

ENVISION MINERAL WELLS A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

May 17, 2017

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INTRODUCTION

Envision Mineral Wells represents the strategic Vision for the future economic sustainability of the City of Mineral Wells, Palo Pinto County, and the adjacent economic region. It was developed through the efforts of a significant number of business, education, and community leaders, joined by elected and appointed officials. They collectively identified the most critical issues faced by the community; assessed the issues relative to community assets, infrastructure, resources, partners, real estate, talent pool, and policies; ultimately proposing, prioritizing, and adopting a number of "high value-high return" actionable items, regarding those issues.

Initially led by the City of Mineral Wells through the leadership of the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager, the Mineral Wells Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has formally adopted Envision Mineral Wells as the Chambers strategic plan, their commitment evidenced by a revision of the Chambers bylaws and a formal restructuring of the Chamber, in order to provide management and administrative support of the plans implementation.

A Community Vision with clearly defined strategic goals; consensually supported by the diversity of the cities leadership; based on a community's competitive advantages and disadvantages; is a critical first step.

It is, however, only the first step, laying the foundational "building block" for the successful implementation of the vision.

It is in the actual implementation that communities often fail. Therefore, it is necessary to lay out a 'Strategic Acton Plan' for implementation, that clearly defines "who will do what by when" in a sequential manner, with specific goals, timelines, responsibility assignments, and performance measures. It should also identify the resources necessary for implementation; the organizational structure that will support implementation; the administrative under-pinning's to enable implementation; and the communications strategy that will keep citizens informed and supportive.

It must fundamentally lay out the specific, actionable steps that move a strategic goal from a concept or idea to accomplishment.

This report is designed to provide the basic framework for the successful implementation of the plan.

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PREMISE FOR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & SUPPORT

"Who will do what by when" is the predominant issue, relative to implementation. For every goal, strategy, objective and task, it must be clearly understood WHO is leading; WHAT specifically will be done; and WHEN we expect to complete each step, leading to achievement.

The remainder of this report will be organized along that basis.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In terms of organizational structure, the Mineral Wells Chamber of Commerce has re-organized into five (5) "Operating Councils", each accepting responsibility for the management and administration of one of the five clearly defined strategic objectives. Those Councils include (1) Economic Development; (2) Education & Workforce Development; (3) Community Development; (4) Hospitality & Tourism; and (5) Government Relations & Infrastructure. These Councils, supported by the Chamber staff, will provide the administrative underpinnings necessary to manage and organize the meetings, and the processes needed to carry out the strategies and actionable tasks.

The Chamber has committed to operate the Councils in close partnership with the City of Mineral Wells, inclusive of Mineral Wells ISD, Weatherford Community College, Palo Pinto County, and all community stakeholders interested in the successful implementation of the plan.

RESOURCES

In terms of the resources necessary, the Chambers Finance Committee will broaden its focus, to work in partnership with the City and community to secure both the people and the dollars necessary to fund these initiatives from federal, state, county, and municipal government; public and private foundations; the business community, civic organizations, and others interested in the development of a vibrant community.

PUBLIC AWARENESS & SUPPORT

The Envision Mineral Wells Steering Committee, that originally provided leadership for the process will remain intact. They will primarily focus on maintaining the public awareness necessary to ensure broad based community understanding and support of these initiatives.

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OUR ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

The Economic Competitiveness goals adopted by Envision Mineral Wells represent the issues deemed most critical to Mineral Wells economic competitiveness. These goals will be the responsibility of the Chambers Economic Development Council.

Economic Development is the creation of wealth in which community benefits are realized. It is more than a jobs program, it's an investment in growing your economy and enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

PRIMARY GOALS:

(1) Grow and diversify the economy of Mineral Wells, through creation, expansion, recruitment and retention, while

(2) maintaining, improving and developing the primary facilities and infrastructure necessary to support the growth of the targeted business clusters.

(Note: goal 1 is the responsibility of the Economic Development Council; goal 2 is the primary responsibility of the Government Relation Council)

FOCUS:

The Economic Development Council will be responsible for three of the targeted business clusters; Aviation, Advanced Manufacturing, and Health Care. The Hospitality & Tourism Council will be responsible for the tourism cluster.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING:

The primary focus for this cluster is attracting suppliers that need to locate in an EPA attainment County. The primary challenge is that the industrial space within the county is nearly built out. Therefore, an assessment of Ft Wolters, the current industrial park, the Dempsey Heli-port, and the Mineral Wells airport should be viewed as determining the potential of those sites for future industrial growth.

AVIATION:

The primary focus for this cluster is the unmanned & autonomous sector (UAS) of aviation, which represents a future high demand sector in the United States. Mineral Wells competitive advantage is location, being adjacent to the fourth most populous region in America, while remaining outside the tightly controlled DFW airspace. In partnership with the advanced manufacturing sector, the airport must be marketed, relative to its suitability to attract both suppliers and primary UAS companies, as well as a site for commercial testing.

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INITIAL STEPS FOR BOTH AVIATION & ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INCLUDE:

- (1) Review the assessments of facilities the city has made and the "white papers" proposing ways to redevelop/repurpose them; these include:
 - a) Ft Wolters
 - b) Industrial Park
 - c) Mineral Wells Airport
 - d) Dempsey Heliport
- (2) Determine what will be needed to utilize and/or expand these facilities;
- (3) Consider whether to integrate aviation with advanced manufacturing, in terms of outreach, as all four facilities represent the potential to attract suppliers as well as primary manufacturers for both advanced manufacturing and aviation.
- (4) Begin due diligence to determine what support Mineral Wells can expect to receive, particularly from the Governor's office of Economic Development. Specifically,
 - a) follow up with Keith Graf, the staff lead for the Texas Military Preparedness Commission.
 - b) arrange a meeting with Gen Kevin Pottinger, Chairman of the Commission.
 - c) Follow up with Nicole Ryf, who is the lead for incentives for advanced manufacturing. (Both Keith & Nicole indicated their support when we met with them in Austin in January.)
- (5) Conduct due diligence to determine the market capability to attract suppliers to Palo Pinto County, beginning with General Motors, given their current focus to bring virtually all of their suppliers to north-central Texas.
- (6) Work to appoint the Mayor to the "Texas Mayors of Military Communities" committee.
- (7) Assess the 5 primary economic foundations, related to the defined industry sectors.

HEALTH CARE:

The primary focus for this sector is to expand the healthcare industry within the community in ways that complement the existing hospital.

In the process of developing the plan, there was strong consensus that we should not do anything that would be detrimental to the hospital, as it is the anchor for this sector. The approach, therefore, is to identify gaps that exist, that can and should be filled.

- (1) The first step for this cluster should be to establish a task force, chaired by the hospital, to specifically identify the gaps that need to be filled.
- (2) The second step should be to follow up with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, to determine the support we can receive from them, relative to the identified gaps. We met with Charles Smith, the Commissioner, in Austin, who indicated his office would be supportive of the growth of healthcare in our rural community/region. Of the 600+ programs managed by HHS, we will determine which ones are appropriate for Mineral Wells.

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(3) Once the gaps have been identified and agreed-upon, and the role of HHS determined, the third step is to develop a specific strategic approach to grow this sector.

SMALL BUSINESS:

Although this is not a targeted industry cluster, small business typically leads communities throughout the United States in terms of job creation. As large firms downsize, small business growth becomes a critical factor. The focus on small business, in general, should be a component of the work of the Economic Development Council.

(1) Governors Small Business Conference: the small business focus should be launched by hosting a Governors small business conference, which can be grant funded through the governor's office of economic development. This event, to be held prior to October 1, would bring multiple state agencies to Mineral Wells; provide information to small business owners they are probably not aware of; and begin to strengthen the partnerships initially developed through the Austin delegation visit. This event could also help promote the bio economy/agribusiness forum that will be conducted later this fall.

(2) Texas Treasure Business Awards: Brad Patterson (Texas Historical Commission) mentioned the Texas treasure business awards, a program that recognizes Texas owned businesses at least 50 years old. This award program could be launched at the governor's small business conference.

(3) Small Business Steering Committee: select a small group from those attending the initial small business conference, to serve as the small business steering committee of the Economic Development Council. Work with them to identify priorities most critical to small business, and develop a plan of action to address those priorities.

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS:

Another aspect of economic development is the establishment of partnerships with statewide industry associations. These associations serve their members by providing information on business opportunities. As Mineral Wells strategy evolves, establishing and maintaining relationships with these associations can translate into awareness of Mineral Wells opportunities by businesses throughout the state of Texas. In particular, Mineral Wells should consider memberships in the Texas Chamber of Commerce and the Texas Economic Development Council.

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HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

The tourism goals adopted by Envision Mineral Wells represent the issues deemed most critical to this sector of the region's economy. These goals are the responsibility of the Chambers Hospitality & Tourism Council.

Tourism must be viewed as a wealth creation strategy, as it is premised on a community's ability to attract visitors, both business and recreational, to the community. In coming to a community, the dollars they spend are essentially dollars migrated from one region to another, therefore it is a form of wealth creation, the basis of all economic development.

Success in this sector is dependent on (1) your brand; (2) the effective marketing of your brand; and (3) the development of the infrastructure, venues, facilities, events and attractions that support your brand, that will draw people from other cities and regions to your community.

INITIAL STEPS:

The initial step should be a review of all of the work done to date, inclusive of the re-branding recently concluded; the current community tourism calendar of events; the status of current "tourism infrastructure", inclusive of hotels/motels, restaurants, retail, state parks and other attractions; and the recommendations from the state agencies that represent support for tourism.

The second step is to determine the tourism sectors (i.e. historical, sports, recreation) you will focus on relative to your brand.

The third step is to review the recommendation made and assistance offered by the Governor Office of Economic Development; the Texas Historical Commission; the Commission on the Arts, and the Texas Parks Department.

MINERAL WELLS STATE PARK:

Brent Leisure, Director of the Parks Division, offered to work with the city's leadership to develop a formal MOU which could include concessions, facilities, for profit use, and RFPs for services, pavilions, and performances. As examples, equestrian use, fishing guides and boat rentals could serve to enhance the visitor experience. In essence the MOU should lay out specific terms by which the city and parks division could work together to enable greater support for the tourism industry. A draft MOU should be developed, reflecting everything the city might want to see as the first step in beginning the process of negotiating the MOU.

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Specific action steps should include:

- (1) request a copy of the state study
- (2) request a copy of the centennial plan
- (3) request information on the new park to be developed in the county, indicating the cities formal interest in being involved in the design process
- (4) discuss Turkey Peak, relative to the land on the northside that may become a state park
- (5) request information on the planned wildlife management area, consisting of 5,000 acres adjacent to the park
- (6) request information on grant programs available for local park development

HERITAGE TRAILS PROGRAM:

Brad Patterson, director of community heritage development at the Historical Commission recommended involvement with this program, as it consists of communities within regions working together. Hospitality training is also available through this program. It also offers opportunities for regional collaboration.

BANKHEAD HIGHWAY:

Suggested by Brad Patterson, the Chamber has already begun to focus on marketing Mineral Wells as a part of the Historic Bankhead highway. This process should be encouraged and developed, similar to how communities have utilized "Route 66".

ARTS:

Jim Bob McMillan, Deputy Director recommended the tourism council review the support available through the Texas Commission on the Arts, and determine the role the arts can play in tourism development.

Specific steps should include:

- (1) request information on grant funds available
- (2) request information on and access to the "touring roster", which is a source of artists that can perform in Mineral Wells
- (3) request information on the technical assistance the Commission can provide
- (4) request assistance on professional development seminars
- (5) contact "Humanities Texas", a sister agency and determine how they might be of assistance

STATE SUPPORT:

Nate Gieryn (Economic Development) discussed cooperative programs that can enable the state to market Mineral Wells. He is also the lead for the tourism assessment.

In addition to the assessment, we should consider the following:

- (1) request state support for the Baker hotel, to include the Governor's office contacting the Department of Homeland Security, to facilitate the process.
- (2) determine what would enable the state to co-market Mineral Wells

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MAINTAINING A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE

The education and workforce development goals adopted by Envision Mineral Wells represent the issues deemed most critical to Mineral Wells ability to maintain a competitive workforce. These goals are the responsibility of the Chambers Education & Workforce Development Council.

Education and workforce development must be viewed as an integrated process, linking public education with higher education and the publicly funded workforce system, aligning and integrating the agencies and their resources to ensure the community is developing a highly educated, trained, skilled workforce; particularly in support of the primary industry sectors that drive wealth creation within the region.

PRIMARY GOALS:

Three specific goals with related objectives have been set. Essentially, they call for a focus on (1) improving student performance; (2) the development of strong partnerships between educational institutions, business, and government at all levels; and (3) to address the needs for skilled workers required by Mineral Wells targeted business sectors.

ASSESSMENT:

The first fundamental step for the council is to assess where the community currently stands, relative to each of the three primary goals. In essence, a SWOT analysis to understand the most critical priorities.

STATE RESOURCES:

Review the resources offered by the 3 state agencies; establish priorities, and follow up with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), relative to the meetings held in Austin, in order to take advantage of the resources offered by the three agencies.

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS:

Set meetings with the following to discuss their priorities, state agency resources, and the goals of Envision Mineral Wells: (1) Mineral Wells ISD Superintendent and School Board; (2) the Weatherford college leadership; (3) the North-Central Texas Workforce Investment Board; and (4) Tarleton State.

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP:

Ensure business leaders representing each targeted sector are on the council, in order to contribute direct input to their industry sectors workforce needs.

AWARENESS:

Create awareness and understanding in the business community. Consider hosting a series of luncheons/coffees to brief business leaders on the resources available to

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them. Create handouts that explain the benefits in simple terms. Invite agency and educational leaders to speak/present.

SKILLS GAPS:

Determine the most critical skills/training gaps the Community faces, and develop strategies that will establish the talent pipelines necessary to close the gaps.

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The community development and quality of life goals adopted by Envision Mineral Wells represent the issues deemed most critical to Mineral Wells ability to redevelop the community in ways that will support economic sustainability and improve the quality of life for all citizens. These goals are the responsibility of the Chambers Community Development Council.

Community Development translates the community vision into reality by integrating the needs of residents and business with municipal goals.

PRIMARY GOALS:

Four specific goals with related objectives have been set. Essentially, they call for focus on (1) redevelopment of existing areas, inclusive of downtown and targeted neighborhoods; (2) at risk/underserved population's; (3) housing development at all levels; and (4) expansion of amenities in the city, to include arts and culture; parks, trails and recreational activities; and facilities and activities that serve the youth population.

ORGANIZE AROUND PRIORITIES:

The first step should be to prioritize the goals and objectives, organizing such task forces and/or work groups as may be necessary to focus on the issues; formulate recommendations; and provide community support, since a significant amount of this work will require city council action that must be supported by community residents. This includes (1) sequential priorities for downtown redevelopment; (2) the selection of priority neighborhoods and the development of plans for their revitalization; (3) an assessment of at risk/underserved populations, as the initial step to formulate a plan of action; and (4) a review of all community amenities, (this should be done with the Tourism Council)

The second step should be to review the recommendations made by state agencies, and determine those the community should support, followed by a sequential plan of action to work with those agencies.

STATE TOURISM ASSESMENT:

A key component, (that will be inclusive of multiple Chamber Councils,) will be the tourism assessment, conducted by four state agencies: The Governor's Office of Economic Development; the Texas Commission on the Arts; Texas Parks & Wildlife; and the Texas Historical Commission.

DOWNTOWN:

Specific to down town, the following should be carefully considered, as the basis to stimulate the redevelopment of downtown. A fundamental goal is to provide tax credits to incentivize and stimulate property redevelopment.

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(1) conduct a resource survey of all properties – this will require a professional, and probably cost \$50,000, however Grants are available from the state to help offset this cost.

(2) establish a landmark commission – which would develop and design guidelines and standards for redevelopment of historic areas and properties.

(3) historic preservation ordinance – this would guide the redevelopment of historic properties in designated districts

(4) create a national register district – this would provide access to state (25%) and federal (20%) tax credits for property that is redeveloped.

(5) establish a Main Street Program – this would necessitate hiring a manager, however it could be done through a partnership between the City and Chamber of Commerce, whereby both could share the funding responsibility.

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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS:

The infrastructure goals adopted by Envision Mineral Wells represent the issues deemed most critical to the community's ability to provide the infrastructure that supports the broader goals of economic sustainability. These goals are the responsibility of the Chambers Government Relations Council.

Government relations should be viewed as the development of strong, effective partnerships with governmental agencies and entities at all levels. These include county, regional, state, and federal entities, as all represent governmental bodies that both establish public policy and approve and fund a significant amount of public infrastructure.

DATABASE:

Effective communications is essential to Government Relations. A vital step is to identify all governmental agencies at all levels important to the goals established; the develop a comprehensive database of all current and targeted governmental partners, inclusive of the primary individuals you will need to interface with, in a format that allows effective communication. As an example, you would want the capability to be able to send a letter within 24 hours to every member of the state House of Representatives, with letters going to both their district office and Austin office concurrently.

PRIMARY GOALS:

Five specific goals with related objectives have been set. Essentially, they focus on (1) the development of an infrastructure plan, to include utilities, roadways, water and sewer; (2) enhanced mobility, addressing both congestion and mobility; (3) the effective use of code enforcement to clean up blighted areas; (4) the establishment of public policies that enable economic sustainability; and (5) the development of primary city facilities, including the Airport, Dempsey heliport, Ft Wolters, and the industrial park.

PRIORITIZE:

Review and prioritize all goals and objectives; then within the Government Relations Council, establish appropriate task forces and work groups as may be necessary to support implementation of the plan and its objectives; and assess and document current resources.

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GOAL 1: INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN:

The following steps should be considered in the development of the infrastructure plan:

- a. Assess the current status of the city's plans
- b. Assess the needs of the identified industry sectors, relative to the geographic areas of the community targeted for each sector, which should be provided by the Economic Development Council.
- c. Assess the needs of the geographic areas targeted for redevelopment (i.e. Downtown), which should come from the Communities Development Council
- d. Assess the needs of the cities projected population growth patterns
- e. Prioritize and project cost estimates, as the basis to seek sources of funding

GOAL 2: ENHANCED MOBILITY

Building and strengthen relationships with this agency is one of your most critical priorities. Specifically, we need to:

- (1) Target Bill Hale, Chief Engineer; Randy Holmann, Director of District Operations; Trent Thomas, Director of Public Policy and Legislation; Brian Barth, District Engineer; and the area engineer
- (2) Review the unified transportation plan, relative to US 281 and US 180
- (3) Review TAP-category nine, relative to trails and parks
- (4) Strengthen the relationship with TxDot Aviation
- (5) Host TxDot state leaders annually in Mineral Wells

GOAL 3: CODE ENFORCEMENT:

- a. Identify the areas of the city that this tactic should focus on
- b. Identify the primary concerns in each sector
- c. Determine appropriate response for identified violations

GOAL 4: PUBLIC POLICIES:

The fundamental premise for this goal is to ensure that the community's public policies support, incentivize and enhance the targeted industry sectors and neighborhoods in the Envision Mineral Wells plan. Suggestions include:

- a. Identify existing policies that act as deterrents to the growth of your identified industry and neighborhood sectors.
- b. Propose policies that should be considered that would serve to stimulate and support the growth of your identified sectors.
- c. Develop a matrix of identified policy issues for review with and input from industry and neighbor sector leaders.

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d. Work with the City to determine an appropriate approach to change or modify existing policies and promote new policies, as identified.

GOAL 5: CITY FACILITIES:

the premise for this goal is that City facilities impact virtually every industry sector, as well as economic, community and workforce development.

Facilities, however, is primarily assigned to the Government Relations Council, since virtually all such facilities require the support of City, County, State & Federal government, relative to approvals and related policy decisions, as well as funding.

While all the other Councils should provide input from their perspective, the primary "driver" should be the Government Relations Council.

The following should be considered:

- a. Compile a master list of identified needs and priorities from all Councils/Industry sectors/Downtown plan/Neighborhoods, and combine with the current projects proposed by the City.
- b. The list should then be reviewed and prioritized, relative to short term (1-2 years); midterm (3-5 years); long term (5-10 years) and strategic (10-20 years) projects.
- c. All available and potential funding sources, including government agencies at all levels, should be identified for each project.
- d. Based on your priorities, a strategic approach should be established, to guide the focus of agency relations, and the agendas for delegation visits to regional, state and federal agencies.
- e. A public awareness and informational campaign should be developed and launched, to educate voters as a prelude to future bond campaigns and/or City Council actions.

DEVELOPING AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

A primary focus of the Government Relations Council should be the continual development of strong working relationships with targeted agencies at all levels. That focus should center on relationships with both career staff and political appointees.

Relationships with both elected officials and political appointees are important; but those individuals will come and go. It is equally important to cultivate strong relationships with the career staff, who do a great deal of the work, and often are the ones who make the

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recommendations, relative to your request. Career staff can also provide entree to the new elected officials and political appointees, if you have cultivated strong relationships, built on trust.

In launching this approach, the following should be considered:

1. LUNCHEON SERIES:

a. Establish a luncheon series, serving as a platform to invite Agency and elected officials to visit your community and speak. It's a very effective method, and can include meetings and/or tours before and/or after the luncheon.

b. The monthly meeting of the Council could be held prior to the lunch, to effectively use the time volunteered by Council members.

2. ANNUAL STATE DELEGATION VISIT:

Consider an annual delegation visit to Austin.

a. In legislative years you can focus on elected officials, and primary partner agencies.

b. In non-legislative years you can focus on legislative staff members; interim studies that generally reflect the next sessions priorities, and state agencies that will have more time to meet with you when the legislature is not in session. Generally late January is a good time to go.

3. ANNUAL FEDERAL DELEGATION VISIT:

Consider an annual delegation visit to Washington, DC. Federal agencies are truly receptive to community delegations that include local elected officials as well as business and education leaders.

The annual visit should be scheduled for late March and can serve as a follow-up to the state agency visits in January. Often, the state agencies can assist in arranging meetings with the appropriate people at the related federal agency. As an example, the Texas Workforce Investment Council interfaces a great deal with the Department of Labor.

Your congressman and his/her staff should also be a partner in the development of your itinerary. They can also assist in securing meetings.

4. YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS:

The elected officials that represent Mineral Wells at state and federal levels should be continuously cultivated. They should be viewed as partners, with a vested interest in the implementation of your plans. Therefore, a continual educational awareness outreach should be launched and maintained, with the officials and their staffs.

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This should include:

- a. Annual address to the community by the elected official. This should include an opportunity to brief them on the status of Envision Mineral Wells, both accomplishments and 12 month projections. If possible, ask for quarterly meetings to brief the official.
- b. Monthly meetings with key staff. These can be individual or group meetings. As an example, you could convene a lunch or mid-morning coffee with the key state and federal staff. This also provides an opportunity for them to meet collectively; something they are not always able to do.
- c. Invitations to all elected officials to "Envision Mineral Wells" and Chamber events; they won't always come but their staff will, enabling them to continue to brief the elected officials.

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SUMMARY/NEXT STEPS

This document serves as an outline for the development of a detailed "Strategic Action Plan", that will guide the community's implementation of Envision Mineral Wells.

It sequentially frames the primary items that need to be decided upon by the Councils and Steering Committee; once those decisions are made, they will serve as the basis for the final version of the "Strategic Action Plan".

As one example; once the decision is made about the specific facilities to be developed/built/expanded/improved, and the determination made as to near term/midterm/long term/strategic, then detailed plans with time lines, benchmarks and potential funding sources can be developed for the facilities portion of the plan.

It is important to remember that Envision Mineral Wells is an action oriented initiative, dependent upon the community's leadership to work in a collective, collaborative, consensual manner.

Success will be dependent upon how effectively we integrate and align our community's resources; keep our citizenry informed, and maintain our focus on achieving the benchmarks that will ultimately lead to the successful implementation of the plan.