

RICHARD WARREN, PRESIDENT

MIKE COOKSLEY, VICE-PRESIDENT

JAY MARTIN, BOARD MEMBER

CHUCK ENGELKEN, BOARD MEMBER



MIKE CLAUSEN, BOARD MEMBER

RANDY WOODARD, BOARD MEMBER

NANCY OJEDA, BOARD MEMBER

## CITY OF LA PORTE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MEETING AGENDA

Notice is hereby given of a meeting of the City of La Porte Development Corporation to be held on March 31, 2016, at the La Porte Police Department Conference Room, 3005 N. 23rd Street, La Porte, TX 77571, beginning at 5:00 PM to consider the following items of business:

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **CONSENT AGENDA** *(All consent agenda items are considered routine by the La Porte Development Corporation Board and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Board member requests an item be removed and considered separately)*
  - (a) Consider approval or other action of minutes of the La Porte Development Corporation Board meeting held on February 22, 2016 - P. Fogarty
  - (b) Receive Financial Report - S. Livingston
3. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**
  - (a) Discussion and possible action regarding future projects and/or initiatives of the La Porte Development Corporation - S. Livingston
4. **SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING - S. Livingston**
5. **Board member comments regarding matters appearing on agenda; Recognition of community members, city employees, and upcoming events; inquiry of staff regarding specific factual information or existing policies.**
6. **Executive Session** The La Porte Development Corporation reserves the right to meet in executive session on any agenda item should the need arise and if authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Title 5, Chapter 551, of the Texas Government Code.
7. **Reconvene into regular session and consider action, if any, on items discussed in executive session.**
8. **Adjourn**

The La Porte Development Corporation Board reserves the right to meet in closed session on any agenda item should the need arise and if applicable pursuant to authorization by Title 5, Chapter 551, of the Texas Government Code (the Texas open meetings laws).

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of La Porte will provide for reasonable accommodations for persons attending public meetings. To better serve attendees, requests should be received

**24 hours prior to the meetings. Please contact Patrice Fogarty, City Secretary, at 281.470.5019.**

**CERTIFICATION**

I certify that a copy of the March 31, 2016, agenda of items to be considered by the Board of the La Porte Development Corporation was placed on the City Hall Bulletin Board on March 24, 2016.

*Patrice Fogarty*

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Patrice Fogarty, City Secretary

RICHARD WARREN, PRESIDENT  
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MIKE CLAUSEN, BOARD MEMBER  
RANDY WOODARD, BOARD MEMBER  
NANCY OJEDA, BOARD MEMBER

## MINUTES OF LA PORTE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD MEETING OF FEBRUARY 22, 2016

The City of La Porte Development Corporation Board met on **February 22, 2016**, at the City Hall Council Chambers, 604 West Fairmont Parkway, La Porte, Texas, at **5:00 p.m.** to consider the following items of business:

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

President Richard Warren called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The following members of the La Porte Development Corporation Board were present: Board members Engelken, Clausen, Woodard, Martin and Ojeda. Absent: Vice-President Cooksley. Staff Present: Corby Alexander, Traci Leach, Patrice Fogarty, Scott Livingston, and Clark Askins.

### 2. CONSENT *(All consent agenda items are considered routine by the La Porte Development Corporation Board and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Board member requests an item be removed and considered separately.)*

**(a)** Consider approval or other action of minutes of the La Porte Development Corporation Board meeting held on February 8, 2016 – P. Fogarty

**(b)** Receive Financial Report – S. Livingston

Regarding Item B, Board member Engelken questioned if the projected year end fund balance is \$3.4 million. Finance Director Michael Dolby responded that is the projection so far.

Board member Engelken moved to approve the Consent Agenda Items pursuant to staff recommendations. Board member Martin seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 6/0. Vice-President Cooksley was absent.**

### 3. AUTHORIZATIONS

**(a)** Consider approval or other action authorizing \$120,000.00 development agreement with Fischer's Hardware, Inc., in connection with incentive grant in the amount of \$120,000.00, for infrastructure improvements to property located at 1010 S. Broadway Street – S. Livingston

Economic Development Coordinator Scott Livingston presented a summary.

Board member Woodard moved to authorize a \$120,000.00 development agreement with Fischer's Hardware, Inc., in connection with an incentive grant in the amount of \$120,000.00 for infrastructure

improvements to property located at 1010 S. Broadway Street. Board member Ojeda seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 6/0. Vice-President Cooksley was absent.**

- (b) Consider approval or other action authorizing an enhancement grant in an amount not the exceed \$19,102.60 payable to 4 Ever Clear Pool Chemical Co., LLC., and associated development agreement, for infrastructure improvements to property located at 101 S. Iowa – S. Livingston

Economic Development Coordinator Scott Livingston presented a summary.

Board member Woodard asked what the maximum amount for is enhancement grants. Economic Development Coordinator Scott Livingston responded \$25,000.00.

Board member Clausen asked if the roof on the middle building will be repaired. Owner Scott Jensen responded the roof is in good shape and will be treated with a product and then painted.

Board member Martin asked Mr. Jensen how long has he been in business at the location. Mr. Jensen responded since April 2014. Board member Martin asked what is the nature of the business. Mr. Jensen responded a swimming pool service company.

Board member Woodard asked Mr. Jensen how long he has been in the swimming pool business and where was his previous location. Mr. Jensen responded over 11 years and in the Dickinson area off of FM 517 and Hwy 146.

President Warren asked how many employees are employed at the location. Mr. Jensen responded five.

Board member Clausen moved to authorize an enhancement grant in an amount not to exceed \$19,102.60 payable to 4 Ever Clear Pool Chemical Co., LLC., and approve an associated development agreement for infrastructure improvements to property located at 101 S. Iowa. Board member Woodard seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 6/0. Vice-President Cooksley was absent.**

**4. SET DATE FOR NEXT MEETING**

Board members set the next meeting date for Thursday, March 31, 2016, at 5:00 p.m., at the La Porte Police Department Training Room.

**5. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS** regarding matters appearing on agenda; recognition of community members, city employees, and upcoming events; inquiry of staff regarding specific factual information or existing policies.

Board member Ojeda requested Economic Development Coordinator Livingston email the 2015-2016 Annual Report of the Economic Alliance Houston Port Region to the Board members. He replied that he would.

**6. ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Board member Woodard moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:22 p.m. Board member Clausen seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY 6/0.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Patrice Fogarty, City Secretary

Passed and approved on this 31<sup>st</sup> day of March 2016.

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President Richard Warren

*This is an Unaudited Statement.*

**City of La Porte  
La Porte Development Corporation (038) Fund Summary  
(Section 4B Sales Tax)**

	<u>Previous Report</u>	<u>FY 2015-16</u>	<u>FY 2014-15</u>
<b>Unaudited Beginning Fund Balance 9/30</b>	\$ 4,544,417	\$ 4,544,417	\$ 3,213,390
<b>Plus Year to Date Revenues:</b>			
1/2 Cent Sales Tax	-	358,355	407,946
Interest Income	391	3,608	1,683
Total Revenues	<u>391</u>	<u>361,963</u>	<u>409,629</u>
<b>Equals Total Resources</b>	4,544,808	4,906,380	3,623,019
<b>Less Year to Date Expenditures:</b>			
Payroll	6,730	31,119	30,480
Supplies	115	621	160
Services & Charges (Memberships, Training, Advertising, Legal, Utilities)	1,033	56,749	123,339
Debt Service Transfer *	56,722	226,889	361,272
Total Expenditures	<u>64,600</u>	<u>315,378</u>	<u>515,251</u>
<b>Estimated Year to Date Fund Balance as of 1/31/2016</b>	\$ 4,480,208	\$ 4,591,002	\$ 3,107,768
<b>Commitments</b>			
Pipeline Grill		\$ 300,000	
Fischer's Hardware		120,000	
Richard Industrial Group		10,000	
ACT Independent Turbo Service, Inc.		426,000	
Debt Service Reserve		<u>1,083,817</u>	
		\$ 1,939,817	
<b>Adjusted Year to Date Fund Balance</b>		\$ 2,651,185	

**Projection Through Year End**

Adjusted Year to Date Fund Balance	\$ 2,651,185
Plus: Estimated Sales Tax	2,076,020
Less: Estimated Operational Costs	(270,317)
Less: Debt Service Transfers	<u>(453,779)</u>
Projected Year End Fund Balance	\$ 4,003,109

*Sales tax revenues for Fiscal Year 2016 are estimated to be \$2,434,375.*

**Previously Funded Projects (Funding in Fund 015 - General CIP Fund)**

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Façade Grants	407,669	131,697	275,972
Commitment - 4 Ever Clear Pool IChemical Co., LLC		19,193	19,193
Available Balance	<u>407,669</u>	<u>150,890</u>	<u>256,779</u>

*\*Debt Service Payments for Library, Bay Area Boulevard & Canada Road and Ballfields.*

## REQUEST FOR LA PORTE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Date Requested: <u>31 March 2016</u>
Requested By: <u>Scott D. Livingston</u>
Department: <u>Administration/Economic Development</u>
Report: _____ Resolution: _____ Ordinance: _____

<u>Budget</u>	
Source of Funds:	_____
Account Number:	_____
Amount Budgeted:	_____
Amount Requested:	_____
Budgeted Item:	YES NO

Exhibit: Board Feedback on ED Priorities

Exhibit: Most Important Ideas

Exhibit: Economic Development Presentation

Exhibit: Five Questions – Round #1

Exhibit: Most Important Ideas – Supporting Data

Exhibit: City Council’s Adopted 2013 Strategic Plan

Exhibit: Airport Business Study, Final Scope

Exhibit: Comprehensive Plan Update, 2012 – Chapter #5

Exhibit: Comprehensive Plan Update, 2012 – Implementation Guide

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### SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

At the request of the Board at the meeting on February 8, 2015, staff presented a status report on every item in the 2009 ED Strategic Plan. In summary, most of the items had been completed; the items that have not been completed were a result of a lack of community consensus (i.e. Main Street), changing priorities, and changes in technology.

Last fall, staff polled the Board to ascertain the Board’s general priorities with respect to economic development. Three board members responded as follows:

- Quality of Life (3 votes)
- Attract/Create Primary Jobs (2 votes)
- Retail (2 votes)

Other submitted topics each received one vote. For full details, please refer to the exhibit called “Board Feedback on ED Priorities”.

While the responses of the three board members generally reflect the priorities outlined in the 2009 ED Strategic Plan, two of the three board members listed **Attracting/Creating Primary Jobs**, which was not included in the 2009 ED Strategic Plan as a top priority.

For all intents and purposes, any remaining tasks of the 2009 ED Strategic Plan are already part of, the City Council's 2013 Strategic Plan and/or Comprehensive Plan Update 2012.

A summary of staff's findings may be found in the attached file called "Most Important Ideas". However, after carefully reviewing the City Council's Adopted 2013 Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan Update 2012, staff is seeking Board direction on the following:

- (1) Board guidance for items in the City Council's 2013 Strategic Plan, for which we have until the end of FY 2017 to complete and/or significantly address, and
- (2) Items in the Comprehensive Plan Update 2012, which are not specifically addressed in the City Council's 2013 Strategic Plan.

The City Council's 2013 Strategic Plan offers general, rather than specific guidance regarding implementation of economic development projects. For example, the Council's Strategic Plan includes broad directives such, "Promote revitalization and development where appropriate along 146, Main, and Broadway by facilitating contact, providing information, and offering incentives to development types consistent with our industry/market." Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan Update 2012 offers some significant suggestions regarding the creation of new primary jobs, attraction of new capital investment, and the attraction of higher paying, local wages that are not included in the City Council's 2013 Strategic Plan.

Therefore, the purpose of this workshop is to identify, according to the City Council's Adopted 2013 Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan Update 2012, the following:

- (1) Identify the status of each task, as assigned to the LPDC, in the City Council's 2013 Strategic Plan. (Note: We won't discuss this much, since files called "Most Important Ideas" and "Most Important Ideas – Supporting Data" are enclosed).
- (2) Identify whether or not the board would like to address the initiatives which are included in the Comprehensive Plan Update 2012, but not included in the City Council's 2013 Strategic Plan.
- (3) Identify how the board would like to address the remaining tasks outlined in one or both documents.

Therefore, as the Board looks toward the end of FY 2017 and beyond, please be prepared to provide staff with direction regarding the remaining tasks to be completed in the City Council's Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan Update 2012.

In order to guide the discussion, staff will:

- Establish the ground rules for the workshop.
- Round #1: Ask five questions to which each board member will vote on a piece of paper by using a scale of 0 to 10.
- Round #2: Request feedback from the board in a round robin format to offer more specific feedback and ideas to address each of the original five questions.

- Offer opportunities for additional discussion and clarification regarding any of the ideas presented during Round #2.
- At the conclusion of Round #2, we will adjourn the workshop.
- Within the next 2 weeks, staff will e-mail each board member an electronic survey with questions related to the feedback received in Round #2.
- At the following board meeting, staff will discuss the aggregate results of the survey.

**For Board preparation, in advance of the workshop, the five primary questions are provided in the first enclosed file and briefly summarized here:**

- (1) How much time and money should be invested to attract **new** companies, which will create **new primary jobs** and/or attract **new capital investment**, to La Porte?  
(Note: 0 – no time/money; 10 – 100% time/money)
- (2) How much time and money should be invested to facilitate the retention and expansion of **existing** businesses that may ultimately result in creating **new primary jobs** and/or attracting **new capital investment** to La Porte?  
(Note: 0 – no time/money; 10 – 100% time/money)
- (3) Should greater value and/or priority be placed upon contributing funds to **private businesses** or **public improvements** to areas such as the corridors of Main Street, S. Broadway, SH 146, and/or San Jacinto Street?  
(Note: 0 – spend 100% on public improvements; 10 – give 100% on private businesses)
- (4) In direct relation to Goal #4c of the City Council’s 2013 Strategic Plan, does the board prefer **private development** of a breakwater marina with a waterfront restaurant on city-owned property or **publicly developed and owned assets**?  
(Note: 0 – no development or pursue only publicly-owned assets; 10 – pursue only privately owned development and assets)
- (5) What value and/or priority should be placed upon increasing the **level of wages and employment** opportunities with local employers for the citizens of La Porte?  
(Note: 0 – no interest/no priority; 10 – much interest/top priority)

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**Action Required by the La Porte Development Corporation:**

Consider approval or other action to provide direction to staff regarding future projects and/or initiatives of the La Porte Development Corporation.

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**Approved for the La Porte Development Corporation Agenda**

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**Corby D. Alexander, City Manager**

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**Date**

Board Member #1	Board Member #2	Board Member #3	Board Member #4	Board Member #5	Board Member #6	Board Member #7
Redevelopment Throughout Quality of Life Retail Attract/Create Primary Jobs	Retail Entertainment Expand the Tax Base Attract Primary Jobs Quality of Life Restaurants Main Street Office Workforce Development Affordable Housing Airport	Primary Jobs Land Acquisition Quality of Life Material Benefits for Citizens	No Response	No Response	No Response	No Response

## Most Important Ideas

What is left to be completed in the City Council's Five Year Strategic Plan?

Except for the items listed below, all items in the City Council's Five-Year Strategic Plan, with respect to Economic Development, have been completed.

Item is currently underway, and significant progress has been made.

Item is currently underway, and may be completed by the end of FY 2017.

**Goal #2b: Optimize historic Main Street in a way that encourages small business development.**

- Review short-term financial incentives to attract Main Street development.

**Goal #3: Ensure that all departments and facilities are ready for any disaster.**

**Goal #4a: Increase retail business measured by sales tax revenues and new business permits.**

- "Dress Up" facades on Broadway shopping centers.

**Goal #4b: Bring our airport into our Economic Development plan as a revenue generating property. Enhance revenues to the City by 20%.**

**Goal #4c: Utilize Bay Front for possible Economic Development. Increase business development by 10%.**

- Breakwater Marina with waterfront restaurant.
- Encourage other private development/investment.

**Goal #6a: Promote greenfield tract development along 146 by facilitating contact, providing information, and offering incentives to development types consistent with our industry/market.**

- Target retail and office users that cater to our industry types for a campus-style development park
- Production of data (census, current demographics stats, BDG, etc.) for use of customers in decision making process

**Goal #6b: Promote revitalization and development where appropriate along 146, Main, and Broadway by facilitating contact, providing information, and offering incentives to development types consistent with our industry/market.**

- Production of data (census, current demographics stats, BDG, etc.) for use of customers in decision making process

## Topics Identified in the Comprehensive Plan that are not in the CC's Strategic Plan

### Primary Topics

Business Retention & Expansion Program  
Attract Capital Investment and Job Creation  
Facilitate Industry Clusters  
Business Parks  
Develop a Logistics Park

### Secondary Topics

Job Quality  
Local Wages (i.e. increase the wages earned by citizens and eliminate wage leakage)  
Connect Downtown to the Bayfront (i.e. specifically listed as a "Weakness")

# Economic Development





# Economic Development

## Definition #1:

A program, group of policies, or set of activities that seeks to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and retaining jobs that facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base.



# Economic Development

## Definition #2:

A process that influences the growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the economic well-being of a community by creating primary jobs, creating wealth and assets, and improving the quality of life in the community.



# Economic Development

Economic Development Strategies should be based upon the needs, assets, and goals of the community.



# (Large) Business Attraction

- Creates primary jobs
- Provides capital investment that may stabilize and/or diminish the property tax burden on residents
- Provides capital investment that supports an increase in the quality of life and quality of city-provided services
- Contributes to the positive self-image of a community
- Provides increased opportunities for sales and services to existing companies.



# (Small) Business Attraction

- Creates local employment opportunities for citizens
- Creates local places to shop, dine, stroll, and socialize
- Keeps money in the community
- Supports the local community
- Stays in the local community
- Provides local control and ownership
- Improves the quality of life and community pride
- Prevents retail leakage to other communities
- Revitalization and redevelopment of older areas of town



# Business Retention & Expansion

- Targets existing companies of strategic importance.
- Identifies “at risk” companies so action may be taken to preclude layoffs or closures.
- Leverages relationships with existing companies to create primary jobs for citizens, attract new capital investment, and contribute to the positive self-image of a community.
- Stabilizes property tax base, may lowers property taxes, and improves both quality of life and city services.
- Leverages unique assets and competitive advantages to benefit both companies and the community.



# Private Development/ Improvements

- Directly increase the tax base
- Directly create jobs
- Represent local control and ownership
- Contribute to community pride and a positive self-image
- Represent an unequal incentive for investment
- Beautify the community at unequal rates and locations
- Collectively create a “sense of place”



# Public Development/ Improvements

- Establishes the theme for and creates a “sense of place”
- Directly contribute to community pride and a positive self-image
- Equalize incentives for investment (i.e. public benefits)
- Beautify the community at equal rates and locations
- Indirectly encourage increases in the tax base
- Indirectly encourage job creation
- Represent public, local control and ownership of assets



# Public Development/ Improvements

- Locations: Main Street, S. Broadway, W. Fairmont Parkway, Underwood, Spencer Hwy, State Hwy 146, Sylvan Beach, Airport, and city-owned properties for recreation.
- Potential Projects:
  - Streetscaping, sidewalks, benches
  - Install medians with landscaping and/or fountains
  - Add landscaping & trees
  - Add street lighting and/or decorative light poles and historic-looking street signs



# Public Development/ Improvements

- Potential Projects (Cont'd):
  - Redevelop the historic buildings
  - Construct restrooms
  - Murals
  - Tie Main to S. Broadway
  - Support an incubator
  - Invest in the Airport
  - Add more parks or improve our existing parks



# Wages & Employment

- Since La Porte residents work throughout the region in a broad range of industries, this can help offset the negative effects of a slowdown in the city's energy sector.
- A large number of La Porte's residents commute to surrounding cities for work each day.
- In 2006, only 13.4% of La Porte residents worked in the city.
- La Porte-based businesses pay high wages to **non-local residents**.
- Millions of dollars in wages are leaking to surrounding cities.

## 5 Questions – Round #1

- (1) How much time and money should be invested to attract **new** companies, which will create **new primary jobs** and/or attract **new capital investment**, to La Porte?

Scale of 0 to 10:

**0**

The LPDC and staff should **not** expend any money or time to attract new businesses to La Porte that will create new primary jobs and/or attract new capital investment.

**10**

The LPDC and staff **should** expend a lot of both money and time to attract new businesses to La Porte that will create new primary jobs and/or attract new capital investment.

- (2) How much time and money should be invested to facilitate the retention and expansion of **existing** businesses that may ultimately result in creating **new primary jobs** and/or attracting **new capital investment** to La Porte?

Scale of 0 to 10:

**0**

The LPDC and staff should **not** expend any money or time to facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses that may ultimately result in the creation of new primary jobs and/or attracting new capital investment to La Porte.

**10**

The LPDC and staff **should** expend money or time to facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses that may ultimately result in the creation of new primary jobs and/or attracting new capital investment to La Porte.

- (3) Should greater value and/or priority be placed upon contributing funds to **private businesses** or **public improvements**<sup>1</sup> to the corridors of Main Street, S. Broadway, SH 146, and/or San Jacinto Street, the Airport, and/or other assets of the City of La Porte?

Scale of 0 to 10:

**0**

Spend 100% of the available funds to revitalize the city's older commercial corridors on **public improvement** projects that will beautify the community and stimulate private investment.

**10**

Give 100% of available funds to revitalize the city's older commercial corridors directly to **private businesses** in the form of incentives.

- (4) In direct relation to Goal #4c of the City Council’s 2013 Strategic Plan, does the board prefer **private development** of a breakwater marina with a waterfront restaurant on city-owned property or **publicly developed and owned assets**?

Scale of 0 to 10:

**0**

The LPDC and staff should only pursue **retain and not develop**, or develop only **public-owned assets** on city-owned property on the waterfront.

**10**

The LPDC and staff should only pursue options to either facilitate and pursue **private development of privately-owned assets** on city-owned property on the waterfront.

- (5) What value and/or priority should be placed upon increasing the **level of wages and employment** opportunities with local employers for the citizens of La Porte?

Scale of 0 to 10:

**0**

The LPDC and staff should **not** expend any money or time to increase the level of wages and employment opportunities with local employers for the citizens of La Porte.

**10**

The LPDC and staff **should** expend both money and time to increase the level of wages and employment opportunities with local employers for the citizens of La Porte.

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<sup>1</sup> **Public Improvements** generally refer to projects such as street-scaping, beautification, parks, lighting, signage, landscaping, recreation, property purchases, utility infrastructure in commercial areas, etc.

# **Most Important Ideas – Supporting Data**

## City Council's Strategic Plan

### Improve Infrastructure

#### **Optimize historic Main Street in a way that encourages small business development.**

- Promote the enhancement grant program.
- Review short-term financial incentives to attract Main Street development.

#### **Increase retail business measured by sales tax revenues and new business permits.**

- Offer incentives to retail similar to those offered to industrial, i.e. "retail zones".
- "Dress Up" facades on Broadway shopping centers.

#### **Bring our airport into our Economic Development plan as a revenue generating property. Enhance revenues to the City by 20%.**

- Explore lease options on properties – many vacancies
- Promote opportunities for retail on Spencer

#### **Utilize Bay Front for possible Economic Development. Increase business development by 10%.**

- Breakwater Marina with waterfront restaurant.
- Encourage other private development/investment.

#### **Promote greenfield tract development along 146 by facilitating contact, providing information, and offering incentives to development types consistent with our industry/market.**

- Target retail and office users that cater to our industry types for a campus-style development park
- Create abatement programs/EDC incentives and infrastructure inputs consistent with needs of applicants
- Production of data (census, current demographics stats, BDG, etc.) for use of customers in decision making process
- Market our City to ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) and Site Selection Consultants

#### **Promote revitalization and development where appropriate along 146, Main, and Broadway by facilitating contact, providing information, and offering incentives to development types consistent with our industry/market.**

- Create abatement programs/EDC incentives and infrastructure inputs consistent with needs of applicants
- Production of data (census, current demographics stats, BDG, etc.) for use of customers in decision making process
- Market our City to ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) and Site Selection Consultants

**Continue to improve the quality of life through recreational amenities.**

- Continue trail system implementation
- Maintain and improve sports field infrastructure
- Continue to offer modern and cost-effective aquatic facilities

**City of La Porte 2030 Comprehensive Plan – Economic Development**

**Not included directly or indirectly in the City Council’s Five Year Strategic Plan.**

**Primary Topics**

*(Note: Most are listed in order presented in the Implementation Guide, Chapter #6)*

**Business Retention & Expansion Program**

**Park and Trail System Improvements**

**Infrastructure & Streetscape Improvements** (in commercial areas, only)

**Downtown Redevelopment**

**Business Parks**

**Business Incubator**

**Community Enhancement** (aka “Commercial Redevelopment/Revitalization”)

**Airport Master Plan**

**Facilitate Industry Clusters**

**Develop a Logistic Park**

**Retail Attraction**

**Industrial Attraction**

**Secondary Topics**

*(Note: Listed in order found in Economic Development, Chapter #5)*

**Job quality**

**Local wages** (i.e. strengthen and eliminate leakage)

**Support of locally-owned businesses**

**Downtown Redevelopment** (i.e. specifically listed as an “Opportunity”)

**Physical Appearance** (i.e. specifically listed as a “Weakness”)

**Beautification** (i.e. specifically listed as an “Opportunity”)

**Attract tourists** (i.e. specifically listed as an “Opportunity”)

**Sales tax leakage** (i.e. specifically listed as a “Weakness”)

**Retail readiness** (i.e. specifically listed as an “Opportunity”)

**Disconnected Downtown/Bayfront** (i.e. specifically listed as a “Weakness”)

**Economic diversification** and lack of **diversity and availability** of retail stores, restaurants, and other non-industry businesses. (i.e. specifically listed as a “Weakness”)

**Commitment to Place-Based Economic Development**

Ensure there is a comprehensive and coordinated **resource/incentive toolkit** to serve existing and future businesses. Incorporate the latest state and federal economic incentives.

**Assist businesses** through the relocation and/or development process.

Become a member of the National Business Incubator Association (NBIA) and **establish a small business incubator** in coordination with San Jac's Small Business Development Center.

Continue to conduct regular outreach (i.e. **Business Retention Expansion**) to local businesses to understand their plans and needs and troubleshoot potential problems. La Porte cannot afford to ignore its current businesses and risk losing one of them to closure or relocation. A strong BRE program should include regular visits with local employers. This will aid in identifying suppliers or customers who could benefit from relocating to La Porte.

Continue to use the industrial payments (i.e. the Community Investment Fund) for ED, community beautification, and revitalization programs, rather than supplementing the General Fund.

Continue to use the Hotel/Motel Fund for projects that include Main Street revitalization efforts.

**Attract capital investment and job creation.** The City should maintain its focus on industrial ED activities. Continue to promote industrial development within the City and industrial districts. Identify the most appropriate target clusters and pursue companies that will complement the cluster.

Consider partnering with U.P. Railroad to create a special logistics park at SH 225 and SH 146 for value-added manufacturing and distribution.

Pursue opportunities to **attract retail and commercial service businesses** to La Porte. Expand the types of incentives and/or procedural streamlining to attract retail and commercial service businesses. Consider the use of retail sales tax grants (or rebates), conditional upon the creation of employment, continued operations for a specified period of time, or other factors.

Use a retail market analysis to develop a coordinated ED strategy to include: retail development, tourism, a convention center, and support for industry.

Consider establishing a Public Improvement District to **make infrastructure improvements in needed areas.**

Remember the importance of attracting people, talent, and younger workers.

**Develop a strong "sense of place"** that offers a wide availability of choices in housing, entertainment, culture, recreation, retail, and employment. Therefore, focus on:

- **Revitalizing Main Street,**
- **Beautification,**
- **Expanding the number of choices available,** as listed above,
- **Stimulating tourism,** and
- **Facilitate infrastructure and facility improvements** to enhance community livability.

For Main Street, specifically build off of the recent Gateway and Five Points Town Plaza improvements to **implement other pedestrian improvements along the entire length of Main Street.**

**Promote Main Street** as the primary entertainment and retail destination for residents, students, and tourists. Downtowns are typically the lifeblood of a community, where residents, employees, and tourists can be seen walking, shopping, entertaining, and dining.

Maximize the recent improvements to Seabreeze Park and Sylvan Beach by **incorporating the city-owned property into an overall Bayfront experience** for the citizens of La Porte.

## Highlights of the ED Strategic Plan Takeaways

- Across the board, considering surveys with 42 local leaders and 301 residents, survey responses reflected a consistent thinking among La Porte residents. Quality of place topics such as **beautification, Main Street/downtown revitalization, and Sylvan Beach revitalization** topped residents' economic development priorities. Traditional economic development roles such as **business recruitment, local business expansion, and external marketing** rated much lower. (I24,26)
- The city's perceived weaknesses were the **lack of retail shopping, downtown, arts and culture, and the city's appearance.** (I,24)
- Many residents encouraged the City to concentrate on balancing growth through **community development vs. industrial recruitment, reviving La Porte's historic core, and offering families enhanced entertainment and recreational opportunities.** (I,24)
- **Economic diversification** requires attracting businesses that can take advantage of La Porte's diverse labor force. La Porte residents comprise only 11.7% (Note: Pg. I,11 says 13.4%) of total local employment, with the balance of workers commuting from surrounding cities. Future economic development recruitment strategies should link the skills sets of current La Porte residents with industry targets. (I,2)
- **Quality of Place** should be the cornerstone of La Porte's long-term economic development efforts. La Porte's most under-utilized resources are its **downtown, historic beach, and waterfront.** Enhancing Sylvan Beach, redeveloping downtown, and improving Main Street serves not only to encourage economic growth, but these initiatives directly improve the quality of life for city residents. (I,2)
- In 2006, only 13.4% of La Porte residents worked in the city. Since La Porte residents work throughout the region in a broad range of industries, this can help offset the negative effects of a slowdown in the city's energy sector. The downside is that La Porte-based businesses pay high wages to **non-local residents.** (I,11) Millions of dollars in **wages are leaking** to surrounding cities. (I,18)
- **Weaknesses:** **City's physical appearance, lack of retail in the city, sales tax leakage, disconnect between Downtown and the Bay Front,** intra-city communication, limited undeveloped land, and the **lack of economic diversification.** (II,1,3)
- **Threats:** Truck traffic, oil and gas industry downturn, external perception of La Porte, flooding, and growth management. One of La Porte's greatest challenges will be to manage growth in a way that preserves the city's character and authenticity. (II,14)
- **Opportunities:** **Quality of Life** factors including **downtown revitalization, and Sylvan Beach improvement, connecting Main Street to the bay front, beautifying the city's physical**

appearance, **attracting tourists**, retail readiness, and **continued investment in parks and trails**. Capitalizing on these opportunities will please the residents and encourage the growth of a more diverse mix of businesses. (I,1,3)

- **Downtown**: The City of La Porte has a tremendous opportunity to further ramp up the redevelopment of the Main Street District. A healthy downtown is critically important to the city's ability to attract tourists and retailers. (II,10)
  - **Sylvan Beach**: Significant improvements have been made to Sylvan Beach. (II,10-11)
  - **Beautification**: Improving the city's physical appearance is a priority of La Porte's residents and represents an opportunity for the City. Beautification initiatives are a visible representation of the City's commitment to meeting residents' needs. Like downtown and Sylvan Beach improvement, beautification will enhance the city's ability to attract tourists, retailers, and new residents. (II,11)
  - **Tourism**: Tourism represents an opportunity for La Porte to diversify its economy, but it will not reach its full potential unless the City invests in beautification, downtown revitalization, and Sylvan Beach improvements. (II,12)
  - **Retail Readiness**: Another opportunity is to offer local residents a good level of support for starting their own businesses. Locally-grown, niche retail will be a good complement to downtown revitalization. (II,12)
- **SWOT Summary**: The focus of economic development in La Porte is **quality of life**. Its audience is comprised of individuals and businesses that enhance the city's livability and are attracted to La Porte's unique amenities. La Porte should target:
    - **Tourists**: Seek to attract day visitors from the Greater Houston Area.
    - **Retailers**: Niche retailers, such as those that would locate in the Main Street District or neighborhood centers, need attractive space, quality control, and assurance of adequate local demand. Ensure that the city has the appropriate infrastructure and policies in place to attract retailers.
    - **Hospitality Businesses**: As La Porte invests in tourism amenities, hospitality businesses become a natural target. Full service restaurants are a prime target immediately. Long-term, small grocers, wellness businesses, art studios, and bed and breakfasts will fit well in La Porte. City may wish to consider recruiting a hospitality-training academy as an anchor.
    - **Real Estate Developers**: (II,15)
- Local leaders recognized that **quality of life** is critical to helping local businesses and residents thrive. The desire to **refresh the city's appearance**, built on its core assets, and continue to increase leisure opportunities inspired this economic development strategy. Better **connecting La Porte's historic downtown district**, the renaissance of Sylvan Beach, and **diversifying residents' leisure and job options** can transform La Porte into one of the most desired destinations in the Greater Houston Area. (III,3)

- Two different kinds of retail markets (destination and local service), a tourism base, and downtown living can establish La Porte as one of the best places in the Houston Region to live and visit. (III,4)
- **Main Street is positioned to provide a community gathering place** to anchor expanding residential urban living in the Greater Downtown (La Porte) Area. The sustained living environment will make service retail for tourists and neighborhoods more viable on Main Street. (III,5)
- **Incentives to consider to revitalize downtown La Porte** may include expanding the **TIRZ, empowerment zone, and Chapter 380**. (III,6)
- The key to La Porte sustaining its new economic development prospects will be a focus on the **livability and sustainability of Greater Downtown**. In order to implement a walkable environment (i.e. according to “New Urbanism”), the current code would need to revise the existing Main Street Overlay and Main Street District Guidelines to create a new comprehensive master plan for Greater Downtown that includes a higher level of detail that creates investment certainty from property to property and street to street. (III,9,14)
- Expanding the **recreational and retail capacity** of the community will serve both residents and tourists. In La Porte, **entertainment, retail trade, and enhanced tourism amenities** are **valid targets for economic development**. For example, a destination retail/entertainment project not only attracts regional shoppers, but also helps stop retail leakage to neighboring communities. (III,17-18)
- The community has overwhelmingly stated its desire for economic development to **prioritize quality of life enhancements**, specifically in four areas:
  - **Beautification**
  - **Downtown**
  - **Sylvan Beach**
  - **Retail (III,26)**

Strategic Plan  
2013-2017



City of La Porte, Texas

Approved by the City Council on April 8, 2013

## **Overview**

On October 27, 2012, the Mayor, City Council, City Manager and key staff of the City of La Porte met together in a retreat planning session. The purpose of that meeting was to establish the Council's Strategic Plan for the next five years. A report was prepared outlining the City Council's Mission, Vision and Core Values, as well as six overall goals. Each goal had identified objectives and strategies, with time lines for beginning and completing the goals.

On March 9, 2013, the City Manager and his key staff met. Their purpose was two-fold. First, staff reviewed and discussed the Mission, Vision and Core Values developed by the City Council and created Leadership Statements for the staff to follow to ensure their work is consistent with the value of the City Council. Secondly, staff reviewed and clarified the goals, objectives and strategies identified by the City Council; if necessary identify additional goals consistent with the overall mission, vision and values; and establish the framework for an action plan. The result of their work is documented in this report.

The Strategic Plan will provide a blueprint for action over the next five years. When developing the annual budget, staff will be tasked with making sure that expenditures and programs further the goals and Core Values stated in this document. This provides clear direction to the staff as to what priorities are important to the Council and plans can be made accordingly to make sure that resources are allocated towards those ends. Additionally, this plan is an excellent communication tool that the Council and the staff can use when speaking with residents and businesses. Many times, ad hoc requests can derail longer-term plans. The Strategic Plan outlines a framework for receiving, prioritizing, and budgeting for resident requests.

All participants, staff and Council, agreed to commit to the success of this plan. A plan only becomes a useful and working document when all the participants (as a whole and as individuals) make a commitment to review it regularly, use it monthly, and modify it as needed. It is a tool that can and should be used regularly to track progress, make notes of variations between expectations and actuals, of timelines and expenses, to help accomplish each goal, and to hold one another accountable for updates and completion.

## **Mission Statement**

The Council reviewed and revised the Mission Statement & Vision Statement of the City and the results are as follows:

**The City of La Porte embraces our heritage, community values, and opportunities, while enhancing the quality of life for our citizens.**

## **Vision Statement**

**To provide improved infrastructure, to drive economic growth, and to enhance quality of life for our citizens.**

## **Core Values**

The City Council wanted to specify the core values under which the City and its staff function. Core values are the general guidelines that establish the foundation for how an organization will operate. Staff then discussed these value statements to define and gain an understanding of what those Core Value meant to staff from a leadership perspective. Staff first discussed what the elements of each Core Value represented, then prepared a Leadership Statement for each one.

The listed the following as the Core Values of the City of La Porte:

- **Health & Public Safety:** City employees will ensure the health and safety of our citizens by providing and maintaining superior public infrastructure and public safety services.
- **Integrity & Accountability:** City employees will be open, honest and transparent, and be accountable to the Council so that Council can be responsive to the citizens.
- **Superior Customer Service:** City employees will proactively provide superior customer service in a positive and timely manner.
- **Quality in everything we do:** City employees will strive for superiority in all services we provide.

## Goal and Plan Development

During the Council Retreat in October 2012, six goals were developed by the Council, with staff providing assistance to flesh out the objectives for each. In March 2013, the staff further added “meat to the bone” to outline more specifically the actions that would be necessary to achieve the stated goals. The development and implementation of the action plan will serve to provide Council a clear understanding of how and when each of their goals will be accomplished. The action plan proposes to do the following:

- Identify a team leader: Each Goal needs a champion who will lead the effort to accomplish the goal and be held accountable for the action plan that is developed. A team leader for each goal was assigned.
- Identify team members. Likewise each goal needs a larger team, consisting of fellow staff from across all departmental lines where appropriate, to assist in the implementation process.
- Identify partners. Each team should identify the partners, outside the city organization, who can provide expertise and resources to accomplish the goal.
- Define action steps. Each objective needs defined action steps showing Council how the goal will be accomplished. The action steps provide the basis for benchmarks.
- Prepare a timeline. Timelines were prepared for each of the objectives. Staff will be asked to review those timelines and recommend adjustments, once the action steps are better defined.

The Council-identified goals are:

- Improve Infrastructure
- Preserve Heritage – to preserve the structure and amenities that make La Porte unique
- Ensure that all departments and facilities are ready for any disaster
- To encourage economic development/retail development
- To provide Superior Customer Service
- To revitalize blight/146

In addition to the six Council-identified goals, it was agreed that key areas of city government were not included in the goals identified by Council. Staff was tasked with discussing other areas where they would establish goals and objectives and bring them to Council for consideration and approval to include in the Strategic Plan. Several new goals were identified and are proposed for Council consideration:

- To provide and maintain superior public safety
- Continue to improve the quality of life through recreational amenities
- Create a Neighborhood Preservation Program
- Provide diverse and timely communications that promote and influence a positive public perception of La Porte

One critical component to ensuring that the elements of the Strategic Plan are being implemented is to provide regular status reports to the City Council. Staff proposes quarterly written reports supplemented by oral reports or action items for implementation that may be necessary in-between written reports.

**Council Goal 1: Improve Infrastructure**

Objective 1a: Street repair at 5.5-6 miles per year (4 mile asphalt, 1.5-2 miles concrete)

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Evaluate conditions	Currently	Quarterly	Q2 2013
2. Prioritize	Budget for year one	Quarterly	Q3 2013
3. Identify the number of actual miles to be rehabilitated	Budget for year one	Quarterly	Q4 2013
4. Re-evaluate needs annually	Q1 2014	Annually	Q1 2017

Objective 1b: Replace water main at 3 miles per year (2 miles by contract and 1 mile by City crews)

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Identify the number of actual water lines	Budget for year one	Quarterly	Q3 2013
2. Prioritize	Budget for year one	Quarterly	Q3 2013
3. Identify the number of miles to be replaced	Budget for year one	Quarterly	Q3 2013
4. Re-evaluate needs annually	Q1 2014	Annually	Q1 2017

Objective 1c: Continue annual sanitary sewer inflow and infiltration program

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Evaluate conditions through smoke testing and televising lines	Continuous	Quarterly	Continuous
2. Prioritize based on data from condition evaluation	Continuous	Quarterly	Continuous
3. Identify the number of linear feet to be rehabilitated	Budget for year one	Quarterly	Q4 2013
4. Re-evaluate needs annually	Q1 2014	Annually	Q1 2017

Objective 1d: Complete \$300,000 in smaller, isolated drainage repairs per year

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Evaluate conditions through televising storm sewer lines, inspecting outfalls, and observing conditions after rain events	Throughout the Year	Quarterly	Throughout the Year
2. Prioritize based on data from condition evaluation	Continuous	Quarterly	Continuous
3. Identify the drainage facilities to be rehabilitated	Budget for year one	Quarterly	Q4 2013
4. Re-evaluate needs annually	Q1 2014	Annually	Q1 2017

Team Leader: David Mick

Council Goal 2: Preserve Heritage – to preserve the structure and amenities that make La Porte unique

Objective 2a: To promote historical structures available to the public that provide a historical look into La Porte’s rich history and complete within 5 years

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Secure good title to the properties	Q4 2013	Annually	Q2 2013
2. Secure funding and obtain historical designation from the State to open the original Northside Schoolhouse	Q2 2014	Annually	Q3 2014
3. Reach out to private and public entities for start-up and implementation	Q2 2014	Annually	Q3 2014
4. Develop agreements with LPBHS to operate as part of the Museum	Q4 2012	Annually	Q4 2013
5. Begin physical improvements to structures	Q3 2014	Annually	Q3 2015
6. Research for period furniture and accessories to highlight the facility.	Q3 2014	Annually	Q3 2015

Objective 2b: To optimize historic Main Street in a way that encourages small business development

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Continue to promote the enhancement grant program (a) Meet with each business owner on Main Street, (b) Review and promote the Enhancement Grant Program, (c) Identify and address ways to broaden and strengthen the Enhancement Grant Program, and (d) Implement a broader, more robust Enhancement Grant Program.	Q1 2014	Annually	Q4 2017
2. Review existing zoning with a goal to encourage small business growth	Q4 2012	Annually	Q4 2013

Objective 2b (continued): To optimize historic Main Street in a way that encourages small business development

<p>3. Review short-term financial incentives to attract Main Street development</p> <p>(a) Identify communities whose Main Street program and development represent our goals &amp; aspirations,</p> <p>(b) Survey these communities to learn what they did to develop their main street program(s),</p> <p>(c) Identify the steps needed to further improve our own main street program, and</p> <p>(d) Structure an incentive program and/or set of popular initiatives to support and implement our objectives.</p>	<p>Q4 2012</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Q4 2013</p>
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Objective 2c: Identify additional historic structures that may be eligible for inclusion in the Heritage Park site or Stand Alone Siting

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Explore and identify other potential historical structures and prepare a listing	Q4 2013	Annually	Q4 2017
2. Identify funding sources and set up installation/operational budgets	Q2 2014	Annually	Q4 2013
3. Develop agreements with LPBHS to operate as part of the Museum	Q4 2012	Annually	Q4 2013
4. Begin physical improvements to structures	As identified	Annually	
5. Research for period furniture and accessories to highlight the facility.	As identified	Annually	

Team Leader: Stephen Barr

Council Goal 3: Ensure that all departments and facilities are ready for any disaster

Objective 3a: Review, revise, and distribute City emergency plans each year for departments to update. New employees should receive a copy of their respective roles and responsibilities regarding emergencies at new orientation.

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Require each department to turn in a revised emergency plan to EOC by May 1 <sup>st</sup> of each year	Q1 each year		Q2 each year
2. Assign a department emergency coordinator the responsibility of training new employees in their respective roles	Ongoing		Ongoing
3. Make sure Human Resources has the proper information to give to new employees regarding their role and responsibilities for disasters	Ongoing		Ongoing

Objective 3b: Conduct a citywide drill simulating a specific emergency event or disaster on an annual basis

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Conduct an annual drill to include EOC staff and critical personnel from all departments	Q1		Q4 of each year
2. Conduct an annual drill to include EOC staff, LEPC members and LPISD	Q1		Q4 of each year
3. Add facility preparation (generators, window treatments, recovery systems)	Q2 2013		Ongoing

Team Leader: Jeff Suggs

**Council Goal 4: To encourage economic development/retail development**

**Objective 4a: Increase retail business measured by sales tax revenues and new business permits**

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
<p>1. Offer incentives to retail similar to those offered to industrial, i.e. “retail zones”</p> <p>(a) Identify incentives that may be used to attract new retail development and re-development, and</p> <p>(b) Start to implement a broader, more robust program to attract new retail development and re-development by using the new retail incentive program.</p>	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q2 2014
<p>2. “Dress up” facades on Broadway shopping center</p> <p>(a) Meet with each business owner on the Broadway shopping center,</p> <p>(b) Review and promote the Enhancement Grant Program,</p> <p>(c) Identify and address ways to broaden and strengthen the Enhancement Grant Program, and</p> <p>(d) Start to implement a broader, more robust Enhancement Grant Program.</p>	Q1 2014	Annually	Q4 2017
<p>3. Remove obstacles to building permits and site inspections for business improvement and new businesses</p> <p>(a) Implement recommendations from the Planning Audit to streamline these processes</p> <p>(b) Implement commercial courtesy walk-throughs for potential remodels</p>	Q3 2013	Quarterly	Q2 2014

**Objective 4b: Bring our airport into our Economic Development plan as a revenue generating property. Enhance revenues to the City by 20%.**

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
<p>1. <b>Explore lease options on properties – many vacancies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Survey our existing industries and large businesses to determine how important the airport is to them and identify what would need to be done to attract more of their business,</li> <li>(b) Ask the Governor’s office ED and DOT what improvements should be made to the airport so that we can use the airport as an asset to attract more companies to La Porte,</li> <li>(c) Identify and survey prospective businesses to determine their current level of interest and prospective level of interest if further improvements were to be made to the airport, and</li> <li>(d) Identify which improvements will be necessary to attract new business to the airport.</li> </ul>	Q1 2014	Q2 2014	Q4 2014
<p>2. <b>Promote opportunities for retail on Spencer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Create a development map of available properties,</li> <li>(b) Implement findings from the Catalyst Retail Study,</li> <li>(c) Get involved in HCREN, BACREN, ICSC, SIOR, ACRP, and CCIM events, and</li> <li>(d) Market to brokers, developers, and end users.</li> </ul>	Q3 2013	Annually	Q4 2017

**Objective 4c: Utilize Bay Front for possible Economic Development. Increase business development by 10%.**

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
<p>1. <b>Breakwater Marina with waterfront restaurant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Survey the City Council, P&amp;Z Commission, ED Board, and leading citizens to determine what types of development the community will support,</li> <li>(b) Create development maps and marketing collateral,</li> <li>(c) Implement findings from the Catalyst Retail Study,</li> <li>(d) Get involved in HCREN, BACREN, ICSC, SIOR, ACRP, and CCIM events, and</li> <li>(e) Market to brokers, developers, and end users.</li> </ul>	Q3 2013	Annually	Q4 2017
<p>2. <b>Encourage other private development/investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Survey the City Council, P&amp;Z Commission, ED Board, and leading citizens to determine what types of development the community will support.</li> <li>(b) Create development maps and marketing collateral,</li> <li>(c) Implement findings from the Catalyst Retail Study,</li> <li>(d) Get involved in HCREN, BACREN, ICSC, SIOR, ACRP, and CCIM events, and</li> <li>(e) Market to brokers, developers, and end users.</li> </ul>	Q3 2013	Annually	Q4 2017

Team Leader: Scott Livingston

Council Goal 5: To provide Superior Customer Service

Objective 5a: Implement 100% employee customer service training by the end of 2013

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Provide Customer Service Excellence training for 80-120 employees	Q1 2014	Quarterly	Q4 2014
2. Provide Train-the Trainer workshop for managers/staff who will train others on Customer Service Excellence for the future	Q2 2014	Quarterly	Q4 2014

Objective 5b: Conduct audit on 100% of processes of all City departments

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Professional services	Q1 2013	Annually	Q1 2017
2. Decide which departments to review and when	Q3 2013	Annually	Q1 2017

Objective 5c: Conduct quality professional development to ensure that all employees are properly trained

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Develop a comprehensive training program that addresses issues facing existing supervisors and prepares line employees to step into supervisory roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Identify areas of need for existing supervisors</li> <li>(b) Evaluate options for in-house versus third party training modules to address those needs</li> <li>(c) Implementation of selected supervisory training</li> <li>(d) Evaluation of succession training to prepare current line employees to successfully become effective managers and supervisors</li> </ul>	Currently underway	Quarterly	Q2 2014

**Council Goal 6: To revitalize blight/146**

**Objective 6a: Promote greenfield tract development along 146 by facilitating contact, providing information, and offering incentives to development types consistent with our industry/market**

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
<p>1. <b>Target retail and office users that cater to our industry types for a campus-style development park</b></p> <p>(a) Create a development map of available properties and marketing collateral,                      (b) Implement findings from the Catalyst Retail Study,                      (c) Get involved in HCREN, BACREN, ICSC, SIOR, ACRP, and CCIM events, and                      (d) Market to brokers, developers, and end users.</p>	Q3 2013	Annually	Q4 2017
<p>2. <b>Create abatement programs/EDC incentives and infrastructure inputs consistent with needs of applicants</b></p> <p>(a) Survey active and prospective customers,                      (b) Identify and document the commonly sought or needed incentives and infrastructure inputs needed to attract new retail development/re-development, and                      (c) Create a plan to put the necessary infrastructure inputs into place that will attract new retail development and re-development.</p>	Q1 2014	Annually	Q4 2017
<p>3. <b>Production of data (census, current demographics stats, BDG, etc.) for use of customers in decision making process</b></p>	Q3 2013		Q4 2013

Objective 6a (continued): Promote greenfield tract development along 146 by facilitating contact, providing information, and offering incentives to development types consistent with our industry/market

<p>4. <b>Market our City to ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) and Site Selection Consultants</b></p> <p>(a) Create a development map of available properties and marketing collateral,          (b) Implement findings from the Catalyst Retail Study,          (c) Get involved in HCREN, BACREN, ICSC, SIOR, ACRP, and CCIM events, and          (d) Market to brokers, developers, and end users.</p>	Q3 2013	Annually	Ongoing
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Objective 6b: **Promote revitalization and development where appropriate along 146, Main, and Broadway by facilitating contact, providing information, and offering incentives to development types consistent with our industry/market**

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Target code enforcement on said thoroughfares through a “carrot vs. stick” approach to blight	Q1 2014		Q4 2017
<p>2. <b>Create abatement programs/EDC incentives and infrastructure inputs consistent with needs of applicants</b></p> <p>(d) Survey active and prospective customers,          (e) Identify and document the commonly sought or needed incentives and infrastructure inputs needed to attract new retail development/re-development, and          (f) Create a plan to put the necessary infrastructure inputs into place that will attract new retail development and re-development.</p>	Q1 2014	Annually	Q4 2017
3. <b>Production of data (census, current demographics stats, BDG, etc.) for use of customers in decision making process</b>	Q3 2013		Q4 2013

Objective 6b (continued): Promote revitalization and development where appropriate along 146, Main, and Broadway by facilitating contact, providing information, and offering incentives to development types consistent with our industry/market

<p>4. <b>Market our City to ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) and Site Selection Consultants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Create a development map of available properties and marketing collateral,</li> <li>(b) Implement findings from the Catalyst Retail Study,</li> <li>(c) Get involved in HCREN, BACREN, ICSC, SIOR, ACRP, and CCIM events, and</li> <li>(d) Market to brokers, developers, and end users.</li> </ul>	<p>Q3 2013</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>
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Team Leader: Scott Livingston

Staff Goal 7: To provide and maintain superior public safety

Objective 7a: Enhance communications infrastructure and promote interoperability

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Ensure all radio systems meet current and future requirements.	Q1 2013	Q3 2013	Ongoing
2. Identify current deficiencies within all communication systems and work to correct them.	Q1 2013	Q1 2014	Q4 2016
3. Put a system in place to ensure proper system maintenance and replacement when needed.	Q1 2013	Q3 2013	Ongoing

Objective 7b: Maintain appropriate staffing levels in all emergency services departments for both paid employees and volunteer members.

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Identify national standards relating to recommended staffing levels for each emergency service department.	Q2 2013	Q4 2013	Ongoing
2. Work to attract and hire the most qualified candidates by developing a comprehensive recruitment program.	Q4 2013	Q2 2014	Ongoing
3. Develop retention incentives.	Q4 2013	Q2 2014	Ongoing
4. Create and maintain an employee development program for existing employees at all levels within the organization.	Q1 2013	Q3 2013	Ongoing

Objective 7c: Identify and capitalize on advanced technologies as a force multiplier.

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Develop a response safety program,	Q1 2013	Q3 2013	Ongoing
2. Improve the community warning system.	Q1 2013	Q3 2013	Ongoing
3. Develop crime prevention measures: cameras, air monitoring, license plate readers, etc.	Q4 2013	Q2 2014	Ongoing
4. Focus on trend/ pattern analysis using incident geographical mapping in order to target resources.	Q1 2013	Q3 2013	Ongoing

Objective 7d: Identify and employ best strategies, management practices, policies and procedures, and organizational systems that promote accountability, open communication, collective responsibility, visionary leadership, fiscal responsibility, and organizational effectiveness.

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-in	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Seek out and attain available state and national “best-practices” organizational certifications and accreditations.	Q3 2013	Q1 2014	Ongoing
2. Create appropriate inspection and auditing systems.	Q3 2013	Q1 2014	Ongoing

Team Leaders: Chief Ken Adcox, Chief Mike Boaze, Emergency Management Coordinator Jeff Suggs

Staff Goal 8: Continue to improve the quality of life through recreational amenities

Objective 8a: Continue trail system implementation

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-In	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Obtain easements for equestrian/bicycle/pedestrian trail in Lomax	Q1 2014	Quarterly	Q4 2014
2. Continue paving sections of various sections of infill trail	Q1 2014	Quarterly	Q4 2014

Objective 8b: Maintain and improve sports field infrastructure

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-In	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Replacing lighting system at 9 soccer fields at Northwest Park	Q1 2014	Quarterly	Q4 2014

Objective 8c: Continue to offer modern and cost-effective aquatic facilities

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-In	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Evaluate options and cost-benefit analysis for potential locations of future sprayparks and make recommendations for implementation at next Pre-Budget retreat	Q3 2014	Q3 2014	Q3 2014
2. Include recommended location(s) into the City's Capital Improvement Plan for upcoming FY 2014 budget	Q3 2014		Q4 2014
3. Installation of spraypark	Q1 2015	Quarterly	Q3 2015

Team Leader: Stephen Barr

Staff Goal 9: Create a Neighborhood Preservation Program

Objective 9a: Create an environment of open communication and cooperation with existing neighborhood groups

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-In	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Create centralized database of neighborhood/HOA and leaders with contact information and update at least annually	Q4 2013	Annually	Q4 2013
2. Establish regular communications with neighborhood groups regarding important City matters and issues affecting neighborhoods, such as new code enforcement regulations	Q4 2013		Continuous
3. Actively seek neighborhood input and comments regarding issues impacting them	Q4 2013		Continuous
4. Create education/outreach program (Neighborhood University)	Q3 2014	Quarterly	Q1 2015

Objective 9b: Improve City coordination to respond to neighborhood issues and concerns

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-In	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Create a cross departmental team, including engineering, inspecting, planning and police, to comprehensively address neighborhood issues	Q2 2014		Continuous

Objective 9c: Continue investing in neighborhood improvement initiatives

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-In	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Create a neighborhood matching grant program for community improvements	Q3 2013	Annually	Q1 2014

Team Leader: Tim Tietjens

Staff Goal 10: Provide diverse and timely communications that promote and influence a positive public perception of La Porte

Objective 10a: Identify scope and job description for Marketing/PR position

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-In	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Recruit and hire individual to fill communications, marketing, and public relations needs	Q1 2014		Q2 2014
2. Develop a communication strategy that ensures that information about the City is disseminated in a timely and professional manner and meets the needs of the various audiences within and outside of the City	Q2 2014	Quarterly	Q3 2014

Objective 10b: Engage development partners to positively promote the city

Strategies	Start Quarter/Year	Check-In	Completion Quarter/Year
1. Create effective methods for utilizing development partners to help promote the City	Q2 2014	Quarterly	Q3 2014

Team Leader: Traci Leach

# **La Porte Municipal Airport Business Plan**

## **Work Scope**

La Porte Municipal Airport is surrounded on three sides by development. There is a vacant field off Runway end 30 that could also be developed. The owner of that property would like to develop the land for industrial purposes while many in City leadership would like to see more residential housing. It is believed that with more housing and population in La Porte, retail stores would be more willing to locate there. Currently, residents must drive to Deer Park, Friendswood, Pasadena, and elsewhere in the Houston area to shop in large retail chain stores. Recognizing that the Airport will stay open, the City has undertaken this business plan to make the best of the situation.

From a financial standpoint, the Airport is slightly below breakeven. The Airport is a land-locked facility with the longest runway being 4,165 feet. A second runway is just under 3,000 feet. These runways cannot practically be expanded. With residential housing on three sides, it is believed that a balance must be reached where aircraft operations do not grow significantly because of noise concerns, but revenue production must continue to grow in order that the Airport not become a fiscal drag on the City. Thus, the Airport must come to terms with its size and character, and brand itself accordingly.

The Business Plan will examine the possibility of decommissioning Runway 5-23, using that land for revenue producing activities. In addition, the Business Plan will compare the Airport's size and residential surroundings to other similar airports to determine ideal operational conditions mixed with economic development.

The City would like to run the Airport more as a business and use it in its recruitment of business and industry, but it needs a clear picture of how the Airport can be utilized, improved, and positioned as a tool or asset to attract new business, companies, and business investment to La Porte. In addition, the Business Plan will identify potential uses of the Airport that are not being made at present. Similarly, the City would like to better identify the Airport's stakeholders. This plan can be a dynamic vehicle to identify public-private investment opportunities, improved Airport financial and economic performance, and a better understanding of the mission and value of the Airport by City leadership. We have outlined nine steps for a successful Airport Business Plan at La Porte Municipal Airport:

### **1. Initial Communications and SWOT**

We would identify and confirm the City's/Airport management's objectives for operating the Airport through discussions and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats (SWOT) analysis. In this task we would work with the City, the City Council, and its Economic Development Corporation to identify the range of stakeholders to include in the SWOT and overall business planning process. This group can include City officials, local businesses, pilot groups, Airport tenants, TxDOT, plant managers, and others, as desired. From the SWOT and our initial set of meetings we will craft a vision statement for the Airport. In addition, we would assess opportunities for revenue enhancement and review: existing levels of activity, reasons for

those levels, expectations for future activity, and opportunities for increased financial production and economic development. By speaking with local economic development agencies in these initial discussions, we hope to learn what their target industries are and how they use the Airport in their marketing.

## **2. Data Collection**

The collection of data will begin with an on-site inspection and published data review. Data not available from those sources will be sought from the City/Airport Management and local agencies. A brief description of the following will be summarized: facilities, services, aircraft activity, property, historical airport/ socioeconomic/demographic information, airport airspace, service area, security systems, airport and adjacent zoning, and land use and environment data. Information concerning previous financial performance will be gathered along with any debt service schedules, depreciation, or other accounting information. We will also collect information on businesses using the Airport, Airport employment levels (public and private), and annual capital spending. Other data will be collected as issues are identified in this process.

Specific data to be collected will include:

- The latest five (5) years of existing airport expenses and revenues (2011 - 2015).
- The latest budget for the Airport.
- A copy of all lease agreements - both aviation and non-aviation (preferably in digital format).
- Airport mission statement, legislative resolutions concerning the airport, airport trusts, or special conditions defined for the Airport.
- Any proposed taxes collected by site, or payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOTS) and/or, taxes to be paid by the Airport.
- List of rates and charges for aircraft storage facilities including: terminal building, conventional hangars, T -hangars, and tie-downs.
- List of all other rates and charges. For example: percent, or cents, charged per gallon of gas (jet or 100 LL); consignment fees; special events, etc.
- Organizational chart or reporting structure.
- Number of employees by type/function listed for both full and part time.
- Expenditures on payroll and operations.
- Average annual expenditure on capital improvements.
- Federal, state and local investment in capital improvements over past ten (10) years.
- List of businesses using the airport, e.g., pilot training, business aviation, recreational, etc.
- Information concerning industrial or commercial property adjacent or near to the Airport.
- List of all on-airport employers and aircraft tenants.
- Tax policy regarding exemption of Airport property from local taxation.
- All branding and marketing programs developed to date for La Porte Municipal Airport.

We will also collect information on businesses using the Airport, employment levels (public and private), and annual capital spending.

## **Survey of Tenants, Users, and Local Businesses**

A survey will be conducted to identify existing and potential business users of the Airport, along with any desired improvements. The survey can discuss the user preferences, particularly in light of the proximity to other airports in the greater Houston area. The survey can also be used to identify inputs for economic impact analysis, if desired. Surveys will be distributed to tenants, Airport users, and local businesses. A website will be developed that can be used to respond to the surveys via Internet. It is anticipated that three survey questionnaires will be developed – one for airport users, one for local businesses, and one of the general public/stakeholders. Once completed, the process and results of the survey will be documented as an appendix in the data collection interim report.

## **Airport Management Structure and Accounting & Operating Practices**

We would assess Airport accounting and business operating practices. A summary of the Airport sponsor's personnel responsibilities, reporting hierarchy, and decision making process will be described along with additional staffing options. Given that the Airport has a small staff, the analysis will focus on the coverage of operational hours and the responsibilities of the Airport Manager/Public Works Director and the City and the interrelationship with economic development personnel.

### **3. Lease Analysis**

Airport leases will be examined in detail to determine whether or not lease language is in conformance with FAA grant assurances and which ones are subject to those provisions. A number of lease strategies including best practices and general areas of advice will be covered in this analysis. These will include such topics as indemnification, minimum standards for commercial aeronautical activities, rules and regulations, and other items as needed. In addition, suggestions will be made concerning land lease investment amounts, term lengths, rental rate formulas, and reversion of property improvements to the City.

### **4. Airport Market Analysis**

An airport market analysis will be performed for La Porte Municipal Airport including: a comparison of factors affecting the market service area airports such as facilities, services, aircraft, and operations; and rates and charges for aircraft storage, fuel, and other pertinent factors. The goal of this analysis is to accurately assess the Airport's competitive market position, relative to other airports in its service area. At a minimum, airport market information will be gathered from Ellington, Pearland, RWJ, Baytown, Chambers County, Houston Southwest, and other airports as necessary. Airports outside the Houston area that have similar operating characteristics will be examined, as well. This section will feed the discussion of Airport branding by helping define the existing market niche for La Porte Municipal.

The market analysis will include a forecast of potential aircraft fleet mix in the estimated La Porte service area of greater Houston. This effort will consider potential technology

improvements that may make the Airport more attractive to a new class of aircraft types, including drones, helicopters, air logistics, etc. This data will help to establish the potential reach of a branding/marketing program designed to improve finances at La Porte Municipal Airport.

## **5. Branding**

The Business Plan will examine themes for a brand improvement. That is, the SWOT results from Task 1 can be used to input the enhanced brand for the Airport. The brand must consider the target market of clients for the Airport and seek to develop an identity that draws those customers to the Airport. In particular, there must be positive differentiation between general aviation facilities and services at La Porte Municipal versus business jet services at Hobby, Ellington, and other larger airports in the region. If there are negative perceptions about the Airport brand, based upon actual conditions at the Airport, those can be corrected (to the degree possible) as a part of the recommended branding effort. All of the branding policies and practices that come from strategy sessions can be identified and summarized in this section.

Our vision is for La Porte Municipal Airport to become more of a factor in the economic development of the community. We believe that a brand make-over is needed to achieve this goal. In fact, many, even in City government, overlook the Airport when considering economic development. It is like the Airport is a stealth facility in the City.

Branding may involve the development of a stand-alone website and video. Currently, the Airport is featured on the City's website and has one web page dedicated to it. The development of a website and video are included as optional tasks later in this work scope. An optional task of new logo design is included, if desired for the Airport.

## **6. Baseline Financial Outlook**

Historically, La Porte Municipal Airport has had to rely on subsidies from the City in order to operate. A baseline financial and economic outlook will be developed, based upon historical data and maintenance of the status quo. This projection only considers a baseline scenario with no new revenue enhancements included. This projection of financial performance is designed to answer the question, "How will the Airport perform if no significant changes are made?" Revenue and expense projections will include historical trends and inflation. This projection will serve as a benchmark that will enable decision makers to measure the potential financial production increases in the Recommended Plan.

## **7. Budget Pro Formas**

Because La Porte Municipal Airport is dependent on City subsidies, this business plan will examine how to improve revenue production and utilize the Airport to its highest and best. In this regard, the potential economic growth factors in the La Porte/Houston Bay area will be examined. Options for revenue enhancement will be described. These may include (but are not limited to) impact of additional hangar development, potential use of land for revenue generation if Runway 5-23 is closed, potential attraction of general aviation tourism, potential for additional business aviation, partnering with local educational institutions, increased flight training

programs, new or improved terminal services or amenities, new/specialty FBOs, feasibility of non-aviation airport property development (including decision tree for developers), changes in rates and charges, and efficient use of federal and state grants. Expense data will be generated to include the cost of implementing revenue enhancement strategies. This will include the costs of redeveloping the airport, the annual cost of those improvements, and the annual cost of any other expenses that may be required to support the Airport's chances for future success.

Alternatives to support demand will be identified for both the airside and landside at the Airport, particularly in light of possible runway closure. The preferred course of action will be graphically depicted and described in detail in the report. Prior to developing the pro formas, forecasts of potential aviation activity increases associated with each revenue enhancement initiative will be developed. These will be compared to other similarly situated airports near residential development.

Pro formas will be provided for a 5 year future, based on known factors and analyses including, but not limited to: inflation, development expenses, personnel changes, expected aircraft growth, potential cost savings for runway maintenance (5-23), revamped leases, contracts, and the local match on grants. These expenses will then be compared with the future revenues in a net revenue analysis. Prior to developing recommendations, a meeting will be held with the Sponsor and/or stakeholders to discuss alternative revenue enhancement strategies and plans. Changes to the preliminary recommendations can be made at this time.

## **8. Recommendations**

A recommended approach for the Airport Business Plan will be developed. As part of the recommendations, specific action steps will be identified and prioritized. These actions steps will:

- Detail current and potential future airport/community value and economic impact of the Airport.
- Detail strategic vision for the Airport development and operation in the future.
- Present a suggested branding strategy for La Porte Municipal Airport. This would help identify the Airport's market niche and provide steps toward the growth of the customer base and brand messaging to stakeholders.
- Feasibility of decommissioning Runway 5-23, including the reuse of property for revenue production.
- Explore new business opportunities including development/use of available Airport lands. This would include out-of-the box thinking for landside developable Airport property, including a role for the former national guard facility.
- Identify potential partnering opportunities with area schools or other businesses.
- Identify current business practices, lease terms, and systems.
- Identify any operational or staffing issues that may be improved.
- Identify needed Airport amenities and/or services, including AWOS and new informational kiosk for pilots.
- An analysis will be provided of what uses, identified by NAICS codes, are not yet

represented at the Airport, but for which the Airport, especially if any new improvements are made, may be ideally suited to attract.

- Discuss capital investment options.
- Review Minimum Standards to ensure best practices and compliance with FAA grant assurances.
- Present financial pro formas for the recommended plan.
- Retention and expansion strategies for existing tenants and businesses.
- Provide an Airport Land Use plan showing existing and future land uses on and around the Airport. This would include a listing of how many acres or square feet of development capability, the location of each site, and types of uses that may be developed.
- Develop an Airport video and/or Internet website, to complement the City's website, if desired.

We will examine the expansion of the revenue base beyond the existing aviation and any non-aviation land leases, hangar leases, fuel sales, and other existing revenues, such that a growing and diversified stream of revenues continues to support the operation of the Airport. We will also look at the Airport's operational structure, including staffing needs, the existing minimum standards, rates & charges, and land lease agreements.

## **9. Presentations & Output:**

A recommended Airport Business Plan will be provided. It is recommended that a total of four sets of meetings be held throughout the project. These will be held at the outset when the SWOT is performed, 30%, 70%, and a final set of meetings and/or presentation on findings will be held for the City and any stakeholders that the City would like to include.

Outputs of the plan will include the following interim reports:

- ***Section 1*** - Introduction
- ***Section 2*** - Airport Mission and Management Structure
- ***Section 3*** - Existing Airport Characteristics
- ***Appendix 3-A*** - SWOT Analysis
- ***Appendix 3-B*** - Lease Analysis
- ***Appendix 3-C*** - Survey Results
- ***Section 4*** - Baseline Financial Projection
- ***Section 5*** - Business Plan Alternatives
- ***Section 6*** - Findings and Recommendations
- ***Section 7*** - Airport Community Value

Once reviewed and approved, these interim reports will compose the final technical report. We will print 10 copies of the final technical report. The Interim reports will be distributed using digital (PDF) format. An executive summary will be prepared and will be included in the final technical

report. Also included as outputs will be a short video for the airport. This video will be 5 to 6 minutes and will be delivered on DVD media.

It is anticipated that the study will take seven months to complete, exclusive of review time.

## **10. Video**

A video will be developed for the Airport in this task. First, a general outline will be prepared and submitted to Airport Management and other appropriate parties to obtain their input. Based upon this review and input, a short 5 to 6 minute video will be developed. The video will focus on the updated brand for the Airport. Airport management and sponsors will be contacted for potential inclusion of business, economic development concerns, social benefits, and points of interest. This video can be copied on DVD, included in direct mailings, or it can be streamed from the Airport's Internet web site. The video will present information, benefits and points of interest in a manner practical to the broadest audience possible. We understand that the purpose of this video is to inform viewers not particularly knowledgeable of the valuable role that La Porte Municipal Airport plays in its service area. We will request stock footage from sources in the area and generate all other graphics and design. We will also make available raw footage to the City, if desired.

## **11. Airport Community Value**

An Airport/Community Value - Economic Impact Analyses would be provided to identify the asset value of the Airport, along with jobs, taxes, and airport revenue generated to the community. It would also identify the amount of significant business use. This analysis would permit the City and interested parties to evaluate the overall airport value to the community against the operating cost of the Airport. In addition, the Airport Community Value estimation would quantify the replacement value and existing value of airport facilities. This analysis would permit the City to estimate return on investment ratios related to the asset base at the Airport. This process may be important for quantifying the value of the Airport to the City and its residents. As a part of the analysis, we can include existing and future ACV values (now and 10 years from now). This will give the City information on the rate of job creation or economic development at the airport.

We believe that it is important to provide information to local decision makers that stresses the value of the Airport in financial terms. In most communities, the leadership is not intimately acquainted with the operation of the Airport or its value to the community. This portion of the business plan would provide a "primer" on the ACV that can be understood by a wide audience.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## CHAPTER 5

*Economic sustainability is essential to La Porte’s future. Simply, it will determine whether and how the City grows and redevelops in the coming years. The City’s economic strength will set the tone and pace for new development/redevelopment and impact its ability to maintain quality public facilities and services, which are necessary to help retain, attract, and support future businesses and the people that fuel them. La Porte is a thriving industrial city with high household/family incomes and housing values, and low unemployment and poverty rates (see Chapter 1, Demographic Snapshot). But, as evident during the public participation process, a majority of citizens increasingly want to find the right balance between protecting the City’s industrial roots, while also improving its livability.*

*In today’s talent-driven economy, the City’s ability to capture new opportunities will depend somewhat less on having the lowest business costs than on having a higher “quality of life” than its competitors. Although “quality of life” is highly generalized, and is difficult to gauge how the City measures up in things like personal safety and security, neighborhood integrity, recreational opportunities, access to healthcare and social services, availability of retail and other shopping opportunities, quality schools and higher learning, etc.; but one that is increasingly important in helping to attract and retain the people the companies need and desire.*

### 2001 vs. 2012 Plan Comparison

2001	2012 Update
No chapter on economic development in 2001 Comp. Plan; but incorporated recommendations found in the Economic Development Strategic Plan, Jan. 2009	Ch. 5, Economic Development

5.1

## 5.1 Introduction

### Strong Metropolitan Growth

The Houston metropolitan area was recently rated among the 20 fastest-growing economic regions in the world, coming in at No. 19 on a list compiled by the Washington-based Brookings Institute.

Source: Houston Chronicle, Houston earns high marks for strong economy. Jan. 21, 2012.

La Porte's economy does not exist in a vacuum. It is inextricably linked to the economic fortunes of both metropolitan Houston and the global economy (see inset). The economic drivers that have historically sustained the City's economy, including manufacturing, construction, and transportation and warehousing, have suffered during the recent recession.<sup>1</sup> However, with the City's proximity to the Port of Houston, including both the Barbour's Cut and Bayport Terminals, a short commute to Houston's Central Business District (CBD), and rail linkages to the rest of the country, La Porte is well positioned to benefit from a resurgence of the global economy. Accordingly, as the national and global economies fully recover from this recession,<sup>2</sup> the City will be primed for growth, particularly with the expansion of the Panama Canal and its predicted associated increase in containerized shipping.<sup>3</sup>

Despite these strong indicators, the City has additional issues it should consider. First, there is limited land remaining for development. In these areas, the City should seek a balance of land uses: residential, commercial, industrial, as well as park and recreation areas, streets, drainage, etc. While industrial expansion is attractive due to an increased tax base and jobs, this may not represent the collective vision for the community and its sense of livability. For this reason, this plan advocates open public dialogue and sound leadership to make decisions that are in the best and broad interests of the community.

### "Economic Development" is ...

the application of public resources to stimulate private investment.

Economic development is as much about quality as it is about quantity. It needs to be measured not just by gross tax revenues and job growth, but also by job quality and security; the impact on local wages, public services, and the environment; and the proportion of locally-owned to absentee-controlled businesses; among other factors.

Secondly, economic development does not happen on its own. It requires a deliberate, proactive strategy, as well as up-front public investment in new infrastructure and program development (see inset). Once begun though, it can start a positive and self-sustaining cycle: It helps hold the line on taxes through tax base growth thus, creating an even more attractive place for

<sup>1</sup> Comparison of total jobs in zip codes 77571 and 77507 between 2006 versus 2009 shows a slight decrease in total number of jobs. U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2002-2010).

<sup>2</sup> The 2008/2009 recession has been defined as starting in December 2007 and ending June 2009. Business Cycle Dating Committee of the National Bureau of Economic Research. September 20, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> H-GAC Regional Goods Movement Study – Final Report. Dec. 2011.

businesses, as well as households. It brings in new income into the community helping to spawn local spending and wealth creation. And most importantly, it impacts the City’s ability to retain and return its best and brightest by expanding local employment and creating opportunities for new businesses.

**Economic Development Strategy**

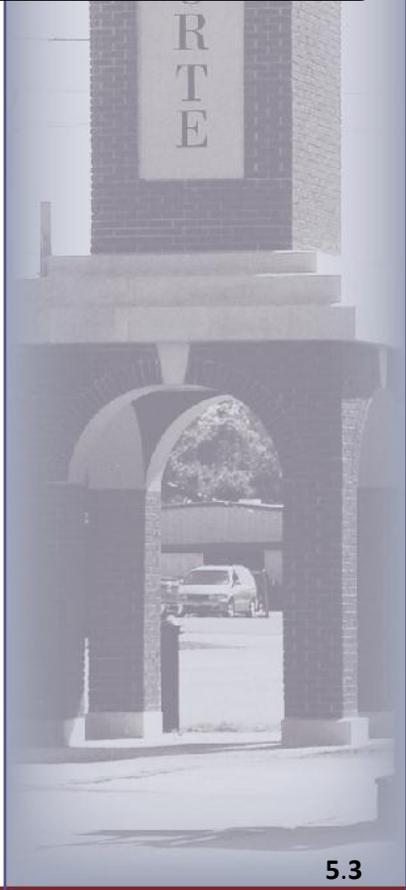
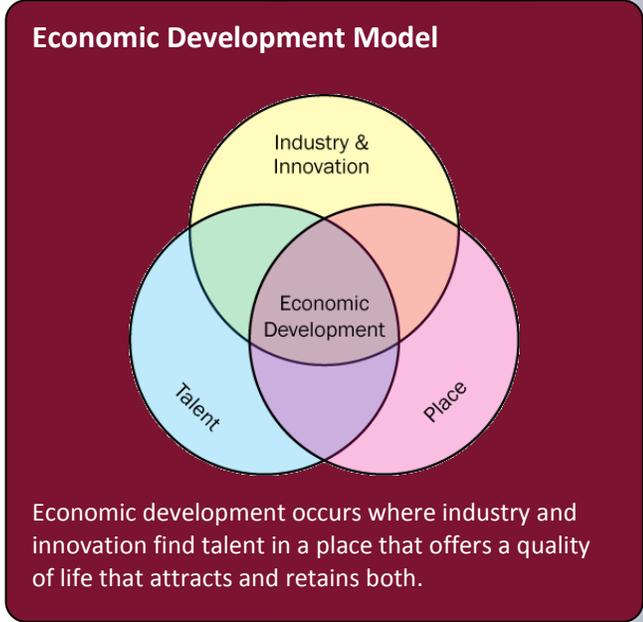
The economic development model is based on the overlap of industry and innovation, human talent, and quality of place. (see inset)

*Industry & Innovation.* In the economic development model, “industry” considers the full complement of economic activities, from traditional industrial employers to entrepreneurship, as well as the physical infrastructure (industrial parks, sites, transportation etc.) and business climate to support those activities. “Innovation,” is about the opportunities for expansion of existing companies, and the best targets for recruitment. These are important building blocks of an economic development plan.

*Talent.* “Talent” refers to the individuals that possess the skills and values to make organizations effective. The concept of “talent” means more than a skilled workforce. It means bringing talented people to the community, as well as cultivating the existing talent pool. It refers to groups as diverse as students, retirees, and entrepreneurs. It also involves ensuring that the employees and companies that have been responsible for a community’s economic health continue to see reasons to remain in the area.

*Quality of Place.* Much has been written about the importance of “quality of life” to the site selection process. Communities throughout the nation have positioned themselves by touting their advantages in this regard – good schools, attractive neighborhoods, strong presence of history and culture, safe streets, pleasant weather. These factors are obviously important, but the focus is still too narrow. Quality of life assumes that everyone thrives in the same environment and is attracted to the same amenities. It assumes that current residents’ view of what makes a community would be shared by all.

By contrast, “quality of place” considers what is attractive to a range of residents, both existing and new. Assessing the “quality of place” involves viewing the assets of the City through the eyes of the talent it wishes to attract and retain. The idea of quality of place accommodates growth and recognizes the benefits of change. It recognizes that one person’s “good





place to raise a family” might translate into another’s “there’s nothing to do in this town.” Quality of place is about providing options, not just for current residents, but also for those who will be residents in the future.

While La Porte has made significant strides in the last decade by establishing its Citywide trail system and improving the Sylvan Beach, bayfront, and Downtown areas, according to residents, further improvement is warranted. The bayfront established this community and remains one of our premier amenities. These should remain high priorities for action during the horizon of this plan. Expanding La Porte’s quality of place amenities and enhancing its community character will go far in making the City an attractive location for educated and skilled workers. This chapter builds upon the core community character theme – and associated action strategies – that are found throughout this Comprehensive Plan, particularly in the Land Use and Development chapter.

### SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis (alternately SLOOT analysis) is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses/Limitations, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats of a community and its economic development. Among others, it involves specifying the economic and quality of life objectives of a community and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve these objectives. Setting the objectives is to be done after the SWOT analysis has been performed. This allows the determination of achievable goals or objectives to be set for the community.

- **Strengths:** characteristics of the community that gives it an advantage over other communities or regions
- **Weaknesses (or Limitations):** are characteristics that place the community at a disadvantage relative to others
- **Opportunities:** external chances to improve performance (e.g. increase tax base) in the environment
- **Threats:** external elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the community in achieving its objectives

Identification of SWOTs is essential because subsequent steps in the process of planning for achievement of the selected objective may be derived from the SWOTs.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative.

### 5.2 Focus Areas, Goals, Actions and Initiatives

Throughout the planning process a number of issues were identified regarding economic sustainability, which was often framed in terms of a lack of availability and diversity of retail stores, restaurants, and other non-industry businesses in the City. There were additional concerns regarding the amount of retail leakage (and loss of associated tax dollars) to neighboring jurisdictions, and the apparent disinvestment in certain types of businesses. In addition to the public participation efforts conducted throughout the planning process, information was incorporated from the City’s existing Economic Development Strategic Plan (January 2009), which was an in-depth study of the City’s economic issues and strategies to improve them.

#### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis

As displayed in **Table 5.1, SWOT Analysis** (on next page), one component of the Economic Development Strategic Plan was the facilitation of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

(see inset), which was performed to frame economic issues in the City. Articulating the issues in this manner is intended to facilitate the development of strategies that address the weaknesses and threats by building upon the strengths and opportunities.

As evident by the analysis, some of La Porte’s enviable strengths are its strong industrial base and proximate location. Similarly, the City’s proximate location is also listed as an *opportunity* for economic development, as was



**Table 5.1, SWOT Analysis**

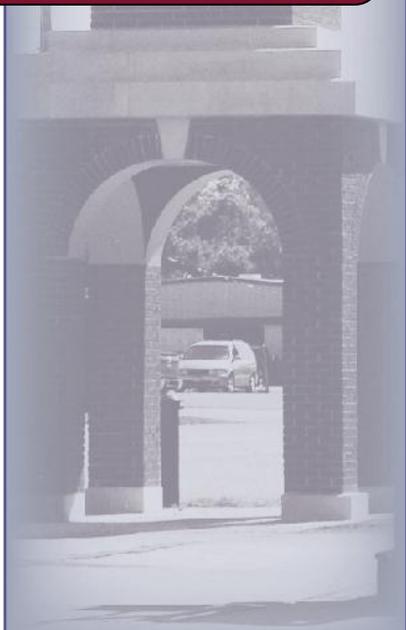
<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sylvan Beach / Bay Front</li> <li>• Historic Main Street</li> <li>• Strong Industry Base</li> <li>• Low Cost of Living</li> <li>• Location within Greater Houston</li> <li>• Current and Planned Parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bayfront Enhancement</li> <li>• Downtown Redevelopment</li> <li>• Sylvan Beach Improvement</li> <li>• Beautification</li> <li>• Attracting Tourists</li> <li>• Retail Readiness</li> </ul>
<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Appearance</li> <li>• Sales Tax Leakage</li> <li>• Disconnected Downtown / Bayfront</li> <li>• Division of east and west side</li> <li>• Intracity Communication</li> <li>• Limited Undeveloped Land</li> <li>• Economic Diversification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truck Traffic</li> <li>• Oil and Gas Industry Downturn</li> <li>• External Perception</li> <li>• Flooding</li> <li>• Growth Management</li> </ul>

Source: City of La Porte Economic Development Strategic Plan, Chapter 2: SWOT Analysis. January 2009.

improving the City’s overall appearance. The City’s identified weaknesses included the City’s increasingly limited land available for development, missed opportunities for generating sales tax revenue, and economic diversification. Finally, the analysis identified increasing truck traffic and a negative external perception, among others, as perceived threats to the City’s livability. All of these issues were again discussed during the public participation process of this Comprehensive Plan Update.

As such, these discussions formed the basis of the following focus areas, along with an analysis of existing conditions and review of current programs, plans, and ordinances. Each focus area contains contextual information, key planning considerations, goals, (and their rationales), and advisable implementation actions and initiatives. The areas of focus are as follows:

- **Focus Area 1** – Expanded economic development toolkit;
- **Focus Area 2** – Improved business friendliness of the City;



- **Focus Area 3** – Expanded opportunities for higher quality industrial operations within the City limits and the ETJ; and,
- **Focus Area 4** – Continued commitment to place-based economic development.

### Advantages / Disadvantages of Development Corporations

#### Advantages

- Can act with greater confidentiality and speed
- Can help to minimize and mitigate the effects of politics on development
- Can more effectively deal with tax credits and solicit tax deductible donations from foundations and philanthropic entities
- Can act as pass-through vehicles for tax-exempt bonds

#### Disadvantages

- Typically exist as a self-supporting entity
- Frequently suffer from a lack of dedicated public financing
- Some are not fully established, rather they are just off-shoots of existing organizations

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative.

### Focus Area 1 – Expanded Economic Development Toolkit.

#### La Porte Economic Development Corporation

Development Corporations are sometimes structured the same way as redevelopment authorities. The term “development corporation” however, usually connotes a higher degree of autonomy from City government and is often structured as a private or public-private non-profit organization. It is common for corporations to be involved in activities other than just real estate development to include the administration of low-interest loan pools that support business and economic development. (see inset)

### La Porte Community Library



The La Porte Community Library is a joint venture between the City of La Porte (who is responsible for the building and furnishings) and the Harris County Library System (who staffs and runs the library). Construction of the library was facilitated by the EDC as one of its first projects.

Operating capital often derives from the ownership and management of real estate assets, private donations, development and financing fees, and fees from tax exempt bonds and special taxes. The La Porte Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is an example of a development corporation already established in La Porte. It offers a full complement of economic development programs and incentives, which are primarily coordinated by the Economic Development Division of the EDC. The Department and its activities are funded through a collection of a one-half cent sales tax (established in 1999), which must be spent on economic development projects relating to capital investment and job creation. The most recent activities include the re-nourishment of Sylvan Beach, the ball fields at Pecan Park, the library (see inset), and infrastructure improvements along Main Street.

### La Porte Redevelopment Authority

The City of La Porte Redevelopment Authority<sup>4</sup> was set up as a local government corporation pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 394 of the Texas Local Government Code.<sup>5</sup> The Authority is organized as a public, nonprofit corporation for the “purposes of aiding, assisting, and acting on behalf of the City in the performance of its governmental function to promote the common good and general welfare of Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (the “TIRZ”) and neighboring areas, and to promote, develop, encourage, and maintain housing, educational facilities, employment, commerce, and economic development in the City.”<sup>6</sup>

One of the current projects undertaken by the Authority was to enter in a Development Agreement with Port Crossing Limited for the purpose of constructing TIRZ public infrastructure in the Lakes at Fairmont Green development. Unfortunately, the national recession and downturn in the local residential housing market slowed growth. Future use of the TIRZ should include a cost benefit analysis along with established goals. In addition, other types of incentives should be considered including grants.<sup>7</sup>

### Key Planning Considerations

Key planning considerations regarding expanding the economic development toolkit include:

- 1) Expanding the City’s economic development program to ensure there is a comprehensive and coordinated resource toolkit to serve the City’s existing and future business community.
- 2) Ensuring existing and future businesses have a dedicated person with whom to collaborate when deciding whether to relocate to the City, and to assist them through the relocation and/or development process.
- 3) Increasing coordination with partners to ensure economic development incentives are provided in a synergistic, efficient, and cost effective manner.

### Goal 5.1: Re-evaluate and retool the City’s economic development program toolkit.

### Actions and Initiatives

- 1) Consider becoming a member of the National Business Incubator Association (NBIA)<sup>8</sup> and establishing a small business incubator site

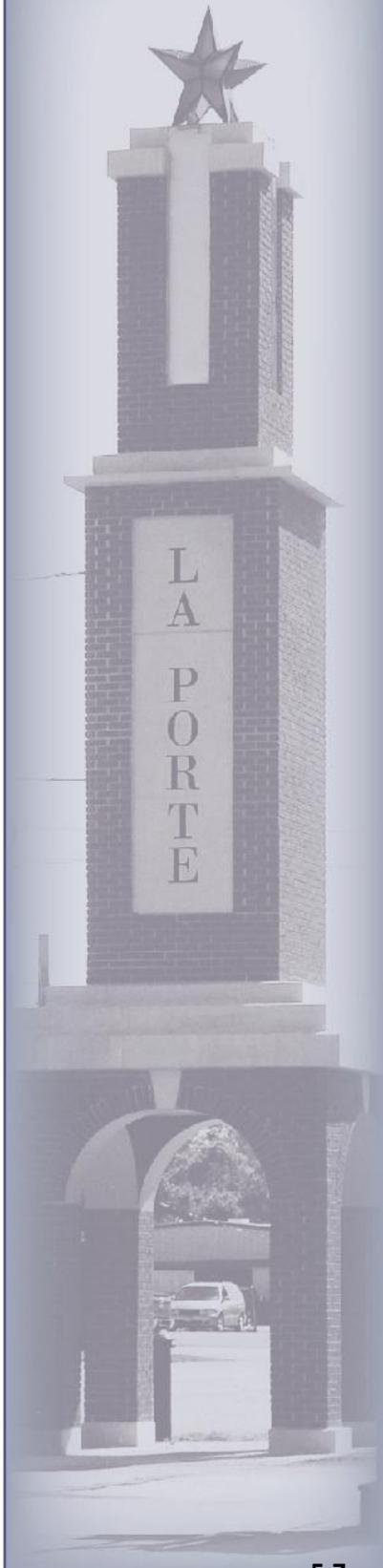
<sup>4</sup> The City of La Porte Redevelopment Authority was authorized by Resolution No. 2009-19 passed on December 11, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Texas Local Government Code, Title 12, Chapter 394. Also known as the Texas Housing Finance Corporations Act of 1987.

<sup>6</sup> Independent Auditor’s Report of the La Porte Redevelopment Authority. Patillo, Brown & Hill, LLP. September 30, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Further information on the National Business Incubator Association can be found at <http://nbia.org/>.



### What are “Business Incubators”?

“Business incubators nurture the development of entrepreneurial companies, helping them to survive and grow during the start-up period, when they are most vulnerable. These programs provide their client companies with business services and resources tailored to young firms. The most common goals of incubation programs are creating jobs in a community, enhancing a community’s entrepreneurial climate, retaining businesses in a community, building or accelerating growth in a local industry, and diversifying local economies.”

Source: National Business Incubator Association (NBIA)

within the City in coordination with the San Jacinto College Small Business Development Center (SJC SBDC).<sup>9</sup> Priority consideration should be given to already-owned property located in the Downtown area or in an area near San Jacinto College. The jointly sponsored incubator could include fully equipped office space at low cost (City provided) with initial and follow-along counseling at no cost (SJC SBDC provided) for entrepreneurs of small and emerging companies. Criteria would need to be developed for admission to the business incubator for start-up companies. In addition, the site could be cross-utilized as a temporary headquarters on a short-term, temporary basis (i.e., one to three months) for new arrivals of established, major companies relocating to La Porte. The Temple Business Incubator (in Temple, TX) is an example of a jointly sponsored and successful business incubator.

- 2) Continue to provide adequate funding for the Economic Development Coordinator/Business Ombudsman and associated staff positions. These are important functions as they direct economic development planning activities for the City by negotiating with business and industry representatives to encourage location (or relocation) to the area. They also conduct research, analysis, and evaluation of data to determine the economic impact of proposed expansions and/or new development.
- 3) Continue to use a single-point-of-contact protocol for all new development and business permit applications. This would be likened to a one-stop project manager or expediter who would help shepherd development applications through the process, troubleshoot problems on the applicant’s behalf, coordinate tax abatement requests with the county, and lead the applicant in the direction of other assistance. This person should continue to be the Economic Development Coordinator/Business Ombudsman.
- 4) Maintain links to the current digest of local, state, and federal economic development programs on the City’s website. The Economic Development Coordinator should be fully abreast of all non-local economic incentives and should act as a liaison for businesses interested

<sup>9</sup> The San Jacinto College Small Business Development Center (SJC SBDC) provides free business consulting and affordable training seminars to small- and medium-sized business owners and managers. The SJC SBDC is a business consulting and training center of the University of Houston SBDC Network, which serves 32 counties in Southeast Texas through 14 business consulting and training centers. It offers customized instruction training at its facility in Pearland, Texas, or it could be facilitated at the future established incubator site in La Porte. More information can be found at <http://www.sjcd.sbdcnetwork.net/sanjacinto/default.asp>

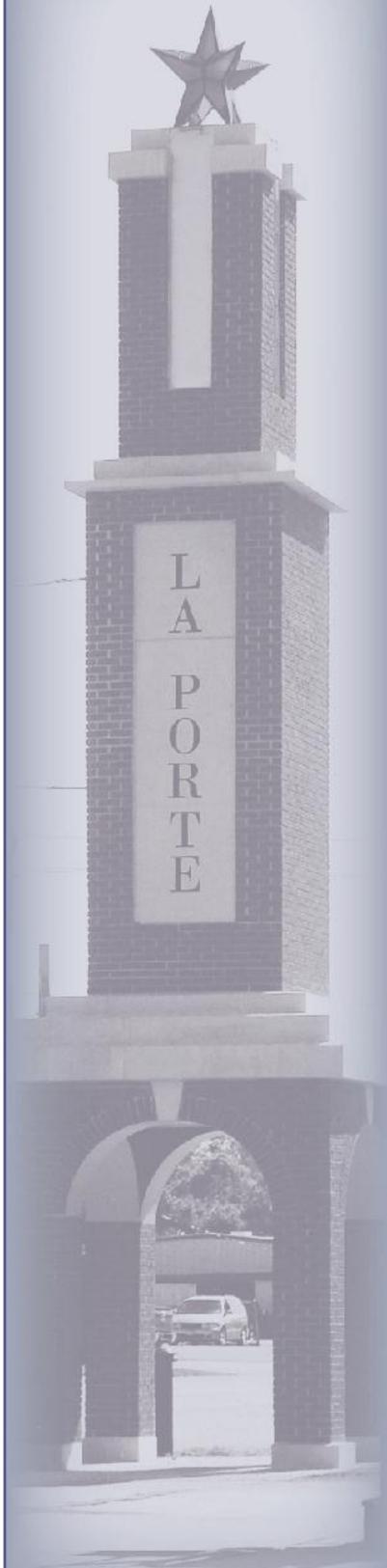
in using these incentives as part of a location or relocation package to La Porte.

- 5) Consider adopting local tax abatement provisions for commercial construction registered with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®), or other similar programs. This would include partial tax abatement for the incremental investment associated with obtaining such certification. While the City does not have any certified LEED projects, nearby City of Houston has 165 certified projects.<sup>10</sup> Any private sector projects utilizing this incentive should agree to their involvement in marketing the community and the program.
- 6) Mobilize top government officials and business leaders as welcoming committees for promising businesses, site selectors, and selected developers.
- 7) Continue to periodically research and keep abreast of the latest state and federal economic incentives (including grants) so that the City can expand the toolkit (see inset next page) in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible.
- 8) Continue to conduct regular business outreach to understand the plans and needs of area businesses and to troubleshoot potential problems.
- 9) Continue use of the industrial payments (the Community Investment Fund) for economic development, community beautification, and revitalization programs, rather than supplementing the general fund.
- 10) Continue to use the Hotel/Motel Fund for projects that encourage visitors to the City. This includes Main Street revitalization efforts; the creation, promotion, and sponsorship of festivals and events; print, Internet, and broadcast advertising; membership dues for the Bay Area Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau; directional and historical (i.e., wayfinding) signage; and projects that enhance the City's image to out-of-town visitors.<sup>11</sup> This also includes continued funding for staff positions dedicated to economic development. A cost benefit analysis should be conducted along with establishing goals so that results can be measured.
- 11) Continue to support the Economic Development Corporation (EDC)'s efforts to fund capital investment and job creation as a means of increasing economic development within the City.

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<sup>10</sup> Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI) Certified Project Directory. January 31, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> City of La Porte, Texas Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 (October 1 – September 30).



- 12) Annually evaluate return on investment and consider continuing partnerships with the La Porte-Bayshore Chamber of Commerce, Bay Area Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, Economic Alliance Houston Port Region, Greater Houston

### Existing Local Incentives and Programs (Local Toolkit)

The City of La Porte currently offers several local incentives for businesses who are considering locating within the City.

- Tax Abatements – The City offers ad valorem tax abatements for new construction for qualifying facilities, including regional distribution/service (up to 10 percent), manufacturing/other basic industry (up to 10 percent), and retail/commercial office/regional entertainment (up to 50 percent). To be eligible for an abatement (averaged over five years), qualifying companies must also have a minimum \$3 million capital investment and create at least 10 jobs.
- Industrial District Agreements – The City provides incentives to businesses that relocate in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Agreements are approved where the City agrees not to annex the property for a specified period of time and sometimes includes annual fee-in-lieu of taxes for the use of City facilities or contractual services (e.g., fire department response).
- Public Improvement Districts – The City has the ability to establish a Public Improvement District (PID), which enables commercial areas to make improvements by spreading out the cost equally among all properties. Property owners are assessed based on benefits and assessments may be used to pay debt service on bonds or they may be used to pay for services directly if no bonds are issued. PID funds may also be used in connection with improvements or enhancements such as water, wastewater, streets, drainage, parking, landscaping, etc.
- Foreign Trade Zones – The City supports the Port of Houston in its efforts to apply for federal exemptions from state and local ad valorem taxes on tangible property imported from outside the United States, and held in Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ).
- Freeport Exemption – The City supports the La Porte Independent School District (La Porte ISD) which offers Freeport Exemption. These are intended to exempt personal property consisting of inventory goods or ores, other than oil, natural gas, and petroleum.
- Municipal Grants – The City Council has the authority to provide loans and grants of City funds to promote economic development projects within the City.

In addition, the City incentivizes economic growth and expansion of facilities in the industrial districts, where the company renders to the City an amount “in lieu of taxes” based on 62 percent (value years 2008 – 2013) or 63 percent (value years 2014 – 2019) of the amount of ad valorem taxes payable if it was within the City limits. Further, new construction is incentivized for substantial increases in the value of land and tangible property to the amount equal to 25 percent (value years 2008 – 2013) or 20 percent (value years 2014 – 2019) of the amount of ad valorem taxes if it was within the City limits.

Source: City of La Porte Website – Economic Development Department

Partnership, and the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) to work towards enhancing economic development within the City. Consider convening an annual meeting with partners to ensure a synergistic, efficient, and coordinated plan of action is realized.

- 13) Consider expanding the business retention and expansion program. While recruiting new businesses is important to growing its economic base, La Porte cannot afford to ignore its current businesses and risk losing one of them to closure or relocation. A strong business retention and expansion program should include regular visits with local employers. These visits can include formal surveys or be informal interviews. However, they should establish a relationship with the employer and serve as a mechanism by which the Economic Development Coordinator can ascertain any major challenges or plans for expansion, and help to identify suppliers or customers who could benefit from relocating to La Porte. In addition to site visits, the business retention and expansion program could be expanded to include such initiatives as shop local programs, advertising cooperatives, shopping guides, frequent shopper programs, small business seminars, etc.
- 14) Budget to update the La Porte Economic Development Strategic Plan, which was prepared as a five-year plan of action (2009-2013).

### Focus Area 2 – Improved Business Friendliness of the City.

One topic that was frequently discussed during the public participation process was the perceived lack of business friendliness of the City with regard to how projects moved through the development process. Indeed, it was a topic that came up in almost every small group charrette, many stakeholder interviews, and in public meetings. It was typically framed from the standpoint that it takes longer to permit a project than it actually takes to construct a project, or that it was overly difficult to permit rehabilitation or other improvement projects. Other times, it was framed as adding requirements during each subsequent submittal, rather than being identified during the original submittal. Some of this discontent may be attributed to the normal course of doing government business. But, a large part of it may be attributed to the City's outdated zoning and development codes and administrative and public approval processes. What is important, though, is for the City to dedicate time and resources to pinpoint the issues, and then determine an action plan to correct them.



“What we hear is that it takes a long time to review plans. Developers make seven corrections, and when it is re-reviewed, there are 10 more new things.”

Source: Interview with Louis Rigby, Mayor of La Porte.

### Moving Forward

The City should consider consolidating and streamlining its development codes and associated processes by combining them into a single and comprehensive Unified Development Code (UDC). See *Chapter 6, Implementation*, for further information.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative.



### Benefits of a Unified Development Code (UDC)

- A UDC offers procedural consistency and a single source of standards and definitions.
- It greatly simplifies the amendment process, helping to ensure consistency among the different codes.
- It makes the regulations more user-friendly for the development, real estate, and consultant communities.
- There can be better cross-referencing to ensure that all related provisions are taken into account pertaining to any particular development proposal.
- The administration of the codes is consolidated into one section, thereby simplifying the roles and responsibilities of each official and body.
- The applications and procedures for all development processes can be clearly defined, including use of a flow diagram to illustrate the submission and review process.
- It allows application of subdivision requirements to “zoning-only” projects, such as driveway access and site circulation review for a single-user site plan when subdivision is not required.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative.

As the City moves forward with the recommended zoning and development code changes contemplated throughout this Comprehensive Plan Update, it is highly recommended to reach out to, and involve, the development community in the process. Consolidating all the zoning and development codes into a single and comprehensive Unified Development Code (UDC) is an opportunity to implement the regulatory provisions discussed in this plan, while at the same time, providing an opportunity to greatly improve the administrative and public approval processes – all of which can improve La Porte’s business friendliness and contribute to the City’s ability to facilitate economic development.

### Key Planning Considerations

Key planning considerations improve the business friendliness of the City include:

- 1) Analyzing the City’s permitting process to determine where processes can be streamlined.
- 2) Updating the City’s zoning and development codes in conformance with the actions identified throughout this plan.
- 3) Increasing communication with the development community to determine and solve impediments to development.
- 4) Providing the necessary online and other resources needed to successfully navigate the development process.

**Goal 5.2: Update the City’s zoning and development codes to implement the regulatory improvements as a means to aid economic development.**

### Actions and Initiatives

- 1) Update the City’s zoning and development regulations to provide for greater predictability in land use decisions while ensuring land use compatibility and enhancing community character. Further, consider consolidating all development-

related provisions into a comprehensive Unified Development Code (UDC) that makes the regulatory specifics easier to navigate and comprehend (i.e., more “user-friendliness”) for the development, real estate, and consultant communities (see inset). Developers and the businesses that finance them want timeliness and certainty. Developers will almost always prefer to be held to a higher standard than to be subjected to an arbitrary, lengthy, and unpredictable approval process. The former allows the developer to “pencil out” the project to see if it is

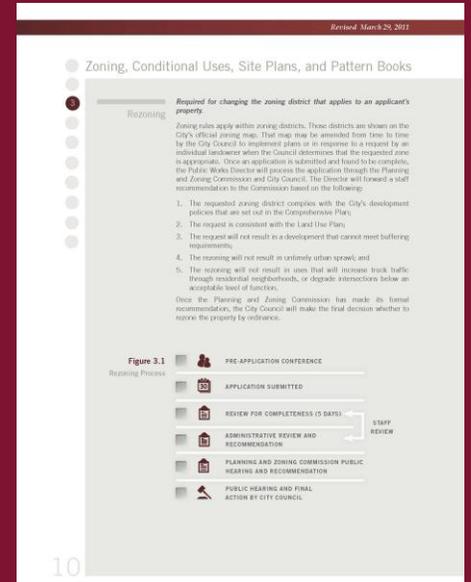
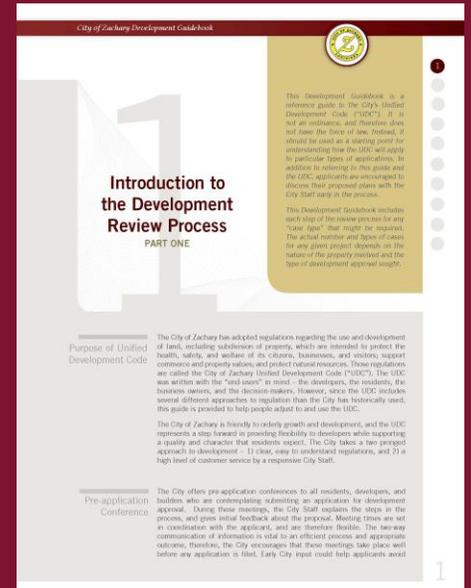
financially feasible. The latter (e.g., a typical Planned Unit Development process) requires a very high tolerance for risk. Consequently, undefined development approval provisions force potential developers to jump through many regulatory “hoops” to get a project approved, which may discourage development when the profitability of the end-product is not known. Additionally, businesses usually need space on a relatively short notice, particularly for start-ups, who will not have the time or resources to hire a team of professionals to navigate a process for obtaining multiple zoning approvals. Indeed, undefined or multiple “hoops” may cause businesses to locate elsewhere.

**Goal 5.3: Conduct a thorough review of the City’s intake procedures for development projects, business permits, and fee structures with a view toward adopting more expedited and “business-friendly” permitting processes.**

**Actions and Initiatives**

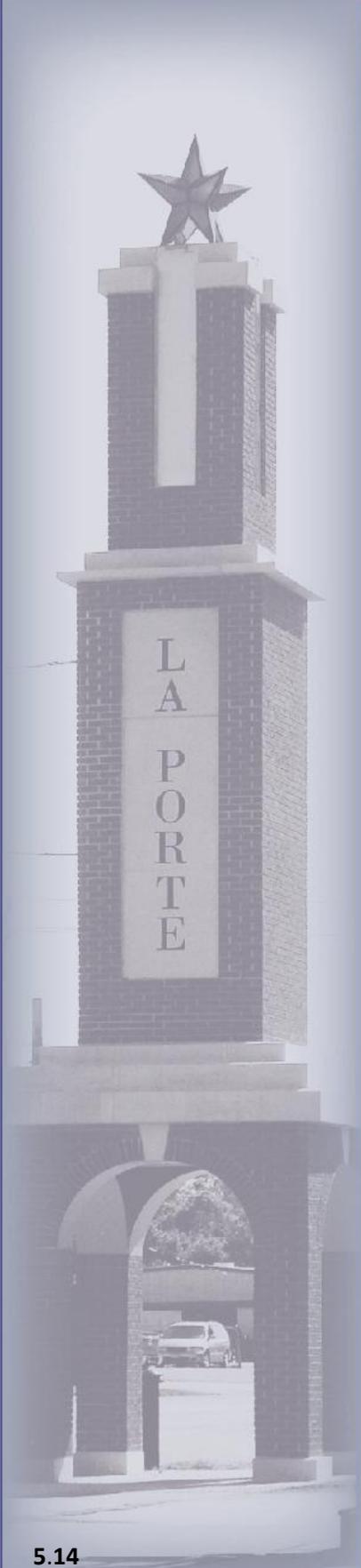
- 1) Consider conducting customer service training for front desk personnel and other key staff members and implementing a survey tool to monitor customer satisfaction.
- 2) Establish a “streamlined permitting process” for desirable developments. Develop a baseline comparison of La Porte’s development review and permitting process with neighboring communities (e.g., Deer Park, Pasadena, etc.). If no such baseline comparison already exists, then the City should begin tracking the review time for different categories of permitting. Once the data has been collected, the City should hold monthly or quarterly meetings with the development community to review the benchmark data and obtain their feedback regarding their dissatisfaction with the development process. Feedback should be requested on how to improve both regulations and the process. Develop a short- and long-term action plan to resolve issues that do not compromise the integrity of the process or conformity with established regulations. Typically, the development community wants and needs consistency and predictability. So, in some cases, streamlining may not resolve the issue. Sometimes, larger issues with the review process lie in the subjectiveness of project approvals. This can be particularly evident when trying to navigate the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process. Relevant feedback from this analysis should be presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.
- 3) Complete the guidebook for the development community and residents to utilize during the development process. The guidebook should include descriptions of the types of applications available, flowcharts of each process, tables of submittal and hearing dates, details

**Example Guidebook**



A well-designed development guidebook can facilitate improved outcomes (e.g., these pages from Zachary, LA).

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative.



as to where further information may be found, and other items pertinent to the successful navigation of the process.

- 4) Update the website to make it easier to access information required by the public to secure approval for projects. This could include Adobe PDF fillable application forms, expanded GIS data (e.g., locations and size of public infrastructure), etc.
- 5) Consider surveying applicants once the development process is complete to determine and quantify overall satisfaction with the department and processes, and to gather feedback on suggested improvements.

### Focus Area 3 – Expanded Opportunities for Higher Quality Industrial Operations within City Limits and the ETJ.

La Porte is an industrial City. It is located just 25 miles from Downtown Houston and is located directly between the Barbours Cut and Bayport Container Terminals of the Port of Houston. The City's quick and easy access to the north/south Interstate 45 corridor and the east/west Interstate 10 corridor is further served by more than 130 trucking lines providing routes to all of the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The Union Pacific and BNSF railroads, with rail hubs in Houston and other Texas cities, serve thousands of miles of track and all Gulf Ports.<sup>12</sup> Combine this with the fact that the Port of Houston is expected to increase its freight tonnage by 42 million tons by 2035 (with an overall expected increase of 45 percent for the region's freight tonnage);<sup>13</sup> La Porte is well-positioned to be an ideal location for businesses in warehousing and manufacturing industries. It is precisely this reason why the City should maintain its focus on industrial economic development activities.

With this being said, the U.S. manufacturing industry continues a transformation that has profound effects on the practice of economic development. It is forcing us to rethink what we mean by a *primary job*, how we measure economic impact, and how we design incentives. This is due, in large part, because manufacturing employment continues to decline. It is not overstatement that an economic strategy built solely around manufacturing jobs may be destined for failure.

For this reason, it is recommended to direct economic development efforts to a few key target industries that are complimentary to the City's existing industrial base. These target industries were identified by the Gulf Coast Economic Development District (GCEED) as being favorable for local economic conditions:

- Biomedical/Biotechnical;

<sup>12</sup> City of La Porte Economic Development website.

<sup>13</sup> H-GAC Regional Goods Movement Study – Final Report. Dec. 2011.

- Chemical & Chemical Based Products;
- Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing; and,
- Machinery Manufacturing.<sup>14</sup>

Since the growth of clusters (e.g., biotech cluster) is significantly affected by local economic factors that can be modified or improved by local policy makers, it is critical that further evaluation is undertaken.

However, expanding the City's industrial base (or targeted clusters) cannot, and should not, be to the detriment of the City's overall livability. Conversely, new industrial development should be in conformance with the City's overall vision as being a business-, tourism-, and family-friendly community (see section on Vision in *Chapter 1, Plan Context*). Achieving this business/tourism/family balance may require the City to think differently about its approach in the coming years.

One of the primary ways to achieve this balance is to strengthen development regulations to implement the Business Park and Auto-Urban Industrial character areas. As detailed in the **Appendix A, Future Consideration of Character-based Planning**, business parks are primarily for office, medical, and technology/research uses, but can also include light industrial (including warehousing/distribution) when well screened and in buildings with enhanced materials and design. Business parks also have areas of common open space, extensive landscaping along the perimeters, special streetscape and design treatments at entries (and other areas), and site operations that are conducted indoors with limited or no outdoor storage or display.

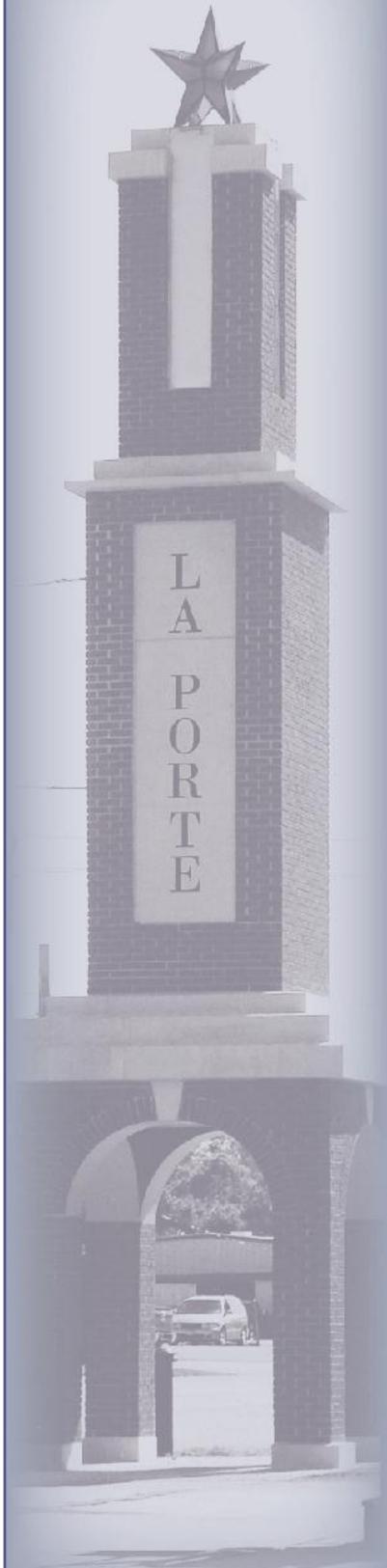
Auto-Urban Industrial, by contrast, is more typical of the industrial operations currently in existence within the City and the ETJ. They are characterized by large parking and storage areas (e.g., container yards) and unscreened or lesser screened outdoor activities. For future developed areas, strengthened regulations should mitigate these areas through landscaping and buffering standards, including screening of any outdoor activity and storage from the public rights-of-way and adjacent uses and properties.

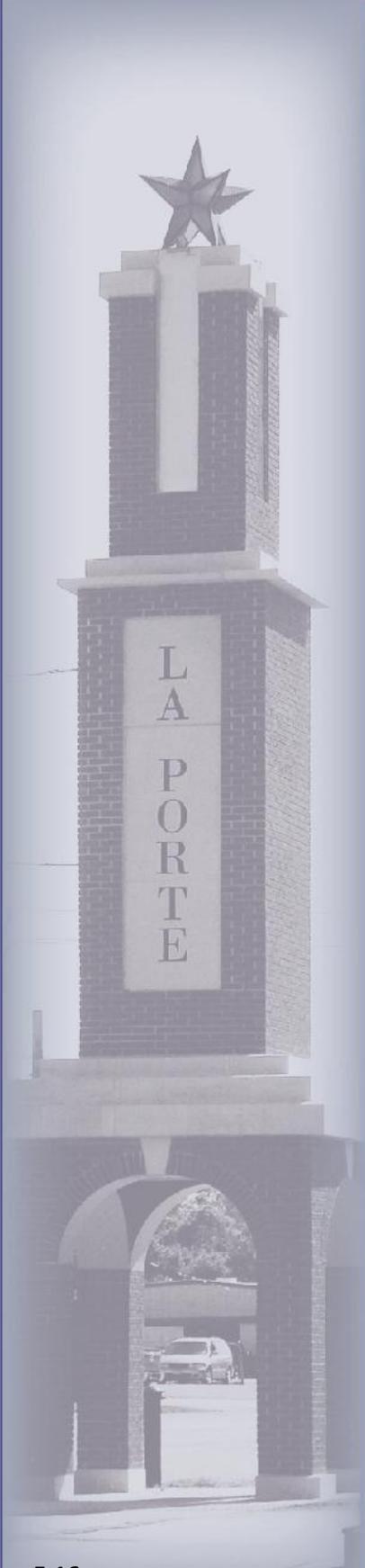
#### Key Planning Considerations

Key Planning Considerations for expanding opportunities for higher quality industrial operations within the City and the ETJ include:

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<sup>14</sup> The Gulf Coast Economic Development District conducted a regional cluster analysis to assess regional competitiveness in attracting and retaining industry clusters. It revealed dominant clusters in the region as well as the ones that are emerging or transforming. Gulf Coast Economic Development District – 2009-2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. July 17, 2009.



- 
- 1) Continued partnerships and support for the Port of Houston's Barbour's Cut and Bayport Terminals.
  - 2) Strengthened regulations for new Business Park and Auto-Urban Industrial development/redevelopment.
  - 3) Pursuing and offering economic incentives for those industrial activities (or targeted clusters) that complement the City's existing industrial base and agree to meet the City's livability objectives.

**Goal 5.4: Balance increased economic development incentives for industry (and targeted clusters) with improved regulatory provisions to protect the City's livability.**

**Actions and Initiatives**

- 1) Strengthen the language in Development Agreements to require new industrial development in the ETJ to adequately screen operations and storage areas from public rights-of-way, provide additional landscaping, etc., as a means to improve the City's character and livability.
- 2) Continue to promote industrial development within the City and industrial districts in the Exterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).
- 3) Assess local economic factors to determine favorable conditions for locating identified industry clusters. This would include identifying the most appropriate target clusters, followed by surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with industry experts to identify their location preferences.
- 4) Update the zoning and development codes to ensure higher quality standards are achieved for those uses that would be allowed in Business Park and Auto-Urban Industrial areas. Additionally, provisions need to be strengthened to improve compatibility between areas of differing character and to achieve better community livability (see *Chapter 2, Land Use and Development*, for additional information on needed regulatory improvements).

**Goal 5.5: Proactively prepare undeveloped (and appropriate) areas for future industrial development and target clusters.**

**Actions and Initiatives**

- 1) Proactively zone land within the City for needed commercial, office, and light industrial uses, as identified on *Map 2.6, Future Land Use Plan*. In anticipation of the 45 percent increase in expected freight tonnage, this is particularly important to pre-zone those areas designated as Business Park and Auto-Urban Industrial.
- 2) Market and provide incentives for these pre-zoned areas to create large-scale business parks. This could include incentives to install the public infrastructure needed for multi-lot developments, so that future individual businesses have shovel-ready lots where all that is remaining to do is to construct the building.

5.16

- 3) Consider facilitating the discussion with property owners, state and county economic officials, and the Union Pacific Railroad, among others, to test the idea of creating a special logistics park in the vacant area bounded by State Highway (S.H.) 225 and S.H. 146 and adjacent to the existing Union Pacific rail line. There are a number of distribution-related companies in the region. The key in maximizing this opportunity is for the City to go beyond warehousing to create opportunities to add value to the goods passing through the area. Specialized facilities that allow for easy off-loading of freight combined with special financial incentives for the modifications of imports and exports (such as through a Foreign Trade Zone) could be a key in making La Porte even stronger for value-added manufacturing and distribution. This would include:
  - a. Facilitate discussion with state and federal officials on the process of creating a general-purpose Foreign Trade Zone, which can be sponsored by economic development corporations and typically involve public facilities that can be used by more than one firm, and are most commonly industrial parks used by small to medium sized businesses for warehousing/distribution and some processing/assembly.<sup>15</sup>
  - b. Facilitate rezoning and permitting the property to allow high-quality, large site industrial warehousing.
  - c. Approach Union Pacific on the possibility of building special rail sidings (i.e., a low-speed track sections distinct from the main line to be used for loading and unloading freight) into a proposed park.
- 4) Work with large undeveloped landowners to discover their goals for the property and help facilitate their goals in conjunction with the objectives of this plan or modify this plan to match mutual goals of the owner and City.

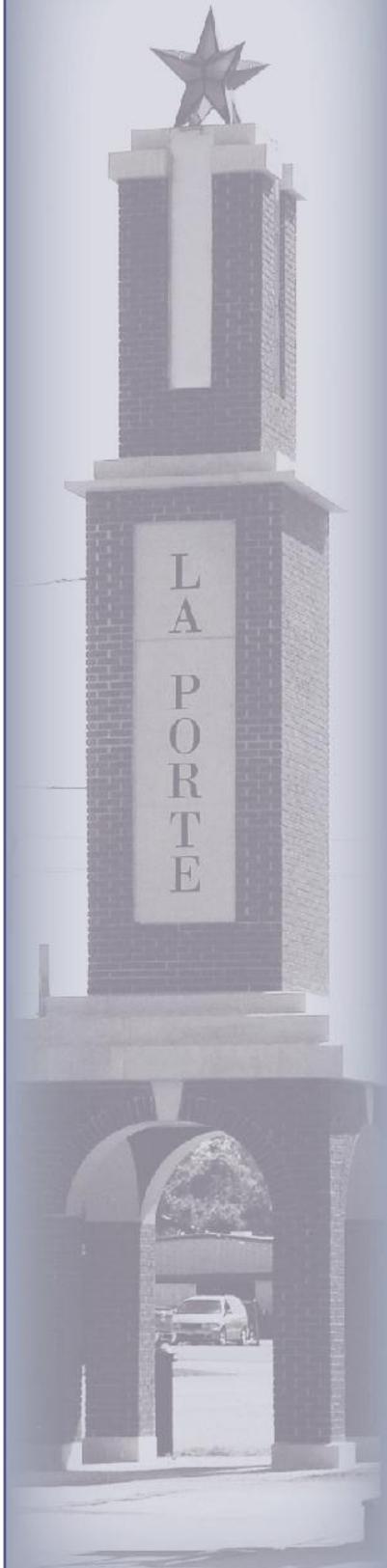
#### **Focus Area 4 – Continued Focus on Expanding Retail and Commercial Service Businesses within the City.**

One of the topics that came up repeatedly during the public participation process was a lack of commercial retail opportunities within the City. Indeed, per capita retail sales in La Porte were \$1,844 in 2007<sup>16</sup>, which is significantly lower than the neighboring cities of Deer Park (\$4,220), Texas City (\$4,561), and Baytown (\$7,024), and Harris County as a whole (\$5,938). This indicates that the City could potentially capture a higher level of spending by residents.

Although most retail developers have sophisticated approaches for site selection, and are primarily driven by demographics, it is beneficial to build

<sup>15</sup> Trade Information Center. June 2000.

<sup>16</sup> City of La Porte Economic Development Strategic Plan. Confirmed by the U.S. Census Bureau as the most recent year comparable numbers were available.



### Retail Development: Fairmont and Main Street

Fairmont Parkway has been developing as the new location (or relocation) of some of the City's key destinations that were once anchors for Main Street, including City Hall, the U.S. Post Office, and many of the newer retail businesses. As business expanded on Fairmont Parkway, business declined on Main Street.

Today, there is opportunity to have complimentary retail in both locations. Main Street offers a place well suited for entertainment, fine dining, neighborhood cafes, boutique shopping, and tourist-based businesses, all in an urban, pedestrian-scaled and walkable environment. On the other hand, Fairmont Parkway has developed as an auto-urban commercial corridor, which best serves the automobile and is less conducive to pedestrians and tourist-based businesses.

Source: City of La Porte Economic Development Strategic Plan; modified by Kendig Keast Collaborative.

relationships with these businesses. As mentioned in the La Porte Economic Development Strategic Plan, continued attendance at the International Conference of Shopping Centers (ICSC) and the ICSC Texas Conference and Deal Making Event could provide increased opportunities to market La Porte's assets to those that have the ability to bring future retail shopping opportunities to the City.

Providing incentives to attract retail is already being done. Providing incentives for retail has its advantages and disadvantages; and accordingly, only certain cities choose to do it. Though retail provides an improved quality of life, increased tax revenues, and improves the property tax base on and/or near the operation, sales collected at these locations are often sent to a headquarters based elsewhere (and in some cases, out of state) and rarely are re-invested to expand the operation or provide above-average wages to local residents. To this extent, most retail, but not all, cause local dollars to flow out of the local economy. Given the lack of retail opportunities in La Porte, however, it is important to pursue additional opportunities for attracting retail and commercial service businesses to the City. This should include the continuation of the "up to 50 percent" ad valorem tax abatement for new construction of retail/commercial office/regional entertainment businesses.

Outside of marketing, incentives, and other procedural streamlining measures, the City's best economic development action may be "community development." The age-old axiom, "retail follows rooftops," is also common sense. Sellers need buyers and will tend to set up shop where they are concentrated. Since La Porte's market area is constrained on one side by the bay, and since there is limited area left for residential development, the City should be smart and strategic with regard to its zoning and development decisions so that there remains a sufficient area for higher quality (and in some cases, higher density) residential development.

### Key Planning Considerations

Key planning considerations for continuing the focus on expanding retail and other commercial service business include:

- 1) Analyzing demographic and retail market conditions to determine appropriate market segments for which to provide incentives.
- 2) Expanding the types of incentives and/or procedural streamlining to help attract retail and commercial service businesses.

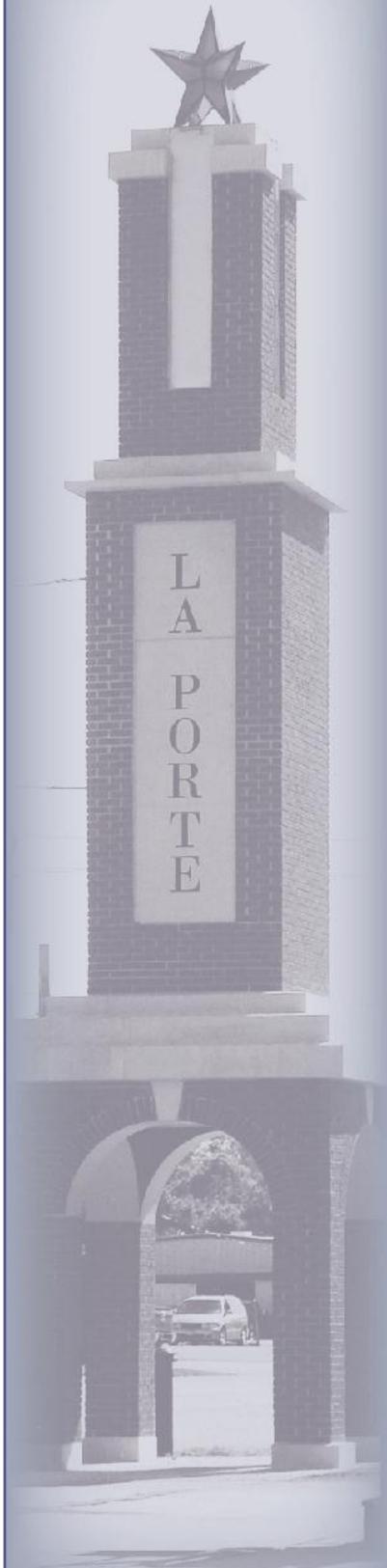
**Goal 5.6: Increase retail and commercial service business opportunities through targeted incentives and streamlined permitting.**

### Actions and Initiatives

- 1) Consider the use of retail sales tax grants<sup>17</sup>, which are tax rebates based upon a percentage of the sales and use tax received by the City from the sale of taxable items. The City may also condition the incentive upon the creation of employment, construction of improvements, certain development, continued operations for a specified period of time, or other public consideration.
- 2) Undertake a retail market analysis to help identify opportunities for future expansion of the City's retail space. The analysis should include a demographic analysis of La Porte's market segments, a sales gap analysis, and an analysis of the City's economic composition and competition. The outcome of this analysis should be to develop a coordinated economic development strategy comprised of four main elements: retail development, tourism, a convention center (consistent with the available space at the soon-to-be-renovated Sylvan Beach Pavilion), and support for industry. Prepare to proactively market La Porte to identified market segments identified in the report.
- 3) Consider non-cash incentives for stimulation of new development/redevelopment of retail and other commercial service businesses, including such things as:
  - a. Fast-track plan review and permitting (as staff work allows);
  - b. Dedicated inspections;
  - c. Corporate relocation assistance for employees and their families;
  - d. Employee recruitment and training, as funded through state grant programs and potentially San Jacinto College;
  - e. Business promotion and assistance; and,
  - f. Assistance with demolition of existing structures for redevelopment and new investment.
- 4) Implement the recommendations identified in *Chapter 2, Land Use and Development* as it relates to housing development. This includes such things as encouraging life-cycle housing options in new developments, incorporating accessory dwelling units in the zoning ordinance, adopting design standards for high-density residential development, establishing average lots size provisions, adding density bonuses, adopting a by-right housing palette, among others, so that there is a sufficient and diverse housing supply (i.e., the rooftops needed to support retail expansion).
- 5) Look for ways to increase dollars available for retail spending. Some of the variables effecting increased retail dollars are number of dwellings (i.e., roof tops), household income, cost of living expenses, and a better understanding of demographics.

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<sup>17</sup> Retail sales tax grants are authorized by Section 380.001 of the Texas Local Government Code.



### Quality of Life Challenge

One challenge facing local governments in their endeavor to accommodate future growth is ensuring an adequate quality of life for area residents and businesses.

Public services such as health, safety, and education, along with amenities such as cultural and recreational opportunities, scenic natural areas and “community character” are becoming increasingly important factors in the economic competition among and within regions.

Investments and public policies aimed at improving quality of life appear to have the potential to yield economic benefits by maintaining or improving the region’s desirability as a place to live and work.

Source: 2009-2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Gulf Coast Economic Development District.

### Attracting Talent

National demographic trends, most notably the aging of the baby boomers, suggest that demand for workers may soon outstrip supply. As a result, competition for labor is expected to increase among companies as well as communities. Focusing on the development, attraction, and retention of talent should, therefore, be an important part of any economic development strategy.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative.

## Focus Area 5 – Continued Commitment to Place-Based Economic Development.

Businesses that do not depend on or need the local and regional infrastructure established for the shipping and container industry (i.e., the ports, state highways, railways and rail yards) will choose to locate (or not choose to locate) in La Porte for a multitude of reasons. Years ago, these decisions were primarily related to location and costs of doing businesses. While these are still extremely important, the business environment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has undergone drastic changes as the national economy is transitioning from being manufacturing-based to service-based. Traditionally, economic development was mostly focused on recruiting businesses to locate in your community. This approach depends heavily on large incentives, such as tax abatements, free land, and reduced costs for infrastructure. While these types of services certainly remain an important part of the overall business/industry attraction process, most organizations stop at this point. Fortunately, these are only the most basic tools in the economic development toolkit.

Nurturing and attracting talent is perhaps the most fundamental issue for creating long-term sustainable economic vitality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Much of this is due to the changing needs of U.S. employers as the economy transitions from manufacturing to services. But this “talent” goal implies more than workforce development and training. It also encompasses the idea of recruiting people.

As denoted in *Chapter 1, Demographic Snapshot*, La Porte’s decreasing rate of population growth signifies that the City will not meet the expectations established by the H-GAC 2035 Forecast due to limited areas remaining for residential development, combined with a relatively low-density pattern of development that currently exists in the City today (and is expected to continue in the future). Further, the *Demographic Snapshot* shows that the City’s younger cohorts (i.e., 40 to 44 years and younger) are decreasing, while the older cohorts (i.e., 45 to 49 years and older) are increasing in size. This will result in an overall aging of La Porte’s population. To maintain a healthy and sustainable workforce, La Porte should focus on attracting and retaining younger workers. (see inset)

The quality of education can enhance a community’s ability to attract and retain a younger demographic, as well as talent, in general. The quality of schools plays a pivotal role in attracting families and employers to an area. The perception of low-quality schools can be a major deterrent to moving to a particular community. As such, a community cannot afford to ignore its public schools. Higher education

also plays a pivotal role. Not only must employers be assured of access to educated and skilled workers, but talented individuals are often drawn to places that offer access to higher education and related amenities. As a result, it is imperative that the City remains supportive of La Porte Independent School District (La Porte ISD) and San Jacinto College to ensure the City remains a more attractive option for new residents and employers.

Increasingly, companies rely on the skills and talent of their workforce to retain or gain a competitive advantage. Only recently have employers discovered that one way to tap into talented workers is by locating operations in communities with a strong sense of place. This is because communities offering a multitude of amenities are the ones attracting many of today's skilled and talented workers. While no set definition for "quality of place" exists, the one common factor is the wide availability of choices in housing, entertainment, culture, recreation, retail, and employment.

In La Porte, the same assets that make it a desirable tourism and recreation destination enhance its quality of place. The historic Main Street, proximity to Sylvan Beach and the bay front, and the recently constructed Citywide trail system are attractive to residents and visitors alike.

For this reason, as the City supports projects to revitalize Main Street, the greater Downtown area, and Sylvan Beach; improve its physical appearance; and expand the number of choices available, marketing these opportunities is of the utmost importance. Increasing the number of visitors to and expanding the population of La Porte is a necessary component of sustaining an enhanced quality of place.

#### **Key Planning Initiatives**

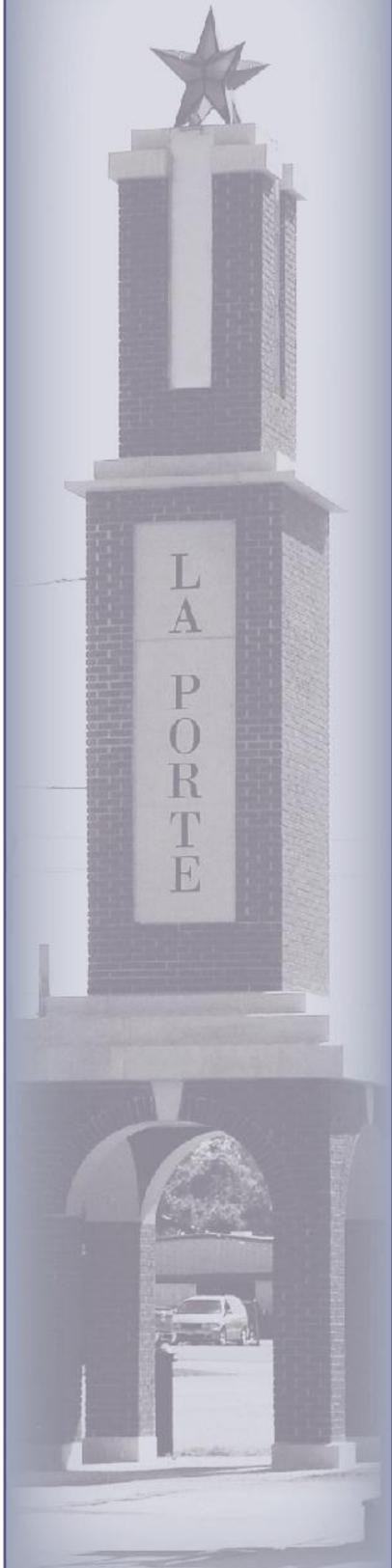
Key planning considerations for continuing to commit to place-based economic development include:

- 1) Strengthening partnerships with San Jacinto College as a means to improve the City's overall economic development conditions.
- 2) Developing a targeted tourism and internal / external marketing strategy.
- 3) Facilitating infrastructure improvements to enhance community livability.

**Goal 5.7: Improving the City's overall economic development conditions by investing in the community and making La Porte an attractive place to live and work.**

#### **Actions and Initiatives**

- 1) Develop collaborative programs with engineering, business, and other similar programs at San Jacinto College to encourage student-led projects that aid in the betterment of the community. Examples of such





programs are design competitions for historic building re-use or parkland design and planning, student consulting projects for area businesses or the City, internship programs with local employers, and community service programs such as Habitat for Humanity or the Keep La Porte Beautiful Program.

- 2) Support the creation of a program designed to retain San Jacinto College graduates and attract alumni. This program should involve the City, San Jacinto College, the Chamber of Commerce, and the La Porte Economic Development Corporation. The program could include scholarships to place graduates with area employers and provide incentives for them to remain in La Porte after graduation. The program should also include a marketing component to establish and maintain communication with San Jacinto College alumni to keep them informed of changes, and the opportunities and benefits of living in La Porte. This can be achieved by publishing a monthly or quarterly e-newsletter to be sent to alumni and other people with ties to La Porte.
- 3) Strengthen the City's relationship with San Jacinto College, as it plays a much wider role in the community as an economic development asset.

The City should explore ways it could partner with the college to help it carry out its goals and mitigate its challenges. In addition, the City should work to enhance San Jacinto College's student experience by encouraging improved pedestrian infrastructure around the college and supporting programs that promote student involvement in the community (see inset). Utilizing representatives from San Jacinto College as a featured speaker at the Main Street Morning Brew is a good beginning point for improving this relationship.

- 4) Develop a coordinated tourism strategy that goes beyond trying to attract visitors to the area, as this is not sufficient. Rather, the tourism strategy should be focused on capturing visitor's dollars by local businesses, so that the full economic benefit can be realized by the City and area businesses. In coordination with area partners (e.g., the La Porte Bay Area Heritage Society), the City should create a tourism plan that focuses on developing tourism "products" that attract visitors, a retail strategy that provides outlets for visitors to spend money, and a marketing plan that effectively targets those groups who are likely to come to La Porte.

- 5) Implement the recommendations identified in *Chapter 2, Land Use and Development* as related to continued investment in Main Street, Sylvan Beach, bayfront, and the Downtown area, including establishing connections between the bayfront and the Downtown area, developing a Downtown master plan, revising regulatory provisions to ensure a strengthened urban character, facilitating additional housing choice (e.g., residential over retail units), and continued pursuit of public/private bayfront development projects.

- 6) Implement the recommendations in *Chapter 2, Land Use*

**Pedestrian Improvements Can Improve the Economic Bottomline for Local Businesses**



In the City of Lodi, California, a series of public-private pedestrian-oriented projects were completed along five street blocks (including widening sidewalks, bulb-out intersections, and other improvements) and were credited for a large economic turnaround. Vacancy rates dropped from 18 to six percent and upon completion, the City saw a 30 percent increase in Downtown sales tax revenue.

Source: Alliance for Biking and Walking.  
Photos Source: LODI.Com

5.22

and Development as related to enhancing the City’s visual character and appearance. Over time, these improvements will increase the City’s overall livability.

- 7) Implement the recommendations in *Chapter 4, Community Mobility* as related to sidewalk and trail improvements.
- 8) Continue to pursue infrastructure and facility improvements on Main Street and at Sylvan Beach. For Main Street, the City should build off of the recent gateway and Five Points Town Plaza improvements to implement other pedestrian improvements along the entire length of Main Street. For Sylvan Beach, the City should build off of the recent beach re-nourishment project and planned renovation of the Sylvan Beach Pavilion to determine other projects that will have a similar economic impact in these areas. These types of “community enhancement” projects can be significant economic development generators for the City (see inset).
- 9) Continue to sponsor festivals and events in Downtown and other parts of the City, including Christmas on Main Street, The La Porte by the Bay Half Marathon, Veteran’s Day concert, and Art Walk (see inset ), among others.
- 10) Promote Main Street as the primary entertainment and retail destination for residents, students, and tourists. Downtowns are typically the lifeblood of a community, where residents, employees, and tourists can be seen walking, shopping, entertaining, and dining. The recent improvements made along Main Street are a good start, but there are still significant improvements to be made.
- 11) Once the Sylvan Beach Pavilion is renovated, utilize its historic status<sup>18</sup> as part of an overall marketing strategy for weddings, dances, and other community events (see inset). Historic preservation activities can also have a significant impact on the City’s economic development and overall livability.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, continued support for implementing the



### Sylvan Beach Pavilion



The Sylvan Beach Pavilion restoration project, like other historic preservation projects, may yield significant economic development benefits for a community. Below are a few of the benefits:

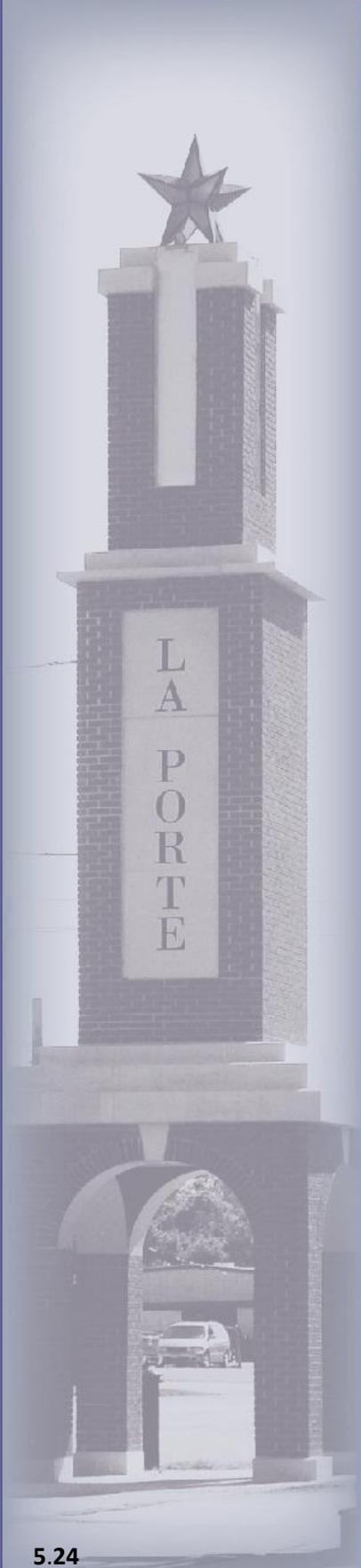
- Historical designations improve property values
- Incentives for historic properties attract reinvestment
- Historic building rehabilitation rebuilds Texas communities
- Preservation of historic properties creates jobs
- Texas’ heritage attracts tourists
- History museums draw tourists and economic vitality to communities
- Revitalization of Texas Main Street cities makes good business sense

Source: Provided by ‘Friends of the Sylvan Beach Park and Pavilion [www.savethepavilion.org](http://www.savethepavilion.org)’

<sup>18</sup> The Sylvan Beach Pavilion is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as well as designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL), and a State Archeological Landmark (SAL). Letter from the Texas Historical Commission. 11/15/11.

<sup>19</sup> The Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University, Texas Perspectives and The LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. Historic Preservation at Work for the Texas Economy. 1999.





- recommendations found in the San Jacinto Historic District Corridor Standards Report can help to bring in tourism dollars.
- 12) Maximize the recent improvements to Seabreeze Park and Sylvan Beach by incorporating the City-owned property into an overall bayfront experience for the citizens of La Porte.
  - 13) Fully implement the economic development internal and external marketing campaign envisioned in the La Porte Economic Development Strategic Plan. La Porte's economic development players should work to build consensus for a primary theme/message to market La Porte that will be shared by all community development, economic development, and tourism-related organizations. As with all successful marketing, it is critical to identify target audiences and to focus efforts on them. The primary target audiences for La Porte should be:
    - a. Local and regional business leaders who can influence business location and other investment decisions;
    - b. Key allies, such as state and regional economic development organizations;
    - c. Members of the region's various media; and,
    - d. Decision-makers at companies within the target industries.

The most important target audience for La Porte should be the people and businesses who are already invested (either financially or emotionally) in the community (e.g., the Main Street Business Alliance). They are also the ones who represent La Porte on a daily basis in their business and personal interactions—both regionally and nationally. A sustained internal marketing campaign should be undertaken to generate and promote a positive image of La Porte. This includes maintaining support for the "Business. By the Bay." quarterly newsletter publication. Making sure that existing residents and local business leaders have a positive image of the community is critical to the success of any external campaign as these are the people who can best tell the La Porte story to the outside world.

La Porte needs to set itself apart from the competition throughout the region. The most effective marketing strategies are those that promote specific initiatives and opportunities. In other words, the various target audiences must be swayed by the message that their interests can be maximized by investing social and economic capital in La Porte.

- 14) To compensate for the closed *The Bayshore Sun* newspaper, the City should continue to pursue additional media opportunities to ensure City residents are kept fully abreast of local government news.

be removed, with the corresponding years advanced one year and a fifth year of programmed actions added. In this way, this table may be used on an ongoing basis and provided to the City Council to keep them apprised of the progress of implementation.

**Table 6.1, Summary Action Plan**

Priority	Primary Action Items	Land Use & Development	Infrastructure & Growth Capacity	Mobility	Economic Development	
		Chapter Reference				
<b>Highest Priority Actions</b> (in order of priority)						
<b>Action Agenda</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Streamlined Permitting Process.</b> Study existing development processes and regulations to determine a plan of action to resolve issues without compromising the integrity of the process or enforcement of established regulations. This also could include such things as fast-track permitting, assistance with demolition of structures, etc..				•
	<b>2</b>	<b>Public Safety Improvements.</b> Continue to support an excellent system of public safety services. In addition, consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>expanding police, fire, and EMS personnel concurrent with population growth;</li> <li>constructing a new animal shelter;</li> <li>establishing a formalized replacement and procurement program for vehicles and major equipment; and,</li> <li>providing adequate funding for training and community education programs.</li> </ul>			•	
	<b>3</b>	<b>Neighborhood Improvement Program.</b> Develop a formalized neighborhood improvement program that ensures the quality of existing neighborhoods are maintained or improved over time. This would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>additional planning (e.g., facilitating the development of neighborhood plans) and technical support;</li> <li>development of a target-area community investment fund;</li> <li>streamlined regulations and processes (focsed to faciliate and incentivize reinvestment); and,</li> <li>development of an advocacy-based code enforcement program.</li> </ul>	•		•	•
	<b>4</b>	<b>Business Retention and Expansion Program.</b> Improve efforts to maintain relationships with existing businesses in order to determine public/private strategies to overcome challenges or facilitate plans of expansion.				•

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Table 6.1, Summary Action Plan – Continued.

Priority	Primary Action Items	Land Use & Development	Infrastructure & Growth Capacity	Mobility	Economic Development
		Chapter Reference			
<b>Highest Priority Actions (continued in order of priority)</b>					
Action Agenda	5	<p><b>Park and Trail System Improvements.</b> Improve the existing quality of existing parks and recreation areas through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adopting and implementing a parks-to-standard program;</li> <li>master planning for all new/revitalized park development;</li> <li>increasing the diversity of amenities;</li> <li>improving accessibility and connectivity;</li> <li>establishing an on-line registration system for programs;</li> <li>adding neighborhood and community parkland in areas of need and concurrent with population growth; and</li> <li>completing the trail system per the City’s Trail Master Plan.</li> </ul>	•	•	•
	6	<p><b>Market Retail Analysis.</b> Undertake a market retail analysis separately or in coordination with an update to the Economic Development Strategic Plan.</p>			•
	7	<p><b>Infrastructure Improvements.</b> Continue to implement the recommendations in the City’s Water Master Plan, Water Conservation Plan, and Drought Contingency Plan. In addition, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>completing the geographic information systems (GIS) utility mapping database;</li> <li>conducting a system-wide condition analysis of all utility infrastructure to determine an appropriate short- and long-term plan of action to repair, rehabilitate, or replace existing utility infrastructure;</li> <li>identifying and eliminating any dead-end water mains; and,</li> <li>studying to identify expanded opportunities for reuse of wastewater.</li> </ul>		•	
	8	<p><b>Unified Development Code / Modification of Regulatory Provisions.</b> Prepare a Unified Development Code (UDC) to ensure an effective transition from comprehensive plan to the implementing regulations. Modified provisions should include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>building placement, design, and materials;</li> <li>parking lot, streetscape, and foundation landscaping;</li> <li>screening, lighting, and buffering;</li> <li>lot design and open space;</li> <li>street and pedestrian connectivity and access management; and,</li> <li>sidewalk design, placement, and amenities.</li> </ul>	•	•	•

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**Table 6.1, Summary Action Plan – Continued.**

Priority	Primary Action Items	Land Use & Development	Infrastructure & Growth Capacity	Mobility	Economic Development
		Chapter Reference			
<b>Highest Priority Actions (continued in order of priority)</b>					
Action Agenda	9	<p><b>Downtown Master Plan.</b> Prepare a master plan for the Downtown area, including Main Street and Sylvan Beach, the connections between, and the transition to adjacent areas. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• setting a clear and collectively supported vision;</li> <li>• determination of implementation framework to guide new/reinvestment; and,</li> <li>• coordinating with previous work completed on marketing and branding.</li> </ul>	•		•
	10	<p><b>Drainage Improvements.</b> Continue to implement the recommendations identified in the Citywide Drainage Study. In addition, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• designing and constructing all future/redeveloped flood control and on-site drainage projects as community enhancements and/or recreational amenities; and,</li> <li>• encouraging vegetative buffers along stream and other drainageways.</li> </ul>			
	11	<p><b>Coordinated Tourism Strategy.</b> Develop a coordinated tourism strategy to focus on capturing visitor’s dollars by local businesses.</p>			•
	12	<p><b>Business Parks.</b> Proactively zone and market areas for higher quality business parks for those areas identified on the <b>Map 2.6, Future Land Use Plan.</b></p>	•		•
	13	<p><b>Business Incubator.</b> Establish a small business incubator site within the City in coordination with San Jacinto College Small Business Development Center (SJC SBDC). Priority consideration should be given to locating the site in Downtown or near San Jacinto College.</p>			•
	14	<p><b>Safe Sidewalks Program.</b> Prepare a safe sidewalks program to identify and correct unsafe and poorly maintained sidewalk segments at key locations throughout the community.</p>			•

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**Table 6.1, Summary Action Plan – Continued.**

Priority	Primary Action Items	Land Use & Development	Infrastructure & Growth Capacity	Mobility	Economic Development
		Chapter Reference			
<b>Highest Priority Actions</b> (continued in order of priority)					
15	<p><b>Increasing Sustainability.</b> Determine a plan of action to improve the City’s sustainability, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reaching the identified per capita water reduction targets;</li> <li>reducing the City’s energy usage;</li> <li>pursuing third-party certification (e.g., LEED-NC®) for design and construction of all new municipal projects;</li> <li>offering tax abatement incentives for private-sector development registered with LEED or other similar sustainable design and construction programs;</li> <li>utilizing drought resistant landscaping for public improvement projects and providing incentives for private sector projects; and,</li> <li>establishing community drop-off recycling locations in each park in the short-term and curbside recycling in the long-term.</li> </ul>	•	•		•
	<p><b>Strategic Corridors Program.</b> Develop a strategic corridors program to direct aesthetic and infrastructure improvements for those corridors identified on <i>Map 2.2, Beautification Plan</i>.</p>	•		•	
<b>Mid- to Long-Term Priority Actions</b> (requires further prioritization in subsequent years)					
16	<p><b>Community Enhancement.</b> Partner with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the county to enhance the appearance of existing corridors, gateways, interchanges, and bridges, as depicted on <i>Map 2.2, Beautification Plan</i>. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strengthening ordinance 1501-II;</li> <li>developing corridor enhancement plans for the primary and secondary corridors identified on <i>Map 2.2, Beautification Plan</i>;</li> <li>partnering with area partners to determine other strategies for visual improvement of the corridors; and,</li> <li>implementing a comprehensive wayfinding program.</li> </ul>	•		•	•
	<p><b>Scenic Texas Certification.</b> Continue to make necessary improvements to achieve certification through the Scenic City Certification Program sponsored by Scenic Texas.</p>	•			

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**Table 6.1, Summary Action Plan – Continued.**

Priority	Primary Action Items	Land Use & Development	Infrastructure & Growth Capacity	Mobility	Economic Development
		Chapter Reference			
<b>Mid- to Long-Term Priority Actions</b> (requires further prioritization in subsequent years)					
Action Agenda	<p><b>Revitalization Program.</b> Develop a comprehensive revitalization program for those areas identified on <b>Map 2.1, Rehabilitation Target Areas</b>. This program should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a detailed public participation process;</li> <li>• the development of revitalization plans; and,</li> <li>• updates to the City’s development ordinance and processes to remove regular impediments to infill development, redevelopment, and revitalization.</li> </ul>	•			•
	<p><b>Existing Street Connectivity Improvements.</b> Work with public and private stakeholders to determine a plan of action and funding source to develop the additional connections on existing streets as identified on <b>Map 4.1, Thoroughfare Plan</b>.</p>			•	
	<p><b>Signal Warrant Studies.</b> Conduct signal warrant studies to determine if signals are warranted at the terminus of roads traversing and bounding the Lomax Area and along Fairmont Parkway and Spencer Highway.</p>			•	
	<p><b>Access Management Studies.</b> Conduct access management studies along corridors of concern to identify and evaluate Transportation System Management (TSM) measures to enhance the capacity of the existing street system.</p>			•	
	<p><b>Complete Streets Policy.</b> Adopt a Complete Streets policy and commit to implementing it during all new development/redevelopment projects.</p>			•	
	<p><b>Expand Mass Transit Availability.</b> Coordinate with area partners to determine the feasibility of additional bus stops and routes to facilitate increased ridership over time.</p>			•	
	<p><b>Improved Mass Transit Quality.</b> Improve the quality of each dedicated bus stop located within the City (e.g., installation of all-weather shelters, benches, ADA accessibility, online transit arrival information, etc.).</p>			•	
	<p><b>Summer Youth Pass Program.</b> Coordinate with the Harris County Office of Transit Services (and other partners) to implement a Summer Youth Pass Program for high school-aged children to have unlimited access during the summer.</p>			•	

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative.

**Table 6.1, Summary Action Plan – Continued.**

Priority	Primary Action Items	Land Use & Development	Infrastructure & Growth Capacity	Mobility	Economic Development
		Chapter Reference			
<b>Mid- to Long-Term Priority Actions</b> (requires further prioritization in subsequent years)					
Action Agenda	<p><b>Airport Master Plan.</b> Update the Airport Master Plan which should include an:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an operations plan;</li> <li>• updated facilities and development plan;</li> <li>• economic development strategy; and,</li> <li>• overall site and landscape improvement plan.</li> </ul>			•	
	<p><b>Facilitate Industry Clusters.</b> Assess local conditions to determine favorable conditions for identified industry clusters. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying appropriate clusters; and,</li> <li>• conducting surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions.</li> </ul>				•
	<p><b>Logistics Park.</b> Facilitate discussion with the Union Pacific Railroad (and others) to develop a special logistics park in the vacant area bounded by State Highway (S.H.) 225 and S.H. 146 and adjacent to the existing rail line. This could include the creation of a general-purpose Foreign Trade Zone and development of special rail sidings into the proposed park.</p>			•	•

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative.

### 6.5 Plan Amendment

This plan must remain flexible and allow for adjustment to change over time. Shifts in political, economic, physical, and social conditions and other unforeseen circumstances will influence the priorities of the community. As growth continues, new issues will emerge, while others may no longer be relevant. Some action statements may become less practical, while other plausible solutions will arise. To ensure that it continues to reflect the vision and remains relevant and viable over time, the plan must be revisited on a routine basis, with regular amendments and warranted updates.

Revisions to the plan are two-fold: minor plan amendments should occur bi-annually and more significant updates handled every five years. Minor amendments may include revisions to the future land use, beautification, or thoroughfare plan as the development/redevelopment pattern unfolds and enhancement

#### Plan Amendments

##### Minor Amendment

Similar to what occurred in 2005, City Staff should under take another minor update revision sometime around 2015-2016.

##### Major Amendment

By 2020-2021, the City should undertake a complete rewrite of this plan.