

SECTION 7 - EVALUATION

PURPOSE

A fair and balanced annual evaluation of the implementation of this plan is critical for determining its success or failure. The practice of annual evaluation is imperative for ensuring that economic development practices and policies are consistent with the goals and objectives of the NEDP. As planning is a continuous process, the completion of the NEDP is by no means an end in itself. The Plan must be continuously scrutinized to ensure that its goals, objectives, and recommended actions continue to reflect changing market shifts, community needs, attitudes, and desires.

MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

The Navasota Economic Development Corporation meets on a monthly basis, and is currently composed of volunteer citizens appointed by the Navasota City Council. It is strongly recommended that the Corporation continue to serve as the driving force and the primary source of leadership for Navasota's economic development. It should be noted, however, that the City has never created a full-time Economic Development Director position to assist the Corporation in its efforts. It is strongly recommended that the City employ a full-time combined urban planning and economic development specialist to act as the point of contact for all development within Navasota. This individual could serve as a liaison between municipal government and the business community and could provide support services for the business and development community. The Director of Planning and Economic Development could be responsible for coordinating and implementing the NEDP, as well as serving in the lead role to pursue financial resources needed to assist and attract businesses to Navasota.

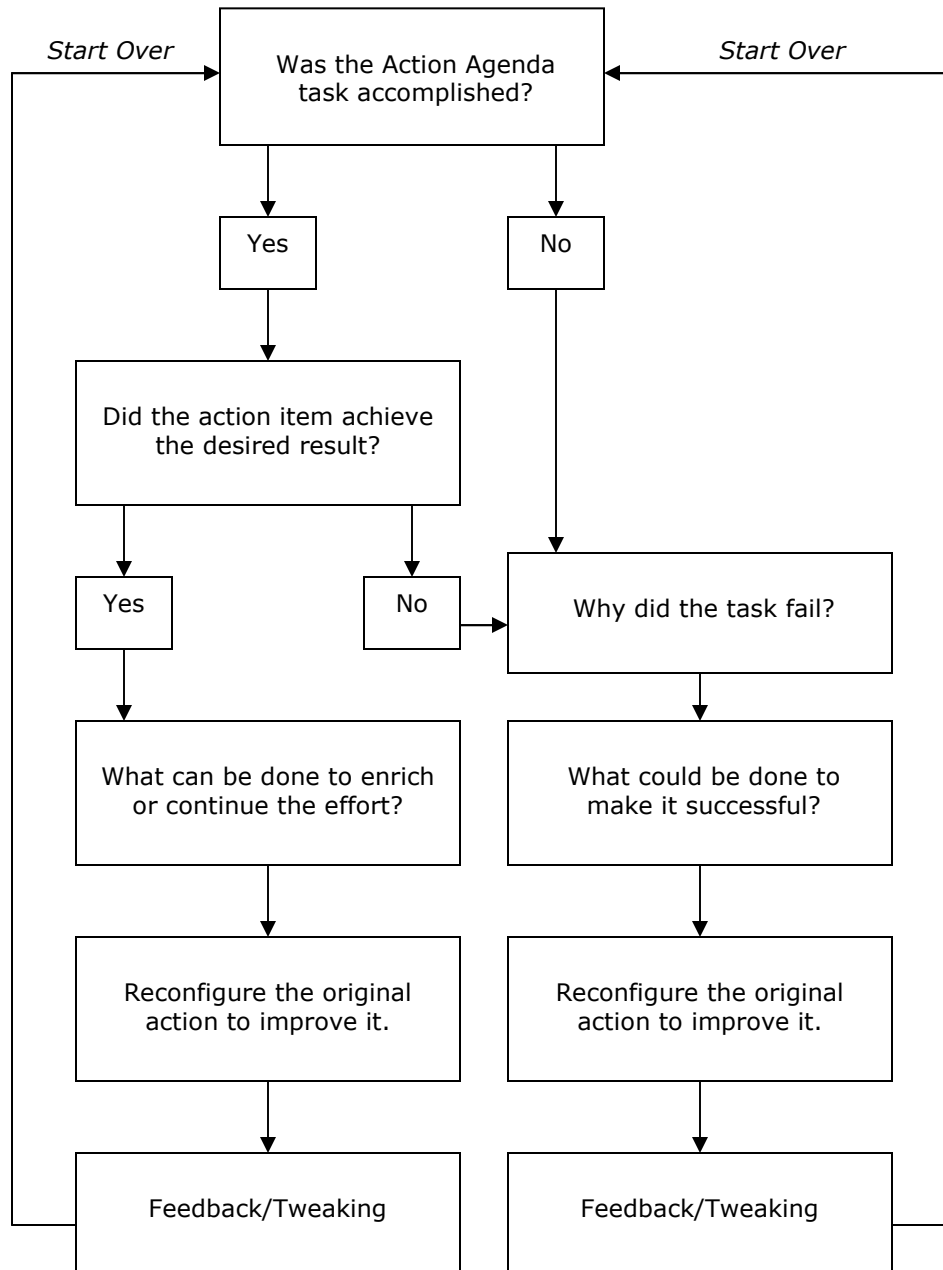
The basic annual tasks for each year have been provided in the previous implementation section. However, in terms of management, a more detailed approach could be useful for implementation. It is recommended that the

person(s) tasked with implementing the economic development plan create a more specific and detailed schedule to address each of the yearly action agenda items. For example, this could be structured so that three of the four agenda items in year one are completed in the first quarter of the fiscal year, freeing up additional time to recruit new businesses and deal with any new objectives that may arise. In addition, setting out the methods to be used in completing the action agenda items before beginning to pursue them could also prove very useful. In general, laying out a more detailed sequence of how and when these actions will occur is more likely to lead to a successfully implemented plan.

It is important to remember that like urban planning, economic development is a process. The diagram on the following page illustrates this process. Monitoring the success of the plan can be achieved in several different ways. Success or failure in the implementation of the proposed Action Agenda will constitute a good indicator of the City's progress. The collection and analysis of key data is essential to determine the City's success. To this end, it is strongly recommended that the Economic Development Corporation produce an Annual Report that can both stand alone as an informational document and as a part of a general annual report for all aspects of city development. Some of the key statistics that could be aggregated and monitored by the Corporation include the following:

- Number of Action Agenda tasks achieved
- New businesses created
- Business failures
- Employment growth or decline
- Number of business loan applications
- Tourism levels
- New home starts
- Property tax valuation
- Sales tax increases or declines
- Number of vacant infill sites developed

Figure 7.1: NEDP Implementation Process



The creation and maintenance of an Annual Report will give Navasota benchmarks to determine if the City is progressing or regressing in achieving the goals and objectives contained in the NEDP.

CONCLUSION

The City of Navasota exists today as a small municipality with great potential. Citizens have repeatedly commented on their pride in the cohesiveness of their community and the spirit of place so obvious to all who live and work there. This sense of community is Navasota’s greatest asset. It is a treasure to be guarded. Once lost, it will be very difficult to rebuild. With the appropriate vision, fortitude in executing its goals, and critical evaluation of its progress, the City will both advance its economic standing and improve its quality of life for its citizens today and for future generations to come. Navasota will indeed be “the small town where everyone wants to live.”