

PEARLAND PROSPERITY

Executive Summary



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND OUTLINE

In 2019, the Pearland Economic Development Corporation (PEDC), along with local partners in government, education, healthcare and business embarked on a collaborative community and economic development strategic planning process that will make the community a more prosperous, successful, and vibrant place to live, work, and do business. This plan would build upon the Pearland 20/20 strategy, which the community developed through a similar process in 2013 and has helped catalyze numerous community improvements in recent years.

The initiative began with the **Competitive Assessment** phase, a series of focus groups and interviews with over 80 local business, government, education and civic leaders. Businesses and residents throughout Pearland had an opportunity to provide feedback about the issues and opportunities facing the community by participating in an online survey. This feedback was combined with quantitative data findings to create a Community Assessment - a concise narrative of the region's opportunities and challenges to lay the groundwork for future phases of the process.

The next phase of the process was an **Implementation Assessment** of the Pearland 20/20 strategic plan to allow the community and steering committee to gain a firm understanding of areas where goals have been met, areas where progress has yet to be achieved, and any barriers that have impeded effective implementation.

The Pearland Prosperity strategic plan is the result of months of research, public input, and feedback and oversight from the project **Steering Committee**. Throughout the process, Committee members, including representatives from the City Council, PEDC Board of Directors, Chamber of Commerce, school districts, City staff, and other key civic and business leaders, reviewed drafts and revised versions of the Strategy and made multiple comments that were incorporated into the Strategic Plan.

At the center of the Pearland Prosperity framework are two **Community Goals** that broadly identify the desired outcomes of Pearland's holistic economic development effort. These Goals are:

Economic growth and diversification

Provide opportunities for residents to prosper and enhance Pearland's fiscal sustainability through a holistic approach to economic development

A community of choice in Greater Houston

Ensure Pearland's quality of life and quality of place continue to attract and retain diverse individuals and families

These goals can be pursued through a number of Strategic Initiatives grouped into seven high-level **Focus Areas**. Each Initiative corresponds to an action, program, effort, or investment that can help move Pearland toward its desired future. The Focus Areas provide organizational clarity and readily communicate to a wide variety of audiences the issues that Pearland will seek to address through collective action. These Focus Areas are:

1. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Pearland's base of employers has grown significantly in recent years, however, Pearland's tax base is heavily dependent on residential property taxes and retail sales taxes. This poses a potential long-term risk as the community's housing stock ages and the national bricks-and-mortar retail sector faces an uncertain future. The community must build upon the location and expansion success of recent years and pursue the growth of primary jobs within its borders through a holistic approach to economic development.

2. BUSINESS FORMATION AND EARLY-STAGE GROWTH

Pearland must enhance its entrepreneurial ecosystem of individuals, organizations, institutions, and programs that encourage and support the formation and growth of new businesses. By ensuring that Pearland has an optimal business climate and support services to aid business formation and growth, Pearland can position itself as an attractive destination for entrepreneurs and new and growing firms in the Greater Houston region.

3. SITE DEVELOPMENT

This Focus Area involves ensuring that Pearland has a competitive, highly visible supply of shovel-ready development sites. Part of this work involves effectively marketing prime districts and ensuring that sites are well-served by needed infrastructure and desirable amenities. In addition, Pearland should take a more proactive approach to increasing the supply of development-ready sites is needed in order to ensure the community's competitiveness and "unlock" sites that may not be activated in the near term through market forces alone.

4. CORRIDORS

The bulk of the community's available development and redevelopment sites suitable for commercial and/or industrial development are concentrated around three primary corridors: SH 288, FM 518/Broadway, and SH 35. Additionally, many of Pearland's existing jobs are already clustered along these corridors. Pearland must invest in its key corridors to ensure that they are efficient, aesthetically pleasing, and well maintained in order to ensure that they are attractive destinations for jobs and investment.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE AND MOBILITY

Pearland has made significant progress in recent years on a variety of road and highway projects aimed at improving internal mobility within Pearland and easing commutes to key job centers. This Focus Area recommends advancing high-priority road and highway projects and advocating for and developing additional resources needed to fund them. Pearland should also seek to advance options for expanding transit connectivity to major employment centers.

6. QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY OF PLACE

A prominent theme that emerged from the public input process is that issues related to quality of life and quality of place are important to Pearland residents, with stakeholders wanting to see

Pearland expand and enhance its supply of walkable, mixed-use activity hubs. The community should advance mixed-use developments and catalytic quality of place amenities that can help Pearland maintain its status as a community of choice within Greater Houston.

7. **WORKFORCE AND TALENT**

Pearland is a highly educated community that boasts excellent PK-12 public schools and proximity to numerous higher education institutions and training providers. However, there are several opportunities to further leverage Pearland's advantages with respect to talent development and address outstanding workforce and training needs. Public, private, and non-profit partners in Pearland must work together to further enhance the community's workforce and, by extension, its competitiveness for jobs and investment.



COMMUNITY GOALS

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION

Provide opportunities for residents to prosper and enhance Pearland's fiscal sustainability through a holistic approach to economic development

A COMMUNITY OF CHOICE IN GREATER HOUSTON

Ensure Pearland's quality of life and quality of place continue to attract and retain diverse individuals and families

FOCUS AREAS

1. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 Engage in a targeted approach to business and attraction marketing
- 1.2 Help existing businesses grow and thrive through a collaborative, action-oriented approach to business retention and expansion (BRE)
- 1.3 Support a vibrant retail sector in Pearland
- 1.4 Proactively communicate the economic development value proposition to the Pearland community

2. BUSINESS FORMATION AND EARLY-STAGE GROWTH

- 2.1 Ensure that Pearland's business climate and support services are optimized for enterprise formation and growth
- 2.2 Establish a hub for entrepreneurship to concentrate local services and connect to the regional ecosystem
- 2.3 Establish a revolving loan fund (RLF) to incentivize primary business formation and growth

3. SITE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Position the Lower Kirby District and the SH 35 Corridor as priority areas for development
- 3.2 Proactively assemble and prepare sites to eliminate burdens related to acquisition and development
- 3.3 Ensure that best-in-class infrastructure and amenities are in place to support site development

4. CORRIDORS

- 4.1 Implement the 288 Corridor Master Improvement Plan
- 4.2 Implement the SH 35 Corridor Redevelopment Plan
- 4.3 Develop the FM 518/Broadway Corridor Development Plan (SH 288 to SH 35)
- 4.4 Beautify Pearland's corridors and gateways

5. INFRASTRUCTURE AND MOBILITY

- 5.1 Advance the planning, design and construction of priority road and highway projects
- 5.2 Pursue federal, state and local funding for transportation projects
- 5.3 Pursue near- and long-term options to expand transit connectivity to major employment centers
- 5.4 Advance infrastructure projects that improve drainage and stormwater management in Pearland

6. QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY OF PLACE

- 6.1 Pursue the development of dynamic, walkable mixed use districts
- 6.2 Advance catalytic "anchor" projects to support vibrant mixed use districts in Pearland
- 6.3 Develop and implement the Parks and Multi-Modal Master Plans
- 6.4 Diversify and maintain Pearland's housing stock

7. WORKFORCE AND TALENT

- 7.1 Connect and enhance Pearland's talent pipeline through a collaborative approach
- 7.2 Leverage Pearland's special diversity and promote a culture of inclusion in Pearland
- 7.3 Engage Pearland's young professionals and emerging leaders