Harnessing Huntsville’s Potential
HOUSING CHOICES, JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND QUALITY EDUCATION

SAC Meeting
December 12, 2012
AGENDA

• Review previous meeting minutes
• Review outcomes from the workshop
  • Focus groups
  • Challenges
  • Partnerships
• Top-ranked projects, programs, policies and current barriers
• Next steps
The overall goal of the Housing & Economic Development Case Study is to assist in developing strong, stable neighborhoods within the City of Huntsville while tying this effort to an economic development approach.
VALUES WORKSHOP SUMMARY

• **Focus Group Meetings**
  - TDCJ
  - Sam Houston State University
  - Economic Development
  - Primary Education
  - Housing
  - Quality of Life/Community
  - Hospital
TDCJ FOCUS GROUP

• Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings
  1. Increase retail and restaurant opportunities
  2. Start a marketing campaign
  3. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
  4. Broaden a range of housing types and price diversity
  5. Create a green edge to the campus along Sam Houston Avenue
  6. Make Bowers Boulevard the ceremonial entrance to campus
  7. Focus redevelopment efforts on ability to accommodate large groups
  8. Increase community health and wellness opportunities
  9. Leverage the presence of TDCJ to expand economic development
  10. Establish University Avenue as the pedestrian link to downtown
TDCJ FOCUS GROUP

• Notes
  • Believe TDCJ is the core of Huntsville – any marketing needs to not detract from history
  • University Gateway – noted that the gateway location on the project card is next to the prison cemetery
  • Planning for schools should accommodate private schools as well

• Partnerships
  • TDCJ offers prisoner workforce to assist in community projects, including parks and recreation needs
Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings

1. Create a marketing campaign
2. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
3. Expand events and festivals/promote current offerings
4. Broaden a range of housing types and price diversity
5. Increase retail and restaurant opportunities
6. Create a green edge to the campus along Sam Houston Avenue
7. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines
8. Enforce development regulations
9. Increase community health and wellness opportunities
10. Expand upon existing open space and trails system
SHSU FOCUS GROUP

• Notes
  • Better coordination and promotion of university and city events is needed
  • Perception of Huntsville as newcomers arrive is critical

• Partnerships
  • City-University
  • City-Chamber of Commerce
  • Academic Community Engagement program
  • SHSU has small business development program
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP

• **Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings**
  1. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
  2. Increase adult education/training opportunities
  3. Create a marketing campaign
  4. Revise and enforce development regulations
  5. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines
  6. Leverage the presence of Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to expand economic development
  7. Broaden the range of housing types and price diversity
  8. Establish University Avenue as pedestrian link to downtown
  9. Promote private development along University Avenue and Sam Houston Avenue
  10. Create a greenway to campus along Sam Houston Avenue
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP

• Notes
  • Bringing in new employment is critical, but the city needs a solid quality of life to enhance recruitment efforts
  • Increasing quality education is important so that the available workforce is skilled
  • Teachers’ low pay is an issue. Neighboring cities pay teachers $10,000 more

• Partnerships
  • TxDOT
  • University
  • Hospital
  • Workforce Solutions
  • Lone Star College
  • Private and public schools
• **Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings**
  1. Create a marketing campaign
  2. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
  3. Increase adult education/training opportunities
  4. **NEW:** Revise and evaluate development regulations and then enforce
  5. Broaden the range of housing types and price diversity
  6. Leverage the presence of Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to expand economic development
  7. Increase community health and wellness opportunities
  8. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines
  9. Increase restaurant and retail opportunities
  10. Promote private development along University Avenue and Sam Houston Avenue
Notes

- A review of current zoning with a focus on infrastructure needs and city involvement in infrastructure was recommended
- Better schools need more revenue

Partnerships

- Lone Star College
- SHSU
- Hospital
- Huntsville ISD promoting itself
HOUSING FOCUS GROUP

• Notes
  • Cost of development is high. A focus needs to be to bring residents here with higher wages to pay more taxes. This would allow the city to assist with infrastructure and not have the developer carry the entire burden
  • Until Elkins and Timberwilde sell out, no one will likely build a subdivision
  • City development code enforcement needs improvement
  • Connect the Sam Houston statue to downtown

• Partnerships
  • TDCJ
QUALITY OF LIFE FOCUS GROUP

• Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings
  1. Broaden the range of housing types and price diversity
  2. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
  3. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines
  4. NEW: Revise code to be more streamlined and user-friendly
  5. Increase restaurant and retail opportunities
  6. Focus redevelopment efforts on accommodating large groups
  7. NEW: Create a greenway to campus along University Avenue
  8. Establish University Avenue as the pedestrian link to downtown
  9. Promote private development along University Avenue and Sam Houston Avenue
  10. Encourage multi-modal transportation
QUALITY OF LIFE FOCUS GROUP

• Notes
  • Better signage is needed to direct highway traffic to downtown and historical district
  • Multi-modal transit is critical, especially sidewalk improvements
  • Vocational college needed
  • Create a historic preservation ordinance or tool
  • Need consistency on enforcement

• Partnerships
  • TDCJ
HOSPITAL FOCUS GROUP

• **Top Projects, Programs, Policies Rankings**
  1. Promote excellence in K-12 schools
  2. Broaden the range of housing types and price diversity
  3. Increase restaurant and retail opportunities
  4. Increase community health and wellness opportunities
  5. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines
  6. Promote private development along University Avenue and Sam Houston Avenue
  7. Develop a business park
  8. Encourage multi-modal transportation
  9. Establish University Avenue as the pedestrian link to downtown
  10. **NEW:** Wellness and fitness facility on/near HMH property
HOSPITAL FOCUS GROUP

• Notes
  • Lack of housing and shopping is a barrier to recruitment of nurses and doctors
  • Establish a city/hospital partnership to advance economic development in Huntsville. Marshall and Bryan have both used this model
  • HMH has been listed as the “best place that no one has ever heard of for physicians to work” in Texas

• Partnerships
  • Huntsville Memorial Hospital
INTERESTED PUBLIC WORKSHOP

• Top Project, Program, Policy from each group (15 total groups)
  1. Promote excellence in K-12 schools (x5)
  2. Actively enforce development regulations (x2)
  3. Re-evaluate wet/dry county lines (x2)
  4. Broaden the range of housing types and price diversity
  5. Create a greenway to campus along Sam Houston Avenue
  6. Manage sprawl
  7. Convert property near I-45 to a recreation field complex
  8. Create a marketing campaign
  9. Connect street grids
INTERESTED PUBLIC WORKSHOP

• Notes
  • Schools are good – it’s more about promoting them
  • Need things for the youth to do in town
  • Need to consider cultural aspect
  • Consider bringing a vocational institution to give options to younger people
TOP 10 PROJECTS, PROGRAMS & POLICIES
#1

promote excellence in K-12 schools

Strategically plan for excellence in K-12 schools to attract and retain teachers and other educational personnel to the community.
#2

broaden the range of housing types and price diversity

Encourage developers to build a range of housing types that match the range of jobs.
#3

reevaluate wet/dry county lines

Currently portions of Walker County prohibit the sale of alcohol which discourages certain business types (hotels, convention centers, fine dining) from locating in these areas.
create a marketing campaign

A marketing campaign is a set of activities designed to promote Huntsville through a series of television, radio, print, or online advertisements.
increase adult education/training opportunities

Adult education includes learning opportunities such as obtaining a high school education, upgrading skills or special programs at community colleges.
#6

increase retail and restaurant opportunities

Increasing the number of businesses in and around downtown.
create a greenway to campus along sam houston avenue

A greenway is a strip of land that provides habitat to support wildlife, provides shaded walkways for pedestrians and protects water quality.
leverage the presence of Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to expand economic development

TDCJ (the state’s prison system headquarters) is without a doubt one of the key economic drivers for Huntsville.
#9
develop a business park

A business park is an area in which multiple offices or commercial businesses are grouped together.
enforce development regulations

Development codes establish performance standards for built projects, including the type, distribution, and intensity of allowable development within the City.
LOWER RANKED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS AND POLICIES
establish university avenue as the pedestrian link to downtown

Pedestrian links are established through the use of well-placed street furniture, wider sidewalks, quality lighting, clearly marked crosswalks and slower traffic speeds.

- economics
- community
- environment
- aesthetics
convert property near I-45 to a recreation field complex

A recreational field complex could be made up of various types of sport arenas.
promote private development along university avenue and sam houston avenue
increase community health and wellness opportunities

Preventative health measures and recreational activities can decrease diabetes, asthma, heart disease, cancer and other physical and emotional ailments.
manage regional stormwater detention

Controlling stormwater runoff to reduce erosion, water quality degradation, and flooding is an important tool for mitigating the adverse effects of development.
Huntsville has some great events, but adding more cultural and seasonal festivals to the City’s calendar would draw tourists and increase spending in the City.
encourage multimodal transportation

Multimodal transportation is a strategic, connected transportation system that supports cars, bicycles, pedestrians, and public transit.

economics  community  environment  aesthetics
expand upon existing open space and trails system

Install hike and bike trails to connect open spaces and public parks.
manage sprawl

Statutory law is set by the legislature and grants Huntsville specific types of authority to manage development within City boundaries.
focus redevelopment efforts on accommodating large groups

Examples of redevelopment efforts that involve large groups could be a convention center, hotel district or new community center.
In a gridded street plan, streets run at right angles to each other allowing easier circulation for pedestrians and automobiles.
create an entry gateway to campus at bowers boulevard

A ceremonial entrance serves as a welcome point and gateway marking important campus entry ways, announcing the University to all who might pass by.
COMMUNITY GOALS

• **Maintain Downtown** as an economic activity center and focal point.
• Transform downtown Huntsville into a "**university village**".
• **Protect established neighborhoods** and reinvigorate older neighborhoods.
• **Manage growth** around Huntsville.
• **Broaden the range of housing types and prices** to meet affordability needs.
• **Promote** Huntsville’s excellent quality of life
• Create a safe **pedestrian and bicycle connections** to adjacent neighborhoods.
• Connect people to **food** sources
• **Employ regulations** that are more **effective in meeting community goals**.


ECONOMIC GOALS

- Retain and expand **existing businesses**.

- Encourage private market to produce desired outcomes with incentives and flexible regulations.

- Make Huntsville more **competitive** in recruiting new businesses.

- Manage **incompatible** land uses.

- Promote **development opportunities** near Sam Houston State University (especially along University and Sam Houston Avenues).

- Increase local **economic impact** of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.
ENVIRONMENT GOALS

• Create streets that accommodate street trees, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and transit where appropriate.

• Use the City's development regulations to directly prevent and/or mitigate adverse impacts on Huntsville's natural features and assets.
Aesthetic Goals

- Focus attention on more effective management of development quality, impacts and aesthetics along Huntsville's major roadway corridors.

- Use the community's official Development Code and associated regulations to encourage development practices and outcomes more consistent with Huntsville's desired character.
Study Kickoff
City meets with project team to begin efforts and begins formation of Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Analysis
From November through February to develop strategies based on Huntsville-specific trends identified through research and input

Case Study Completed
City of Huntsville is able to move into implementation phase

Input Opportunities
These include the community-wide Harnessing Huntsville’s Potential Workshop as well as focus group discussions to create basic foundation of approach

Input Opportunities
These include the community-wide Achieving Huntsville’s Potential Workshop and additional focus group meetings
NEXT STEPS

• Next SAC meeting: January 9th
• Benchmarking
  • What are other cities of comparable characteristics doing?
  • What targets should we set for goals?