



Proud Past - - Bright Future

**Economic and Community
Development
Key Performance Area**

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A Belton Key Performance Area – ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A group of citizens committed to the economic and residential growth of Belton make up the Economic and Community Development Key Performance Area (KPA). In order for the goals of this KPA to succeed, city leaders, elected and appointed committee persons and Belton's citizens must all have a strong commitment to implementing each action step in a timely manner. The positive and straightforward nature of our citizens will guarantee a bright and progressive future for our community.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT KPA VISION:

Belton is a city that creates opportunities for diversified residential growth and successful business development. This attitude and environment will be maintained by providing a highly diversified commercial base that will result in employment that minimizes the impact of economic cycles. This will create a desirable atmosphere that attracts residential development conducive to a diversified population. Belton's economic climate will afford more opportunity for people to live, work and shop locally. It also will make our city a welcoming destination for those who live and work in outside communities.

Priority Issue - Development of a Strong Industrial, Professional and White-Collar Job Base

A Group to Focus on Incentives - The current process for gathering and distributing incentive information needs to become clearer and more complete. By combining members of all parties involved, the community can create a better-educated, more aggressive group to market incentives for development in the city. Rather than combining or eliminating existing groups, we recommend the establishment of a separate group for educational and marketing purposes only. The new group will need to focus on various issues, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Chapter 100 Bonds, Grants, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), tax abatements and special incentives in sales or property tax. The group could also include non-monetary incentives such as special employee training or hiring services. Funding could be sought from schools, county and state governments and corporate services.

A Program to Train and Inform all City Employees and Related Support Staff in order to Expand and Enhance Capabilities for Recruitment and Retention of Businesses - Many city employees have contact with the public on a regular basis. Proper education of employees about the available programs and benefits to businesses will ensure that all business prospects receive complete information on all resources available to them.

Developing Aggressive Strategies for Accelerated Annexation for Organized Future Growth in Areas Identified in a Comprehensive Timetable - The City of Belton has a comprehensive timetable that addresses issues of annexation, including the areas targeted for annexation and when they should be annexed. The public should receive notification and education regarding the reasons and benefits of the timetable. Aggressive strategies should be developed and communicated in the implementation of the timetable.

Because the city is limited by law as to the scope of their involvement in the promotion of annexation, Belton will need to hire a public relations firm to market and promote the advantages of annexation. The city limits of Belton need expansion so the tax revenue created by growth will not bypass our community and go to another governmental area.

The timetable and the division of the areas to be annexed should be re-examined to assure successful campaigns in the future.

Expansion of the Economic Development Team - With the visible growth taking place in our community, citizens realize that the Economic Development Team, made up of Belton Corporation for Economic Development (BCED), the City Administrator and the Planning and Zoning staff, has done a good job with the resources available. However, the team needs to expand its scope and abilities due to the aggressive economic development attempts of surrounding communities. The Vision Team recommends the following:

Promote Individual and Business Membership in BCED - We should establish a dues structure that will generate an additional funding source for expanded projects. In addition, we should visit other economic development organizations in the Kansas City metro area and establish future projects to generate other sources of revenue for the organization.

Create a Special Projects Fund - The Board of Aldermen (BOA) should create such a fund for BCED to administer, dedicated to funding expenses for industrial, residential and business recruitment and retention.

Practice Effective Networking - This effort will encourage continued and expanded coordination with national, state, county and metro Economic Development Corporations (EDC).

Hire Additional Support Staff - This will enhance the capabilities of BCED and the city's development team.

Priority Issue - Attracting Residential Development

Guidelines and Performance Requirements for All Boards and Commissions - The functions of local governments have changed dramatically over the last few years. As citizens become better educated, they expect more from their elected officials and their city services. Because of increased demand for city services, Belton should establish written guidelines and performance requirements for all boards, board members and appointed commissions. Each person should go through an educational and training process that is consistent with the growth and development vision of the City of Belton.

Consistent Communication with Developers and Builders - Data from builders and developers indicates that Belton needs to continue to improve the consistency of all correspondence and procedures with regard to persons involved in the development process. The Vision Team recommends the following:

The Development of a Job Packet for Commercial and/or Residential Development Projects - These packets should include a complete list of the contact persons and phone numbers for each step, a detailed list of all requirements within each step (to be signed off on by responsible city employee or builder/developer), all specific codes and ordinances identified and a complete inspection checklist to follow the job file.

Weekly Meetings with Developers and Contractors Continued and Expanded

Priority Issue - Retention of Discretionary Spending by Belton Citizens and the Attraction of Shoppers from Outside the City

A Cooperative Agreement for Business Advisory Services - The Belton Chamber of Commerce, the City of Belton and Belton Corporation for Economic Development (BCED) would combine to form this agreement to establish a program that provides business advisory services to new and existing businesses.

Business advisory services benefit local companies. Many business owners are unaware of the resources available through government and educational sources that positively impact their companies and their employees. As businesses succeed on a higher level, the local economy receives more money, generating revenue for the goods and services provided by the City of Belton.

Agreements need to be established with all the organizations that provide services to businesses, such as SCORE (Counselors to America's Small Business), Small Business Administration, Community Colleges and Belton High School. The Belton Chamber of Commerce would work with interested organizations to get the advisory programs underway.

Identification of Unfilled Business Opportunities - Through this effort, Belton would identify products and/or services which would enhance our community.

Leadership would conduct a series of community surveys to determine unfilled needs and desires of the community in the retail and service sectors. BCED would evaluate other communities for businesses/services/products not offered in Belton and would then actively recruit businesses to fill any void, based on the needs and wants determined.

Develop Future Residential Areas with a Small Town Atmosphere - Residential subdivisions are beginning to change in many areas of the country. Over the last 30 years, subdivisions with houses side-by-side and back-to-back have been the typical design. The sense of neighborhood connection disappeared due to commuting parents and organized events for children. Many developers now realize that communities with amenities and services close by and convenient to the homeowner generate greater profits and long-term stability for the community.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should work closely with the county to include this residential concept in its comprehensive plan. Future annexation areas should include parks, neighborhood gathering areas, walkways and bike trails in order to allow families to shop, work and relax in their own neighborhood.

Recruit Investors to support the Belton Vision Plan - Belton needs individuals and corporations willing to invest in Belton within the framework of the Vision Plan.

Summary:

In order to manage the accelerated growth the community has experienced over the past 10 years, Belton needs to recruit individuals and companies to share in the business opportunities a growing community offers. Belton still has a large number of undeveloped commercial acreage and a large potential for residential development in the proposed annexation areas. Efforts need to be made to establish business relationships with experienced developers and business owners in other parts of the country, in order to encourage them to work in the Belton community. This process should be started by BCED and the city development team as soon as possible.