

11 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Through the years the City of League City has struggled to reach its economic potential, despite proximity to the interstate, ample land for development, major office activity and the marina at South Shore Harbour, and a variety of cultural and shopping opportunities in the Historic District. Recently, however, the city has made a concerted effort to establish a focused and sustainable strategy for economic development. Most important, each of the recent efforts seek to build directly upon the community's natural and collected assets, as well as complement activities in surrounding areas. These efforts appreciate that the majority of League City falls within the market capture radius of Baybrook Mall, as well as the fact most other large scale commercial centers and attractions, including Johnson Space Center and the Kemah Boardwalk sit just outside of the community.

Rather than attempt to craft a separate and additional approach toward economic development, the Comprehensive Plan collects the intentions of recent studies and translates those efforts into goals and policies intended to guide development activity. The result is a Plan that thoroughly embraces a community identity that permeates through every aspect of daily life in League City. Further, it adopts a destination based approach to economic development that builds upon niche markets natural to the community and particularly marketable to the Creative Class and retirees - two groups already drawn to League City's Recreational Lifestyle.

Other Plans & Studies

LEAGUE CITY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS REPORT

In September 2009, Destination Development International, a firm specializing in community branding, conducted a community assessment for purposes of determining League City's marketability. More specifically, the assessment was intended to take a look at the elements that would typically attract people, including residents, employees, tourists, potential residents and potential investors, and examine their performance. The report results suggest that League City has a number of existing and potential resources upon which to build, but struggles with a marketable identity as well as some key ingredients needed to draw people and keep them in the area for an extended period.

"Ingredients" recommended by the Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report promote:

- A strong brand and community focus
- An effective system of gateways and wayfinding
- A series of districts (beginning with the Historic District) with identifiable names, attractions, and distinctive commercial clusters
- "Third places" that draw people in regularly as places to "hang out",

including gathering places for small and large scale social activity and events

- Activities, events and features that bring life to an area such as street performers, interactive fountains and outdoor cafes
- Methods for making local businesses more enticing
- Evening hours and activities
- Means of inviting residents and guests into businesses and the area, including a strategic and focused approach to marketing
- “Pioneers with patient money”

BRANDING, DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING ACTION PLAN, 2010

By 2010, city leaders determined that the first step in a bold economic development policy was to determine an identity and “brand” for the community. In doing so, however, it was critical that a brand be more than simply graphics and slogans. Rather, the “brand” must truly reflect the unique character and position of League City and provide a framework around which the community can grow, particularly as it relates to establishing a focus for economic development.

The City of League City hired Destination Development International, authors of the Community Assessment, to establish a brand for the community. The firm concluded that League City’s five greatest assets as it related to building a brand include:

- Its convenient location close to the Gulf Coast beaches, Galveston, Houston, NASA, I-45, and Hobby Airport.
- Being home to one of the state’s top-rated independent school districts – a huge draw for families.
- The location along Clear Lake and Clear Creek showcasing the fact that League City is a waterfront community.
- Beautiful and affordable subdivisions and historic neighborhoods, many with trails, community parks, and water features or golf courses surrounding the homes.
- The 200-mile trail system about to be developed.

The plan notes that these traits make League City particularly appealing to professionals in their late 20s, 30s or 40s, married with a young family. It states, “Wouldn’t this be an incredible place to live? You’re in a convenient location, with great schools, close to a ton of amenities, whether the Boardwalk or Gulf Coast beaches, with beautiful affordable neighborhoods, and on the water with miles and miles of walking and biking trails.”

The result is a brand that builds upon a “Recreational Lifestyle” focusing on themes natural to League City such as, “Upscale”, “Active”, “Recreational”, and “Beautiful”. It proposes to build upon current attributes of the community while adding another - an atmosphere that fosters innovation, technology, and emerging businesses. The slogan “League City Style” suggests that the Recreational Lifestyle be built in to all aspects of the community life, including the work atmosphere.

If “League City Style” is a reflection of the Recreation Lifestyle enjoyed by League City residents and employees, it is defined by:

Location. “League City is minutes from all the amenities of downtown Houston, minutes from NASA’s Johnson Space Center, the famous Kemah Boardwalk, and just 20 minutes from the Gulf Coast and historic Galveston. The city is an hour from George Bush Intercontinental Airport and only 20 minutes from Hobby Airport.”

Lifestyle. “Stunning upscale neighborhoods with hundreds of waterfront homes, beautiful golf courses, waterways and trail systems, and some of the best schools in Texas. With a myriad of activities from Big League Dreams to historic gardens, no wonder League City is becoming Houston’s recreational lifestyle community.”

Business. “With affordable Class A office space designed for smaller firms specializing in the creative services and technology, the fastest broadband services, and world-class amenities, League City is quickly emerging as the innovation capital of Southeast Texas. Skip the commute and plant your roots in League City – a family-centric community built around sports, recreation, education, and an active lifestyle.”

Opportunity. “Architecture; engineering; finance; law; the creative arts; publishing and photography; website and Internet technologies; software research and development; industrial art and design; medical research, education and technology development. With a wealth of innovation in this creative, recreational environment away from urban noise, League City is in a league of its own as the innovation capital of Southeast Texas.”

The Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan offers a number of recommendations aimed at making both physical and marketing improvements as needed to begin to “own” the Recreational Lifestyle brand. Physical recommendations advocate development of destinations intended to draw people into an area and keep them entertained or otherwise occupied for an extended period of time through a mix of attractions, events,

recreation and shopping opportunities, and other activities. The Plan markets first and foremost to the residents and employees of the area, as well as their guests in an effort to reduce both retail and employment leakage. It also suggests that the Historic District and Main Street serve as the first major destination within League City.

Specific recommendations of the Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan include:

- Development of an implementation plan for the Historic District and Main Street as the first major destination to be established in League City. Unlike typical plans, the implementation plan is intended to serve as a “business plan” for improvements that incorporates development of catalyst projects such as a large, scale permanent public market, redevelopment of League Park as a true event and gathering space, reinvented use for Perkins Station, and the possibility of an amphitheater in or near the area. The plan proposes recommendation of a desired retail mix and implementation of complementary strategies related to parking, gateways, free wireless access, and identification of the area.
- Establishment of a business incubator in the community to grow startup firms seeking to take advantage of the emphasis on innovation and support for small business.
- Development of Class A office space, particularly for small businesses.
- Design and implementation of a wayfinding and gateway system that links the important destinations throughout League City.
- Enhancement of the number and magnitude of activities, events and programs in League City.
- Implementation of the trails system and promotion of commuter rail.
- Improvement to the appearance of gateways and major corridors.
- Acquisition of recruitment expertise with a focus on business capable of building critical mass in each of the commercial and cultural districts that will become destinations.
- Coordination and potential affiliation with Main Street USA and other national programs or organizations that promote destination based economic development.
- Establishment of improved marketing efforts including a process for selling the community’s brand to local organizations, as well as creation of a new style guide, photo library, brand posters, brand bookmarks, marketing pieces, business cabinet (letterhead, envelopes, business cards, etc.), promotional materials, community profile, and marketing website.

2011 LEAGUE CITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN (INITIAL DRAFT)

In 2010, City staff initiated an effort to construct an Economic Development Strategic Plan that recognizes the unmet potential of League City and seeks to establish detailed strategies intended to foster and sustain economic growth. As noted in the initial draft of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, key themes for a strategy include:

- Establishing a community brand that defines League City's identity
- Utilizing the community's greatest assets: the creative, innovative pool of residents and business owners
- Building a "home-grown" economy from the inside out and pursuing highly strategic businesses
- Investing in the community and its resources first, offering incentives only to strategic partners
- Creating great destinations for working, shopping and playing
- Prioritizing League City's residents, employers and their guests as the primary audience; regional residents, employers and their guests are the second audience; outside tourists as the third audience
- Engaging in a regional approach to economic development, including office, retail and tourism

SWOT Analysis

A simple examination of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to economic development substantiates both the phenomenal possibilities and major daunting challenges faced by League City.

- Strengths include the highly skilled and highly educated League City workforce, location between Houston and Galveston, the waterfront, and the community's recreational amenities.
- Weaknesses noted in the draft plan include the lack of a common vision or recognizable brand, substantial employment and retail leakage, the substantial number of organizations with a role in economic development, and the lack of a dedicated revenue stream to promote economic activity.
- Opportunities to build upon include the rich environment for starting and growing a business, existing regional clusters (in aerospace, medical, energy and tourism), a destination based approach, and the amount of raw land available for development.
- Threats confronting the community include changes to NASA and aging refineries, a lack of local economic development "champions", limits in infrastructure and transportation, and potential competition among

regional peers.

Natural and Targeted Market Niches

League City is more likely to successfully capitalize on specific economic markets, particularly those that can build upon the community's resources, as well as those that complement the proposed Recreation Lifestyle brand. The draft plan recommended pursuit of niches such as:

- An Office/Business market ranging from small businesses and entrepreneurs to larger employers, including an economic gardening program designed grow local businesses.
- Evolving aerospace and energy industries that takes advantage of shifts in both industries, including a push toward privatization of space-related activities and green energy.
- Retail appropriate to each district that results in a distinctive cluster of shops and restaurants within each destination in League City, beginning with the Historic District and extending into other potential niches.
- Institutions appropriate to each district, including educational institutions such as schools and the Helen Hall Library, medical facilities, and a broad array of government services at the local, county and state level.
- Tourism opportunities that draw people to the area as a result of the mix of attractions, events and activities celebrated within each district and keep them entertained for an extended period of time.
- Agribusiness that allows for food and food products to be grown and sold locally ranging from local farming and gardening and food processing to development of a local market and restaurants that feature local foods.
- Recreation ranging from businesses that support organized activities along the waterfront or in facilities such as Big League Dreams to simply rental sites along local trails or Clear Creek.

Districts

Similar to discussion in the Land Use chapter, the draft Economic Development Strategic Plan promotes a destination based approach that builds critical mass and includes attractions that draw guests to the area. The Economic Development Strategic Plan recognizes that one destination is a tremendous step forward, but a series of well connected districts allows for a range of complementary places, attractions and events that broaden the community's appeal as a place to live, work, shop, play and gather.

The plan details opportunities in four areas of League City that already exhibit the initial traits of a district and advocates creation of more as the opportunity permits.

- The Creekside District includes the Historic District and Main Street and represents the cultural heart of the community. This particular district is already home to two museums, three parks and a variety of shops and local restaurants.
- The Harbourside District represents the area in and around South Shore Harbour and includes the marina, resort hotel, office campus, and nearby restaurants. The potential district offers the community's strongest direct association with the waterfront and is en route between the Creekside District and Kemah.
- The Big League Dreams/UTMB area offers a unique blend of medical activity, commercial retail and regional sports. The potential district benefits from proximity to I-45 and its distance from Baybrook Mall is sufficient to allow for substantial growth of national brand retailers. Growth of the UTMB campus at Victory Lakes and the presence of Big League Dreams provides the area with a major attraction and employment center.
- The Government/Civic Center potentially consolidates numerous government, educational and institutional activities into a single location that could include a mix of city, county and state facilities as well as a hub for college branch locations in a campus format that could serve as a new "town center". Located along Walker Street, the site provides ample opportunity to integrate private investment as well as the chance to provide world-class shared resources.



Typology

Traditional land use generally categorizes commercial activity into one of two broad categories: Retail or Office. Industrial activity is typically defined as “light” or “heavy”. From a form-based or economic development perspective, however, these categories do very little to ensure that the community provides adequate facilities to successfully operate in League City, particularly if the intent is to accommodate businesses from startup to their peak size. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes a variety of building types related to commercial and industrial activity with the understanding that the market is constantly evolving - as are the building types in which business occurs. The chapter also suggests the community character categories in which each type of building is appropriate.

MIXED USE STRUCTURES/SITES

- Home Based Businesses refers to a retail or office business operated from a home, but in such a manner that it goes relatively unnoticed. Home based businesses typically employ one to two people and generate an extremely limited amount of traffic.
- Live/Work consists of residential structures with space intentionally reserved for office use that exceeds the visibility and interaction seen in a home-based business. In Suburban character areas, live/work units may locate the office space above a garage or in a “granny flat” accessory structure. In walkable urban or clustered development, a live/work structure will include office space on the first floor of a multi-story structure, with the office space facing the sidewalk. Live/work space is typically sufficient for a business employing one to three employees with limited on-site customer interaction.
- Lifestyle Centers are shopping centers that combine the shopping experience of a major Power Center with amenities and attractions such as green space, water fountains and play areas. Many lifestyle centers include a limited mix of uses, including commercial office space, multifamily residential or institutional activities. Lifestyle centers can be indoor facilities but are more often at least partially open-air. Lifestyle centers tend to be walkable places. They typically include national brand retail stores, including at least one anchor tenant. Size of a facility is most often greater than 150,000 square feet.
- Urban Center is a highly mixed activity center that includes commercial office and retail, as well as multifamily residential and institutional activities. In addition to uses, urban centers typically include a number of amenities and are highly walkable. Most urban centers have sufficient employment or population densities to be transit supportive.

STAND ALONE STRUCTURES

- Vendors are broadly defined as people offering goods or services for sale to the public from a temporary static structure or mobile stall. Vendors may be stationary or may move from place to place carrying their wares on push carts. Some vendors may operate from a vehicle. Vendors may range in form from simple display of wares or services (such as street performer or cartoon artist) to food trucks. While vendors don’t have permanent space requirements, they most certainly play an economic role and, where appropriate, add vibrancy to a destination.
- Small Stand Alone Structure represents a single structure on a site that can range from an office building for a small business to a light industrial business or restaurant. A small stand alone structure is intended for a single tenant. Size is typically 20,000 square feet or less and, if designed appropriately, can fit into any character classification. Some industrial and commercial small stand alone structures may include outdoor storage.
- “Big Box” Commercial Retail characterizes stand-alone, nationally branded “category killer” (large-scale retail business that is dominant in the market) retail stores. A Big Box generally consists of a single “jumbo” story structure of 50,000 square feet or more. Design is often simple and “branded” to reflect the occupying business. A big box structure may have no relationship to surrounding activities, but may also be located on an outparcel adjacent to a Power Center. Site design is most often typical of Auto-Dominant character, although it may also be appropriate in Suburban areas. A Big Box may also be called a Supercenter or Superstore.
- Large Stand Alone Structure are similar to Small Stand Alone Structures in all aspects except scale and level of impact.

MULTI-TENANT STRUCTURES

- Markets are locations, public or private, where a number of independent merchants can sell their products to the public. Markets may be indoor, outdoors or a combination of the two. Products may include general produce, meats, plants, flowers, prepared foods, jewelry, art, music, woodwork, and crafts, as well as handmade clothing, soaps, candles, or myriad other locally made or unique items. Markets may range from regularly scheduled activities such as farmer’s markets or they may be larger, fully managed activities that operate daily. A market may be appropriate in any character area, but will likely change in scale and products based upon demand.
- Shared or Community Offices refers to a structure in which numerous



Stand Alone, Coconut Grove, California



Cottage Office, Issaquah, Washington



Lifestyle Center, Mountain Brook, Alabama

Table 9-1, Typology

	Type of Activity			Character			
	Office	Retail	Industrial	Rural	Suburban	Auto-Dominant	Urban
Mix Use							
Home Based Business	X	X		X	X	X	X
Live/Work	X	X		X	X	X	X
Lifestyle Center	X	X		X	X	X	X
Mixed Use Center	X	X		X	X		X
Stand Alone Structures							
Vendor		X		X	X	X	X
Big Box		X			X	X	In Urban Format
Small Stand-Alone	X	X	X	In Clusters	X	X	X
Large Stand-Alone	X	X	X	In Clusters	X	X	In Urban Format
Multi-Tenant							
Market		X		X	X	X	X
Shared or Community Offices	X	X		X	X	X	X
Flex space	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Incubator	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strip Commercial Center	X	X				X	
Power Center	X	X			X	X	
Outlet Center		X			X	X	
Shopping Mall		X			X	X	In Urban Format
Office Tower	X				X	X	X
Campus							
Office Condo	X		X		X	X	X
Office Warehouse	X		X	X	X	X	
Cottage Business	X			X	X	X	
Office/Business Park	X		X	X	X	X	



Pike's Place Market, Seattle, Washington



Mixed Use, Sugar Land, Texas



Live/Work, Issaquah Highlands, Washington

features are shared by a number of tenants that only require the facilities offered by a formal office structure on a rare or infrequent basis. Shared office space typically includes offices or cubicles, meeting facilities, receptionist and administrative services, and sometimes other often-needed features such as print production. Businesses lease a portion of the services and spaces as suits their needs. Shared office space is appropriate as an extension of a home based business, a small business with limited space or a semi-transient business.

- Flex Space represents structures in which space can be apportioned by a single tenant among activities as needed and in a fairly cost effective manner. A flex space structure may include retail space, offices, research space, storage or production. It is most useful for industrial business in which other activities, such as office space, is needed. Flex space is most appropriate in Rural, Suburban and Auto-dominant character areas.
- Incubators are small office/retail centers developed for the purpose of housing and supporting startup businesses during their initial and most critical stages as a means of increasing small business growth in the area. Incubators are typically comprised of one or more structures of multiple units. They may range from historic structures to warehouse spaces. An incubator structure can be designed to fit in the context of any character area. Size of a facility will range based on a number of factors that may include potential demand and the number of businesses that require support.
- Strip Commercial Centers tend to be linear multi-tenant structures that run parallel to the roadway. A strip commercial center may include a major anchor, but in most cases, is simply a series of smaller businesses with very little, if any, relationship to each other. Strip Commercial retail activity is highly prevalent along major corridors in Auto-Dominant character areas. Design is typically simple with high dependence on signage to attract attention to the site. Strip Commercial centers are primarily intended for retail and service operations, although they may also house some office and institutional activities. Strip Commercial structures are nearly entirely dependent upon automobile traffic for business.
- Power Centers are retail shopping centers that feature three or more anchor tenants complemented by a relatively limited number of smaller tenants. Anchor tenants are often “category killers”. Power Centers are typically a series of one or more linear structures totaling 100,000 square feet or more of retail space. Site design and architecture are reflective of Auto-Dominant character, including simple structures fronted by ample parking. Structures directly face a major roadway with limited outparcels reserved for complementary “big box” retailers,

stand-alone restaurants and similar uses. Power Centers require high visibility and high volume traffic and, as a result, are located along arterials or freeways.

- Outlet Centers include a compilation of numerous name brand manufacturer’s stores assembled in a single location and in a series of generally linear, multi-tenant structures. They may be enclosed, but most often, stores have direct access to parking. Outlet Centers typically require access to one or more freeways for purposes of convenience and visibility in a manner similar to Power Centers. Because of their unique nature, Outlet Centers tend to locate beyond or near the edge of the capture area of regional shopping malls to avoid retail cannibalism. On the other hand, Outlet Centers tend to draw from an expansive region.
- Regional Shopping Mall refers to a major shopping center of the magnitude of Baybrook Mall. While the historic trend has been development of a regional shopping mall as an enclosed structure, more recent centers tend to follow an “open air” concept that either blends with the walkable, leisurely approach of the Lifestyle Center or the convenience-oriented approach of the Power Center. A regional shopping mall serves as a draw that extends between 12 and 20 miles, depending upon scale. Most often, the Regional Shopping Mall is found in either a Suburban or Auto-Dominant character area, although it is also possible in an Urban format.
- Office Tower represents a single multistory, multi-tenant structure. If density is sufficient within a tower or within the nearby area, most often in an Urban environment, then a percentage of the first floor could be comprised of retail activity. Office towers may also incorporate parking as subsurface, multiple base floors, or within the interior of the structure in a format known as the “Texas Doughnut”. While it is possible for an office tower to locate in a Rural character area, it is more likely to be seen in a Suburban, Auto-Dominant or Urban environment. Space available for tenants in an office tower can range substantially in size.
- Office Condo functions very similarly to the residential condominium concept in that tenants own their space and share the costs of maintaining common areas such as restrooms, hallways, parking areas and signage. A number of office/retail structures could function in an Office Condo format, including an Office Tower, Strip Commercial Center, Cottage Businesses and others. Office Condos can fit into all character areas, particularly if clustered. They can also be effective when placed into a mixed use environment.

CAMPUS

- Cottage Businesses represent a clustered series of stand alone or limited multi-tenant businesses on a single lot. Entrance to the lot, parking, trash dumpster, and signage, among other aspects, are all shared by the various structures. Cottage businesses do not always front upon the major roadway, but may focus instead upon a central parking area or courtyard. Cottage businesses are typically utilized for office activity and are appropriate to Suburban and Auto-Dominant character areas.
- Office Park/Business Park a collection of several office and/or industrial buildings located together in a unified subdivision. Similar to a residential subdivision, an office or business park allows for common access and development of a marketable identity through common architectural design, distinctive site design and choice of development pattern. An office or business park can be made appropriate to any character area based upon scale, amount of open space and treatment of open space. The concept is most recognizable in Suburban or Auto-Dominant formats.



Live/Work Coconut Grove, California

Goals & Policies

The goals and policies outlined in the Economic Development chapter are intended to ensure that the economic vision of the community is effectively translated into long term development practices. The goals and policies related to economic development transcend discussion of job creation or sales tax revenue. Economic development is impacted by establishing districts enticing to residents and guests in the manner discussed in the Community Character chapter. It is also effected by using parks and green spaces to enhance the character and establish attractions as discussed in the Parks and Open Spaces chapter. For that reason, it is imperative that the goals and policies stated in this chapter are considered in context of the entire Comprehensive Plan. Together, they establish the foundation needed to establish a marketable and economically dynamic community.

GOALS

- ❖ A city that physically reflects the community’s “Recreational Lifestyle” brand of “League City Style” through its distinctive districts and neighborhoods, attractions and events that draw and keep people in the area, and focus on desirable development patterns and character.
- ❖ A distinctive system of gateways and linkages that appropriately introduce people to League City and connect the community’s various districts and attractions physically, socially and economically.
- ❖ An array of land and building types as necessary to pursue preferred markets and allow businesses to successfully grow from infancy to their full potential within the community.
- ❖ A jobs to housing balance of one job per household or greater by 2035.
- ❖ A government system that serves as an aggressive partner in promoting economic development appropriate to the vision for future League City.

POLICIES

Economic “Incentives”

- Placemaking practices and efforts that draw people to an area or make it a more desirable place for business should be considered a valuable means of capturing the jobs, capital and labor pool desired by League City.
- Creating a variety of highly appealing places to live, particularly in regards to capturing a labor pool that supports the economic vision for League City, should be considered an integral component of economic development, but not at the expense of a strong jobs to housing balance.
- As a general rule, investments in placemaking, infrastructure, access,

parking, and other activities that have a long term public benefit should be considered economic development incentives equal to or greater than direct financial incentives to a specific business or developer.

- Development (and redevelopment) regulation should focus on form, development patterns and impacts related to an activity with the understanding that most uses are compatible if form is appropriate and impacts are fully addressed.
- Development (and redevelopment) regulation should provide ample opportunities for commercial and industrial activity without the need for change in zoning or creation of Planned Unit Development, particularly if issues related to form, development pattern and impacts can be met.
- Regulations should promote flexibility sufficient to allow for impact mitigation and creative site design.
- A streamlined application process for select projects indicates poorly managed government, not an incentive. The application process for ALL development should be streamlined to the greatest extent possible, while continuing to actively promote protection of the community’s interests and vision.

Critical Mass

- Actively promote the development of identifiable districts for clustered economic activity with clear boundaries and well designed attractions as an alternative to linear development that lacks critical mass.
- Development of major attractions such as a public marketplace, performing arts center, amphitheater, or other event space is a critical way in which the public sector can contribute to economic performance and development of critical mass.
- Businesses should be clustered, particularly retail related activities, for purposes of establishing the higher return on investment and stability offered by critical mass.
- Support development of retail clusters with the maximum diversity of complementary restaurants, shops and businesses with evening hours.
- When possible, businesses should locate within easy walking distance to open space to allow for socialization, flexible work opportunities, entertainment and events.
- Open spaces near businesses should be designed appropriately to allow for different needs, such as spaces with seating, semi-secluded spaces, sufficient tree canopy for shade, and “white noise” such as the sound of water or wind through trees.
- Public parking at strategic locations should be considered one critical method of providing the infrastructure needed to promote clustering, reducing on-site parking requirements, and allowing greater investment

to be placed on aspects of making the site more marketable (such as improved architecture, landscaping and outdoor amenities).

Gateways, Wayfinding and Linkages

- Gateways are critical to the marketability and branding message and should be promoted at entry points into the city, districts and neighborhoods.
- Wayfinding systems, including signage, banners, artwork, bollards and other features, should direct people from gateways to key districts and attractions within League City.
- Wayfinding should connect districts within League City and connect to destinations in adjacent communities.
- Once in or near a district or attraction, wayfinding should allow for navigation to critical complementary facilities and services such as parking and restrooms, as well as the additional activities within the district.
- Wayfinding throughout League City should maintain a common theme but also allow for each district to establish a unique identity.
- Features of the transportation system that build upon the Recreation Lifestyle brand (such as bike lanes, dedicated routes for golf carts, shared use paths, the paddle trail, and charging stations) should be obvious through design, materials, signage, landscaping, markings, or other techniques.
- Street furniture such as bike racks, trash cans, benches and more should be creatively designed to extend the community brand and district identity.
- Landmarks such as artwork, water features and monumentation are encouraged as unexpected by dynamic means of making destinations memorable and establishing visual linkages between places.
- Safety features such as crosswalks, bollards and lighting should be creatively designed to reinforce the community brand, district identity and linkages.
- Landscaping systems should be considered an integral component of building the community’s identity, as well as a means of bolstering visual linkages between districts.
- Open space and viewsheds that are marketable assets for the community, particularly at gateways and along Clear Creek, should be presented to the extent practical (i.e. “Kodak moments”).

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

- A business that fits within the economic vision of the city should have every opportunity to begin in League City (or relocate to the community)

and expand to its full potential.

- Diversity in office space, particularly additional space for small businesses, should be actively encouraged, including development of incubator space, flex space, live/work, cottage businesses, and shared office space.
- Home-based businesses should be encouraged and promoted.
- Coordination with private financial institutions to establish financing programs to support small business and entrepreneurship is encouraged, including the possibility of creating revolving loan and/or micro loan programs to supplement opportunities available through the Small Business Administration.
- Actively incorporate private sector activities into public projects. For example, allow private rental facilities for kayaks and paddle boats at stations along the paddle trail or food vendors at major cultural events.
- Facilities and resources that can spur interaction with and among small business owners and entrepreneurs, including meeting facilities and a small business “resource center” are highly desirable to promote small business growth and sustainability.
- Wireless internet access and other technologies that extend the work environment into the community are key assets that are attractive to the creative class and are therefore very highly encouraged in both public and private places, including parks, activity centers, community facilities, and eating establishments.

Marketability of Outdoor spaces

- Presence of pedestrians is the single greatest marketing tool for a business or district (and also among the best tools for traffic calming and public safety) and should be encouraged at every opportunity, particularly within districts.
- Outdoor seating areas, including outdoor cafe’s, are desirable for drawing guests into a business while also bolstering the appeal of the district to passersby.
- Creative use of space in front of shops to attract attention is encouraged including placement of wares outside, entertainment, artwork, music, landscaping, and signage (with respect to context).
- The “front door” to business should be considered critical to marketing and, for business that requires customers, should utilize the entire site as a lure (with respect to context).
- Dependence on signage and/or a view of available parking to capture the interest of potential guests should be discouraged.
- Promote signage appropriate to character. For example, projecting signs and awning signs are more relevant in urban setting than monument

signs.

- Seating, in all guises, is encouraged in front of businesses, in public spaces and other instances where appropriate. Moveable chairs have a surprisingly positive impact on the experience of a place and should be considered. Atypical examples of seating include steps, ledges and interactive art.
- Public benches should be located in places where people are expected to sit. Poorly located benches are underutilized and leave a poor impression on passersby.
- Visual clutter such as over-reliance on signage, flashing signs, poorly implemented or maintained streetscape amenities, or poorly managed frontages detract from the marketability of businesses and districts and should be discouraged.
- Street corners can serve as locations for “spontaneous meetings” or small gatherings in an urban setting. Ample space should be present at street corners to accommodate pedestrian flow and account for static small groups.
- Use of “bulbouts” at street corners and occasionally along urban sidewalks can allow for extended outdoor activities, including introduction of street vendors, street performers, outdoor seating or cafes.
- Landscaping, particularly trees with a strong tree canopy, make a positive impression and build upon the community brand in a manner that is highly desirable.
- “White noise”, including music and the sound of water, has a positive impact on the desirability of a place and is encouraged where appropriate.

Education and Job Training

- Promote development patterns that can allow for location of higher education institutions in League City, particularly in a clustered manner that allows for shared resources.
- Public spaces and facilities, when creatively possible, should serve to expand the scientific curriculum of local schools in partnership with CCISD, Dickinson ISD, and other schools as warranted.
- Shared facilities with county and state government, education institutions and business-related nonprofit organizations in a manner that expands training opportunities and availability of resources for local businesses and employees should be actively promoted.

Agribusiness

- Home gardening activities are a valuable means of entry-level agribusiness and should be promoted in all character areas.

- Community gardens provide an outstanding use for vacant space, pocket parks, or other small open spaces and can also serve as social spaces, landmarks or small event spaces when designed creatively.
- Urban agriculture is an excellent means of preserving open space, particularly in Rural and Suburban character areas.
- A public market is desirable as a major attraction as well as a means of supporting local growers and producers, as well as local artists, craftsmen and similar vendors.
- Encourage locally owned and operated restaurants to utilize local and regional produce as another means of establishing local dining as unique.
- Street vendors and food trucks provide a means of entrepreneurship in food production and delivery, as well as an additional use of locally grown food, and should be promoted appropriately.

Code Enforcement and General Appearance

- Every effort should be taken to proactively enforce ordinances that ensure visual upkeep and the physical condition of the built environment to ensure that the community brand is not diluted.
- Maintenance of the right of way and public spaces is critical to the marketability of League City to ensure that investments operate in optimal condition and maintain a high quality appearance.

Partnership

- Relationships with community and regional partners are essential to ensure that the community’s vision and implementation efforts are complementary to those of peer communities to the extent practical.
- Establishing a development ethic that results in a marketable community should include coordination between city government and all of its economic development partners, particularly the League City Chamber of Commerce and any other organizations that act as a direct conduit to the business community.
- Successful implementation of a community brand should involve marketing efforts by all parties with “skin in the game”.
- Community marketing efforts should facilitate success of established districts.
- Development of district associations is encouraged as a means of assisting in support and enforcement of requirements (both public regulations and private restrictions).