

## A Path to the Future

### Executive Summary

October 2018

#### Background

This serves as an executive summary of process we have used over the past 20 months as we have embarked on developing a new long-range vision for our community. This process started in February 2017 with several brainstorming meetings where we asked local citizens to provide their input. We asked them to tell us what made our community great. And we asked them to share with us what could make our community even better. We received over 600 different comments at these initial community brainstorming meetings.

During the next phase of the public input process we went out in the community to local churches, schools, civic groups and other organizations. Over 200 additional comments were provided at these sessions from individuals representing a broad range of ages, ethnicity, occupations and backgrounds. This included people who have lived in Gillespie County all their lives as well as recent transplants to our community.

Citizens were open and honest during these input sessions. We were amazed at the level of insight that these citizens had on current local issues, the diversity of ideas that were offered and the level of thought and creativity that they had in defining the future of our community. In providing this report, the Community Visioning Steering Committee wants to thank each person who came forward with their comments. Your input was critical to the final visions and recommendations.

Following the public input process, we recognized that most of the comments included common areas of concern. Therefore, the Steering Committee started to group the various comments into major subject areas. These four subject areas were business, government, quality of life and family life.

Then we agreed to establish citizen committees to focus on these four major areas and we opened these committees to anyone who wanted to participate. These committees involved over 100 local citizens who volunteered their time over an 8-month period reviewing the public comments submitted. They spent over 1,000 hours researching significant community issues. They also met with individuals who had specific knowledge in the topics that they were reviewing. Each of these committees developed the vision statements and recommendations that are summarized below. Their entire detailed report is included in this report along with their references. The Steering Committee wants to recognize and thank every individual who participated on one of the four committees.

## Community Visions and Key Recommendations

The following ten long-range visions for our community will serve to guide major decisions made by Gillespie County, the City of Fredericksburg, Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Commission, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Hill Country Memorial Hospital and other major local organizations. In offering these visions and specific recommendations for achieving these visions, we believe that we have answered the two basic questions that were raised when we started this process some 20 months ago.

WHAT MAKES OUR COMMUNITY GREAT?

WHAT COULD MAKE IT BETTER?

### Child Care Vision Statement

The long-range vision includes the provision of affordable, safe and high quality early childhood educational opportunities that will be available to all families so that children in our community will be placed on the path to educational and economic success.

Recommendations:

1. Establish on-site childcare services at major local employers
2. Provide additional training and certification of child care workers with a higher level of compensation provided to these workers.
3. Create a foundation (or use an existing foundation) to provide financial support for these programs,

### Wineries Vision Statement

This vision recognizes that the City of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County have a unique opportunity to become both the winery and culinary center of Texas. However, the growth of these types of businesses requires planning and proper management to protect the excellent quality of life enjoyed in our community.

Recommendations:

1. Support efforts to develop the Texas Center for Wine and Culinary Arts so that this project can be completed as part of the University Center campus.
2. Continue to urge local winery businesses to improve the quality of wine produced in the area.

3. Consider managing the number of wine-related businesses in the downtown area so that there is a balance between these types of businesses and other establishments such as restaurants and retailers.
4. Increase traffic safety efforts in the Highway 290 East area by expanding law enforcement, reduction of speed limits and completion of roadway improvements
5. Pursue legislation that will provide County government with the tools to plan and manage the growth of wineries in the area.

### Education, Training and Workforce Development Vision Statement

This vision includes the need for better training and education to develop our local workforce to address future employment needs in the community. This vision also includes the need to have a dynamic and comprehensive educational system that will provide equal opportunity for local students from pre-kindergarten through college/university degrees.

#### Recommendations:

1. Establish a formal working group made up of a cross-section of local businesses, schools, Central Texas College and Texas Tech University to create, review and adjust workforce development programs to meet current and future needs.
2. Expand local workforce programs to address immediate community needs such as the Child Development Associate (CDA) degree and the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program.
3. Develop innovative academic programs which feature student centered learning and problem-solving models such as the Systems Go rocket engineering program.
4. Support the phased development of first-class educational facilities both at the local public and private schools as well as the projects detailed in the University Center Master Plan.

### Tourism Vision Statement

This vision includes the City of Fredericksburg partnering with other organizations and stakeholder groups to further enhance the reputation of the Texas Hill Country as a major tourism destination including increasing the efforts to establish this area as a family destination.

#### Recommendations:

1. Focus recruitment of tourism businesses on small to medium sized business with fewer employment needs and lower water consumption.
2. Take additional steps to protect our historic assets and expand our cultural opportunities.

3. Continuously review HOT funding distribution at both the City and County level to ensure that these funds provide maximum benefit to the community.
4. Develop and maintain infrastructure such as water, streets, sidewalks and broadband services to support tourism as part of the community's overall economic development program.

### Housing Vision Statement

This vision includes the development of quality housing that is affordable and that will accommodate our expanding workforce including workers in all employment categories from the hospitality industry to individuals in the fields of nursing, teaching and emergency services.

#### Recommendations:

1. Review all development and zoning regulations and make changes necessary to encourage the development of additional affordable housing.
2. Create a local land trust to bank land that can be used to develop affordable housing.
3. Create a Housing Ombudsman position in the community who can work with local builders, developers and government agencies in a cooperative effort to develop more affordable housing.
4. Create opportunities for use of local investor funds to help reduce the costs for affordable housing.
5. Continue to annex property into the City Limits as needed for affordable housing development.

### Domestic Violence/Drug and Alcohol Addiction and Mental Health Vision Statement

This vision includes seeking holistic, long-term community strategies for dealing with these issues which are often considered to be "taboo" but have a significant impact particularly on our young people, the elderly and their families.

#### Recommendations:

1. Establish a Family Crisis Hot Line in the community
2. Develop a women and children's shelter.
3. Develop a County mental health facility.
4. Hire a full-time licensed social worker at Fredericksburg High School.
5. Provide advanced training on mental health issues to all local first responders.

### Infrastructure Vision Statement

The improvement of infrastructure including broadband, water, trails and recycling services will be important for providing quality and dependable services to existing residents and businesses and for facilitating future growth.

Recommendations:

1. Implement a transportation system to serve the local workforce.
2. Improve local roadway system in accordance with the Transportation Master Plan.
3. Complete planning, design and construction of a Relief Route.
4. Make on-going improvements to parking in downtown area.
5. Improve broadband services both within the City and throughout the County.
6. Improve and expand parks system.
7. Expand local recycling programs.

Market Square/Main Street Vision Statement

This vision recognizes these major community assets that should be protected and improved for future generations to enjoy. The vision focuses on maintaining the historic feel of Main Street and the 20 acres set aside by the founders of Fredericksburg for green space and community functions.

Recommendations:

1. Support and implement the One-Square-One Vision Concept for future development of Market Square.
2. Conduct opportunities for broad community involvement in the long-range development plans for Courthouse Square.
3. Prepare redevelopment options for Main Street for community discussion when the Relief Route project is designed and constructed.

Diverse Economy Vision Statement

This vision includes the maintenance of our successful tourism and wine business and current diverse economy, while expanding desirable target industries that create jobs with “living wages.” This can be accomplished by leveraging the underlying strengths of our community and maintaining our unique character.

Recommendations”

1. Focus economic development efforts on target industries that pay higher than “living wages.”
2. Implement a local working group to link current and future workforce demand with local workforce training and development capabilities.
3. Consider steps for reducing barriers for new business creation and existing business growth.
4. Consider steps for reducing barriers for workforce recruitment and retention.

## Healthcare/Hill Country Memorial Hospital Vision Statement

Hill Country Memorial Hospital and other associated medical facilities are one of the most important assets of our community and we should make every effort to protect this asset while creating opportunities for local medical services to expand to serve a growing population with diverse health and medical needs.

### Recommendations:

1. Create opportunities for additional community support for the Hospital Foundation to provide funding for future medical equipment and capital improvements.
2. Expand local nursing education programs.
3. Assist in the recruitment of additional medical personnel as needed.

### Recent Accomplishments

While the focus of the visioning committees was on creation of a long-range vision for the community, many specific short-term recommendations were identified by the visioning committees. These were identified as opportunities that could improve our community immediately. So, rather than including these in the long-range visions and recommendations cited above, steps have been taken to move forward to implement and adopt these “low hanging fruits.”

These short-term accomplishments serve as another example of the value of both the community brainstorming meetings and the work of the visioning committees in creating ideas and recommendations that will make our community better. These accomplishments include the following:

1. Development of plans and adoption by the City Council of a new Fort Martin Scott Trails Plan.
2. Development of promotional information on summer youth activities for dissemination to the community.
3. Establishment of programs at Fredericksburg High School for hospitality, culinary arts, medical and building trades.
4. Adoption and implementation of new short-term rental ordinance.
5. Improved ADA compliance by making ADA improvements to sidewalks.
6. Initiation of plans by Morning Rotary Club for new basketball courts at Old Fair Park.
7. Initiation of plans for new woman’s shelter near Law Enforcement Center.
8. Development of new soccer fields at Oakcrest Park.
9. Establishment of new City communications program.

