

## Corsicana Strategic Plan - 2017 through 2020

It is the belief of the Economic Development Partnership sub-committee that there should be four major areas of focus in the Strategic Plan as follows:

- Job Growth & Creation
- Branding/Communication
- Workforce Development
- Quality of Life

### Job Growth & Creation

**Goal:** Grow Corsicana jobs and capital investment in target markets; provide a competitive atmosphere for business attraction and expansion.

**a. Attract New and Expand Existing Businesses:**

1. Regularly visit all major local businesses (100+ employees) and determine what they require for growth. (continually in process: ED Department)
2. Regularly canvass existing building inventory and 3<sup>rd</sup> party owned shovel-ready sites with completed utilities to provide users with available space or land on which to build. (continually in process: ED Department)
3. Incentivize expansions, not just relocations: provide competitive incentive programs, including low cost sites or land grants, tax abatement and/or other incentives for expansion and attraction projects. (in process: City/County)
4. Introduce additional changes to place Corsicana firmly among its regional competitors with regard to available properties, business climate and taxation, workforce skills and availability, as well as incentives.
  - a. Fully develop Corsicana's I-45 and Corsicana RailPort industrial parks and provide shovel-ready sites (including city water, city sewer, industrial gas and electric service, fiber) on which to locate industrial user facilities. (in process: City/County)
  - b. Develop speculative, flexible shell buildings in which to accommodate industrial users with immediate location requirements. (ED researching)
  - c. Join Ellis County's Foreign Trade Zone to allow marketing to businesses importing foreign products that require inventory tax deferral (freeport exemptions). (in process: ED Department)
  - d. Leverage state and federal economic development resources available: Texas Enterprise Fund, Enterprise Zone, Skills Development Fund, Texas Capital

Fund grants, New Market Tax Credit program, EDA grants, etc. (in process: ED Department)

- e. Develop customized workforce training programs and trade certifications in our high school and college to employ our youth in local industry upon graduation, and provide future and existing employers a skilled talent pool from which to constantly recruit. (in process: ED Department, Navarro College, SBDC)
- f. Complete a feasibility study and use future bond financing to develop service roads on both sides of I-45 from TX-31 to US287 to complete Corsicana's Interstate commercial corridor, add substantial commercial frontage business opportunities and capitalize on City-owned property there.
- g. Complete a feasibility study to develop a future intermodal facility and logistics park between the rail lines in the county where available, affordable land exists; explore cost, funding and acquisition.
- h. Develop attractive "gateways" or entrance corridors into downtown on Business 45, TX-31 and US287; enhance the "Corsicana Experience".
- i. Plan and expand city, power, gas and fiber utility availability to industrial parks and sites along the new TX-31 Relief Route south of town to open up new commercial and residential development corridors.
- j. Develop a high-speed fiber optic network, beginning downtown and in primary commercial development areas, and then expand service to the entire city.

**b. New Business Attraction:**

- 1. Continually develop/refine target markets to focus business attraction efforts toward: (in process: ED Department, City/County)
  - a. Small to medium-sized manufacturing
  - b. Advanced manufacturing/robotics
  - c. Logistics/distribution/warehouse
  - d. Retail/restaurant (fill retail gaps/leakage and increase fast casual dining options)
- 2. Develop cluster strategies for existing industries; focus a portion of recruiting efforts on businesses that will enhance, sell to, buy from, or provide services to existing Corsicana industry. (in process: ED Department)
- 3. Attract additional targeted industries; increase business development budget to allow prospecting and the travel costs involved (or outsource lead generation and business development to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties); ED Team should attend 3 target industry trade shows annually (see targets above). (item 1 in process: ED Department)

4. Establish policies and ROI requirements to sell, discount or grant sites in exchange for specific levels of job creation and capital investment.
5. Leverage state and federal economic development resources available (Texas Enterprise Fund, Enterprise Zone, Skills Development Fund, Texas Capital Fund grants, New Market Tax Credit program, EDA grants, etc.). (in process: ED Department)
6. Close on two small business (under 500 job) relocation or expansion projects annually. (in process: ED Department)

**c. Promote Entrepreneurship:**

1. Pair entrepreneurs with SBDC, SBA and other available resources. (in process: ED Department)
2. Repurpose or create a new entity to offer inexpensive incubator space to small business startups to ensure their success; buy or lease a suitable structure or repurpose an existing owned building and develop a small business incubator with shared services/planning/marketing/financial support and provide sufficient access to capital for startup and expansion.
3. Revitalize, repurpose and recommission the Corsicana Industrial Foundation to acquire investor/foundation funding, construct spec buildings for sale or lease, or provide assistance and some form of incentives for industrial users.
4. Coordinate with Navarro College to create entrepreneurship programs to provide education and training on starting a new business and making an existing business more profitable.

## **Branding/Communication**

**Goal:** Position Corsicana as a favorable tourism, residential & business destination.

1. Rebrand Corsicana:
  - a. Create new slogan – e.g., “Corsicana...the can-do city”.
  - b. City departments to use single branding for all city events, initiatives, etc. to create a sense of community pride.
  - c. Encourage other community organizations to incorporate the community branding into their marketing and event promotions.
2. Aggressively market and promote Corsicana as a destination for new investment and employment:
  - a. Spread the word by mouth and media. (in process: ED Department, City)
  - b. Correct recent reported population decline by amending current NTCOG population estimate methodology; this important demographic data is derived by using the number of new housing starts less the number of demolitions reported by the City, multiplied by the average statewide number of

- households per family (2.5) to achieve an estimated number for new residents for years between census tracts (every 10 years). **(completed: ED Department)**
3. Engage emerging leaders in economic development and civic affairs and promote community pride:
    - a. Create and mobilize a Young Professionals Organization (YPO/CORE) at the Corsicana/Navarro Chamber and encourage/empower young leadership potential. **(in process: Chamber of Commerce)**
    - b. Promote young leader participation in various civic boards, P&Z, City Council, County Commissioners, Landmark Committee, etc.; involve these young leaders in strategic planning aspects of government and economic development.
  
  4. Launch a communitywide public awareness campaign designed to encourage residents to become ambassadors for Corsicana's success and promote community pride; increase communication and awareness between government entities, economic development partners and the public.
    - a. City to hire a PR/communication manager to disseminate information and update social media outlets about upcoming events, programs, opportunities, new businesses, and news. **(in process: City)**
    - b. Use social media as a primary tool to inform the public; create regular online blogs and newsletters; hire SEO marketing firm to enhance Corsicana's online presence and push forward positive stories; utilize printed and signage media as needed to assist message delivery.
    - c. Invite resident and stakeholder feedback and answer informational requests in short timeframes.
    - d. Form public relations consortium with local industry and government marketing/publicity representatives (County, City, Chamber, hospital, college, CISD, Mayor's Partnership, Corsicana My Hometown, other?) to meet regularly and share/publicize community information. **(in process: ED Department, City/County)**
    - e. Communicate strategic planning initiatives for the City, County, Chamber, Economic Development Department and Committees, and other involved entities, and develop a set of common strategic goals and initiatives, as well as metrics for measuring success, a regular performance review process and periodic strategic updates to the strategic plan (every 3 years recommended). **(in process: ED Department, City/County)**

## Workforce Development

**Goal:** Create an environment for employees to be trained and ready for local employment through traditional education, vocational training and workforce training.

1. Strengthen the City and County's Economic Business Retention and Expansion Programs by making businesses aware of workforce training opportunities and funding resources. (in process: ED Department, Navarro College)
2. Organize a quarterly meeting of private sector employers and education providers, such as local high schools, Navarro College, Navarro SBDC, and Texas Workforce Commission, to communicate workforce skills shortages pervasive in existing industries and identify workforce training curriculum requirements.
3. Identify specific technical and career educational programs that the local ISDs and Navarro College can collaborate on to expand jobs in Corsicana.
4. Provide a competitive atmosphere for attracting new businesses by developing workforce training opportunities to provide customized training programs. (in process: ED Department, Navarro College, SBDC)
5. Coordinate with local high schools, Navarro College, Navarro SBDC, and Texas Workforce Commission to identify targeted markets and clusters to provide corporate and continuing education training opportunities in hard and soft skills for both industry and the potential workforce.
6. Coordinate with Navarro College and Workforce Solutions to help local existing businesses obtain Skills Training Grants to achieve required skill levels.
7. Coordinate with Navarro College to provide Spanish language training, English as a Second Language (ESL) training or English Language Institute (ELI) courses to local businesses.

## Quality of Life

**Goal:** Corsicana should promote, invest in and market quality of life improvements:

1. Housing:
  - a. Attract/ incentivize development of new, affordable units:
    - i. Promote available single- and multi-family residential land tracts, the 2017 Housing Study, known commute patterns, and data citing current high housing demand, to DFW and other metro area builders/developers to create interest and attract them to develop in Corsicana. (in process: ED Department, City/County/CISD/Navarro College)
    - ii. Confirm availability of capital and cost for interim/permanent loans with local lenders; seek out outside sources of capital if local lender limitations are discovered; enlist assistance in grant and financing

- acquisition for interested developers, lessees and buyers and market these programs: FHA/VA financing, USDA Rural Development Mortgage Guarantee, HARP, IRRRL, HOME, LIHTC.
- iii. Promote residential property development on Corsicana's 2 future lakefront developments (Halbert & Magnolia), and its golf courses.
  - iv. Develop residential incentives to provide assistance for housing infrastructure development and building/renovation programs.
  - v. Catalog other shovel-ready privately owned residential development sites/lots and market to industries through brokers, MLS, Xceligent and other means.
- b. Encourage infill development:
    - i. City, County, CISD, and College District should agree and approve a plan to grant foreclosed tax trust lots co-owned by taxing entities to builders, developers and individuals in return for constructing new, affordable residential housing for sale or for lease within a specified time frame; returns non-performing assets back to performing status in the least time possible; initiate aggressive foreclosure process for additional lots into the tax trust. **(plan completed, disposition in process)**
    - ii. Habitat for Humanity program expansion: build as many as can be afforded and sold annually.
  - c. Expand senior assisted/unassisted living housing opportunities.
  - d. Research and recruit multi-family development:
    - i. Study and promote new and more dense residential strategies, including zoning changes and special use permits were applicable; pursue alternative construction strategies like zero lot, townhome, condo, lofts, tiny homes, modular, containerized housing, etc. **(in process: ED Department, City)**
  - e. Update City Master Plan: **(in process: City)**
    - i. Create a Carriage Historical District overlay along 3rd and 4th Avenues, between 15th Street and 31st to preserve the historical atmosphere and appearance of the neighborhood, as a whole.
    - ii. Acquire ROW, plan, fund and create thoroughfares to move traffic through and around the city more efficiently:
      - A route from 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> Street intersection to Business 45 is needed to facilitate access and lessen traffic on 7<sup>th</sup> Ave./SH31.
      - A north relief route will be necessary to allow southbound heavy truck traffic on I-45 to circumvent SH31 through downtown.
      - Plan future ETJ annexation and zoning/uses for property close to the City Limits; analyze existing zoning and highest and best uses.
  - f. Increase access to capital for commercial and residential development:

- i. Survey local lenders to determine scope and depth of capital resources available in the local market.
  - ii. Recruit additional market rate and discount capital sources to insure demand does not outstrip supply.
  - iii. Develop a microloan program (\$5,000-\$10,000) with sufficient funding to provide startup capital for 5 new businesses annually.
  - iv. Train local lenders in SBA lending programs.
2. Downtown:
- a. Continue to clean up and develop Downtown District and make more appealing to businesses and patrons:
    - i. Regulate window screening/boarding of vacancies and storage uses; promote window art displays, advertising for other downtown businesses, etc.; remove boarded up windows and replace glass; enforce. **(in process: City)**
    - ii. Enhance enforcement of existing ordinances regarding screening, outside storage, mowing, debris and junk.
    - iii. Rehabilitate major downtown buildings (State National Bank, Bank of America, Dyer's, etc.).
    - iv. Pass additional screening and maintenance ordinances; enforce.
    - v. Expand façade and economic incentive programs; enforce downtown façade improvement and stop further deterioration.
    - vi. Continue bronze statue erection projects. **(in process: City and other groups)**
    - vii. Expand/repaint/tune piano art exhibits.
    - viii. Continue ADA corner ramp access projects. **(in process: City)**
    - ix. Develop mural competition and paint Beaton Market Pocket Park; expand to other private property owners with written consent easements.
    - x. Complete "Historic Downtown" gateway signage on S. Beaton and develop other gateway and commercial location signage. **(Beaton completed: City)**
    - xi. Replace uniform street signage and expand attraction signage.
    - xii. Standardize window graphics allowed by ordinance; install period street lighting.
    - xiii. Recruit more and diverse restaurants, entertainment, and nightlife venues for downtown. **(in process: ED Department, City)**
    - xiv. Add parking for downtown residents and businesses.
    - xv. Develop a Dog Park and other green spaces. **(in process: City)**
    - xvi. Expand downtown overlay district north and south.

- b. Develop walking thoroughfares via a “Make Corsicana Walkable Campaign”.
  - c. Continue to promote activities via the Main Street Committee, Parks and Recs, etc. (in process: City)
  - d. Develop bike lanes downtown and through town.
3. Leisure Activities & Cultural Opportunities:
- a. Encourage the development of more fast casual, “sit down” and family style restaurants; encourage the development of more diverse, ethnic restaurants and menus. (in process: ED Department)
  - b. Develop a downtown food truck court and/or main gathering/event venue.
  - c. Relocate the Farmer’s Market closer downtown, and expand its goods and hours of operation.
  - d. Encourage the development of more, diverse after 5pm entertainment, live music venues, etc. (in process: ED Department, City)
  - e. Coordinate with Navarro College to provide more community education courses.
4. Connectivity:
- a. Ensure new developments, local eateries and business have access to high speed internet.
  - b. Provide access to wireless hotspots downtown and throughout the community. (in process: City)
  - c. Encourage existing service providers to invest in additional infrastructure to upgrade current access to higher speeds.
5. Transportation:
- a. Research and fund public transportation (bus/trolley?) from key locations throughout town, i.e., Navarro College to downtown or downtown to the hospital, possibly from DFW to Corsicana someday.
  - b. Develop a comprehensive long range transportation plan.
  - c. Investigate alternatives to public transportation: cabs, Uber, Lyft, Car2Go, Zipcar. (in process: City)
  - d. Develop urban bicycle lanes and loop parks system with hiking/jogging/bike trails.

**BECOME INVOLVED IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TODAY!**