



2015 - 2022
La Marque, Texas
Strategic Economic and Community Development Plan
Executive Summary

The City Council of La Marque in cooperation with the La Marque Economic Development Corporation embarked on an open and honest assessment of their city's assets and liabilities with a desire to establish a roadmap to a stronger, more prosperous future. This process engaged over 100 local citizens in a series of interviews and focus groups culminating in a planning charrette clarifying the city's critical issues and agreeing on a series of priority goals. Participants throughout the process universally expressed their commitment to invest their time individually and collectively in accomplishing the agreed upon goals leading to a brighter future for La Marque and its citizens and organizations.

The following is a summary of the critical issues and associated goals identified through this process presented in priority order.

Critical Issues

- **Critical Issue 1: Blight Reduction**
- **Critical Issue 2: The Future of the La Marque Independent School District (LMISD) and quality public education opportunities in La Marque**
- **Critical Issue 3: Infrastructure Needs**
- **Critical Issue 4: Community Image**
- **Critical Issue 5: Economic Development**
- **Critical Issue 6: City's Human Resources**
- **Critical Issue 7: Communication**
- **Critical Issue 8: Youth Engagement**
- **Critical Issue 9: Volunteer Engagement and Development**
- **Critical Issue 10: Quality of Life Issues**
- **Critical Issue 11: New Leadership Development Efforts**
- **Critical Issue 12: Residential Plan**

Community Goals

1. Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Plan
2. Blight Reduction
3. Update and Enforce Code of Ordinances
4. Interstate 45 Plan
5. Communication Plan
6. Water/Sewer/Road Annual \$1 Million Investment
7. Community Center Plan
8. Consolidation of LMISD into TCISD
9. Blight Reduction Plan
10. Grocery Store Plan
11. Expanded Tax Base Strategy
12. Economic Development Plan (9 votes)
13. Compensation Improvement Plan (9 votes)
14. Expanded Youth Recreation Program (7 votes)
15. Lemonade Day Plan (6 votes)

The following provides a prioritized listing of the agreed upon community goals.

Priority 1: Infrastructure Improvement Plan

Goal I. A.

- Develop and approve by City Council a five year prioritized listing of infrastructure repair, replacement and expansion priorities of not less than \$1 million per year by December 31, 2015.
- This plan will include projected sales tax revenues for five years as a primary source of revenue for financing these expenditures.
- Evaluate the plan annually as a part of the city's budgeting process and reestablish priorities as needed.

Goal I. B.

- Implement the five year Infrastructure Improvement Plan by investing not less than \$1 million per year beginning with FY 2017 through FY 2021 in road, water and sewer major repairs, improvements and expansion.

Priority 2: Blight Reduction

Goal 2. A.

- Develop and approve by City Council a comprehensive, priority based, blight reduction plan for La Marque by December 31, 2015 through the active participation of the La Marque Clean City Commission.
- Evaluate the plan annually as a part of the city's budgeting process and reestablish priorities as needed.

Goal 2. B.

- Based on the priorities established in the approved blight reduction plan, demolish and remove not less than 20 vacant and dilapidated structures each year beginning in FY 2016 through FY 2021.
- Develop and implement a plan to maintain the vacant lots to appropriate standards.
- Develop and implement a plan to recoup the cost of the demolition/clean up from the respective property owners through assessments or sale of the property.

Goal 2. C.

- Complete a comprehensive review of all La Marque city codes and ordinances related to appearance and safety of facilities and grounds for both residential and commercial including both compliance and fines.
- Provide recommendations for City Council consideration for improving the codes and ordinances to strengthen and streamline the city's ability to address issues of blight.
- Complete the code and ordinance review process by June, 2016.

Goal 2. D.

- Develop, fund and implement a plan to enhance code enforcement of issues related to blight reduction in the City of La Marque beginning with the FY 2017 fiscal year.

Priority 3: Interstate 45 Plan

Goal 3. A.

- Develop for approval by Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council appropriate zoning and development guidelines to protect and enhance development along the La Marque Interstate 45 corridor by March 2016.
- Implement the revised guidelines by May 2016.

Priority 4: Communication Plan

Goal 4. A.

- Develop a comprehensive communication strategy including but not limited to web, social media, advertising and print (newsletters) to enhance the ability to communicate the positive news and opportunities available in La Marque.
- Complete the strategy development by November 2015
- Evaluate the implemented communication strategies annually.

Goal 4. B.

- Develop a community newsletter to be distributed not less than 3 times each year beginning with FY 2016.

Priority 5: Community Center Plan

Goal 5. A.

- Create a Community Center Exploration Task Force charged with the responsibility of exploring opportunities for the development of a La Marque community center no later than December 2015.
- Charge the task force with exploring issues related to the potential community center to include but not be restricted to:
 1. Purpose and uses by age group
 2. Recommended resources, amenities and capabilities in priority order
 3. Suggested models
 4. Estimated construction/renovation budget
 5. Estimated operational budget
 6. External grant and private funding opportunities
 7. Potential partnerships
 8. Potential sites or locations including vacant LMISD facilities
- The Community Center Exploration Task Force will report their findings and recommendations to the City Council by September 2016.

Priority 6: Foster the Improvement of K-12 Educational Opportunities in La Marque

As this situation is in the hands of the State of Texas, the participants universally agreed to support the decision and plans that afford the best opportunity for the children of La Marque to receive an outstanding education and the taxpayers to receive the best educational outcomes for the tax dollar invested. No specific goals were presented.

Priority 7: Grocery Store Plan

Goal 7

- Develop and implement a communication campaign directed at decision makers who site new locations for small grocery stores.
- Utilize broad based community support, social media, direct communication and leadership intervention to share the desire to work with grocery store chains to select La Marque as a location for development
- Create a La Marque Grocery Store Team to plan and conduct this effort in conjunction with area civic groups and the chamber of commerce.
- Develop a plan for review by the La Marque EDC by December 2015 for implementation in 2016.

Priority 8: Expanded Tax Base Strategy

Goal 8

- Develop a plan with specific strategies designed to incent investment in La Marque's commercial and residential tax base.
- Identify and address barriers to now development and construction in La Marque

Priority 9: Economic Development Plan

Goal 9

- Develop and present for approval to the La Marque EDC a focused economic development plan including basic incentive guidelines for distribution to various site selectors, developers and project managers by December 2015.

Priority 10: Compensation Improvement Plan

Goal 10

- Develop and present for approval to City Council by June 2016 a revised compensation plan for the city employees along with a proposed multiyear compensation adjustment plan to bring current employees in alignment with the new compensation schedules

Priority 11: Expanded Youth Recreation Program

Goal 11

- Establish a La Marque Youth Recreation Task Force by October 2015 to develop strategies to enhance youth recreation programs and volunteerism to support this effort. Plan to be developed and presented to City Council and invited community leaders by May 2016 with implementation by August 2016.

Priority 12: Lemonade Day Plan for La Marque

Goal 12

- Develop a Lemonade Day program in cooperation with the chamber of commerce, local schools and local business to engage 200 elementary kids annually in this nationally recognized strategy to teach business and life skills by May 2016.

Conclusion

The elected officials, civic leaders and citizens of La Marque have many assets and opportunities upon which to build a vibrant and prosperous community. The participants in this study demonstrated great honesty and candor in recognizing and clarifying their weaknesses and challenges. The participants also demonstrated a deep love and commitment to do the work to build and rebuild the foundation and community of La Marque. As this commitment is sustained, La Marque will see the desired outcomes.