



GEDC Gonzales, Texas

Goal Setting Workshop Final Report

April 8-9, 2013

Background

Strategic Government Resource (SGR) was enlisted to lead the EDC of Gonzales through a two day workshop designed to focus on leading them to establish new goals—both long-range goals and short term goals. The timing of the workshop was important because the Gonzales City Council had recently completed the process of establishing a long-range vision and a number of strategic targets for the city to reach in the next 20 years. Some of these targets relate directly to the work of the EDC, so it was very important to establish alignment between the goals of the City Council and the goals of the EDC.

In addition to setting definable goals, the EDC wanted to develop a clear Mission Statement that could help them maintain unity and direction.

The workshop was led by Dr. Mike Mowery, Director of Leadership Development for SGR, and Rob Franke, who has served as the Mayor of Cedar Hill, Texas, for the last fourteen years. All of the Board Members of the EDC were in attendance at the workshop. (Bill Keck, Clint Hille, Nathan Neuse, Al O'Donnell, Hector Porras, James Ryan, Larry Wehde) Carolyn Gibson-Baros, the Economic Development Director, and Barbara Friedrich, Main Street Administrator, were also present.

Process

Monday, April 8th

Rob Franke gave a presentation on Principles of Good Governance which focused on the importance of building and maintaining trust within the Board, and between the Board and the ED Director. The board identified the following five areas of effective board governance practices that provide an opportunity for greater effectiveness.

- *An effective board knows the boss and the vision.* The board noted strong agreement regarding their role and relationship with the City Council. They felt there was opportunity in developing the vision for the organization.

- *An effective board respects and communicates with each other and with staff, as well as with key constituencies.* The board noted that greater communication with other stakeholders will help them establish priorities and spend time on the more important elements of their mission. There was a great deal of discussion regarding the need to identify the key stakeholders.
- *An effective board helps keep the organization focused on its mission, vision and core values.* The board discussed the need to develop greater focus and strategic decision within their board meeting agendas.
- *An effective board emphasizes strategic planning and priority setting as a foundation for decision-making.* The board recognized the value in developing a stronger strategic direction.
- *An effective board holds staff accountable.* An important part of holding the staff accountable is having clear values, mission statements, and goals.

Following this presentation Mike Mowery shared the results of the pre-workshop interviews that were conducted with the Board Members. The Board identified several themes that emerged during those interviews. These included: the need for direction, a concern for downtown, a desire to leverage the oil boom to support other industries, and a need for things connected with tourism, such as improved infrastructure and more restaurants.

Mission Statement

After these presentations and discussions, the Board crafted a Mission Statement that could succinctly define its purpose. The new GEDC Mission Statement is: **“The Gonzales Economic Development Corporation exists to create positive economic growth, enhance the quality of life, and maintain the historical heritage of Gonzales.”**

Vision

The closing portion of Monday night was spent discussing the need for a unifying vision regarding economic growth, particularly as it related to the downtown area. The Board decided to spend time on Tuesday night discussing their vision for downtown.

Tuesday, April 9th

Rob Franke shared the results of an informal survey that the Board had taken on Monday night regarding trust, and the Board spent time reviewing the results of an online assessment each one had taken called “I-OPT” Survey. “I-OPT” measures how a person perceives and processes information and has many implications for how team members can work together more effectively.

Following this discussion, the Board turned its attention to discussing their vision for Downtown. These are some things that describe the Downtown that the Board envisions in twenty years:

- Full Buildings
- Businesses Catered to Tourism
- Vibrant
- Light Industry moved to other areas of town
- Restaurants
- Night Life
- Housing
- Office Space
- Utilities buried or hidden
- Historical Tours
- Concerts
- Multiple Activities
- Specialty Stores
- Coffee Shops
- Businesses Open at Hours Conducive to Tourism

Goals

1. To Promote Economic Growth that will Serve as a Catalyst to Revitalize Downtown

Objectives

- Create a Team of Strategic Stakeholders
- Encourage Efforts to Promote Restoring and Cleaning Downtown (through such things as improving facades, code enforcement, landscaping, and hiding or burying utilities)
- Encourage the City Council to pass a Historical Preservation District Ordinance for the Downtown Area
- Reinforce the Main Street Program
- Create an Attractive and Visible Welcome Center
- Develop Better Alignment with Downtown Merchants and Events
- Start a Retail Business Incubator in the Downtown Area

2. To Promote Economic Growth that will Enhance the Quality of Life and be Sustainable

Objectives

- Support Existing Businesses and Attract New Businesses for the Airport
- Support Businesses that are likely to remain in Gonzales after the Eagle Ford Boom has subsided
- Create an Inventory List of Spin-off Businesses that are Needed due to the Current Industrial Growth
- Strengthen the Partnership with Gonzales Independent School District, Victoria College, and the University of Houston
- Investigate the Possibility of Building a new Industrial Park

Recommendations

SGR recommends that the Board consider the following actions to maintain alignment and focus without causing discouragement.

- At each Board Meeting make time on the agenda to discuss one, or at the most two, of their Objectives to determine what steps have been taken and what next steps can be taken.
- Assign a Board Member as the “Point” for each specific Objective.
- Revisit the Board’s strategic mission and vision efforts in approximately six months.