



City

of

Willis

**Economic Development
Report
And
Strategic Plan**

**Adopted
TBD**

**Prepared and Facilitated
By
Ron Cox Consulting**



REPORT AND ACTION PLAN WILLIS CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RETREAT

July 26, 2014

Introduction

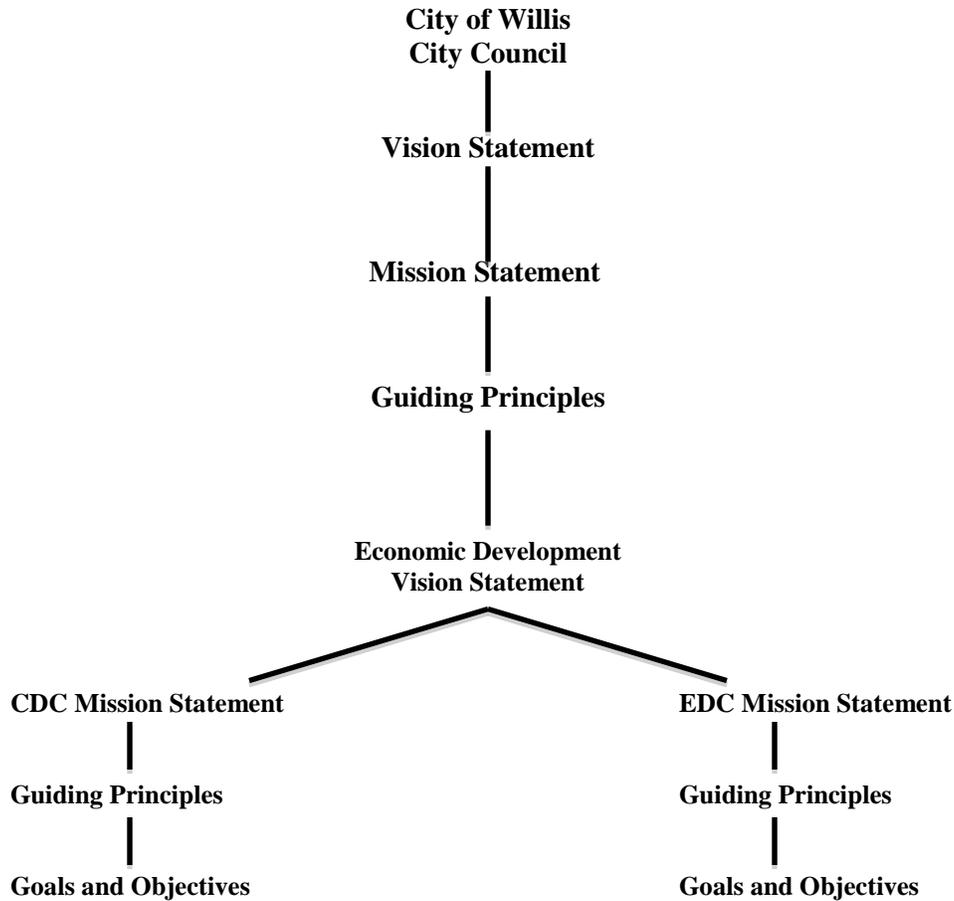
On July 26, 2014, the Boards of Directors of the Willis Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Community Development Corporation (CDC), City Manager, Director of Economic Development and other staff met in a planning retreat to discuss, develop, and prioritize short and long term strategies for the City's economic development programs. Ron Cox facilitated. Session 1 (in the morning) was designed to develop the governance model for economic development in general and for each board to prepare their guiding principles based on the city's already established Mission Statement. Session 2 (in the afternoon) was to prepare a combined economic development strategic plan for both Boards to implement.

The Corporations' respective board members and staff participated in the retreat discussions in a free and open manner. All participants were honest, courteous and respectful in their responses, and dialogue was excellent in all respects. The purpose of this report is to document the discussion at the retreat and provide the basis for the strategies established.

Governance

The CDC and EDC Board members and staff discussed their respective vision and mission as it related to the City Council. The two boards made several commitments during their time together to better define their vision, mission and guiding principles. Following are observations and commitments made during this first session.

The Governance Model for economic development should flow as follows.



City's Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles and Goals

The two boards reviewed the City Council Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Guiding Principles and 2013 Community and Economic Development goals. This set the base for the two boards to know and understand the City's governing body's expectations for economic development in Willis.

EDC/CDC Roles and Responsibility

Marge Littleton, the Assistant City Manager and Economic Development Director, presented the general roles and responsibilities of any economic development organizations. The concept is that both CDC and EDC will have the same overall role and responsibility toward the economic health of the community. Each organization has statutory requirements on their expenditures, so their mission is different.

The role of the EDC and CDC is as follows:

- The role of the EDO is to organize and implement a plan of action to improve the economic well-being and quality of life of our residents.
- EDO's are part of a team of players committed to creating and maintaining good jobs and a high quality of life.
- EDC – creating primary jobs and helping the economy grow.
- CDC – helping fund quality of life initiatives that bring value to our residents.

The best economic development organizations know the following:

- Their local economic strengths and weaknesses.
- Their community's place in the broader regional economy.
- Their community's economic development vision and goals.
- Their community's strategy to attain its goals.

The facilitator led the group in a discussion of their place in the broader economy by asking the following questions.

Where is Willis in the regional community?

- Five roads lead into Willis.
- Communities from the north, east and west come to Willis. These include smaller cities like Cold Springs, Shepherd and New Waverly.
- Willis is part of the "Lake Community" surrounding Lake Conroe.
- It is only 40 miles from downtown Houston and is 200 miles from Dallas.
- Willis is adjacent to the national forest.
- Snowbirds come to the area in the winter.

Who supports the Willis market?

- Retirees.
- The very young – those in their late 20's – early 30's.
- People within the Willis zip code, which includes over 20,000 people even though the city only has an estimated 6,000 population.

What does Willis need?

- Acquire the Retail Coach Company to help define what Willis needs.

Willis Economic Development Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles

Vision Statement for Economic Development

The group prepared a vision statement for economic development that encompasses the respective missions of the CDC and the EDC. The vision statement is as follows:

Willis is a beautiful and mobile city, ready for future growth with a strong business environment that promotes a higher quality of life for our residents and businesses.

Mission Statements and Guiding Principles

Then, each board reviewed and revised their respective mission statements, to align with the city's vision and mission and their own ED vision statement. In addition, each board created their own set of guiding principles. In turn the board will use these guiding principles in making plans and decisions that affect the citizens and economy of Willis. Their respective mission statements and guiding principles are as follows:

Community Development Corporation

CDC Mission Statement

The mission of the Willis Community Development Corporation is to provide leadership in developing and maintaining a quality living and working environment for people who live, work, visit and patronize our city.

CDC Guiding Principles

- **Leadership.** Leading by example through our presence in the community, taking initiative and following set guidelines and laws.
- **Developing and maintaining.** We will develop and maintain one community by being innovative and accountable to our residents.
- **Quality living and working environment.** We will support residents through new opportunities for job growth, new connections, provide for mobility and preserve open spaces.

Economic Development Corporation

EDC Mission Statement

The mission of the Willis Economic Development Corporation is to empower the local Willis economy, through the expansion and retention of the business community, with infrastructure assistance, and to promote business opportunities in the market area that enhances the quality of life.

EDC Guiding Principles

- **Empower.** The city provides resources for public and business developments.
- **Expansion and Retention.** The EDC has developed financial networks of assistance.
- **Promote.** Maintain a positive business environment.

EDC and CDC 2013 goals and milestones

Marge Littleton reviewed the 2013 goals and milestones for both the EDC and the CDC. Accomplishments for each goal were recognized. In addition the EDC and CDC boards decided whether each goal should be continued, or if it has been completed. 2013 Goals and Objectives that are to be continued will be included in the 2014 Strategic Plan, attached to this document. Following are the 2013 CDC and EDC Goals and Objectives.

2013 CDC Goals and Objectives and Annual Report

Goal 1: Develop and maintain an aesthetically pleasing living environment.
Ongoing.

Objective 1: Improve and maintain public property, rights-of-way, easements, open space etc. so that they are functional yet aesthetically pleasing.

Results: *Keep Willis Beautiful continues to be active. They have completed the following projects:*

*Crawford's Corner
Interstate 45 at 1097 beautification
108 South Thomason*

The Victorian Street Lamps have been removed from Danville and Montgomery. They have been placed in Crawford's Corner and Lindley Street Park and Martin Luther King Park. The City sponsored the 2013 Annual Trash Off, which was successful.

Objective 2: Provide assistance to private property owners in the form of loans or grants to demolish existing dilapidated structures.

Results: *The City and CDC have agreed on funding a program to use due process of law to consistently rid the City of dilapidated structures. Total lots and structures cleared = 16.*

Goal 2: Provide opportunities for community activities by developing appropriately related public facilities. Completed.

Objective 1: Develop and provide some financing for a teen center to be used by local area residents.

Results: *The CDC, the YMCA and the Willis ISD have started an after school program of activities for Willis youth. This is a trial program that began in January, 2008. Attendance ranges from 50-60 children receiving benefits from this program.*

Objective 2: Purchase property and develop a major municipal outdoor recreation park with a diversified group of activities.

Results: *An ad hoc committee of the Willis CDC and the Willis Planning Commission has developed a conceptual 66 acre municipal park. They have a power point presentation available to deliver to different community groups and individuals in order to build support. This project is on hold until a site can be found for the park.*

Objective 3: Assist with planning and coordinating special events for Willis.

Results: *The CDC assisted with the promotion and the logistics for the mobile Vietnam Wall memorial in the fall of 2008. It stopped in Willis and was viewed by 20,000 people. In 2009, the CDC began heading the effort to have an annual Christmas festival (Christmas in Willis). In 2009-2012, a successful event was held each year. In 2011, the CDC began heading the effort to have an annual Fourth of July celebration with fireworks. In 2011-12, a successful event was held each year.*

Goal 3: Promote or develop new or expanded business enterprises. Ongoing.

Objective 1: Assist with the financing of public infrastructure or services that may be needed by business enterprises.

Results: *The CDC was a participant in a joint project with the City and the EDC to provide sewer infrastructure to businesses and affordable housing sites on FM 1097 West. This project was completed and paid off by 2008. The CDC has also approved funds to provide infrastructure to a Love's Travel Stop. The CDC also participated with the*

City and the Willis EDC in the establishment of a 380 agreement for the Sam Houston Center.

Objective 2: Encourage the development of affordable housing by private developers that will benefit employees of local area business enterprises.

Results: *The CDC has approved rules for participation in its affordable housing program. The CDC also participated with the City in its HOME program to rehabilitate/reconstruct housing in Willis. Eight houses were reconstructed/rehabilitated for eight low income families. The CDC has also provided infrastructure assistance to a subdivision that has and will provide new, single-family housing for low to moderate income families. The CDC assisted a private developer in building an affordable house by giving two small lots for the improvement site.*

Goal 4: Assemble and maintain a marketing package for the local area.
Completed.

Objective 1: Maintain a website that summarizes the local area's best assets.

Results: *The website is up to date and is available for use by the public.*

Objective 2: Publicize the City to people who pass through town.

Results: *The CDC and the EDC jointly pay for advertising in the Conroe Chamber of Commerce Business Directory. The City is also promoted through the two special events, Christmas in Willis and the July 4th celebration.*

Goal 5: Provide park improvements to neighborhood and regional parks throughout the area inside the City limits of Willis. Ongoing.

Objective 1: Make landscaping improvements; install playground equipment and/or concrete basketball courts with goals in neighborhood and regional parks.

Results: *Lindley Street Park has been completed. Martin Luther King Park has been completed. Pine Circle Drive Park has been completed. New functional and security fences around these parks were completed in 2010. Portable toilets were added in 2012.*

Objective 2: Install basketball goals with concrete playing courts; install sand volleyball courts; and install soccer playing fields.

Results: *Lindley Street Park has a basketball goal and concrete playing half-court. Martin Luther King Park has a full size concrete playing court with two goals. Pine Circle Drive Park has a full size concrete playing court with two goals.*

Objective 3: Work with Montgomery County to replace playground equipment at Rogers Road County Park.

Results:

Objective 4: Find a site and, if necessary, obtain the property to construct a splash pad for use by Willis area residents.

Results:

Goal 6: Establish a local museum to preserve and display the history of the Willis area. Completed.

Objective 1: Obtain property in a good location to construct a museum building that is suitable for preserving and displaying the history and culture of Willis area.

Results: *The CDC has purchased the Moran building at the intersection of Danville and Montgomery on the southwest corner.*

Objective 2: Construct/renovate a building that will provide information and knowledge in a pleasant setting about Willis history and culture.

Results: *The CDC has selected an architectural firm to guide it in the construction/renovation of the Moran Building.*

Objective 3: Involve the Willis area community in supplying historical and cultural artifacts for the museum and in funding the construction/renovation. Create a Willis community ownership atmosphere for the museum to perpetuate the preservation of history and culture by future generations.

Results: *No action to date.*

EDC Goals, Objectives and Annual Report

Goal 1: Seek to retain and expand existing businesses/employers and visit all new businesses/employers. **Ongoing.**

Objective 1: Conduct a visitation program to existing employers in the local area. EDC Directors will make attempts to visit each business in Willis once each year.

Results: *A total of 94 individual visits have been made since the inception of this program in October, 2000. The EDC is also spearheading a drive to have a Chamber presence in Willis.*

Goal 2: Actively recruit potential businesses to be located in the local area. **Ongoing.**

Objective 1: Visit with potential employers, provide information and offer assistance in locating in Willis.

Results: *Active recruitment has been made to four potential employers since June, 2006. Three have been assisted and have located in Willis—Omega Farms RV Retreat, Bailiff Enterprises and Newquest, Inc.*

Objective 2: Intervene in cases where an employer appears likely to relocate out of the local area.

Results: *No activity since 9/30/02*

Goal 3: Lead the initiative to organize Team City and maintain its existence in perpetuity as a vehicle for bringing the community together on community and economic development issues. **Completed**

Objective 1: Work with Entergy to insure continuity in Team City. Encourage participation among community leaders in Team City.

Results: A Team City Economic Development Summit with over 150 people in attendance has been held from each year from 2009-2012 with community and business leaders and speakers on a variety of development issues. Another Summit is planned in 2013.

Goal 4: Communicate educational needs of local employees to local educational institutions. **Completed.**

Objective 1: Meet with pertinent local educational institutions on an annual basis to communicate the needs expressed by employers when conducting Goal 1, Objective 1.

Results: The Willis I.S.D has a program to train vocational workers for local businesses. Many students have been trained in this program since its inception in 2004. The EDC Board made a visit to this program in the fall of 2007. There were several different types of training programs for students to obtain national certification in a marketable vocational skill. The EDC has had meetings with Willis I.S.D. and Lone Star College to update this program and to make definite connections with the job training needs of local businesses.

Goal 5: Work with the Greater Conroe Economic Development Council for the mutual economic benefit of North Montgomery County. **Ongoing.**

Objective 1: Meet with representatives of the Greater Conroe EDC at least annually and on an as needed basis to discuss mutual economic development efforts.

Results: *Representatives from the Greater Conroe EDC met with the EDC Board in July, 2000, November, 2001, October, 2003, March, 2009 and July, 2010. Dialogue continues between the two entities.*

Goal 6: Maintain a marketing package for the local area. **Completed.**

Objective 1: Maintain and update the Willis Website.

Results: *The Willis Website is functioning and up to date.*

Objective 2: Assemble and maintain a brochure.

Results: *A brochure has been completed, received an update in 2012 and has been distributed throughout the Willis trade area and up Interstate 45 to Dallas.*

Objective 3: Work in partnership with the Willis Community Development Corporation on promotional items.

Results: *The Willis CDC and EDC jointly participate in advertising Willis in the Conroe Business Directory and on special events such as the July 4th celebration and Christmas in Willis.*

Goal 7: Assist existing and potential employers with site acquisition and development. **Ongoing.**

Objective 1: Designate a contact person that has knowledge of potential sites.

Results: *The City Manager has taken on this responsibility and has shown available sites to various prospects.*

Objective 2: Maintain adequate budgetary amounts for infrastructure assistance to existing and potential employers.

Results: *Five infrastructure projects are completed—(1) improvements to the intersection of Cochran and Powell, (2) the 1097 West water and sewer improvements project, (3) sewer service on Highway 75 south (4) water and sewer service on Highway 75 north and (5) infrastructure improvements to the Love’s Travel Stop at I-45 and Longstreet. One other infrastructure project for sewer service on Highway 75 north in a newly annexed commercial area is in engineering design. The EDC has also financed the study that led to the creation of the Westside Willis Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) The Westside Connector Project, which would provide better access to the Best Western and other businesses in the area, will probably be a TIRZ project.*

Objective 3: Obtain and develop a site for an industrial park.

Results: *The EDC has taken an approach of providing infrastructure to developable land where business and industry have expressed an interest in building permanent structures for economic activity.*

Goal 8: Assist existing and potential employers with employee training. **Ongoing.**

Objective 1: Designate a contact person that has knowledge of local educational and training institutions.

Results: *James Patrick has been designated as the contact person.*

Objective 2: Maintain adequate budgetary amounts for training assistance to existing and potential employers.

Results: *Funds have been set aside for training. Grants of \$20,000 dollars were approved to Willis I.S.D. to train workers for local employers.*

Goal 9: Develop and maintain recycling programs for the City of Willis. **Completed.**

Objective 1: Establish a working relationship with recyclers so that recyclables will be picked up and turned into usable products.

Results: *Relationships have been established. Recyclers pick up material on a regular basis from the recycling center.*

Objective 2: Establish sites for residents to bring recyclable products.

Results: *A recycling center has been in operation since September 4, 2001. The following shows the use of this facility:*

<i>Item</i>	<i>Recycled thru 5/16/13</i>
<i>Tires</i>	<i>37,260</i>
<i>Used Oil</i>	<i>19,576 gallons</i>
<i>Oil Filters</i>	<i>275—55 gallon drums</i>
<i>Batteries</i>	<i>1,098</i>

Session 2

Strategies

Introduction

The board members and staff undertook a process to develop a series of economic development strategies. A mini-SWOT exercise was used to arrive at the strategies: strengths, weaknesses, issues and challenges. From the issues and challenges the participants developed a single set of strategies for economic development. They then divided the strategies between those to be addressed by the CDC and the EDC respectively. Following is a report of their work together.

Strengths

The board and staff were divided into two groups. They were asked to identify the strengths of the city and community. These are the two lists which are shown without editing, thus there is duplication. They show a commonality between groups.

Strengths

- Location

- Growing economy
- Undeveloped land
- Strong entry level job base
- School district
- Open real estate
- Infrastructure
- City staff/resources
- Public safety
- Small businesses
- Churches
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Location
- Leadership
- Diversity in the population and among elected officials
- Future growth opportunities
- Stable and accessible local government
- Infrastructure
- Diverse economy
- Public safety
- Communication
- Full time EDC/CDC staff
- Transparency in the government
- Rich history
- Long term planning
- Availability of land and real estate

Weaknesses

Weaknesses were identified by the two groups (unedited):

- Lack of community involvement
- Youth involvement
- Lack of additional recreation opportunities
- Lack of mobility for local people
- ESD sales tax issue
- Downtown
- Need for building makeovers
- Lack of medical care
- Lack of hotels
- No variety of restaurants
- Turnover in school leadership
- Housing market is 50% rental
- Lack of assisted living locations
- Inadequate library space

- Overall appearance of the city needs improvement
- ESD Sales tax
- Landlocked – need additional annexations
- Lack of hotels
- Lack of mobility locally
- Need more diverse dining.

Common Themes

The facilitator led the group in a discussion of identifying common themes between the two groups among the identified weaknesses. These themes form the basis for economic development strategies and goals.

- Lack of community involvement
- Need for additional recreation opportunities locally
- Lack of mobility
 - Sidewalks and bicycle trails and routes
 - Lack of available transportation to and from places within the city
- Downtown revitalization
- Overall beautification and preservation within the City
- Accessibility to medical clinics and facilities locally
- Lack of hotel space in the City
- Need for additional restaurants and dining opportunities.
- Lack of quality housing
 - Rental
 - New homes
 - Assisted living
- Providing infrastructure connectivity for the ETJ.

Strategies and Goals

The group took the common themes, and prepared strategies and goals for economic development overall. (These are listed below, without regard to any priority.) Following the preparation of the goal statements, the group assigned each goal to either the CDC or EDC for inclusion in their work program. The assignments are listed at the end of the goal statement. Finally, some goals listed below, will become objectives within a 2013 goal that will be continued for 2014. Those assignments are also listed where applicable.

Goal #1: Heavily recruit additional restaurants/dining establishments. (CDC/EDC)

Goal #2: Have infrastructure in place in order to prepare for new housing opportunities. (CDC)

- Goal #3:** Communicate with county and community leaders on future improvements and expansion of the County library facility. (CDC)
- Goal #4:** Improve mobility opportunities for citizens, including transportation to and from various locations, and sidewalks and bicycles trails. (CDC)
- Goal #5:** Utilize local organizations such as SHSU, Lions Club to improve community involvement. (CDC/EDC)
- Goal #6:** Continue to provide the latest “fad” in our parks. (CDC)
- Goal #7:** Develop an incentive matching grant program for local businesses to improve their storefronts and building facades. (EDC)
- Goal #8:** Encourage the location of hotels and bed & breakfast businesses in Willis. (EDC)
- Goal #9:** Provide for murals and opportunities for art within the city to depict our history. (CDC)

Again, these goals will be inserted into the Strategic Plan for review and approval by the CDC and EDC Boards respectively.

Implementation and Reporting

Implementation

Following the retreat, the staff met. They worked together to develop the framework for the implementation of the strategies. The implementation plans for each of the areas of emphasis will be included in the Strategic Plan attached to this document.

Reporting Protocols

Finally, staff determined their reporting protocols for economic development should be the same as that for the City Council. Staff will make verbal and written reports periodically through the city manager, and economic development director on a monthly basis, and a formal report on a semi-annual basis. These protocols serve the purpose of keeping the staff on schedule with the implementation of strategies, keeping the City Manager informed, and providing regular reports to the Economic Development Corporation Board, Community Development Corporation Board, and City Council on the status of the implementation of the adopted strategies.

Conclusion

The board members of the Willis Community Development Corporation and Willis Economic Development Corporation and staff of the City of Willis worked through a strategic planning process that brought the boards/staff leadership closer together as a team, allowed the boards to identify economic development strategies for moving the city forward, and developed an implementation process to ensure the strategies are addressed and accomplished over time.



City of Willis

**Strategic Plan
For
Economic Development**

2014

**Adopted
August 27, 2014**

**Prepared and Facilitated
By
Ron Cox Consulting**

City of Willis

Vision Statement

It is the City Council's resolve that the city's mission statement will instill a sense of pride and accomplishment in its citizens and that the City will be known as a progressive, innovative, balanced and environmentally sensitive community while preserving the foundation of our past.

City of Willis

Mission Statement

The mission of the City of Willis is to provide high quality services, accountability and professional commitment to our citizens.

We pledge to provided those who live, work and visit our City an effective government that is open and responsive to the needs and values of the community.

City of Willis

Guiding Principles

High Quality Services

- The quality of services provided to our citizens must be reliable, cost-effective, delivered in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- The city is committed to hiring and retaining good people and providing training, direction and resources to do the job.
- The city will utilize best management practices for each department to the extent possible, based on available resources.

Accountability

- The city exhibits accountability through transparency and fiscal responsibility.
- The city will be accountable through evaluation of personnel and processes.
- The city will be accountable and transparent in carrying out daily duties, always performing at optimal levels to ensure quality output.

Professional commitment

- The employees of the city must be qualified, participate in on-going education, reliable, committed to their positions, and people friendly.
- The city will show commitment to its professionals by providing the training, continuous education, tools and resources to excel.
- The employees must have a desire to continually develop their skills and knowledge in their particular discipline for the purpose of being among the best in their field.

Open, responsive, effective government

- City leaders must be open to new ideas, aware of existing problems, and have a willingness to change within the limits of the law.
- The City will be accessible to citizens and the media, and be as open and transparent as legally possible.
- The Council and staff are united as a team to meet the expectations of the community while accomplishing positive change striving for the continuous improvement of established methods and processes.

City of Willis

Vision Statement For Economic Development

Willis is a beautiful and mobile city, ready for future growth with a strong business environment that promotes a higher quality of life for our residents and businesses.

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Mission Statement
for the
Community Development Corporation

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CDC Guiding Principles

- **Leadership.** Leading by example through our presence in the community, taking initiative and following set guidelines and laws.
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City of Willis

Economic Development Corporation

EDC Guiding Principles

- **Empower.** The City provides resources for public and business developments
- **Expansion and Retention.** The EDC has developed financial networks of assistance.
- **Promote.** Maintain a positive business environment.

City of Willis Economic Development Plan

2014-2015 Goals & Objectives

EDC GOALS

Goal 1: Seek to retain and expand existing businesses/employers and visit all new businesses/employers.

Objectives:

1. Conduct a visitation program to existing employers in the local area. EDC Directors will make attempts to visit each business in Willis once each year.

Goal 2: Actively recruit potential businesses to be located in the local area.

Objectives:

1. Visit with potential employers, provide information and offer assistance in locating in Willis.
2. Intervene in cases where an employer appears likely to relocate out of the local area.
3. Encourage the location of hotels and Bed & Breakfast businesses in Willis.

Goal 3: Promote or develop new or expanded business enterprises.

Objectives:

1. Assist with the financing of public infrastructure or services that may be needed by business enterprises.
2. Encourage the development of affordable housing by private developers that will benefit employees of local area business enterprises.
3. Heavily recruit additional restaurants/dining establishments.

Goal 4: Assist existing and potential employers with site acquisition and development.

Objectives:

1. Maintain adequate budgetary amounts for infrastructure assistance to existing and potential employers.
2. Obtain and develop a site for an industrial park.

Goal 5: Business façade grant program.

Objectives:

1. Create a program for a matching grant for businesses to update the façade of their building.

Goal 6: Assist existing and potential employers with employee training.

Objectives:

1. Maintain adequate budgetary amounts for training assistance to existing and potential employers.
2. Work with Lone Star College to explore grant-funding opportunities.
3. Continue to open lines of communication with employers about needs.

CDC GOALS

Goal 1: Develop and maintain an aesthetically pleasing living environment.

Objectives:

1. Improve and maintain public property, rights-of-way, easements, open space etc. so that they are functional yet aesthetically pleasing.
2. Provide assistance to private property owners in the form of loans or grants to demolish existing dilapidated structures.
3. Work to provide murals on buildings in town depicting our history, as well as provide for the arts and culture.

Goal 2: Provide opportunities for community and recreation related activities by developing appropriate public facilities.

Objectives:

1. Develop a major municipal outdoor recreation park with a diversified group of activities.
2. Continue to pursue the latest “fad” within the park.

Goal 3: Provide park improvements to neighborhood and regional parks throughout the area inside the City limits.

Objectives:

1. Make landscaping improvements; install playground equipment and/or concrete basketball courts with goals in neighborhood and regional parks.

Goal 4: Work with the county on improving the library system in Willis.

Objectives:

1. Meet with County officials on future improvements to the library system and convey needs of the community.

2. Help to share the services already available at the library to residents.

Goal 5: Improve mobility for our residents

Objectives:

1. Work on grant funding for sidewalks on city streets.
2. Communicate with TXDOT the need for sidewalks and bike lanes on TXDOT roads.
3. Work on transportation issues for the elderly to doctor's appointments etc.
4. Work on a bicycle rental program for residents to use in town.

Goal 6: Improve community involvement.

Objectives:

1. Create a Willis 101 class that seeks to educate the public in a classroom setting on all the day-to-day activities in Willis.
2. Create a Mayor's Advisory Youth Council.
3. Work on helping the Lions Club grow in Willis.

Goal 7: Have infrastructure in place in order to prepare for new housing opportunities.

Objectives:

1. Plan for and ensure extensions of utilities services into areas that are prime for housing development in both the city limits and the ETJ.



Community Development Corporation

Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #1 Develop and maintain an aesthetically pleasing living environment.			
Objective 1: Improve and maintain public property, right-of-ways, easements, open space etc. so they are functional yet pleasing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with public works to maintain public property • Plant flowers and shrubs were appropriate 	\$10,000	Ongoing
Objective 2: Provide assistance to private property owners in the form of loans or grants to demolish exiting dilapidated structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with residents/owners in need 	\$15,000	Ongoing
Objective 3: Work to provide murals on buildings in town depicting our history, as well as provide for the arts and culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research local mural artists • Contact Willis ISD Art Department & SHSU Art 	\$25,000	2014-2015
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	Code enforcement, local mural painters, public works department.		

Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #2: Provide opportunities for community and recreation related activities by developing appropriate public facilities.			
Objective 1: Develop a major municipal outdoor recreation park with a diversified group of activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently working with the county on moving the drainage easement • Complete the lease with the county for additional acreage • Park committee to review the survey results and make a recommendation to the board for the master plan • CDC to approve items for the master plan • Those amenities will then be placed into a draft master plan • Draft master plan taken to council for approval • Once approved the master plan with all amenities will be taken to Austin for the state’s approval • Once approved by the state Phase 1 will start • Continue to research and apply for appropriate grant funding 	2.5 Million (estimated)	2014-2019
Objective 2: Continue to pursue the latest “fad”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the latest amenities for 	TBD	2014

within the park.	local parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact NRPA for more information regarding the latest fads 		
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	Boys Scouts, Commission Meador, Bleyl Engineering, TRAPS, NRPA, Texas Parks and Wildlife, various community groups		

Community Development Corporation			
Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #3: Provide park improvements to neighborhood and regional parks throughout the area inside the city limits.			
Objective 1: Make landscape improvements, repair playground structure and address structure improvements as necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repaint the basketball goal lines at all the parks Replace the nets and check the backboards at the parks Have playgrounds inspected regularly 	\$5,000	2014-2015
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	Public works		
Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #4: Work with the county on improving the			

library system in Willis.			
Objective 1: Meet with county officials on future improvements to the library system and convey needs of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up meetings with Commissioner Meador • Identify what the needs are for the future 	None	2014-2015
Objective 2: Help to share the services already available at the library to residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with library staff about the features and services • Share the features and services with the community 	None	2014-2015
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	Montgomery County officials, library staff		
Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #5: Improve mobility for our residents			
Objective 1: Work on grant funding for sidewalks on city streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research mobility and sidewalk grants. • Apply for grants that are applicable 	None	2014-2015
Objective 2: Communicate with TXDOT the needs for sidewalks and bike lanes on TXDOT roads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up meetings with TXDOT to express needs for future improvements 	None	2014-2015
Objective 3: Work on transportation issues for the elderly to doctor's appointments etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate needs with the Friendship Center in Conroe • Research opportunities to help residents be more mobile 	TBD	2014-2015
Objective 4: Work on a bicycle rental program for residents to use in town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research bike rental programs 	TBD	2014-2015
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		

Partners	Montgomery County officials, Friendship Center staff		
Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #6: Improve community involvement.			
Objective 1: Create a Willis 101 class that seeks to educate the public in a classroom setting on all the day-to-day activities in Willis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with SHSU staff that helped create the County U program to establish a basis for the program in Willis • Meet with county officials regarding meeting times and content. • Create a schedule and application for residents • Create a binder of information for each participant 	None	2014-2015
Objective 2: Create a Mayor’s Advisory Youth Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Willis High School leadership staff and students to begin dialogue relating to this program. • Create a flyer and application form • Recruit students to participate • Form curriculum related to the program 	None	2014-2015
Objective 3: Work on helping the Lions Club grow in Willis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Lions Club members to discuss ways to increase membership • Continue to support their programs and initiatives 	TBD	2014-2015

Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	SHSU staff, city council, Mayor, Lions Club, Willis ISD staff and students		
Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #7: Have infrastructure in place in order to prepare for new housing opportunities			
Objective 1: Plan for and ensure expansion of utility services into areas that are prime for housing development in both the city limits and the ETJ.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to communicate with public works the cost of additional water and sewer lines for undeveloped areas. • Establish funding when appropriate. 	TBD	2014-2015
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners			



Economic Development Corporation

Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #1 Seek to retain and expand existing businesses/employers and visit all new businesses/employers.			
Objective 1: Conduct a visitation program to existing employers in the local area. EDC Directors will make attempts to visit each business in Willis once each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The board of directors will be able to use the business directory to verify which businesses need to be visited, visit with them, and remind them of our continued service to the community. 	None	Ongoing
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	EDC Board of Directors, local businesses		

Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #2: Actively recruit potential businesses to be located in the local area.			
Objective 1: Visit with potential employers, provide information and offer assistance in locating in Willis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marge will continue to pursue opportunities to meet with new and potential businesses. • If applicable the business will be considered for incentive dollars. 	None	Ongoing
Objective 2: Intervene in cases where an employer appears likely to relocate out of the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By keeping open lines of communication with the visitation program we will be able to communicate the benefits of staying in Willis to local businesses. 	None	Ongoing
Objective 3: Encourage the location of hotels and Bed & Breakfast businesses in Willis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify possible stakeholders involved with the hotel industry. • Share the needs of Willis with potential clients. 	None	Ongoing
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	Business owners in Willis, Hotel industry		
Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #3: Promote or develop new or expanded business enterprises.			
Objective 1: Assist with financing of public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas of Willis that will 	TBD	Ongoing

infrastructure or services that may be needed by business enterprises.	<p>need water/sewer for future development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside funding for these projects. 		
Objective 2: Encourage the development of affordable housing by private developers that will benefit employees of local area business enterprises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with developers about the need for housing in Willis. • Share with developers about open land in Willis ready for development. 	None	Ongoing
Objective 3: Heavily recruit additional restaurants/dining establishments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend the International Council for Shopping Centers Conference and Dealing Making. • Share with vendors and industry leaders about Willis and our needs. 	None	Ongoing
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	Private developers, city council		
Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #4: Assist existing and potential employers with site acquisition and development.			
Objective 1: Maintain adequate budgetary amounts for infrastructure assistance to existing and potential employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to share with businesses about the opportunities for incentives. • Set aside budget funding for 	TBD	Ongoing

	incentive to help with growth.		
Objective 2: Obtain and develop a site for an industrial park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key issues surrounding the creation of an industrial park. Identify land for sale in Willis that would be suitable for an industrial park. 	TBD	2014-2016
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	Business owners and community members.		
Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline
Goal #5: Business façade grant program.			
Objective 1: Create a program for a matching grant program for businesses to update the façade of their building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify best practices in the area regarding a program of this type. Create a handbook and application for businesses Set aside a budget amount for the program. 	TBD	2015-2016
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	Local businesses, Director of Community Development		
Strategic Initiative (priority order)	Action Steps	Budget	Timeline

Goal #6: Assist existing and potential employers with employee training.			
Objective 1: Maintain adequate budgetary amounts for training assistance to existing and potential employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with businesses on training needs • Set aside funding for training opportunities. 	TBD	Ongoing
Objective 2: Work with Lone Star College to explore grant-funding opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify grant funding available at the state level and the local level for companies. 	None	Ongoing
Objective 2: Continue to open lines of communication with employers about needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with businesses regarding training and identify needs. 	None	Ongoing
Team Facilitator	Marge Littleton		
Partners	Business owners, Lone Star College		