

SECTION 5 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

INTRODUCTION

This section of the Economic Development Plan (NEDP) identifies the goals, objectives, and municipal policies aimed at economic development. All of these items are based on the preceding SWOT analysis. This section sets the stage for the specific action agenda items that follow in the Section 6. The Plan's economic development approach is centered on two fundamental objectives: First, what actions can be taken to improve job opportunities. Second, what actions can be taken to optimize the assets of the City and improve the quality of life for the citizens of Navasota.

VISION STATEMENT

"The City will aggressively pursue the creation of a stable and healthy economy that supports the needs its citizens, while also endeavoring to retain Navasota's village atmosphere and priceless sense of place."

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Continue to promote a well-planned and beneficial industrial park south of Navasota.

Objective: Acquire new land to the west of the existing industrial park for future industrial sites.

Objective: Extend any western development of the industrial park to abut the Navasota Airport to take advantage of potential expansion of this facility.

Objective: Continue to seek potential industries that would benefit from Navasota's railroad and transit facilities.

Goal 2: Develop a research and development (R&D) park to complement the existing industrial park.

Objective: Acquire land for the development of a research and development park to the east of the existing industrial development.

Objective: Encourage development of this park as an attractive gateway into both the city and existing industrial facilities.

Objective: Recruit new businesses that would locate their manufacturing component within the industrial park, but additionally provide for administrative and management facilities within the R&D Park.

Objective: Execute a recruiting campaign to attract the administrative and maintenance facilities of existing companies within Navasota and other cities within the region.

Objective: Collaborate with the Research Valley Partnership and participate in efforts to create a signature identity that can be marketed by the City.

Goal 3: Take advantage of Navasota's geographic location to promote new industries within the city.

Objective: Seek to recruit the administrative and management functions of manufacturing businesses located in the Houston and College Station/Bryan areas.

Objective: Continue to seek niche-manufacturing components of regional manufacturing businesses.

Objective: Utilize the available employment base provided by the University and nearby colleges to supplement underrepresented skills within the existing Navasota workforce.

Goal 4: Encourage new urban development and historic building renovation within the Downtown to aid in business recruitment and to provide an increased sales tax base.

Objective: The City should take the lead in the revitalization of vacant, underutilized, or distressed urban fabric.

Objective: Enhance gateways, streetscapes, and building façades to give Navasota a better urban image and to inspire confidence in potential business investors

Objective: When legally possible, provide for redevelopment incentives within the Downtown to increase Navasota's tax base.

Objective: Seek potential employers and sectors traditionally found in urban downtowns such as small high-tech firms (information/web hosting, consulting, etc.).

Objective: Recruit rail dependent manufacturing and warehousing uses for vacant land within into the south of downtown's road frontage.

Objective: Create an "Artisan's Row" along stretches of the Downtown with underutilized or vacant historic buildings.

Objective: The City should sponsor a business incubator to support entrepreneurs and encourage new development.

Goal 5: Encourage preservation and redevelopment along the Washington Avenue corridor, and new development along the Texas State Highway 6 corridor.

Objective: Capitalize on potential sales tax revenue in the heritage tourism field, such as bed and breakfasts, special hospitality venues including microbreweries and/or wineries and specialty restaurants.

Objective: Restructure land use controls in designated areas to encourage mixed-use areas that will support specialty shops, galleries, artisan's studios, craft shops, and small niche restaurants.

Goal 6: Encourage the creation and expansion of locally owned businesses in Navasota.

Objective: Promote local business development through training and financial incentives.

Objective: Create an atmosphere that synergizes the relationship between local business expansion, vocational training and the City of Navasota’s historic restoration activities.

Goal 7: Create City support for the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to fulfill the goals of this plan.

Objective: Employ a Planning & Economic Development Director or a full time staff position to represent the Economic Development Corporation.

Objective: Produce an Annual Report that highlights the economic development successes and failures of the past year. Use this report as a basis for establishing benchmarks to determine economic development progress.

Goal 8: Develop a tourism-oriented project in the north portion of the city as a public/private project.

Objective: Construct an RV Park to serve short and long-term tourism.

Objective: Create a regional trade grounds site that would serve as a venue for tourism and the sale of medium to high-end arts and crafts, handmade products, and general merchandise.

Objective: Investigate the feasibility of other tourism related projects in the immediate area including an arboretum and amphitheater.

Objective: Determine the applicability of Tax Increment Financing to construct the necessary roads, utilities and public spaces.

Goal 9: Provide educational opportunities for residents to help them prepare for good jobs.

Objective: Redouble efforts on vocational education and job training programs to assist local residents in finding useful well-paid jobs.

Objective: Conduct an annual survey of businesses and industries to determine skill set requirements that need to be addressed.

Goal 10: Encourage a diversity of housing to meet the needs of citizens as well as a means of marketing Navasota.

Objective: Support efforts to create high-end housing for business executives and others.

Objective: Support efforts to expand moderate-income housing.

Objective: Support efforts to create assisted living facilities, apartments, and homes that are aimed at retirees and the elderly.

AVAILABLE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

There are essentially five sources of funding for the actions advocated in this document. They are:

- Individual property owners or other private sector sources
- Local financial institutions
- The City of Navasota
- State of Texas programs
- U.S. Government programs

Local financial institutions include the banks in Navasota as well as the financial institutions located in College Station/Bryan and other regional cities. Many of these institutions offer small business loans.

Table 5.1: Potential Economic Incentives

Type of Incentive	Description	Status
Tax Abatement	Tax relief through either a direct reduction in taxes or through a freeze on the current tax rate for an extended period	Not Currently Used
Economic Development Sales Tax	A lowered sales tax that is place on goods provided by a company promoting economic development to lower the cost of the items and increase sales	Currently Being Used
Permit Waivers	Municipal government waives permit fees for infrastructure installation and service costs	Not Currently Used
Grants Programs	Monetary or physical (land, structures, etc.) gifts that are provided to businesses without an expectation of repayment	Not Currently Used
Freeport Exemptions	Tax exemptions that are kept on business goods kept in inventory until a specified shipping date	Not Currently Used
Workforce Training	Educational programs offered at no cost to businesses and industries to improve workforce capabilities	Not Currently Used
Texas Industrial Revenue Bonds	Tax-exempt financing for eligible industrial and manufacturing companies enabling them to purchase land and depreciate property	Currently Being Used
Texas Capital Access Fund	A program that helps businesses and non-profit organizations who are not normally eligible for capital financing	Currently Being Used
Texas Linked Deposit Program	A program that encourages lenders to provide capital financing in Enterprise Zones to historically underutilized businesses	Currently Being Used
USDA Business and Industry Loans	Loans made available from the United States Department of Agriculture	Currently Being Used
William Albert Miller Industrial Park	An industrial park that offers companies incentives such as reduced utility charges	Currently Being Used

The City of Navasota does not presently offer financial support for new or existing businesses. However, it is strongly recommended that the City play a much more aggressive role in offering both direct and indirect financial support for economic development purposes. This support could include direct loans, or could manifest

itself with other forms of support such as urban redevelopment activities, use of public facilities for business incubation purposes, city sponsored workforce training, and municipal policies that nurture and encourage job growth and community improvement.

Table 5.1 on the preceding page lists incentives that could be provided to encourage and support economic development activities.

The following list of Internet citations includes agencies of state and local government that are aimed at economic development and quality of life enhancement:

- Economic Development Administration
Offers several grant funding for economic purposes
<http://www.eda.gov/>
- Capital Access Fund
Loan program for businesses with fewer than 500 employees
<http://www.txed.state.tx.us/TexasCapitalAccess/>
- Linked Deposit Fund
Lower interest rate loan program for qualified businesses
<http://www.txed.state.tx.us/TexasLinkedDeposit/>
- Leverage Fund
Loans to cities that have the economic development sales tax
<http://www.txed.state.tx.us/TexasLeverageFund/>
- Industrial Revenue Bonds
Tax-exempt financing to businesses for land and depreciable property
<http://www.txed.state.tx.us/TexasIRBProgram/>
- Enterprise Zone Program
Encouraging job creation and capital investment by providing tax incentives to businesses in economically distressed areas
<http://www.txed.state.tx.us/TexasEnterpriseZone/>
- Defense Zone Program
Tax incentives for businesses located in adversely impacted defense-dependent communities
<http://www.tded.state.tx.us/defense/defgrant/defenseradjzone.htm>
- Other Funding Opportunities
[State Grants Team website](#)