

Third, it creates clear signals and value to attract private capital and the cluster-based industrial development targeted in the economic development plan; and finally, it promotes mixed-use pedestrian friendly developments integrated with public facilities (e.g., schools) and open space elements of the plan to facilitate walking/ biking, outdoor recreational opportunities and healthier lifestyles. It also promotes a more sustainable environment by reducing automobile trip travel distances and the resulting carbon footprint.

- Downtown Revitalization Plan

The Downtown Revitalization plan provides the foundation for the VIBRANT and EFFICIENT themes of the Vision by creating a strong Sense of Place that defines Brownsville based on its history and its original foundation along the Rio Grande. The Sense of Place that a revitalized and vital downtown brings to Brownsville is critical to attracting and retaining Brownsville’s future talent pool; increasing infill redevelopment which leads to greater density and value that translates directly into greater ad valorem and sales tax revenues; and creating and promoting cultural attractions and diversity. The plan achieves these goals in various ways including the creation of visual and functional links between Downtown and the University; creation of corridors that link key block redevelopment areas; identification of key revitalization projects to catalyze reinvestment downtown, and promotion of mixed uses that support residential development located above retail/commercial uses.



The Downtown Plan's key catalyst projects include: Capitol Theatre Improvements; City Market Building Cultural Center; Pacheco Building; County Jail Relocation; Multi-Modal Transportation Center; El Cueto Building UTB Student Housing Project; Secure Urban Riverfront Project and the International Blvd Improvement Project.

- Economic Development plan

The Economic Development Plan underpins the PROSPEROUS and EFFICIENT elements of the Vision. It does so by targeting increases in per capita income, jobs, and property and sales tax revenues through the diversification and transformation of the industrial base in Brownsville.

Vision Themes Related to Economic Element:

	DIRECT	INDIRECT
PROSPEROUS	•	
EFFICIENT	•	
FUNCTIONING		•
SAFE		•
TALENTED		•
HEALTHY		•
LIVABLE		•
VIBRANT		•
ENGAGED		•
COLLABORATIVE		•
EQUITABLE		•
SUSTAINABLE	•	

The main strategy of the Economic Plan is identifying the industrial clusters in traded sectors where Brownsville has the greatest competitive advantage; identifying recruitment targets for supporting industries to increase the level of cluster aggregation to minimize economic leakages and maximize local economic benefit; and specifying the required supporting infrastructure improvements and workforce skills needed for the targeted industrial clusters. Five clusters were identified: Heavy manufacturing, Light manufacturing, Logistics, Healthcare, and Tourism and Hospitality. One of the key initiatives of the economic development plan includes a multi-modal logistics/heavy manufacturing hub at the Port/Airport focusing on renewable energy production. Additional initiatives are outlined in

the economic development plan.

Economic projections were developed for each of the five clusters to investigate the levels of investment that would be required to close the per capita income, levels of service, and tax gaps of the community. While different assumptions will change the timing and the required investment levels to a certain extent, the main conclusion remains the same: In order to create real wealth that leads to significant increases in per capita income, Brownsville needs to focus on targeted traded clusters and attract additional levels of private investment. The size of the investments required to close the gaps is well beyond the capacity of the public sector alone even at aggressive debt levels that stress the bonding capacity of the community. In the absence of additional private sector investments, the deficient levels of service and the associated per capita income gaps will continue for extended periods into the future.

The long term concern is that the combined effect of higher property taxes, low levels of service and high poverty rates could lead to an exodus of higher income/higher educated residents to surrounding cities resulting in further deterioration of economic and social conditions of the city in the future.

Essentially, the only way to bridge the critical gaps in per capita income and levels of service without raising taxes is by attracting additional levels of private sector investment, focusing on traded (exporting) clusters, and working to increase the level of cluster integration. Moreover, the only way to attract private sector investment is if the private sector sees value and an opportunity for a return on its investment. This can only happen by increasing the competitiveness of the community through targeted improvements in infrastructure, strengthening institutions and their cooperation, increasing educational attainment, and improving the sense of place provided by a revitalized downtown and a sustainable and healthy environment.

- Infrastructure Plan

The Infrastructure plan promotes a FUNCTIONING MOBILE and GREEN community by stressing conservation and reuse to save on future utility capacity expansion and operating costs. It also redirects scarce utility and transportation financial resources to capital improvement projects that address the City's broader economic development goals focused on the targeted industrial clusters identified in the economic development plan.

The transportation plan directly supports a number of the community vision themes including the FUNCTIONING, EFFICIENT, PROSPEROUS, SAFE and SUSTAINABLE elements as well as other elements indirectly.

Vision Themes Related to Infrastructure Element:

	DIRECT	INDIRECT
PROSPEROUS		●
EFFICIENT	●	
FUNCTIONING	●	
SAFE		●
TALENTED		
HEALTHY		●
LIVABLE		●
VIBRANT		●
ENGAGED		
COLLABORATIVE		
EQUITABLE		●
SUSTAINABLE	●	

The plan proposes five general initiatives to support the vision themes. First it establishes a new way to plan and design roadways based on context sensitive design principles that better integrate the transportation system with land use and economic development. This leads to walkable, pedestrian-friendly streets and neighborhoods, shorter local trip distances served by boulevards, avenues and streets rather than highway facilities, and regional thoroughfares that create, capture and transfer regional economic value more efficiently.

Second, it improves the efficiency of the existing system including mobility along principal east-west corridors and the existing bus transit system.

Third, it increases future system capacity by considering future transit options (bus, bus rapid transit, rail), coordinated with roadway systems

to achieve measurable mobility improvements.

Fourth, it recommends greater coordination of intermodal transportation elements to support the cluster-based industrial hub centered at the airport/port.

Finally, it improves the operational condition of the city's streets and reduces their life-cycle maintenance costs through the implementation of a condition and use-based street inspection and maintenance program.

The Sustainability and Smart Growth elements of the plan are programmatic elements that support the core elements of the plan. Each is critical to sustain the Community's Vision and its competitiveness.

- **Civic Element**
The Civic element concentrates on civic engagement, institutional cooperation and strengthening of leadership. One of the principal strategies of the Civic Element is the creation of an organizational framework for supporting inter-institutional cooperation.

- **Environment Element**
The Environment element is the core of the sustainability element. The overall purpose of the plan is to increase sustainability by increasing environmental awareness through education; protect and preserve the community's rich natural resources including resacas and habitat; and promote more efficient use of the community's natural resources through reuse, recycling and conservation.

- **Equity Element**
The Equity element deals with the fair and equitable distribution of opportunities and access to public services. The main strategy involves providing education and outreach assistance to low income workers to claim benefits from earned income tax credits, medical insurance, and housing subsidies in addition to several others described in further detail in the Equity Element of the Plan.

- **Healthcare Element**
The Healthcare element focuses on the issues of

prevention and promotion of health awareness to reduce excessive obesity and diabetes incidence rates in the community, and medical provider shortages.

- **Education Element**

Local educational institutions have developed extensive strategic frameworks for addressing their respective educational goals. The purpose of the education element is not to address their internal strategic plans, but rather to identify external strategies that can help educational institutions dovetail their educational attainment and workforce goals with those of the community. The education element also is designed to track their progress through a series of indicators as part of an overall community wide competitiveness evaluation program. The main strategy of the education plan involves expanding and incorporating existing community wide cooperative models involving BISD, UTB and the private sector to support the community's educational attainment and workforce skills goals.

- **Emergency Management Element**

The Emergency Management element addresses the City's ability to prevent, prepare and respond to natural and manmade disasters. This is an essential function of a healthy city and critical in ensuring the safety and vitality of the community and its residents.

IMPLEMENTATION

The final section of the plan outlines the implementation of the comprehensive plan. The organizational structure of the coordinating body that is proposed for the implementation of the plan is based on the realization that the implementation of the comprehensive plan is beyond the scope and capacity of any one institution, and moreover requires the participation of the private sector. The structure is a hybrid model of the task force dimension committees and the cluster focus groups that were organized as part of the comprehensive planning effort. The Board includes the revised task force, an executive committee consisting of representatives from each public sector entity in Brownsville, and a technical support group.

The technical support group provides the necessary technical support to the task force to carry out its mission of developing strategies, maintaining indicators, and tracking the community's progress toward its vision.

A summary list of the implementation strategies proposed in the Comprehensive Plan is presented in the implementation section of the report. It summarizes relevant issues by task force committees and cluster groups. It also outlines strategies, identifies responsible parties, applicable indicators, and priorities.

A short term 5-year plan recommendation is also included. The five year term provides a starting point for the implementation stage of the plan. It is also a convenient benchmark for the re-evaluation of the plan priorities and indicators as comprehensive plans are required to be updated on a five year schedule.

The main strategic focus of the five year plan is on taking the needed steps that are appropriate to move a factor-driven economy to the next stage of development:

- Strengthening institutions and their collaboration;
- Ensuring scarce financial and natural resources are used efficiently;
- Adopting land use policies that minimize unit municipal service costs and maximize the creation, capture and transfer of value;
- Increasing the community's capture of federal/state funds;
- Ensuring that public sector funds are prioritized jointly and allocated, when possible, to generate the highest return to the community;
- Improving infrastructure and educational capacities critical to the development of targeted traded clusters.

The following is a brief summary of the recommended strategies to be considered by the Comprehensive Plan Coordinating Board as part of the five year implementation plan. A more detailed description of the recommended strategies are presented in the remainder of the report.

Landuse

- Adopt Land Use Plan and associated Implementation strategies. Details of the plan implementation are presented in the Future Land Use Plan Implementation Section (Section 8), including the priority initiative of implementing a form-based code for the port / airport employment node.

Downtown

- Develop the multi-modal alternate concept that provides a plaza view corridor linking UTB and the newly renovated Immaculate Conception Cathedral. This integration of the University and the Downtown area will catalyze mixed use redevelopment of the intermediate space and promote higher value uses throughout this critical corridor.
- Initiate the redevelopment of the 500-acre Banco District including the reinforcement of the levee between Gateway Bridge and B & M Bridge.

Economic

- Implement an economic development strategy focused on traded (exporting) clusters (versus firms) where Brownsville has the greatest competitive advantage: Heavy Manufacturing; Light Manufacturing; Logistics; Healthcare; and Hospitality and Tourism.
- Implement a Heavy Manufacturing Initiative establishing a Multimodal Logistics/Heavy Manufacturing industrial HUB at the Airport/Port Industrial Node. This cluster focuses on the manufacture of renewable energy products (e.g., wind turbines) and leverages the existing scrap metal and offshore platform steel fabrication and construction technologies to create internal demand and cross-integration of the logistics cluster. This initiative includes a number of critical infrastructure improvements including the completion of the East Loop, extension of the airport runway, the expansion of the electrical industrial capacity, Megasite certification, and additional port improvements including channel and dock enhancements. These infrastructure improvements are referenced in other projects below.
- Initiate a complementary Light Manufacturing

Cluster Initiative that focuses on diversifying the existing Maquiladora industry markets by adapting existing advanced manufacturing technologies in the automotive industry to new markets including renewable energy components, higher technology automotive and aviation components, recycling industries and technologies, and shovel-ready industrial park sites.

- Develop local technology and innovation capacity centered at UTB/ITEC by establishing strategic alliances with technology development centers (e.g. maquiladora technology centers, national labs) within the cluster initiative.
- Implement a municipal efficiency review process to identify and implement cost efficiency improvements within and between public sector entities.
- Develop a local Angel network to provide additional sources of private capital.
- Develop a comprehensive city-wide and out-of-area multi-media marketing, advertising, and public relations campaign that includes a new city brand system.

Infrastructure

- Construct essential water and wastewater infrastructure projects identified in BPUB's master plan, particularly the Robindale WWTP Rehabilitation and Expansion, and the associated wastewater transfers to the Southside WWTP, and the construction of the SWRA Pre-Treatment and capacity expansion.
- Determine the most economically efficient mix of energy sources to increase the existing electrical system capacity that is critical to the development of the Multimodal Logistics/Heavy Manufacturing HUB at the airport/port industrial node.
- Use the most current operational data to determine/update the optimal mix and timing of alternative options (i.e. conservation, reuse, fresh surface water, brackish water, groundwater, or seawater) to meet future water demands that best balances the life cycle costs and the risk of water supply shortfalls.
- Create a single, accountable drainage entity with a drainage utility fee structure, and an effective stormwater management program



with uniform and technically based detention policies including restrictions on development in floodplains.

- Pursue strategic regional corridors aggressively including the East Loop and a new West Loop. The East Loop in particular is a critical component of the Multimodal Logistics/Heavy Manufacturing Hub at the airport/port industrial node.
- Improve East-West Mobility through corridor management techniques (e.g., Access management; signal timing and coordination; intersection turn lane improvements) and transit prioritization to serve local mobility. Specific corridors include Boca Chica boulevard, International Boulevard, 11th Avenue and Ruben Torres from US 281 to Expressway.
- Implement a survey based traffic and street condition inspection program to prioritize and track the City's street pavement maintenance programs and capital improvements.

Civic

- Expand leadership training opportunities and improve quality of leadership (development of candidate scorecards, expansion of "Leadership Brownsville" program, internship/apprenticeship programs, youth leadership training).
- Increase voter registration and participation through youth programs, voting leagues and education and outreach efforts.
- Create a volunteer center and mechanism for increased volunteerism.
- Create a Comprehensive Plan Coordinating Board (CPCB) to provide an organization for inter-institutional cooperation; coordinate the implementation of the comprehensive plan; and implement a program to track the community's overall competitiveness by monitoring targeted indicator data.
 - Create an inter-institutional grant team

Environment

- Conduct a pilot study for curbside recycling to explore costs, operational constraints and alternative funding options.
- Develop a long-term Resaca Management Plan that includes implementation of smart growth principles in the comprehensive plan's land use element to preserve and restore their

integrity and maximize water supply, water quality, and drainage benefits.

- Evaluate wastewater reuse projects including routing treated wastewater through resacas for flow augmentation, effluent polishing and non-potable reuse in conjunction with the US COE Resaca system dredging project.
- Evaluate the development and implementation of renewable energy sources at the Port of Brownsville specifically solar, wind and biofuels.
- Promote and expand existing energy and water conservation programs.
- Evaluate expanding and connect existing trail system based on existing irrigation and drainage system ROW to promote walkable/bikable and health objectives.
- Develop a single comprehensive GIS data base and monitoring program to support the comprehensive planning effort.

Equity

- Develop an outreach and assistance program to assist low income workers to qualify and claim all applicable benefits including Earned Income Tax Credits, Medical Insurance, Children's Medical Insurance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), subsidized daycare, food stamps and housing subsidies; increase financial and wealth building awareness and provide supporting education resources including language training and alternatives to payday loans; and increase voter registration and voter participation that is so critical to the community's ability to capture its fair share of state and federal funding. The program would be operated by the United Way using facilities and support from local Community Health Centers.

Healthcare

- Create a community advisory/stakeholder group aimed at providing assistance to the City of Brownsville in implementing its plan to improve the health status of its residents.
- Support applied research that will address local health issues and interventional strategies to reduce preventable health conditions; and use the data to influence

political decision through the comprehensive plan implementation board.

- Develop a wellness program, with incentives, for all City personnel that promotes a healthy diet and lifestyle and results in cost savings for the City by reducing healthcare costs.

Education

- Create a subcommittee under the Education Task Force Committee to address and track educational attainment and workforce skills development. The committee shall include members from BISD, UTB/TSC, ITEC, Chamber and representatives from each of the five clusters targeted in the comprehensive plan; and shall develop a just-in-time workforce skills program designed to respond rapidly to the changing workforce skills demands.
- Develop a mechanism to track local high school graduates that leave the region to attend college and actively work with local industry to attract students back to the region. This could be accomplished by offering internship programs, providing financial incentives, and developing a job information network to notify locals residing outside of the region of available employment opportunities. This effort should occur in conjunction with major elements of the downtown revitalization plan to create a sense of place and improve the offerings of entertainment, recreation, and dining venues.

Emergency Management

- Restrict development within the 100 year floodplain and hazardous material transport corridors.
- Develop a public awareness/education program that emphasizes self-preparation for disasters.

The total CIP associated costs with the 5-yr initiatives exceed \$750 million. The potential revenue sources for these initiatives include revenue bonds, general obligation bonds, federal and state government participation and private/public partnerships. The total required funding levels exceed the individual bonding capacities of the various public sector entities; however,

their individual financing capacities can meet the required funding levels if they are leveraged together, especially if external public sector funding sources and private sector capital can be brought into the equation.

Finalizing the five year candidate initiatives will require performing a more refined benefit/cost analysis, risk assessment, evaluation of the probabilities of potential external sources of funding, consensus on priorities, and investigation of public/private partnerships. This is the first step in the implementation of the plan.

The process to perform the more detailed prioritization is presented in the implementation section. It outlines how projects would be identified, evaluated, ranked and presented to governing entities for implementation as well as the subsequent accountability steps that would be carried out to track the project's progress and the overall effect on the community's indicators.

An outline of the next steps over the first year of the five year plan and associated timelines is presented in Figure 5.



