

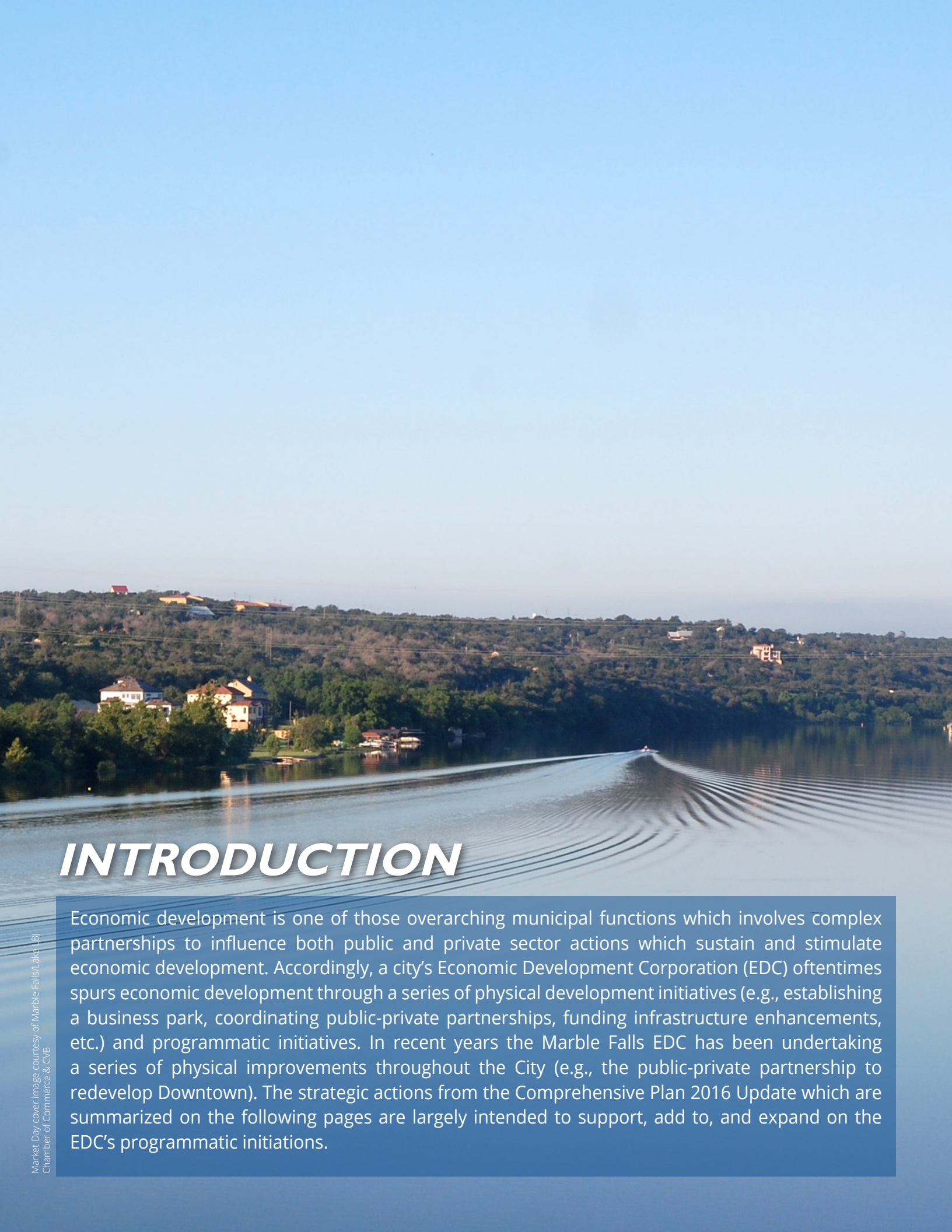
MARBLE FALLS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2016

Adopted June 7, 2016



ECONOMIC EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

Economic development is one of those overarching municipal functions which involves complex partnerships to influence both public and private sector actions which sustain and stimulate economic development. Accordingly, a city's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) oftentimes spurs economic development through a series of physical development initiatives (e.g., establishing a business park, coordinating public-private partnerships, funding infrastructure enhancements, etc.) and programmatic initiatives. In recent years the Marble Falls EDC has been undertaking a series of physical improvements throughout the City (e.g., the public-private partnership to redevelop Downtown). The strategic actions from the Comprehensive Plan 2016 Update which are summarized on the following pages are largely intended to support, add to, and expand on the EDC's programmatic initiations.

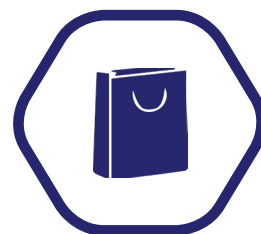
The Texas economy is outpacing the national economy. U.S. Census data shows the nation's growth is concentrated in Texas, with Central Texas being the epicenter of this growth. The rapid speed of changes in the world and potential for growth in Marble Falls and surrounding areas leads to the question, "What will Marble Falls look like 20 years from now?" The 2016 Comprehensive Plan is an update to the 2009 Marble Falls Comprehensive Plan. The Plan provides guidance for a time frame of up to 20 years and describes the community's desired vision for the future. Goals, objectives, recommendations, and actions are provided to guide the City towards that future.

Located at the southern end of Burnet County, Marble Falls is the regional commercial, trade, and service center for a primary trade area of approximately 70,000 people and a secondary trade area of 150,000 people.¹ Local industry and natural-resource-based recreation will continue to be influential in the community, while the newly opened Baylor Scott & White Medical Center will likely drive potential growth and development. Due to its central location in the Highland Lakes area, Marble Falls can be a regional healthcare hub that serves surrounding communities and also attracts new residents of all ages. With this potential for new growth, the City has taken preemptive planning action in order to shape the character and maintain the identity of Marble Falls.

With a growing population in the City and its trade area, development pressures are mounting in Marble Falls. Having surpassed a population of 6,000, the need for additional housing, infrastructure, traffic control, and amenities, among other things, is becoming evident. While there are a comparable number of people working and living in the City, approximately 87 percent of those who work in Marble Falls commute in from outside the City limits. Notably, this means that less than 800 people both live and work in the City.²

Marble Falls has two upcoming and opposing development areas. The 2011 Downtown Master Plan focuses development on tourism and multi-use business-residential buildings along the north side of Lake Marble Falls and in the central Downtown district located just off of U.S. Highway 281. Recent development of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center at the southern end of the City limits has the potential of pulling population and development growth away from Downtown. Proposed widening of U.S. Highway 281, recent replacement of the bridge over Lake Marble Falls, including addition of a pedestrian trail, and increased commuter traffic to and through Marble Falls tie these two development areas together. Wise planning for the City's development at this time can be the catalyst for positive growth in both areas and the City as a whole.

Considering the recent development influences and depending on a variety of development factors, Marble Falls is anticipated to surpass 10,000 people by 2040. As such, the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update recommends a variety of strategic actions to plan for and foster economic growth in the community by encouraging business retention and expansion, attracting new businesses, revitalizing the City's commercial core, investing in community improvements, enhancing Downtown development, and providing workforce development opportunities.



¹ Marble Falls Economic Development Corporation
² U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap



BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Marble Falls is the retail, wholesale, and service hub for the region with a wide variety of businesses in the community. These range from small, entrepreneurial endeavors to large, big-box retailers. As the City strives to grow its economic development, it recognizes that some of the strongest growth derives from existing businesses. As such, providing additional shovel-ready sites, financial assistance, and infrastructure is recommended to help the City retain and expand existing businesses.

RETENTION & EXPANSION STRATEGIES



Expand Business & Technology Park

Support EDC efforts to continue the expansion of the Marble Falls Business and Technology Park to further improve the economic competitiveness of the City.



Financial Assistance for Businesses

Encourage the EDC to consider expanding incentive programs to support the expansion of new businesses.



Expand Infrastructure to Support Increased Opportunities

Evaluate opportunities for increasing public/private Citywide access to the fiber optic network and plan for the extension or upgrade of other infrastructure to support growth in areas that have opportunities for infill, revitalization, or redevelopment.



As the regional hub for the Highland Lakes area, with a primary trade area of approximately 70,000 people and a secondary trade area of 150,000 people, economic opportunities in Marble Falls are poised to grow.



BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Historically, many economic development programs focused solely on creating a framework that provided new (or relocated) businesses the lowest business costs, whether that involved reduced capital costs (e.g., City's extension of infrastructure) or lower annual operating costs (e.g., tax reductions, reduced utility fees, etc.). In today's mobile and talent driven economy, however, a quality and skilled workforce may be equally as important. This goes beyond simply providing training or education; rather it embodies the fact that more and more people are valuing quality of place which is affecting where they are willing to work. In an effort to attract new businesses to the community, improving zoning regulations, increasing housing opportunities, and providing quality of life enhancements will help set the City apart from other competing municipalities.

ATTRACTION STRATEGIES



Update Zoning Regulations

Consider a comprehensive update to the City's zoning regulations to implement the quality and character recommendations identified in each future land use classification and improve readability and usability.



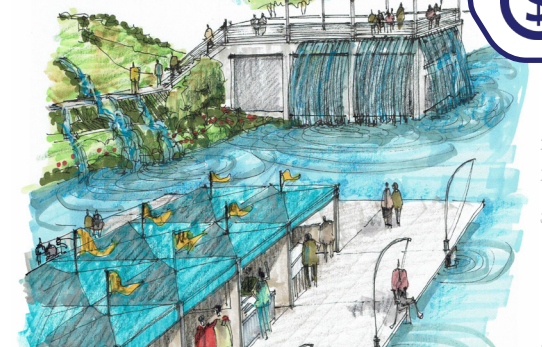
Improve Housing

Identify partnerships to rehabilitate the existing housing stock in order to enhance the quality and character of neighborhoods and consider establishing a housing palette to direct the quality and design of new housing.



Update Economic Plan

Support EDC efforts to update the Strategic Economic Development Plan to reflect the status of previous recommendations and analyze current demographics and economic conditions.



Develop New Economic Opportunities

Support EDC efforts to increase the development of place-based economic opportunities and create a unique live, work, play destination unlike any other in the Highland Lakes area.



Provide Quality of Life Improvements

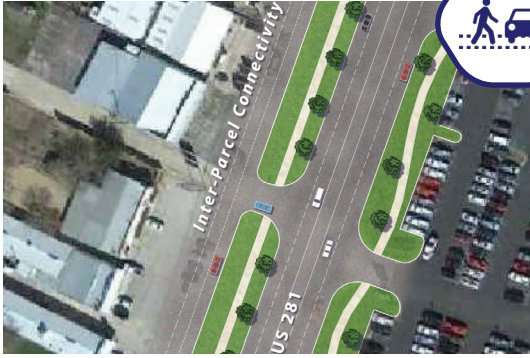
Provide and maintain high-quality parks which become part of the identity and a point of community pride for Marble Falls, including improved pedestrian and boat access to the lake.



COMMERCIAL CORE REVITALIZATION

The principal arterial corridors in Marble Falls (i.e., U.S. 281, FM 1431, and State Highway 71) serve as the commercial core for the City. Areas along these thoroughfares and in the neighborhoods directly adjacent receive the highest level of vehicular and commerce-related traffic. Residents and visitors frequently express concern about vehicular and pedestrian safety along these corridors, and specifically along U.S. 281 and FM 1431. In addition to safety concerns, motorists traveling along these thoroughfares can currently pass quickly through the City without seeing any design characteristics of particular note. In order to expand the commercial areas, where appropriate, improve safety, visually communicate a sense of identity and pride in the community, and ensure that these corridors are ultimately developed to create high-quality corridors of note, revitalization efforts are recommended.

REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES



Improve Vehicular and Pedestrian Safety

Proactively coordinate with TxDOT to implement access management strategies and enhancements to improve the safety and appearance along U.S. Highway 281.



Improved Development Standards

Develop corridor improvement standards for U.S. 281, FM 1431, and State Highway 71 to enhance the appearance of properties adjacent to these principal arterial corridors and provide more incentives for abutting and nearby properties to do the same.



Aesthetic Enhancements

Utilize gateways, entry signs, and landscaping at edges of the City to indicate entrance into Marble Falls and coordinate with TxDOT to improve the appearance of the U.S. 281/State Highway 71 interchange.



Expand Neighborhood Commercial Opportunities

Consider improving the C-1, Neighborhood Commercial District to improve compatibility between neighborhood-serving commercial uses and abutting residential uses.

A scenic view of a wooden bridge over a river, surrounded by lush green trees and a blue sky with white clouds. The bridge is made of dark wood with a lattice railing. The river is calm, reflecting the sky and trees. The background is filled with dense green foliage and a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

As the resident and visitor population of Marble Falls continues to grow, so does the need for community improvements and enhancements. Businesses and potential new residents will be looking at the City's character, safety, amenities, and neighborhoods when determining whether to locate in Marble Falls. In an effort to improve the community for existing and potential residents and businesses, key investments in growth, quality of life, and safety features are recommended.

INVESTMENT STRATEGIES



Develop Lake Front Enhancements

Support the EDC's efforts in developing lake front enhancements and increase water-based recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.



Improve Parks and Recreation

Increase regularly scheduled and special activities and events in parks and continue to pursue partnerships with other public and private organizations to leverage park and recreation investments.



Image courtesy of Marble Falls EDC



Create Regional Marketing Campaign

Develop a Tourism Master Plan and support efforts of the Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB to increase tourism opportunities and attract varying user groups.



Improve Pedestrian Connectivity

Develop a Sidewalk Master Plan separately, or in conjunction with a Citywide Trails Master Plan and consider increasing funding and other resources to improve sidewalk and crosswalk segments in key areas of the City.




Develop Key Thoroughfare Segments

Evaluate the near- and or mid-term potential to establish specific segments of the Thoroughfare Plan to proactively alleviate traffic impacts, facilitate areas of new growth, or to connect key destination points.



Provide Quality, Safe Neighborhoods

Consider developing a target-area capital investment program focused on infrastructure improvements within at-risk neighborhoods.



Historic
Downtown
District

Shopping
Dining
Art
Enjoy!

Marble Falls

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Downtown
District

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DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Marble Falls is a great place to live for retirees and families. Due to impetus for growth in the south of the City near the hospital, the City must strive to improve the quality of its Downtown. As the heart of Marble Falls, Downtown provides a unique opportunity to maintain the small-town feel, which is treasured by the community, while providing a unique, pedestrian-oriented, memorable destination district. In 2011, the City adopted its Downtown Marble Falls Master Plan. While the Downtown already has a unique, artsy feel to it, the City should continue to implement the Plan to further enhance this area and set it apart as a destination for residents and visitors. Implementation of key elements laid out in the Master Plan, as well as additional recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan Update, will go a long way towards creating a unique character in the heart of the City.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Image courtesy of Elizabeth Maynard, Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB Staff



Create a Downtown Zoning District

Enhance and redevelop the City's Downtown district to create a strong identity in the heart of the City, improve the local economy, and establish this area as a true regional destination attraction.

Image courtesy of Marble Falls EDC



Downtown Conference Center

Support implementation efforts of a Marble Falls Hotel and Conference Center located in Downtown and consider additional capital projects (e.g., streetscape enhancements) to capitalize on the synergistic opportunities that could occur during the same time.

Image courtesy of Elizabeth Maynard, Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB Staff



Unified Downtown Parks System

Develop a revitalized plan for Downtown parks that provides interconnectivity and plans appropriate uses for each park.



Develop Key Attractions

Design and implement unique attractions, such as the creekwalk trail, and following implementation of Downtown enhancements, re-evaluate potential for rural tourism train route.



Downtown Landscape Median

Coordinate with TxDOT to provide a central landscape median along U.S. 281 to create a unique character and increase safety within the Downtown and nearby areas.



Image courtesy of Local Architect Marley Porter with Living Architecture

Redevelop and Relocate City Hall

Identify potential locations and determine a funding source for a new City Hall.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

During stakeholder interviews it was noted that much of the local workforce is not sufficiently equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to fill higher level professional and medical jobs which are being created in conjunction with the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center. In order to provide Marble Falls' residents and the local community a greater competitive edge in the job market, the City should consider increasing support for entrepreneurial ventures and workforce development and education programs. Through key partnerships with local business and education leaders, coordinated training opportunities can be created to help educate and elevate the Marble Falls workforce.

TRAINING STRATEGIES



Increase Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Support EDC efforts to increase entrepreneurial opportunities in the City by supporting or encouraging the development of a small business incubator site to provide flexible workspace at a low cost for small and emerging companies. This could be a partnership venture that eventually leads to the establishment of a Small Business Administration (SBA) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) suitable to serve the entire Highland Lakes area.



Support Workforce Development Programs

Consider partnering with the EDC and the Central Texas College to organize workforce development and education programs and consider establishing a regular business-education roundtable of local business and education leaders to connect those who teach skills development with those who utilize those skills in the workforce. This could also include providing more local learning opportunities in areas of local job demand, support for career days and fairs, among other related initiatives.



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