

**Economic Development and
Marketing Strategy
2004-2009
Report 3 of 3**

City of Taylor

AngelouEconomics would like to thank the City of Taylor, Taylor Economic Development Corporation, Taylor Independent School District, Taylor Chamber of Commerce, Taylor CNET, Williamson County, Taylor Main Street, Members of the Economic Development Advisory Committee, and all of the community members who have provided us input in the development of this plan.

Many of the recommendations within this strategy are reflections of the ideas we received during interviews, focus groups, and surveys with local residents. Without the community's support, this strategy would not be possible.

The consulting team from AngelouEconomics included Angelos Angelou, Sean Garretson, Nicole Urbis, Travis Warziniack, and Kristin Boyd.

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Media List

CDC Formation

CDFI Fund

Special Assessment Districts

Main Street Grant Opportunity

Kauffman Foundation Freedom School Grant

Taylor "Quality of Life" Survey (2004)



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June 2004

AngelouEconomics (AE) is pleased to present the City of Taylor with this Five-Year Economic Development and Marketing Plan. This document builds on the analysis contained in the Historical Development Report and Baseline Analysis Report by recommending strategies and action steps that address the issues presented in the previous reports.

This report provides a plan of action and a marketing strategy, which will serve as a roadmap for the major stakeholders in Taylor to use in improving the community and the economy.

Thank you for your input.

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Introduction

The City of Taylor has made significant strides over the past decade to improve the environment for economic success in the community. As a result, Taylor has several advantages over its regional competitors, including Taylor CNET and Temple College at Taylor (TCAT). Taylor has also had several recent business development successes, including the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) and the retail expansions of HEB and Wal-Mart. All of these initiatives will help Taylor improve its economy.

However, before Taylor can become successful in business recruitment, a committed and well-organized effort should be undertaken to improve the downtown, 2nd Street, and South Taylor. A community is as strong as its weakest link. Until these areas of town are improved, Taylor's image will always be tarnished by the physical impression it makes on visitors and Taylor will be hampered in its business development efforts.

Additionally, the community should focus on improving education and workforce development, creating a strong entrepreneurial environment, and focusing more resources toward business expansion and retention. Business recruitment should not be a primary focus for Taylor until these basic areas as well as the quality of life issues mentioned above have been addressed and the business climate has improved.

Although Taylor recognizes its diversity, the diversity could be better celebrated. Efforts such as public art and cultural festivals as well as small business development focusing on arts, crafts and culinary industries will bring regional and national attention to Taylor's efforts to celebrate diversity, and will attract leaders to participate in economic development activities who have not previously been involved in the community.

This plan provides a course for Taylor which will strengthen the community's vision and lead Taylor to success. This plan should be a living document, implemented not by a select few, but by the entire community. Lastly, internal marketing efforts are important to Taylor's success in implementation.

Economic Development Mission

To improve the economic climate for the Taylor community.

Goals and Critical Projects

AE has identified **six goals** that will lead to an improved economy in Taylor. These goals, and strategies to achieve these goals, are further defined in the remainder of this report. However, when resources are scarce the following list of critical projects will assist Taylor in directing resources to the highest impact areas with the most critical needs:

GOAL	CRITICAL PROJECT
<p>Goal One: Workforce development and education programs are innovative and tailored to prepare a workforce for Taylor’s target industries and future economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Raise expectations of Taylor ISD.</i> • <i>Ensure K-12 education is as strong as possible.</i> • <i>Improve workforce programs.</i> • <i>Adopt and enhance TCAT programs for target industries.</i>
<p>Goal Two: Taylor offers a place for its residents to live, play, and work, and it is an appealing place to live for young professionals and individuals who are employed by target industry companies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Expand retail choice by aggressively recruiting targeted retailers.</i> • <i>Develop a Community Development Corporation (CDC).</i> • <i>Improve appearance of Taylor by developing a Gateway into town, cleaning up buildings, and developing public art.</i> • <i>Fully develop the East Williamson County Park.</i> • <i>Embrace cultural diversity.</i>
<p>Goal Three: Entrepreneurship and small business growth are significant drivers of the economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop a business incubator.</i> • <i>Educate local population about entrepreneurship and starting a business.</i> • <i>Create a youth entrepreneurship program.</i>
<p>Goal Four: Taylor will have a thriving downtown full of business, education, tourist, and entrepreneurial activity; the downtown will become a central place in the community where a diversity of cultures is celebrated through public art and festivals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Implement public sector initiatives such as the TEA-21 grant, and improve and aggressively enforce ordinances.</i> • <i>Develop a Special Assessment District for the downtown and 2nd Street in order to make necessary improvements in these key areas of the community.</i>
<p>Goal Five: Taylor’s sites and infrastructure meet the needs of target industries and a growing population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop and market sites for target industries.</i> • <i>Improve transportation infrastructure.</i> • <i>Improve telecommunications capacity.</i>
<p>Goal Six: Taylor is engaged in a proactive, targeted marketing campaign to send a clear message that the city is dedicated to improving its economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adopt a single logo and tag line.</i> • <i>Form a marketing committee to implement recommendations.</i> • <i>Hire a public relations manager.</i> • <i>Present a more integrated and attractive web experience.</i>

Implementation

AE recommends that the City of Taylor, the Chamber of Commerce, the Taylor Economic Development Corporation (TEDC), the Taylor Independent School District (TISD), Taylor CNET, Johns Hospital, and Temple College at Taylor (TCAT) continue to partner on projects as they have in the past. However, AE recommends that they have a more formalized method for implementing this plan, such as meeting once per quarter to review progress on plan implementation. AE recommends that the TEDC be the primary organizer of the Market Taylor Team (MTT) and that the City be the primary organizer of the Citizen Improvement Team (CIT).

The Appendix section of this plan contains additional resource materials for use in achieving several of the projects identified in this plan.

Additionally, since downtown Taylor needs to be a priority of not only the primary stakeholders, but also the general public, a separate non-profit Community Development Corporation, or CDC, should be formed that will focus mostly on the Central Business District, 2nd Street (Hwy 79 into Taylor) and south Taylor. The CDC will have more autonomy than the City to implement projects, will rely heavily on community participation, and will have unique funding opportunities.

One of the primary recommendations that will provide funding for several recommendations is to develop either a Public Improvement District (PID) or Municipal Management District (MMD) for the downtown and 2nd Street. The City should contract with the CDC for implementation of this district and utilize the CDC board as the PID/MMD Board.

More detailed information on the CDC and improvement district is found later in this report.

Implementation Schedule

The following six pages contain an implementation schedule. The purpose of this implementation schedule is to list Taylor's critical projects, the organization primarily responsible for each project, a timeline for implementing projects, metrics for measuring success and a realistic budget estimate for each goal. Taylor leaders may revise this schedule after acceptance of this plan based upon available resources.

Taylor Summary of Workforce Development and Education Recommendations						
GOAL #1: Workforce development and education programs are innovative and tailored to prepare a workforce for Taylor's target industries and future economy						
Metric #1: More than 66% of Taylor residents surveyed feel that the TISD schools are good. Metric #2: All schools within Taylor achieve Recognized status.						
Recommendation	Priority	Start Timing	End Timing	Budget	Primary Responsibility	Supporting Orgs.
Workforce Strategy 1: Ensure K-12 education and youth workforce development is as strong as possible.						
Action 1: Make adjustments at the existing high school and update the vocational programs to meet the future workforce skills needed in Taylor	Immediate	May-04	on-going		TISD	City
Action 2: Adopt a unique collaborative in planning for the new high school						
Action 3: Engage entire community in education reform and improvement						
Action 4: Inform students, teachers, and parents of post-graduation options other than college. These programs will help keep graduates in the county, fill workforce needs and keep students from dropping out of high school						
Workforce Strategy 2: Improve Workforce Programs						
Action 1: Develop non-traditional Workforce Programs	Short-term	Jul-04	Jul-06		City	Rural/WF, TCAT, TISD
Action 2: Inform the community that these programs are available						
Workforce Strategy 3: Adopt and Enhance TCAT Programs for Target Industries						
Action 1: Educate TCAT about target industry workforce needs	Short-term	Jul-04	Jul-06		TCAT	TEDC, City, Main Street, Chamber
Action 2: Enhance workforce training for the health care industry						
Action 3: Develop core curriculum geared towards graphic artists, computer-aided design and other technical design careers						
TOTAL BUDGET						\$TBD

Taylor
Summary of Community Development Recommendations

GOAL #2: Taylor is an appealing place to live for young professionals and individuals employed by target industry companies

Metric #1: More than 75% of citizens and local employees surveyed find that quality of life is improving.

Metric #2: Economic impact of East Williamson County Park yields more than \$2million in Direct and Indirect Impacts to Taylor.

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Start	End	Budget	Primary Responsibility	Supporting Orgs.	Page # in Rpt.
Quality of Life Strategy One: Improve Appearance of Taylor	Immediate		May-04	on-going		City	Main Street, Chamber	20
Action 1: Develop a Community Development Corporation (CDC)					\$ 30,000			20
Action 2: Rehabilitate Housing					\$ 5,000			20
Quality of Life Strategy Two: Expand and improve retail opportunities	Immediate		May-04	on-going		City	Main Street, Chamber	21
Action 1: Adopt liquor by the drink					\$ 5,000			21
Action 2: Market to higher end chain restaurants (based upon research)								21
Action 3: Market to retailers								21
Action 4: Develop incentive programs for targeted areas in the community								21
Quality of Life Strategy Three: Expand and improve parks and recreation assets	Immediate		May-04	on-going		City		22
Action 1: Fully develop the East Williamson County Park								22
Action 2: Sponsor annual, national sporting events together with locally owned sport businesses								22
Action 3: Further Develop Park System in Other Areas of Taylor								23
Action 4: Further Develop the Bike System in the Taylor Area								23
Quality of Life Strategy Four: Celebrates Taylor's diversity	Short-term		Aug-04	on-going		CDC	City, Main Street, Chamber, TEDC	23
Action 1: Develop cultural awareness programs for all residents and businesses and consider a cultural ombudsman for the community								23
Action 2: Create an artists guild for artisans and recognize local artistic ventures as economic development prospects								23
Quality of Life Strategy Five: Help newcomers feel engaged in the community	Short-term		Aug-04	on-going		City	Chamber, Main Street	24
Action 1: Develop community wide support and gain broad participation in a Meet and Greet program for both new residents and new businesses.								24
Action 2: Provide customer service training to City employees who regularly interact with local businesses and residents								24
TOTAL BUDGET							\$ 40,000	

Taylor Summary of Entrepreneurship Recommendations									
GOAL #3: Entrepreneurship and small business growth are significant drivers of the economy. <i>Metric #1: Taylor receives five good press releases in local or regional media per year for entrepreneurial efforts. Metric #2: Incubator graduates at least two business per year.</i>									
Recommendation	Priority	Start Timing	End Timing	Budget	Primary Responsibility	Supporting Orgs.	Page # in Rpt.		
Entrepreneurship Strategy One: Educate local population about entrepreneurship and what is required to open a business. Action 1: Ensure that Taylor leaders understand and support entrepreneurship programs Action 2: Expand and promote Entrepreneurship training TCAT/TCNET Action 3: Support the Small Business Incubator and Resource Center Action 4: Provide specific information and training in Spanish to the growing Hispanic market	Immediate	Jun-04	on-going	\$ 500	Chamber	City, CDC, Main Street, TCAT, TISD, TCNET, TEDC	26		
Entrepreneurship Strategy Two: Create a Small Business/Entrepreneur Alliance Action 1: Meet regularly to exchange ideas and network with investors	Immediate	Jul-04	Jul-04	\$ 500	Chamber	City, CDC, Main Street, TCAT, TISD, TCNET, TEDC	27		
Entrepreneurship Strategy Three: Create a Youth Entrepreneurship Program Action 1: Hold focus group at high school to determine interest Action 2: Identify best medium for entrepreneurship training Action 3: Seek Retired Business Executive within City/County to provide free training and mentoring to youths in this program Action 4: Hold annual event honoring the best youth entrepreneurial project, with a prize (eg, funding) for best idea	Immediate	Aug-04	Aug-04	\$ 10,000	Chamber	City, CDC, Main Street, TCAT, TISD, TCNET, TEDC	27		
Entrepreneurship Strategy Four: Improve financing for local entrepreneurs Action 1: Better connect venture capital and angel investors across the region with Taylor entrepreneurs Action 2: Develop a local business plan competition Action 3: Send a representative from Taylor to the regional entrepreneurial network events Action 4: Provide local banks with resources that educate them on the best way to support small and start up companies	Short-term	Sep-04	on-going	\$ 5,000	Chamber	City, CDC, Main Street, TCAT, TISD, TCNET, TEDC	28		
Entrepreneurship Strategy Five: Develop a Small Business Incubator Downtown	Immediate	Jun-04	on-going	\$250,000	CDC	City, Chamber, Main Street, TCAT, TISD, TCNET, TEDC	29		
TOTAL BUDGET							\$ 265,500		

Taylor
Summary of Downtown Recommendations

GOAL #4: Downtown Taylor will be a thriving center of the community where diversity will be celebrated through public art and a mixture of land uses will compliment each other.

Metric #1: More than 75% of citizens and local employees feel that the appearance of Downtown and 2nd street are improving.

Metric #2: At least 2 major public art projects are completed downtown.

Recommendation	Priority	Start Timing	End Timing	Budget	Primary Responsibility	Supporting Orgs.	Page # in Rpt.
Commercial Business District Strategy One: Define and Enhance Downtown							
Action 1: Develop a Gateway on 2 nd Street into the City/Downtown	Immediate	May-04	on-going	\$ 500 grants	CDC	Main Street, City, Chamber	31
Action 2: Develop public art downtown				grants			31
Action 3: Develop an artisan cooperative							31
Commercial Business District Strategy Two: Improve Capacity for Improvements							
Action 1: Establish sustainable funding mechanisms and organizational capacity for improvements downtown	Immediate	Jun-04	Aug-04	\$ 5,000 legal	City	Main Street, new CDC, Chamber	32
Action 2: Encourage private sector investment							32
Commercial Business District Strategy Three: Implement Public Sector Initiatives							
Action 1: Effectively implement TEA-21 Grant	Immediate	Jul-04	on-going	abatement, historic tax credit	City	Main Street, new CDC, Chamber	32
Action 2: Incentivize business growth in CBDs							33
Action 3: Modify ordinances to encourage redevelopment							33
Action 4: Develop and Promote Signage				grant			33
Action 5: Develop Downtown Tourism Amenities				grant			33
Action 6: Develop and Enforce Lighting Standards				grant			33
Action 7: Improve Public Buildings/Areas				\$ 1,500,000			33
Action 8: Modify Zoning Ordinance							33
				TOTAL BUDG \$	1,505,500		

Taylor Summary of Sites and Infrastructure Recommendations		Start Timing	End Timing	Budget	Primary Responsibility	Supporting Orgs.	Page # in Rpt.
GOAL #5: Taylor's sites and infrastructure meet the needs of target industries and a growing population.							
<i>Metric #1: Residents feel that streets are improving.</i>							
<i>Metric #2: More than 75% of surveyed citizens feel that CNET is useful to them.</i>							
Recommendation							
Sites and Infrastructure Strategy One: Develop and Market Sites							
Action 1: Better understand the needs of target industries and focus on expanding and recruiting these industries.							
Action 2: Improve Marketing of Available Sites							
Action 3: Plan for Future Demand for Industrial and Business Space							
Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Two: Improve Transportation Infrastructure							
Action 1: Clearly communicate a strategy for improving the streets to all citizens.							
Action 2: Develop a Drainage Master Plan and make drainage improvements concurrently with street improvements.							
Action 3: Consider allocating funds to move utilities on 2 nd Street and engage representatives to lobby for State to make street improvements on 2 nd Street.							
Action 4: Develop a Public Improvement District (PID) or Municipal Management District (MMD) for infrastructure improvements from Hwy 79 Loop to downtown, and along Main Street.							
Action 5: Aggressively increase raising retail sales tax revenue to invest \$1.5 million in streets each year.							
Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Three: Improve Telecommunications Capacity							
Action 1: Expand services of CNET regionally.							
Action 2: Leverage CNET in the implementation of this Plan.							
Action 3: Find a Solution to Issues of Tree Cover Impacting Wireless Internet.							
Action 4: Instead of trying to bring students to CNET, connect the schools to CNET so they can stay on campus and still get distance learning.							
Action 5: Develop TaylorCNET portal to become the main web entrance into Taylor and link to all other organizations.							
TOTAL BUDGET							\$ 17,500

Taylor
Summary of Marketing Recommendations (continued)

GOAL #6: Taylor is engaged in a proactive, targeted marketing campaign to send a clear message that the city is dedicated to improving its economy.

Metric: Taylor increases positive publicity throughout Central Texas by 25% each year. Mentioned in the defined media outlets.

Recommendation	Priority	Start Timing	End Timing	Budget	Primary Responsibility	Supporting Orgs.	Page # in Rpt.
Marketing Strategy One: Establish specific marketing roles for each organization currently involved in economic development Action 1: Organize the way economic development marketing occurs Action 2: Meet periodically to discuss progress	Immediate	May-04	readjust annually	time	TEDC	Chamber, Main Street, City, TCAT, TSD, TCNET	41
Marketing Strategy Two: Form a Marketing Implementer Committee - Market Taylor Team (MTT) Action 1: Organize a team to implement marketing recommendations	Immediate	Jun-04	Jun-04	time	TEDC	Chamber, Main Street, City, TCAT, TSD, TCNET, new CDC	41
Marketing Strategy Three: Adopt a single economic development logo Action 1: Understand the process of creating Taylor's new logo and begin to "live it." Action 2: Promote Taylor with a new, single message that the community endorses	Immediate	May-04	on-going	time	TEDC	All organizations, local businesses, and citizens	43
Marketing Strategy Four: Improve and promote economic development products Short-term	Short-term	May-04	on-going	see other sections	TEDC	Chamber, Main Street, City, TCAT, TSD, TCNET, new CDC	44
Marketing Strategy Five: Understand target audiences Action 1: Market to local employers, the current workforce, influencers, and local entrepreneurs Action 2: Market to target industry business executives and decision-makers Action 3: Identify target business champions, business leaders with expert knowledge of a particular industry Action 4: Know your customer and communicate in their language	Short-term	Jun-04	on-going	\$5,000	TEDC	Chamber, Main Street, City, TCAT, TSD, TCNET, new CDC	45
Marketing Strategy Six: Invest in hiring a Public Relations Manager Action 1: Recognize the importance of PR and hire a professional to oversee this role Action 2: Set role and responsibilities for new PR manager	Short-term	Dec-04	on-going	\$45,000	City of Taylor	Chamber, Main Street, City, TCAT, TSD, TCNET, new CDC	46
Marketing Strategy Seven: Build awareness through local and regional media Action 1: Plan to activate an internal awareness campaign Action 2: Identify media champions Action 3: Leverage the local media Action 4: Kick off internal awareness campaign	Short-term	May-04	Jun-04	PR Manager	TEDC	Chamber, Main Street, City, TCAT, TSD, TCNET, new CDC	47
Marketing Strategy Eight: Launch an internal marketing campaign Action 1: Activate an internal marketing PR campaign Action 2: Incorporate direct marketing into the internal marketing campaign Action 3: Incorporate collateral into the internal marketing campaign	Short-term	Jul-04	on-going	PR Manager+ \$8,000	TEDC	Chamber, Main Street, City	48
Marketing Strategy Nine: Better integrate Web sites promoting Taylor Action 1: Present a unified, attractive Web appearance to all audiences	Mid-term	May-04	readjust annually	\$35,000	TEDC	Chamber, Main Street, City, TCAT, TSD, TCNET, new CDC	50
Marketing Strategy Ten: Implement external campaigns Action 1: Activate an external marketing PR campaign Action 2: Incorporate direct marketing into the external marketing campaign Action 3: Incorporate marketing missions into the external marketing campaign Action 4: Join Target Industry Associations and attend/sponsor conferences Action 5: Campaign to industry conference attendees prior and post conferences	Long-term	Jan-06	on-going	PR Manager + \$15,000	TEDC	Chamber, Main Street, City, TCAT, TSD, TCNET, new CDC	51
							52
							53
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							55
							56
							57
							58
							59
							59
							60
							60
TOTAL BUDGET							\$ 108,000

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

GOAL ONE: Workforce development and education programs are innovative and tailored to prepare a workforce for Taylor's target industries and future economy.

Basic education and workforce development should be considered the foundation of successful economic development. Those regions across the U.S. that have invested in basic education are also the most successful in growing high tech, high wage employers. The two go hand in hand. Before an aggressive external economic development campaign is launched, it is essential that Taylor invest in the core of the community: K-12 education, the revitalization of their downtowns, and infrastructure that supports new economy businesses. This investment will have much greater pay off long term by helping Taylor retain its current employers and high skilled workers, as well as renew a positive spirit across the community.

Businesses demand that the best possible K-12 education system and workforce training programs are in place to prepare the workforce to succeed in targeted industry businesses. This ensures that they will be able to recruit and retain young professionals who demand that their children receive excellent education. It also shows them that the community is willing to invest in itself, its future, and therefore will support them into the future.

Workforce development and education efforts should be geared towards industries that Taylor has selected as targets for business expansion and recruitment. Industries that Taylor should target include:

- Manufacturing
- Value added Agriculture
- Logistics and Distribution
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Design (e.g. arts and crafts, software, film production, professional services)
- Healthcare
- Retail

Taylor has made strides over the past five years in both TISD and TCAT, yet there remain several areas that can be improved. The following are the most critical areas for Taylor to focus its workforce and education efforts:

- **Ensure K-12 education is as strong as possible.**
- **Improve workforce programs.**
- **Adopt and enhance TCAT programs for target industries.**

Workforce Strategy 1: Ensure K-12 education and youth workforce development is as strong as possible.

Taylor ISD recently received a 21st Century Learning Center Grant which is part of the “No Child Left Behind Initiative.” The application was written around the concept of “Duck University” which proposes to introduce the concept of higher education to school kids starting no later than the 3rd grade. However, the following actions should be considered to improve upon this initiative.

Action 1: Make adjustments at the existing high school and update the vocational programs to meet the future workforce skills needed in Taylor.

- Improve career counseling by increasing early childhood career exposure to existing businesses.
 - Establish the school counseling program as an integral component of the academic mission of the school.
 - Ensure every student has access to the school counseling program.
- Trust the students. Let the Student Council and/or campus advisory council work with the administration to identify areas that students can help to improve.
- Expand the take-home computer program.
- Over time, create WI-FI networks on all school campuses and allow students to use laptops during lunch hours.
- Let the students establish an area in which they want TISD to excel, such as robotics, and become the leader in the country for this academic discipline. Invest in the lab infrastructure and have students travel to other robotics programs.
- Music could be another discipline in which students believe that TISD could excel because of location and cultural traditions. Ensure that high school band teaches more than brass instruments. Students should be able to learn electric guitar and drums, for example. Consider establishing more than one high school band. The variety of available options could make the school more attractive to students, and parents may move into the district if they have a gifted musician in the family.

Action 2: Adopt a unique collaborative in planning for the new high school.

It is now known that the “Robin Hood” initiative in Texas has not worked as was originally intended. School districts have had to increase their property tax rates to accommodate growth and at the same time have had to decrease their staffing.

What some ISDs in Texas, and several across the country, are doing to address the need to improve schools is what is referred to as “co-location.” Consider the local example (see below) of the Austin Independent School District’s St. John’s Community Center. Not only is this new elementary school state of the art, but it also houses several community facilities including parks, libraries and social services. Additionally, there is tremendous cost savings to each partner when using a co-location model.

Source: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/stjohns.htm>



Return to Department Homepage



St. John's Recreation Center
7500 Blessing Avenue
Austin Texas 78752
Phone (512) 974-7865
Fax (512) 380-0731

Site Manager: Geronimo Aguirre
Program Specialist: Jerry Bell
Program Specialist: Augustin Beitia

Opened on January 27, 2002, the St. John's Community Center is a **first time collaboration between the City of Austin and the Austin Independent School District**. The center houses the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, the Austin Police Department, the Austin Public Library, Health and Human Services, three joint use conference rooms, as well as the J.J. Pickle Elementary School.

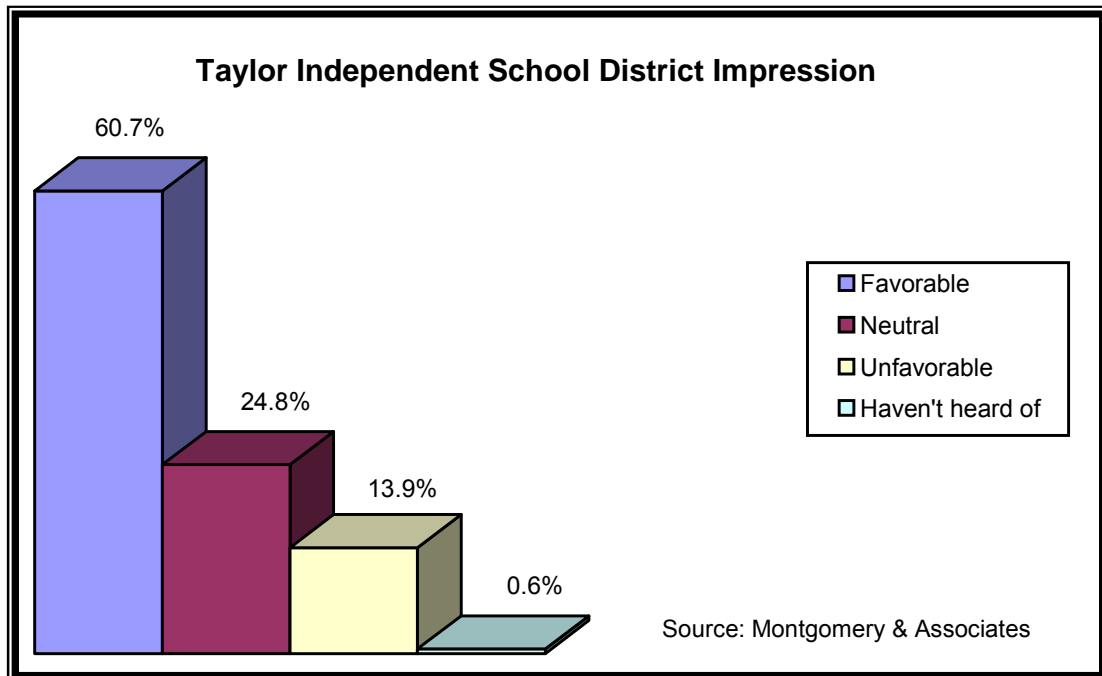
The Austin Parks and Recreation Department suite consists of a lobby area, one activity room, a full size kitchen and shares the use of the gymnasium with the J.J. Pickle Elementary School. The school and the community center sits on 15 acres of land in the heart of the St. John's neighborhood in northeast Austin, just east of Interstate 35 and south of U.S. Highway 183.

Today, St. John's is a diverse community, which is rich in history and tradition.

- Invite student teams to help school officials brainstorm on how to use new school bond revenue. Students can, for example, envision what an ideal computer laboratory would look like. This will help school officials plan facilities that consider student needs while also empowering students.
- Partnering is something that Taylor does well. Begin to collaborate about future needs of other organizations in Taylor and how they could be combined in a future ISD/Partner facility.

Action 3: Engage entire community in education reform and improvement.

School reform and student achievement is not just the job of the administrators and staff at the schools. It is the joint responsibility of these individuals as well as the entire community. Taylor must embark on an **internal marketing campaign to engage the entire community** in looking at TISD as an asset and not as a weakness. Consider the graph below from a recent survey regarding residents' impression of the schools - **60.7% of respondents have a favorable impression.**



For School:

- Promote the value of quality education within the community. Turn K-12 education into a “cause” around which the community can rally.
- Each school should adopt a program aimed at keeping parents informed about school events. Consider the following examples that have worked for other communities:
 - Weekly take home folders that include a parent participation sheet, information on upcoming events, and recent curriculum activities, and graded tests. Parents sign and students return to school. One single format could be developed for the Taylor ISD - with easy ways for each school to customize it. Ideally, take home information would be available in both English and Spanish.
 - Ask for parent volunteers to serve on a phone chain to call other parents with updates about school events, get feedback, and answer questions.
 - Create a series of public service announcements aimed at instilling the value of public education in Taylor residents.
 - Work with the MTT and school district to implement internal marketing recommendations. An internal ISD task force could help with organizing and overseeing the communication campaign within the schools.

- Develop bilingual home school liaisons that can make up to 25 home visits per month to personalize school communications.
- Start an internal PR campaign with the themes: (1) the importance of staying in school; (2) opportunities for high school graduates other than attending a four-year university; (3) how students can help their families even more in the long term by continuing education or training after high school; (4) post-high school work, training, and education opportunities located in Taylor to retain young people; (5) the benefits of investing in Taylor's schools to residents who do not have children in the school system.
 - Over time, develop a Web site containing resources for non-university bound youth. The Web site should contain information about non-college options, links with training organizations, apprenticeship programs, and the community college. It could also contain job postings.

For Parents:

- Promote the value of quality education within the community. Turn K-12 education into a "cause" around which the community can rally.
- Expand Even Start program – federally funded for parents without a diploma and with children seven years old and younger. Both students and parents receive education and program continues until the parents receive a GED.
- Consider developing a Spanish-only PTA that is not competitive with the standard PTA but is delivered in Spanish and has a different cultural focus.
- Offer workshops, hands-on training, and home visits that train parents how to teach kids at home. Parents can make educational materials such as flash cards and board games at the workshops that they take home and use with their children.
 - Continue the WOW program, annual community day outreach and educational event at which parents, teachers, non-profits, and community leaders share information about local schools, programs, services, and successes. The event could provide training to parents about how to continue the educational process at home.

For Businesses:

- Promote the value of quality education within the community. Turn K-12 education into a "cause" around which the community can rally.
- Have a career day where a variety of professionals come in and speak to students about their careers. Begin this in Kindergarten and carry through 12th grade.
- Invite successful Taylor alumni to speak to students and/or act as mentors.
- Develop Adopt-a-School Programs. This is very important to start and continue.

Action 4: Inform students, teachers, and parents of post-graduation options other than college. These programs will help keep graduates in the county, fill workforce needs, and keep students from dropping out of high school.

Youth employment programs, more than those designed for adults, must take a comprehensive approach integrating education, work experience, recreation and social development. The best youth employment programs are concerned with developing the whole person, rather than simply imparting job skills or making placements. As Karen Pittman, director of the International Youth Foundation, explains, "We have to broaden the goals of youth development beyond school and jobs to include health, social and civic competencies. While achieving various competencies is important for youth, we must also help youth develop the confidence and connectedness needed to use those competencies well."

Many youth programs try to work with all elements of a young person's environment: family, communities, schools, social networks and other institutions that contribute to a person's development. Much of a youth employment program's focus is preventative rather than remedial. By instilling confidence and skills that lead to labor market attachment, programs can help young people steer a course to successful adulthood.

- Encourage students and parents to explore all possible post high school educational tracks, e.g. military service, vocation training, community college, universities, post college professionals (e.g. law school, dental, and medical).
- Early in high school, identify students who may be interested in a different track other than college.
- Track these students into apprenticeship programs for occupations that are growing but currently not being pursued (electricians, truck drivers, and graphic designers, for example).
- Develop programs to assist these students achieve success in careers that may not require college.

Workforce Strategy 2: Improve workforce programs.

Taylor has seen an increase in its minority population during the past decade. This trend will only continue, so efforts to address workforce training for minorities and the entire population needs to be further developed. Workforce training programs need to be holistic, encompassing not just formal education and skill development but also healthcare, affordable housing, transportation, daycare, and monthly stipend. In order to effectively transition displaced workers into target industries, coordinating workforce development programs with these other types of services will yield the most positive results. Even Start and CNET have recently partnered to provide basic computer skills training to their GED and ESL students, but this could be expanded.

Action 1: Develop non-traditional workforce programs.

- Consider developing courses at TCAT that will feed into the new Small Business Incubator, such as courses in “Culinary Business”, Arts, Crafts, and “Starting Your Own Business.”
- Involve the Rural Capital Area Workforce Development Board as an integral player on these initiatives.

Action 2: Inform the community that these programs are available.

- Begin a series of informational sessions on workforce training options in Taylor neighborhoods and community organizations.
- Encourage people in need to participate, and ensure that all leadership in the community fully understands the new workforce program delivery at all levels so that they can talk intelligently about these programs in their business development and expansion efforts.
- Include details about where and how to distribute information throughout the community (e.g., libraries, churches, chambers, employers, local media).

Construction Gateway has been recognized as one of the Top Four job training programs in the nation by Jobs for the Future and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Some 90 percent of Construction Gateway clients who enrolled in the program last year graduated, 73 percent obtained employment and 69 percent were still employed after six months. Many of the students are incarcerated members of CORE (Criminal Offenders Re-entry Effort), the Travis County Sheriff’s Department’s “boot camp” at Del Valle Correctional Facility. Construction Gateway is a collaboration between CATF, Austin Community College and the local construction industry that serves the hiring needs of construction employers. For more information, contact Tom Serafin, Managing Director, Construction Gateway at 381-4214 or tserafin@catf-austin.org

Workforce Strategy 3: Adopt and enhance TCAT programs for target industries.

Temple College at Taylor (TCAT) is a tremendous advantage to Taylor. The recent expansion of TCAT with a nursing program and required laboratory space will help Taylor-area residents address the projected staff shortages in the health care industry.

Taylor should also determine how to partner with the new Round Rock Higher Education Center (RRHEC) so that it can positively impact the community. The 117,000-square-foot RRHEC is scheduled to open in August 2005 and will undoubtedly have a direct impact on Taylor.

Action 1: Educate TCAT about target industry workforce needs.

Provide TCAT staff and leaders with information on those industries that Taylor would like to see expand in the community, in hopes that TCAT will continue to customize programs not only for demand occupations but also for Taylor's specific preferences.

Action 2: Enhance workforce training for the health care industry.

Education and training will be geared toward the health care industry. TCAT's Nursing Program will produce students with LVNs, with a hope of eventually adding a Registered Nurse (RN) certification program. Demand locally is not only at Johns Community Hospital and the two clinics, but also at the rest homes in Taylor. Many of these graduates will also work in Round Rock or Georgetown.

This program should be embraced and marketed throughout Taylor and the region.

Action 3: Develop core curriculum geared towards graphic artists, computer-aided design and other technical design careers.

As more and more manufacturing jobs go overseas, the United States will see an increased demand for software engineering and computer-aided design professions.

Taylor has a rich history in design of furniture, equipment, and crafts. However, wages in these traditional industries generally do not pay well for some of the more blue-collar employees. Design is an industry that these workers can be transitioned into with relative ease.

Design Industry Overview

Design is the complex combination of computers and the art world. This target is largely driven by the skills of the workforce – computer-aided graphic design. With both artistic and commercial appeal, occupations can be found in a broad spectrum of industries. **The fast growing and high paying targets of computer-aided animation, graphic design, and industrial design should be a primary sector in which Taylor can find a differentiating niche vis-à-vis other competitors.**

Digital design continues to work its way into all fabrics of American life. As more of our day-to-day activities involve computers, designers keep these systems efficient and user-friendly. Most people are familiar with occupations such as computer animation and graphic design, though many overlook the more industrial applications. Commercial and industrial designers develop and design manufacturing products, from cars to biomedical lab equipment to missiles. Within this industry, while not often full-time, is the traditional artistic community comprised of craftsmen and visual artists.

QUALITY OF LIFE

GOAL TWO: Taylor is an appealing place to live for young professionals and individuals employed by target industry companies.

Quality of Life consists of the following factors that residents, businesses and tourists consider when rating a community as a desirable place to live, work, and visit:

- **Appearance** of a community
- Quality, quantity, connectivity, convenience and accessibility of **parks and trails**
- Quality and choice of **restaurants**
- Real and perceived issues of **safety**, including fire and police
- Affordability, quality, and choice of **housing**
- Quality, diversity, and friendliness of **shopping facilities**
- Diversity and quality of **professional businesses**, such as doctors, lawyers, dentists
- Objectivity and coverage of local **media**
- **Healthcare** options
- **Cultural** attractions such as museums and movie theatres
- **Churches**

The majority of Taylor residents feel that the quality of life in Taylor is either the same or getting better. According to Montgomery & Associates survey findings, over one-third of respondents (35.2%) believe that the quality of life in Taylor is getting better, and almost one half (44.6%) think that it is staying about the same. Only 14.2% think that the quality of life is getting worse. Nonetheless, **quality of life improvements are necessary in Taylor, and they will help Taylor attract higher paying businesses and more affluent residents.**

The following are the most important areas for Taylor to focus its efforts to improve its quality of life:

- **Improve the appearance of Taylor.**
- **Expand retail choice.**
- **Expand and improve parks and recreation assets.**
- **Celebrate Taylor's diversity.**
- **Help newcomers feel engaged in the community.**

Quality of Life Strategy One: Improve the appearance of Taylor.

The general appearance of Taylor as one enters the city from Hutto is very poor. Efforts for tourism or business development will always be hampered by this appearance. This should be a number one priority for the community.

Action 1: Develop a Community Development Corporation (CDC).

- Create the CDC.
- Identify funding sources for startup, programmatic and administrative funding.
- Consider the following priority initiatives:
 - Street and sidewalk improvements.
 - Building façade improvements.
 - Small business loans (see Entrepreneurship section).
 - Housing rehabilitation.
 - See Appendix for information on starting and funding a CDC.

TEDC can refer to the *International Economic Development Council's*, Summer Newsletter article on CDCs for more information on financing and measuring success.

Action 2: Rehabilitate housing.

- Work with the prison and youth rehabilitation program to develop a Hands-on-Housing initiative to rehabilitate identified houses throughout Taylor, but focus on south Taylor.
- Develop a Habitat for Humanity program in Taylor.
- Work with the Community Development Corporation to develop an infill affordable housing program.
- Offer citizens who restore old houses a tax credit against their property taxes. Identify houses that qualify and give them information to promote this new program.

What is a CDC?

A CDC or Community Development Corporation is a non-profit organization. It is tax exempt and can be funded by any combination of member dues, private or public grants, and other resources. The corporation can take on projects of both a regional or single community nature.

Success stories abound from Community Development Corporations throughout the country where such "grass roots" efforts have made a tremendous impact.

What Does a CDC Do?

- Affordable Housing Development
- Commercial Development
- Expansion of Consumer Markets for Local Food Products
- Small Business Loan Programs
- Youth Development Programs

What projects does a CDC focus on?

Economic Development

- Revolving loan funds for small businesses
- Technical assistance for small businesses
- Seminars and workshops for small businesses

Housing

- Managing housing rehabilitation

Where does a CDC obtain its funding?

- Foundations, Private Sector, CDBG funds, US Treasury CDFI Funds, and others

Quality of Life Strategy Two: Expand and improve retail opportunities.

One area of needed improvement in Taylor is having more options for restaurants and shopping. The new HEB and Wal-Mart expansions will help to provide more shopping opportunities, but residents and businesses still want more options for restaurants and clothing.

Action 1: Adopt liquor-by-the-drink.

- Certain restaurants will not locate unless they can sell alcohol. Taylor must develop a petition in order to begin the process of having a local option election to sell alcohol. These efforts often fail if done without professional help; AE highly recommends hiring an outside expert who specializes in local option elections (e.g., Texas Petition Strategies).
 - Efforts that focus on the economic benefit to the community or area combined with a professionally coordinated message, petition effort and campaign almost always win.
 - Local option election requirements are difficult under any circumstances. Efforts are doomed to fail if proper planning and message development are not undertaken.

In the spring of 2004, the City of Taylor hired Buxton, <http://www.buxtonco.com>, a Fort Worth based firm to help Taylor identify retailers by analyzing the use of household level data that the city can attract.

Action 2: Market to higher end chain restaurants.

- Utilize the services of Buxton to attract higher end national restaurant chains.
- Work with downtown landowners to develop chain restaurants downtown, and consider some form of microbrewery that can easily be retrofitted to downtown.

Action 3: Market to retailers.

- Work with landowners of these buildings to partner on recruitment and marketing strategies.

Action 4: Develop incentive programs for targeted areas in the community.

- Develop more aggressive incentives for commercial and retail development in two areas of town: 1) south Taylor, which has not experienced the kind of retail and commercial activity seen in other areas of town; and 2) the area near FM973, that will eventually become a hot area as the major access to Manor.

Quality of Life Strategy Three: Expand and improve parks and recreation assets.

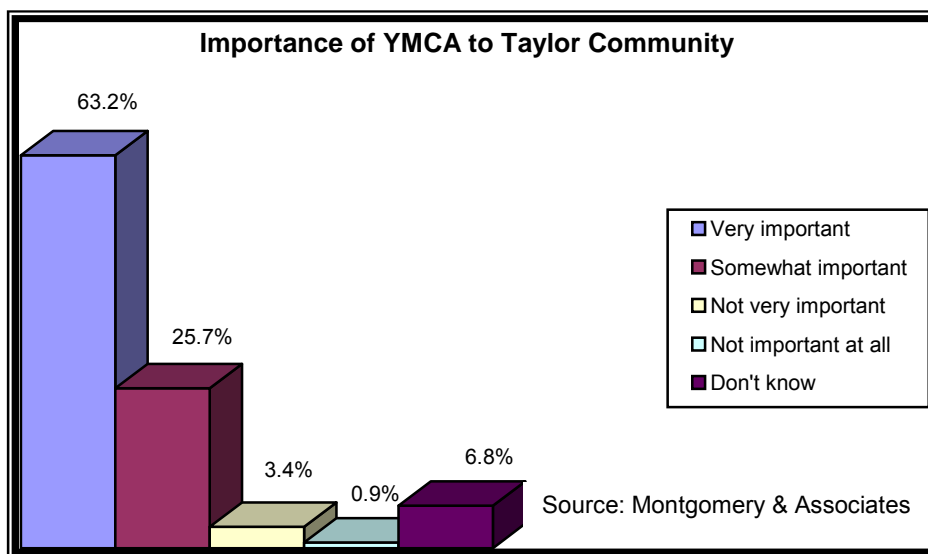
Taylor has an extensive hike and bike trail and several acres of dedicated parkland. Some areas of town have more parkland than others, but this aspect of quality of life is certainly an asset for Taylor. **Taylor has approximately 250-acres of existing parkland.**

Action 1: Fully develop the East Williamson County Park

AE completed an economic impact analysis of this park on Taylor (see Baseline Analysis Report). The study overwhelmingly shows that the most positive impact on Taylor can be realized if the park is built according to the site plan that was prepared for the park, including such amenities as the YMCA facility, the rodeo and fair grounds, and ball fields. Additionally, AE recommends that Taylor try to host the annual Williamson County rodeo and fair at this location.

The YMCA is a much needed facility. When asked what facility the community needs the most, two facilities were in a statistical tie for first place – YMCA facility (26.3%) and teen facility (25.1%).

- Develop every aspect of the site plan for this park.
- The Williamson County Park should be operated as a business. The park has the potential to draw substantial visitors. To make it successful, the City and County should pursue an organization or individuals who have relevant experience to oversee the park.
- Enlist the YMCA to develop a stellar facility on this site.
- Develop a civic center at the park site. Ensure that beer and alcohol can be sold on this site.



Action 2: Sponsor annual, national sporting events together with locally owned sport businesses.

- Biking trails are great – have an annual bike road race through Taylor (see Action 4 below).

- Although the event may not be held in Taylor, portions of a mountain bike race, bicycle road race, kayak race or adventure sports event may go through Taylor.
- Collaborate with neighboring counties towards this action.

Action 3: Further develop park system in other areas of Taylor.

- Consider developing a park near downtown. Focus on developing something that celebrates the ethnic diversity of the town. Consider a Fiesta marketplace where the Farmers Market can be moved.
- Consider developing and improving park amenities in south Taylor.
- Promote the new county park on a Web site, Chamber and City's Web site, or consider creating a separate site, www.WilliamsonCountyPark.com to promote it (e.g., <http://traveltex.com/pq.asp?SN=4441362&LS=0&PN=5407>).

Action 4: Further develop the bike system in the Taylor area.

- The bike trail system in the Taylor area is already well known by bicycle enthusiasts throughout Central Texas. Market the trails and clearly identify through the Williamson County Bicycle Map as well as Road Sign Markers where these trails exist.

Quality of Life Strategy Four: Celebrate Taylor's diversity.

Taylor has a tremendous ethnic diversity and history rich in diverse cultures. This is an asset that can be exploited to bring together the community and to bring attention to Taylor as a community that celebrates its diversity.

Action 1: Develop cultural awareness programs for all residents and businesses and consider creating a cultural ombudsman position for the community.

- Make learning about the Hispanic culture fun. Invite leaders from the Hispanic community within Taylor, or the region, to co-organize a Mexican-American event at which cuisine, traditions, and artwork are showcased.
- Work with local banks to become more flexible to the needs of Hispanic workers. Provide information on banking in Spanish. Be more flexible on the type of identification required to open a savings account.
- Develop a position for the entire city for a Cultural Ombudsman who can serve the groups such as the City, the police department, the school district, and others to understand cultural issues and develop strategies for improving cultural relationships and celebrating cultural diversity.
- Start a cultural orientation program to help parents, teachers, and students understand and appreciate the culture of their peers – Hispanic, African American, German, Czech, and others.

Action 2: Create an artists guild for artisans and recognize local artistic ventures as economic development prospects.

- Arts schools, artists, and skilled crafts workers are each their own engines of economic development and entrepreneurship.

- Consider several examples to draw ideas from, including <http://www.mexico-artemuseum.org/>.
- Create a monthly event in downtown for locals and tourists to shop, eat, and socialize, e.g., <http://www.firstthursday.info/>.
- Promote art in Taylor, such as arts and crafts fairs: <http://www.texasartsandcraftsfair.com/>.

Quality of Life Strategy Five: Help newcomers feel engaged in the community.

AE heard in several interviews that “if you aren’t from Taylor it is difficult to start a business.” More needs to be done to help new businesses and residents feel comfortable.

Action 1: Develop community wide support and gain broad participation in a Meet and Greet program for both new residents and new businesses.

- Work closely with large employers to educate their employees about new businesses that open in Taylor and new residential opportunities.

Action 2: Provide customer service training to City and school personnel who interact with local businesses and residents.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

GOAL THREE: Entrepreneurship and small business growth are significant drivers of the economy.

More than 80% of job growth in the United States will be driven by entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs can play a vital role in any community, if given the proper resources and environment for growth. Taylor has many small businesses that started and several very successful entrepreneurs. However, there is no concerted effort by the community to foster an entrepreneurial environment.

The entrepreneur in the community is a primary contributor and mobilizer of resources to develop the economy, a provider of employment for others, and a stabilizing factor in the society. **The following are some of the major benefits of entrepreneurship:**

- ✓ Provide a productive outlet for energies of enterprising and energetic people
- ✓ Create jobs at relatively low capital cost, especially in the fast growing service sector
- ✓ Develop a pool of skilled and semi skilled workers who are the base for industrial expansion
- ✓ Small businesses are a source of innovation in products, services and techniques
- ✓ Contribute to increased participation of all communities in the economic activities of the region
- ✓ Serve a social function by creating career opportunities and upward social mobility, and by preserving, in many instances, a set of values increasingly needed in these days of large impersonal firms

It is most important for Taylor to focus on the following entrepreneurial efforts:

- **Develop a business incubator.**
- **Educate local population about entrepreneurship and what is required to open a business.**
- **Create a youth entrepreneurship program.**

Entrepreneurship Strategy One: Educate local population about entrepreneurship and what is required to open a business.

The goal of business incubators is to increase the success rate of new businesses by providing technical support and reducing startup costs. Incubators generally offer low-cost lease space and/or reduced overhead expenses to new businesses by offering a way to share expenses for marketing, utilities and other operations. Firms sponsored by incubators can benefit their host communities by hiring local labor and buying supplies locally. State and local economic development agencies, not-for-profit organizations, chambers of commerce, colleges and universities, and private corporations can all operate incubators.

Action 1: Ensure that Taylor leaders understand and support the entrepreneurship programs.

- Economic Development Team should provide a presentation to City Council, School District, Chamber Board, 4A Board, Main Street Board, and Civic Clubs on the importance of entrepreneurship and programs that will be developed to support entrepreneurship.
- Community leaders should develop press release(s) and hold a community forum on the “Importance of Entrepreneurship to Taylor” and what programs will be put in place to help those that are interested in developing their own business.

Example: Triad Entrepreneur Initiative (TEI, <http://www.triadlaunchpad.org/>) P.R. or newsletter

Action 2: Expand and promote Entrepreneurship training at TCAT/CNET.

- Individuals seeking assistance from workforce service providers should be given information about starting a new business.
- Use computers at CNET to link small businesses.

Example: St. Edwards University (SEU)

Action 3: Support the Small Business Incubator and Resource Center.

- The center should include a library of information on entrepreneurship and consulting to small and startup businesses.
- Invite retired business people to staff the Small Business Incubator and Resource Center.
- Invite local business owners and financiers to contribute to the Small Business Incubator and Resource Center, making their knowledge available to potential entrepreneurs.

Example: Center for Advanced Research and Training (CART, www.cart.org)

Action 4: Provide specific information and training in Spanish to the growing Hispanic market.

- Many immigrants have a natural entrepreneurial inclination and should be recognized as potential sources of entrepreneurship.
- Utilize radio, Hispanic churches, and health workers as a medium to provide information to this segment of the population about these programs.
- Provide training in Spanish.

Entrepreneurship Strategy Two: Create a small business/entrepreneur alliance.

Action 1: Meet regularly to exchange ideas and network with investors.

Meet monthly with a guest speaker to educate the audience. Practice business plan presentations, enable connections with local investors and banks, and develop connections to other Entrepreneurship groups across the United States.

- Invite successful local entrepreneurs to speak at community events.
- Initiate a “buy local” campaign.
- Create church-based entrepreneurship programs geared towards Hispanics/Blacks.
- Establish innovative program (similar to CARTS, see below) that integrates ISD/Temple College/Churches/Businesses/Youth).

Example: Triad Entrepreneur Initiative

Entrepreneurship Strategy Three: Create a youth entrepreneurship program.

One demographic in entrepreneurial development that is often overlooked is youth. **Seven out of ten high school students want to start their own businesses**, according to the first national Gallup poll on entrepreneurship education commissioned and co-developed by the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (CEL) of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation (1994). **Young people no longer believe that corporate America will take care of them.** Today's high school students watched their parents invest years of hard work and loyalty in companies that promised job growth and security in return. These same youngsters are observing in dismay as corporation after corporation downsizes its workforce and drastically abandons the assumptions that used to constitute the unwritten contract between the long-term employee and the corporate employer.

The channeling of our nation's youth into the "employed-by-somebody-else" marketplace is particularly damaging for our at-risk youth populations. Access to entrepreneurship knowledge occurs primarily in the home or family environment. When children gain awareness, they often do so informally by observation and by "conversational osmosis" at the dinner table of parents, grandparents, and other relatives. While these ad hoc opportunities provide some youths in specialized socio-economic circumstances a small chance to observe entrepreneurship role models and acquire entrepreneurship knowledge, at-risk youths in general have no such opportunities in their extended family. The education to which they do have access typically focuses on job skill training and conspires with their social circumstances to confine their vision of productive employment. That vision tends to be a very narrow "take-a-job" playing field bounded by low-skill minimum-wage jobs on one end and low-level supervisory and middle management jobs on the other end.

Action 1: Hold focus group at Taylor High School to determine interest.

- Create a Junior Leadership Program.
- Develop a business incubator downtown – TCAT/TEDC/City/County can develop “start your own business” education tracks for all ages/ethnicities.
- Develop a Junior Chamber of Commerce.

- Set up a mentor program where local students (junior and seniors) can spend a day a week in some profession of their choosing.
- Allow schools to help place the students.

Action 2: Identify best medium for entrepreneurship training.

Action 3: Seek a retired business executive within the City/County to provide free training and mentoring to youths in this program.

Action 4: Hold an annual event honoring the best youth entrepreneurial project, with a prize (e.g., funding) awarded for best idea.

Action 5: Apply for Kauffman Foundation Freedom School Grant.
(See Appendix for additional information)

Entrepreneurship Strategy Four: Improve financing for local entrepreneurs.

Funding for business startup is also one of the biggest impediments to furthering entrepreneurship in Taylor. There are several organizations in the region such as the Austin Entrepreneur Network.

Action 1: Better connect venture capital and angel investors across the region with Taylor entrepreneurs.

Action 2: Develop a local business plan competition.

- Obtain private funding from local investors to help fund marketing, promotion and awards for competition.
- Ask the local entrepreneurial network to support competition.
- Invite venture capital and angel investors from the region to judge.

Action 3: Send a representative from Taylor to regional entrepreneurial network events.

- A delegate from the business incubator should represent Taylor at this event.
- Draw attention to the incubator as a resource and model for rural entrepreneurial initiatives.
- Consider hosting a conference or event at the facility for some of the regional entrepreneurial groups and angel investors.

Action 4: Provide local banks with resources that educate them on the best way to support small and start up companies.

- Host a workshop for local and regional banks on types of financing available for entrepreneurs.
- The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) does this by providing information to existing business on programs and resources that are designed to improve the profitability of companies.
- Ask the SBDC to provide a presentation and handouts for an informational meeting.
- Ask business leaders to support the workshop event and market widely to all sectors of Taylor (students, young professionals, Hispanics, churches).

Entrepreneurship Strategy Five: Develop a Small Business Incubator and Resource Center in one of the vacant Downtown Buildings.

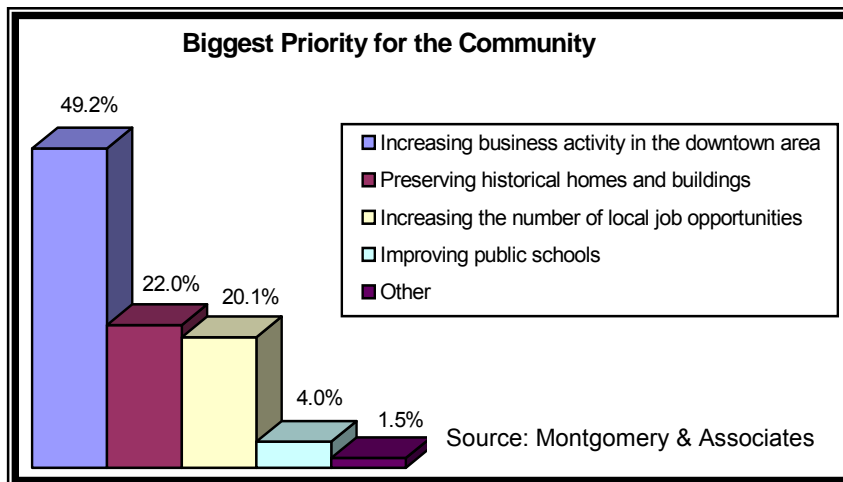
- Consider developing a non-traditional incubator that will be focused on developing small businesses in arts, crafts, and culinary industries. The CDC will help support this through funding of the facility (along with grants) as well as small business start-up funds for these businesses.
- The Hispanic population should be encouraged to participate in this incubator.

Central Business District

GOAL FOUR: Downtown Taylor will be a thriving center of the community where diversity will be celebrated through public art and a mixture of land uses will complement each other.

Downtown Taylor was once a thriving downtown - full of pedestrian and commercial activity. Several factors led to the downtown becoming less of a focus for the community, but many are hopeful that the downtown can come back to life. Recent efforts including the Main Street, the TEA-21 grant, Downtown Merchants Association, and the Historic District Designation are giving Taylorites some of this renewed interest.

The community wants the downtown to be a focus for business activity. Consider the chart that the right that represents survey participants' responses to "What is the biggest priority for the Community?" Clearly, a majority of the respondents feel that the downtown should be the focus.



However, the City of Taylor does not have the funds to make all the improvements necessary in downtown. The TEA-21 grant will not be sufficient to make all the improvements, and the Historical District Designation alone is not enough to bring back the private sector interest to downtown.

Taylor needs to make significant improvements to the downtown that go beyond the ability of one or even all of the organizations currently involved to achieve. Therefore, **AE recommends two major initiatives** that will facilitate the growth that the community would like to see: 1) formation of a new organization (CDC) to aggressively pursue improvements in downtown, 2nd street, and south Taylor, and 2) development of a special assessment district and fee for the downtown and south 2nd Street.

Areas for Taylor to focus on to improve the downtown include:

- **Define and enhance downtown.**
- **Improve capacity for improvements.**
- **Implement public sector initiatives.**

Central Business District Strategy One: Define and enhance downtown.

In addition to the other recommended improvements to downtown mentioned above, the downtown needs to be considered a special place by those who visit it or drive by.

Action 1: Develop a Gateway on 2nd Street into the city/downtown.

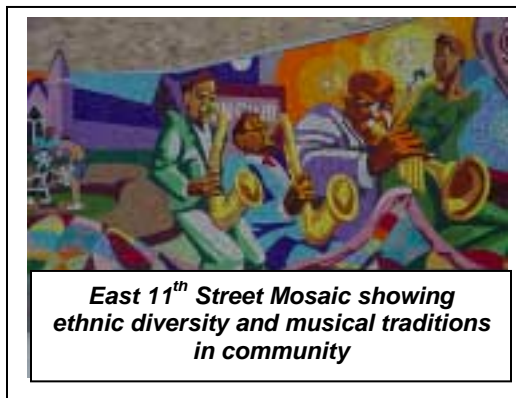
- Clearly define when a visitor is coming into Taylor and the downtown by having an actual gateway developed.
- Taylor may consider working with TxDot to utilize the existing overpass at Hwy 79 and the loop to place gateway information on the façade of the overpass.
- Consider having a giant mural painted along 2nd Street - several very long sheet metal walls could act as canvas. Engage students in this endeavor.



Action 2: Develop public art downtown.

The Taylor Arts Guild has developed initiatives such as "Art in the Park" at Heritage Park. In addition, they are going to hold an art contest for high school students and there will be several prizes with this. This type of initiative needs to be further expanded.

- Provide a public art program framework which ensures artistic excellence and opportunities for community engagement.
- Develop a collection of public artworks representing the full range of art media, and sharing strong aesthetic form and content.
- Reflect the diversity of the community, its history, culture and goals.
- Engage residents and visitors with both permanent and temporary artwork.
- Display and interpret the public art collection in a manner that ensures artworks are accessible to citizens of all ages and mobility ranges.
- Encourage community understanding of and dialogue about issues raised by artists in their public work.
- Display financial contributions and gifts by corporations and private individuals for artworks in public places.
- Aggressively pursue grants from private foundations, and from state and federal sources (e.g., <http://www.arts.state.tx.us/artstexas/03fall/funding.asp>).



Action 3: Develop an artisan cooperative.

- City could lease space downtown for an artisan cooperative that is comprised of local and regional artists and craftsmen.
- Utilize vacant downtown space as arts and design centers.

- Seek local artists' interest in developing a cooperative studio and gallery downtown.
- Examine neighboring communities that have developed arts studios downtown, such as Lockhart.
- Consider an artists incubator downtown.

Central Business District Strategy Two: Improve capacity for improvements.

Action 1: Establish sustainable funding mechanisms and organizational capacity for downtown improvements.

- Establish a special assessment district to pay for improvements, such as a Public Improvement District (PID) or Municipal Management District (MDD).
- The city should use the prisoners to effect change in the parks, and downtown buildings. This source of labor should be used as much as possible for beautification of the city.
- Encourage the downtown merchants association to continue to function as a capable organization.
- Continue to utilize the Main Street designation for special grant considerations.

Action 2: Encourage private sector investment.

- Continue to pursue and then utilize Historic District Designation.
- Provide processing fees for Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits (fees can cost up to \$2500 for a rehab costing \$1 million or more).
- Encourage downtown businesses to stay open until 9 p.m. If it is difficult for small businesses to stay open late every night of the week, ask shop owners to agree to the same one or two evenings a week in which they stay open later.
- Start a monthly downtown celebration. In Austin, for example, every first Thursday of the month, stores in one shopping district stay open until 10 p.m. The sidewalks are filled with local artists and merchant booths selling wares. Local bands provide live music in the street. First Thursday now attracts more than 10,000 people every month.
- Aggressively market buildings and sites that are not just for ownership but also for rent.
- Develop a rapport with building owners who have empty buildings. Meet regularly with them to educate them about tax benefits, city incentives and business interest in renting their buildings. Be very aggressive about this. Show them the results of the Buxton analysis and what retailers could do well in Taylor.

Central Business District Strategy Three: Implement public sector initiatives.

Action 1: Effectively implement TEA-21 grant.

- Clearly communicate to business and residents about the TEA-21 grant and its purpose.
- Do everything high quality – planters, lighting, sidewalk improvements.

Action 2: Encourage business growth in the CBDs.

- Develop and adopt specialized incentives that assist existing and future retail, commercial and office business downtown.
- Reduce or eliminate permitting fees for businesses downtown.
- Invest in wireless infrastructure downtown.

Action 3: Modify ordinances to encourage redevelopment.

- Ensure that mixed-use development is allowed throughout the CBD.
- Adopt building codes to facilitate renovation of older buildings.
- Invest in additional code enforcement officers for a one-year period. Aggressively pursue cleaning up buildings. The City should strictly enforce any code violations in order to stimulate redevelopment of those buildings owned by absentee landlords.
- Pass and enforce a Thru Truck Ordinance, forcing trucks to use the bypass around Taylor.

Action 4: Develop and promote signage.

- Develop, adopt and enforce strict signage ordinance for downtown business – limiting size, and developing uniformity for signage downtown.
- Develop thematic and uniform city signage that goes with new marketing theme.

Action 5: Develop downtown tourism amenities.

- Develop 1-2 kiosks (linked to wireless Internet access and tourism promotion), downtown walking tours, specific tourist attractions (with artistic attractions), maps, and other visitor amenities such as benches.

Action 6: Develop and enforce lighting standards.

- Adopt and enforce strict lighting ordinance – limiting size, location, and design.
- Develop thematic and uniform lighting standards downtown.

Action 7: Improve public buildings/areas.

- Improve the appearance of City Hall. Invest in a well-defined landscaper to make the city hall building appear very special and inviting. Consider public art projects adjacent to City Hall.
- Work with the CDC to improve the old City Hall Museum and move the chamber into this building, along with a museum. The estimated cost of the project is \$1.5 million. These funds can be obtained if a targeted and aggressive fundraising campaign is developed.

Action 8: Modify Zoning Ordinance.

AE does not recommend any changes to the current future land use map for the CBD. Therefore, the Future Land Use map for the entire city that is found in the Future Land Use section of the Comprehensive Plan also serves the CBD. AE does, however, offer the following recommendations to the Allowable Uses in the Commercial Business District (B-3) in Taylor's existing Zoning Ordinance.

Currently Permitted in B-3, Commercial Business District, but should be changed to only be allowed with a Special Use Permit:

- Continuing Care Retirement Community
- Group Day Care Home
- Rehabilitation Care Facility (Halfway House)
- Retirement Housing for the Elderly
- Laundromat (Or Self-Service Washateria)

Currently not allowed, but should be allowed with a Special Use Permit:

- Discount or Department Store
- Bookbinding
- Bus Station or Terminal

SITES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL FIVE: Taylor's sites and infrastructure meet the needs of target industries and a growing population.

When firms are queried as to which factors are musts when selecting a state or region while making location decisions, labor considerations are by far the most important, followed by proximity to markets, and residential amenities for managers and engineers. The only infrastructure that is often mentioned in a regional context is transportation.

When choosing a specific development location within a state or region, however, the availability of infrastructure grows in importance. As infrastructure is available in almost every city, business prospects will look to compare a region's or city's infrastructure (availability and pricing). It becomes especially enticing to a company when key systems are found complemented by adequate land priced lower than acreage near a regional economic core, without problems associated with urban congestion.

Taylor has affordable and available land for commercial and industrial development. Taylor's tax rates are high, relative to its benchmarks, but utility rates are competitive. Although Taylor is relatively distant from I-35, with SH130 and SH45 being completed in the next few years, I-35 proximity becomes less of a disadvantage.

The following are the most critical areas for Taylor to focus sites and infrastructure efforts:

- **Develop and market sites.**
- **Improve transportation infrastructure.**
- **Improve telecommunications capacity.**
- **Commuter rail.**

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy One: Develop and market sites.

Taylor has several sites that are available for commercial and industrial development that are quality sites. Following the marketing recommendations and creating targeted marketing to specific industries will help Taylor garner business development wins that will add value to the economy in Taylor.

Action 1: Better understand the needs of target industries and focus on expanding and recruiting these industries.

In the appendix section of this report, we provide a detailed summary of each target industry as well as industry-specific associations and trade shows that could help in Taylor's target marketing to these industries:

- Manufacturing
- Value added Agriculture
- Logistics and Distribution
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Design (e.g. arts and crafts, software, film production, professional services)
- Healthcare
- Retail

Action 2: Improve marketing of available sites.

Taylor needs a central source of available sites for both the downtown and industrial development. Both the Main Street and EDC have some information on their respective sites, but this could be centralized and presented so that it is easier to "see" what is available online.

Action 3: Plan for Future Demand for Industrial and Business Space.

Taylor should consider developing a 10-year plan for site development based on anticipated demand. Based on the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use recommendations, identify where the City would like to continue industrial development and/or business park development.

- Consider actively promoting downtown space for professional office space for physicians, dentists, lawyers, and other similar professions.

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Two: Improve transportation infrastructure.

Streets are in poor condition in Taylor. Residents, businesses and tourists all complain of this, yet the City does not have enough funds to pay for all of these improvements in a short time period. Beyond city streets, the transportation infrastructure is a tremendous asset and should continue to be leveraged.

Action 1: Clearly communicate a strategy for improving the streets to all citizens.

Action 2: Develop a Drainage Master Plan and make drainage improvements concurrently with street improvements.

Action 3: Consider allocating funds to move utilities on 2nd street and engage representatives to lobby TxDOT to make street improvements on 2nd street.

Action 4: Develop a Public Improvement District (PID) or Municipal Management District (MMD) for infrastructure improvements from Hwy 79 Loop to downtown, and along Main Street.

Action 5: Aggressively increase retail sales tax revenue and invest incrementally \$1.5 million in city streets on an annual basis.

Sites and Infrastructure Strategy Three: Improve telecommunications capacity.

Taylor CNET is certainly a success. It is a model community network in Texas and the United States. The facilities are very good and the programs are well attended. These services though can be expanded and this asset can become better utilized.

According to several community network experts, key aspects of sustaining a community network include:

- Awareness creation
- Training
- Streamlining community ideas into proposals
- Enhancing people's personal development through the use of technology
- Aggregating demand
- Providing connectivity that would otherwise not be offered or affordable
- Providing a place for social interaction, learning, creativity
- Linking organizations with resources and opportunities

Action 1: Expand services of CNET regionally.

Action 2: Leverage CNET in the implementation of this plan.

- Online user groups could be developed that focus on the implementation of specific strategies within this plan. This will not only ease the implementation but it will also provide the citizenry an opportunity to view the progress of plan implementation.

Action 3: Find a solution to issue of tree cover impacting wireless internet.

Action 4: Instead of trying to bring students to CNET, connect the schools to CNET so they can stay on campus and still get distance learning.

- Monterrey Tech is a good example of distance learning.

Action 5: Develop TaylorCNET portal to become the main web entrance into Taylor and link to all other organizations.

MARKETING

GOAL SIX: Taylor is engaged in a proactive, targeted marketing campaign to send a clear message that the city is dedicated to improving its economy.

Taylor faces three immediate marketing challenges: 1) lack of communications with citizens, local businesses, and workforce; 2) a perceived negative perception; and 3) a lack of awareness outside of Central Texas.

To create a marketing plan for Taylor, AE conducted several meetings and workshops with economic development and community leaders. The **majority agree that Taylor will be more successful if all organizations promoting the city use a single plan and message.** This buy-in is a huge step towards successful marketing. The appendix provides more information on the marketing planning process.

During the project, AE and local leaders identified Taylor's economic development marketing objectives and "owner" of specific marketing roles. These objectives support Taylor's marketing goal and all recommendations within this plan.

- Increase the amount of **positive**, local, regional, and national publicity that Taylor receives.
- Improve **internal knowledge** of resources that are available in Taylor for residents seeking education and training, for expanding businesses, and for potential entrepreneurs.
- Increase the **number of businesses** approaching TEDC, the Chamber, or the City for information about expanding their business in Taylor.
- Recruit **target industry companies**, thereby creating new jobs at higher skill levels so fewer Taylorites have to commute.
- **Increase demand** for Taylor's economic development products – TCAT, TCNET, Business / Industrial Parks, TISD, Airport, new County Park and incentives.
- **Improve** Taylor's economic development product – Gateway, Downtown, Workforce Development Programs, south Taylor, Business resources, and image.

Marketing for economic development will benefit all Taylorites by creating more local jobs, enhancing career opportunities, raising sales tax revenue, providing more amenities, and creating a positive buzz and increasing morale among citizens.

For Taylor, the initial focus should be on informing the community of economic development goals, campaigning to internal audiences, and then to new target industries outside of Taylor.

The following ten marketing strategies will help economic development leaders accomplish the marketing goal:

- **Establish specific marketing roles for each organization currently involved in economic development.**
- **Form a Marketing Implementer Committee.**
- **Adopt a single economic development logo.**
- **Improve economic development products.**
- **Understand target audiences.**
- **Invest in hiring a Public Relations Manager.**
- **Build awareness through local and regional media.**
- **Launch an internal marketing campaign.**
- **Better integrate Web sites promoting Taylor.**
- **Implement external campaigns.**

The following pages further discuss each marketing strategy.

Marketing Strategy One: Establish specific marketing roles for each organization currently involved in economic development.

Each organization promoting Taylor has a common goal for the city: **to create a more prosperous economy.**

Fortunately Taylor has several organizations with experience in marketing the city. However, with limited staff, resources, and budgets, Taylor must rethink how it markets and be more efficient.

The table below identifies Taylor’s primary economic development organizations. We recommend establishing **primary marketing roles** for each organization. The City should review and agree on the identified roles.

Organization	Primary Purpose	Marketing Role
City 	Infrastructure improvements / Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make improvements to roads, parks, and utilities ○ Invite citizens to attend public meetings ○ Better inform citizens on the city progress ○ Participate in business prospect meetings
Taylor ISD 	K-12 Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to improve education by leveraging technology and starting creative programs ○ Promote the value of education to parents and students ○ Create positive awareness throughout Central Texas
Chamber of Commerce 	Business retention, events and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase local business activity ○ Host annual local business recognition events ○ Develop and manage events and festivals that will increase tourism
TEDC 	Business retention and new business recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help local businesses expand ○ Lead economic development marketing organization ○ Promote Taylor to new target industry companies
Temple College 	Secondary Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer educational programs to support local business and target industry needs ○ Inform regional citizens of course offerings ○ Market programs and create positive awareness throughout Central Texas
Main Street 	Downtown business retention and recruitment, and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complete TEA-21 grand and make downtown aesthetic improvements ○ Retain and market downtown businesses ○ Recruit new businesses downtown
Taylor CNET 	Telecommunication Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote wireless services via coordinated marketing programs ○ Promote services to citizens and local businesses ○ Partner with local companies to provide training and teleconferencing

An organizational structure will help Taylor be more efficient and thereby effective. **Marketing activities for economic development should be overseen by a single organization, the TEDC.** The Chamber and each other organization are extremely important entities that make up the economic development team. We highly recommend that all organizations support the TEDC’s marketing efforts and avoid launching other campaigns that could dilute the city’s primary marketing message.

For the city to reach its desired economic development goals, the TEDC should adopt this marketing plan and all organizations should agree on marketing roles.

Action 1: Organize the way economic development marketing occurs.

- All organizations should discuss and agree on these proposed marketing roles.
- TEDC should consider and agree to be the lead economic development marketing organization.
- All organizations involved in economic development marketing should consider and agree to implement this plan.

Action 2: Meet periodically to discuss progress.

Marketing Strategy Two: Form a Marketing Implementer Committee - Market Taylor Team (MTT).

By jointly implementing marketing activities and combining resources, Taylor will be more successful. AE recommends that the MTT is comprised of two individuals from each of the eight primary economic development organizations. Each organization should nominate one community leader. This team will manage ongoing marketing activities.

Long-term, Taylor can consider adding or replacing individuals on this committee. Strive to make this committee a “club,” a prestigious group that is respected within the community. It will be viewed “prestigious” as accomplishments occur and individuals receive local recognition for their contributions. The committee should always be referenced through word-of-mouth and articles as **“the team responsible for marketing Taylor and its successes.”** Here is an example representation of what the initial MTT can look like.

Each organization listed should nominate one citizen, either an advisory

Organization	Representatives
City	2 (Community Development Director, Public Information Officer, City Council representative)
TEDC	2 (Director, Assistant Director, Administrative)
Chamber	2 (President, Board member, Junior Chamber Representative)
Main Street	2 (Director, Board member, downtown business owner)
TCAT	2 (Director, Professor, Marketing Manager)
TISD	2 (Superintendent, Principal, Public Relations Manager)
TCNET	2 (Director, Board member)
CDC	2 (Director, Board Member)
Total Reps	16

committee member or a community leader, making the total MTT to 24 leaders. If Taylor elects to form a CDC, this organization should join the MTT.

Being the lead marketing organization, the TEDC will oversee the MTT. This includes managing the budget, monitoring progress, scheduling routine meetings, and raising additional monies from the private sector.

The overarching goal of having the MTT is to ensure alignment among all groups that manage retention and recruitment marketing, and tourism marketing for Taylor. By better collaborating, marketing communications and campaigns will improve and Taylor will gain awareness and generate more business investment.

Here is a list of potential MTT member responsibilities:

- Contribute funds for marketing
- Meet routinely to discuss actions and progress on plan
- Start a buzz within the community about Taylor's new marketing tag line and what it means
- Persuade the community to become promoters and speak positively about Taylor's economic development efforts
- Distribute new Taylor logo to local businesses and encourage them to incorporate this into their marketing
- Write press releases and distribute to local and regional media
- Participate in media interviews
- Attend local business association meetings to communicate Taylor's economic development and marketing plans
- Fundraising – ask local businesses to contribute to the marketing budget
- Rewrite content for Web sites, manage updates, and contribute to new portal structure and linking each organization's site
- Provide annual updates to TEDC on the success of marketing and areas of challenge

As for the budget, ideally, each economic development organization should contribute. Since majority of this plan is focused on business investment and tourism, the City, TEDC, and Chamber are the organizations that likely will contribute the most.

Implementation of this marketing plan, minus a PR Manager, will initially require \$25,000 annually and approximately **300 - 325 total monthly hours**. This amount equals approximately 2 full-time marketers. By forming a MTT and sharing marketing responsibilities, the monthly hourly time needed for each MTT member is about 14 hours per month.

An additional \$40,000 – 50,000 annually is required to optimally implement the PR recommendations. Ideally this should be a shared expense between the primary economic development organizations. If Taylor decides not to hire a PR Manager, the above monthly figure will increase to 460 – 485, the equivalent of three full-time marketers. Taylor should also consider the value of a PR professional.

Action 1: Organize a team to implement marketing recommendations.

- All organizations should discuss and agree on our proposed structure for the MTT.
- Each organization should decide who it wants to represent them and confirm that these two individuals can devote the necessary time.
- The TEDC should agree to be the lead organization to manage the MTT.
- The MTT should review responsibilities.
- Each organization should discuss the amount it will allocate to marketing.

Marketing Strategy Three: Adopt a single economic development logo.

Communities that establish an economic development marketing tag line that differentiates them have a much greater chance of being recognized, trusted, and gaining business investment. A single message, tag line, should be verbally explained, illustrated through marketing collateral, and incorporated in **every** activity that promotes Taylor. Remember a logo is part of the brand. A brand is all of the **promises and perceptions** you want your customer to feel about your product.

According to the AE on-line survey, when asked, “Do you believe Taylor has a **bad perception** in Central Texas?” 67% of 40 respondents replied “yes.” Even though this perception may be based on false pretenses, this confirms that there is a major need to re-brand and change this perception.

Action 1: Understand the process of creating Taylor’s new logo and begin to “live it”.

- To create an economic development tag line for Taylor, AE reviewed current themes and tag lines being used in Taylor.
- We conducted numerous meetings to convey to Taylor leaders the best approach to branding and creating a tag line. During meetings AE gained input from key stakeholders and over 100 individuals from the community. The purpose for the open process is to allow the community to feel **bought-in** and proud of the new message.
- This process includes identifying Taylor’s competitive advantage. To do this AE considered **Taylor’s top assets** and compared this to the city’s benchmark communities. The top asset that stands out and gives Taylor an advantage is the **Wireless Internet Infrastructure, CNET**. Taylor was the first Central Texas community to build a wireless community network.
- The three benchmarks for Taylor are Georgetown, Elgin, and Bastrop. If one thinks of Georgetown, one immediately thinks of a location off IH-35, Southwestern University, and their charming downtown. When one thinks of Elgin, one thinks of HWY 290, retail development, and cultural festivals. When one thinks of Bastrop, one thinks of beautiful parks and the city’s growing health care industry cluster.
- Other assets to promote and consider in the tag line include:
 - Location - Access
 - Family-like environment
 - TCAT higher education programs
 - Business and Industrial parks and land
 - Affordable
 - Dedicated workforce

- Airport
- Incentives
- Through a survey in the *Taylor Daily Press* and on www.GrowingTaylor.com, we asked the community to rate the current logo and three new logos so that everyone in Taylor would have an opportunity to participate.

Taking this into consideration, TEDC and the Chamber have elected to use the tag line, “A record of resourcefulness” for promoting economic development.



Action 2: Promote Taylor with a new, single message that the community endorses.

- All organizations should adopt the new logo and use this in promoting economic development for Taylor.
- The new logo should be unveiled at the public presentation.
- The style guide should be made widely available to other community organizations, including schools, not-for-profit organizations, local media, businesses, workforce service providers, and arts and cultural organizations. Encourage as many organizations in Taylor as possible to adopt the style guidelines in their own external promotions. The more consistent that the Taylor “look” appears from the outside, the more effective the new brand will be.
- Create e-postcards of local establishments and make it easy for citizens to download and send to friends and colleagues. Incorporate the logo. e.g. http://www.irvingtexas.com/misc_postcard.html.

Marketing Strategy Four: Improve and promote economic development products.

Product marketing includes creating or improving a product. This report lists several ideas or new products for Taylor. The products to embrace and create are a Community Development Corporation, a gateway for downtown and 2nd Street, small business incubator, and cultural center.

Current products that offer major benefits when it comes to economic development include: TCNET, TCAT, TISD, local employers, retail expansions, ample workforce, healthcare options, safety, highway infrastructure, business sites and land, historic downtown, new County Park, and community leaders.

Throughout this report and the *Economic Baseline Analysis*, AE offers recommendations on how to improve and promote these products. It is important for leaders to commit to not only making necessary improvements, but to inform Taylor's target audiences of its progress. When promoting Taylor either person-to-person, on a Web site, or through a news story, communicate the products in a manner that illustrates the city's dedication and strengths.

Marketing Strategy Five: Understand target audiences.

Understanding requirements of each target audience will help economic development leaders.

Taylor should use a secondary message, one that is more customized to an audience segment and occurs after initial inquiry (audience has received primary message, tag line). Secondary messaging touts quality and specific benefits. Secondary messaging can be stated during personal meetings, within collateral or the appropriate Web page, and in targeted press.

Action 1: Market to local employers, the current workforce, influencers, and local entrepreneurs.

- Sometimes these audiences are overlooked and cities directly promote to new companies outside of the city. The City, TEDC, and the Chamber should continue to improve relationships with local businesses and provide additional services that will help companies be more successful.
- It is important to market to the current workforce and convey what Taylor is doing to bring more jobs to the community.
- Influencers, such as politicians and real estate developers, can help Taylor accomplish its vision.
- Local entrepreneurs are an extremely important segment that needs to be marketed to. This audience can bring dramatic benefits to Taylor's economy.

Action 2: Market to target industry business executives and decision-makers.

- Once the City successfully addresses internal audiences' needs, it should become more familiar with targeted business sectors.
- The target industry companies include: the existing industry clusters such as services, manufacturing, health care, value-added agriculture, construction, retail, and telecommunication, but also focus on those new external companies within high impact industries that Taylor should market to.
- These external companies include hospitality and tourism, design, software development, and distribution and logistics.

Action 3: Identify target business champions, business leaders with expert knowledge of a particular industry.

- These individuals typically know industry decision-makers and understand trends, challenges and opportunities.
- Champions may have powerful connections within an industry that can aide in Taylor's marketing recruitment efforts.

- Champions should be asked to meet with site selectors, business prospects, volunteer to speak at events promoting Taylor, and share industry knowledge with economic development leaders.
- The MTT should identify target business “champions.”
- Champions may already exist. TEDC’s board members and City Council members may be champions. These individuals should be asked to be an “industry champion” and join to MTT. If they are not able to be active, ask them to nominate an individual that is appropriate for this role.

Action 4: Know your customer and communicate in their language.

- Each organization that is involved in marketing Taylor and the MTT should consider these target audience requirements and assets when developing collateral and revamping the Web site.
- The images, messages, and copy contained in collateral must address the industry needs.

Here is a table that summarizes top requirements of each target industry and assets that Taylor should promote.

Taylor's Target Audience Requirements and Points to Promote		
Audience	Top Requirement (Needs)	Top Assets to Promote
Local companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled workforce • Low operating costs (quick permitting) • Sites to expand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low operating costs • Available land and sites • Workforce profile
Skilled workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality jobs (advancement opportunity) • Entertainment / Shopping / Recreation options • Affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New vision and goals for Taylor • New HEB, Wal-Mart and plan to attract retailers • New subdivisions being built
Entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to capital • Incubator facility • How to start a business tools • Creative workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financing options • College / New Incubator • Guide on starting a business • TCAT entrepreneur courses
Business Influencers and Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitively priced land • Incentives • Low costs and quick permitting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available land and sites • Targeted incentives • Permitting process
Public sector officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise tax base • Improve quality of life • Provide more jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New vision and ED Plan for Taylor • Integrated team working to improve and market Taylor
Community at large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality jobs • Balance to growth • Better infrastructure (roads) • Downtown activities / shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New vision and goals for Taylor • Definition of ED and the benefits it provides • Current project status
Tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major attraction • Friendly community • Easy access (location) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic downtown • New Arts and Entertainment District • Taylor’s physical location

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Tourism / Hospitality (Retail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw venue (conference center, museum, nice downtown) • Nice accommodations (hotels and restaurants) • Quality service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractions and festivals • Accommodations / Restaurants / Shops • Conference / meeting space
Distribution / Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect to major metro • Affordable land and labor • Good transportation access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport • New highways (45 and 130) proximity to Taylor • Available land and sites
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong technical and creative college programs • Well-trained workforce • Incubator facility • High-speed Wireless Internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.S. and college tech programs • Profile and skilled workforce • Taylor CNET
Value-added Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good transportation access • Maintains average taxes • Reliable and affordable utilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic industry – large base of local farmers • Farmers market • Proximity to large markets

Marketing Strategy Six: Invest in hiring a Public Relations Manager.

Considering Taylor’s current marketing challenges, (lack of internal communication, perceived bad perception, and lack of awareness), Taylor needs a dedicated, professional PR manager.

Due to current resource constraints, having an existing economic development leader handle this effort does not seem feasible. Therefore, the City should consider hiring a Public Information Officer (PR Manager) or outsource this function to a marketing firm. Regardless of the approach that Taylor leaders decide on, the city needs to seriously elevate PR if it wants to “fix” the current challenges.

A professional PR manager can make a tremendous difference to overall economic development marketing for Taylor. Each primary economic development organization should consider this to be of utmost importance and allocate funds to hire someone to fill this critical role. In hiring a full-time PR manager, an appropriate salary is \$40,000 – 50,000. Based on the contributions of seven organizations, this amounts to approximately \$6,500 per organization each year.

Action 1: Recognize the importance of PR and hire a professional to oversee this role.

- This PR Manager should be charged to work with each economic development organization and the proposed MTT to ensure that every organization is speaking in the same tone and promoting successes and improvements. This PR position can be considered a liaison for marketing implementation.
- The PR Manager can ideally report to the TEDC. Another important role of the PR Manager is to provide Taylor economic development leaders with press communication skills training so that everyone is conveying a strong

and positive message to the public, and Taylor is getting the most from its marketing investment.

- Each organization marketing Taylor and the MTT should discuss hiring a PR manager or outsourcing this.
- In the fall of 2004, budgets should be approved and the MTT should begin interviewing candidates.

Action 2: Establish the role and responsibilities for new PR manager.

- Hire a PR Manager by December 2004.
- The PR Manager should review this plan and specific PR recommendations.
- The PR Manager should meet with all key stakeholder organizations and the MTT and create a monthly schedule of articles to submit to the media.
- The PR Manager should provide quarterly updates on progress.
- The PR Manager should conduct bi-annual press training for all economic development leaders.
- The PR Manager should schedule routine calls with regional and target industry publications.

Marketing Strategy Seven: Build awareness through local and regional media.

Internal PR began when AE started this project and occurred each time we presented reports in Taylor. In June 2004, at the Economic Summit, AE and the Advisory Committee presented the new economic development vision, mission, logo, and goals to the community. This event communicated both the purpose and benefits of the new goals as well as the next steps in the process, and to request support from the community.

Action 1: Plan to activate an internal awareness campaign.

- Following the completion of this project, the City and TEDC should **reconvene the project Advisory Committee**. Ask Committee members to volunteer to serve as “media champions” or to serve on the newly created MTT. Assign each volunteer with a topic on which they should write an editorial or conduct a radio interview.
- A PR campaign should be launched in June 2004. The purpose of this campaign is to continue to communicate economic development activities to the community.

Action 2: Identify media champions.

- It is imperative that the local media provide positive coverage and that all citizens begin to speak optimistically about the city's efforts.
- "Media champions" should be identified who can write and "tell stories" related to economic development to local newspapers, radio stations, company newsletters, and Web sites to inform citizens about Taylor's vision and economic development strategies.
- Media champions can be representatives from TEDC, the Chamber, Main Street, and Advisory Committee members.
- Local media champions should help garner local publicity by personally meeting with editorial boards or reporters of local news companies. Present the editorial boards with background information on this plan and the subjects on which the volunteer teams will be writing.

Action 3: Leverage the local media.

- Local media is the first avenue for creating local "buzz" and Taylor is fortunate to have the *Taylor Daily Press* as a strong advocate for economic development.
- During this project, the *Taylor Daily Press* published several articles pertaining to our plan and future economic development initiatives. By doing this, more citizens are involved and understand the state of economic development in Taylor; however, this is just the beginning.
- The newspaper has also offered to print a weekly section dedicated to updates on economic development. Economic development leaders can take advantage of this opportunity to communicate to the community. Follow-up with *Taylor Daily Press* offer to dedicate a section of their paper of the following topics: (1) updates on Taylor economic development; (2) how to start a company in Taylor or what resources are available to entrepreneurs; (3) profile of each target business and current Taylor businesses in those industries.
- **If Taylor elects to hire a PR Manager, this professional should be tasked with leading this effort.**

Considering the Montgomery and Associates survey, 57% of respondents say they get their news from the *Taylor Daily Press*, 13% from family and friends, and 10.5% the *Austin American Statesman*. There are segments of Taylor's population that are not reached through these vehicles. The PR Manager / MTT should consider reaching local audiences through Church bulletins, TEDC newsletter, new TCAT and TISD newsletters, and community events.

Action 4: Kick off internal awareness campaign.

- The main goal of an internal campaign is to inform all citizens of economic development efforts and successes, to garner the community's support for the plan, and to act as promoters. The PR campaign should live as long as Taylor is implementing an economic development plan.
- Taylor's internal PR campaign to the community should focus on stories that discuss what economic development means to Taylor, what Taylor is doing to make the city more competitive, and how it benefits its citizens.
- Communicate that, "Taylor is focused on activities that improve workforce services and education, economic health, and business resources, to help

local companies succeed and new job opportunities to emerge for all Taylor families for generations to come.”

- Economic development and City leaders should focus on communicating updates about the actions being taken to address those items that would make Taylor a “better place to live.” According to the Montgomery Associates survey, these issues include: improving roads, more employment, greater retail, better public schools, and more recreational activities. Supplementary campaign topics should include what Taylor is doing to better educate and train its workforce. The TCAT press conference is an excellent example of this and should be continued. Local college professors and TISD teachers should be asked to write articles and editorials on new college programs that will provide training for target businesses.
- Until Taylor hires a PR Manager, local economic development leaders, the Advisory Committee and MTT members will need to write and distribute these editorials, and speak at business association engagements and interviews with local business professionals.

Taylor should consider the following PR topics:

- “Taylor’s Economic Development 5-year Strategy”
- “Growing from Within”
- “Value of Education”
- “Taylor ISD Recognizes Special Teachers”
- “Be Proud of Taylor Students (list some accomplishments and recognize students – WOW program)”
- “Recruiting New Companies”
- “Fixing Our Road”
- “Promote Taylor using the new tag line”
- “Taylor’s New Vision”
- “Characteristics of Taylor’s Target Businesses and Call for Industry Champions”
- “Local Start-up Successes”
- “Economic Development Marketing Achievements and the MTT”
- “Community Ambassadors or Promoters Celebrate Taylor”

Taylor is receiving a compiled shared regional media list for economic development organizations and the proposed MTT to use during implementation. There are approximately 70 media contacts on this list, which can be found in the appendix.

Marketing Strategy Eight: Launch an internal marketing campaign.

Direct marketing, PR, and collateral can help Taylor reach its internal audiences.

The previous strategy covers building awareness through PR within the community. This section will cover building awareness with the business community. Taylor will also receive recommendations for direct marketing and collateral activities. **Another top priority for Taylor is to better integrate web sites.**

AE recommends that Taylor devote approximately 80 percent of marketing efforts in 2004 and the first six months of 2005 to internal activities. Of this, half should be on PR. The other activities should be on collateral and direct marketing.

In the fall of 2005, Taylor should consider adjusting internal efforts to 60 percent and external to 40 percent. In the fall of 2006 and thereafter, Taylor should strive to balance internal and external 50 / 50.

Action 1: Activate an internal marketing PR campaign.

- Publicity is Taylor's best vehicle to cost-effectively reach internal audiences and generate interest. To reach local businesses, entrepreneurs, and influencers, Taylor should strive to appear in publications and newspapers read by these industries. Taylor should focus on local and regional newspapers, newsletters, and business publications. The proposed PR Manager should assist with this effort.
- Other ways to communicate to the public include: delivering newsletters, similar to the current TEDC and City. TEDC should post this newsletter on its Web site and promote this to individuals who prefer to get their news on-line. Other ways to "get the message out" include submitting one-page updates that can get posted in church bulletins, high school and college papers. Regional business journals, such as the *Austin Business Journal*, are excellent ways to reach the target business audience.
- An excellent PR activity that gains awareness is a bylined article, which incorporates both press stories and advertising into one activity. This is an activity that a PR Manager can facilitate. An example of this is an editorial in *Texas Monthly* that promotes the Texas State Fair and incorporates graphics to make it more appealing.

Some announcements for Taylor to consider that will increase awareness with local businesses include:

- "New Incentive Program for Local Businesses"
- "Taylor's Reaching Out to Local Entrepreneurs" (mention new resources)
- "Taylor Plans to Open New Business Park" (mention that local businesses have first chance to bid on space)
- "Newly Formed Community Development Corporation receives \$X in Federal Funding"
- "X Local Business Plan To Hire X New Employees"
- "X Local Business Invest \$X to Expand Operations in Taylor"
- "TEDC Recognizes X Local Business for Helping Market Taylor to New Employees"
- "TEDC Job Fair on X"
- "Chamber Recognizes X Local Businesses for Their Contributions / Business Success"
- "Taylor Main Street is Recognized by National Register"
- "Downtown Taylor Getting a Hispanic Cultural Center"
- "Downtown Taylor Signs Two New Tenants Planned to Open in X"
- "Smart Kids are Cool"
- "WOW Program"
- "Taylor ISD Sets High Standards"

- “Taylor ISD Reaches Out to Hispanics”
- “Taylor Opens Rural Workforce Development Office” (One-Stop Shop for workforce training)
- “Taylor is Planning to Open a Business Incubator”
- “Why Shopping In Taylor Makes a Huge Difference”

Action 2: Incorporate direct marketing into the internal marketing campaign.

- Direct marketing, also referred to as personal selling and promotion, is proven to be very effective when it comes to marketing to local businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Direct marketing includes spreading information by word-of-mouth and through personal meeting, attending local and regional industry events, speaking at business networking events with key influencers, forming relationships with regional economic development teams to sell Taylor, for example Greater Austin Chamber, as a place to do business.
- **Taylor does not have formal way to communicate to the business community about how it is addressing big issues that impact their business.** Some of these issues include permitting, incentives, and resources for small businesses considering starting a business. Taylor should have one primary individual who markets and provides services to local businesses. Some specific activities to incorporate include:
 - **“Ask Taylor” breakfast meetings.** “Ask Taylor” breakfast meetings can be a routine monthly meeting held at different local restaurants, where business leaders are invited to attend and ask questions pertaining to economic development. The MTT can coordinate and invite a guest speaker to each meeting. Guest speakers can include a TEDC Board member or Director, City Manager, City Mayor, City Council member, TISD Superintendent, TCAT President, TCNET Director, and John’s Community Hospital Director.
 - **“Visit local business leaders twice a year.”** A representative from TEDC or the MTT should schedule a personal meeting with local business leaders during a lunch or breakfast meeting.
 - **“Conduct an annual on-line business survey.”** TEDC or the MTT should activate an annual survey to local businesses and ask leaders to rate Taylor on topics similar to the AE on-line survey. Use the same survey each year to measure progress. This survey should be on the TEDC’s Web site.
 - **“Speak at business association meetings.”** TEDC or the MTT should have a representative speaking at business association meetings once a month. This can be as simple as a five minute verbal update or 30-minute presentation.
 - **“Meet with regional economic development organizations.”** TEDC or the MTT should meet with regional organizations, such as the Greater Austin Chamber, Round Rock Chamber, Georgetown Chamber and EDC, Elgin EDC, Bastrop EDC, and Hutto EDC, in order to promote Taylor. Invite these organizations to a Taylor Regional Economic Development event, once a year. Make this an event to share information among economic development leaders

throughout the region and to promote Taylor. Have the meeting at TCAT or TCNET.

- **“Host an annual Economic Development Forum.** During the event, regional leaders can provide an overview of the year’s successful economic development activities and an update of economic data for Taylor. The MTT can manage and invite local business leaders. The public presentation (June 2004) can be the first annual Taylor Economic Development Forum.

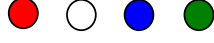


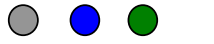





Action 3: Incorporate collateral into the internal marketing campaign.

- The primary collateral piece used to promote Taylor should be a portal into the city that links to key city organization Web sites.
- During the project, many leaders stated the need to have a better Web entrance to the city. At this present time, Web visitors have to search through several sites that do not have an integrated look and feel.
- Collateral that Taylor should consider for internal audiences include:
 - **“Annual Report on-line.”** The TEDC should publish an annual report on its Web site. This is considered a brochure to the TEDC Board, local businesses, and citizens. It communicates the TEDC goals and accomplishments. It also features local companies and business leaders who have made a sizable contribution to Taylor’s economy. For example, this should feature a story on the benefits of having ERCOT in Taylor and quote an ERCOT executive on what TEDC has done for their business.
 - **“Starting a Business in Taylor.”** Economic development organizations should consider jointly creating a tri-fold type brochure that explains the steps to follow when opening a business in Taylor. It should be a one-source piece. (e.g., <http://www.city.surrey.bc.ca/Doing+Business/Business+Development/Starting+Your+Own+Business/default.htm>)
 - **“User-friendly Guide to Workforce Training and Educational Resources in Taylor”** to be made available at schools and public gathering places such as libraries, churches, or social organizations.
 - **Create a “welcome package”** for newcomers. Send to new residents when they sign up for utilities and ask local employers to distribute to employees.
 - **Web sites.**

Marketing Strategy Nine: Better integrate Web sites promoting Taylor.

Revamping the current Web sites promoting Taylor so that there is one main portal into the city will create a more unified message and look on each organization's Web site. As a result, Taylor will have a more attractive appearance and be more efficient at updating.

The below table illustrates the main organizations promoting Taylor via a Web site, their target audience, colors, and fonts.

Promoting Taylor through Web sites				
Organization	URL	Audience	Colors	Font
City	http://www.ci.taylor.tx.us	Residents and Local businesses	 Red, White, Blue, Green	Arial, Times New Roman
TEDC	http://www.taylorcdc.com	Local employers, workers, and new companies	 Red, Black, Yellow, Green	Arial
Chamber	http://www.taylorchamber.org	Local employers, residents, and tourists	 Blue, Green, Purple	Arial
Main Street	http://www.taylormainstreet.com	Downtown residents and employers, and new companies locating downtown	 Grey, Blue, Green	Garamond, Arial, Verdana
TCNET	http://www.taylorcnet.com	Residents and Local businesses, and Central Texas businesses / organizations	 Green, Blue, Red	Verdana
TCAT	http://www.templejc.edu	Local and Central Texas students and professionals	 Blue, Yellow	Times New Roman, Arial
TISD	http://taylorducks.org	Local students	 Green, Peach, Grey	Verdana
Will County	http://www.williamson-county.org	Residents and County businesses	 Red, Black, Burgundy	Tahoma
Shop Taylor	http://www.shoptaylor.net	Local employers, residents, and tourists	 Grey, Purple, Green, Burgundy	Arial, <i>Monotype Corsiva</i>

As you can see, of these nine Web sites, Taylor presents an inconsistent web image. Even though each of the organizations is its own entity, the City of Taylor as a whole can benefit by having a more cohesive Web appearance.

While at the same time, if you review each Web site, there is an overlap with content and a need for some additional information. The diagram on the following page illustrates the current content on each Web site.

City of Taylor Economic Development and Marketing Strategy 2004-2009

Taylor Web site Content								
Topics	Entity							
	City	TEDC	Chamber	Main Street	TCNET	TISD	TCAT	Will County
Airport	x							
Annexation Plan	x							
Business Resources		x	x	x	x			x
City Council / Mayor / Meetings	x							
City Facilities for Rent	x			x				
City Ordinances	x							
Civic Organizations		x						
Community Video		x	x					
Downtown / Main Street	x		x	x				
Economic Profile / Target Industries		x						x
Education / Libraries / Schools / Colleges	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Events / Festivals / Calendar		x	x	x	x			
Faith-based					x			
Healthcare		x				x		
Historic / Location / Map / Directions		x	x		x			
Housing / Safety	x	x						
Incentives	x	x		x				
Job Posting	x				x	x	x	x
Lifestyle - Parks / Attractions	x		x					
Media			x					
News		x						x
Non-profit Resources					x			
Permitting								x
Police	x							x
Residential Real Estate								
Shopping / Hotels								
Sites and Business / Industrial Parks				x				
Taxes		x						
Testimonials / Discussion Forums					x			
Topography / Climate		x						
Utilities	x	x						
Workforce Development		x						
Zoning	x	x						

It has been suggested to AE that TCNET can be the portal “into Taylor” and link to each Web site promoting economic development in Taylor. Each organization’s Web site should be accessed by going directly to that site, for instance, <http://www.tayloredc.com>, or through the portal. TCNET’s current URL is <http://www.taylorcnet.com/>. Taylor may want to consider a new name for the city’s portal that supports the new economic development tag line, for example www.TaylorConnection.com. (Note, www.MakingConnections.com is owned by a Florida company, The Connections Groups, a networking business.)

The purpose of the table on the following page is to recommend a new navigation, topics, and to identify what organization can provide specific information and share it with other organizations. For example, when it comes to an economic development Web site, one of the most frequent requests for information about a community is its economic profile, description of target industries and how the community nurtures these industry companies through workforce development and college programs.

Ideally, this is information for TEDC to provide, manage, and update, collaborating with TISD, TCAT, and the Chamber. The Chamber can benefit by obtaining this information from the TEDC and providing it on the Chamber’s Web site. Our recommendation is to

City of Taylor Economic Development and Marketing Strategy 2004-2009

review and decide what organization will “own” a particular topic so that one organization updates and other organizations can either link to this information or revise and post it to their site. The goal is to have each of Taylor’s economic development organizations manage the upkeep of less information, so more time can be devoted to providing better information, a more attractive Web appearance, and campaigns to entice clients and prospects to frequent the sites.

Taylor Web site Content Recommendations									
Entity									
Main Navigation Bar	Topics	City	TEDC	Chamber	Main Street	TCNET	TISD	TCAT	Will County
Location	Historic / Location / Map / Directions				X	X			
Education	Education / Libraries / Schools / Colleges						X	X	
Climate	Topography / Climate	X							
Economic and Business Resources	Economic Profile / Target Industries/ Business Resources / Workforce Development / Job Posting / Community Video		X	X					
Civic Resources	Non-profit Resources / Faith Based / Civic Organizations					X			
Real Estate Resources	Sites and Business / Industrial Parks / Residential Real Estate / City Facilities for Rent // Housing / Safety / Utilities		X						
Lifestyle	Events / Festivals / Calendar/ Parks / Attractions			X					
News	News / Media/ Testimonials / Forums					X			
Money and Permits	Permitting / Zoning / Incentives / City Ordinances / Taxes / Annexation Plan	X							X
City	City Council / Mayor / Meetings / Police / Healthcare / Airport	X							
Downtown	Downtown / Main Street				X				

Imagine being on Taylor’s portal page, this site would have the main navigation bar that would easily take the Web visitor directly to their specific topic of interest or easily locate Taylor organizations.

The current Web sites that promote Taylor’s economic development offer relevant content for most of the defined target audiences; however, there is some information either missing or that can be improved.

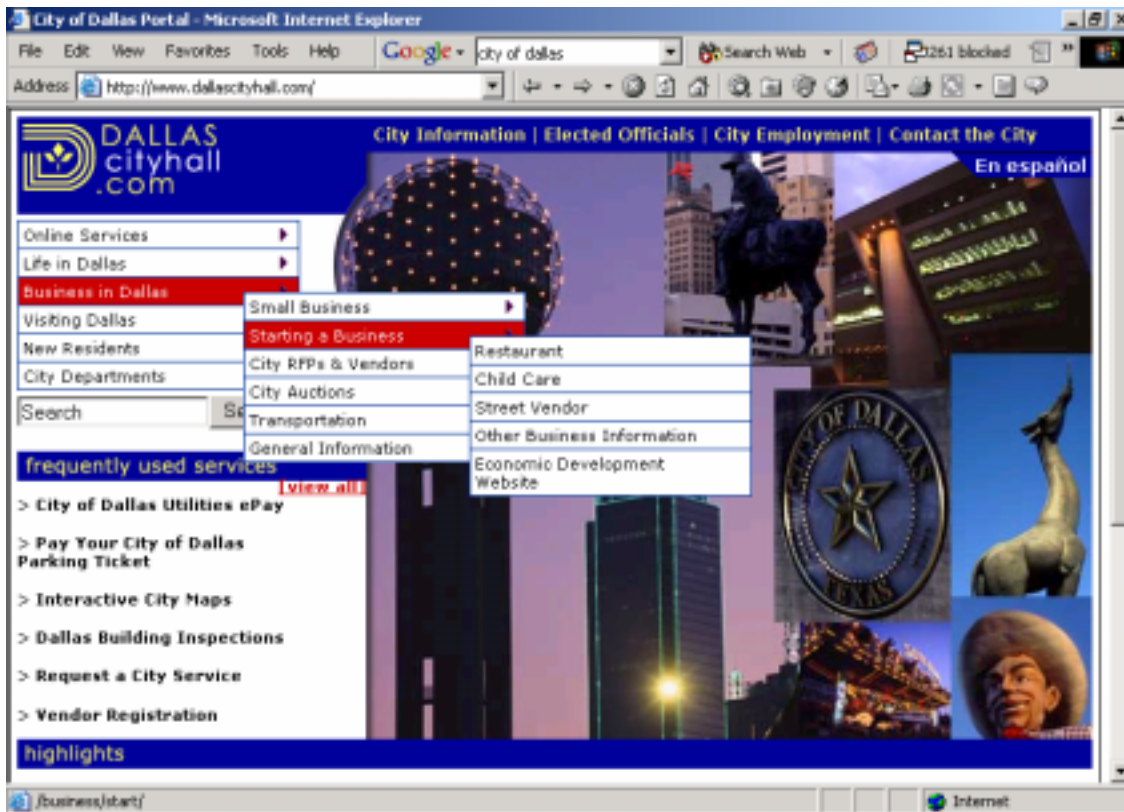
Taylor should consider adding or updating the following components on its Web site:

- Economic and industry information
- How to start a business in Taylor
- *Information of potential new Community Development Corporation / Incubator*
- Workforce development and college programs
- Local company database
- Sites and business parks
- Economic development projects
- Job postings
- Economic development news wire
- TISD newsletter to parents
- TCAT newsletter to students

City of Taylor Economic Development and Marketing Strategy 2004-2009

- Local company testimonials
- Recognition of achievements – high school students, entrepreneurs, leaders
- Quality of life – safety
- Shopping and hotels
- Incentives and permitting
- Annual report

During the marketing workshop, we discussed the City of Dallas' portal, www.dallascityhall.com as an example of how Taylor's portal can be structured. See the screen shot of this Web site's home page below.



Remember to use search engine features to ensure that the newly created portal's domain is top on search lists.

Helpful Web Site Sources

Webby Awards, the leading international honor for the World's best Web sites, bases awards on six criteria: content, structure and navigation, visual design, functionality, interactivity, and overall experience. Webby Awards is a good site to reference when revamping Taylor's Web sites. **Some important tips to mention include: content should always keep the Web visitor wanting more, it should load quickly, have live links, consistently work, and entice Web visitors to bookmark, frequent often, sign up for news, and forward information to friends or colleagues.**

Some Webby award winners that Taylor can learn from include:

- <http://www.apple.com/itunes/store/>
- <http://www.travelocity.com/>
- http://www.miniusa.com/crm/mini_entrance.jsp
- <http://www.hp.com/>
- <http://www.southwest.com/>
- <http://www.salesforce.com/>
- <http://www.yahoo.com/>
- <http://www.nytimes.com/>
- <http://www.brandchannel.com/>

These sites are attractive, easy to navigate, and entice Web visitors to “want more.”

Source: http://www.webbyawards.com/main/webby_awards/judging.html

Nielsen, NetRatings, <http://www.nielsen-netratings.com/> provides the industry’s global standard for Internet and digital media measurement and analysis, offering technology-driven Internet information solutions for media, advertising, e-commerce and financial companies which enable customers to make informed decisions regarding their Internet strategies. This is another good source for Taylor to use while revamping its Web sites. The Web sites most visited by a business professional in the month of January 2004 included: Microsoft, Yahoo, Time Warner, Google, and the United States Government.

Action 1: Present a unified, attractive Web appearance to all audiences.

- The primary collateral piece used to promote Taylor should be a portal into the city that links to key city organization Web sites.
- Developing this Web site should be a primary focus in 2004.
- The TEDC and each economic development organization should review and agree on the portal concept and structure for updating content.
- Organizations should decide on hiring a Web development firm to assist with this initiative.
- Taylor should consider a portal domain name to support its tag line.
- When portal is complete, each organization should jointly promote the new domain name and encourage target audiences to visit the new site.

Marketing Strategy Ten: Implement external campaigns.

External marketing promotes Taylor to identified targeted businesses that reside outside of the city. **External marketing should begin in the fall of 2005 or early 2006.**

The same vehicles that Taylor is using to reach internal audiences should be used to reach external audiences. Web sites, publicity, and direct marketing / selling are the most cost effective methods for communities to convey their messages.

The primary vehicle, and one that should be used throughout external efforts, is publicity. Taylor should then incorporate collateral (Web site and brochure), marketing missions, and industry associations and conferences.

Action 1: Activate an external marketing PR campaign.

- Taylor can significantly increase the amount of publicity it receives in publications.
- At the present time, there is minimal coverage of Taylor. A PR Manager should manage this.
- Some potential announcements that Taylor should promote to targeted businesses include:
 - “Taylor Offers New Incentive Program for Technology and Design Companies”
 - “Taylor Opens New Business Park 10-miles From IH130”
 - “Taylor, Home of the New Central Texas Aviation Airport, Leases Commercial Airliner Hangar Space at Record Pace”
 - “X Logistics Company Opens in Taylor”
 - “X Company Visits Taylor”
 - “Taylor, Central Texas City Making Big Time Connections”
 - “Taylor Opens a Business Incubator with X and X as First Tenants”

Action 2: Incorporate direct marketing into the external marketing campaign.

- Direct marketing, also referred to as personal selling and promotion, is proven to be very effective when it comes to marketing to local businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Resources should be invested to continuously redevelop the primary Web sites that promote economic development in Taylor. The main economic development organization’s URL (TEDC) and phone number should be incorporated into every activity that promotes the city.

Action 3: Incorporate marketing missions into the external marketing campaign.

- Taylor leaders need to engage in marketing missions to recruit target business companies from other regions and to see first hand benchmark communities’ efforts.
- Schedule marketing missions each year to a region with a high concentration of its target businesses and visit benchmark cities to observe what is effective and what is not within these business communities.
- Participate in marketing missions organized by regional or state ED organizations, especially for national missions.

- For example, visit regional neighbor benchmark cities. In the second year, consider visiting national benchmark communities. Academics should attend marketing missions, which can involve a series of meetings with local companies to sell Taylor as an ideal business location.

Action 4: Join target industry associations and attend/sponsor conferences.

- Industry associations are a trusted source of information for member companies and offer an opportunity to track trends and prospects.
- TEDC and the MTT should consider joining the leading associations of its target businesses, place articles in industry association newsletters and sponsor two industry conferences per year.
- Industry conferences provide a unique opportunity for Taylor to promote business development. Face-to-face marketing is recommended to supplement other marketing efforts. Taylor can attend, sponsor, and exhibit at conferences.

Action 5: Campaign to industry conference attendees prior to and after conferences.

- Obtain target business databases and send electronic campaign mail.
- Sponsor and/or attend 2-3 industry events per year.
- Partner with regional economic development teams and take joint missions to an out-of-state market with a high concentration of target businesses.
- Consider partnering with regional economic development teams and jointly sponsoring an industry conference.

See the appendix for a list of industry association and conferences that Taylor should consider.