



## **Willis - Strategic Planning Initiatives**

**Presented to the Mayor, City Council, and  
Willis Community Development Corporation**

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**City Manager**



## **A VISION FOR OUR FUTURE**



  
**VISION...**

The City of Willis is a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community that embraces our small-town charm where families can live, work, and play.

**MISSION...**

To provide high quality services, accountability, and professional commitment to our citizens. We pledge to provide those who live, work, and visit our City an effective government that is open and responsive to the needs and values of the community.



## **GOALS...**

- **Improve Infrastructure**

Ensure that physical infrastructure is planned, funded, and maintained to provide for current and further community needs, in support of commercial, recreational, and environmental requirements and standards, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

- **Cohesive Governance**

Promote a local government and city organization committed to meeting the needs of the community, encouraging collaboration and civic participation, and promoting accountability and transparency in the effective delivery of services.

- **Economic Development & Job Creation**

Create a diversified economic base with a range of employment opportunities by supporting the growth of existing businesses and providing expanded opportunities for new businesses through targeted infrastructure investments that leverage existing community and regional assets.

- **Strengthen Downtown Character**

Establish a Downtown area as the Heart of the City and center of civic activities by facilitating a mix of residential and commercial activity while preserving our small-town character.

## Cohesive Governance

Promote a local government and city organization committed to meeting the needs of the community, encouraging collaboration and civic participation, and promoting accountability and transparency in the effective delivery of services.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain a high-performing and competent employee base.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hire, develop, and retain a top-quality City workforce emphasizing professionalism, results, and performance accountability.</li><li>• Support employee development and leadership growth.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote volunteerism. Maintain adequate membership on City Boards, Commissions, and Committees.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take immediate action to fill vacancies and maintain an alternate pool of volunteers.</li><li>• Host in-person and online Volunteer Informational Sessions to provide specific Board, Commission, and Committee information, including requirements and time commitments.</li><li>• Offer continued support and training to volunteers.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create and maintain transparent citizen interactions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance utilization of online tools and provide accurate and timely information.</li><li>• Maintain an updated website.</li><li>• Engage residents and update through robust social media campaigns.</li><li>• Host Public Forums and Town Hall Meetings.</li><li>• Develop customer service evaluation tools and feedback methods for City services, programs, and events.</li><li>• Promote visibility and access to existing reporting tools.</li></ul>

# Cohesive Governance

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have clear, concise, and consistently applied processes and policies that make it easy for stakeholders to interact with the City and Staff.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create written policy documents and adopt a continuous improvement process to maintain responsiveness to ongoing stakeholder engagement.</li></ul>
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## Economic Development and Job Creation

Create a diversified economic base with a range of employment opportunities by supporting the growth of existing businesses and providing expanded opportunities for new businesses through targeted infrastructure investments that leverage existing community and regional assets.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish Willis's Competitive Edge</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt an investment framework to drive public-private partnerships.</li><li>• Align City incentives to create new jobs and private sector investment and build capacity in existing businesses.</li><li>• Develop marketing and branding materials.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Become a hub for creative businesses.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define and manage incentives and services to effectively develop businesses.</li><li>• Tailor programs and marketing to industries with the best growth and branding potential.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support activities that develop and retain a reliable and talented workforce.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage workforce partners to strengthen workforce programs.</li><li>• Connect businesses with hiring and training resources.</li><li>• Align workforce incentives and programming with current business needs and ensure workforce programming serves diverse business and community needs.</li><li>• Support K-12 initiatives that bridge student and business needs with Willis Independent School District.</li></ul>

# Economic Development and Job Creation

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on business retention and expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market available small business development grants for business expansion.</li> <li>• Enhance communication and collaboration between business owners by supporting the Willis Community Development Corporation and the Chamber of Commerce.</li> <li>• Intervention program in cases where an employer appears likely to relocate out of the City.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure community vitality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and foster the development of small/local businesses.</li> <li>• Create a Retail Development Strategy for key areas of the community to further diversify revenue sources and expand entertainment, dining, and shopping options.</li> <li>• Survey businesses to track changes in business practices and program and policy responses through monthly or quarterly visits.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chamber of Commerce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the Willis Chamber of Commerce.</li> </ul>

## Strengthen Downtown Character

Establish a Downtown area as the Heart of the City and center of civic activities by facilitating a mix of residential and commercial activity while preserving our small-town character.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Downtown identity and image by developing a strategic Downtown Plan consistent with the City’s Vision and Mission, making Willis a preferred place to live.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the boundaries of downtown, how dense it should be, and how it addresses the immediate surrounding neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Continuously market downtown and new downtown events.</li> <li>• Ensure that citizens have continuous opportunities for input and involvement- keeping stakeholders engaged in the process.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a vibrant community with lively areas and a successful commercial core.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote development for a major community and regional destination that has a “unique” draw that is distinctive from other regional downtowns.</li> <li>• Promote the City Center as a successful asset contributing to the Willis community.</li> <li>• Create and enhance community programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote special events and activities emphasizing the diverse, equitable, and inclusive character of the city - ensuring the downtown area enhances the City’s social and cultural character.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support accessible educational activities that embrace art, dance, music, culture, fitness, nutrition, and sports as a foundation for recreational activities offered at parks and park facilities.</li> <li>• Program new public spaces in the downtown area to maximize activity and engagement with citizens.</li> </ul>

# Strengthen Downtown Character

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emphasize a multi-modal transportation network connecting downtown to adjacent neighborhoods.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a network of shared-use trails and pathways that are safe, convenient, and connected within and between parks.</li><li>• Incorporate all modes of transportation in street design, including pedestrian facilities.</li></ul> |
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