



**Report  
and  
Strategic Plan**

**Adopted by CEDC  
April 6, 2022**

**Prepared and Facilitated  
By  
Ron Cox Consulting**



# **REPORT AND STRATEGIC PLAN COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE PLANNING SESSION**

## **CITY OF FRIENDSWOOD**

**December 1, 2021**

### **Introduction**

On December 1, 2021, the Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC) of the City of Friendswood met for a planning session. The purpose of this meeting was twofold.

- Understand the roles and responsibilities of the Committee and identify key elements of the mission for the CEDC.
- Prepare a strategic plan for the CEDC.

The CEDC members and staff freely worked together, and their work was exemplary in all respects. Ron Cox facilitated the process.

On March 2, 2022, the CEDC members met again to review the results of their earlier session and to complete their work. The prepared a mission statement and added goals and objectives to two of the Key mission elements. The additions are in red for ready reference.

### **Governance**

In the December 1, 2021, session the facilitator noted there are several new members who have not been meeting long with the group. So, it is important to learn a little about each other, why we serve and what attributes we bring to the table.

The facilitator asked the members to tell why they serve on this important committee. They responded as follows.

### **CEDC members serve ...**

- To benefit local businesses.
- To improve the quality of life in Friendswood.
- Help new businesses.
- Be an advocate for businesses.
- To attract the next generation of businesses.
- To identify and seek out talent from within the city and surrounding area to assist in overall economic development.
- Be prepared for those new businesses to come.
- To ensure land availability – not lose the land we have already designated for commercial purposes.
- To keep the city’s tax base diversified, strong and balanced.
- To create legacy style facilities.
- Encourage relationships with local developers to invest in Friendswood.
- Establish a consistent message about the advantages of Friendswood and market it.

CEDC members were then asked to explain what individual attributes and skills they have to contribute to the work of the committee.

### **CEDC member attributes...**

- A design background.
- Historical reference for the group.
- Real estate perspective
- Networking ability.
- Experienced entrepreneur.
- Active listener.
- Experience with the Greater Houston Partnership with its associated contacts.
- Passion and drive.
- Youth.
- Ability to influence others.
- Not afraid of change.

Finally the CEDC members were asked what they hoped to accomplish. They responded as follows.

- To develop a three to five year strategic plan.
- To have measurable strategies and goals.
- To identify tangible steps the CEDC can take to improve the economic health of the city.
- To gain an understanding of what the members can do between meetings to be effective.
- Clarify the mission and roles of the committee.

- Identify other partners to accomplish our mission.
- To know what the City Council expects of the CEDC.
- To learn how other similar organizations work together.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

Morad Kabiri, City Manager, made a detailed presentation of the history of the CEDC, as well as its roles and responsibilities. He also discussed the current economic condition of the city and the impact the Committee can have on the overall economic health of the city. There are three key roles of the CEDC as follows.

- **Encourage commercial and industrial developments which are compatible with the image of Friendswood.**
- **Provide recommendations to the City Council regarding codes, ordinances, policies and procedures that assist economic development.**
- **Conduct surveys of citizens and businesses to gain understanding of economic development which is compatible with the City’s interests, needs, and image.**

## **Vision and Mission**

In order to understand the context of their role the Vision of the City of Friendswood should be reviewed.

### **City of Friendswood - Vision Statement**

**Together we build our future in a friendly place to live, work, play, learn and worship**

### **CEDC Mission**

**To champion a vibrant and competitive economy by providing leadership and resources for business attraction, retention, and expansion to enhance the quality of life.**

### **Key Mission Elements**

These elements are presented with no order of priority. It should be noted that these key elements can and should be reviewed regularly. Adjustments to the elements can be made any time to reflect the issues and challenges that may present themselves in the future.

- **Bring relevant and diverse businesses to Friendswood.**
- **Retain existing businesses in Friendswood.**
- **Market our city and its businesses to prospects and other influencers.**

- **Identify and build talent capable of expanding and sustaining the business community.**
- **Ensure a business-friendly city.**
- **Promote entrepreneurship.**
- **Collaborate with other relevant entities and partners to improve economic development.**

## **Strategic Planning**

The facilitator led the participants in a SWOT analysis, identifying and discussing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the CEDC, both organizationally and in the community. The weaknesses then were addressed by preparing strategies and goals designed to overcome the weaknesses. Finally, threats were identified that if not anticipated can get in the way of accomplishing the strategies and goals.

The participants were divided into two groups. Each group focused on strengths and weaknesses as follows.

### **Strengths**

#### **Group 1**

- Friendswood has a local developer capable of leasing space before building.
- The buying power of consumer base (high household income) is high.
- There is an availability of land yet to be developed for commercial/industrial purposes.
- Friendswood has a highly educated workforce.

#### **Group 2**

- Residents have high median/disposable income.
- There is great community engagement.
- Residents have town pride.
- “We” are a target market now for some amazing businesses.

### **Weaknesses**

#### **Group 1**

- Friendswood is not a destination of choice.
- The location is away from I-45.
- The city is landlocked and cannot expand beyond its current borders.
- The square foot price of commercial property is high compared to other commercial centers.
- There is a lack of identifiable town center.
- Many business owner(s) are reluctant to improve the looks of their properties.

#### **Group 2**

- Current businesses need to improve curb appeal.

- There is a need to improve infrastructure in central business area for parking and walkability.
- Location is not on I-45.
- There are a lack of entertainment options.
- There is little opportunity to “hop” from one business to another.
- High price of commercial sites (cost per square foot).

## **Weaknesses Rearranged**

The weaknesses identified above, have been summarized and arranged to be within one of the identified mission elements.

- **Bring relevant and diverse businesses to Friendswood.**
  - Lack of entertainment options.
- **Retain existing businesses in Friendswood.**
  - Lack of identifiable town center.
  - High price of commercial sites (cost per square foot).
- **Market our city and its businesses to prospects and other influencers.**
  - Friendswood is not a destination of choice.
  - Location is away from I-45.
- **Identify and build talent capable of expanding and sustaining the business community.**
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- **Ensure a business-friendly city.**
  - Inability to influence business owner(s) to improve the looks of their properties.
  - Current businesses need to improve curb appeal.
  - Need to improve infrastructure in central business area for parking and walkability.
  - City is landlocked and cannot expand beyond its current borders.
- **Promote entrepreneurship.**
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- **Collaborate with other relevant entities and partners to improve economic development.**
  - Lack of opportunity to “hop” from one business to another.
  - Inability to influence business owner(s) to improve the looks of their properties.
  - Need to improve infrastructure in central business area for parking and walkability.

## **Opportunities – Strategies and Goals**

The groups then brainstormed to identify opportunities to overcome the weaknesses. These opportunities are the basis for the strategies and goals prepared below.

- **1.0 Bring relevant and diverse businesses to Friendswood.**
  - 1.1 Identify and establish a plan to bring more entertainment venues to the city.
  - 1.2 Review and make recommendations for adjustments to the zoning classifications for the “panhandle” area on FM 2351 for appropriateness for full utilization.
- **2.0 Retain existing businesses in Friendswood.**
  - 2.1 Develop a plan for and work with local business owners to promote “hopping” from one business to another.
    - 2.1.1 Cluster a diversity of businesses according to hours of operation and seek opportunity for business hopping.
- **3.0 Market our city and its businesses to prospects and other influencers.**
  - 3.1 Create and distribute a marketing plan that emphasizes the strengths of the community
  - 3.2 Place marketing signs for various businesses on “blue” exit signs on I-45.
- **4.0 Identify and build talent capable of expanding and sustaining the business community.**
  - 4.1 Partner with schools (ISDs and colleges) and businesses to showcase and connect businesses with emerging talent in Friendswood.
  - 4.2 Establish a process for identifying and utilizing “stay-at-home” parents and their talents.
  - 4.3 Host a job fair to connect businesses with local talent.
  - 4.4 Partner with the library to train others to market their talents and skills.
- **5.0 Ensure a business-friendly city.**
  - 5.1 Establish a consulting designers’ program to assist local businesses in improving their curb appeal.
  - 5.2 Review and make recommendations to improve the façade grant program to assist local businesses in making curb appeal improvements.
- **6.0 Promote entrepreneurship.**
  - 6.1 Partner with schools and students to provide opportunity for entrepreneurship.
  - 6.2 Explore opportunities for developing cooperative workspace to engage entrepreneurs.
  - 6.3 Determine funding sources for entrepreneurship startups.
  - 6.4 Establish a day-long event for young talent and entrepreneurs to shadow businesses in Friendswood.
- **7.0 Collaborate with other relevant entities and partners to improve economic development.**
  - 7.1 Collaborate with KFB for corridor improvements to improve curb appeal of city rights of way and entryways.
  - 7.2 Identify needs and develop a plan to improve the infrastructure in the downtown area for parking and walkability.

- 7.2.1 Work with our partners, FDFA, FDEDC and TxDOT.

## **Threats**

Finally, Council and staff identified threats to accomplishing the goals and strategies that have been identified.

- Lack of funding to accomplish the tasks.
- Lack of buy-in by business owners.
- Lack of alignment with Council goals.
- Natural disasters.
- Poor infrastructure – lack of connectivity

## **Follow up Planning Session January 5, 2022**

TBD. On January 5, 2022, the CEDC members met in follow up session with Ron Cox facilitating the process. They reviewed their key mission elements. They reviewed the strategies established at the December 1, 2021, session and added to them. The Strategic Plan below reflects the additions and changes from the December 1 report earlier in this report.

## **Reporting**

Finally, the CEDC established reporting protocols. These protocols serve the purpose of keeping the committee members and staff on schedule with the implementation of strategies, keeping the City Manager informed, and providing regular reports to the Mayor and City Council on the status of the implementation of the adopted strategies. This provides for long term accountability toward the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

## **Reporting Protocols**

- **Committee Reports**
  - The Committee will receive reports from members and staff assigned work on a monthly basis as a regular item on the agenda. It is recognized that not all strategies will have significant items of progress in that short period, but will give all an opportunity to report and refresh the status of the Strategic Plan
- **City Manager**
  - City Manager receives regular – both formal and informal - updates from staff at regular staff meetings on progress of assignments.
- **City Council**

- Receives updates at least annual from CEDC Chair and staff at Council meetings regarding various projects related to the strategic plan.

## **Conclusion**

The CEDC of the City of Friendswood worked through a roles and responsibilities, mission key elements and planning process that allowed the committee members to create their governance model and identify strategies for moving the city's economic development initiatives forward. The process brought the committee members and staff closer together as a team and developed an implementation process to ensure the strategies are addressed and accomplished over time.



# **Strategic Plan 2022**

**Committee/Staff Planning Retreat  
December 1, 2021  
January 5, 2022**

**Adopted by CEDC  
April 6, 2022**

**Prepared and Facilitated  
By  
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# **City of Friendswood**

## **Vision Statement** **(Adopted by City Council)**

**Together we build our future in a friendly place to  
live, work, play, learn and worship**

# **Community and Economic Development Committee**

## **Role and Responsibilities**

- **Encourage commercial and industrial developments which are compatible with the image of Friendswood.**
- **Provide recommendations to the City Council regarding codes, ordinances, policies and procedures that assist economic development.**
- **Collaborate with citizens and businesses to gain understanding of economic development which is compatible with the City's interests, needs, and image.**

## **CEDC Mission (2022)**

**To champion a vibrant and competitive economy by providing leadership and resources for business attraction, retention, and expansion to enhance the quality of life.**

## **Mission Elements**

- **Bring relevant and diverse businesses to Friendswood.**
- **Retain existing businesses in Friendswood.**
- **Market our city and its businesses to prospects and other influencers.**
- **Identify and build talent capable of expanding and sustaining the business community.**
- **Ensure a business-friendly city.**
- **Promote entrepreneurship.**
- **Collaborate with other relevant entities and partners to improve economic development.**

**Mission Elements 2.0**  
**(same as above, prioritized by the CEDC)**

- **Collaborate with other relevant entities and partners to improve economic development.**
- **Bring relevant and diverse businesses to Friendswood.**
- **Market our city and its businesses to prospects and other influencers.**
- **Retain existing businesses in Friendswood.**
- **Ensure a business-friendly city.**
- **Promote entrepreneurship.**
- **Identify and build talent capable of expanding and sustaining the business community.**