



GREATER SAN MARCOS VISION 2020 STRATEGY

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February 18, 2015

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, Greater San Marcos, Texas has emerged as an increasingly prominent destination, home to new businesses and one of the nation's fastest-growing universities, Texas State. Nearly equidistant from the thriving cities of Austin and San Antonio, the area sits in a very strategic geographic location, allowing it to take advantage of economic opportunities generated by both metros while maintaining its own unique character.

In 2009, *Market Street Services* partnered with the City of San Marcos and its economic development team, Economic Development San Marcos, to coordinate a plan known as Partners for Progress aimed at elevating economic prosperity for the residents, businesses and elected/appointed leadership of the area. One of the first strategic initiatives successfully implemented was the creation of the Greater San Marcos Partnership (GSMP), which is funded by a strong collaboration of originating investors.

Since 2009, GSMP has made important headway on several fronts and began establishing its credibility and value position within the region. Now, as part of a comprehensive effort to make the community as competitive as possible for new jobs, talent, and corporate investment, the Greater San Marcos Partnership is taking the next step in its evolution by launching a process to enhance economic development activities and programs in the region comprised of Hays and Caldwell counties. At the end of the eight-month process, Greater San Marcos will have a consensus-based, achievable Vision 2020 Strategy to guide its path to short- and long-term prosperity.

PHASE 1: COMPETITIVE ASSESSMENT

The goals of the first phase were to identify how Greater San Marcos has grown as a community and to gather feedback from leaders and stakeholders in the area about how various changes and developments should be integrated into the new Strategy. The goal of this data-driven component of the process was to tell the area's story in a way that clearly identified competitive advantages, niche opportunities, challenges to prosperity, and strategic considerations that should frame the Partnership's program of work. Greater San Marcos trends were benchmarked against Rutherford County, Tennessee; Brazos County, Texas; York County, South Carolina; Texas; and the United States.

The following comprised the key takeaways from the Competitive Assessment research:

- ✓ Greater San Marcos must better accommodate quality growth and development.
- ✓ The region must leverage its key assets (location, workforce, Texas State, natural amenities, livability, existing businesses) more effectively.
- ✓ Perceptions of Greater San Marcos must be changed
- ✓ Greater San Marcos' two component counties are diverging.
- ✓ A consensus strategy for Greater San Marcos' future must be established.

PHASE 2: TARGET BUSINESS ANALYSIS & MARKETING REVIEW

The purpose of the Target Business Analysis was to identify economic sectors that will drive future employment growth and opportunity in Greater San Marcos. *Market Street* took a look at the Partnership’s current strategic economic development targets and analyzed them to ensure that these sectors continue to hold value for the community and are defined accurately. The Marketing Review complemented the target business research by analyzing the Partnership’s current marketing efforts. The Review took a look at the Partnership’s website and internal and external marketing programs to evaluate their effectiveness as marketing tools and to gauge how strongly they position the Partnership’s existing target business sector opportunities. The following graphic represents Greater San Marcos’ proposed target sectors:



PHASE 3: VISION 2020 STRATEGY

Market Street worked with the Steering Committee to identify the key strategic priorities for Greater San Marcos based on all of the quantitative and qualitative research performed to date. This Strategy serves as a consensus blueprint to move the Greater San Marcos area forward and with measurable and actionable goals and tactics needed to achieve success.

PHASE 4: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

While the Strategy represents “what” Greater San Marcos needs to do, the Implementation Guidelines determines “how” to do it. The Guidelines will serve as the “road map” for putting the Strategy into motion. The Guidelines outline the activities of the Strategy’s objectives on a day-by-day, month-by-month, and year-by-year basis.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Vision 2020 Steering Committee has been critical to the success of this initiative, shaping the strategy through various feedback channels and meeting sessions. Representing a broad group of community leaders from the public and private sectors, the Committee was responsible for reviewing project deliverables, providing feedback, and participating in discussions about the future direction of Greater San Marcos.

The following individuals served on the Vision 2020 Steering Committee:

Steering Committee Co-Chairmen:

Will Conley, Hays County

John Cyrier, Sabre Commercial

Daniel Guerrero, City of San Marcos

Patrick Rose, Corridor Title

Steering Committee Members:

Brett Arabie, Oxford Commercial

Trey Bailey, Luling Economic Development Corporation

Wayne Becak, Pioneer Bank

Ruben Beccera, Gils Broiler

Diana Blank, City of Kyle

Ed Bolton, Nexus Medical Consulting

Eugene Bourgeois, Texas State University

Jim Broaddus, Broaddus & Associates

Jed Buie, Buie & Co.

Ben Cloutier, CFAN Company

Becky Collins, Walton Development & Management, Inc.

Megan Compton, Texas State Highway 130

Shaun Cranston, Brookfield Residential Properties, Inc.

John Doucet, Doucet & Associates

Mark Eads, San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District

Byron Eckols, Wimberley Chamber of Commerce

Scott Flack, Live Oak-Gottesman

Steve Frayser, Texas State University

Rick Gonzales, Mensor Corporation

Debbie Gonzales-Ingalsbe, Hays County

Lonnie Hall, Gary Job Corps

Sam Huenergardt, Central Texas Medical Center

Laura Kilcrease, Texas State University

Greg Marberry, CBRE

Sandra Mauldin, City of Lockhart

Meagan McCoy Jones, McCoy's Building Supply

Nikelle Meade, Husch Blackwell LLP

Jared Miller, City of San Marcos

Ann Miller, Buda Economic Development Corporation

Carter Morris, Century 21-Randall Morris & Associates

Alfredo Munoz, Caldwell County

Pike Powers, The Pike Powers Group

John Schott, Frost Bank

John Sertel, Thermon Manufacturing Company

David Sheldon, Atlantis Properties

Lon Shell, Hays County

Lance Spruiell, Pioneer Bank

Jim Wimberly, Texas Aviation Partners

Market Street would like to recognize and thank the Greater San Marcos Partnership staff: **Adriana Cruz**, President; **Mike Kamerlander**, Vice President, Economic Development; **Rosemary Suniga**, Senior Research Director; **Ashley Gossen**, Director of Marketing & Communications; **Victor Garza**, Director of Business Retention & Expansion; and **Laurie Hartz**, Executive Assistant. Their support, guidance, and insight during the strategic planning process were essential to the effective development of the Vision 2020 plan.

VISION 2020 STRATEGY

Greater San Marcos, comprised by Hays and Caldwell counties and their component cities, is poised to enter an exciting and unprecedented phase of sustainable growth and development. As was the case for the geographic area between Dallas and Ft. Worth, Greater San Marcos will expand and densify as the inevitable, inexorable growth pressures from Austin and San Antonio converge in the counties between them.

As the Austin-San Antonio corridor continues its evolution into a consolidated metropolitan area, the only questions for Greater San Marcos will be what type of growth will occur, what will it look like, how can it be managed, and how will the region's economy and population be affected? Will Hays and Caldwell counties simply become bedroom communities to Austin and San Antonio and continue to create jobs principally in lower-paying, growth-dependent sectors like retail, real estate, construction, and affiliated industries, or will it forge its own identity and foster competitive advantages for export-oriented sectors that create high-value, high-wage jobs that increase local wealth, provide quality opportunities for local graduates, and attract talent from outside the community? Despite a core of promising assets and existing traded-sector employers, there is no guarantee that Greater San Marcos can differentiate its brand and economy from the broader I-35 corridor through Central Texas.

As the research reports for this Greater San Marcos Vision 2020 process found, the region has some critical obstacles and challenges to overcome, but also features a base of powerful resources, assets, and amenities that can be leveraged for quality short- and long-term development and job creation.

The full complement of quantitative and qualitative research conducted for Vision 2020 informed the identification of five key **Strategic Catalysts** that comprise the structure of Greater San Marcos' Vision 2020 plan. Acknowledging the critical importance of the region's alignment along the I-35 corridor between Austin and San Antonio as well as the work that must be done internally to capitalize on super-regional opportunities, each Strategic Catalyst includes tactics and priorities related to the San Marcos area's role in the context of the Central Texas corridor.

STRATEGIC CATALYSTS

Define and Promote the Greater San Marcos Value Proposition

Greater San Marcos must determine what it has to "sell" to internal and external stakeholders and how to best communicate these advantages. Currently, the region's "value proposition" – in other words, what differentiates Greater San Marcos in the marketplace – must be better defined, both among local stakeholders and external audiences. A process is needed to create visual and messaging platforms to inform a positive and impactful narrative on the benefits for companies and talent of locating in Hays and Caldwell counties.

Support Quality Growth in Export-Oriented Target Sectors

While there are certain burgeoning concentrations of employment in export-oriented (products and services consumed by non-local patrons) sectors, to a large degree the San Marcos metro economy is anchored by local-serving employment driven by population growth. This must change if local wealth is to be increased and better jobs created for existing and future residents, especially talented graduates of Texas State University and other regional higher education institutions. Effectively diversifying the Greater San Marcos economy will not be easy – competition for quality jobs has never been fiercer – but the region is not starting from scratch. Leveraging and enhancing existing assets and developing greater competitive capacity will be necessary to create sustainable and high-value economic growth.

Optimize the Local Talent Base

Compared to the state of Texas and the nation, Greater San Marcos has fairly competitive workforce dynamics. But seen in the context of Central Texas, the San Marcos region must upgrade its complement of adults with college degrees at all levels to get on the radar of top knowledge businesses in the Austin-San Antonio corridor and beyond. Concerning trends are apparent when comparing educational attainment and skills-levels of Hays and Caldwell County adults. Significant demographic differences also exist within the western and eastern portions of Hays County itself. In addition, programs and processes must be established to better connect existing and future employers with the regional education and training community.

Accommodate and Manage Quality Growth

Data supports residents' perceptions: Hays and Caldwell counties, taken together, are growing faster than nearly every region in the country, while San Marcos specifically has been designated the fastest growing city in the country with over 50,000 residents two years in a row. Concerns about transportation capacity and traffic congestion, natural resource protection, water capacity and sustainability, utility and wastewater infrastructure, and provision of quality public services top citizens' surveys across the region. Addressing growth issues will require a two-pronged approach: development of capacity to support and accommodate growth and also creation of policies and safeguards to ensure that Greater San Marcos' growth is sustainable and equitable.

Create Destination Appeal

Vision 2020 public input was clear: Greater San Marcos residents want more and better housing choices, dining and entertainment variety, arts and cultural amenities, recreation opportunities, downtown and activity center dynamism, and other trappings of a destination community. Many of these amenities will not only make Greater San Marcos a more competitive option for companies and talent, but also advance the prospects of the regional tourism sector. Quality of place and the environment provide great value because they are appreciated by current residents and are foundational to the success of modern economic development programs. Some of this development will naturally occur as the San Marcos area continues to grow, diversify, and create wealth, but a focus on what we need to create must be balanced with a focus on what we must protect. Steps can then be taken to advance the timeline and stimulate destination-amenity development in advance of what the market would naturally provide.

The key components of the five Strategic Catalysts are profiled in the following graphic. In the Strategy itself, priority actions and tactics will be detailed and proposed. The arrangement of the Catalysts does not imply hierarchy or priority; all are equally important to secure Greater San Marcos' preferred future.

GREATER SAN MARCOS VISION 2020 STRATEGIC CATALYSTS



Over 700 stakeholders from across Greater San Marcos contributed to the development of the Vision 2020 Strategy through their participation in public input. This feedback complemented an exhaustive array of quantitative research that combined to produce a clear picture of the region's competitive position, challenges, and opportunities. These conclusions directly informed Vision 2020 plan development.

Just as the development of the plan has been a community effort, so too will be its implementation. The Greater San Marcos Partnership will not be able to single-handedly activate every action proposed in the Vision 2020 Strategy. Hays and Caldwell County governments, K-12 school districts, two- and four-year colleges and universities, community development organizations, neighborhood groups, and a host of other public, private, and non-profit partners will be called upon to support implementation either through dedication of personnel, resources, or time. In the spirit of this collaborative need, *Market Street* has sought to incorporate existing organizations, programs, and policies in this strategy that contribute to the positive and progressive growth of the Greater San Marcos economy. The goal is not to reinvent the wheel programmatically if an existing effort has demonstrated success and sustainability.

The Vision 2020 Implementation Plan will identify entities to lead and support strategic activities and build a network of implementation partners so existing programs and processes can be coordinated under the Vision 2020 umbrella. As implementation proceeds, programmatic gaps and issues will be identified as partners activate the strategy and determine how these gaps and limitations can be addressed.

For certain recommendations in the Vision 2020 Strategy, BEST PRACTICES have been researched and identified to offer perspective on how other communities have addressed these challenges or opportunities. An action with an associated best practice is indicated by the letters "BP" noted parenthetically after the title.

Key Initiatives

The following proposed actions were confirmed by the Vision 2020 Steering Committee through group discussion and participation on an online comment survey. They represent the most impactful, priority activities that the Vision 2020 implementation team should focus on during the initial months after strategic launch. The proposed Key Initiatives are:

- *Work collaboratively to define a regional narrative for Greater San Marcos (1.1.1).*
- *Develop a brand and messaging platform for Greater San Marcos and utilize the campaign to promote the region to influential constituencies and markets (1.2.1/1.2.2).*
- *Take existing business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts to the next level (2.1.1).*
- *Develop an effective suite of multi-media marketing tools (2.2.1).*
- *Develop a Greater San Marcos entrepreneurship initiative (2.3.1).*
- *Support resource-development and expansion of STAR (Science, Technology, and Advanced Research) Park (2.4.1).*
- *Help Texas State secure funding for the construction and programming of its proposed Engineering and Science Building (2.4.3).*
- *Maximize the economic impact of the San Marcos Regional Airport (2.4.4).*
- *Create a partnership to better align and coordinate education and training in Greater San Marcos (3.1.1).*
- *Effectively inform and support regional transportation planning (4.2.1).*
- *Provide appropriate assistance to optimize development controls, regulations, and permit issuance as a competitive advantage in Greater San Marcos (4.3.1).*
- *Consistently maintain and promote information supporting development opportunities in the Greater San Marcos housing market (5.2.1).*

These initiatives will be the principal focus of initial Vision 2020 implementation and will be critical catalysts for bringing Greater San Marcos public and private leaders and stakeholders together in new and more dynamic ways. Effectively advancing the Key Initiatives will lay the groundwork for moving forward with the remainder of the Vision 2020 strategy.

1.0 DEFINE AND PROMOTE THE GREATER SAN MARCOS VALUE PROPOSITION

It is important for any economic geography to differentiate itself in the marketplace in order to attract attention and investment. This is perhaps more true for a region like Greater San Marcos, bracketed by two of the most dynamic communities in the country in Austin and San Antonio. However, before it can communicate to the outside world its identity and value proposition, the San Marcos region must build greater consensus internally on what binds the two-county area together and comprises its most compelling and unifying narratives.

1.1 INTERNAL

Diversity within the two-county Greater San Marcos region is both a challenge and a strength. Demographic and other differences that exist between Hays and Caldwell counties are real, with differences even within Hays County having significance. In reality, the communities within Greater San Marcos had never formally worked together on any issue save for the operations of the GSMP beginning in 2009. The fact of the matter is that regional collaboration anywhere in the country can be as difficult as it is critical. It is illustrative, for example, that input received in the Vision 2020 Competitive Assessment was so divergent between City of San Marcos and non-City of San Marcos residents. While this is expected in a region that is newly constituted, it is still a detriment to the goals of regional economic development. An area's residents and businesses must be its most vocal advocates and effectively tell its story to individuals and companies considering local investment.

Action 1.1.1 Work collaboratively to define a regional narrative for Greater San Marcos.

- ∟ Empanel a Working Group of key leaders representative of principal regional constituencies.
 - Ensure that the Group truly reflects the geographic and demographic diversity of Greater San Marcos.
- ∟ Conduct targeted outreach to Greater San Marcos stakeholders to engage in structured discussions about unifying principles, assets, ambitions, and shared values for the region.
- ∟ Through facilitated dialogue, charge the Working Group with developing a narrative profile of Greater San Marcos unique to its constituent counties and cities.
- ∟ Vet and refine the regional narrative with leadership groups across Greater San Marcos.
- ∟ Partner with media and local and regional institutions, associations, businesses, and constituency groups to promote the Greater San Marcos narrative to regional stakeholders.

1.2 EXTERNAL

Once consensus is reached internally on Greater San Marcos' value proposition, the next step is to communicate this message outside the region. When queried during the Vision 2020 input process about their perspectives on Greater San Marcos, stakeholders from outside the region were often at a loss to describe what differentiated the San Marcos area from the rest of Central Texas. The most common response was "home to Texas State." This is not a negative perception, but rather an incomplete one. Using both electronic and interpersonal tactics, regional economic development professionals and their partners should purposefully and deliberately begin redefining the perceptions of Greater San Marcos to outside audiences in Central Texas and beyond. The process will take time, but eventually a more complete and compelling picture of the San Marcos area's advantages and opportunities will embed in key networks of decision-makers, investors, prospects, and relocation professionals.

Action 1.2.1 Develop a brand and messaging platform for Greater San Marcos.

- ∟ Contract for the creation of a dynamic and salable communications platform to market the region externally.
- ∟ Build from the messaging base developed through the internal process proposed in Action 1.1.1.
- ∟ Engage all requisite public and private regional leaders in the development and confirmation of the Greater San Marcos campaign.

Action 1.2.2 Utilize the marketing campaign to promote Greater San Marcos to influential constituencies and markets.

- ∟ Build a full suite of media around the chosen brand and message.
- ∟ Ensure graphic and thematic consistency across all electronic, printed, and online media and collateral.
- ∟ Outreach to partners to incorporate the Greater San Marcos brand and messaging platform into their online media.
- ∟ Leverage the campaign to develop a script of key Greater San Marcos promotional talking points for use by top corporate, elected, and institutional leaders in conversations with and presentations to their networks.

2.0 SUPPORT QUALITY GROWTH IN EXPORT-ORIENTED TARGET SECTORS

Improving awareness of Greater San Marcos' competitive assets and position is only one part of a comprehensive, holistic, economic development program. Investments must also be prioritized in target business sectors that have the greatest potential to diversify the economy and raise local wealth. The Target Business Analysis conducted for the Vision 2020 process identified seven high-value regional and "super-regional" target sectors that were confirmed by the project Steering Committee as the appropriate categories for the region to focus on in the coming years. Expanding employment in these targets will require a multi-faceted, proactive, and collaborative approach to ensure that all potential growth catalysts are engaged and leveraged. It is also important that local economic development professionals, working every day to improve the competitive position of their communities and grow quality employment, are leveraged as key partners to inform and help implement a regional program.

2.1 EXISTING BUSINESS

Most of an economy's jobs are created by businesses already located in the community. Thus, it is imperative that local and regional economic development organizations (EDOs) invest time and resources in supporting the growth of these companies to the fullest extent possible. While EDOs do not directly create jobs, they can ensure that the local competitive and support climate provides companies with the optimal conditions for growth and investment. Local practitioners are important partners to a regional organization as they are experts in their local economies and have established relationships with companies, governments, and training entities.

Action 2.1.1 Take existing business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts to the next level.

- ∟ Reorient visitation rosters, schedules, and surveys based on Greater San Marcos' approved target sectors.
- ∟ Better utilize Executive Pulse to build a robust and consistently-updated database of existing regional firms and their buyer-supplier networks.
- ∟ Leverage the database to inform cluster-mapping efforts to identify potential opportunities to insource purchases currently made outside the region.
- ∟ Ensure that all local economic development partners are utilizing Executive Pulse software sub-licenses and contributing to the database of information on Greater San Marcos companies.
 - Work with local economic development professionals to ensure that support for area businesses is coordinated, collaborative, and effectively addresses key challenges and opportunities.

- ∟ Utilize institutional, state, and federal export-assistance organizations to expand overseas development opportunities for regional businesses.
- ∟ Leverage enhanced relationship-building efforts (see 2.2.3) to foster business-development opportunities between local firms and potential customers and partners in the Austin and San Antonio markets.

Action 2.1.2 Create and coordinate a Local Economic Development Professionals Council in Greater San Marcos.

- ∟ Empanel a group of practitioners from San Marcos area economic development organizations and departments to serve as a key resource to inform regional programs and efforts.
- ∟ Utilize the Council as an important tool to optimize lead distribution, prospect development, and project management protocols.
- ∟ Support the local efforts of partners to improve competitive positioning and effectively develop and implement economic development programming.
- ∟ Ensure that Council members are kept informed of ongoing project negotiations and the results of all prospect engagements, including reasons cited (if given) for not investing in the region.

Action 2.1.3 Launch a pilot economic gardening¹ program in Greater San Marcos. (BP)

- ∟ Become familiar with the economic gardening concept and research established programs to inform the development of a pilot effort in Greater San Marcos.
- ∟ Design the specifications of Greater San Marcos' economic gardening initiative and build the capacity necessary to effectively implement the pilot program.
- ∟ Outreach to a local company that fits the established economic gardening profile and work with them to incorporate formal support for their growth ambitions.
 - Partner with local economic development practitioners to ensure program implementation is integrated with local support efforts.
- ∟ Based on piloted efforts, determine the value of expanding the program to additional Greater San Marcos businesses.
- ∟ Optimize the expanded program based on experiences with the pilot firm.

¹ Economic gardening focuses on strategic growth challenges such as developing new markets, refining business models, and gaining access to competitive intelligence. Economic gardening specialists help CEOs identify issues hindering their growth and then apply tools to deliver insights and information for CEOs to leverage. (Source: Edward Lowe Foundation)

Action 2.1.4 Support the integration of local businesses into targeted councils and associations in Austin, San Antonio, and corridor-wide.

- ∟ Conduct an inventory of all existing target sector councils, associations, and advocacy groups corresponding – or related – to Greater San Marcos’ targeted sectors, including any existing membership of regional firms in these entities.
- ∟ Work with representatives of these groups to introduce Greater San Marcos firms for potential membership in these networks.
- ∟ Discuss the potential to expand existing target sector membership groups to the full Austin-San Antonio corridor, as appropriate.

Action 2.1.5 Partner closely with the San Marcos Manufacturers Association. (BP)

- ∟ Continue efforts to integrate the work of the San Marcos Manufacturers Association (SMMA) and the GSMP through dual board membership and other means.
- ∟ Work to support the inclusion of education and training, government and economic development officials in the SMMA.
 - Advance the Association’s desire to serve a footprint extending beyond the City of San Marcos into Hays and Caldwell counties.
- ∟ Leverage the existing and potential SMMA membership to conduct meaningful strategies in support of the success and expansion of Greater San Marcos firms.
- ∟ Consider the potential to eventually create additional target sector councils in other Greater San Marcos targeted business categories.

2.2 MARKET POSITIONING

External awareness-building, as recommended in *Strategic Catalyst 1.0*, must be differentiated by audience to ensure that decision-makers or their representatives in control of corporate investments are familiar with a community’s competitive assets to support their industry. As such, Greater San Marcos’ external marketing tactics and tools should be segmented and directed towards individuals, prospects, and markets engaged in targeted business activity applicable to the region’s prioritized opportunities. As assessed in the Vision 2020 Marketing Review, the region’s designated marketing entity, the Greater San Marcos Partnership, is currently reprioritizing and repositioning its marketing program. The organization’s refreshed program should effectively focus on investments with the greatest potential for positive results. The San Marcos’ region’s size and ability to act quickly to capitalize on opportunities should be emphasized; in other words, Greater San Marcos is large enough to have strong competitive assets and opportunities but is not so big that it cannot be nimble in pursuing them.

Action 2.2.1 *Develop an effective suite of multi-media marketing tools.*

- ∟ Ensure that the Greater San Marcos Partnership website is an optimal point of first contact for decision-makers researching the region.
- ∟ Incorporate consistently updated profiles of Greater San Marcos' target sectors into the Partnership website.
- ∟ Ensure that compete and current profiles of all available sites and buildings in Hays and Caldwell counties are prominently featured on the site.
- ∟ Create a website tab dedicated to Greater San Marcos' location in the Austin-San Antonio corridor and the competitive benefits it provides.
- ∟ Link to a set of impactful social media accounts managed by the Partnership and consistently updated with new information, stories, profiles, and data.

Action 2.2.2 *Invest in strategic sponsorships and earned media capacity to increase positive awareness of Greater San Marcos in the marketplace.*

- ∟ Identify high-value sponsorship opportunities corresponding to Greater San Marcos target sectors, strategic priorities, and/or I-35 corridor initiatives.
- ∟ Contract for national public relations services with a proven individual or firm.

Action 2.2.3 *Engage in relationship-building to establish a leadership position in the Austin-San Antonio corridor.*

- ∟ Continue outreach to Central Texas partners to develop one-day events, conferences, seminars, and other engagements focused on shared opportunities and challenges along the I-35 corridor.
- ∟ Seek to develop more robust relationships with economic development partners, top firms, and entrepreneurial ecosystem leaders in Austin and San Antonio to identify and advance potential opportunities for San Marcos area firms.
- ∟ Actively engage with local governments and institutions in the Corridor as well as key entities such as the Greater Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council, CAMPO (Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization), Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG), Lone Star Rail District, and other super-regional partners that can influence San Marcos area strategic initiatives.
 - Consider opportunities to extend leadership to the state level through similarly impactful organizations and entities.

Action 2.2.4 Partner with Texas State to significantly increase external awareness of the university's capacity and strategic opportunities.

- ∟ Develop a formal outreach campaign in partnership with Texas State to promote the university to key audiences across the U.S.
- ∟ Focus on Texas State's efforts complementary to Greater San Marcos' target sectors as well as the university's core philosophies supportive of commercialization and corporate partnerships.
- ∟ Ensure that Texas State innovations, commercialization and incubation successes, and other news are leveraged by Greater San Marcos' contracted public relations efforts.

Action 2.2.5 Selectively schedule outbound and inbound marketing engagements to maximize return on investment.

- ∟ Refine the Greater San Marcos Partnership's travel calendar to only focus on the highest value marketing missions.
 - Schedule travel far enough in advance to allow the participation of local economic development organizations in planning efforts.
- ∟ Identify a select number of target sector and real estate conferences that promise significant return on investment to economic development program funders.
- ∟ Continue to expand and enhance inbound marketing events targeting top site consultants and prospect companies, and other influential decision-makers.

2.3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Vision 2020 input participants and key data indicators confirmed that Greater San Marcos' entrepreneurial ecosystem is less developed than other communities in Central Texas, the state, and nation. Building a competitive climate for startup development, research commercialization, and focused innovation will take time and persistence. Research infrastructure, activities, and facilities affiliated with Texas State provide the region with a strong base of entrepreneurial capacity. Building networks of entrepreneurs, a universe of startup focused events, get-togethers, and programming, and other tactics associated with ecosystem development must leverage existing talent but also seek to attract new entrepreneurs and investors to Greater San Marcos. Leaders say that the region's emphasis must be upon development of an initiative that encourages a robust entrepreneurial environment and identifies an entity to serve as a "neutral" clearinghouse for efforts to foster collaboration and coordination in the entrepreneurial ecosystem rather than leveraging physical facilities as the driver.

Action 2.3.1 Develop a Greater San Marcos entrepreneurship initiative.

- ∟ Convene a working group of service-delivery entities to coordinate and oversee development of the initiative.
- ∟ Conduct a gap analysis to identify existing and proposed programs or initiatives supporting entrepreneurship in Hays/Caldwell Counties.
 - Leverage the findings of the analysis to develop specific program coordination, collaboration, development, and implementation strategies.
- ∟ Assign operational responsibilities to address existing and emerging needs, including the identification, designation, or creation of a central entity to foster collaborative approaches to delivery of entrepreneurial services.
 - Charge this central entity with serving as a “clearinghouse” for information on the full breadth of Greater San Marcos entrepreneurial efforts.
- ∟ Consider the longer-term opportunity of identifying a facility to serve as a physical “center of gravity” for the region’s entrepreneurial activity. **(BP)**
 - Prior to designation of a facility, conduct a formal feasibility study to define the opportunity, strategies for roll out, and funding dynamics.

Action 2.3.2 Leverage and develop programs to accelerate enterprise development.

- ∟ Fully promote and capitalize on the Texas State Center for Entrepreneurial Action.

Action 2.3.3 Foster opportunities to engage and activate local capital investment.

- ∟ Determine if local capacity is sufficient to create a Greater San Marcos angel investment fund by outreaching to top regional business executives and high-net-worth residents.
- ∟ Identify the appropriate entity or individual(s) to manage the fund and coordinate vetting of funding opportunities with invested angels.
- ∟ Actively promote the fund to all potential entrepreneurs and startup founders.
- ∟ Supplement the proposed angel fund by securing grants to capitalize a seed-investment fund in Greater San Marcos for startup businesses at the pre-angel phase.

Action 2.3.4 Leverage relationship-building to better promote and connect local entrepreneurs with colleagues and investors in Austin and San Antonio.

- ∟ Focus a component of super-regional relationship-building (see 2.2.3) on developing linkages with incubation/acceleration facilities (i.e., Capital Factory and Austin Technology Incubator in Austin, InCube Labs Texas and the Texas Technology Development Center [T3DC] in San Antonio, and others), startup founders, and entrepreneurs.

- ∟ Broker relationships between Austin and San Antonio founders, funders, and officials and San Marcos Area entrepreneurs to seed opportunities for counsel, investment, partnerships, and business relationships.
- ∟ Ensure that Austin and San Antonio-based capital resources are aware of all potential research-commercialization and investment-stage funding opportunities at Texas State.

2.4 COMPETITIVE ASSETS

Though Greater San Marcos' economy is currently dominated by lower-paying, growth-dependent service sector jobs, that does not mean the region is devoid of key competitive assets that can spur greater economic diversification and wealth-creation. Supporting and leveraging these existing and potential assets will be critical to advancing the development of Greater San Marcos' target sectors and providing more compelling employment opportunities for current and future talent and local higher education graduates. Making progress in capitalizing on these assets will require partnerships across multiple Greater San Marcos stakeholder groups and organizations; no single entity will be able to do it alone.

Action 2.4.1 Support resource-development and expansion of STAR (Science, Technology, and Advanced Research) Park.

- ∟ Engage in STAR Park's ongoing strategic planning process and actively support confirmed priorities and expansion plans.
- ∟ Ensure the STAR Park Advisory Board has ongoing participation from economic development professionals.
- ∟ Continue to leverage STAR Park as a key destination for familiarization tours with prospects, site consultants, the media, and super-regional/state/federal partners.
- ∟ Incorporate STAR Park and STAR One information and updates in all targeted external marketing media and materials.
- ∟ Integrate STAR Park facility and programmatic funding priorities in annual state and federal legislative agendas (see 4.3.3).

Action 2.4.2 Develop a comprehensive strategy for the attraction and retention of foreign direct investment (FDI) by small to mid-sized companies seeking to enter the U.S. market by locating in Greater San Marcos. (BP)

- ∟ Convene a working group to oversee the development of a gap analysis to identify needed services, existing resources, and other elements to support the initiative.
- ∟ Based upon the gap analysis, development specific implementation strategies, assign responsibilities, and set milestones and outcome measures to address the opportunity.

- ∟ Designate the key entity which will provide the leadership for development and implementation of the strategy.

Action 2.4.3 Help Texas State secure funding for the construction and programming of its proposed Engineering and Science Building².

- ∟ Partner with leaders in the Engineering, Materials Science, and Biology programs to determine how Greater San Marcos economic development organizations, governments, and the business community can most effectively support resource-development goals for the building.
- ∟ Prioritize the funding of the Engineering and Science Building in Greater San Marcos' proposed annual legislative agenda (see 4.3.3).
- ∟ After funding is secured, work with Texas State to fast-track the construction of the building to ensure that growth in target-sector-supportive programs is not constrained.

Action 2.4.4 Maximize the economic impact of the San Marcos Regional Airport. (BP)

- ∟ Conduct a highest-and-best-use analysis of developable property at and adjacent to the airport.
- ∟ Incorporate multiple target-sector-supportive development scenarios for municipal and privately-owned sites to determine if a preferred option emerges.
- ∟ Based on the analysis, assess current land-use guidelines and availability of site-based incentives to gauge applicability to priority development scenarios.
- ∟ If feasible, consider the creation of a statutory incentives district at the airport to optimize its marketability.

Action 2.4.5 Promote opportunities to develop Class A office space in Greater San Marcos.

- ∟ Perform a full inventory of regional property currently zoned for commercial development and create a GIS-based electronic map designating priority opportunities for new office construction.
- ∟ Create prospectuses for top identified office-development sites leveraging data on current market conditions, prospective demand, comparative land costs, and available incentives to effectively convey opportunities for new Class-A office product.
- ∟ Post all promotional materials on the Greater San Marcos Partnership website and appropriate partner sites.
- ∟ Hold twice-yearly Development Days for local and super-regional developers to take them on guided tours of Greater San Marcos' most compelling sites for speculative office construction.

² Current Status: The building's Total Project Cost estimate was updated August 2014 from \$93.0 million to \$107,012,293. A Tuition Revenue Bond request for the Engineering and Science Building in the amount of \$107,012,293 that would provide full funding for this project is pending. (Source: Texas State).

Action 2.4.6 Capitalize on opportunities to leverage the future Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin for local economic growth.

- ∠ Fully support strategies identified by the Central Texas Medical Center (CTMC) UT Medical School Interface Committee to capitalize on associated prospects for local growth tied to the Dell School.
- ∠ Position CTMC as a key partner for translational medicine opportunities linked to Dell School-sponsored or affiliated research.
- ∠ Work with Texas State to assess potential programmatic connections/collaborations with the Dell Medical School and determine their applicability to Greater San Marcos target-sector-development strategies.

3.0 OPTIMIZE THE LOCAL TALENT BASE

The quality of a community's workforce is the most important competitive asset it can offer current and future businesses. Austin, Greater San Marcos' northern neighbor, is the epitome of leveraging a dynamic talent base (the region was branded "The Human Capital") to fuel growth in a knowledge economy and related sectors. The San Marcos area does not need to match Austin's sky-high educational attainment levels or "stickiness" for talent to more effectively diversify its economy and enhance local wealth creation. In fact, there are advantages to Greater San Marcos maintaining a healthy mix of manufacturing, retail, agriculture, and real estate in its economy as opposed to going "all in" on a technology-focused future. However, data has shown that the San Marcos area must boost performance in its pre-K to 12 systems, raise the degree-attainment levels of working-age adults, and better align education and training with regional job creation to more effectively compete for knowledge-intensive industries.

3.1 PRE-K TO 16

The training system from pre-K through college graduation is often called the "cradle to career" pipeline in acknowledgement of the need to funnel children along a prescribed path to quality employment. Not everyone appreciates or agrees that students should be considered "products" honed for the benefit of local employers, but if a community is interested in: 1) supporting the talent and growth needs of local companies, and 2) ensuring that opportunities exist for local graduates to stay in the community to live and work, the concept of a formalized training pipeline is compelling. If nothing else, education/training institutions, the business community, government, economic development, and social-service providers should see themselves as coordinated partners in the optimization of career-directed student advancement.

Action 3.1.1 Create a partnership to better align and coordinate education and training in Greater San Marcos. (BP)

- ∟ Outreach to partners in all San Marcos area independent school districts, higher educational institutions, Gary Job Corps, key corporate human resources representatives, government officials, and leaders in regional social services entities to serve on a training-alignment council.
- ∟ Base Greater San Marcos' partnership on the collective impact³ alignment model proliferating across the United States.

³ The concept of collective impact hinges on the idea that in order for organizations to create lasting solutions to social issues like education on a large-scale, they need to coordinate their efforts and work together around clearly defined goals. The concept of collective impact was first articulated in a 2011 Stanford Social Innovation Review article. Collective impact was

Action 3.1.2 Focus curricula and campus development on career-based learning tied to local industry concentrations.

- ∟ Continue efforts to create subject-specific career academies in Greater San Marcos school districts, leveraging existing programs as models.
- ∟ Outreach to regional employers to consistently inform curricula development and provide support and resources for subject-specific academies and programs.
- ∟ Ensure that program planning and development at Austin Community College's (ACC) Hays campus and Texas State continues to be informed by business community priorities and targeted opportunities.

Action 3.1.3 Increase physical and programmatic training capacity in Greater San Marcos.

- ∟ Continue efforts to ensure that pre-kindergarten programming in Greater San Marcos is fully funded for all eligible children.
- ∟ Work with district and institutional representatives to expand internship, job shadowing, "2+2," co-operative, early college, direct-to-work, and other programs for students across the region.
- ∟ Consider launching a STEM-based regional high school in Greater San Marcos. **(BP)**
 - Leverage the Texas State LBJ Institute for STEM Education and Research for enhancement of STEM-based education throughout Hays and Caldwell counties.
- ∟ Support the enhancement of ACC's in-district efforts in Kyle and Buda as well as out-of-district work in San Marcos and Caldwell County.
 - Monitor future efforts to assess the challenges and benefits of incorporating the San Marcos CISD and school districts within Caldwell County into the ACC taxing district and opening satellite campuses, as appropriate.
- ∟ Enhance local partnerships with Gary Job Corps.
 - Ensure that the Corps' Industry Council is reflective of Greater San Marcos economic development and target-sector priorities and effectively informs program development and training standards.
 - Leverage the region's proposed annual legislative agenda (see 4.3.3) to ensure that federal Job Corps Centers (including the Gary center) are fully funded, staffed, and continue to provide comprehensive suites of programming.

chosen as the #2 philanthropy buzzword for 2011, and has been recognized by the White House Council for Community Solutions as an important framework for progress on social and economic issues. (Source: Wikipedia)

Action 3.1.4 Expand efforts to improve the perception of Greater San Marcos CISDs and awareness of their programming.

- ∟ Refresh, update, and relaunch the “Making the Grade” initiative beyond just the San Marcos CISD to broaden awareness of the competitive assets and accomplishments of districts across the region.
- ∟ Develop, schedule, and host work sessions for regional real estate professionals to provide them with accurate information on local school districts and their performance dynamics, especially those with greater percentages of lower-income students.

3.2 TALENT RETENTION AND ATTRACTION

While the retention and attraction of top talent is a key concern for any community, this is especially true in Greater San Marcos, where thousands of skilled students graduate from Texas State University every year and thousands more transition to the job market from colleges and universities across Central Texas. Ultimately, the presence of quality employment with strong prospects for advancement or startup business opportunities with potentially lucrative paydays will be the key determinant of retention and attraction success. Because Greater San Marcos has an appealing quality of life and established amenities for young adults, it has a leg up on other communities that have less to offer in terms of employment or lifestyle. At most, Greater San Marcos officials should ensure that talent in Central Texas is aware of local opportunities and the most effective ways to plug into local peer networks.

Action 3.2.1 Encourage the utilization and development of internship programs.

- ∟ Support the promotion of all existing internship programs between Texas State and regional employers.
- ∟ Work with university officials and Greater San Marcos businesses to establish new internships linking targeted regional employers with applicable Texas State programs.
- ∟ Consider capitalization of an internship-development fund to support the creation of internship positions at small- and medium-sized employers.

Action 3.2.2 Create an online “landing pad” for existing and potential talent in Greater San Marcos. (BP)

- ∟ Develop a stand-alone branded web portal aimed at engaging, connecting, networking, and informing talent of peer networks and opportunities in the region.
- ∟ Provide information on Greater San Marcos’ lifestyle, housing options, school districts, professional and social networks, cost of living, and other germane details.
- ∟ Create password-protected portals for employers and job seekers to post openings and résumés.

- ∟ Enlist local talent to serve as moderators for discussion boards and topic areas.
- ∟ Actively promote the talent portal across all applicable owned media.

Action 3.2.3 Establish and expand relationships with Central Texas institutions, associations, and young professional groups.

- ∟ Leverage proposed relationship-building activities (see 2.2.3) to foster lasting interactions with decision-makers and influencers in corporate HR departments, university job-placement offices, alumni associations, YP networks, and other groups across Central Texas to actively promote Greater San Marcos as a location to live and work.
- ∟ Encourage regional employers to establish a presence at college/university job fairs across Central Texas and other formalized engagements with skilled job seekers.
- ∟ Promote Greater San Marcos in print and online campus media.
- ∟ Direct new and existing contacts to the proposed talent portal (see 3.2.2) as a point of first contact for individuals or entities interested in Greater San Marcos.

3.3 LEADERSHIP AND INCLUSION

Fostering a competitive climate for talent involves more than just ensuring that quality employment is available for interested workers. Today's younger generations are looking for places that respect and engage them and cultivate opportunities for leadership development and community involvement. The region then benefits by having new, fresh, and diverse perspectives on key issues and the establishment of a leadership-succession process when current community stalwarts step aside. While there is great benefit to segmenting networking activities by constituency group, there must be equally focused efforts to cultivate interaction between affinity groups and ensure that leadership development is reflective of community diversity. For example, young professional (YP) groups provide proven opportunities for long-term and recently arrived members of this key constituency to build social and business networks, develop ties to the area, and potentially influence community discourse, policy, and strategy. It is critical that young adults develop binding local connections to increase the potential for them to become lifelong residents. However, it is equally important to outreach to YPs and incorporate them into leadership networks and opportunities across the full breadth of the local age spectrum.

Action 3.3.1 Effectively support and leverage Leadership San Marcos.

- ∟ Work with the director, board, and key alumni of Leadership San Marcos to determine opportunities to enhance and expand the program to all regional constituencies.
- ∟ Ensure that all potential participants across Greater San Marcos are aware of the program and are familiar with the application process.
- ∟ Resource and offer scholarship monies to support interested low-income program applicants.

- ∠ Outreach to program graduates to ensure they remain engaged in key regional initiatives, programs, and advocacy.

Action 3.3.2 Establish a Hispanic Leadership Council in Greater San Marcos. (BP)

- ∠ Identify and partner with top Hispanic public, private, and non-profit leaders from across the region to discuss opportunities to create a Council and inform its design, launch, and sustainability.
- ∠ Support the effective programming of the Council and ensure that its influence is applied to Greater San Marcos policy and issue discussions and development.
- ∠ Fully support and leverage the Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos (CCHSM) for the preservation, development, promotion, and celebration of local Hispanic arts, culture, heritage, and values.
 - Work to position the Centro as a community facility available to Hispanics across Greater San Marcos.

Action 3.3.3 Create a Greater San Marcos Young Professionals network. (BP)

- ∠ Research best-practice models from across the United States to inform the development (or enhancement) and programming of the San Marcos area's network.
- ∠ Identify an organizational "home" for the network, with the potential dedication of full-time staff to coordinate and manage programs, events, and members.
- ∠ Host events in locations across the region to ensure that YPs in all Greater San Marcos communities feel welcome in the network.
- ∠ Actively engage the YP organization in regional issues, leadership networks, economic and talent development initiatives, and promotional efforts.

4.0 ACCOMMODATE AND MANAGE QUALITY GROWTH

Greater San Marcos is one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, while the City of San Marcos has been the fastest-growing city in America two years running. The belief that the San Marcos area will continue to see its population increase is a given for nearly every public and private leader in the region. The impacts of this growth are at the top of many residents' concerns for the future, be they traffic congestion, natural-resource depletion, cost of living increases, or any of the other externalities typically associated with such rapid population expansion. Strategically, Greater San Marcos' response to these growth pressures should be two-fold: 1) ensure that quality development is effectively facilitated by government processes and supported through provision of infrastructure and services, and 2) implement policies that ensure the region's growth is sustainable and does not adversely impact quality of life, natural amenities, or the built environment.

4.1 NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY

In addition to ensuring that Greater San Marcos' supply of water is sustainable and safeguards the integrity of its aquifer systems, regional officials must acknowledge and support public preferences related to protection of sensitive environmental lands and resources. Balancing the demands for quality growth and preservation of the natural assets and amenities that residents cherish is a delicate dance, but one that must be successfully accomplished if Greater San Marcos is able to not only grow, but grow in a way that supports and enhances the qualities that stakeholders value most about their communities. Austin and its surrounding communities have shown that it is possible to grow while also maintaining environmental integrity and assets. In fact, these assets are frequently cited as one of the area's principal competitive strengths. Greater San Marcos should similarly focus on supporting quality growth and perpetuation of natural amenities that draw residents, businesses, and visitors to the community.

Action 4.1.1 Leverage Texas State Meadows Center for Water and the Environment research to foster environmental sustainability and economic development.

- ∟ Serve as a connector and advocate for the inclusion of the Meadows Center as a key voice in discussions, assessments, and sustainability planning related to Greater San Marcos water systems.
- ∟ Continue to support and capitalize on educational, community, and environmental benefits provided to Greater San Marcos by the "living laboratory" of Spring Lake.
- ∟ Explore opportunities to commercialize water technology research and innovation, including rainwater-collection technology, hydrology modeling and analytics software, drone-enabled remote-sensing, water-flow technology, filtering processes for agriculture, and proprietary watershed-management processes.

Action 4.1.2 Formalize environmental protection and sustainability practices and policies in city comprehensive planning efforts.

- ∟ Ensure that city comprehensive plans (see 4.2.2) effectively address issues related to natural-resource management and protection.
- ∟ Inform the development and updating of statutory zoning and land-use guidelines through identification and confirmation of land, systems, and habitats reserved for protection.

Action 4.1.3 Support Hays County as it effectively implements its Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (RHCP) and leverage it as a key tool to protect habitats, facilitate quality development, and provide additional valuable resources in support of efforts to conserve environmentally sensitive land.

- ∟ Ensure existing and future landowners are aware of the dynamics and benefits of the program's development mitigation credits.
- ∟ Continue to apply income from credit sales into conservation efforts in designated Hays County environments.
- ∟ Promote the RHCP to outside developers as an example of progressive development and conservation processes in Greater San Marcos.
- ∟ Monitor environmental and species protection issues in Caldwell County to determine if a program similar to the RHCP is appropriate for design, development, and implementation.

4.2 INFRASTRUCTURE

Complementing a transparent and reliable business climate, the provision of sufficient infrastructure to support quality growth is also critical to ensuring that development in Greater San Marcos is sustainable, directed to land that can accommodate it, and managed to the fullest extent possible. Failure to invest in necessary infrastructure will not only risk over-taxing current systems but also drive development away from Greater San Marcos, threatening the local tax base, reducing the potential for new residential and visitor amenities, and severely constraining the ability to create quality local jobs and retain and attract talent. It is important that greater consensus be reached among San Marcos area communities and constituencies as to priority infrastructure needs and investments; decision-makers at the state and federal levels are often more compelled to fight for key projects if they are supported by all (or most) regional geographies and leaders.

Action 4.2.1 Effectively inform and support regional transportation planning.

- ∟ Ensure priority Hays and Caldwell County transportation projects are included in long-range and short-term TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) plans developed by CAMPO and the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

- Leverage private sector associations and economic development organizations to advocate for a better understanding among San Marcos area cities of existing and future planning efforts.
- ∟ Partner with the Greater Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council, Capital Area Council of Governments, and the Lone Star Rail District to serve as visible and vocal advocates for the funding and construction of priority projects.
- ∟ Lobby for full funding and timely construction of local and regional transportation projects in Greater San Marcos' annual legislative agendas (see 4.3.3).
 - This includes active support for the funding and construction of the Lone Star Rail line between Austin and San Antonio.

Action 4.2.2 *Develop new – and implement existing – comprehensive plans in Greater San Marcos cities.*

- ∟ Effectively advance the implementation priorities of Vision San Marcos.
- ∟ Work with city officials to determine the need to develop new and/or updated comprehensive plans in their jurisdictions.
 - Support governments in building consensus on the need to develop/update plans and identifying resources to facilitate and complete planning processes.
- ∟ Foster collaboration across city processes to ensure that comprehensive plans support holistic Greater San Marcos growth-management preferences and priorities.

Action 4.2.3 *Continue advancing processes to develop consensus project lists for voter approval in city and county bond elections.*

- ∟ Utilize the City of Buda's successful 2014 bond election and other examples as models for the effective development, promotion, and approval of infrastructure-supportive public votes.
- ∟ Work with local and regional economic development, planning, and tourism officials to ensure that bond-election project lists support Greater San Marcos' target sector, land use, quality of life, and hospitality priorities.
- ∟ Host and leverage community leadership meetings of local/regional stakeholders to inform the development and approval of bond-election project lists.

4.3 BUSINESS AND POLITICAL CLIMATE

Opportunities for Greater San Marcos may arise as the City of Austin and Austin MSA continue to grow and challenges associated with that growth – delayed permitting timeframes, increased cost of doing business, and a more difficult regulatory environment – could potentially escalate to the extent that investors will

look elsewhere in Central Texas to site their projects. If this occurs, the communities within Hays and Caldwell counties could rightly position themselves as an affordable and desirable alternative for quality job growth and capital investment within the Austin MSA. It should be noted, however, that the Competitive Assessment raised significant issues related to these challenges within Hays and Caldwell counties, and particularly with regard to the City of San Marcos. Such challenges can be overcome. Above all, officials in both the private and public sectors feel that the business community's "voice" in Greater San Marcos must be more vocal in advocating for policies and developments locally and legislative priorities at the state and federal levels. There must also be continual opportunities for leaders in Hays and Caldwell counties to come together around issues across multiple subject matters areas.

Action 4.3.1 Provide appropriate assistance to optimize development controls, regulations, and permit issuance as a competitive advantage in Greater San Marcos. (BP)

- ∟ Leverage the business and development communities to consistently assess regulatory processes in San Marcos area cities and counties to ensure they are pro-business, cost-competitive, efficient, and predictable.
- ∟ Continue to exercise business-community support for efforts to improve efficiency and predictability in City of San Marcos permitting systems.
 - Provide all needed assistance and guidance to the Technical Committee empaneled to oversee the rewrite of San Marcos' development code.
 - Support ongoing efforts to increase staffing capacity, speed up inspections, and institute a "culture change" in the city's Planning and Development Services department.
 - Ensure the public and local/regional contractors and developers are familiar with the city's MyPermitNow web-based permitting software.
- ∟ Consider launching an effort in Hays and Caldwell counties to create physical and electronic "one-stop shops" for obtaining regulatory approval for new development and redevelopment.
- ∟ Incorporate the benefits of existing and enhanced future development climates in Greater San Marcos cities and counties into external promotional efforts.

Action 4.3.2 Establish a clear and consistent business community "voice" on key Greater San Marcos initiatives.

- ∟ Formalize a process to outreach to selected business leaders to inform regular policy positions on priority local and regional initiatives.
- ∟ Effectively communicate consensus business community positions to elected officials, media outlets, local constituency groups, and through owned-media channels of economic development entities and their partners.

- ∠ Identify and manage a Rapid Response Team of business leaders to attend key city and county discussions and votes on initiatives of private-sector concern.

Action 4.3.3 *Develop and promote annual state and federal legislative agendas for Greater San Marcos. (BP)*

- ∠ Work with public and private partners during the months leading up to legislative sessions to identify, vet, and confirm the state and federal legislative issues of most interest and concern to Greater San Marcos.
- ∠ Promote the approved legislative agendas through publication of printed and electronic position summaries on chosen issues and opportunities.
- ∠ Populate a group of public and private leaders to formally approach state and federal legislators to advocate in person for the region's policy and issue priorities.
 - Ensure that Greater San Marcos has a presence, as necessary, on lobbying trips made by Austin and San Antonio organizations.
- ∠ Follow up on all advocated positions and communicate to regional leaders, program investors, and the public at large the results of Greater San Marcos lobbying efforts.

Action 4.3.4 *Maximize opportunities to foster collaboration between Hays and Caldwell counties on various issues of joint interest.*

- ∠ Create a Leadership Committee of business executives and city/county officials to adopt an annual, non-binding platform of shared economic development goals.
- ∠ Consider holding annual joint leadership retreats for elected leaders of Hays and Caldwell counties to discuss key opportunities for collaboration and potential action plans to advance them.
- ∠ Identify existing formal and informal contexts that can be leveraged to further cross-county collaboration.
 - Work with the organizers/coordinators of these forums, meetings, discussion groups, etc., to incorporate opportunities for Hays/Caldwell County collaboration into agendas and missions.

5.0 CREATE DESTINATION APPEAL

Many experts now feel that quality of place is integral for economic development competitiveness. This is especially true as talented workers increasingly choose destinations to live before finding employment there. Quality of place is a broad term, but nevertheless incorporates components of place-making, passive and active park and recreation options, environmental sustainability, and other elements. The Vision 2020 public input process showed that Greater San Marcos must enhance its quality of place; consistent themes were the lack of competitive housing choices at mid- and upper-level price points, a dearth of arts, entertainment, and dining options in Greater San Marcos, and the potential to leverage historic and newer downtowns and activity centers to provide some of these desired environments and amenities. Despite these frustrations, however, green shoots exist within Greater San Marcos. On the retail front, Endeavor Real Estate Group's recent purchase of Springtown Mall in San Marcos offers a unique opportunity to repurpose a historically blighted front door to the city. And with regard to executive housing, the City of San Marcos' recent unanimous approval of La Cima San Marcos and support for Brookfield Residential's Paso Robles development provide particular promise. Strategically, it is difficult to propose actionable tactics to achieve success in spurring development of higher-price-point housing, boutique retail, gourmet restaurants, and similar amenities. These projects and establishments typically follow their own proven research and investment models to inform development decisions. However, economic development professionals in Greater San Marcos can consistently seek to make decision-makers aware of opportunities in the region and provide defensible data, analysis, and testimonials to draw attention to and build momentum for regional investment.

5.1 LIFESTYLE AMENITIES

Multiple business people in Greater San Marcos spoke of having to take important clients to dinner in New Braunfels or elsewhere because of a lack of local options. These stories were shared by constituents from across the community who lamented that few non-student entertainment and dining options exist in the region, especially the City of San Marcos. Certainly, as Greater San Marcos evolves into a more self-contained, higher-paying, export-based economy, these amenities will come naturally as retailer research shows higher per capita incomes and spending power in the community. Until that point, however, it will again be contingent upon economic development organizations to demonstrate latent demand for higher-end destinations and establishments as effectively as possible.

Action 5.1.1 Support local partners' retail-development goals and strategies.

- ∟ Provide economic and demographic data and analysis as needed to advance San Marcos area localities' goals of attracting new retail establishments.

- ∠ Incorporate, as appropriate, retail development activities into Greater San Marcos strategies to grow its Destination Attractions target sector.
- ∠ Support San Marcos area governments that choose to invest in contracted retail analysis and attraction plans.

Action 5.1.2 *Establish a geographically-defined incentive zone around the San Marcos Premium Outlets and Tanger Outlets of San Marcos.*

- ∠ Outreach to property owners adjacent to the outlet malls to propose the creation of an investment zone supportive of new development in the district.
- ∠ Define the parameters of the district to include preferred uses, development types, densities, and public amenities.
- ∠ Work with property owners and public officials to determine the most appropriate and impactful tool to leverage, potentially including a municipal utility district (MUD), tax increment reinvestment zone (TIRZ), or public improvement district (PID).

5.2 HOUSING

Housing development within Hays and Caldwell counties, broadly, is a concern. Some examples of high quality, master-planned communities currently exist, such as Plum Creek in Kyle or Blanco Vista in San Marcos. But across the two-county region, and particularly within the City of San Marcos, these are the exception, not the rule. In fact, new construction at higher-end price points is a concern in eastern portions of Hays County and throughout Caldwell County as well. Nowhere within Greater San Marcos is this concern more consistently expressed than in the City of San Marcos itself. At the time of this strategy's writing, however, multiple large-scale housing developments are in the planning or construction phase. These include Paso Robles, La Cima, and the recently-announced 2,358-acre Cotton Center development. While project announcements are not a guarantee that they will be built in a timely manner, the recent spate of proposed housing construction in Greater San Marcos nevertheless indicates that momentum is building in the development community to satisfy what is increasingly perceived as strong demand in the San Marcos market. As development activity increases, Greater San Marcos leaders should also acknowledge that not all local communities will desire the same intensity of new housing construction and should remain sensitive to local development preferences and dynamics.

Action 5.2.1 *Consistently maintain and promote information supporting development opportunities in the Greater San Marcos housing market.*

- ∠ Partner with the Four River Board of Realtors to develop an electronic guide for posting on multiple websites highlighting information on Greater San Marcos population, income, and housing trends and projections.

- Include an updated interactive map showing the locations of housing development projects.
- ∟ Consider placing advertisements in super-regional, state, and national development publications and websites promoting Greater San Marcos as a dynamic housing-development opportunity and directing readers to the electronic information guide.
- ∟ Become active in the Homebuilders Association of Greater Austin and Greater San Antonio Builders Association, as well as the Real Estate Councils of Austin and San Antonio, in order to consistently promote opportunities for quality capital investment within Greater San Marcos.

Action 5.2.2 Ensure that talent retention and attraction campaigns and other communications outreach include information on new and under-development regional housing.

- ∟ Populate the proposed talent retention/attraction web portal (*see 3.2.2*) with constantly updated news and information on housing-development activity in Greater San Marcos, including links to projects and builders.
- ∟ Leverage Greater San Marcos Partnership communications channels like its e-newsletter, social media accounts, public relations efforts, and outreach to membership to keep the business community and external audiences aware of all current and proposed housing developments.
- ∟ Support the sourcing of funds for a regular insert in the *Austin American-Statesman* profiling new San Marcos area housing developments.
- ∟ Utilize proposed super-regional relationship-building efforts (*see 2.2.3*) to raise awareness on new mid-price and executive housing options in Greater San Marcos.

Action 5.2.3 Encourage appropriate regulatory flexibility for higher-density, mixed-use housing types in new and amended development codes.

- ∟ Subject to the planning preferences of area councils and municipalities, support opportunities to enable different housing and development typed under local codes.
- ∟ Consider offering overlay zoning code options in designated districts for developers seeking to invest in mixed-use and/or transit-oriented product.
- ∟ Provide fast-track permitting, density bonuses, and other benefits for projects meeting predetermined development standards or including a percentage of housing units affordable to buyers below the median regional wage.

5.3 ACTIVITY CENTERS

In addition to Downtown San Marcos – the best known of the region’s activity centers – Greater San Marcos features many dynamic downtown districts, including those in Wimberley, Kyle, Buda, Lockhart, Luling, and others. In the City of San Marcos, while the Downtown area is bustling and almost fully leased, the majority of establishments in the district cater to nearby Texas State University. Strategies to better connect Downtown to the San Marcos River and leverage the waterway’s destination appeal (without threatening its ecosystem) were mentioned by multiple input participants as key economic opportunities. Likewise, constituents from cities and towns across Greater San Marcos tout the benefits of their historic or new-build cores and express optimism that the potential for high-value development and redevelopment is great.

Action 5.3.1 Advance efforts to stimulate dynamism and development in activity centers across Greater San Marcos.

- ∟ Encourage and support the funding, creation, and implementation of master development plans for Greater San Marcos downtowns and activity centers.
 - Leverage all existing and potential efforts such as the implementation of aesthetic-improvement grants in Buda and the leveraging of hotel/motel taxes for development of wayfinding systems.
- ∟ Incorporate information on regional downtowns and activity centers in the proposed talent portal (see 3.2.2) and other communications and promotional tools and channels.
- ∟ Ensure that investment opportunities in San Marcos area downtowns are included in the proposed housing development guide (see 5.2.1) and promoted in super-regional relationship-building efforts (see 2.2.3).

Action 5.3.2 Support partners’ efforts to optimize development, commerce, accessibility, and recreation in Downtown San Marcos.

- ∟ Consider launching a planning process to assess the relationship of the San Marcos River to Downtown and propose options to better connect the district to the River and improve accessibility and public aesthetics in the riverfront zone.
- ∟ Continue with efforts to create a Downtown San Marcos parking district and accompanying parking management plan.
- ∟ Reassess liquor-license-approval processes to enable food-service establishments to serve beer and wine prior to the six-month waiting period for hard liquor.
- ∟ Seek consensus on the opportunity to construct a new City Hall in Downtown San Marcos.

- ∟ Renew efforts to create a business improvement district (BID) in Downtown to fund event programming, aesthetic improvements, clean-up efforts, and – potentially – an “ambassador” corps to assist visitors with navigating the district and accessing businesses.

5.4 DESTINATION DISTRICT

In the introduction to this strategy, Greater San Marcos’ location between Austin and San Antonio along the I-35 corridor was equated with that of communities bracketed by Dallas and Ft. Worth along I-30 in north central Texas. The most apt comparison is with the City of Arlington, roughly equidistant to the major cities to its east and west. Arlington has been very strategic in leveraging its prime geographic position to attract major sports and entertainment facilities and destinations, including AT&T Stadium, Globe Life Park, and Six Flags Over Texas. These parks are co-located in a designated entertainment district supported by the city through targeted planning, zoning, incentives policies, and bond financing. As the Austin-San Antonio corridor develops and densifies, millions of potential patrons of sporting events and theme parks, including tourists, will be within an easy drive of Hays and Caldwell County destinations. This is especially true with the expansion of Texas Highway 130 as a high-speed connector between the two cities. It behooves Greater San Marcos governments to examine how they can leverage their centrality in the I-35 corridor to attract similar game-changing developments as the City of Arlington.

Action 5.4.1 Conduct a Feasibility Study for the identification, preparation, promotion, and development of a Destination District in Greater San Marcos. (BP)

- ∟ Contract for a comprehensive analysis of Greater San Marcos publicly and privately owned property to identify one or more potential locations for a specially designated large-scale Destination District housing multiple athletic and entertainment-related facilities, venues, and amenities.
- ∟ Determine the optimal siting, administrative framework, funding mechanisms, and regulatory guidelines for the Destination District.
- ∟ Consider the Destination District as a potential location for a new Greater San Marcos convention and events center supplementing the existing facility in the City of San Marcos.
- ∟ Initiate private discussions with professional sports franchises, theme parks, and major entertainment promoters to assess the appeal of Greater San Marcos as a preferred destination.

CONCLUSION

Growth is coming to Greater San Marcos. The question of the quality of that growth and the ability of the region to create more and better opportunities for its residents is paramount, especially because the demographic profile of Hays and Caldwell counties shows that these opportunities are needed. Greater San Marcos must therefore capitalize on current interest from investors to maximize its development potential and optimize the character and appeal of this growth to ensure that the community is firmly established as a destination of choice and preferred location for residents, businesses and visitors.

The region is in a stronger position to maximize the impact of current opportunities because of the significant progress that has been made in the previous five years since the regionalization of economic development in the form of the Greater San Marcos Partnership. A similarly transformative evolution in programmatic and personnel capacity will be necessary to take the region to the next level through the Vision 2020 strategy. Indeed, the five Strategic Catalysts and associated actions and tactics in this Vision 2020 plan represent another great leap for economic, community, and workforce development in Greater San Marcos. Quite simply, the breadth of this plan is well beyond what the region has ever attempted previously to stimulate development, quality job growth, and sustainable wealth creation in the community. To effectively advance these strategies, Greater San Marcos will need to significantly expand its resource and staffing capacity to implement a comprehensive, holistic regional initiative.

Vision 2020 represents the first time that Greater San Marcos has truly come together to collaborate on a comprehensive strategic process as a two-county region. It is hard work, necessary, and truly impactful if effectively implemented. Successfully advancing Vision 2020 will require new collaborations and partnerships between Hays and Caldwell counties and a commitment from both the public and private sectors to ensure that regional constituencies – often divided over issues such as new development and natural-resource protection – come together under a shared vision for Greater San Marcos' preferred future. The Greater San Marcos Partnership will play a critical role as a convener, catalyst, advocate, collaborator, and program implementer.

The forthcoming Implementation Plan will assess and determine roles, responsibilities, and structures for key implementation partners as well as resource availability and demands, phasing of strategic activities, and metrics to track performance.

APPENDIX: BEST PRACTICES

Market Street maintains an extensive library of best practice programs, processes, organizations, and efforts for application to key competitive opportunities and challenges identified through our comprehensive research process. Best practices recommended to inform the Vision 2020 strategy were selected based on their specific relevance to actions and efforts the community can pursue. Ultimately, local leadership should utilize these best practices as guidelines and potential programmatic models to inform strategic efforts custom-tailored to Greater San Marcos.

ACTION 2.1.3: TWIN CITIES (MN) AREA ECONOMIC GARDENING PARTNERSHIP

Recognizing the need for sustained growth of second-stage companies, the Minnesota counties of Hennepin, Carver, Anoka, Scott, and Ramsey established the Regional Economic Gardening Network to provide select growth companies with no cost business research and enhancement. Companies who participate in this opportunity must show potential for job creation and longer-term business growth.

In its Economic Gardening Program, the Partnership supports existing businesses well-positioned for growth by providing strategic research assistance to participating firms. Eligible businesses have between 10 and 99 employees and revenue between \$1.0 and \$5.0 million. Expanded from a pilot project implemented by Hennepin (Minneapolis) County, the Partnership now includes the aforementioned counties. Hennepin County is the lead agency in the implementation of the Edward Lowe Foundation model gardening program. Services include:

- Custom research: 40 hours per chief operating officer (CEO) of four “pods” of 15 selected core companies (for a total of 60 companies)
- CEO round table sessions: Eight half-day sessions for the CEO’s of the 60 selected core companies
- CEO forum events: Four sessions for CEOs of up to 100 companies per session

<http://www.hennepin.us/business/work-with-henn-co/business-assistance>

ACTION 2.1.5: CAPITAL AREA MANUFACTURING COUNCIL (LANSING, MI)

Facing systemic employment loss caused by outsourcing and the relocation of manufacturing operations to the Sunbelt, manufacturing business leaders from central Michigan came together in 2004 to create the Capital Area Manufacturing Council. The Council is an executive-level manufacturing committee that works together to improve central Michigan’s manufacturing competitiveness by addressing common issues and challenges. The Council approaches these issues through its Executive and Workforce committees. The Executive Committee meetings are held six times per year for CAMC members with discussion centering on enhancing business opportunity for local manufacturers. Supply chain support, import/export strategies,

lean manufacturing strategies, product/market diversification, and plant tours are common topic areas. Among the Council's initial successes include identifying and addressing a CNC/welder skill shortage, engaging manufacturers with M-Tech (Michigan's technical education centers), and securing a \$10 million grant from Michigan's Skilled Trades Training Fund (STTF) to support efforts to train and develop new and incumbent workers. The Capital Area Manufacturing Council is funded by dues, donations, in-kind support from partners and members, and grants from Michigan Works!

<http://www.camconline.org/>

ACTION 2.3.1: GREENHOUSE (ST. PETERSBURG, FL)

As a partnership between the St Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of St. Petersburg, Greenhouse is a one-stop shop facility for starting or growing local St. Petersburg businesses. Greenhouse provides an array of services including business counseling, training, networking, specialized assistance, and access to start-up capital. Greenhouse acts as St. Petersburg's entrepreneurial center of gravity, leveraging a broad support network to ultimately benefit local entrepreneurs. Through its partnership with the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and ASPEC (Academy of Senior Professionals at Eckerd College), entrepreneurs receive one-on-one mentorship programs and in-house office hours to ensure their business is on the path to success. Greenhouse is also highly focused on ensuring that entrepreneurs are equipped with the knowledge they need to proactively address or anticipate their future needs. Entrepreneurs in the St. Petersburg Area credit the creation of Greenhouse as the catalyst for bringing together what had previously been a disparate local ecosystem.

<http://stpetgreenhouse.org/>

ACTION 2.4.2: UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA SOFT LANDING PROGRAM

The University of Central Florida Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) is a university-driven community-supported partnership created to build successful business ventures from opportunities in Central Florida. UCFBIP's Soft Landing Program offers the following benefits:

- Satellite office space with flexible short term lease options at nine sites in Central Florida
- Connections with the Central Florida business community
- Access to a network of training and meeting rooms
- Access to a PR Bureau for Press Release creation and distribution
- Domestic market research through UCF Venture Lab
- Access to experts concerning import/export laws and regulations
- Cultural training
- Connections to UCF faculty and students

In order to be eligible for consideration, a prospective Soft Landing company must:

1. Be a for-profit business in a high growth field.
2. Have all the valid paperwork needed to conduct business in the USA.
3. Have the ability to pay the UCFBIP's monthly rental fee for the intended term of occupancy.
4. Have potential for positive economic impact on the community through:
 - a. A technology, product or service deemed to have a high potential impact in the marketplace, and having potential for creation of new high paying jobs.

<http://incubator.research.ucf.edu/clients/softlanding.html>

ACTION 2.4.4: BRADLEY AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT ZONE (WINDSOR, CT)

The Bradley Airport Development Zone (BADZ) was created in 2010 to seize upon the Windsor, Connecticut airport's full potential. The BADZ extends tax incentives to airport-related firms utilizing the facility for distribution, manufacturing and other specified businesses that develop or acquire property in the Zone and foster job growth. A business qualifies for BADZ's the tax incentives if it acquires an idle facility or constructs, substantially renovates, or expands one and uses the facility for specified uses. Eligible uses include:

- Manufacturing;
- Performing research and development directly related to manufacturing; or
- Significantly servicing, overhauling, or rebuilding machinery and equipment for industrial uses.

Warehousing and motor freight distribution uses qualify for the incentives, but only if they handle goods shipped by air. Business services, including information technology, also qualify for incentives if they depend upon or relate directly to the airport. Businesses that qualify for the property tax exemptions also qualify for a 10-year corporation business tax credit equal to the portion of the tax attributable to the facility.

http://www.bradleydevelopment.com/Regional_Profile/Incentives/Bradley_Airport_Development_Zone/

ACTION 3.1.1.: CRADLE-TO-CAREER EDUCATION COALITIONS

These public-private coalitions convene education, training, government, non-profit, and business constituencies through a shared vision of creating a best-in-class regional workforce development system and product. Business interests in communities around the country have long sought to support and improve the quality of education systems. But in recent decades, as school systems have faced increasingly

severe challenges and as resource constraints have increased, many communities have formalized these efforts through the creation of comprehensive programs or independent, non-profit entities.

Strive Together (Cincinnati, OH)

Promoted by community leaders in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, the Strive Together effort was launched in 2006 to focus cross-sector community leaders on prioritizing education through significant investments of time, talent, and treasure. The Strive Partnership has a three-pronged approach: engaging executive and grassroots partners in the vision, working through turf issues among service providers, and encouraging funders to move existing resources to proven strategies. During its first five years, Strive saw positive improvement in 40 of the 53 educational outcomes it measured. Strive's success has inspired other communities to adopt the model. Since starting in Greater Cincinnati, Strive has grown to include a network of 49 partnerships across 26 states and the District of Columbia from Maine to Alaska to Austin and San Diego.

<http://www.strivetogether.org/>

Alignment Nashville (Nashville, TN)

Founded in 2004, Alignment Nashville was created to align community organizations and resources to provide coordinated support for Nashville's youth, having a positive impact on public school success, children's health, and the success of the community as a whole. Alignment Nashville is governed by a Board of Directors, which appoints an Operating Board to oversee Design and Implementation Teams. This structure allows varying levels of involvement and leadership and engages a wide range of stakeholders in different ways. Alignment programs, based on Alignment Nashville have also been implemented in Rockford, Illinois; Jackson, Mississippi; Coachella Valley, California; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Oneida-Herkimer-Madison, NY.

Though the Strive and Alignment networks are the largest and most prominent cradle-to-career coalitions, many other communities have launched similar efforts, including 55,000 Degrees in Louisville, KY; the Los Angeles (CA) Education Partnership; the Boston (MA) Opportunity Agenda; Project L.I.F.T. in Charlotte, NC; the Alliance for Education in Seattle, WA; and the recently announced EDGE Initiative in Greater Des Moines, IA.

<http://portal.alignmentnashville.org/>

ACTION 3.1.3: DAYTON (OH) REGIONAL STEM SCHOOL

The Dayton Regional STEM School is a public school for students in grades 6-12 who live in and throughout the Dayton region. Application is via an online form with qualified potential students selected via lottery. The school's mission is to prepare students with the skills necessary to compete in the global economy, with a focus on aviation as a technological representation of the region's industrial past and current economy. Per the school's website, "This mission is inspired by the Dayton region's history and is aimed at ensuring our community's future success." Students are able to participate in real-world experiences with practicing scientists, engineers and technical professionals at WPAFB's Air Force Research

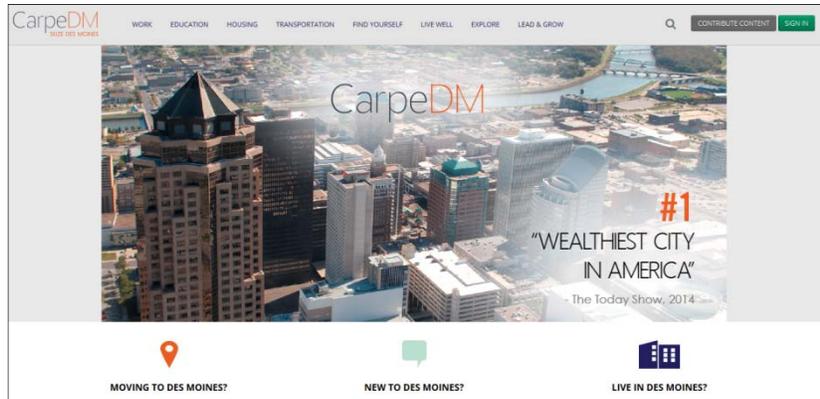
Laboratory and other research/industry sites. They are also able to earn college credit for certain courses while still in high school.

<http://www.daytonstemschool.org/>

ACTION 3.2.2: CARPE DM (DES MOINES, IA)

Found at the address www.SeizeDesMoines.com,

Carpe DM is an online portal developed by the Greater Des Moines Partnership as a landing pad for existing and potential talent interested in the region. The Partnership built the central content with links to a comprehensive database of information on



moving to and/or discovering Des Moines. Much content is expected to be user-generated, with local volunteers serving as site coordinators for various functions and topic areas. The site launched in early 2014 with information and links to finding a career; starting a business; local primary, secondary, and higher education; housing options, including rentals and real estate broken down by community; transportation in the metro and outside of it; volunteer and network opportunities for students, young professionals, career-minded adults, families, and empty nesters; local farmers markets, health care, spiritual communities; local arts, sports, politics, entertainments, and news; and area professional organizations and leadership programs.

ACTION 3.3.2: HISPANIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF PINELLAS (PINELLAS COUNTY, FL)

Established in 2006, the Hispanic Leadership Council is a community partnership of 30 member organizations representing government, education, social services, and business in Pinellas County. The Council's goal is to respond "to the needs of a changing Hispanic/Latino population through public education, advocacy, enhanced services, and elimination of barriers, for the betterment of the entire community." Since its inception, its five strategic priorities have been: Achievement Gap, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Information and Advocacy, Access to Health Care, and Cultural Competency. The Hispanic Leadership Council of Pinellas hosts several events to reach its target audience, including an annual "Embracing Our Changing Community" conference which promotes cultural competence and recognizes diversity, a Hispanic Summit which assesses the current needs and barriers experienced by the Hispanic community, and many health fairs, screening events, and health education seminars that connect residents with available services. The Council collaborated with Pinellas County Adult Education and other member organization to produce and publish on YouTube over 20 DVDs teaching practical English to

adults and providing information about topics such as domestic violence, gardening, human trafficking, and others. Another accomplishment, the result of Council members working closely with local elected officials, was the passage of in-state tuition for qualified undocumented students. Before the legislation, students were paying as much as \$1,000 per class and now pay approximately \$300 like their high school peers, ensuring that higher education goals are within reach for more qualified students.

www.hispanicoutreachcenter.org/hispanic-leadership-council-of-pinellas

ACTION 3.3.3: TULSA'S YOUNG PROFESSIONALS (TULSA, OK)

Tulsa's Young Professionals (TYPros) was founded by the Tulsa Metro Chamber in 2003 in response to the region's "brain drain" of new graduates and young professionals to other cities and states. TYPros has since grown to more than 8,000 members. The organization is a key component of the Tulsa Metro Chamber's regional economic development plan, Tulsa's Future. To ensure that the group was maturing into an active facilitator of community change, TYPros developed "work crews" allowing young professionals to have a collective voice and impact on a number of community concerns and initiatives. TYPros work crews are focused around the following issues:

- Business Development
- Colleges & Universities
- Community Ambassadors
- Community Redevelopment
- Diversity
- Government Relations
- Next Generation Leadership
- Special Events
- Sustainability

The Government Relations Crew organized has organized legislative days in which they rent buses and take a large consistency of young professionals to the state capital for a day of meetings with state representatives from the region. The Diversity Crew promotes greater diversity within TYPros membership while hosting a number of events to promote dialogue about diversity in Metro Tulsa. The organization's mission is to attract and retain young talent in the Tulsa metro region while also establishing Tulsa's next generation of business and community leaders.

www.typros.org

ACTION 4.3.1: CITY AND COUNTY WEB-BASED PERMITTING (CINCINNATI, OH)

The City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, in conjunction with the Cincinnati Geographic Information System, created a web-based building permitting system to make permit issuance seamless from either jurisdiction. The ezTrak System allows citizens to apply for permits as well as check the status of permit applications, required inspections, and plan review, all online in a user-friendly format that shifts easily between departments and city and county systems.

Source: City of Cincinnati, Ohio

ACTION 4.3.3: ONE VOICE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA (TULSA, OK)

Coordinated by the Tulsa Chamber, the OneVoice agenda is an annual list of ten state and ten federal priorities endorsed by chambers, counties, municipalities and educational and economic development organizations from across metro Tulsa. Task forces are formed and meet for three months to create a list of each group's top priorities. These priorities are then presented at an annual Regional Legislative Summit where the Tulsa Chamber and its regional partners work to create a comprehensive agenda built upon the top ten priorities identified by Summit attendees. Once compiled, each partner is asked to formally endorse the OneVoice Legislative Agenda and add their organization's support to the region's most important issues.

The OneVoice legislative agenda identifies both federal and state priorities and advocates for these priorities on a regular basis through events like the Regional Day at the Capitol and the Tulsa Regional D.C. Fly-in. The Chamber also hosts monthly Capitol luncheons in Oklahoma City, legislative briefing breakfasts and distributes advocacy alerts to engage its membership in priority issues. The participation of the 65 regional partners in these events leverages a comprehensive regional voice that legislators have said strongly influences their policy decisions.

<https://www.tulsachamber.com/onevoice/>

ACTION 5.4.1: ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT OF ARLINGTON, TX

In 2008, the City of Arlington Department of Community Development and Planning created an Entertainment District Overlay to allow a broad mix of uses, including retail, restaurants and bars, apartments, and office space, around the then planned new stadium for the Dallas Cowboys. Development standards promoting a unifying identity for the Entertainment District, now a 2,700-acre entertainment area in central Arlington, as a whole through a complementary mix of land uses and physical design were instituted to guide new developments and redevelopment in the district.

Serving over 7.0 million visitors annually, the Arlington Entertainment District contains seven major attractions: Six Flags Over Texas, Hurricane Harbor, Globe Life Park (Texas Rangers), Legends of the Game Museum, AT&T Cowboys Stadium, Lincoln Square Mall, and the Arlington Convention Center.