



EDINBURG CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF EDINBURG, HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS

Location: City of Edinburg
City Hall-Council Chambers
415 West University Dr.
Edinburg, Texas 78539

WORK SESSION AGENDA
OCTOBER 1, 2024
5:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER, ESTABLISH QUORUM

A. Pledge of Allegiance.

2. CERTIFICATION OF PUBLIC NOTICE

3. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Mayor and City Council allow for a specific portion of the City Council Meeting to be dedicated to public comments. Public Comments are limited to three (3) minutes. Please note that this public comment period is not interactive. The City Council may not respond to public comments.

If a resident desires to make a public comment in person, please complete the Public Comments Form which will be located outside of the City Council Chambers and submit the completed form to the City Secretary prior to the commencement of the City Council Meeting. We ask for everyone's cooperation in following this procedure.

5. PRESENTATION AND REPORT

A. Presentation by Gary Mitchell with Kending Keast Collaborative on the City of Edinburg Comprehensive Plan. [Jaime Acevedo, Director of Planning & Zoning]

6. ADJOURNMENT

I hereby certify this Notice of a City Council Work Session was posted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, at the City Offices of the City of Edinburg, located at the 415 West University entrance outside bulletin board, visible and accessible to the general public during and after regular working hours. This notice was posted on September 27, 2024 at 6:20 p.m.

By: /s/ Clarice Y. Balderas
Clarice Y. Balderas, City Secretary

Disability Access Statement

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aid or services are requested to contact the City Secretary Department at (956) 388-8204 at least two business days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The accessible entrance and accessible parking spaces are located at Edinburg City Hall, 415 West University.



CITY OF EDINBURG - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: October 1, 2024

PRESENTATION AND REPORT

Agenda Item No: 5.A.

Presentation - Update to the City of Edinburg Comprehensive Plan

1. Agenda Item:

Presentation by Gary Mitchell with Kendig Keast Collaborative on the City of Edinburg Comprehensive Plan. [Jaime Acevedo, Director of Planning & Zoning]

2. Description:

On October 03, 2023, the Edinburg City Council awarded RFP No. 2023-016, City of Edinburg Comprehensive Plan to Kendig Keast Collaborative to assist the City in the creation of a new Comprehensive Plan.

The City of Edinburg last adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2005. Since then, the City has experienced significant changes, including explosive growth, both in its corporate limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Kendig Keast Collaborative has been in the process of updating the City of Edinburg Comprehensive Plan through a series of meetings with the public and committees. The new Comprehensive Plan incorporates land use, growth and development, transportation, utilities, economic development, public services, and relevant information from other plans previously adopted by the City. The new plan will focus on responsible, sustainable growth and development, especially as it applies to providing current and future residents with all necessary utilities and services. This Plan will create a policy framework from the update and implementation of our development ordinances, capital projects, and other relevant municipal operations or endeavors.

The purpose of this work session will be to: Brief the Mayor and Council on project status and as well present the Draft Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.

3. Staff's Recommendation:

Presentation by Gary Mitchell with Kendig Keast Collaborative on the City of Edinburg Comprehensive Plan.

Reviewed by:

Prepared by:

Jaime Acevedo, Director of
Planning and Zoning

Attachments:

- A. Edinburg 2050 Mid-Century Plan (DRAFT October 2024)
- B. Edinburg Future Land Use Map (Interim DRAFT 09.24.24)



THE CITY OF
Edinburg
2050
MID-CENTURY PLAN



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October 2024 Draft



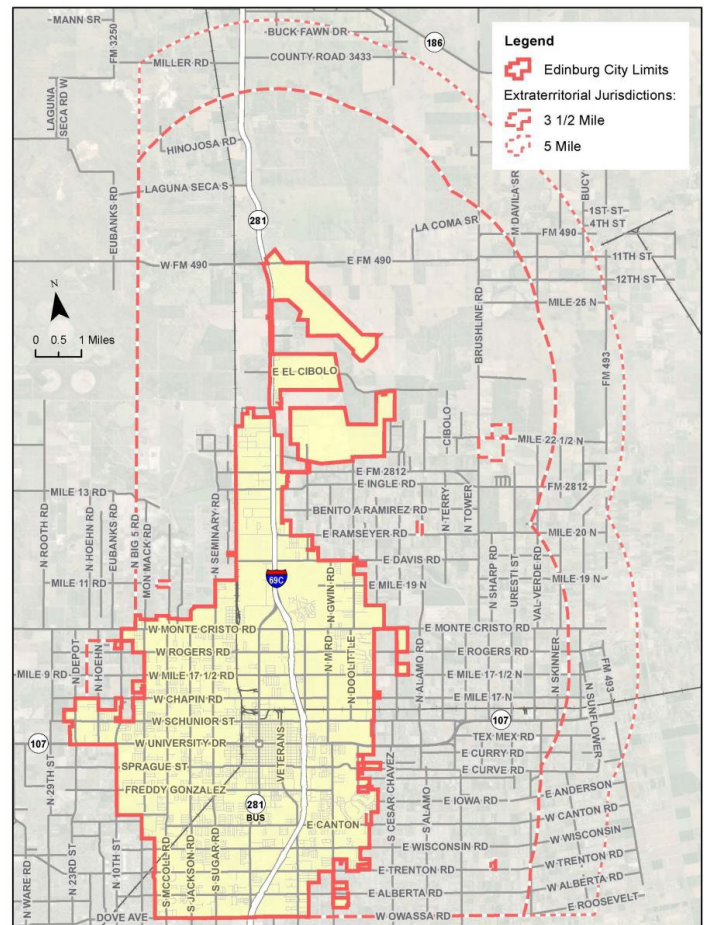
 Introduction	 Growth Capacity	 Economic Development	 Transportation
 Recreation and Amenities	 Land Use and Community Character* <i>[This section pending based on October 1 City Council feedback and for October 10 Planning & Zoning Commission review.]</i>	 Plan Implementation* <i>[This section pending based on October 1 City Council feedback and for October 10 Planning & Zoning Commission review.]</i>	

The Edinburg Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide future development, redevelopment and community enhancement efforts over the next 10-20 years. However, discussions during a community planning process often involve an even longer-range outlook, helping establish a vision of what Edinburg could and should be in the future versus the trend line it is currently on. Based on this broader context, the purpose of this plan is to provide realistic goals and achievable strategies that residents, business and land owners, major institutions, civic groups and public officials prefer – and will support with sustained action – in the years ahead.

Geographic Coverage and Context of the Plan

This plan addresses the approximately 45 square miles currently encompassed within the city limits of Edinburg, along with the extensive area just beyond within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). In Texas, cities also consider the future of their ETJs as the area into which the community may someday expand – at least into portions of the ETJ where new development that approaches in-city densities can be accommodated with public services. Under state statute, Edinburg previously had a 3.5-mile ETJ beyond its city limits when its population was in the 50,000-99,999 range. When Edinburg's population surpassed 100,000 in recent years, its statutory ETJ automatically expanded to the maximum of five miles. Most of Edinburg's full five-mile ETJ is to the north and east. Edinburg has no, or only limited ETJ along portions of its west and south city limits given the proximity of the city limits and ETJs of McAllen and Pharr.

Edinburg City Limits and ETJ



**Click to Enlarge Map*

Regional Context



*[*Click to Enlarge Map](#)*

As summarized in the **Edinburg Today Report** that is a supplement to this future-focused portion of the Comprehensive Plan, Edinburg is located in south Texas, approximately 60 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico in Hidalgo County, where it is the county seat. Edinburg's position in the north central area of the Rio Grande Valley has long made it the "Gateway City" to the Valley – and only about 16 miles north of the Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge over the Rio Grande at the U.S./Mexico border. Edinburg is bisected by a north-south segment of Interstate 69C. Within the region are McAllen International Airport (9 miles), Valley International Airport in Harlingen (31 miles), the Port of Brownsville (53 miles), South Padre Island (64 miles), and the SpaceX facilities at Boca Chica (66 miles).

Process



EDINBURG 2040

BUILDING FOR TOMORROW'S FUTURE, TODAY!

The process for updating Edinburg's Comprehensive Plan, as last done in 2005, began in January 2024, not long after completion of the City's Edinburg 2040 strategic planning initiative (more information at <https://edinburg2040.com/>). This new Comprehensive Plan resulted from a nine-month planning and community engagement process, followed by public hearings and plan adoption. The plan's findings and action recommendations focus on the physical and economic aspects of Edinburg's projected growth, development and redevelopment in the coming years. It provides guiding principles, goals and action priorities that will help City officials, board/commission appointees and staff in prioritizing public improvements; updating and administering development regulations; and guiding reinvestment efforts. The plan also provides a basis for coordinating the actions of many different functions and interests within and outside of municipal government.

To facilitate the Comprehensive Plan process, the City again engaged **Kendig Keast Collaborative**, community planning consultants based in Sugar Land, Texas.

Leadership and Community Engagement Activities

Outreach and engagement activities completed in support of the Comprehensive Plan process included:

3 Workshops



Three workshop meetings with Edinburg City Council, which also included participation by City boards, commissions, committees, other stakeholders and members of the public in attendance (January, April and September 2024). Also an interim progress presentation to Council (August).



4 Committee Meetings

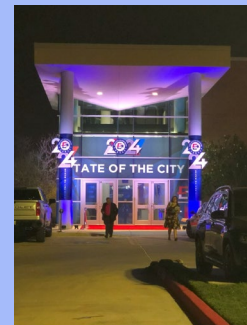
Four working meetings with a City-appointed Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee, comprised of the chairs of the seven Edinburg 2040 committee plus of a Downtown committee added later (July-September).

Early interviews with the individual 2040 committee chairs or their alternates (March), and a later informal social event and presentation for all 2040 committee members (April).



An initial roundtable session with representatives of all City departments (January), followed by interviews and follow-up discussions with individual departments as needed.

Meetings with various other public agencies and community partners.



Attendance at the 2024 State of the City event, where the Comprehensive Plan process was highlighted (March).



A midpoint open forum for Comprehensive Plan input hosted by the Mayor, key City staff and the consultant project manager at City Hall (July), plus another input opportunity also at City Hall (August).



An immediate prompt on the City's website homepage for ongoing Comprehensive Plan input, other communications via City social media posts, and a City webpage dedicated to the Comprehensive Plan process, with presentations and materials posted from meetings and events along the way:
https://cityofedinburg.com/departments/planning_and_zoning/comprehensive_plan_update.php



Public hearings before the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council on the final proposed plan (October).

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan is usually the most important policy document a municipal government prepares and maintains. It lays out a “big picture” vision and associated goals regarding the future growth and enhancement of the community. It is “comprehensive” in two ways, by:

- Considering at once the entire geographic area of the community, including areas where new development and redevelopment may occur, as opposed to more specialized plans and studies that focus on particular sub-areas of the city.
- Assessing near- and longer-term needs and desires across a variety of inter-related topics that represent the key “building blocks” of a community (e.g., land use, transportation, urban design, commercial development, redevelopment, neighborhoods, parks and recreation, utility infrastructure, public facilities and services, etc.).

“Planning” is ...

The process of identifying issues and needs, establishing goals and objectives, and determining the most effective means by which these ends may be achieved.

Through a comprehensive plan, a community considers how best to accommodate and manage its projected growth, as well as the redevelopment of older

neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. Like most similar plans, this Comprehensive Plan is aimed at ensuring that ongoing development and redevelopment will proceed in an orderly, well-planned manner so that public facilities and services can keep pace and residents’ quality of life will be enhanced. Significantly, by clarifying and stating the City’s intentions regarding the area’s physical development and infrastructure investment, the plan also creates greater predictability for residents, land owners, developers and potential investors.

The comprehensive planning process is intended to celebrate accomplishments of the past while providing an opportunity to anticipate and address challenges of the future. In some cases, this plan will offer guidance to decision makers for challenges only now emerging while other sections reinforce established policies that should be carried forward as a sure and sound basis for future development and redevelopment. Whether an issue is a challenge or an opportunity, the utmost importance should be placed upon periodic comprehensive planning as an opportunity for thoughtful public discussion on the real and perceived challenges currently facing Edinburg and the opportunities that will shape its future.

Important Reasons for Long-Range Planning in Edinburg include to:

- Ensure adequate public facilities to meet the demands of future development and redevelopment.
- Achieve an efficient development pattern that reflects the values of the community.
- Promote the long-term protection and enhancement of the image and visual appearance of the community.
- Provide a balance of land uses and services throughout the community to meet the needs and desires of its population.
- Involve local citizens in the decision-making process and reach consensus on the future vision for Edinburg and its ongoing development and redevelopment.
- Develop annual City budgets, department work programs, and potential new and amended ordinances, and to prioritize capital improvements, pursue external grant funding that leverages local dollars, and strengthen and establish mutually beneficial partnerships consistent with

Why Plan?

Local planning allows the City of Edinburg to have a greater measure of control over its destiny rather than simply reacting to change. Planning enables the City to manage future development and redevelopment actively as opposed to reacting to development proposals on a case-by-case basis without adequate and necessary consideration of community-wide issues.

Long-range planning also provides an opportunity for the City’s elected and appointed officials to step back from pressing, day-to-day issues and clarify their ideas on the kind of community they are trying to create and maintain. The process required to prepare a new Edinburg Comprehensive Plan may prove more valuable to the community than the plan itself since the document is ultimately only a snapshot in time. The planning process involves major community decisions about how much and where development and redevelopment will occur, the nature of future development, and the community’s capability to provide the necessary public services and facilities to support this development. This leads to pivotal discussions about what is “best” for the community and how everything from taxes to “quality of life” will be affected.

PLAN FOCUS AREAS

Focus areas within the Comprehensive Plan provide direction when setting program and funding priorities to enhance the quality of life in Edinburg. The five focus areas of this plan are highlighted below. These focus areas were considered in developing the Edinburg Today Report and helped orient this Future Edinburg portion of the plan.

Growth Capacity



Economic Development



Land Use and Community Character



Recreation and Amenities



Transportation



Use of the Plan

This plan is ultimately a guidance document for City officials and staff, who must make decisions on a daily basis that will determine the future direction, financial health and “look and feel” of the community. These decisions are carried out through:



Targeted programs and expenditures prioritized through the City’s annual budget process, including routine but essential functions across municipal government.



Major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the City’s capital budgeting.



New and amended City ordinances and regulations closely linked to Comprehensive Plan objectives (and associated review and approval procedures in the case of zoning, subdivision and land development activities).



Departmental work plans and resources in key areas.



Support for ongoing planning and studies that will further clarify needs, costs, benefits and strategies.



Pursuit of external grant funding to supplement local budgets and/or expedite certain projects.



Initiatives pursued in conjunction with other public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes neither could accomplish on their own.

Comprehensive plans focus primarily on the responsibilities of City government in the physical planning arena, where municipalities normally have a more direct and extensive role than in other areas that residents value such as education and social services. Therefore, the resulting plan may not address every challenge before the city, but it is meant to set a tone and motivate concerted efforts to move the community forward in coming years.

Planning Authority

State Support for Community Planning – Section 213 of the Texas Local Government Code

Unlike some other states, municipalities in Texas are not mandated by state government to prepare and maintain local comprehensive plans. Instead, [Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code](#) provides that, “The governing body of a municipality may adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the municipality.” The Code also cites the basic reasons for long-range, comprehensive community planning, stating that, “The powers granted under this chapter are for the purposes of promoting sound development of municipalities and promoting public health, safety and welfare.” The Code also gives Texas municipalities the freedom to “define the content and design” of their plans, although [Section 213](#) suggests that a comprehensive plan may:

- include but is not limited to provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
- consist of a single plan or a coordinated set of plans organized by subject and geographic area; and
- be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

However, for cities like Edinburg that have adopted zoning regulations to guide the use of land and address compatibility among differing land use types and intensities, [Local Government Code Chapter 211](#) – the source of municipal zoning authority in Texas – states in [Section 211.004\(a\)](#) that “Zoning regulations must be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan.” The adopted comprehensive plan provides the public policy basis for a city’s zoning regulations, and the plan also includes a map of future land use and associated narrative as guidance for City officials, advisory commissions and staff involved in making zoning decisions.



Source: Texas Department of Transportation

Authority of Edinburg Planning & Zoning Commission

Article IX of the Edinburg City Charter establishes a City Planning and Zoning Commission. The City's Unified Development Code (UDC) then spells out the specific powers and duties of the Commission, in [UDC Section 8.207.A](#). The Commission is specifically assigned to be the curator of the City's Comprehensive Plan:



A. Powers and Duties.

2. Studies and Policy Recommendations to the City Council. The Planning and Zoning Commission is the City's citizen-based planning body. It is empowered to conduct appropriate studies, draft proposed regulations and amendments, and make policy recommendations to the City Council regarding the Comprehensive Plan. In this respect, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall:
 - a. Periodically make studies of the City's resources, development trends, environmental and aesthetic condition, and other issues and needs related to the use and development of land, and report its findings to the City Council.
 - b. Initiate, prepare, or cause to be prepared amendments (both text and map) to the Comprehensive Plan as appropriate.
 - c. Initiate, prepare, or cause to be prepared amendments (both text and map) to the Unified Development Code as appropriate.

Furthermore, the UDC establishes various linkages to the Comprehensive Plan, including:

- [UDC Section 1.103.B.](#), regarding the UDC purposes, has as its first purpose “to implement the City of Edinburg’s Comprehensive Plan.” A more specific Planning Objective of the UDC, in [Section 1.103.C.1.a.](#) involves “establishing rational land use and growth patterns and encouraging the most appropriate use of individual pieces of land in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.”
- [UDC Section 2.101.C.](#), states that the zoning districts created by the UDC “are the minimum necessary to achieve compatibility of uses and maintain or create community character within each district, consistent with the spirit and intent of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.”
- [Section 5.101.A.](#), in [UDC Article 5, Subdivision Standards](#), states that among Article 5’s purposes is to: “Ensure that new development is consistent with the goals and intentions of the Comprehensive Plan.”
- Among the Common Decision Criteria for development review procedures in [UDC Section 9.205](#) is to find that a “request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.”
- [UDC Section 9402.C.1.c.](#) requires that applications for UDC text amendments must demonstrate “that the proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and any applicable adopted area plans.”
- Likewise, [UDC Section 9403.B.4](#) requires City review bodies for zoning map amendments (rezonings) to assess whether “the Comprehensive Plan calls for the zoning that is sought.”

Edinburg must prepare for, and have the capacity to meet, the public service demands of current residents plus future new development and redevelopment. This plan section focuses on the utility infrastructure and other essential service needs the area will face in the years ahead, along with prudent growth management strategies. Growth can bring many economic and community benefits but must be balanced with reinvestment in established neighborhoods and nonresidential areas, which tax base expansion through revitalization will help to support.

Infrastructure and services are essential to secure investor interest and assurance to undertake private projects in the area. Likewise, the City depends on an adequate tax base from business activity and private property improvements to fund essential capital projects and ongoing maintenance.



Why This Comprehensive Plan Section is Important for Edinburg



Together with the [Land Use and Community Character](#) section, focuses on the potential extent of growth in and around Edinburg in the decades ahead, where this growth might occur including beyond the city and within unincorporated Hidalgo County, and the implications it could have for City government.



Highlights that, along with its ongoing growth and new development, Edinburg has aging infrastructure and public facility needs to address in established areas of the city, including to maintain the capacity and efficiency of water and wastewater systems in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations.



Points out that capital investments in public infrastructure such as utilities and streets can signal desired locations for growth, help maintain a high quality of life for residents, and create a framework for land development and revitalization.



Emphasizes that absorbing some of the community's projected population growth within existing developed areas will inject new dollars and energy inside Edinburg, capitalize on public infrastructure and facilities that are already in place, and potentially lead to new housing options and commercial and mixed-use developments.



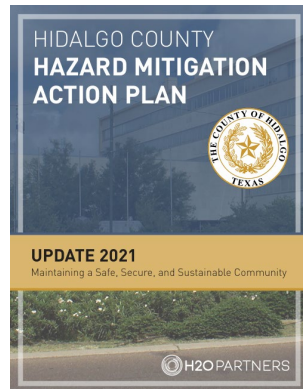
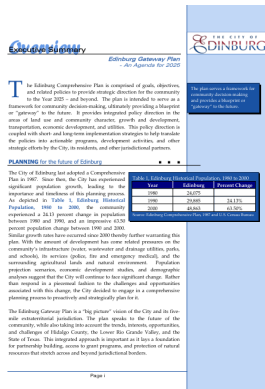
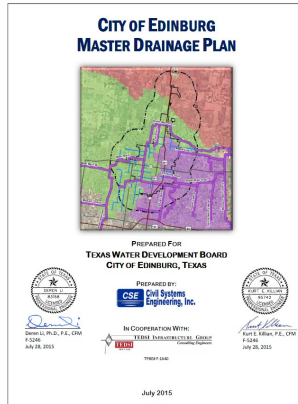
Reinforces local government's role in growth management and related tools and methods, including:

- Local development regulations that govern subdivision and re-platting activity, provide for the appropriate use of land through zoning, and set minimum standards for the nature and quality of development.
- Financing and special district mechanisms that advance the community's growth and economic development objectives while supporting beneficial private development and reinvestment
- Annexation of additional territory into the City where appropriate and when deemed fiscally sensible.
- Ongoing partnerships with other key public agencies, including [Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District \(ECISD\)](#) and other area school districts, and the [University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley \(UTRGV\)](#), among others.

Legacy of Past Planning

EDINBURG 2040

BUILDING FOR TOMORROW'S FUTURE, TODAY!



This new Comprehensive Plan builds on previous plans and studies completed by the City of Edinburg and other partners, including these most relevant to the Growth Capacity topic:

- Edinburg 2040 Committees: Strategies and Objectives 2022-2023
- City of Edinburg Master Drainage Plan, 2015
- City of Edinburg annual Water Quality Reports, through 2023
- City of Edinburg Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan (ongoing)
- City of Edinburg Emergency Management Plan (ongoing)
- Hidalgo County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan, 2021
- Edinburg Gateway Plan: An Agenda for 2025 (Comprehensive Plan), 2005

**Click Images to View Plans*

Accomplishments

Progress and achievements resulting from past planning and implementation efforts related to Growth Capacity include:



Completion of stormwater detention ponds and upgrades (Doolittle, Schunior, Veterans).

Successful grant applications for other drainage system improvements.



Funding of the Owassa Sewer Extension Project and the North Edinburg Water Tower (one million gallons of added water storage) by the Edinburg Economic Development Corporation.

Public Works Department recognized in 2023 with the Exceptional Performance Award for Safety from the Texas Chapter of the American Public Works Association for an innovative flood management project.



Capital Projects Dashboard on City website (at the time of this Comprehensive Plan, located at: <https://coe-capital-projects-hub-cityofedinburg.hub.arcgis.com/>).



New Strategic Plan prepared by Edinburg Police Department (EPD, with its plan in process at the time of this Comprehensive Plan).

4.6% decrease in overall major crimes highlighted by EPD in City's 2024 Annual Report, as well as a significant increase in Driving While Intoxicated arrests through a targeted new program (overall shift to a more preventive versus reactive policing approach, along with upgrades to training, equipment, communications and community outreach).



New EPD programs and grant funding to boost its commitment to mental health awareness and support.



EPD's biannual Citizens Police Academy expanded to include a first Spanish Academy to serve Edinburg's Hispanic community.

Continued evolution of Edinburg Fire Department (EFD) to more paid firefighters, with volunteer firefighter support, also allowing for expanded community outreach and fire prevention activities.



Notable improvement in EFD response time achieved by staging MedCare EMS at the City's fire stations, starting in fall 2023.

Fire Chief currently serving as first Hispanic President of Texas Fire Marshals Association.

1st



Continued grant funding success by both EPD and EFD.



856 tons of material recycled in 2023 through the City's Solid Waste Management Department.

60-year permit for City's Regional Landfill secured by Solid Waste Management Department.



The High BTU Gas Generation Plant at the City's Regional Landfill continues to divert landfill gas for beneficial use (and generate revenue for the City), which also reduces the production of CO₂ gas – highlighted in the City's 2024 Annual Report as equivalent to the energy use of 462,878 homes in one year.

Key Planning Issues and Considerations

Through the Edinburg Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, numerous real and perceived community issues and needs were identified through leadership and public engagement activities, as well as through the work of the plan consultants and their interactions with community leaders of the Edinburg 2040 process and with City staff.

Key issues and considerations that led to the goals and action items in this Growth Capacity section include (along with specific points and suggestions from leadership and community input):



Near- and long-term water supply.

- Related to aspirations for ongoing growth and economic development.
- Related to pace and type of residential development and added water demand.
- Related to nonresidential land use types with significant water needs.
- Need for aggressive water conservation and supply-stretching strategies. **[FY22-23 funded item for promotion of water conservation based on Edinburg 2040 priorities.]**



Pressure on City public safety services from expanded service areas and growth in population.

- Advance planning and land acquisition for future facility needs (e.g., fire stations), especially to better serve the growing north and northwest areas of the city.
- Extent of Edinburg Fire Department service calls beyond city limits into 68 square miles of unincorporated Hidalgo County (approximately 35% of calls at time of this Comprehensive Plan), and the cost/benefit situation for the department under current cost reimbursement arrangements with the County.



Pressure on area public schools to accommodate rapid growth pace, need for coordinated growth planning.



Equity concern for new development to pay for more of its direct impacts on public infrastructure and services relative to putting an added burden on existing tax and fee payers.



Infrastructure maintenance imperative.

- Future challenge from when a generation of new infrastructure is constructed in same timeframe, meaning that major maintenance and rehabilitation points will come due at same time.



Level-of-service expectations of residents and business community.

[FY22-23 funded item to increase frequency of trash cleanup, street sweeping and power washing of streets and sidewalks for community beautification reasons based on Edinburg 2040 priorities.]



Infrastructure support for key economic development initiatives (e.g., expansion and expanded business activity at Edinburg's South Texas International Airport).

- Adequate and sustainable energy supply, including for energy-intensive industries.



Strategies for effective growth management in extraterritorial jurisdiction given state-imposed limits on previous municipal authorities (e.g., annexation, ability of property owners to petition for release from City's ETJ – and implications for public service delivery).



Extent of City's CCN ("Certificate of Convenience and Necessity") area to the north beyond the city limits that must be served.



Balancing public service demands of new growth with those of existing neighborhoods and commercial areas.



Storm drainage, and flooding risk exacerbated by climate change.

- Lessons learned from past major flood events.



Linking planning, design and public investments involving multi-purpose objectives and benefits (e.g., coordination and integration opportunities across projects involving utility infrastructure, mobility, stormwater management, neighborhood and commercial area revitalization, parks and recreation, community identity and beautification, etc.).



Advocating for Edinburg's "fair share" of state-level and regional funding given its growth pace, and pursuing related external grant and funding opportunities effectively.



Promoting regionalism in the Rio Grande Valley and pursuing all forms of partnership opportunities to improve, upgrade and finance critical infrastructure and public safety facilities and services (e.g., South Texas Water Utility Managers Association, Rio Grande Valley Partnership, etc.).



Continuing to enhance the resilience of Edinburg's public infrastructure and facilities and the community's preparedness to adjust to climate change trends, regional drought persistence and other challenges.

- Also linked to the hazard mitigation planning, along with its utility system master plans and City's Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan.



Need for frequent updates to utility system master plans in a rapid-growth environment.

- Need to anticipate potential land acquisition needs early given rising land costs – and land availability in key growth areas.



Importance of maintaining compliance with federal and state permitting requirements and operational standards for water and wastewater systems and treatment facilities, including preparedness to expand and upgrade facilities when certain capacity thresholds are reached.

Framework for Action

This Framework for Action portion of the Growth Capacity section builds off of the six Comprehensive Plan themes confirmed with City officials during the transition from the Edinburg Today to the Future Edinburg phase of Comprehensive Plan development — especially Planning Themes 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 for this Growth Capacity section. The plan goals and action strategies that follow are aimed at “connecting the dots” between this set of community improvement fundamentals for Edinburg that involve:

 Planning Theme 1	Leverage City infrastructure, especially for: ★ Growth management ★ Economic development	 Planning Theme 2	Embrace Edinburg’s university town advantage, especially in terms of: ★ Community spirit ★ Research commercialization ★ UTRGV community outreach and services ★ Graduate retention
 Planning Theme 3	Go all in on asset preservation and maintenance, especially involving: ★ Infrastructure life-cycle tracking ★ Neighborhood integrity ★ Downtown revitalization (especially east toward I-69C) ★ Heritage sites and buildings ★ Parks, trails and recreation facilities	 Planning Theme 4	1st Uplift people (as a core principle of Edinburg 2040), especially involving: ★ Economic security ★ Health and wellness ★ Safety ★ Equity ★ La buena vida (the good life)!
 Planning Theme 5	Pursue opportunity in scarcity and abundance, especially involving: ★ Methods to extend water supply – a relatively scarce resource for Edinburg and the Lower Rio Grande Valley ★ Productive re-use of the regional waste stream – a relatively abundant resource for Edinburg since it hosts a major regional landfill for solid waste disposal ★ Edinburg being a leader in mitigating the effects of a changing climate	 Planning Theme 6	Promote regionalism, especially in the areas of: ★ Economy ★ Mobility ★ Water ★ Drainage ★ Education ★ Healthcare ★ Tourism ★ Advocacy for the interests and priorities of Lower Rio Grande Valley communities and their residents and businesses

Goals for Growth Capacity

A Goal is ...



a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).

The actions in this Growth Capacity section involve tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the following goals:



Goal 1

Adequate capacity of public infrastructure, and across key public services functions, to accommodate Edinburg’s projected population growth and associated land development activity.



Goal 1: Associated Plan Themes

Leverage City Infrastructure



Asset Preservation Uplift People and Maintenance



Pursue Opportunity in Scarcity and Abundance



Promote Regionalism





Goal 2

A growth trend and pattern in which new development in edge locations is balanced with ongoing promotion of infill development and adaptive re-use of properties in areas with public infrastructure and services already in place and/or prioritized for improvement.



Goal 2: Associated Plan Themes

Leverage City Infrastructure



Asset Preservation Uplift People and Maintenance



1st



Goal 3

Pro-active planning and investment in ongoing maintenance and upgrades to public infrastructure and facilities, balancing new and extended infrastructure to support first-time development with necessary and equitable funding to rehabilitate aging components in previously developed areas.



Goal 3: Associated Plan Themes

Leverage City Infrastructure



Asset Preservation Uplift People and Maintenance



1st





Goal 4

Ongoing support for continual improvement in police and fire capabilities to maintain the responsiveness expected by Edinburg residents and provide a safe and secure environment as the city grows.



Goal 4: Associated Plan Themes

Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People



Goal 5

Ongoing collaboration with various partner agencies and organizations to advance strategies and projects that address regional issues involving water supply, utility infrastructure, flooding risk and emergency response,



Goal 5: Associated Plan Themes

Leverage City Infrastructure



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People



especially to:

- bolster Edinburg's resilience and readiness to deal with and recover from natural hazards while also preparing for the implications of a changing climate;
- promote sustainable practices, especially effective management of public utilities to minimize adverse effects on the natural environment, along with Edinburg's economic and fiscal sustainability; and to
- support ongoing efforts to streamline public service delivery and provide for the long-term fiscal health of City government, including by applying technology and by promoting and implementing energy-, water- and waste-reducing "green" practices.

Pursue Opportunity
in Scarcity and
Abundance



Promote
Regionalism



Resilience is ...



the ability to prepare for, absorb,
recover from, and more
successfully adapt to adverse
events.

National Academy
of Sciences

Actions for Growth Capacity

The actions below are categorized into the five types of plan implementation actions highlighted throughout this plan:



Capital Investments



Programs and Initiatives



Regulations and Standards



Partnerships and Coordination



More Targeted Planning / Study

Additionally, items with an asterisk (*) in the table below are adapted from the results of the Edinburg 2040 strategic planning process, especially from the 2040 committees focused on Transportation Mobility / Connectivity / Drainage, Public Safety and Economic Development / Innovation / Entrepreneurship / Workforce.

Plan Actions Involve ...

seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.

Action Leaders

With the support and direction of City leaders and management, action leaders and other key players for most initiatives involving Growth Capacity will include:

- City of Edinburg departments, especially the City Manager's office, Engineering, Public Works, Utilities, Planning and Zoning, Police, Fire, Solid Waste Management and Grants Administration
- Edinburg Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) and its Board of Directors
- City boards and commissions, especially:
 - Community Development Council
 - Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors
 - Edinburg 2040 committees, especially Transportation / Mobility / Connectivity / Drainage, and Public Safety
 - Environment Advisory Board
 - Planning and Zoning Commission
 - Public Safety Board

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
<i>Capital Investments</i>			
1	To keep pace with Edinburg's rapid growth, continue prioritizing capital projects related to public utility infrastructure and facilities (water, wastewater, storm drainage, local government buildings/sites, etc.) through a multi-year capital improvement planning process, to plan ahead for project financing needs (and early land acquisition where crucial), ensure appropriate sequencing of interrelated projects, and raise community and private investor awareness of the area's public infrastructure / facilities outlook and priorities. Use of inter-departmental working groups for annual and ongoing capital improvements planning is a best practice, especially to coordinate on sequencing considerations for or across multiple inter-related projects.	1, 3, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Utilities ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Finance ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ All City departments with capital project needs and involvement
2	Utilizing recommendations of the City's updated utility system master plans, continue implementing key system improvements, along with phased maintenance and replacement of aged and undersized system components. Prioritize projects based on facility condition and cost of failure, along with other cost/benefit considerations.	1, 2, 3	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Utilities ➤ City Public Works
3	Continue capital improvements and operational practices to maintain the City's "Superior Public Water Supply" system rating by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.	1, 3	➤ City Utilities ➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works
4	Larger office for police staff.* This should be part of a plan for longer-term EPD and Municipal Court space needs, especially to better serve north side growth. EPD also needs a firing range dedicated for its use.	1, 4	➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Police Department ➤ City Engineering
5	Plan and budget for a next fire station (north) and rehabilitation of older current stations, as well as EFD's heavily-used fire training facility (largest in the Valley).	1, 3, 4	➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Fire Department ➤ City Engineering
<i>Programs and Initiatives</i>			
6	Continue steps to secure Edinburg's long-term water supply, involving both ground and surface water sources.	1, 5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Utilities
7	Follow an asset management planning and life-cycle strategy for tracking the condition and anticipating the timing of needed maintenance, rehabilitation or ultimately replacement of all components of public infrastructure and other facilities.	1, 3, 4, 5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Utilities ➤ City Public Works ➤ UTRGV

Related Edinburg 2040 action item:

- Develop strategic relationships at UTRGV in order to develop partnerships to perform studies, models, simulations by graduate students for infrastructure function and performance modeling.*

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
8	Continue a territorial growth and annexation strategy based on more limited municipal authority in recent years, including the use of public/private development agreements, Strategic Partnership Agreements, limited-purpose annexation, and consideration – or active solicitation – of property owner petitions for voluntary annexation or ETJ inclusion (in areas that further City goals and/or with associated development agreements that address service provision, compliance with City development and building codes and standards, and potential cost-sharing arrangements).	1, 2, 3	➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ Real estate/development community
9	Pursue infill development and revitalization strategies that make it more realistic for more of the area's projected growth to be absorbed within the interior of and contiguous to the Edinburg city limits.	2, 3	➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ EEDC ➤ Real estate/development community
10	Maintain budget and community support to continue the Edinburg Police Department's accreditation through the voluntary Law Enforcement Accreditation Program of the Texas Police Chiefs Association, and to support the Edinburg Fire Department as it works to reach a Class 2 versus 3 rating through the Insurance Services Office (ISO) evaluation system (on a scale of 1 to 10, with a 1 rating the best, rarest and most prestigious).	1, 3, 4	➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Police Department ➤ City Fire Department ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ City Communications & Media
11	If not already part of the City's stormwater management strategy, establish an "Adopt a Drain" program to encourage citizen participation, refresh understanding of watersheds, and ensure that stormwater inlets and other facilities are clear prior to major storm events. Such grass-roots buy-in can benefit the community by reducing nuisance flooding in neighborhoods and aiding the overall system performance by preventing solids accumulation that can disrupt stormwater flow.	3	➤ City Utilities ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Communications & Media
12	Evaluate opportunities to manage stormwater through green infrastructure methods on publicly-owned properties, in coordination with partners, and to demonstrate effective methods for use on private properties. One approach is to install pervious pavement and pilot demonstrations of infiltration ditches and bioswales to reduce nuisance flooding in targeted neighborhood areas and edge growth locations. With minimal investment, a proof-of-concept installation can be constructed to provide residents, commercial property owners and other stakeholders an opportunity to familiarize themselves with these methods and their potential benefits.	1, 3, 5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Utilities ➤ City Public Works ➤ City departments with candidate sites and facilities ➤ UTRGV

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
13	Keep abreast of water conservation technologies and best management practices while promoting wise water use throughout the city, including through related grant opportunities, and as another way to extend water system capacity.	1, 3, 5	➤ City Utilities ➤ City Engineering ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ City Communications & Media ➤ Region M Planning Group for regional water planning
14	Continue to utilize best management practices for publicly-maintained open spaces and facilities, such as efficient mowing, xeriscape (i.e., low-water, low-maintenance, and native plantings), reduced pesticide use, and energy and water conservation. Related Edinburg 2040 action items include: ➤ Incorporate gardens with native landscaping at every park (pollinator gardens).* ➤ Use drip irrigation from recycled water.*	3, 5	➤ City Public Works ➤ City Parks & Recreation
15	Identify lead persons and points of coordination across departments, along with targeted staff training, to advance green practices and enhanced resiliency within local government. This can include modified operations and maintenance practices that reduce water and energy use, stormwater runoff and the need for detention, and wastewater and solid waste generation.	3, 5	➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Utilities ➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ UTRGV
16	Continually evaluate new technologies and options for improving public service delivery and communications/outreach, especially where this will contain costs and postpone the need for additional staffing. Also identify lead persons and points of coordination across all relevant functions – and with partner public agencies, as appropriate – to share effective technology tools and practices and potentially coordinate on training needs.	3, 4, 5	➤ City Information Technology ➤ City Communications & Media ➤ City Police Department (use of drones to support first response) ➤ All other City departments
17	Increase of [police] personnel for communications as the city is growing.* Also add more certified police officers to work toward meeting the Federal Bureau of Investigation standard for municipal police departments of 2 officers per 1,000 residents.	1, 4	➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Police Department ➤ City Grants Administration

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
18	Add more firefighters.* This is especially needed to meet staffing standards for stations and fire apparatus (vehicles) and to work toward meeting a target average response time of 5.5 minutes.	1, 4	➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Fire Department ➤ City Grants Administration
<i>Regulations and Standards</i>			
19	Update the City's development regulations to modify or add provisions and standards based on recommendations in a next update of the City's drainage master plan, along with consideration of changes that may be necessary due to evolving climate trends and weather patterns.	1, 5	➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Engineering
20	Ensure consistency across adopted design and construction standards, development regulations and other relevant policies and criteria whenever new plans and studies are completed, such as utility system master plans.	1	➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Engineering
21	Consider encouraging and incentivizing Low Impact Development (LID) standards through the City's development regulations and engineering design specifications, as well as designing such methods into public improvement projects in Edinburg's older established neighborhoods for more cost-effective and environmentally beneficial outcomes.	1, 3, 5	➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Engineering ➤ UTRGV
22	Keep abreast of further potential evolution in Texas enabling statutes involving annexation and ETJ management. Except for the most strategic exceptions, the City should not extend its utility infrastructure or other services into the ETJ without requiring annexation as a condition of such service provision, or by ensuring adequate cost recovery through development agreements or other means.	2	➤ City Attorney ➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Engineering ➤ City Utilities
<i>Partnerships and Coordination</i>			
23	Continue grant pursuits to leverage local resources with regional, state and federal funding for infrastructure improvements.	1, 3, 4, 5	➤ City Grants Administration ➤ All other City department with grant opportunities
24	Continue interaction with Hidalgo County in support of the City's Fire Department given EFD's various challenges in responding to service calls in the county's developing unincorporated areas (e.g., basic cost of EFD response relative to current reimbursement, now up to 15 miles to most distant calls in county, colonia situations, plus problems with fire hydrant installation due to liability aspect between EFD, County and private water companies).	4, 5	➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Fire Department ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ Other area water providers

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
25	Along with maintaining the City's Emergency Management Plan, continue collaboration with Hidalgo County and other area cities on countywide multi-hazard mitigation planning, which maintains the area's eligibility for related grant opportunities especially through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).	5	➤ City Fire Department ➤ City Police Department ➤ All other involved City departments ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ Hidalgo County Emergency Management
26	Follow the numerous state and national agencies and organizations with publications, technical assistance, grant and funding opportunities, and other guidance and resources for local governments involving technology application, green practices, and community resiliency (especially the Texas Municipal League, International City/County Management Association, American Planning Association, U.S. Green Building Council, Esri, and Governing magazine, among others).	1, 3, 4, 5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Utilities ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Grants Administration
<i>More Targeted Planning / Study</i>			

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
27	Complete fresh master plans for the City's water, wastewater and storm drainage systems, which require more frequent full and interim updates in Edinburg's situation given the rapid pace of growth and changing physical conditions in and around the city. Such planning efforts typically involve comprehensive analysis of all components of the existing systems and anticipated future needs indicated by growth and build-out projections. Proper planning helps to ensure ongoing compliance with strict state and federal regulatory standards, as well as providing for the orderly extension and upgrading of properly-sized water distribution lines, wastewater collection lines and storm sewer lines and other drainage improvements when and where needed. Maintaining up-to-date master plans will be highly beneficial for the City as the plans' findings and recommendations are an essential input to multi-year capital improvements programming, budgeting and any related grant pursuits to leverage local dollars with external funding sources.	1, 3, 5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Utilities ➤ City Planning & Zoning
Related Edinburg 2040 action item: ➤ Create/perform a master drainage plan.* Such a planning effort is typically based on comprehensive analysis of area watersheds beyond the existing city limits and an assessment of all existing stormwater infrastructure. Along with identifying flooding issues and risk across the area, the plan should provide goals and strategies for mitigating adverse outcomes in identified areas of concern. Maintaining an up-to-date master plan will be highly beneficial for the City for the same reasons cited above. The master plan process should also highlight inter-related community planning objectives involving recreational enhancements through multi-objective site/facility design, potential annexation activity with more effective stormwater management among the motivations, and opportunities for greater intergovernmental cooperation.			
28	Perform the study necessary to evaluate impact assessment fees for infrastructure and drainage projects.*	1, 2	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Utilities
29	Implement priority actions in the Edinburg Police Department's new Strategic Plan, and consider conducting a similar strategic planning process for the Fire Department.	1, 3, 4	➤ City Police Department ➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Fire Department ➤ City Grants Administration

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
30	Consider and explore geothermal energy as a potential power source for the new wastewater treatment plant.*	5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ UTRGV

As also highlighted in the Economic Development section of this Comprehensive Plan, the following additional actions were recommended by the Edinburg 2040 committee focused on Economic Development / Innovation / Entrepreneurship / Workforce. These actions also relate to this Growth Capacity section of this Comprehensive Plan, and they are very much in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan theme of Pursuing Opportunity in Scarcity and Abundance:

- Promote energy and water conservation as an earth-friendly habit (especially in schools with Edinburg CISD).
- Pursue the future development of a brackish water desalination plant.
- Investigate ASR (Aquifer Storage and Recovery) using pretreated or untreated runoff water.
- Facilitate community solar projects for lower-income neighborhoods.



Ongoing and Potential Partners Related to Growth Capacity

Along with the Action Leaders and Key Partners called out in the table above, the following agencies and entities are also established or potential partners for helping Edinburg achieve its goals for Growth Capacity:

- Cities of [McAllen](#), [Pharr](#), [San Juan](#), [Mission](#) and other nearby cities
- [Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District \(ECISD\)](#) and other area districts
- [Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council](#)
- Other area public safety agencies, through mutual-aid interactions and staffing for major events (municipal, volunteer, school districts, UTRGV, etc.)
- Real estate/development community
- [Region M Planning Group](#) for regional water planning with Texas Water Development Board
- [Rio Grande Valley Partnership](#)
- [RGV Stormwater Task Force](#)
- [South Texas Police Chiefs Association](#)
- [South Texas Water Utility Managers Association](#)
- [Texas A&M Task Force 1](#) (urban search and rescue)
- [Texas Anti-Gang \(TAG\) program](#) (statewide and regional coordination, grants and regional TAG center in McAllen)
- Utility providers
- [UTRGV](#)

Population Outlook for Edinburg

Population projections are an important component of a long-range planning process. They help determine and quantify the demands that will be placed on public facilities and services based on the potential pace and scale of the community's physical growth. Projections reflect local, regional, national and even international trends and offer a basis to prepare for the future. However,



forecasting population changes can be challenging, particularly for the long term, because it is often difficult to account for all circumstances that may arise. In fact, demographers caution that population projections become trickier as the geographic area gets smaller, making city-level population the most difficult to forecast. This is because local population change is strongly influenced by less predictable factors such as housing prices and options, availability of vacant land to develop, results from economic development efforts, and potential future annexation of additional territory, which may already have existing residents and results in an instant increase in the citywide total.

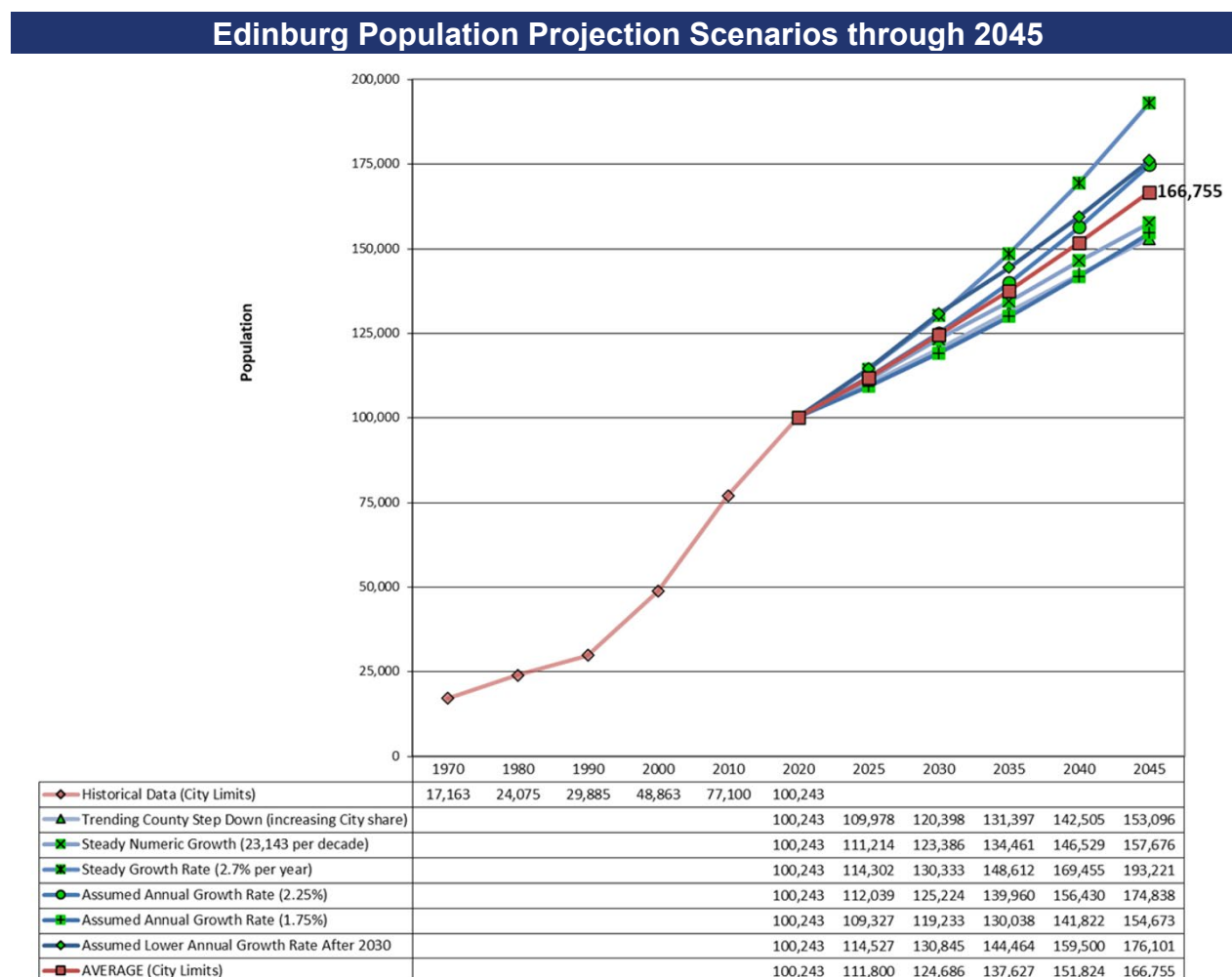
Therefore, it will be important for the City to monitor population and economic growth continually to account for both short- and longer-term shifts that can influence development activity and trends in the community and larger region. The population projections chart below provides a comparison of multiple potential scenarios for future in-city population change in Edinburg. The projections build on the Census 2020 population count of 100,243 persons, and they identify potential population levels in five-year increments out to 2045.



Bottom Line

It is wise for cities to think in terms of a range of potential growth rather than an absolute number given the uncertainty of any small-area forecast that extends beyond a few years. Generalizing from the various scenario outcomes below, **it is assumed for this Comprehensive Plan that Edinburg's 2045 in-city population will fall within a forecast range of 155,000 to 190,000 persons** (and these numbers are based on the May 2024 city limits, meaning the projections would need to be revisited if the City annexes significant additional land that has existing population and/or the potential for more development and population growth).

The projection line labeled Average on the chart represents a calculated midpoint among the different scenarios. The Average line indicates that **Edinburg would surpass the 150,000 population threshold in-city shortly before 2040 and grow to nearly 167,000 residents by 2045**. This would mean an **additional 66,512 residents from 2020**, implying that **Edinburg could add the equivalent of two-thirds (66.4%) of its Census 2020 population by 2045**. The midpoint projection would put Edinburg's population at 111,800 in 2025; 124,686 in 2030; 137,627 in 2035; and 151,824 in 2040.



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Texas Demographic Center, Kendig Keast Collaborative.

[*Click to Enlarge Chart](#)

Projections Based on Varying Quantities and Rates of Growth from Recent Trend

The **Steady Growth Rate** scenario produces the highest 2045 projection at just over 193,000 residents (nearly doubling the Census 2020 population count, with 92.8% growth from 2020 to 2045). This projection method assumes that the compound annual growth rate the city experienced from 2010 to 2020 (2.7%) will continue each year through the 20-year projection period.

By comparison, the **Steady Numeric Growth** scenario leads to only 157,676 residents in 2045 (57.3% growth from Census 2020). The lower outcome is because it is a “straight-line” projection method in which a steady number of people is added to the population every decade (23,143 persons in Edinburg’s case, the same as was added from 2010 to 2020). The prior steady-rate method produces higher numbers over time because the number of new residents added gets larger each decade while the rate of growth stays constant (2.7% in this case). This is similar to the power of compound growth in a savings account; the interest (i.e., growth) rate may not change, but it is being applied to an ever-expanding balance, resulting in larger and larger interest earnings over time. The Steady Numeric Growth method results in a declining rate of growth over time as the same new quantity of people is being added each decade to an ever-expanding base.

Projections Based on Assumed Rates of Growth versus Recent Trend

While the prior scenarios involve typical projection methods of extending historical trends to future years, the three Assumed Growth Rate scenarios consider the potential outcomes from varying Edinburg's compound annual growth rate in future years:

- The first such scenario, labeled **Assumed Annual Growth Rate (2.25%)**, is based on a steady compound annual growth rate of 2.25% per year from 2020 through 2045. Even this slight reduction from the annual 2.7% rate assumed in the Steady Growth Rate scenario produces nearly 20,000 fewer added residents by 2045, at **174,838** (74.4% growth from Census 2020).
- The second scenario, labeled **Assumed Annual Growth Rate (1.75%)**, lowers the annual growth rate assumption even more, in case Edinburg's population growth were to begin to moderate over the next few decades. This leads to roughly another 20,000-person drop in the 2045 population, to **154,673** (54.3% growth from Census 2020). Even this annual rate of growth would be a rapid pace for many cities to keep up with, especially when already providing municipal services to more than 100,000 existing residents.
- The third scenario, labeled **Assumed Lower Annual Growth Rate After 2030**, considers a situation where Edinburg continues to grow at 2.7% annually through the rest of this decade before leveling off to a still fast-paced clip of 2% per year through 2045. This scenario leads to a 2045 population of **176,101** (75.7% growth from Census 2020). This is slightly higher than the 2.25% scenario but well below the 193,221 outcome in the highest scenario (Steady Growth Rate of 2.7% throughout the projection period). The eventual reduction in growth rate could reflect a slower pace of area home construction as land costs rise, as water availability becomes a greater constraint, or due to various other factors. Also, growth percentages tend to moderate naturally over time as the overall "pie" continues to expand; otherwise, ever larger quantities of people and homes would be added year after year if the growth rate remained steady over several decades.

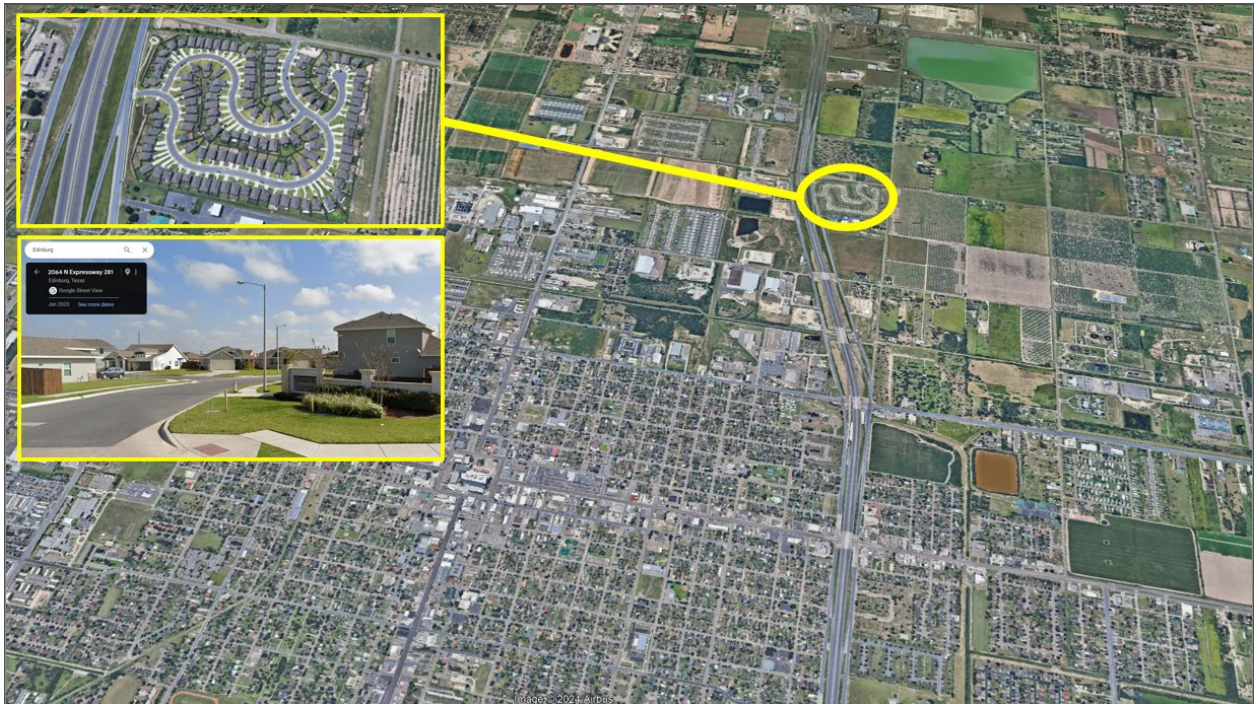
Projection Based on Local Share of County-Level Growth

Finally, the **County Step Down scenario produces the lowest 2045 projection with approximately 153,100 residents** (52.7% growth from Census 2000) – resulting in roughly 40,000 fewer residents than the Steady Growth Rate scenario. This Step Down projection method considers the trend in city share of the countywide population in past decades and prospects for the city's future share (Edinburg was 11.5% of the Hidalgo County population in Census 2020, and the projection assumes the city will trend upward to 15% in 2045). The results of the other projection scenarios suggest that Edinburg will account for an even larger share of the Hidalgo County population several decades from now than current trends might indicate (i.e., Edinburg's growth will outpace overall countywide population growth even more).

Physical Implications of Projected Growth

The calculated midpoint projection from the chart above indicates that Edinburg could have 166,755 residents by 2045. To illustrate what this potential level of growth could mean for Edinburg, the Sonador Coves subdivision in northeast Edinburg, along the east side of I-69C, was randomly selected to help quantify and visualize the implications. The accompanying aerial review of Sonador Coves, from summer 2024, shows an existing neighborhood of 131 single-family detached homes. Based on some further calculations below:

- A 2045 Edinburg population of 166,755 would mean 61,302 additional residents relative to the population estimate of 105,453 announced at the Edinburg State of the City event in March 2024.



- Edinburg would need approximately 19,900 more housing units by 2045 to accommodate this added population based on an average household size of 3.08 persons (per the newest U.S. Census Bureau estimate for 2022).
- With 131 homes in Sonador Coves, Edinburg would need 152 more such subdivisions by 2045 for the calculated housing need.

With regard to just single-family homes, ongoing tracking by the City showed that 667 new single-family dwellings were constructed in Edinburg in 2023 (relative to previous highs between 500 and 520 homes per year in 2017 and 2020-22). Through May 2024, 380 single-family homes had been built in five months – already 57% toward the highest annual peak of 667 in 2023.

As with the necessary year-to-year tracking of actual population growth relative to earlier projections, trends in Edinburg's housing mix should also be monitored as average household size differs among housing types. In many communities, the number of persons per household in multi-family housing is often somewhat lower than in single-family detached homes – and this is also affected by the age distribution of the local population (i.e., potential for lower average household sizes depending on the extent of young singles, “empty nesters,” seniors living alone, etc.). As of 2022, the Census Bureau estimated that 44.7% of Edinburg's housing stock was renter-occupied relative to owner-occupied housing. The land area needed for new housing will also be lower if more of the added population is absorbed into housing types other than single-family detached homes.

Monitoring Population Outlook Over Time

As explained above, all of these scenarios are projections of what could occur in Edinburg over the next several decades based on recent trends and/or specified assumptions. Some communities choose to adopt more conservative assumptions due to concerns about their growth capacity and/or the implications of growth in terms of density of development, increasing traffic, school impacts, loss of open space or other factors. On the other hand, some officials wish for their community to set its sights higher and aim to grow beyond the projected level in the coming decades.

The midpoint projection could be exceeded if the City of Edinburg promotes growth more aggressively through programs that incentivize new development or redevelopment/infill, or if it brings more population and/or growth areas into the city through annexation. Other key factors include:

- The extent of available, developable land in Edinburg that actually transitions to residential use, the pace and timing of such land development activity, and the housing types and densities involved;
- The projected capacity of the City's infrastructure and public services (and of Edinburg CISD and other area public school systems) to accommodate this growth in future years; and
- Community values and preferences regarding growth, which ultimately translates into capital projects and public services planning.

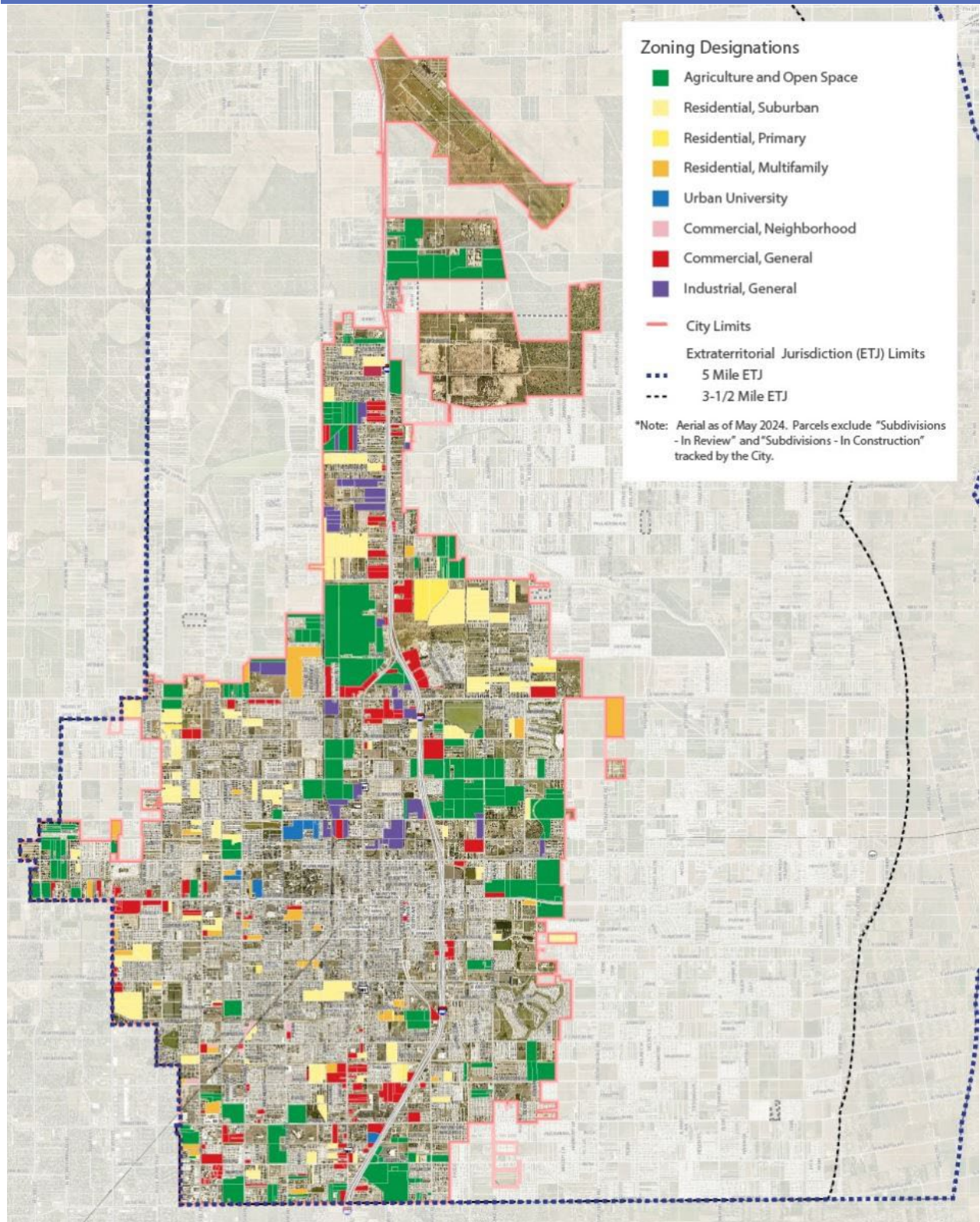
As emphasized several times in this discussion, the next step after any such projections is immediate and ongoing tracking of actual growth year to year. That way, assumptions and projections can be adjusted through annual reviews and periodic updates of this Comprehensive Plan. Finally, available data and/or local studies on trends in daytime population – the influx of workers and visitors who come into a hub community like Edinburg on most weekdays and/or weekends – is another critical factor for gauging and anticipating cumulative demands on local infrastructure and public services.

Remaining Land Outlook

A next step after considering Edinburg's population outlook was to assess the extent of remaining land potentially available for development inside the city limits (as of July 2024), then within the much more extensive ETJ. The reason for saying "potentially" available is that constraints such as availability of utilities and street access, location of property within a flood zone, land use or density allowances that come with current zoning, or other factors could limit to what extent land is developable – at least in the near term.

The first map below shows the results of this assessment within the city limits, also indicating the current zoning of such property. As noted on the map, this inventory looked beyond subdivisions that the City tracks and reports online as: (1) proposed and already in review; and (2) already under construction. The second map below then shows the same results for both city limits and ETJ, with the caveat that Edinburg and other Texas cities have zoning authority only within their city limits. But Texas cities do have the ability to review and approve subdivisions within their ETJs in coordination with County government.

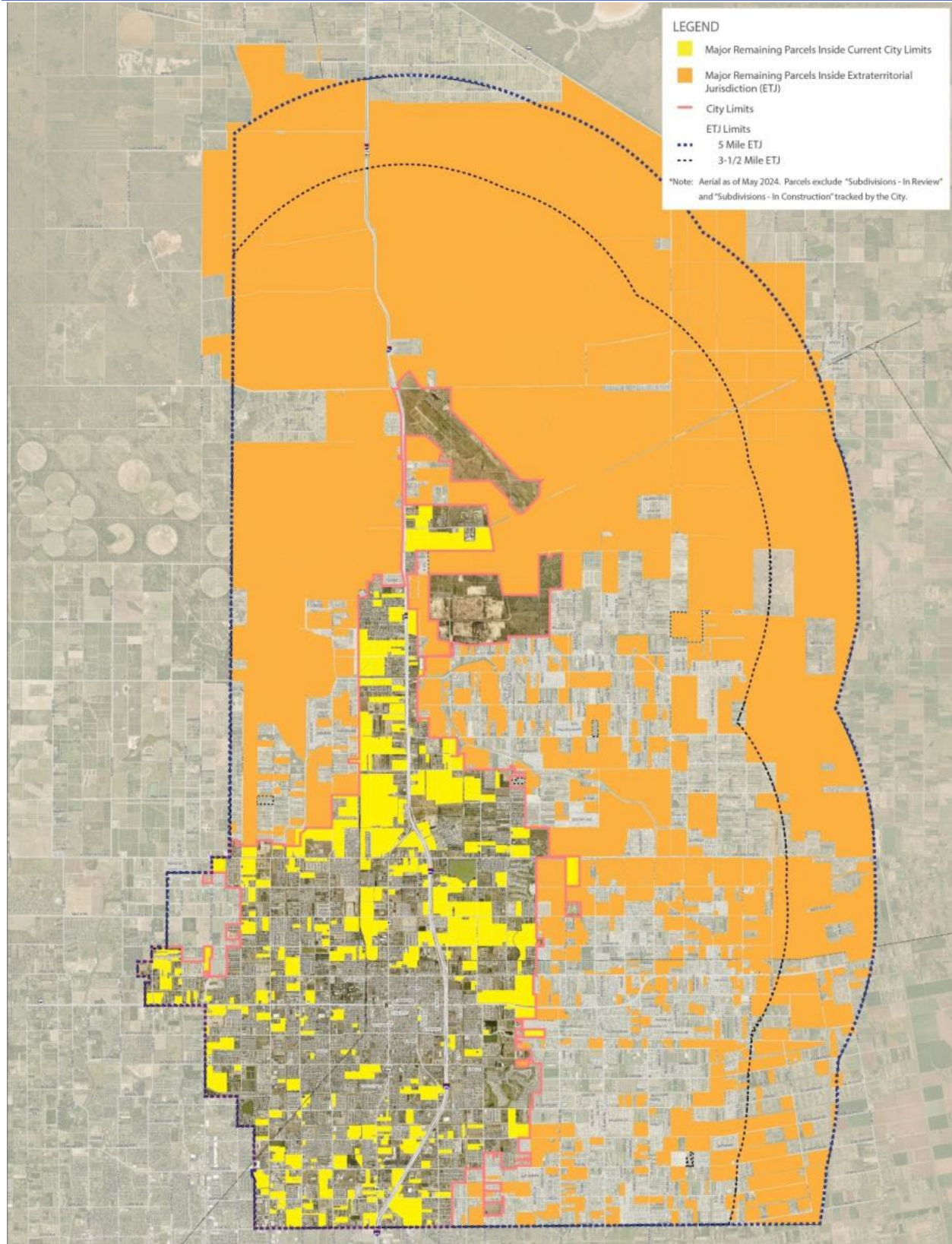
MAP 0a: Remaining Land within Edinburg City Limits (July 2024)



SOURCE: Kendig Keast Collaborative.

[*Click to Enlarge Map](#)

MAP 0b: Remaining Land within Edinburg City Limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (July 2024)

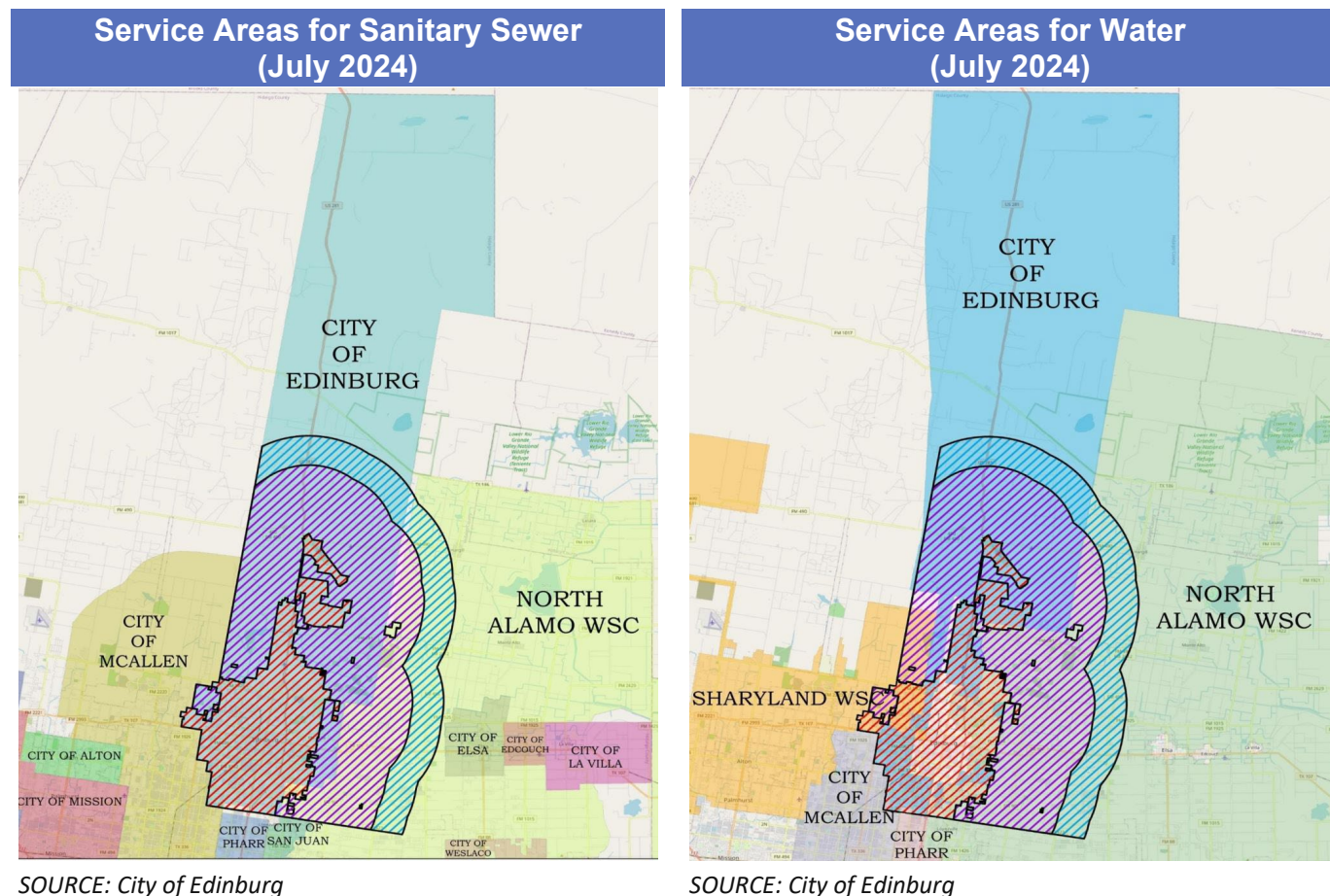


SOURCE: Kendig Keast Collaborative.

[*Click to Enlarge Map](#)

Infrastructure Outlook

This portion of the Growth Capacity assessment is based on available mapping and data plus discussions with key City departments and staff. The first two maps below show the current status of service areas and lead providers (as of July 2024) for the Edinburg area.



[*Click to Enlarge Maps](#)

One important take-away from these maps is that utility service areas do not always coincide with municipal boundaries or ETJs. The sanitary sewer service area of the North Alamo Water Supply Company currently overlaps with portions of Edinburg's ETJ and some small areas within the city limits, while the cities of McAllen and San Juan have service areas immediately adjacent to Edinburg. Meanwhile, the water service areas of the cities of McAllen and Pharr, and of the North Alamo Water Supply Company and the Sharyland Water Supply Corporation, all overlap Edinburg's municipal jurisdiction to some extent.

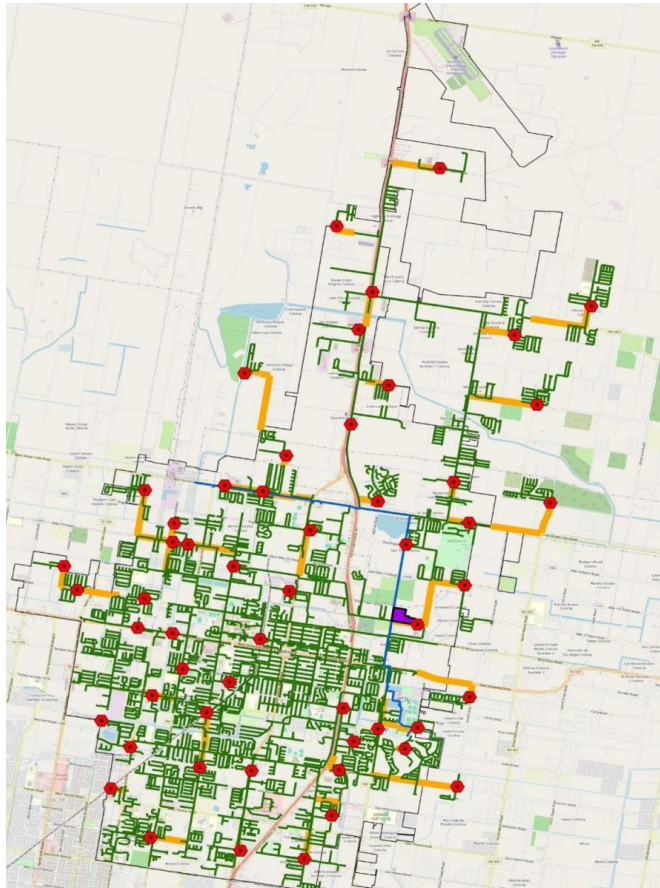
Both maps also illustrate that the City of Edinburg is the lead provider for both sanitary sewer and water service well north of its current city limits and ETJ (as determined by state oversight of which entity holds the Certificate of Convenience and Necessity, or CCN, for a particular area, which gives a public utility the exclusive right to provide retail water or sewer utility service to an identified geographic area).

The next two maps below show the current extent of, and components within, the City's sanitary sewer collection system and the water distribution system (as of July 2024), respectively.

Current City Sanitary Sewer System (July 2024)

LEGEND:

- SANITARY SEWER LIFT STATIONS
- SANITARY SEWER WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS
- SANITARY SEWER EFFLUENT LINES
- SANITARY SEWER LINES
- SANITARY SEWER FORCE MAIN
- EDINBURG CITY LIMITS

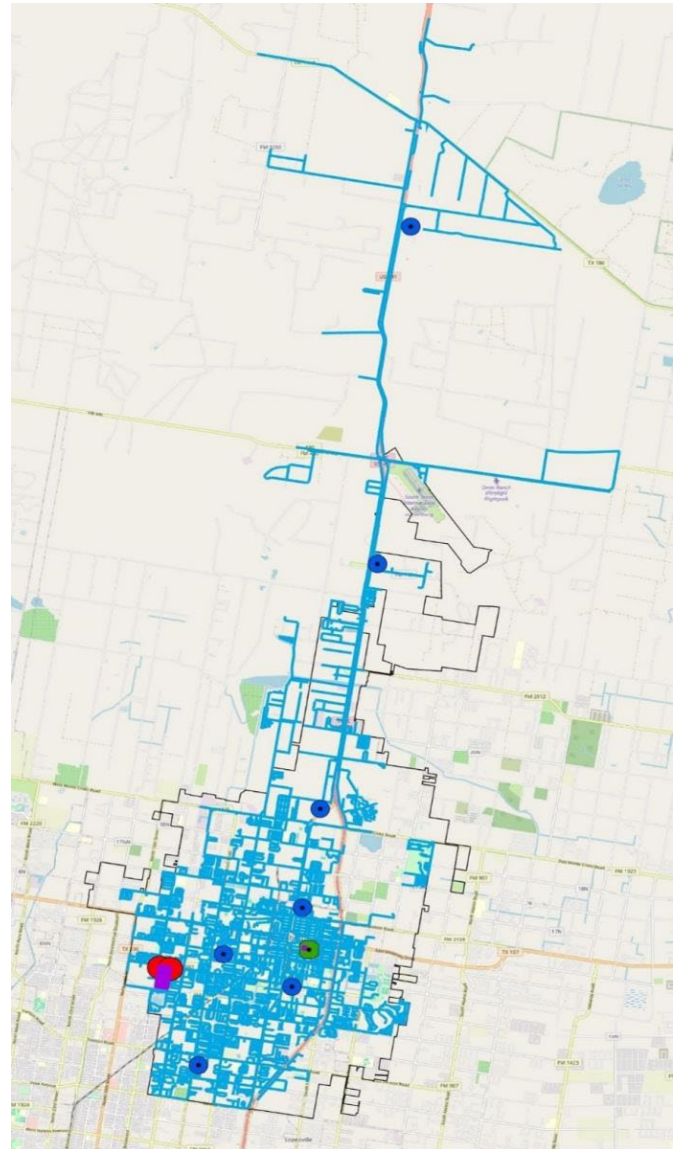


SOURCE: City of Edinburg.

Current City Water System (July 2024)

LEGEND:

- WATER TREATMENT PLANTS
- WATER TOWERS
- WATER ELEVATED STORAGE TANKS
- WATER CLEARWELL STORAGE TANK
- WATER LINES
- EDINBURG CITY LIMITS



SOURCE: City of Edinburg.

[*Click to Enlarge Maps](#)

Status of Wastewater Treatment Capacity

The very latest status of the City's wastewater treatment capability, amid a period of rapid land development and associated population growth, included the following points:

- The sanitary sewer system had 19,013 connections as of June 2024.
- The **remaining available treatment volume** at the City's single current plant (in northeast Edinburg to the east of M Road, north of Richardson Road) was **4.1 million gallons per day**

- This was based on the plant currently being permitted for up to 12.3 MGD and having a current average daily flow of 9.4 MGD, putting **the plant at 76% of its maximum permitted capacity.**
- Current improvements in process by the City will increase the maximum treatment capacity to 13.5 MGD. The City must also maintain 54 current lift stations across the sanitary sewer system that help pump wastewater to the plant given the area's relatively flat terrain.
- Looking ahead, the City is already planning for the design and construction of a **second wastewater treatment plant** to position the City to serve its future projected growth.

Status of Water Treatment Capacity

The very latest status of the City's water treatment capability, also amid a period of rapid land development and associated population growth, included the following points:

- The water system had 31,996 connections as of June 2024.
- The system had **available capacity to handle 4,852 more connections** at that time.
- This was based on the City's two current water plants having 26 MGD of **total available treatment volume** relative to a current average daily flow of 22.5 MGD (including the City's original Downtown plant just four blocks southeast of the County Courthouse between Mahl and Stubbs streets and 15th and 16th avenues; and the newer and larger West plant along Mon Mack Road just south of Freddy Gonzalez Drive).
- **Because the City water system is already operating at 86.5% of capacity, expansion of water system capacity is the more critical utility infrastructure item (relative to wastewater capacity).**
- The City is already planning for the design and construction of additional water treatment capacity as state regulations require that construction must have begun by the time the 90%-of-capacity point is reached. However, **the necessary interim steps place start of construction at least four years away as of summer 2024.**
- The City also continues to add to its water storage capacity as an essential element of its overall water system, with current ground storage capacity of 9.8 million gallons in 10 tanks, and 3.15 million gallons of capacity in five elevated storage towers (with a new tower under construction just north of Monte Cristo Road along Business 281 at the time of this Comprehensive Plan).
- The City must also maintain two current booster stations to maintain adequate flow within the system.

Status of Storm Drainage System

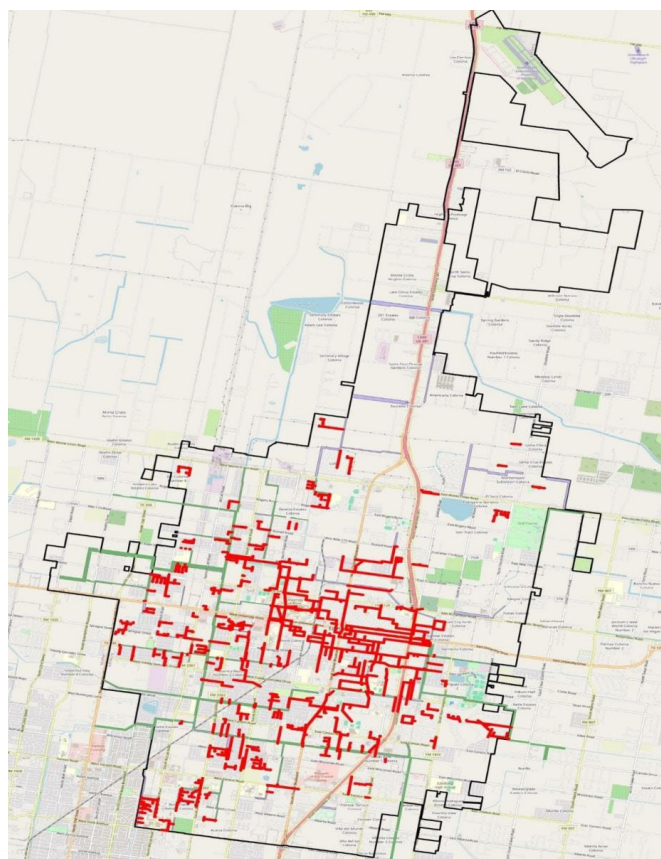
The next map below shows the current extent of, and components within, the City's storm drainage system (as of July 2024).

- The City's storm drainage system expands as new developments add to the system, along with ongoing system improvements made by the City.
- The City's drainage system ultimately carries stormwater to regional drainage ditches and canals, meaning that drainage can back up locally during severe storm events if downstream systems are already at capacity.
- **Relative to wastewater and especially water, storm drainage is not a significant growth constraint for Edinburg** as the city does not include any severe-risk flood zones, and engineering improvements can make lesser-risk areas suitable for development.
- As in many areas of Texas and the nation, Edinburg has the **opportunity to make greater use of regional stormwater detention and other larger-scale and multi-jurisdiction stormwater management solutions**, which can relieve some burden on individual properties and developments while yielding shared benefits for local governments and communities.

Current City Storm Drainage System (July 2024)

LEGEND:

- STORM LINES
- STORM DITCH
- DITCHES & CANALS
- EDINBURG CITY LIMITS



SOURCE: City of Edinburg.

[*Click to Enlarge Map](#)

Public Safety Services Outlook

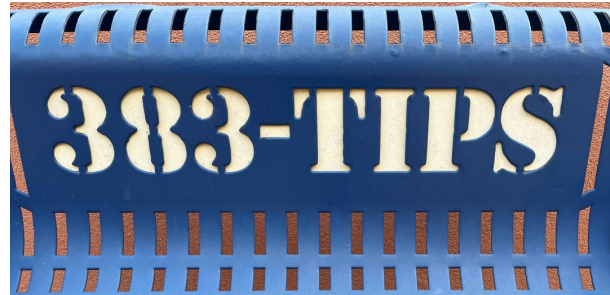
This portion of the Growth Capacity assessment is based on discussions with the City’s Police and Fire Department (EPD and EFD) leadership. Both departments face the challenge of serving and protecting a continually growing population and expanded service areas in the years ahead – and also amid a time of rising costs across the board (i.e., for personnel, vehicles, equipment, facilities, etc.). EPD and EFD also must both plan for and devote resources to ensure public safety during the many community festivals, parades, street races and other events held in Edinburg each year.

Police Department Opportunities and Challenges

- Incorporating best practices of highly-rated police departments in Texas, at an overall systemic level as well as in day-to-day operations, guided by a new EPD Strategic Plan that built on input from the Edinburg 2040 process and Public Safety Committee.
- Transitioning from a mostly reactive to a preventive “community policing” approach, including emphasis on youth and Spanish-language outreach, and optimizing how and where officer time is spent.
- Applying data and mapping analysis to focus EPD effort – and police visibility – where most needed, including rebuilding the Department’s policing model and beats to allocate resources within the city more effectively.
- Continuing to measure crime reduction, decreases in fatal and drunk-driver caused crashes, removal of unsafe commercial vehicles from area roads, and other indicators of how a preventive policing approach is making a difference.
- Given Edinburg’s projected growth, continuing to increase EPD’s officer ranks accordingly – along with support staff (e.g., dispatch, investigations, records, jail, etc.) – while aiming to achieve the nationwide average of approximately two officers per 1,000 residents as tracked by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (EPD 15 officers below that target as of mid-2024).
- While dealing with more immediate needs, also planning for a next-generation EPD and Municipal Court facility, having already outgrown the current headquarters at Closner Boulevard/Business 281 and Freddy Gonzalez Drive, and to be better positioned to serve Edinburg’s northward growth. The Department also needs its own firing range versus sharing time at other facilities.
- Acting on Edinburg 2040 priorities, including better street lighting, illuminated street signs and other Public Safety action items, along with overall livability and safety-related efforts (e.g., better compliance with speed limits on neighborhood streets).



- Exceeding state certification requirements for training, and emphasizing employee recognitions and other ways to boost officer recruiting and retention, along with more competitive compensation for non-officer personnel.
- Making better use of technology, including through additional training (e.g., computer-aided dispatch, upgraded radio communications, leading-edge use of drones in local policing, etc.).
- Continuing EPD's success, in partnership with the City's Grants Administration Department, at securing grants and other external funding.
- Continuing Edinburg's leadership within the revived South Texas Police Chiefs Association, as well as other state/federal coordination and participation in multi-agency task forces to combat gangs, drugs and human trafficking that flows through the Rio Grande Valley.
- Also emphasizing ongoing partnerships with police departments for Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District, UTRGV and others – with preparations already underway for coordinated gameday traffic and event management as UTRGV begins Division 1 football in 2025.
- Maintaining the strong community support EPD receives, and potentially re-activating a police foundation in Edinburg to support the needs of officers and their families.



Fire Department Opportunities and Challenges

- Expanding EFD's staffing in line with the city's ongoing growth, especially as the Department continues the transition from being a primarily volunteer fire department in past decades. In the meantime, as one example, none of the Department's ladder trucks are fully staffed (just that would require at least 24 additional personnel). Ideally, additional personnel would be on board to staff a next fire station before it is built and operational as done in McAllen.
- Managing the financial and logistical challenges of EFD service calls beyond the city limits and into approximately 68 square miles of Hidalgo County now accounting for just over one-third (35%) of all calls. This trend further stretches the Department's available resources, especially at Fire Stations 2 and 3 (602 West Canton Road and 1221 East University Drive, respectively), with a 15-mile drive to the furthest service call in the county. Colonia situations in the county add to the challenge, in areas with no fire hydrants, substandard building construction and different materials, etc.
- As part of improving its service and responsiveness, aiming to reduce EFD's average response time closer to its 5.5-minute target (currently averaging 6.5 to 7 minutes, which is skewed by longer-distance service runs into the county).





- Planning for a new north side fire station, likely in the Monte Cristo vicinity, to ensure effective response to growth in this area. EFD's five current stations have overlapping response areas, reflecting a time when Edinburg had a much smaller urbanized footprint. Response from headquarters Station 1 (212 West McIntyre Street) can also be challenging at times in a busy Downtown area, especially when special events bring crowds and closed streets immediately around the station.
- Also rehabilitating existing fire stations, two of which are in the 20- to 30-year range, as well as EFD's own fire training facility, which is the largest in the Rio Grande Valley but also in need of various repairs.
- Working toward rising soon from a Class 3 to Class 2 rating in the Insurance Services Office (ISO) evaluation system (on a scale of 1 to 10, with a 1 rating the best) – which is a mark of excellence in the world of municipal fire suppression and prevention – but will also requires adequate and ongoing investment in all aspects of EFD capabilities as itemized above.
- Acting on an upcoming study on ways to upgrade EFD's radio communications, with Edinburg and Pharr not currently linked to a Texas Department of Public Safety communications system like other Valley cities.
- Continuing EFD's interaction with the Edinburg 2040 strategic planning effort and committees, especially the Public Safety Committee.
- Continuing EFD's emphasis on community and school outreach to promote fire prevention and indoor carbon monoxide monitoring, including through grant-funded programs.
- Continuing EFD's success, in partnership with the City's Grants Administration Department, at securing grants and other external funding, to support its personnel in the field and make incremental facility improvements – along with funding opportunities through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in an era of increasing weather- and disaster-related risks.



The City of Edinburg and the area's lead entities for economic development — the Edinburg Economic Development Corporation (EEDC), the Edinburg Chamber of Commerce and Explore Edinburg (the local Convention and Visitors Bureau) — continue to work on key market factors they can directly influence. These include utility infrastructure availability and capacity, suitable locations and spaces for business investment and growth, the size and skills of the local workforce, networking and support among existing and prospective new local businesses, processes for obtaining development approvals and permits, and image-setting and marketing of the city and what it has to offer.

Ultimately, economic development is much less about transformational, “silver bullet” strategies than it is about the basics of competent and responsive government. Local governments create synergy by providing basic public services, on the one hand, while also supporting economic development initiatives. Increased economic activity that creates a growing tax base better enables local government to provide the infrastructure and services desired by residents and businesses. In turn, the services, infrastructure and amenities provided are enticements that encourage further economic growth.

In recent years, the practice of economic development has been gradually shifting away from “big fish” corporate relocations and expansions to improving a community's quality of place through downtown and neighborhood redevelopment and growing the small business support “ecosystem.” Helping lower-income families build generational wealth through effective and

Defining “Economic Development”

Economic development is a shared effort between local governments and the business community with the mutual benefit of increased economic activity, the building of household wealth and the expansion of revenues for businesses and governments. At the core of all economic development programs is to create, attract and retain businesses; create jobs; expand local wealth and investment; stabilize and grow the local tax base and enhance local quality of life. To achieve these goals, economic development programs encompass a wide range of activities including:

- ▶ Business retention and expansion assistance.
- ▶ Business development and recruitment.
- ▶ Marketing and branding.
- ▶ Small business development.
- ▶ “Economic gardening” (a data-centric approach to identifying and assisting local high growth companies).
- ▶ Incentives and subsidies.
- ▶ Industry-education collaborations.
- ▶ Commercialization of research discoveries (e.g. intellectual property).
- ▶ Workforce development.
- ▶ Tourism, including cultural draws (art, historic, music).
- ▶ Improved public services, processes and infrastructure.
- ▶ Housing and “quality-of-place” improvements.
- ▶ Talent recruitment and cultivation.
- ▶ Downtown and neighborhood redevelopment and rejuvenation.

customized workforce development programs, citizenship initiatives and homeownership programs is also gaining growing currency within the field.

As underscored by the work of the Edinburg 2040 committees, well-constructed economic development policies will provide Edinburg the greatest opportunity to influence the quality, quantity and timing of development. Such policies will create the ability to shift some of the risk of funding public improvements to private sector partners and will provide the opportunity to ensure growth pays for itself. In a highly competitive economic world, the right policies, programs and incentives, on the margin, can make the difference between a thriving community that offers opportunities for all strata of society versus one that is just getting by.

Why This Comprehensive Plan Section is Important for Edinburg



Connects this Comprehensive Plan, which is focused on the Edinburg's overall growth, development and revitalization to more detailed economic plans and strategies overseen by the area's lead entities for economic development.



Builds on previous and ongoing efforts by the City of Edinburg, the Edinburg Economic Development Corporation (EEDC), the Edinburg Chamber of Commerce, the Rio Grande Valley Partnership, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) and other partners to encourage and accommodate new business investment in the area while working to retain and grow existing industries.



Reinforces local government's role in promoting the public's general welfare by broadening economic opportunity in the area, whether in terms of the range and quality of job opportunities, programs and resources for enhancing one's marketable skills, improved mobility to access employment and education sites, or the environment for supporting home-grown entrepreneurs.



Links to other plan sections that address the prerequisites for a vibrant economy, including public infrastructure capacity, available land for growth of new and existing business, all forms of transportation for moving workers and goods, and attainable housing options and a quality living environment to ensure an adequate labor pool to meet the needs of area employers.

Economic Development Approaches: Jobs, Innovation, Generational Wealth

The practice of economic development is multi-faceted but can generally be organized into three main categories:

- traditional business retention, expansion and attraction (BREA),
- entrepreneurial ecosystem-building and
- people- and place-based strategies.

These spheres of activities are not all-inclusive and often overlap, though they can sometimes represent very different approaches, philosophies and responses to a community's particular priorities, political environment and resource constraints.

Recent years have seen a decided shift toward the latter two areas in response to the rise of remote work and the national conversation around racial equity, as well as the troubling optics – and the negative media coverage – surrounding a few high-profile corporate relocation “sweepstakes” such as the Amazon HQ2 project and Foxconn. Meanwhile, business attraction strategies have started tilting away from bare-knuckle interstate competition for domestic industry toward more foreign direct investment and the reshoring of increasingly fragile global supply chains. The table below summarizes how the various tools and tactics of economic development are generally applied in each of these spheres.

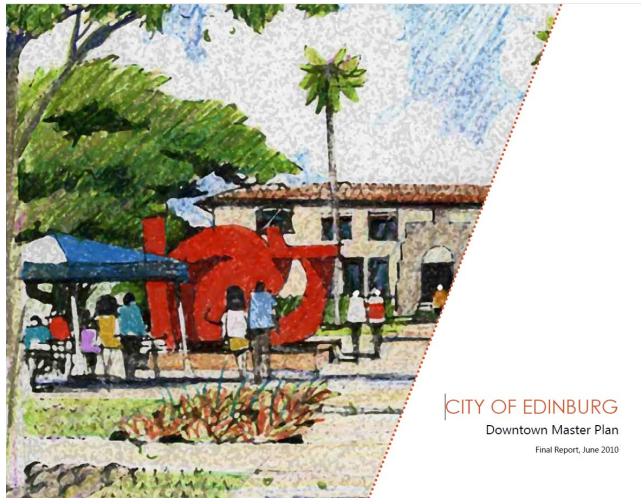
Main Spheres of Economic Development

	BREA (Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction)	Entrepreneur and Small Business Ecosystem Development	People- and Place-Based Strategies
Strategic Emphasis	☐ The relocation and expansion of large employers usually in exchange for substantial public incentives. ☐ Foreign direct investment.	☐ Building-out the small business resource network to create more of an organic “home-grown” economy.	☐ Creating/redeveloping distinctive districts and neighborhoods to retain and attract talent. ☐ Helping lower- income families build generational wealth (e.g., indirect, long-term job growth). ☐ Delves into community development (e.g., workforce development, homeownership, citizenship, etc.).
Client Orientation	☐ External facing. ☐ Corporate.	☐ Internal facing. ☐ Small business and start-up communities.	☐ Internal facing. ☐ Neighborhood business and community groups, affordable housing advocates, historic preservation groups, tourism and convention boards, developers, lower-income households.
Incentives	☐ Prominent and less “needs based” (transactional). ☐ Often criticized as “corporate welfare” by social equity and fiscal watchdog groups.	☐ Less prominent (e.g., small “proof-of-concept” grants and early-stage seed capital) and more needs based. ☐ Some in-kind incentives. ☐ Generally seen as worthy and necessary (small-dollar) perks for underdog founders.	☐ Needs-based developer subsidies to close financial feasibility gaps in overlooked neighborhood real estate markets. ☐ Wage subsidies and/or training funds for hard-to-employ individuals. ☐ Developer subsidies often criticized unless tied to affordable housing and other community benefits.
Promotions and Marketing	☐ Core activity focused on external, national audiences of corporate location decisionmakers and influencers.	☐ Minor, heavily-targeted activity focused mainly on local and intra-regional small business networks.	☐ Moderate activity focusing on downtowns and special districts, usually on behalf of neighborhood businesses.

Workforce Development	☐ Moderate to major intermediary, (“convenor”) activity. ☐ Usually more project based than program development based.	☐ Minor to moderate involvement focusing on technology skills development. ☐ Usually more program based.	☐ Core activity of people-based strategies. ☐ Program-based focused on both “soft skills” and hard skills, apprenticeships, etc.
Real Estate Focus	☐ Traditional (e.g. “horizontal”) land development activities focusing on business park development and extension of infrastructure. ☐ Some brownfield redevelopment.	☐ “Nested” special-use facilities (incubators) and innovation parks/districts usually in conjunction with major public institutions (e.g., universities, national labs and hospitals).	☐ Core function of place-based activities. ☐ Usually requires a public-private redevelopment enterprise (intervenor) agency/powers to “package” redevelopment projects and jump-start failing markets in historic neighborhoods.
Partnerships	☐ Regional economic development organizations (for national exposure/marketing and lead generation), regional industry/trade groups, Chambers of Commerce.	☐ Universities, community colleges, philanthropic organizations, foundations of local corporations, angel investor/mentor groups, national business accelerator programs (TechStars, etc.), local banking community, Chambers of Commerce.	☐ Local banks, philanthropic organizations, non-profit corporations, affordable housing organizations, developers, neighborhood business associations, workforce development agencies, community development organizations.
Professional Skill-Set	☐ Sales, marketing and networking, negotiations. ☐ Some land development and export assistance.	☐ Networking, fundraising, small business development and finance, banking, technology transfer. ☐ Miscellaneous technical assistance and advisory services.	☐ Urban (i.e., “vertical”) real estate development and analysis, housing, business organizing, promotions and branding, workforce development and placement, fundraising.

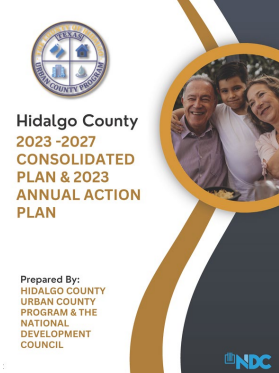
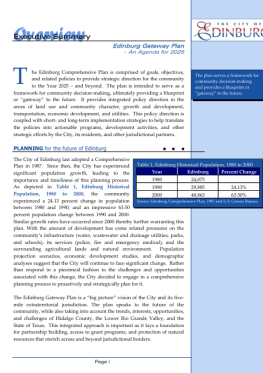
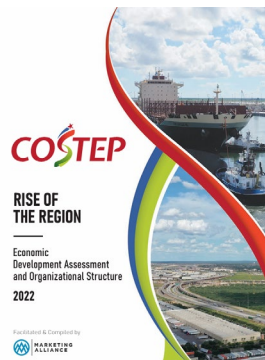
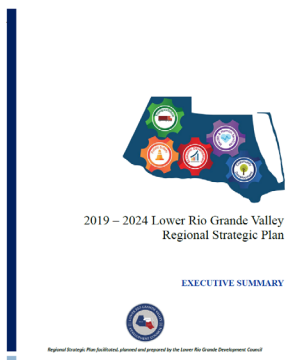
Funding Sources	☐ Special sales taxes. ☐ Industrial revenue bonds (IRBs). ☐ General funds. ☐ Sales and ground-lease revenues on public lands.	☐ Government grant funds. ☐ Private angel/seed investor funds. ☐ Foundations. ☐ Local revolving loan funds (RLF). ☐ Small Business Administration (SBA) loans.	☐ Tax increment reinvestment zones (TIRZs). ☐ 380 (sales tax redirection) Agreements. ☐ Developer fee participation. ☐ Ground-lease revenues of public land. ☐ Non-profits. ☐ Community Development Corporations (CDCs). ☐ Foundations.
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Legacy of Past Planning



This new Comprehensive Plan builds on previous plans and studies completed by the City of Edinburg and other partners, including these most relevant to the Economic Development topic:

- Edinburg 2040 Committees: Strategies and Objectives 2022-2023
- Edinburg Economic Development Corporation Strategic Plan
- 2019-2024 Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Strategic Plan (LRGVDC)
- COSTEP: Rise of the Region, Economic Development Assessment and Organizational Structure, 2022
- City of Edinburg Downtown Master Plan, 2010
- Edinburg Gateway Plan: An Agenda for 2025 (Comprehensive Plan), 2005
- Hidalgo County 2023-2027 Consolidated Plan and 2023 Annual Action Plan



**Click Images to View Plans*

Accomplishments

Progress and achievements resulting from past planning and implementation efforts related to Economic Development include:



Consistently high national rankings of McAllen-Edinburg-Mission metropolitan area (growth, affordability, added jobs).

Land sales and business occupancy at Edinburg EDC's North Industrial Park.



A 522-acre Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) on the site of Edinburg's South Texas International Airport, which is a subzone of FTZ #12 in McAllen, allowing the suspension or waiver of duties on imported goods until they enter, or are re-exported from, the U.S. market, respectively.

"Build to Scale (B2S)" \$744,000 federal matching grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, secured by the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV), to support local business founders and investors with access to educational and technical assistance resources.



UTRGV's Workforce, Economy, Research and Community (WERC) Complex along I-69C near Freddy Gonzales Drive, which involves expansion and upgrades to its former Community Engagement and Student Success facility to transform it into "a state-of-the-art, multifunctional facility that will serve as a business incubator across the Valley and house our new initiatives in workforce development and research" (funded by a \$2.4 million EDA grant combined with \$6 million by UTRGV and a \$500,000 contribution from Congresswoman Monica De La Cruz, for a total project investment of almost \$9 million).



The new UTRGV-Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District (ECISD) Collegiate High School at I-69C and Freddy Gonzalez Drive, where "students will experience a rigorous curriculum including AP level freshman and sophomore courses followed by two years of courses taught by university faculty" through this special partnership.



Retail and restaurant growth along key corridors in Edinburg.





Edinburg Business Center/Society 204, a 22,000 square foot subscription-based coworking space housed in an historic building in the heart of Downtown.

Transformation of the former H-E-B Park stadium in east Edinburg – built in 2016 to accommodate professional soccer – to UTRGV’s Vackar Stadium, in time for the elevation of the Vaqueros program to Division 1 collegiate football starting with the fall 2025 season.



Bert Ogden Arena in southeast Edinburg along I-69C, an \$88.3 million investment in 2018 that provides a 7,700-seat venue for sports, concerts and special events, including serving as home to the Rio Grande Valley Vipers, the “G league” affiliate of the National Basketball Association’s Houston Rockets.

Public investments and streetscape enhancements to establish McIntyre Street as a cultural corridor in Downtown Edinburg.



Promenade Park Amphitheater and Water Gardens, a new outdoor venue anchoring the McIntyre Street cultural corridor near the Hidalgo County Courthouse within Downtown Edinburg.

The new Arts, Culture, Events Center (ACE) across from City Hall on McIntyre Street, a \$14 million, 45,000 square foot multi-purpose facility to host local conferences, cultural art exhibits, educational classes, and performing arts and community events.



Key Planning Issues and Considerations

Through the Edinburg Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, numerous real and perceived community issues and needs were identified through leadership and public engagement activities, as well as through the work of the plan consultants and their interactions with community leaders of the Edinburg 2040 process and with City staff.

Key issues and considerations that led to the goals and action items in this Economic Development section include (along with specific points and suggestions from leadership and community input):



Inadequate career employment opportunities for area's young adults.



No "gown to town" college town vibe.



Brain drain of UTRGV graduates.



Lack of career mobility options for dual-professional households.



Not enough start-up capital or technical training resources for area entrepreneurs.



Too much lower-level retail, especially on high-profile corners of major intersections and other strategic areas.



Insufficient private investment in Downtown Edinburg.



Need for greater regional collaboration on tourism development.

Framework for Action

This Framework for Action portion of the Economic Development section builds off of the six Comprehensive Plan themes confirmed with City officials during the transition from the Edinburg Today to the Future Edinburg phase of Comprehensive Plan development. Unlike some other plan sections, all six plan themes are directly relevant to this Economic Development section. The plan goals and action strategies that follow are aimed at “connecting the dots” between this set of community improvement fundamentals for Edinburg that involve:

 Planning Theme 1 Leverage City infrastructure, especially for: ★ Growth management ★ Economic development	 Embrace Edinburg’s university town advantage, especially in terms of: ★ Community spirit ★ Research commercialization ★ UTRGV community outreach and services ★ Graduate retention Planning Theme 2
 Planning Theme 3 Go all in on asset preservation and maintenance, especially involving: ★ Infrastructure life-cycle tracking ★ Neighborhood integrity ★ Downtown revitalization (especially east toward I-69C) ★ Heritage sites and buildings ★ Parks, trails and recreation facilities	 Uplift people (as a core principle of Edinburg 2040), especially involving: ★ Economic security ★ Health and wellness ★ Safety ★ Equity ★ La buena vida (the good life)! Planning Theme 4
 Planning Theme 5 Pursue opportunity in scarcity and abundance, especially involving: ★ Methods to extend water supply – a relatively scarce resource for Edinburg and the Lower Rio Grande Valley ★ Productive re-use of the regional waste stream – a relatively abundant resource for Edinburg since it hosts a major regional landfill for solid waste disposal ★ Edinburg being a leader in mitigating the effects of a changing climate	 Promote regionalism, especially in the areas of: ★ Economy ★ Mobility ★ Water ★ Drainage ★ Education ★ Healthcare ★ Tourism ★ Advocacy for the interests and priorities of Lower Rio Grande Valley communities and their residents and businesses Planning Theme 6

Goals for Economic Development

A Goal is ...



a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).

The actions in this Economic Development section involve tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the following goals:



Goal 1

A more dynamic and diverse local economy characterized by plentiful and lucrative career pathways in professional, paraprofessional (i.e., “grey collar”), skilled trades, entrepreneurship and technology-related employment, especially by leveraging Edinburg’s growing and innovative “Eds and Meds” institutions.



Goal 1: Associated Plan Themes

Embrace University Town Advantage



Uplift People



Pursue Opportunity in Scarcity and Abundance



Promote Regionalism





Goal 2

A more vibrant and attractive Downtown, with its latent potential unlocked through a wider breadth of land uses and activities, plus stronger tie-ins with UTRGV to strengthen the “town-gown” relationship and make Downtown a center of off-campus life.



Goal 2: Associated Plan Themes

Leverage City Infrastructure



Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People

1st



Goal 3

An expanded and diversified commercial tax base, including new hospitality options, restaurants, retail goods and leisure and entertainment options that enhance Edinburg’s place quality for residents and visitors.



Goal 3: Associated Plan Themes

Embrace University Town Advantage



Uplift People

1st





Goal 4

A more equitable and balanced labor market with opportunities for upward mobility and generational wealth-building for lower-income households.



Goal 4: Associated Plan Themes

Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People



Promote Regionalism



Goal 5

An adaptive, “future forward” community identity and brand that helps draw in talent and innovative companies to an increasingly resilient local economy and city.



Goal 5: Associated Plan Themes

Leverage City Infrastructure



Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People



Pursue Opportunity in Scarcity and Abundance



Promote Regionalism



Actions for Economic Development

The actions below are categorized into the five types of plan implementation actions highlighted throughout this plan:



Capital Investments



Programs and Initiatives



Regulations and Standards



Partnerships and Coordination



More Targeted Planning / Study

Additionally, items with an asterisk (*) in the table below are adapted from the results of the Edinburg 2040 strategic planning process, especially from the 2040 committee focused on Economic Development / Innovation / Entrepreneurship / Workforce.

Plan Actions Involve ...

seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.

Action Leaders

With the support and direction of City leaders and management, action leaders and other key players for most initiatives involving Economic Development will include:

- Edinburg Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) and its Board of Directors
- Edinburg Chamber of Commerce and its Board of Directors
- Explore Edinburg (Convention and Visitors Bureau)
- City of Edinburg departments, especially the City Manager's office, Planning and Zoning, Aviation, Engineering, Public Works, Utilities, Library and Cultural Arts, and Grants Administration
- City boards and commissions, especially:
 - Airport Advisory Board of South Texas International Airport of Edinburg
 - Community Development Council
 - Cultural Activities Board
 - Downtown District Steering Committee
 - Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors
 - Edinburg 2040 committees, especially Economic Development / Innovation / Entrepreneurship / Workforce
 - Planning and Zoning Commission

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
<i>Capital Investments</i>			
1	Develop a new Class A eco-industrial park in mid-town or near the landfill site.	1, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ City Planning & Zoning
2	Continue to invest in Downtown infrastructure and beautification and aggressively incentivize new private investment.	2, 3, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ EEDC ➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Planning & Zoning
Also Programs and Initiatives			
3	Ensure that Edinburg has an adequate and resilient water supply to provide for and fuel the city's future growth and development.*	1, 5	➤ City Engineering and Utilities ➤ Other area water utilities ➤ LRGV Development Council
4	Ensure that Edinburg has enough power from resilient and sustainable sources to provide for the city's current and future growth and the transition to electric powertrains, and that the area has the ability to ramp up power supply quickly when necessary to attract energy-intensive industries.*	1, 5	➤ City Engineering and Utilities ➤ Utility providers ➤ LRGV Development Council
<i>Programs and Initiatives</i>			
5	Promote investment in future-forward sectors such as: renewable energy and storage, life sciences, bio-engineering, electric power systems, avionics and aerospace.*	1, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ RGV Partnership ➤ UTRGV
6	Deploy EEDC "resource center funds" for future-forward sectors and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship.*	1, 4, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ UTRGV
7	Build local awareness of the incentives for renewable energy and energy conservation included in the Inflation Reduction Act.*	1, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ Edinburg Chamber ➤ RGV Partnership
8	Move away from "case-by-case" (lottery style) incentives toward weighted, entitlement-based awards tied to clear project metrics and industry classification codes (i.e., a transparent incentives "scorecard" and on-line calculator).	1, 3, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ City Manager's office
9	Reserve district-level redevelopment tools such as Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs), Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) and 380 agreements for larger commercial projects that will widen and diversify Edinburg's retail mix.	2, 3	➤ City Manager's office ➤ EEDC
10	Build EEDC's capacity to do neighborhood/district redevelopment work by building capacities, expertise and incentives in urban real estate development, housing and small business development.	2, 3, 4	➤ EEDC ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ UTRGV

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
11	Complete arts corridor and seek state cultural arts district designation.*	2, 3	➤ City Library & Cultural Arts ➤ Explore Edinburg
12	Establish and promote a special Downtown revitalization initiative and programs, including incentives for building rehabilitations and infill development (targeting 100% residential developments and projects involving less than \$5 million in capital investment).	2, 3, 4	➤ City Manager's office ➤ EEDC ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ Edinburg Chamber
13	Establish a Downtown-focused micro-loan/grant program specifically for downtown start-up businesses.	2, 3, 4	➤ EEDC ➤ Banking / lending / finance community (including Community Development Financial Institutions)
14	Aggressively apply traditional public finance tools Downtown, including tax increment financing and 380 agreements in coordination with new private investment.	2, 3, 4	➤ City Manager's office ➤ EEDC ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ Edinburg Chamber
15	Evolve the Downtown District Steering Committee into a permanent management/advocacy organization to program events and serve as liaison with Downtown business and property owners.	2, 3, 4	➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Library & Cultural Arts ➤ Edinburg Chamber
16	Ensure that Edinburg has the workforce that it needs to meet today's needs and can fuel the city's future growth and development.*	1, 4, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ Texas Workforce Solutions ➤ Edinburg CISD ➤ UTRGV ➤ South Texas College
17	Promote the need for technical education.*	1, 4, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ Texas Workforce Solutions ➤ Edinburg CISD ➤ UTRGV ➤ South Texas College
18	Establish more internship and apprenticeship programs.	1, 4	➤ Edinburg Chamber ➤ Texas Workforce Solutions ➤ UTRGV ➤ South Texas College ➤ RGV Partnership
19	Establish a young professionals network to help with talent retention and attraction.	1, 5	➤ Edinburg Chamber ➤ UTRGV

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
20	Ensure that ALL Edinburg residents have reasonable access to affordable broadband internet throughout the city.*	4, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ Utility providers
<i>Regulations and Standards</i>			
21	Work to expand Edinburg's retail mix by continuing to expand its housing mix, including new urban-format townhouses, condos and mixed-use developments.	2, 3	➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ Real estate/ development community
<i>Partnerships and Coordination</i>			
22	Seek partnership opportunities with UTRGV and other universities in future-forward sectors such as water desalination, energy storage, regenerative medicine, electric powered aviation.*	1, 5	➤ Key City Departments ➤ EEDC ➤ UTRGV
23	Work with the RGV Partnership to establish a regional online economic development resource portal for start-ups and investors (modeled after <i>Sourcelink™</i>).	1, 4, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ RGV Partnership ➤ Edinburg Chamber
24	Create a stronger working relationship with the McAllen EDC and Chamber of Commerce, particularly on innovation corridor and tourism-related initiatives.	1, 3, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ Edinburg Chamber ➤ Explore Edinburg ➤ McAllen partner entities ➤ RGV Partnership ➤ Explore RGV
25	Work with regional partners to capitalize a Downtown-focused subordinated loan program to assist Downtown businesses and developers (with working capital and gap financing, respectively).	1, 2, 3, 4	➤ EEDC ➤ Banking/lending/finance community (including Community Development Financial Institutions) ➤ RGV Partnership ➤ Edinburg Chamber
26	Work with the UTRGV Alumni Association, the RGV Partnership and COSTEP to establish a UTRGV graduate repatriation outreach program and STEM graduate placement (i.e., medical residency) program.	1, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ UTRGV Alumni Association ➤ RGV Partnership ➤ COSTEP
27	Partner with Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District's Career & Technology Center to promote skills development.*	1, 4, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ Edinburg CISD ➤ Texas Workforce Solutions ➤ UTRGV ➤ South Texas College
28	Bring South Texas College technical education and short courses to Edinburg possibly in cooperation with the new ECISD Career & Technology Center.*	1, 4, 5	➤ South Texas College ➤ Texas Workforce Solutions

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
29	Work with Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District and other community partners to develop a community-based option for affordable quality broadband internet.*	4, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ Edinburg CISD ➤ Utility providers ➤ Area foundations
<i>More Targeted Planning / Study</i>			
30	Brand Edinburg's medical district and explore with McAllen and Pharr the creation of a Tri-City Innovation Corridor along Jackson, McColl and Sugar roads (centered around the major hospital and medical nodes in the three cities).	1, 3, 4, 5	➤ EEDC ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ Cities of McAllen, Pharr ➤ UTRGV ➤ Area medical institutions and community
31	Update the Downtown Master Plan to address the need for new private investment requiring redevelopment-specific economic development tools and incentives.	2, 3, 4	➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ EEDC ➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Library & Cultural Arts ➤ Hidalgo County
32	Create an arts district master plan and marketing plan.*	2, 3	➤ City Library & Cultural Arts ➤ Explore Edinburg

The following actions were also recommended by the Edinburg 2040 committee focused on Economic Development/Innovation/Entrepreneurship/Workforce. These actions also relate to the Growth Capacity section of this Comprehensive Plan along with Economic Development, and they are very much in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan theme of Pursuing Opportunity in Scarcity and Abundance:

- Promote energy and water conservation as an earth-friendly habit (especially in schools with Edinburg CISD).
- Pursue the future development of a brackish water desalination plant.
- Investigate ASR (Aquifer Storage and Recovery) using pretreated or untreated runoff water.
- Facilitate community solar projects for lower-income neighborhoods.

Also, within the remainder of this plan section under Additional Considerations and Background for Edinburg's Economic Development, more recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan consultant are highlighted within the discussion of current Economic Development Resources and Capacities.



Ongoing and Potential Partners Related to Economic Development

Along with the Action Leaders and Key Partners called out in the table above, the following agencies and entities are also established or potential partners for helping Edinburg achieve its goals for Economic Development:

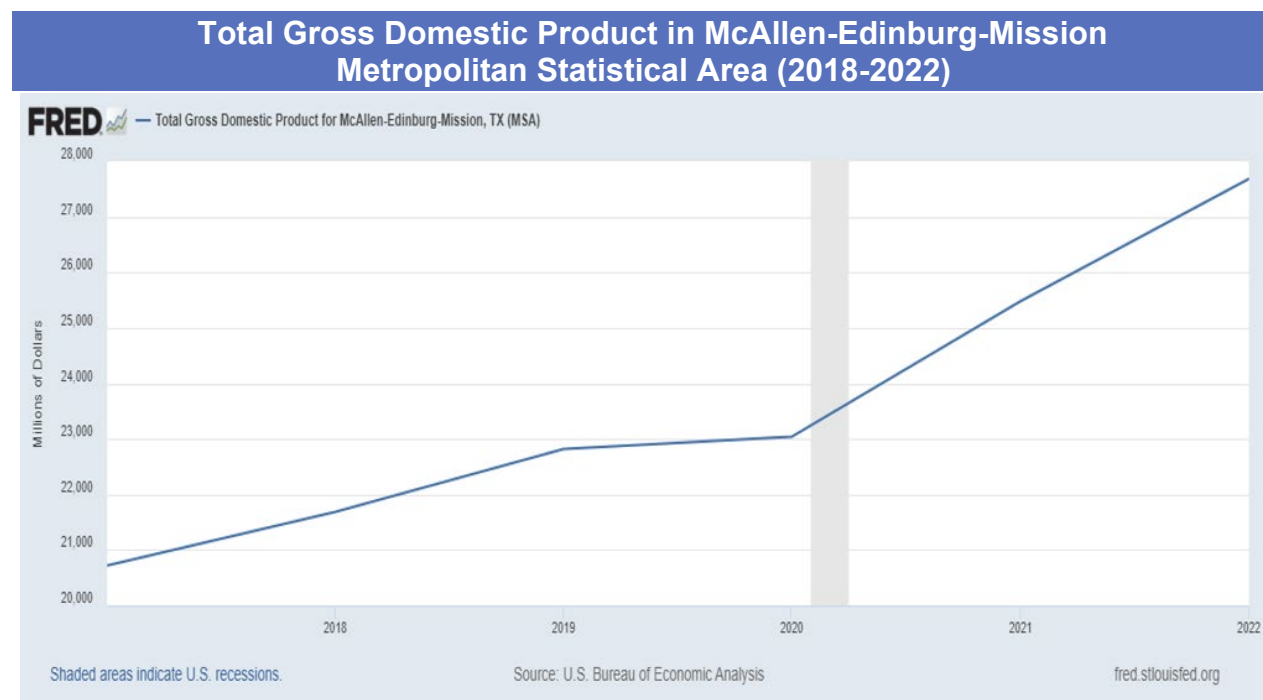
- Banking/lending/finance community
- Cities of McAllen, Pharr, Mission and other nearby cities
- City of Reynosa and State of Tamaulipas, Mexico
- Council For South Texas Economic Progress (COSTEP)
- Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District (ECISD) and other area districts
- Explore RGV
- Hidalgo County Economic Development
- Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
- Major employers, key business sectors
- Real estate/development community
- RGV Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- RGV Partnership
- South Texas College
- Texas Economic Development Corporation (TXEDC)
- Texas Economic Development Council (TEDC)
- Texas Workforce Commission
- Texas Workforce Solutions - Edinburg and Lower Rio Grande Valley
- Utility providers
- UTRGV



Additional Considerations and Background for Edinburg's Economic Development

Edinburg's location within the growing Rio Grande Valley bi-national economic region presents many opportunities to develop both established and emerging regional economic sectors. At the most immediate level, these include the existing core industry sectors such as medicine and healthcare, warehousing and logistics, and agriculture and food processing. At a more aspirational level, they include sectors such as advanced manufacturing, water resource management, climate resiliency, electrical power systems, and aerospace and avionics.

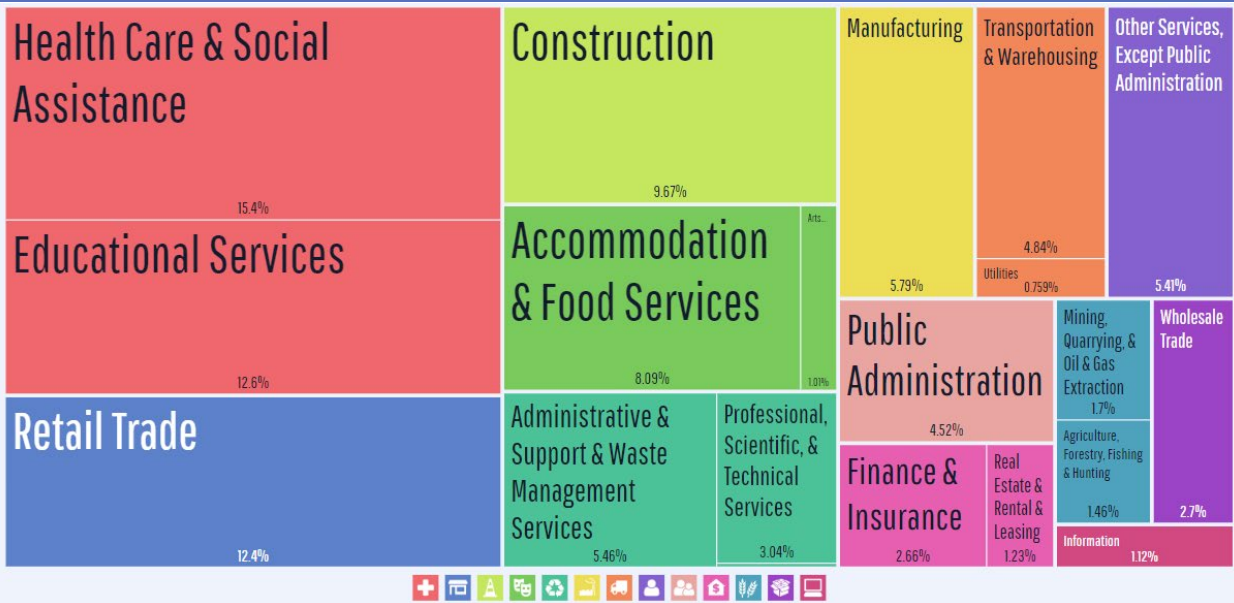
Growing these sectors will involve the creation of partnerships between government, industry and institutions of higher education. In some cases, they may require the expansion or creation of new and specialized infrastructure and educational programming (i.e., food science, supply chain management, renewable energy, natural resource management, international business, etc.). In other cases, it may mean forging collaborations with other cross-regional entities and networks. For instance, the region's prominence in the medical and healthcare spheres may be burnished by strengthening partnerships with Texas Medical Center institutions in Houston to share resources and to participate in clinical trials. (From a land use standpoint, the high concentration of medical institutions on Edinburg's southwest side offers an opportunity to create a co-city branded medical district at the nexus of Trenton, Jackson and Owasso roads as elaborate on later.) Similarly, the region's growing aerospace cluster anchored by SpaceX may be expanded through inter-regional partnerships with the aerospace industry cluster centered in the Houston area. These types of partnerships require organizational initiative and capacity – and an understanding on the part of local governments that their long-term prosperity is dependent on that of the region as a whole.



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis via Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

[*Click to Enlarge Chart](#)

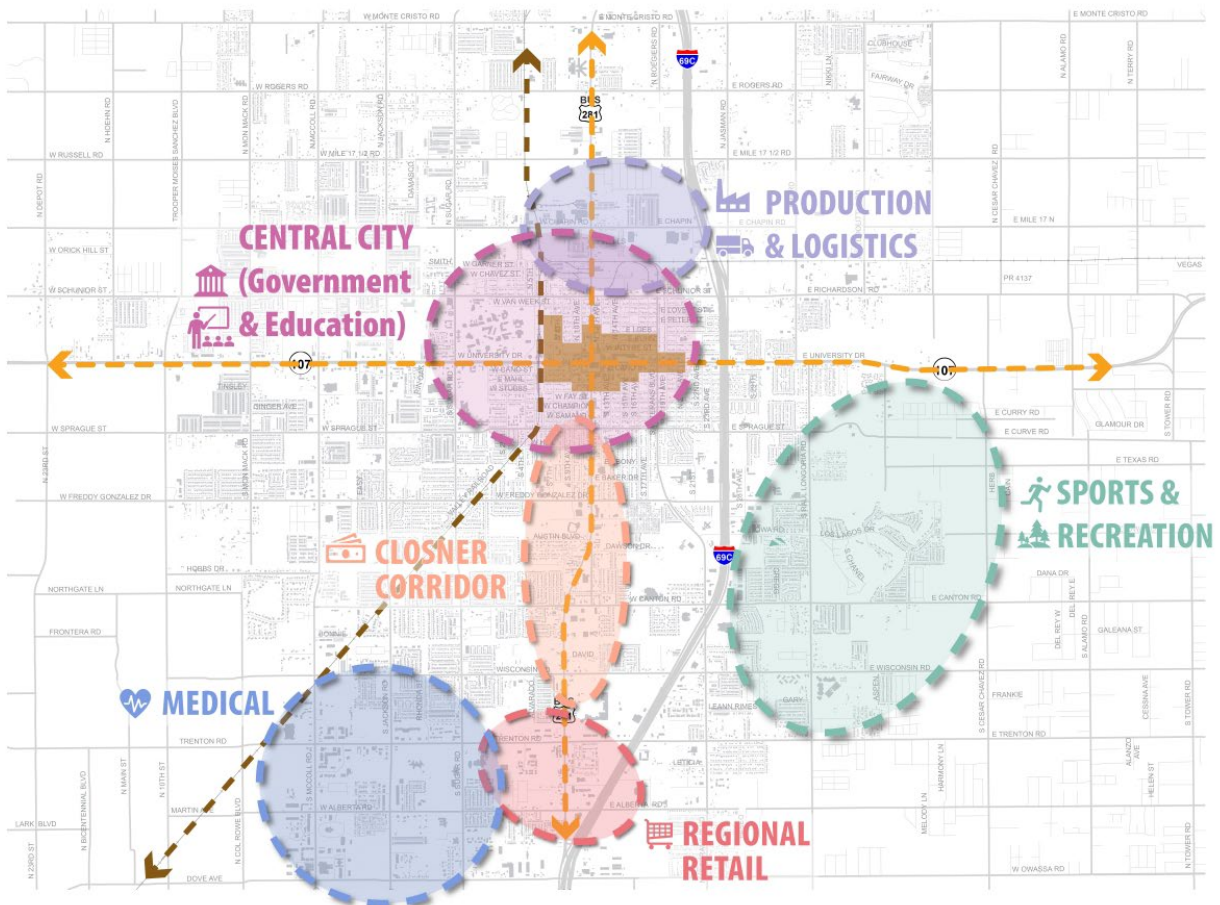
Occupations in McAllen-Edinburg-Mission Metropolitan Statistical Area (2022)



SOURCE: Data USA

[*Click to Enlarge](#)

Generalized Locations of Key Economic Drivers of Edinburg's Economy



SOURCE: Kendig Keast Collaborative

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Economic Development Resources and Capacities

The practice of economic development in and for the City of Edinburg is carried out mainly by the Edinburg Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) and the Edinburg Chamber of Commerce. Under state law, the EEDC is a “Type A” development corporation funded by local sales taxes. As a “Type A” corporation, the EEDC’s programs and incentives are focused mainly on the development and retention of traditional “export industries” – the kinds of companies that sell most of their goods and services to customers outside of the city. The Chamber serves as the main hub of the business support network in Edinburg. It holds several large community-building events throughout the year and conducts various educational and training sessions in conjunction with area service providers for both Chamber members and non-members. The Chamber also has a tourism development function.

Perhaps because of the EEDC’s Type A status, its real estate activities are focused mainly on classic business park site development activities in support of corporate expansions and relocations (it currently owns more than 35% of the 450 available acres of industrial land in the North Industrial Park and in the Renaissance Industrial Park). Despite being a major funder of several recent Downtown public improvement projects, the EEDC currently does not have a well-defined neighborhood redevelopment role or functionality. However, this type of neighborhood intervenor role – focused heavily on neighborhood business development, promotional activities and selective “arms-length” involvement in the private real estate market – is critical to help jump-start the neighborhood or district revitalization process. These activities have become essential for attracting and retaining highly sought after talent workers.

At the regional level, the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) Partnership serves as an umbrella organization, supporting its constituent members (including the City of Edinburg) mainly through regional marketing, advocacy and lead generation. The Partnership also serves as a regional coordinating body and sites/incentives availability clearinghouse, while also collecting and publishing various data sets and performance metrics on the Valley economy.

Also at the regional level, the Council for South Texas Economic Progress (COSTEP) serves as a de facto regional chamber of commerce, promoting the interests of area businesses. COSTEP acts as an intermediary between the business community, local governments and the area workforce development system.

At the sub-regional level, the Hidalgo County Economic Development Department participates in providing tax abatements and TIRZ tax redirection incentives to projects within Edinburg and throughout the county.

Edinburg 2040 Aspirations

Vision of 2040 Committee on Economic Development / Innovation/ Entrepreneurship / Workforce

To be a catalyst for sustainable economic growth and prosperity, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and a skilled workforce that empowers Edinburg to thrive as a dynamic and inclusive community.

Mission Statement

The Committee is dedicated to efficiently and effectively leveraging resources and fostering collaboration with organizations in Edinburg. Our mission is to promote economic growth, expand the tax base, and create quality educational, career, and business opportunities for all citizens. Through diligent research, proactive planning, and strategic support, we aim to fuel the city's development and ensure a prosperous future for Edinburg and its residents.

Local Programs and Incentives

Incentives

City incentives are available for non-residential projects that add at least \$5 million to Edinburg's property tax base and/or create at least 15 full-time equivalent jobs paying at least \$15 per hour. Except for investments in Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones, the City's incentives are "site neutral" in that eligibility is not tied to investments in specially-designated redevelopment areas. Local incentives available through the City and the EEDC include:

- **FLIP Program.** The Façade Lot Improvement Program (FLIP) provides grants of up to \$10,000 for miscellaneous site improvements for eligible small businesses.
- **Job Grants.** Supports new full-time jobs involving veteran or special needs candidate employment, workforce training and internships.
- **Tax Refunds.** Tax rebates are available based on the number of jobs created or capital investment expended.
- **Interest Rate Buy-Down (IRBD) Program.** A collaboration with LiftFund that offers low-interest loans/refinancing of up to \$50,000 to small businesses.
- **Lease/Build.** The EEDC offers discounted leases for companies meeting certain job/wage and capital investment targets for property the EEDC owns in Edinburg's designated business parks.
- **Retail Recruitment Program.** Provides reimbursement of up to 50% of annually generated sales tax (\$100,000 cap).
- **Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ).** Edinburg currently has three TIRZ: (1) TIRZ No. 1 (The Shoppes at RGV), (2) TIRZ No. 3 (La Sienna Development), and (3) TIRZ No. 4 (Bert Ogden Arena).
- **CDFIs/New Markets Tax Credits.** Two federally-certified Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) primarily serve the Edinburg area: the RGV Multibank Corporation and The Bank of South Texas. CDFIs receive federal funding to do responsible lending to small businesses and homeowners in underserved communities. They also serve as conduits to the highly competitive federal New Markets Tax Credits program.

Recommendation:



Expand and channel incentives, including small business grants and loans, preferential "by-right" tax rebates/abatement and bonus FLIP grants to targeted reinvestment areas in Edinburg such as Downtown, the east University Avenue corridor and the Closner corridor.

Small Business Resources

- **Small Business Administration (SBA).** The SBA serves Edinburg-based businesses through its district offices in Harlingen and Corpus Christi. Participating SBA lenders in/near Edinburg include Edinburg's Rio Bank along with Chase Bank, Frost Bank, Greater State Bank, Lone Star National Bank, Navy-Army Credit Union, PeopleFund and Vantage Bank in McAllen.
- **SCORE Rio Grande Valley.** The Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) offers free business mentoring and advisory services through its Rio Grande Valley chapter.
- **UTRGV Small Business Development Center.** UTRGV operates several SBDCs throughout the region, including one at its Edinburg facility that is currently transitioning to the new Workforce, Economy, Research and Community (WERC) Complex along I-69C near Freddy Gonzales Drive.
- **Edinburg Business Center/Society 204 (Co-Working).** A 22,000 square foot subscription-based coworking space housed in an historic building in the heart of Downtown.
- **Hidalgo County Business Incubators.** Hidalgo County has two service-providing business incubators: The Hidalgo Business Center in the City of Hidalgo, and the McAllen Creative (arts) Incubator in McAllen. Several other incubators are scattered around the region.
- **UTRGV APEX Accelerator.** Located in Edinburg at 1407 Freddy Gonzales Drive, the APEX Accelerator operated by UTRGV provides free business coaching and advisory services for businesses seeking government contracts.
- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).** As a federally-designated "entitlement community," Edinburg receives approximately \$1 million per year in federal CDBG funds. These funds can be used nominally for housing and community/economic development-related projects in economically-distressed census tracts. Recent CDBG projects in Edinburg have included parks, housing rehabilitation programs and select infrastructure projects.

Recommendations:



Work with area banks and the RGV Partnership to create a regional small business revolving loan fund (RLF) that will make subordinated, extended amortization, low-interest loans of up to \$250,000 to preferred business types in and around Edinburg.

Work with Edinburg banks to create a separate small business micro loan fund program (of up to \$25,000 per loan) specifically for businesses within designated target reinvestment neighborhoods in Edinburg.

Manufacturing-Related and Other Resources

- **Airport Foreign Trade Zone.** A 522-acre area at Edinburg's South Texas International Airport that is a sub-zone of FTZ #12 in McAllen, allowing the suspension or waiver of duties on imported goods until they enter, or are re-exported from, the U.S. market, respectively.
- **Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEPs).** The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) provides funding to numerous entities throughout the U.S. so they can offer technical assistance to local manufacturers in the development and application of new technology. In Edinburg, this entity is the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center housed in the College of Engineering and Computer Science on the UTRGV campus.
- **McAllen EB-5 Regional Center.** The federal government encourages foreign direct investment in specially-designated geographic areas in the U.S. through its EB-5 program. The program offers green cards to foreign investors making qualified, job-creating investments via certified EB-5 Regional Center entities throughout the U.S. Several regional centers serve Texas, with the McAllen Regional Center being the closest and focusing exclusively on Hidalgo County.

Recommendations:



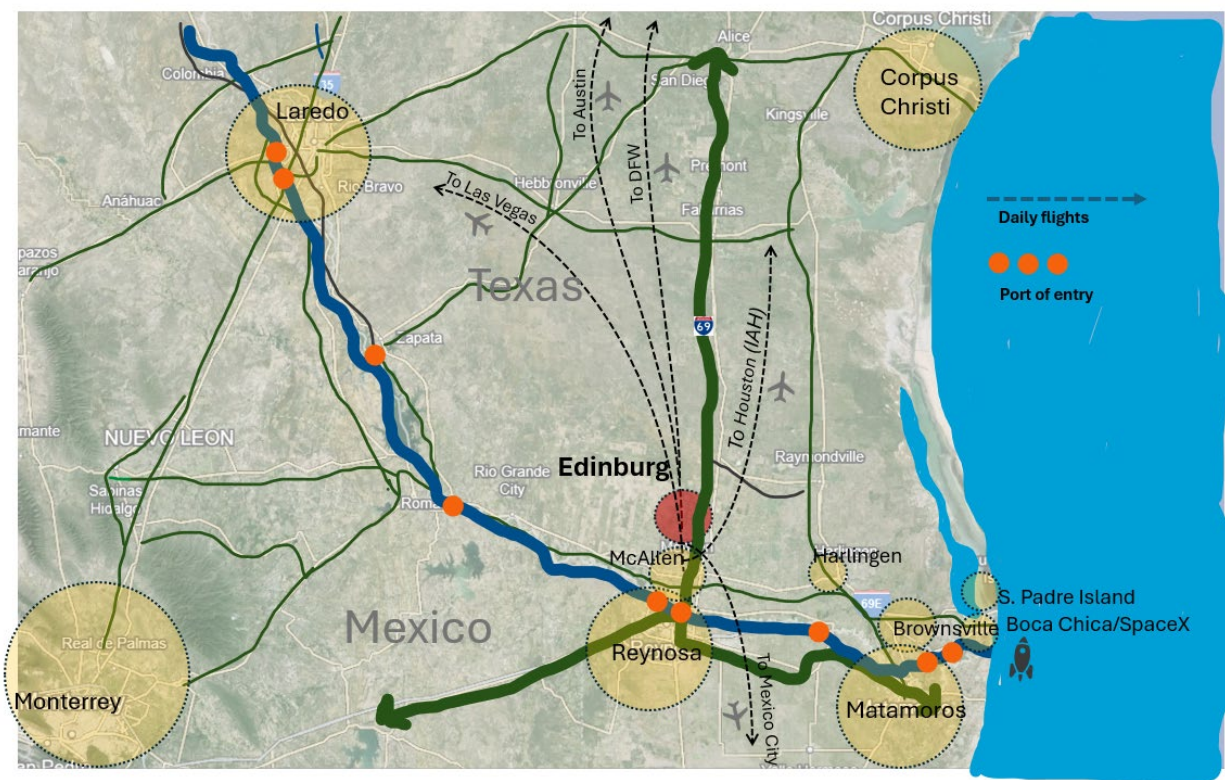
Institute a near automatic (entitlement-based) tax abatement policy for target industries that meet certain benchmarks for employment, average wages, payrolls and capital investment. Create a weighted, elective incentives scoring system for non-target industries and those not meeting benchmarks.

Formalize a Chamber of Commerce-led business retention and expansion (BRE) program that uses professional customer relationship management (CRM) software.

Major Asset Base

Edinburg's distinguishing economic assets include one of UTRGV's two core campuses, a comparatively large and growing medical/healthcare cluster, proximity to key U.S. ports of entry, and multiple offices of County government and judicial activity. The city has good transportation links via road, rail and air to the interior U.S. and Mexico and occupies a central location in a fast-growing border region.

Bi-National Border Crossroads



SOURCE: Kendig Keast Collaborative

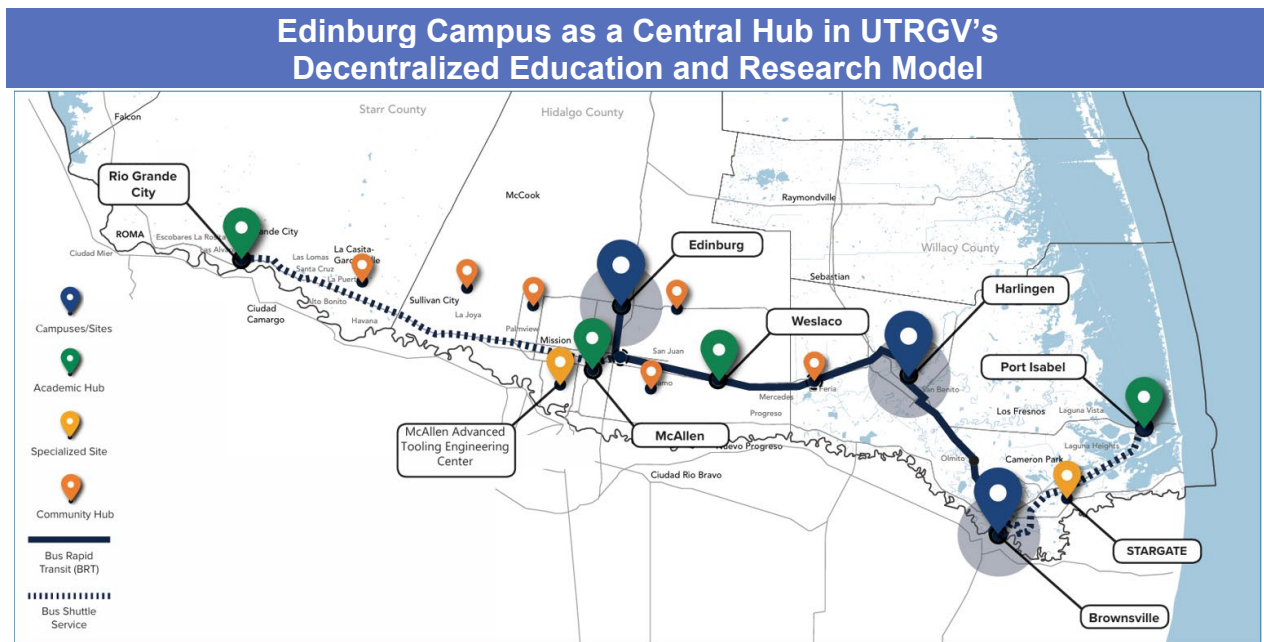
[*Click to Enlarge Map](#)

Edinburg is less than an hour's drive to SpaceX's production and launch facilities at Boca Chica, placing it very near to a main hub of the nation's emerging commercial space industry. The city is also a short distance to one of Mexico's largest manufacturing ("maquila") regions in Tamaulipas State consisting of the Matamoros-Reynosa-Nuevo Laredo chain of cities. Finally, Edinburg has its own general aviation airport and is home to major regional entertainment and recreational facilities, including Vackar Stadium, Bert Odgen Arena and the Edinburg Scenic Wetlands and World Birding Center site adjacent to Municipal Park. All of these factors represent special competitive advantages around which Edinburg can build its economy.

UTRGV at Edinburg

UTRGV is a decentralized, multi-site higher education and research institution whose facilities are distributed throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Edinburg's central location within UTRGV's dispersed constellation of assets – and as the legacy home of the original UT-Pan American campus (one of two core institutions that were merged into the larger UTRGV network) – positions the Edinburg campus as a clearinghouse for much of the commercialization and talent-development potential within the expanded university research enterprise.

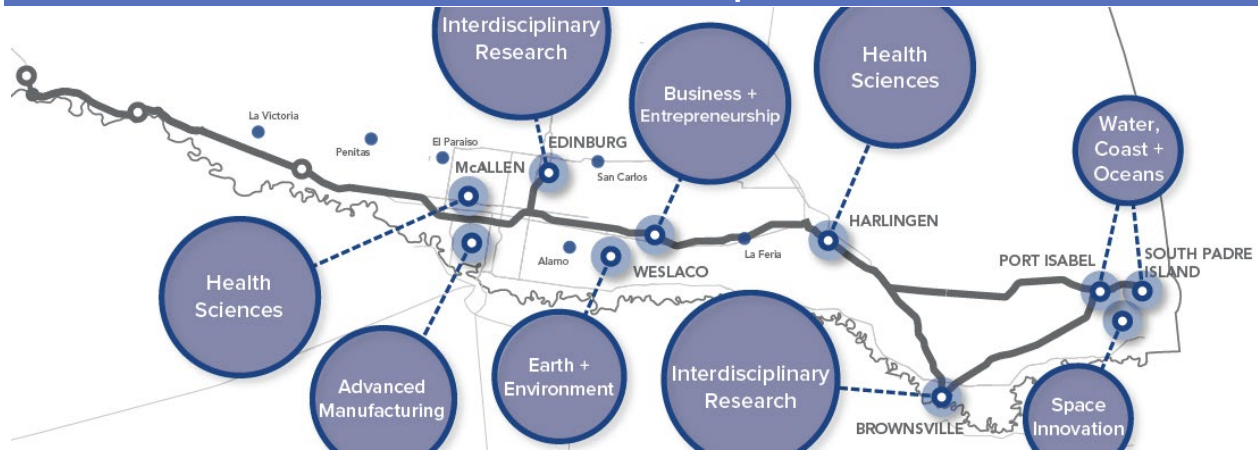
UTRGV's Edinburg campus is one of the largest traditional university campuses within the UTRGV network and one of its largest combined teaching and research institutions. It also is also one of the region's largest producers of college graduates. UTRGV's 2017 Master Plan laid out a 15-year plan for the university to achieve Tier 1 research university (R1) status and add as many as 16 new Ph.D. programs at its Edinburg campus. The plan envisioned an interdisciplinary research role for UTRGV-Edinburg in the areas of science, arts and engineering. Proposed capital projects included 175,000 square feet of new multidisciplinary academic space (2027, 2032) and a new 210,000 square foot interdisciplinary research building (2032).



SOURCE: UTRGV Master Plan (2017)

[*Click to Enlarge Map](#)

Interdisciplinary Research Focus in Edinburg and Brownsville Amid Varied Specializations



SOURCE: UTRGV Master Plan (2017)

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The presence of UTRGV's Performing Arts Complex, Edinburg's Municipal Auditorium, the new ACE facility, Promenade Park Amphitheater and the Museum of South Texas History in close proximity presents an opportunity to establish a branded cultural district comprising the assets of both the City and UTRGV.

Opportunities and Potentials

Downtown Redevelopment

Having a dual-anchor downtown, with both the seat of county government and a major university in close proximity, has significant advantages – namely, permanent (if sometimes “cloistered”) activity-generators and stable tenancy. However, because of the high number of tax-exempt properties, it also can result in a comparatively smaller downtown tax base to pay for needed public improvements.

A key goal for Downtown Edinburg should be to expand and deepen its sphere of activity into more of an 18-hour-a-day, year-round environment. This can only be done by attracting more private investment (including residential development), creating stronger links between the university and the core Downtown (as well as Edinburg’s nascent medical district), and through effective programming and branding.

Downtown also has to be proactively managed and advocated for by a core group of dedicated individuals consisting of local business and property owners and professional staff. It also needs to be supported with special geographically-proscribed incentives geared toward smaller infill and rehabilitation projects, residential

developments, small business and privately-financed projects that reward catalytic impacts over pure job creation.

A special opportunity exists to create more interplay and cross-movements between the UTRGV campus and the core Downtown area. The proposed cultural district, along with several of the capital projects suggested in the 2010 Downtown Master Plan, underscore this opportunity. Other ways to “seed” this interplay include spinning off ancillary university functions or facilities (e.g., bookstore, event centers, residences, etc.) into the nearby Downtown and connecting the two areas with frequent, free transit and bike and pedestrian amenities. Key ingredients for effective Downtown revitalization include a permanent base of residents within Downtown, a small number of unique businesses such as restaurants, quality transit and bike-ped facilities, and a handful of well-designed public spaces. All of these ingredients are interdependent. It is difficult for any one of them to be successful without the others.



Recommendations:



Follow through on select civic design elements described in the 2010 Downtown Master Plan.

Work with the Downtown District Steering Committee to establish a member organizational network and management capacity for Downtown.

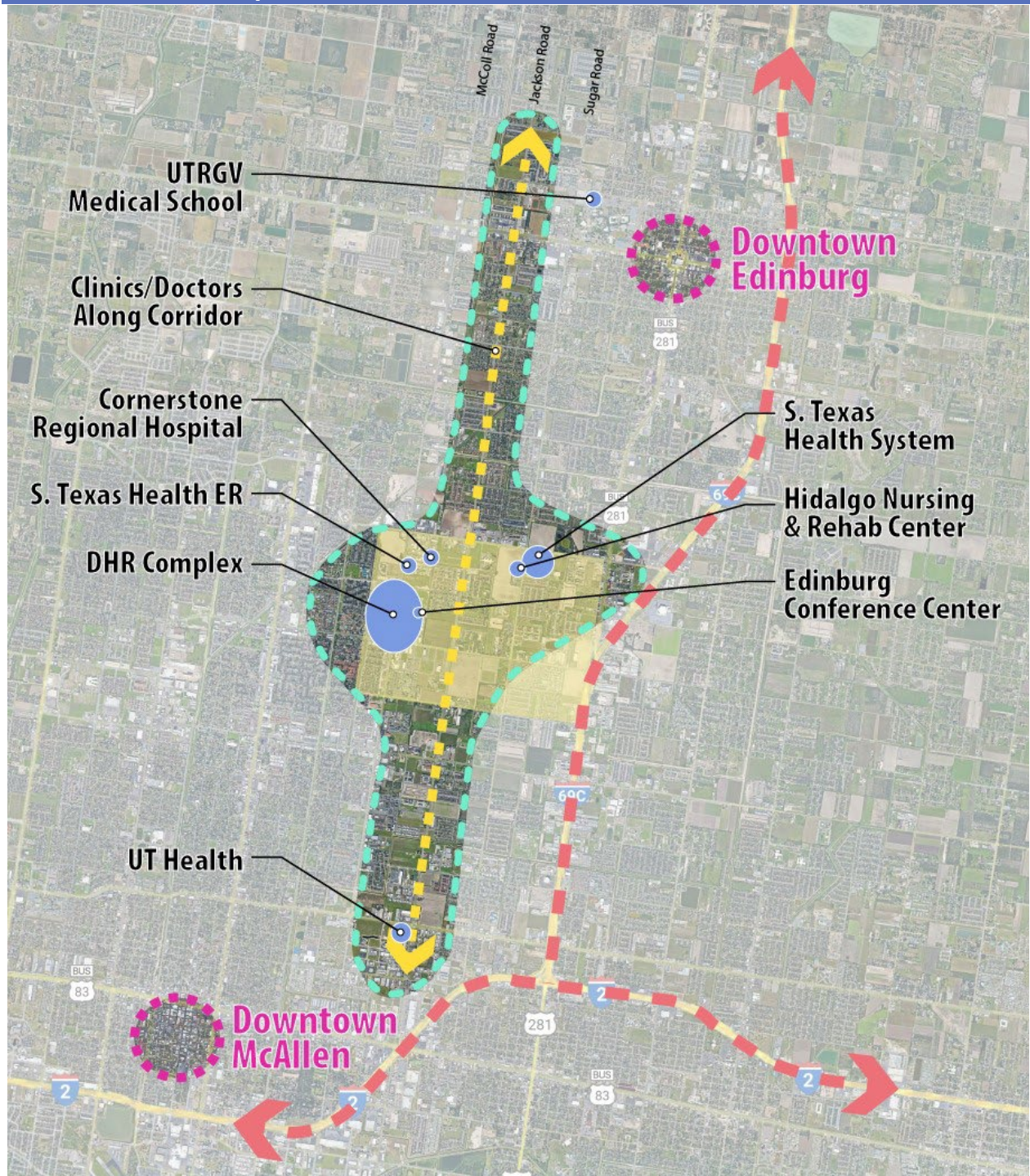
Tri-Cities Innovation Corridor

Although UTRGV's research and commercialization assets are intentionally dispersed throughout the region – and tailored to the individual academic specialties of each satellite facility – the most successful innovation environments concentrate the greatest activity and assets (educational, research and corporate) in a closely-knit area. This concentration allows for the highest number of serendipitous encounters that can potentially lead to breakthrough ideas and partnerships. It also helps reduce the inherent frictions caused by physical distance and makes it easier to construct an innovation support system (or “ecosystem”) around.

Geographically, Edinburg and McAllen are the central hubs in UTRGV's distributed, decentralized academic model.

Between them, these two cities also have one of the highest concentrations of medical institutions, corporations and government facilities in the region. Hidalgo County is also the largest and most urbanized county in the seven-county “Rio-South Valley” region. If there was an obvious location for a UTRGV-“flagged” research park or innovation district – a place that could aggregate and “scale” all of the commercialization potential of the entire region – it would be in the Edinburg-McAllen-Pharr area. The Jackson Road corridor, in particular, connects many of the institutional and medical assets in both Edinburg and McAllen and would be a prime location for such a district.

Conceptual Illustration of Tri-Cities Innovation Corridor



SOURCE: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Creating such an innovation zone would benefit from commitments by UTRGV, area corporations and area workforce development entities to expand or relocate some of their programming into the district, and by UTRGV allowing use of its logo in district branding. An on-site bus rapid transit (BRT) connection to other UTRGV facilities within the region (as recommended in UTRGV's 2017 Master Plan) would help tie the district to satellite facilities along the I-2 corridor. The district would also need special land use and design controls to physically distinguish it from its surroundings.

Potential state and federal funding sources for both planning and implementation include the U.S. Economic Development Administration's Economic Adjustment Assistance program, federal Inflation Reduction Act grants (infrastructure), private Opportunity Zone and federal New Markets Tax Credits investments, and the Texas Enterprise Fund.

Recommendations:



Brand a medical-focused innovation district through special streetscape, signage, transit and green amenities.

Create a new mixed-use "medical campus" zoning designation that supports new hotel and mixed-use development and limits auto-oriented commercial uses.

Midtown Eco-Industrial Park

Edinburg's landfill area presents an opportunity to develop a captive energy-fueled industrial park that uses landfill-generated methane gas to power adjacent industrial development. This would potentially involve scaling-up the current on-site methane capture system and containing much of the harvested energy in the immediately surrounding area. This could be done potentially in conjunction with other green technologies such as solar and wind power and new battery storage systems. The capped portions of the landfill could potentially be used for solar collection or industrial-scaled greenhouses. This

opportunity could be enhanced with a renewed effort to attract more value-added agriculture into the area, with agriculture waste products serving as an additional energy feedstock.

This type of "eco-industrial" development could offer cheaper and more reliable power service than a typical industrial park in Texas and would help burnish Edinburg's "future forward" profile.

Regional Entertainment Hub

Vackar Stadium, plus UTRGV's elevation to Division 1 status, together with Bert Odgen Arena, the AMC IMAX Theater and nearby hotels and restaurants, positions Edinburg as a regional center for entertainment and recreation. This status could be reinforced with co-sited

facilities and events, including a youth sports complex, expanded hospitality options and stronger physical ties (i.e., streetscape, bike-ped facilities, transit) to Downtown and the UTRGV campus.



This plan section focuses on current, near-term and longer-range transportation needs and priorities in and around Edinburg. Some of these priorities are outward focused, involving regional and state-level entities and necessary coordination, recognizing the role of the City among multiple transportation partners in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Various other priorities are inward focused, such as adding needed connections and capacity within the local road network plus ongoing

street maintenance and rehabilitation, sidewalk extensions and repairs, and other mobility and safety enhancements in particular areas of the city.

As in many communities, top transportation-related issues facing the area include improving traffic flow, safety and connectivity while adding more ways to move around the community on foot and by bike. Continued enhancement of the area mobility system will be necessary to accommodate the increased travel demand resulting from population growth and development, along with goods movement and additional visitor traffic. As the transportation system continues to evolve, it should address not only traffic and safety needs but also reflect the surrounding land use and character. Finally, public transportation services will continue to be a priority, especially for those without a personal vehicle or with special transportation needs, especially to reach jobs, education sites and essential services.



Why This Comprehensive Plan Section is Important for Edinburg



Reinforces the importance of minimizing traffic congestion while also ensuring safe roadway conditions as a key quality of life component for Edinburg residents.



Highlights the role of street design in establishing and reinforcing the desired character of an area, whether in suburban residential neighborhoods or in Downtown Edinburg and vicinity, where walkability and safe biking are desired as much, or more, than accommodation of the automobile in a more Urban character setting.



Emphasizes the fundamental priority placed on neighborhood integrity, which is influenced by traffic conditions on residential streets and the safety of kids and adults when walking and biking in the community.



Provides the public policy basis for City regulations and standards related to streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, parking and other mobility-related infrastructure and physical improvements.



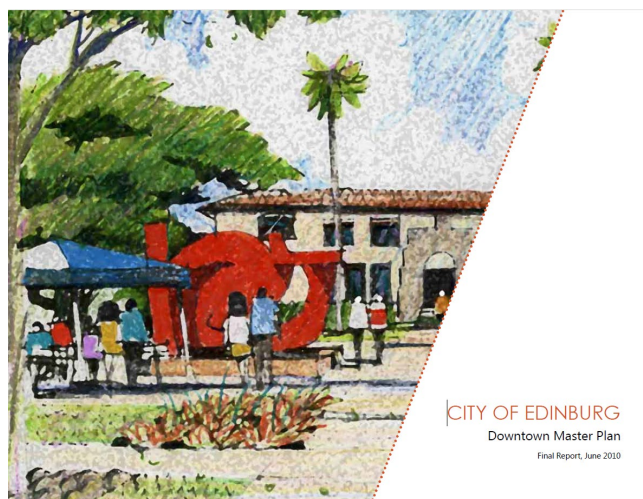
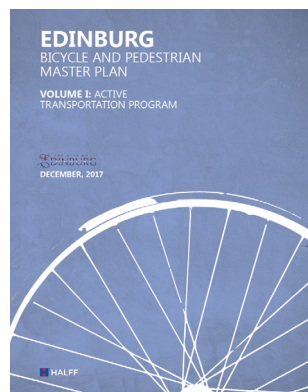
Recognizes that multiple state and regional agencies plan for and guide transportation upgrades and services in the area, enabling the City to focus on local issues and needs along with regional coordination.



Supports Edinburg's linking of roadway and corridor design to economic development and aesthetic objectives.

Legacy of Past Planning

EDINBURG 2040 BUILDING FOR TOMORROW'S FUTURE, TODAY!



This new Comprehensive Plan builds on previous plans and studies completed by the City of Edinburg and other partners, including these most relevant to the Transportation topic:

- Edinburg 2040 Committees: Strategies and Objectives 2022-2023
- Edinburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, 2017
- Edinburg Downtown Parking Garage Needs Assessment and Economic Analysis Report, 2023
- Edinburg Downtown Master Plan, 2010
- Airport Layout Plan for South Texas International Airport, 2019
- UTRGV Campus Master Plan
- RGV Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), 2020
- RGV MPO Active Transportation Plan, 2020
- RGV MPO Transit Development Plan, 2020
- RGV MPO Resilience and Sustainability Analysis (as part of 2045 MTP), 2023
- RGV MPO Equity Analysis (as part of 2045 MTP), 2020
- RGV MPO Freight Needs Assessment (as part of 2045 MTP), 2020
- Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, 2016 (and a similar plan specifically for Hidalgo County, initiated in 2023)
- Edinburg Gateway Plan: An Agenda for 2025 (Comprehensive Plan), 2005

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October 2024 DRAFT

Accomplishments

Progress and achievements resulting from past planning and implementation efforts related to Transportation include:



Enhanced biking and walking connectivity:

- Cano Trail
- Ebony Hills Golf Course bridges
- Jackson Hike & Bike Trail (ongoing)

Ongoing roadway improvements, some with grant funding, including projects involving:

- Adding turn lanes at intersections (e.g., Freddy Gonzalez Drive)
- New and upgraded traffic signals
- Paving and/or reworking of existing streets (e.g., Freddy Gonzalez, Hobbs, Knight, Sprague, etc.)
- Planned roundabout design for improved traffic flow around County Courthouse block
- Reconstructing and/or widening roads (e.g., 10th Street, Alberta Road)
- Right-of-way acquisition for future needs (e.g., Jackson Road)



Ongoing regional thoroughfare planning by RGV MPO.



Portion of U.S. Highway 281 in area, from Interstate 2 through Pharr to the vicinity of Edinburg's South Texas International Airport, designated as Interstate 69C.

Intersection improvements, including for pedestrian safety (e.g., Freddy Gonzalez Drive at Closner Boulevard/Business Highway 281).



Sidewalk crew established for minor repairs.



Medians added to limit traffic conflict points along University Drive west of the County Courthouse.



New transit terminal for Valley Metro on University Drive, between City Hall and UTRGV, built through a partnership between the City, Edinburg Economic Development Council (EEDC, which donated the 1.6-acre site) and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, and with a \$4.3 million federal grant.

Ongoing upgrades to South Texas International Airport.



Continued grant funding success for local transportation improvements.



Street sweeping program established.

Capital Projects Dashboard on City website (at the time of this Comprehensive Plan, located at: <https://coe-capital-projects-hub-cityofedinburg.hub.arcgis.com/>).



Key Planning Issues and Considerations

Through the Edinburg Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, numerous real and perceived community issues and needs were identified through leadership and public engagement activities, as well as through the work of the plan consultants and their interactions with community leaders of the Edinburg 2040 process and with City staff.

Key issues and considerations that led to the goals and action items in this Transportation section include (along with specific points and suggestions from leadership and community input):



Prioritizing the enhancement of mobility and access across the community by improving levels of service along major roadways and at busy intersections, addressing gaps in connectivity, expanding public transportation options and ensuring accessibility for all residents.



Addressing the broader issues of traffic safety and the implications of growth, with a focus on mitigating congestion and enhancing the overall safety and flow of vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians as traffic volumes increase on Edinburg's major roadways.

[FY22-23 funded items to add/upgrade crosswalks, improve street lighting and street name signage, update street markings, install shared street signage as part of a Complete Street approach, add data-collecting speed signs, and implement traffic calming measures in neighborhoods based on Edinburg 2040 priorities.]



Recognizing the ongoing challenges of traffic circulation, turning movements and bike/pedestrian street crossing at certain key locations due to existing street layouts and design with limited or no areas of pedestrian refuge, notably at areas around the Hidalgo County Courthouse and along University Drive.



Acknowledging the importance of basic (e.g., potholes) and ongoing street maintenance (e.g., periodic resurfacing and repair) to ensure safe roadway conditions while also protecting the longer-term integrity of the area transportation network – and the value of past public investments toward it.



Recognizing the need to implement an advanced traffic control system to manage more effectively the increasing demands being placed on the area's transportation infrastructure.



Considering the potential introduction of a repavement fee for residents, similar to the water fee model used in nearby jurisdictions, as a means to fund essential roadway maintenance and improvements.



Anticipating and preparing for the implications of increasing vehicle electrification, including the growing demand for car recharging infrastructure, and ensuring that the City's planning and development processes are aligned with this ongoing shift towards more sustainable transportation solutions.



Maximizing the potential of the Edinburg South Texas International Airport by expanding its infrastructure and capabilities, to ensure it remains a vital hub for regional connectivity and economic growth.

[FY22-23 funded item to promote private and international flights at the airport based on Edinburg 2040 priorities.]



Exploring and evaluating the potential use and "activation" of alleys within the Downtown area, considering how these spaces can be more effectively integrated into the urban fabric to enhance accessibility, utility and overall vibrancy Downtown.



Continuing to cultivate and strengthen partnerships with Hidalgo County and other regional and state mobility partners, leveraging available funds to support projects that provide mutual benefits and address shared community objectives.



Undertaking a comprehensive Downtown parking study to assess the extent and nature of parking demand and identify strategic locations for surface lots or parking structures, along with alternative measures for better managing available parking supply and improving access to key destinations to support Downtown revitalization. [Some level of parking analysis was done through a 2023 study for the Downtown parking garage initiative.]

Designing for a “Complete” Street

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) defines a “Complete Street” as one that “is safe, and feels safe, for all users.” Based on this principle, FHWA “is focused on supporting transportation agencies to plan, develop and operate equitable streets and networks that prioritize safety, comfort, and connectivity to destinations for all people who use the street network.” FHWA encourages transportation agencies to:

- Make Complete Streets the Default Approach, such that funding and designing Complete Streets is the easiest option.
- Plan and Analyze Complete Streets, such that safety for all road users is integrated into planning and analysis.
- Implement Complete Street Improvements, such that streets are designed, constructed, operated and maintained to be safe for all road users.



SOURCE: Kendig Keast Collaborative.

Framework for Action

This Framework for Action portion of the Transportation section builds off of the six Comprehensive Plan themes confirmed with City officials during the transition from the Edinburg Today to the Future Edinburg phase of Comprehensive Plan development — especially Planning Themes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 for this Transportation section. The plan goals and action strategies that follow are aimed at “connecting the dots” between this set of community improvement fundamentals for Edinburg that involve:

Feeling of Safety



In the community survey conducted for the Edinburg 2040 process, participants were asked to rate how safe they feel in certain situations within the city. The situation that was rated unsafe by the most survey respondents (38%) was “Traveling by bicycle in Edinburg” (25% feel safe doing so, and 37% were neutral).



Planning Theme 1

Leverage City infrastructure, especially for:

- ★ Growth management
- ★ Economic development



Planning Theme 2

Embrace Edinburg’s university town advantage, especially in terms of:

- ★ Community spirit
- ★ Research commercialization
- ★ UTRGV community outreach and services
- ★ Graduate retention



Planning Theme 3

Go all in on asset preservation and maintenance, especially involving:

- ★ Infrastructure life-cycle tracking
- ★ Neighborhood integrity
- ★ Downtown revitalization (especially east toward I-69C)
- ★ Heritage sites and buildings
- ★ Parks, trails and recreation facilities



Planning Theme 4

Uplift people (as a core principle of Edinburg 2040), especially involving:

- ★ Economic security
- ★ Health and wellness
- ★ Safety
- ★ Equity
- ★ La buena vida (the good life)!



Planning Theme 5

Pursue opportunity in scarcity and abundance, especially involving:

- ★ Methods to extend water supply – a relatively scarce resource for Edinburg and the Lower Rio Grande Valley
- ★ Productive re-use of the regional waste stream – a relatively abundant resource for Edinburg since it hosts a major regional landfill for solid waste disposal
- ★ Edinburg being a leader in mitigating the effects of a changing climate



Planning Theme 6

Promote regionalism, especially in the areas of:

- ★ Economy
- ★ Mobility
- ★ Water
- ★ Drainage
- ★ Education
- ★ Healthcare
- ★ Tourism
- ★ Advocacy for the interests and priorities of Lower Rio Grande Valley communities and their residents and businesses

Goals for Transportation



A Goal is ...

a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).

The actions in this Transportation section involve tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the following goals:



Goal 1

A mobility system that provides connectivity and options for getting to destinations in and around the city, including to employment centers, shopping and services, schools and parks, and locations for workforce training – and especially for swift emergency response.



Goal 1: Associated Plan Themes

Leverage City Infrastructure



Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People



Promote Regionalism





Goal 2

A transportation system that accommodates all modes of travel including vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, “micro-mobility” options and public transit.



Goal 2: Associated Plan Themes

Leverage City Infrastructure



Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People

1st



Goal 3

A continued focus on providing more – and safer – opportunities for residents and visitors to walk and bike within the city, with a focus on linking key destinations.



Goal 3: Associated Plan Themes

Leverage City Infrastructure



Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People

1st





Goal 4

A systematic approach to street maintenance, and advance planning for periodic rehabilitation and reconstruction of older roadways, using such opportunities to enhance bike/ped circulation and to add design elements that promote Edinburg's image and aesthetics.



Goal 4: Associated Plan Themes

Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People

1st



Goal 5

An enhanced mobility system that supports local economic development and tax base growth through the City's own investments plus improvements achieved through partnerships and advocacy at the regional and state levels.



Goal 5: Associated Plan Themes

Leverage City Infrastructure



Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People

1st



Promote Regionalism



Actions for Transportation

The actions below are categorized into the types of plan implementation actions listed throughout this plan:



Capital Investments



Programs and Initiatives



Regulations and Standards



Partnerships and Coordination



More Targeted Planning / Study

Additionally, items with an asterisk (*) in the table below are adapted from the results of the Edinburg 2040 strategic planning process, especially from the 2040 committees focused on Transportation Mobility / Connectivity / Drainage, Neighborhoods / Parks / Green Spaces / Beautification, Public Safety, and Economic Development / Innovation / Entrepreneurship / Workforce.

Plan Actions Involve ...

seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.

Action Leaders

With the support and direction of City leaders and management, action leaders and other key players for most initiatives involving Transportation will include:

- City of Edinburg departments, especially Engineering, Public Works, Planning and Zoning, Aviation, Parks and Recreation, Police and Grants Administration
- Edinburg Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) and its Board of Directors
- City boards and commissions, especially:
 - Airport Advisory Board of South Texas International Airport
 - Community Development Council
 - Downtown District Steering Committee
 - Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors
 - Edinburg 2040 committees, especially Transportation / Mobility / Connectivity / Drainage, Neighborhoods / Parks / Green Spaces / Beautification, Public Safety, and Economic Development / Innovation / Entrepreneurship / Workforce
 - Environment Advisory Board
 - Planning and Zoning Commission
 - Public Safety Board
- Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Valley Metro

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
<i>Capital Investments</i>			
1	Continue to implement short- to mid-term transportation projects identified in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). In the interim, signal upgrades at intersections may also provide some congestion relief, for a relatively minimal cost, including simple signal timing adjustments. In various locations this will require pro-active coordination and potential cost-sharing with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) depending on which entity has jurisdiction over the signals.	1, 2, 4, 5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ TxDOT
2	Continue to apply a Transportation System Management (TSM) approach, which emphasizes efficient use of existing roadway capacity, especially when added capacity projects are unlikely to happen in the near future due to physical or fiscal constraints (e.g., improvements and turning movement enhancements focused at congested intersections, access management measures along roadways, improved roadway marking/signage/ lighting, "pull-outs" at busy transit stops to remove stopped buses from travel lanes, traffic signal upgrades and use of "Intelligent Transportation System" (ITS) technologies, etc.).	1, 2, 4, 5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT ➤ Valley Metro
	Related Edinburg 2040 action items: Prioritize improvements at intersections to improve mobility.* Road and intersection improvements (including traffic signal synchronization, sensors and other Intelligent Transportation System measures) to enhance traffic flow and avoid congestion so that public safety response times are not impeded.*		
3	Given increasing traffic volumes on local roadways with Edinburg's growth, plan for installation of traffic preemption devices at key intersections in the city. This will help reduce emergency response times and improve traffic safety for both first responders and the public at such times.	1, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Fire and Police ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT
4	Identify corridors that could be candidates for "road diet" treatments (street retrofits that reallocate space within the available street right-of-way to balance the movement and speed of motorized vehicles relative to the safe circulation of pedestrians, cyclists and disabled individuals), which would incorporate "Complete Street" design principles and promote Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. Monitor transportation funding opportunities intended to support such projects.	2, 3, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
5	Implement projects identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, working across City departments and with other agencies and partners to capitalize on implementing such improvements while maintenance or upgrades of other City facilities are also in planning and design. For example, if utilities are being upgraded could it be an opportunity to add sidewalks or improve a street crossing?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	► City Engineering ► City Public Works ► City Grants Administration ► ECISD, other districts and schools ► RGV MPO ► TxDOT ► UTRGV
6	Secure grant funding to extend the runway at South Texas International Airport.*	5	► City Aviation ► City Grants Administration ► RGV MPO ► TxDOT
7	Install upgraded flashing school zone signs.*	4	► City Engineering ► City Grants Administration ► ECISD, other districts and schools ► TxDOT
8	Illuminate the street signs over major intersections for better visibility for drivers and to expedite public safety response.*	4	► City Engineering ► City Public Works ► City Grants Administration ► Hidalgo County ► TxDOT
9	Add/upgrade crosswalks, improve street lighting and street name signage, update street markings, install shared street signage as part of a Complete Street approach, and add “smart” data-collecting speed signs.*	2, 3, 4	► City Engineering ► City Public Works ► City Planning & Zoning ► City Grants Administration ► TxDOT
10	Follow a “dig once” policy that aims to synchronize utility work with road construction projects to reduce the cost burden of digging up streets multiple times. Also, where and when feasible, relocate overhead utilities underground for the aesthetic benefit, particularly at high-profile community gateways.	4	► City Engineering ► City Public Works ► Area utility providers
<i>Programs and Initiatives</i>			

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
11	Follow an asset management planning and life-cycle strategy for tracking the condition and anticipating the timing of needed maintenance, rehabilitation or ultimately replacement of all components of public infrastructure. Typical steps include: (1) collecting data to inventory, spatially locate (using GPS) and map (using GIS) all existing improvements; (2) analyzing the collected data and assigning a condition rating to each asset; (3) using the condition ratings to determine the remaining usable life of each asset; and (4) identifying a repair and/or replacement approach for each asset to ensure that its maximum usable life is realized. Such efforts serve to reaffirm that it is in a municipality's best interest to invest further in existing infrastructure before it reaches a poor condition. A more strategic, life-cycle approach to infrastructure maintenance will also enable the City to reap the benefits from lengthening the useful life of physical assets and reducing their total cost to the City over time. Related Edinburg 2040 action item: Develop strategic relationships at UTRGV in order to develop partnerships to perform studies, models, simulations by graduate students for infrastructure function and performance modeling.*	4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ UTRGV
12	Maintain an ongoing sidewalk improvement program to repair, replace or install new sidewalks, crosswalks and curb cuts in high pedestrian use areas (e.g., around school campuses, near public buildings and spaces, in park vicinities, etc.) and in other areas with the potential for greater pedestrian activity if better and more safely accommodated. Walkability within and to the Downtown area should be prioritized.	1, 2, 3, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
13	In keeping with the nationwide “Vision Zero” movement, which aims to eliminate preventable injuries and fatalities suffered by motorists, pedestrians and cyclists, pursue local actions such as: • Committing to capital projects that expand and enhance bicycle and pedestrian circulation and safety, especially involving installation of protected bicycle/pedestrian lanes and facilities. • Evaluating whether speeds are a contributor to bicycle/pedestrian accidents and considering potential speed limit reductions in locations of concern, along with targeted traffic calming measures in both new development and existing developed areas. • Focusing on large vehicle safety to avoid conflicts between large vehicle traffic and smaller, less protected road users. • Providing bicycling education and safety courses. • Co-hosting with area schools a National Walk and Bike to School Day event to promote safe biking/walking to and from school.	1, 2, 3, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ City Communications & Media ➤ ECISD, other districts and schools ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT
14	Develop an ADA Transition Plan, to involve: • Engaging with the disabled public on accessibility challenges and issues in Edinburg. • Identifying existing facilities, services and programs. • Identifying and cataloging non-ADA compliant public rights-of-way. • Identifying critical gaps in sidewalk coverage. • Inventorying existing sidewalks and establishing a condition rating index. • Developing a transition plan and priority schedule for accessibility improvements.	1, 2, 3, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ City Communications & Media ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT
15	Utilize energy-efficient and sustainability technology in City-related projects.*	4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ UTRGV
16	Implement traffic calming measures in neighborhoods (in response to neighborhood-level requests).*	2, 3, 4	

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
17	Develop private and international flights at South Texas International Airport.*	5	► City Aviation ► EEDC ► RGV MPO ► TxDOT ► UTRGV
18	In conjunction with state and regional partners, emphasize resiliency in transportation network planning, including both redundancy in systems (e.g., multiple routes for reaching major community facilities and key destinations, two or more points of subdivision ingress/egress, etc.) and protection from potential hazards and threats.	1, 5	► City Engineering ► City Planning & Zoning ► Hidalgo County ► RGV MPO ► TxDOT
<i>Partnerships and Coordination</i>			
19	Along with Hidalgo County representatives, actively participate in regional transportation planning efforts and funding allocation processes through the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council and with the Texas Department of Transportation to advocate for Edinburg area needs and secure funding to advance priority projects.	5	► Mayor and City Council ► City Manager's office ► City Grants Administration ► City Engineering ► City Planning & Zoning
20	Prioritize the execution of the UTRGV Campus Master Plan for off-site parking structures to implement mass transit.*	2, 5	► City Engineering ► City Planning & Zoning ► UTRGV ► Valley Metro
21	Strengthen partnerships between the Edinburg Police Department and area school districts and other schools regarding planning for traffic flow and drop-off/pick-up queueing during peak periods, and for overall congestion management and safety around school campuses. This is especially important at the start of school years and when new schools open. Also coordinate on clear public communications regarding such traffic management plans and to address Frequently Asked Questions in advance.	3, 4	► City Police Department ► City Engineering ► City Public Works ► City Communications & Media ► ECISD, other districts and schools
22	Identify hazard areas for the school district including roadside swales.* Identify safety concerns at rural, narrow bridge crossings for ECISD.*	3, 4	► City Engineering ► City Public Works ► ECISD, other districts and schools ► Hidalgo County
<i>More Targeted Planning / Study</i>			

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
23	Prepare a Transportation Master Plan for Edinburg that, based on localized street network modeling and analysis and evaluation of all travel modes, establishes overall principles for action and sets the stage for capital improvements planning and pursuit of external funding and grants. Such a Master Plan can also support a more data-driven thoroughfare planning process.	1, 2, 3, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT ➤ Valley Metro
24	Develop a new Thoroughfare Plan to replace the 2005 Comprehensive Plan version, then update the Plan periodically.* Also use the Thoroughfare Plan as a tool to evaluate development and categorize roadways.*	1, 2, 5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT
25	Along with periodic traffic counts, continue to conduct traffic studies at targeted locations to better understand causes of congestion and evaluate potential operational or lower-scale improvements that could improve traffic flow and safety short of roadway widenings or other significant and costly projects (e.g., access management measures, lane width adjustments and/or additional turning lanes at intersections, traffic signal adjustments or upgrades, etc.).	1, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT
26	Investigate locations with the highest frequency of incidents involving pedestrians and cyclists to assess the physical and operational characteristics, along with input from bike/ped advocates and roadway users to confirm higher-risk roadways and intersections. Also assess whether such high-frequency locations can be improved with low-cost enhancements such as curb bulb-outs, marked crosswalks, mid-road/median “refuge” areas, enhanced signage and/or better lighting.	2, 3, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT
27	Explore whether a bike share program would be feasible – and acceptable – in and around Edinburg’s Downtown area, UTRGV campus area or other conducive locations, including consideration of: • Projected costs of operations, maintenance and improving infrastructure for bike share stations. • Potential initial and sustainable funding sources. • Potential public or private partners to help start, maintain and sponsor a bike share program, including a role for local businesses and vendors that already provide bike rentals and maintenance.	1, 2, 3	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ RGV BCycle ➤ Area bicycle organizations, advocates (e.g., RGV Cycling) ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
28	Identify the locations of Edinburg’s key employment centers and workforce training opportunities. Then: • Ensure transit routes and stops align with these critical locations. • Apply for Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants to help build infrastructure to improve access to employment opportunities. • Identify gaps in sidewalk coverage to get to employment opportunities from transit stops. • Evaluate regional workforce transit opportunities such as vanpooling and carpooling.	1, 2, 3, 4	➤ EEDC ➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ Major employers and business community ➤ UTRGV ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ RGV MPO ➤ Valley Metro ➤ Texas Workforce Solutions
29	Identify area school campuses with significant trip generation. Then: • Determine the mode share of students, faculty and staff (school bus, parent drop-off, walk, ride bike, personal vehicle, carpool, rideshare, public transit, etc.). • Identify gaps in sidewalk coverage within the watershed of individual schools and prioritize these locations for sidewalk construction. • Apply for Safe Routes to School grant opportunities to help build infrastructure.	1, 2, 3, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ ECISD, other districts and schools ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT
30	Periodically re-assess whether transit routes, stops and on-demand ride services are effectively meeting the mobility needs of seniors, persons with disabilities and areas with subsidized housing. Also confirm good sidewalk coverage between such housing locations and essential needs such as grocery stores, pharmacies and parks, trails and recreational facilities.	1, 2, 3, 4	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ Edinburg Housing Authority ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ RGV MPO ➤ Valley Metro

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
31	Continue to monitor evolving state statutes that, in recent years, allowed golf carts, all-terrain vehicles and other motorized vehicle types on local roadways as long as they are licensed. Monitor through the Texas Municipal League and other local government forums the strategies and best practices implemented in other Texas cities in response to this statutory change, along with standards and approaches in coastal and western states that have previously allowed a wider range of vehicle types on roadways.	1, 2	➤ City Attorney ➤ City Engineering ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Police ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT ➤ Homeowner Associations
32	Continue to plan for the local implications of transportation technology advancements such as more widespread use of electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles, electric bikes and scooters, ride-sharing services and drones (e.g., for package deliveries, etc.).	1, 2, 3	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Police



Ongoing and Potential Partners Related to Transportation

Along with the Action Leaders and Key Partners called out in the table above, the following agencies and entities are also established or potential partners for helping Edinburg achieve its goals for Transportation:

- Cities of McAllen, Pharr, San Juan, Mission and other nearby cities
- Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District (ECISD) and other area districts
- Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
- Real estate/development community
- Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Rio Grande Valley Partnership
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
- UTRGV
- Valley Metro

Thoroughfare Planning

Among the Actions for Transportation in the table above, the first item under More Targeted Planning / Study – which originated in the Edinburg 2040 process – calls for the City to “Develop a new Thoroughfare Plan to replace the 2005 Comprehensive Plan version, then update the Plan periodically.”

A thoroughfare plan is a city's long-term road network plan. It is designed to address current and anticipate future travel needs in and around the community. Similar to the Future Land Use and Character map, which is intended to guide land use and development patterns over the next several decades, the thoroughfare plan map represents a long-term vision for the community's surface transportation system.

An essential purpose of a thoroughfare plan is to preserve the rights-of-way needed for future transportation corridors so that, if and when land development occurs, adequate and continuous corridors for appropriately sized and designed transportation facilities will be available. On some such plans, various future proposed streets may not be needed or fully constructed for some years. Various streets in developed areas of Edinburg are already in place, although some are still to be upgraded to their ultimate intended width and number of travel lanes to accommodate area traffic growth (as with 10th Street, Alberta Road and Jackson Road, examples that are called out under Accomplishments earlier in this plan section).

Thoroughfare Planning Considerations

Along with Edinburg's projected growth and land development activity, a new thoroughfare plan map should reflect the related transportation planning of other entities (e.g., adjacent cities such as McAllen and Pharr; Hidalgo County; Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); and the Texas Department of Transportation. Specific technical considerations for thoroughfare planning include:

Network and Alignment Factors

- Continuity (arterials) versus discontinuity (collectors) through an adequate array of north-south and east-west arterials that extend across and beyond the city.
- Connectivity of the network and origins/destinations, within the local street network and to the regional highway system.
- Spacing and density of the network.
- Intersection location and spacing of major roadways for effective signalization of key intersections.
- Alternative travel and emergency response routes.
- Multiple routes and travel options to avoid traffic overload on certain roadways.
- Crossings (water, railroads, freeways, etc.).
- Grade separation needs at key locations to maintain traffic flow and enhance safety.
- Multi-modal planning (pedestrian, bicycle, transit, freight, etc.).

Constraints

- Physical (floodplains, topography, water features, utility/pipeline corridors, etc.).
- Parcel pattern.
- Existing development.
- Environmental features/assets (e.g., wetlands, areas with valued mature trees or other vegetation, etc.).
- Parkland and preserved open space.
- Jurisdictions (territorial, roadways, water features, etc.).
- Right-of-way potential (adequate width for eventual construction of a full roadway cross section to standard).
- Existing driveways and fronting development (access management needs).
- Fiscal (network cost implications, maintenance, cost of bridges and grade separations, etc.).

Land Use-Transportation Coordination

- Inducement of desired/undesired land use (consistency with future land use plan and zoning).
- Designing roadways in context with their surroundings to maintain desired community character and to minimize effects on valued natural resources.
- Consistency with utility master planning and growth management strategy.
- Potential traffic volumes.
- Location of major traffic generators.□ Location of “sensitive” land uses (e.g., residential, schools, parks, etc.).
- Emergency access (network connectivity).

New Challenge to Thoroughfare Plan Implementation and Administration

As part of ongoing efforts by State of Texas elected leaders to limit municipal authorities, the Texas Legislature in 2023 amended Texas Local Government Code Section 212.010 (within Chapter 212, Municipal Regulation of Subdivisions and Property Development) to end the long-held ability of Texas cities to require, as a condition of subdivision plat approval, the dedication of land within the subdivision for a future street or alley that is:

- Not intended by the owner of the tract (even if on the City's adopted Thoroughfare Plan); and
- Not included, funded, and approved in:
 - A capital improvement plan adopted by the municipality; or
 - A similar plan adopted by a county in which the municipality is located or the state.

This legislative action undercut a fundamental purpose of thoroughfare planning as stated above – to help preserve rights-of-way needed for future connectivity of the area roadway network, which is essential for long-term traffic circulation, and for efficient access to properties in residential plus commercial and industrial areas. Network connectivity and smooth access are also crucial for police, fire and emergency medical response; during and after damaging weather events; and for circulation of school buses, solid waste vehicles, transit vehicles, mail and other delivery vehicles, and other public and private service functions.

The very essence of thoroughfare planning is to preserve and acquire the necessary segments of future planned roadway corridors as individual land development projects occur. Often, such right-of-way set-asides happen well before the broader area has developed to the point to justify the roadway's full construction, when enough new traffic volume has built up in the area. Without this thoroughfare plan implementation method, the City will need to rely on interactions with like-minded property owners and developers who see the value in ultimate planned roadway connections to and within their developments. The specifics of priority right-of-way preservation (including potential dedication or public acquisition) and of near-term or later roadway construction responsibilities can also be negotiated and committed to through public/private development agreements.



RECREATION & AMENITIES

October 2024 Draft



While all aspects of this Comprehensive Plan ultimately shape the livability of Edinburg, this Recreation and Amenities section especially reinforces the quality of life its residents enjoy, along with the events and amenities that draw visitors to the city. At the time of this plan, City leaders and residents were already thinking in general about all the elements that will make Edinburg



a more complete community as it grows, from more shopping and restaurant options to cultural and entertainment offerings, along with robust recreation opportunities.

With Edinburg undergoing a rate of growth and transition of land unprecedented in its history, it is more important than ever to maintain and enhance existing parks and to increase the quantity and quality of developed recreational acreage. This will benefit not only current residents but also those who will make Edinburg their home in the decades ahead.

Why This Comprehensive Plan Section is Important for Edinburg



Emphasizes that parks, open space and recreation facilities are an essential part of a healthy and sustainable community, offering relaxation and exercise outside of the home and work and beyond school activities.



Underscores that much like streets, utilities, and police and fire protection, parks are another component of a municipality's core services – and often among the public services most valued by residents and also enjoyed by visitors.



Highlights that along with its unique heritage and appreciation for arts and culture, Edinburg also offers close proximity to the Texas coast and beaches, and access to all the nearby leisure amenities that the Lower Rio Grande Valley has to offer.

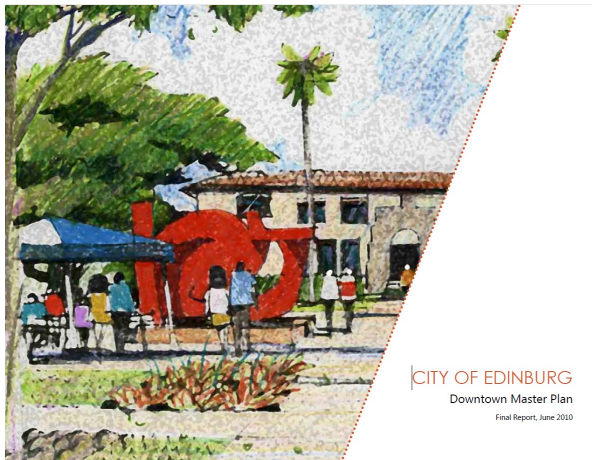
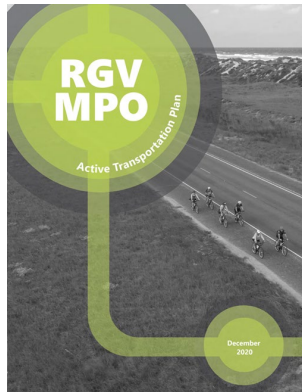
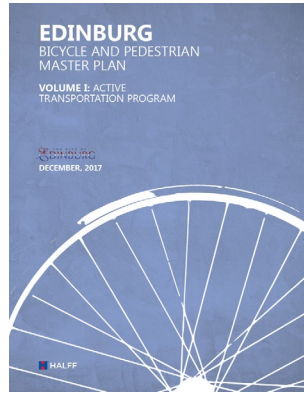


Reinforces that the quality of land, water and air resources is also essential to the character and livability of a community, especially one like Edinburg that is situated within a larger metropolitan area.

Legacy of Past Planning

EDINBURG 2040

BUILDING FOR TOMORROW'S FUTURE, TODAY!



This new Comprehensive Plan builds on previous plans and studies completed by the City of Edinburg and other partners, including these most relevant to the Recreation and Amenities topic:

- Edinburg 2040 Committees: Strategies and Objectives 2022-2023
- Edinburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2019
- Edinburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, 2017
- Edinburg Downtown Master Plan, 2010
- RGV MPO Active Transportation Plan, 2020
- Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Active Tourism Plan, 2016 (and a similar plan specifically for Hidalgo County, initiated in 2023)
- Edinburg Gateway Plan: An Agenda for 2025 (Comprehensive Plan), 2005

**Click Images to View Plans*

Accomplishments

Progress and achievements resulting from past planning and implementation efforts related to Recreation and Amenities include:

Edinburg receiving its fourth All-America City Award from the National Civic League in 2024 – the first since 2000 and after previous awards in 1968 and 1995 – which is recognized as the nation’s most prestigious civic honor, and “acknowledges communities that engage residents in innovative, inclusive, and effective efforts to tackle critical challenges and improve the quality of life for all.”



Added two parks to City’s park system since 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan – one with Edinburg Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) funding – along with park and path/trail improvements (20 total parks in 2024)

Upgrade of park restrooms to be more inclusive



Upgrade to Hidalgo County’s J.R. “Milo” Ponce Memorial Park to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant



Promenade Park Amphitheater and Water Gardens

Texas Amateur Athletic Federation (TAAF) – largest participation in Edinburg

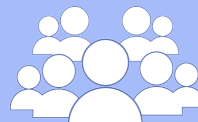


Largest baseball program in the Valley



Boxing, mixed martial arts, karate program – boxing brought home two championships to Edinburg

Participation at the City’s golf courses has doubled since 2020



Largest junior Olympics in Texas history and in the nation currently

Seven races throughout the season (10K, fun run, miracle mile, triathlon, etc.) with more than 11,000 participants



43rd annual triathlon with over 10,000 participants (turned it into a health care event)




22 events throughout year just with Parks and Recreation

15 years in a row received the Achievement of Excellence Award from the Texas Municipal Library Directors Association (TMLDA) – top 15% in Texas of all libraries



Selected as one of 18 “Arts for Everybody Communities”

Provide more than 22 art classes




Debuted original musical ¡Despierta! to kick off Frida Fest – self-produced with over 60 participants

Challenge RGV (collaboration with UT Health Houston, School of Public Health, 2024)



Key Planning Issues and Considerations

Through the Edinburg Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, numerous real and perceived community issues and needs were identified through leadership and public engagement activities, as well as through the work of the plan consultants and their interactions with community leaders of the Edinburg 2040 process and with City staff.

Key issues and considerations that led to the goals and action items in this Recreation and Amenities section include (along with specific points and suggestions from leadership and community input):



Maintenance of existing parks and trails. **[FY22-23 funded items to add mile markers along completed trails, improve turf and add trees within parks for shade, and upgrade park restrooms based on Edinburg 2040 priorities.]**



Balancing public needs due to growth (e.g., needed parks, facilities and a library branch in the northern part of the city; need more meeting spaces; etc.).



Level of resources generated by current fee level on new development in lieu of parkland dedication.



Need for a dedicated storage facility to support the growing inventory and equipment needs of cultural arts programs.



Safety measures to accommodate the increasing participation in community events.



Accessibility and connectivity between residential and commercial areas.



Equity concern for existing communities lacking sidewalks.



Maintenance of green spaces created through park fees in lieu of land dedication.



Beautification efforts such as painting irrigation pipes, using native landscaping and using river rocks in medians. **[FY22-23 funding for these activities based on Edinburg 2040 priorities.]**



Strategies for beautification and use of temporary green spaces on empty lots (e.g., for events).



Water management challenges for splash pads.



Update needed to the 2019 Edinburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



Pursuing external grant and funding opportunities effectively (updated master plan is important for this).



Adequate Parks and Recreation Department staffing to maintain exemplary level of sports and recreational programming along with added parks maintenance needs



Recognizing the necessity for staff expansion and the creation of volunteer opportunities to maintain and enhance the level of events and programs offered by the Library and Cultural Arts Department.



Continuing to maintain and foster relationships with key partners, including public agencies, organizations/non-profits and private entities.



Potentially curating a select number of distinctive and highly-attended events that showcase the unique character of Edinburg to avoid “burning out” City departments and staff, core volunteers and others with too many – and too frequent – local events.

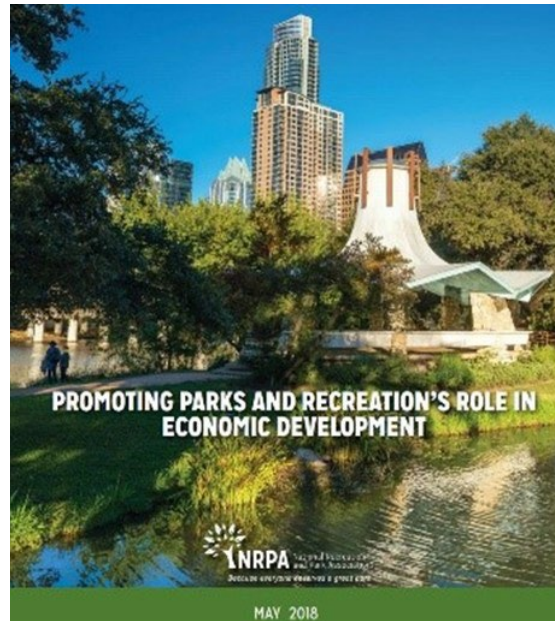
Framework for Action

This Framework for Action portion of the Recreation and Amenities section builds off of the six Comprehensive Plan themes confirmed with City officials during the transition from the Edinburg Today to the Future Edinburg phase of

Parks and Economic Development

Parks contribute to perceptions of a community and its overall quality of life. Quality of life elements, including parks and recreation, can make a community more attractive to potential residents, businesses and their workers. Well-maintained parks also increase property values of nearby properties, which in turn enhances local tax revenues. Additional tourism-related spending occurs when parks host out-of-town visitors for events, festivals or sports tournaments.

SOURCE: National Recreation and Park Association (2018).



Comprehensive Plan development — especially Planning Themes 3, 4, 5 and 6 for this Recreation and Amenities section. The plan goals and action strategies that follow are aimed at “connecting the dots” between this set of community improvement fundamentals for Edinburg that involve:

 Planning Theme 1 Leverage City infrastructure, especially for: ★ Growth management ★ Economic development	 Embrace Edinburg’s university town advantage, especially in terms of: ★ Community spirit ★ Research commercialization ★ UTRGV community outreach and services ★ Graduate retention Planning Theme 2
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Planning Theme 3

Go all in on asset preservation and maintenance, especially involving:

- ★ Infrastructure life-cycle tracking
- ★ Neighborhood integrity
- ★ Downtown revitalization (especially east toward I-69C)
- ★ Heritage sites and buildings
- ★ Parks, trails and recreation facilities



Planning Theme 4

Uplift people (as a core principle of Edinburg 2040), especially involving:

- ★ Economic security
- ★ Health and wellness
- ★ Safety
- ★ Equity
- ★ La buena vida (the good life)!



Planning Theme 5

Pursue opportunity in scarcity and abundance, especially involving:

- ★ Methods to extend water supply – a relatively scarce resource for Edinburg and the Lower Rio Grande Valley
- ★ Productive re-use of the regional waste stream – a relatively abundant resource for Edinburg since it hosts a major regional landfill for solid waste disposal
- ★ Edinburg being a leader in mitigating the effects of a changing climate



Planning Theme 6

Promote regionalism, especially in the areas of:

- ★ Economy
- ★ Mobility
- ★ Water
- ★ Drainage
- ★ Education
- ★ Healthcare
- ★ Tourism
- ★ Advocacy for the interests and priorities of Lower Rio Grande Valley communities and their residents and businesses

Goals for Recreation and Amenities



A Goal is ...

a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).

The actions in this Recreation and Amenities section involve tangible steps that will lead to achievement of the following goals:



Goal 1

A park and recreation system that keeps pace with Edinburg’s expected growth through ongoing City investment in new and improved sites and facilities in geographic areas of need, along with continued reinvestment in existing parks, playgrounds and trails.



Goal 1: Associated Plan Themes

Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People

1st



Goal 2

A park and recreation system that contributes to a more connected community and healthy lifestyles through expanded trail networks and various ways for all ages to stay active and fit, along with quiet places to connect with nature.



Goal 2: Associated Plan Themes

Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People

1st





Goal 3

A more complete “lifestyle” community with amenities and activities that appeal across a range of ages and interests – and with increased awareness of all there is to do in Edinburg.



Goal 3: Associated Plan Themes

Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People

1st



Goal 4

Greater emphasis on and resources toward preserving Edinburg’s natural, historic and cultural assets.



Goal 4: Associated Plan Themes

Embrace University Town Advantage



Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People

1st





Goal 5

A more attractive community based on quality design and character of private development and ongoing beautification efforts within public areas.



Goal 5: Associated Plan Themes

Embrace University Town Advantage

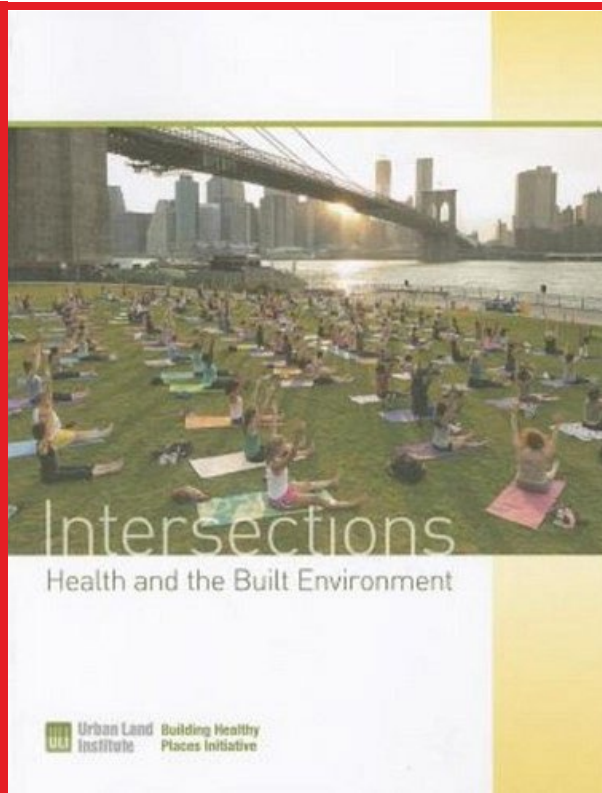


Asset Preservation and Maintenance



Uplift People





Parks and Health

Well-designed parks and trails can encourage and allow a safe place for exercise and community interaction, also providing mental health benefits such as stress reduction. Local governments and other public agencies can use tools such as Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) to quantify and qualify the potential public health effects of proposed policies, plans or development projects. This includes the distribution of benefits and costs within the community.

Health Impact Assessments commend strategies for monitoring and managing health and for bringing public health issues to decision-makers outside of the public health field, such as in transportation and land use. The assessments can be voluntary or regulatory processes that focus on health outcomes.

HIAs can be completed specific to recreational projects to evaluate how best to maximize the positive impact of new park and trail investments on public health.

SOURCE: Intersections: Health and The Environment, Urban Land Institute (2013).

Actions for Recreation and Amenities

The actions below are categorized into the five types of plan implementation actions highlighted throughout this plan:



Capital Investments



Programs and Initiatives



Regulations and Standards



Partnerships and Coordination



More Targeted Planning / Study

Additionally, items with an asterisk (*) in the table below are adapted from the results of the Edinburg 2040 strategic planning process, especially from the 2040 committees focused on Neighborhoods / Parks / Green Spaces / Beautification, Arts / Culture / Historic Preservation, Health and Wellness, and Government Transparency / Equity / Civic Engagement.

Plan Actions Involve ...

seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources — financial and otherwise — and recognizing that various routine and ongoing activities will continue in the meantime.

Action Leaders

With the support and direction of City leaders and management, action leaders and other key players for most initiatives involving Recreation and Amenities will include:

- City of Edinburg departments, especially Parks and Recreation, Library and Cultural Arts, Planning and Zoning, and Grants Administration
- Explore Edinburg (Convention and Visitors Bureau)
- Edinburg Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) and its Board of Directors
- Edinburg Chamber of Commerce and its Board of Directors
- City boards and commissions, especially:
 - Community Development Council
 - Cultural Activities Board
 - Downtown District Steering Committee
 - Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors
 - Edinburg 2040 committees, especially Neighborhoods / Parks / Green Spaces / Beautification, Arts / Culture / Historic Preservation, Health and Wellness, and Government Transparency / Equity / Civic Engagement
 - Edinburg Golf Board
 - Edinburg Little League
 - Environment Advisory Board
 - Planning and Zoning Commission
 - Public Library Board
 - Recreation and Parks Board
 - Tree Board

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
<i>Capital Investments</i>			
1	Implement specific capital projects identified in the City's updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan and its Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, prioritizing projects which promote active and healthy living opportunities for all ages. Also pursue links to regional trails and pathways where such opportunities arise.	1, 2	➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration
2	Continue to invest in new acreage for future parks and recreation purposes, particularly within areas that are currently underserved by parks. Coordinate with the development community during the land planning phase to strategically plan for and invest in new community-scale and neighborhood parks. Invest in acreage, as available, that is classified as higher-risk flood zones or in other difficult to develop areas.	1, 2	➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ Real estate/development community
3	As new playground equipment is needed in parks, continue to consider inclusive playground equipment that is accessible to children with a variety of physical and sensory needs and abilities.	1, 2	➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ City Engineering ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ Capable Kids Foundation
4	Continue to pursue multi-purpose design approaches for stormwater management projects to incorporate recreational and open space preservation opportunities within such projects.	2	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ City Grants Administration
5	Plan, budget and design for a new City library facility, considering various scenarios that include continued use of the current library property and building, but with the intent to better serve a much larger Edinburg population through a more central location and state-of-the-art, multi-purpose facility.	3, 4	➤ City Manager's office ➤ City Library & Cultural Arts ➤ City Grants Administration
6	Explore opportunities to link the design and construction of specific capital projects to community beautification objectives, such as along corridors and at high-profile gateways to the city. This can include supplementing public infrastructure with art and design elements that help to improve the aesthetics of and/or screen an otherwise utilitarian capital project. Possibilities include overpasses and viaducts (with the Texas Department of Transportation), ground and elevated water storage tanks, utility cabinets and fire hydrants. In downtown areas, this can include creative designs for street furniture, bike racks, trash containers, signage and lighting fixtures, as well as enhancements during alley improvements.	5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ TxDOT

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
7	Design and construct signature gateway and streetscape/intersection treatments, which can include monument signage or other elements that call out the Edinburg name and branding as these locations offer opportunities to establish “first impressions,” promote Edinburg’s image and communicate community values. Potential improvements include installation of landscaped esplanades, more extensive landscaping within public rights-of-way and on private sites, special street lighting and traffic signal fixtures, enhanced traffic signals and street signage, overhead utility wires moved underground, and distinctive designs for intersection crosswalks and widened sidewalks. Installing esplanades in place of continuous center turning lanes on major roadways would also help control vehicle turning movements and increase safety, provide an intermediate refuge area for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing busy streets, and enhance corridor aesthetics through landscaping of the new esplanades.	5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ Hidalgo County ➤ Edinburg Chamber of Commerce ➤ EEDC ➤ RGV MPO ➤ TxDOT ➤ UTRGV
<i>Programs and Initiatives</i>			
8	Revive a local Keep Texas Beautiful affiliate to focus energy and resources toward Edinburg’s beautification and image enhancement, and to highlight accomplishments and voluntary improvements on private properties (https://ktb.org/form-an-affiliate/). Other established Texas affiliates can be found and explored at https://ktb.org/find-an-affiliate/ .	5	➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ City Public Works ➤ Edinburg 2040 committees ➤ Edinburg Chamber of Commerce
9	Build incrementally toward the level of sustained image enhancement and beautification efforts achieved in other Texas cities, which helps focus public/private energy and resources toward visible results and brings ongoing community and funder support. Texas cities that are recognized with the prestigious annual Governor’s Community Achievement Awards also receive Texas Department of Transportation funding for further landscaping and community identity projects along local TxDOT rights-of-way (https://ktb.org/gcaa/).	5	➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Grants Administration ➤ Edinburg 2040 committees ➤ Edinburg Chamber of Commerce ➤ Future Keep Edinburg Beautiful affiliate
10	Maintain Edinburg’s designation as a Tree City USA through the Arbor Day Foundation as one way to continue reaping the environmental, economic and aesthetic benefits of a healthy and robust urban tree canopy.	5	➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ City Tree Board ➤ City Public Works ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ Edinburg 2040 committees

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
11	Continue the City's event planning focus, across departments and with community partners, especially for the Downtown area. Also ensure responsiveness to feedback and suggestions from residents, visitors and those involved in event planning, staffing, security and other support roles.	2, 3, 4	➤ City Library & Cultural Arts ➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ City Police and Fire, and all other involved City departments
12	As also included in the Growth Capacity section of this plan, continually evaluate new technologies and options for improving dissemination of all City information, including for recreational programming and community events.	2, 3	➤ City Communications & Media ➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ City Library & Cultural Arts ➤ Edinburg 2040 committees ➤ Explore Edinburg ➤ Explore RGV ➤ Edinburg Chamber of Commerce
13	Pursue opportunities to advance Edinburg as a lifelong community including Age-Friendly certification from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Also explore principles and resources available from the 8-80 Cities non-profit organization, which advocates that "if everything we do in our cities is great for an 8 year old and an 80 year old, then it will be great for all people."	2, 3	➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ Edinburg 2040 committees ➤ City Communications & Media
<i>Regulations and Standards</i>			
14	Regularly review and update, as appropriate, the City's park fees applied to private developments (in lieu of parkland dedication) to ensure adequate revenue generation in line with increasing costs for land and improvements, and based on regional trends across jurisdictions.	1, 2	➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Attorney ➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ Real estate/development community
<i>Partnerships and Coordination</i>			
15	Continue school district coordination and formal agreements regarding after-hours public use of sports fields and recreational facilities, identifying additional opportunities for leveraging resources.	2	➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ ECISD, other districts and schools

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
16	Continue mutually beneficial arrangements with property owners and developers to add to the local public park inventory and work toward continuous trail segments and links to City parks.	1, 2	➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ Real estate/development community
17	Continue to pursue sponsorships, donations and other forms of partnerships that extend the reach of Edinburg’s park and recreation offerings for residents.	1, 2	➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ Edinburg 2040 committees
18	Maintain positive and productive interactions with the Hidalgo County Historical Commission and the Hidalgo County Historical Society to advance shared heritage planning and preservation priorities including potential incentive methods and/or recognition for those reinvesting in and upgrading older homes, structures and sites. Also continue to take advantage of resources and support from the Museum of South Texas History and UTRGV.	3, 4	➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Library & Cultural Arts
19	Coordinate with community organizations, the local faith community and others to welcome newcomers into the Edinburg community, raising their awareness of events, family activities and “things to do,” along with opportunities to plug in for networking and volunteer service.	2, 3	➤ City Communications & Media ➤ Edinburg 2040 committees ➤ Edinburg Chamber of Commerce
<i>More Targeted Planning / Study</i>			
20	Complete a thorough update to the current Parks and Recreation Master Plan from 2019, especially to maintain the City’s competitive position for grants available through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, which favors communities with master plans updated within the last five years. Then complete ongoing interim updates every five years at most, highlighting implementation progress and successes – especially through partnership efforts – while continuing to communicate Edinburg’s park, recreation, trail and open space priorities to funding partners and private development interests.	1, 2	➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ City Planning & Zoning ➤ City Engineering

Actions			
#	Action	Goals Supported	Action Leader(s) and Key Partners
21	Explore a potential “percent for the arts” approach for City capital projects as done by numerous state and local governments across the country, who budget into major public investments an allocation for associated image and beautification enhancements as part of design and construction (some locales also pursue such percentage allocations as part of private development projects). The organization Americans for the Arts offers guidance and resources, including an inventory of percent for art ordinances from across the nation, with many example programs readily available online through a “percent for the arts” browser search (https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/percent-for-art-ordinances). The Texas Commission on the Arts is the lead entity for such efforts in Texas: “Per Section 444.029 of Texas Government Code, any county, municipality, or other political subdivision of this state undertaking a public construction project estimated to cost more than \$250,000 may specify that a percentage not to exceed one percent of the cost of the construction project shall be used for fine arts projects at or near the site of the construction project. Those organizations may consult with Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) for advice in determining how to conduct the public art or percent for art project.” (https://www.arts.texas.gov/initiatives/public-art/)	4, 5	➤ City Engineering ➤ City Library & Cultural Arts ➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ Edinburg 2040 committees
22	Tap into data and resources at the regional and state levels for tracking tourism numbers and spending, along with information on area, state and national tourism trends (in general and before/after the pandemic disruption). When appropriate, a more localized study could examine visitation at local sites and amenities, gathering data and input from local partners as available and compiling visitor feedback and ratings including from popular travel websites and social media.	3, 4	➤ Explore Edinburg ➤ City Library & Cultural Arts ➤ City Parks & Recreation ➤ Area lodging and hospitality businesses ➤ Edinburg Chamber of Commerce ➤ EEDC ➤ Explore RGV



Ongoing and Potential Partners Related to Recreation and Amenities

Along with the Action Leaders and Key Partners called out in the table above, the following agencies and entities are also established or potential partners for helping Edinburg achieve its goals for Recreation and Amenities:

- Capable Kids Foundation
- Cities of McAllen, Pharr, Mission and other nearby cities
- Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District (ECISD) and other area districts and schools
- Edinburg Economic Development Corporation (EEDC)
- Explore RGV
- Hidalgo County, including Hidalgo County Historical Commission
- Hidalgo County Historical Society
- Homeowner Associations
- Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
- Museum of South Texas History
- Real estate/development community
- Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- South Texas Motorcycle Museum
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- UTRGV
- Valley Off-Road Bicycling Association (VORBA)

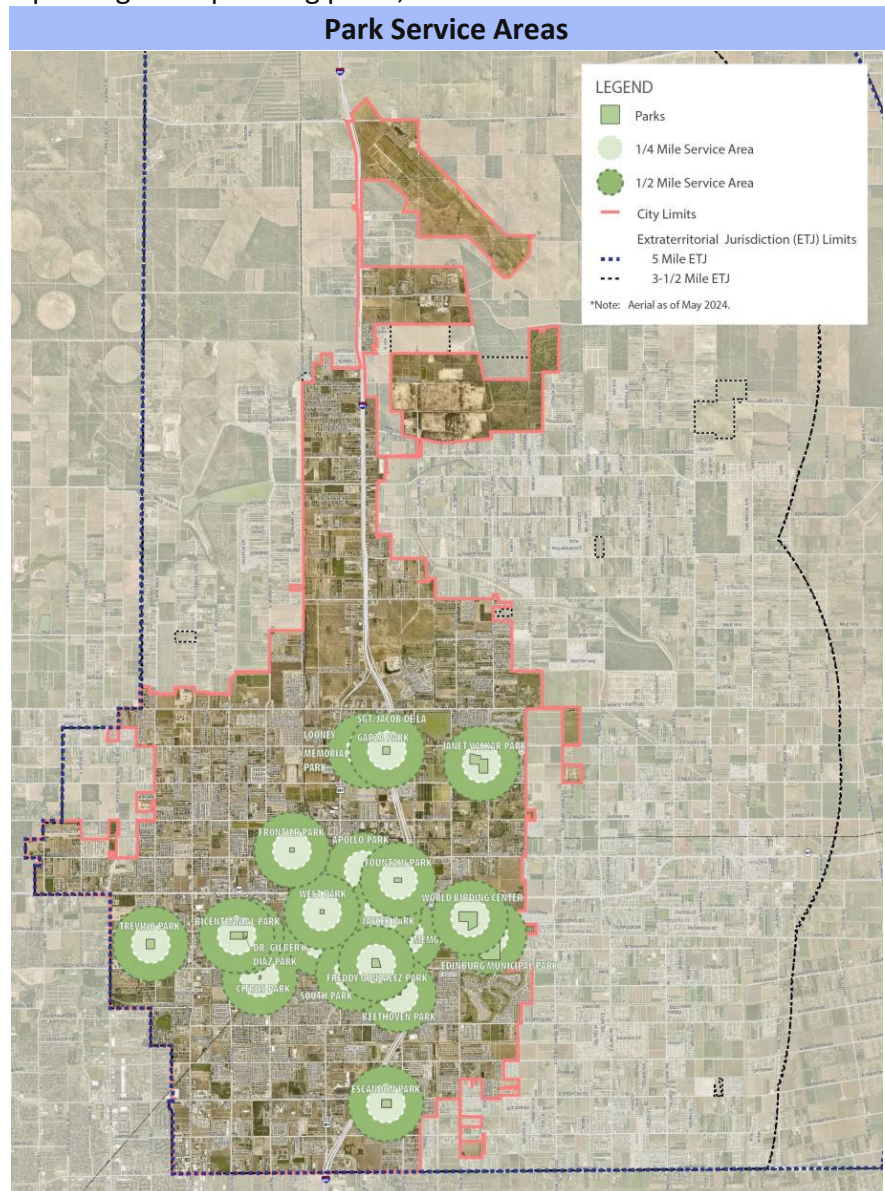
Parks and Recreation System Outlook

This portion of the Recreation and Amenities section is based on discussions with leadership of the City's Parks and Recreation and Library and Cultural Arts Departments. Both departments involve highly popular City services and programming that will only face increasing demand with Edinburg's ongoing growth.

Parks and Recreation Department Opportunities and Challenges

- The increasing cost of acquiring land for new or expanded parks – and higher costs in general for developing, improving and operating parks, trails and recreation facilities.

- Anticipating the need for a Department satellite facility on Edinburg's growing north-northwest side at some point given the extent of the city limits that stretches north from the central city, while also addressing the lack of City park space in southwest Edinburg. The accompanying map shows the locations and service areas of Edinburg's 20 current public parks, which are mostly concentrated in the central city.



SOURCE: Kendig Keast Collaborative

[*Click to Enlarge Map](#)

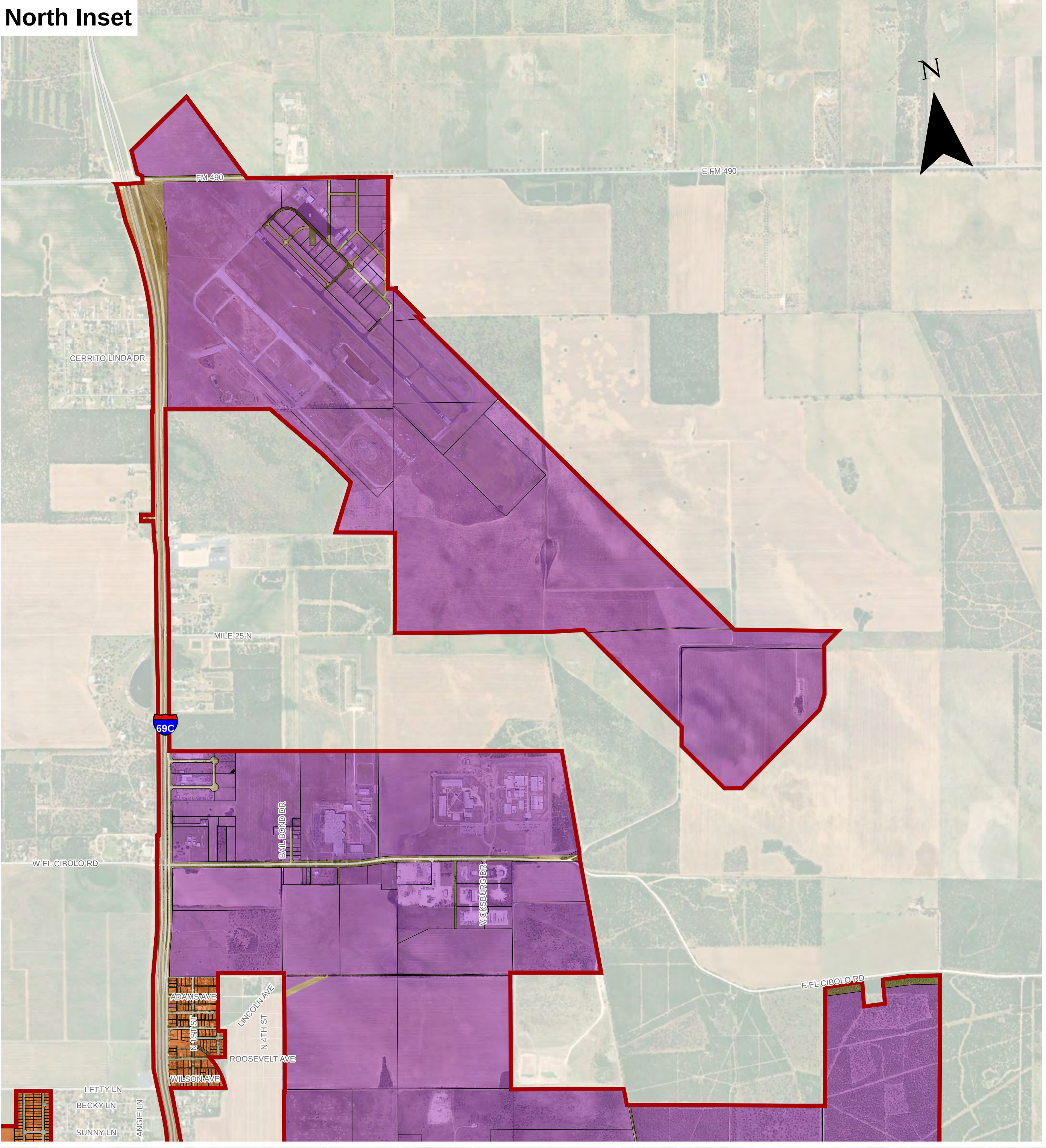
- Serving the recreation and program needs of youth from lower-income families and areas of the city. Parks and recreation opportunities in close proximity are especially important to residents with limited mobility options.
- Maintaining the Department's commitment to making parks, playgrounds and other recreation facilities and events accessible to kids and adults with disabilities.

- Prioritizing hike-and-bike opportunities and safety given the popularity of paths and trails already developed within the city, along with other ways to promote residents' health and wellness and spending time outside.
- Serving sports teams and youth from all across the Valley with the Department's programs, in keeping with the Promote Regionalism theme of this Comprehensive Plan.
- Managing the extent and variety of programming the Department offers, along with the various races and special events held annually in Edinburg, plus the festivals and events the Department supports in coordination with Library and Cultural Arts – all of which require oversight and staffing commitments throughout each week and weekends.
- Dealing with water and heat challenges in the Valley context and with a changing climate, which presents challenges for managing popular swimming pools and splashpads, and also needing to provide more shade for recreation areas and outdoor spaces where people gather.
- Along with City/UTRGV interaction, maintaining City/school district partnerships and joint-use agreements that result in shared parks, use of City facilities and parks for school sports, walking trails on certain school properties and other after-school-hours access to campus fields and playgrounds.
- Also building on relationships with community groups and devotees of particular sports and recreational activities to expand offerings and develop or improve unique facilities (e.g., Valley Off-Road Biking Association, disc golf enthusiasts, Capable Kids Foundation, etc.).
- Continuing the Department's interaction with the Edinburg 2040 strategic planning effort and committees, especially the Neighborhoods/Parks/Green Spaces/Beautification Committee.
- Continuing to pursue grants and external funding opportunities in coordination with the City's Grants Administration Department. Especially important to these efforts is ensuring timely updates of the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan, ideally every five years at most (last updated in 2019).

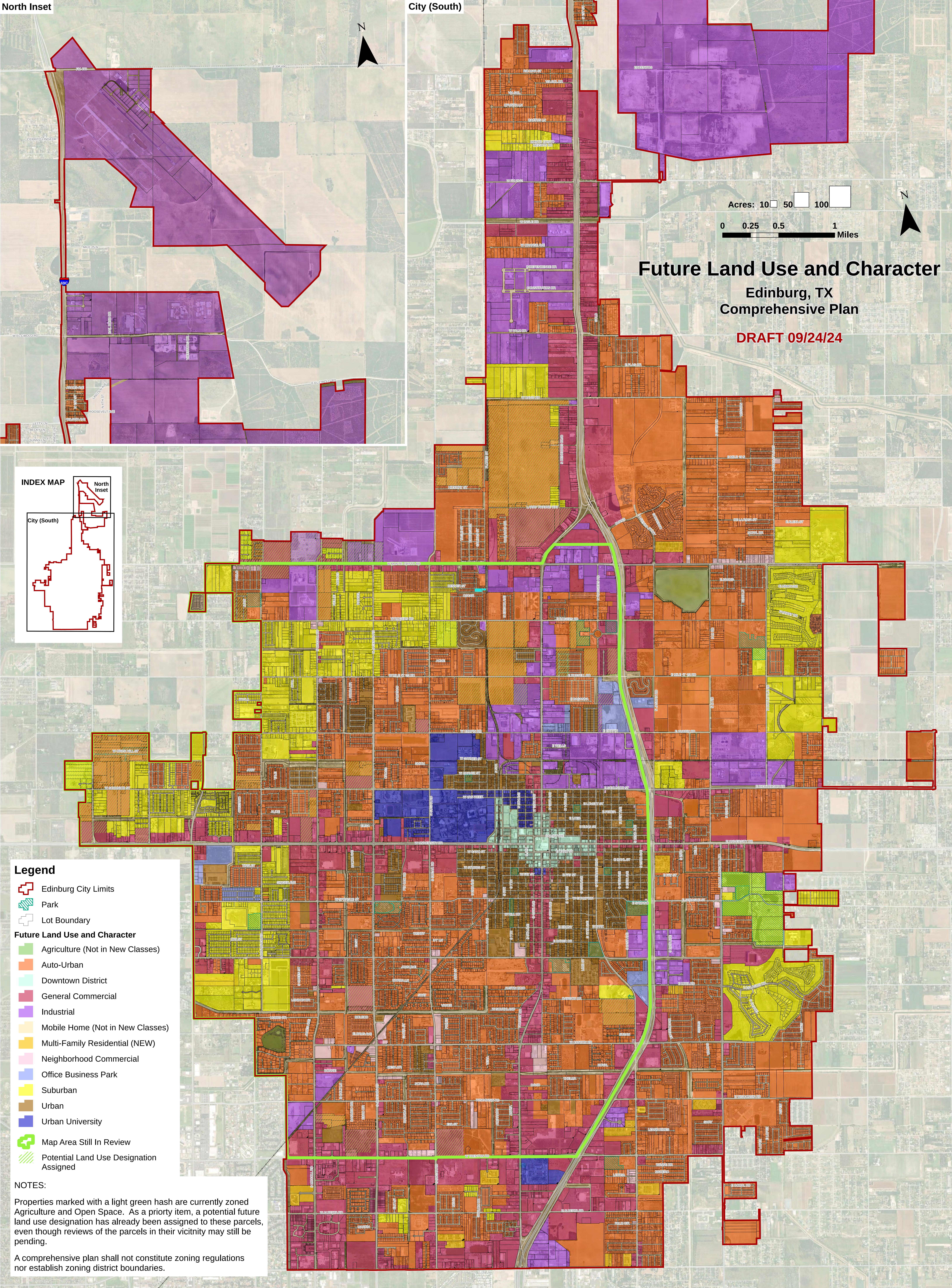
Library and Cultural Arts Department Opportunities and Challenges

- Planning for a new municipal library facility suited to Edinburg's current and projected size, and for all the expectations of modern libraries (e.g., access to technology, community meeting/gathering space, space for "makers," coworking space, education and workshop venue, etc.), starting with a needs assessment and master plan effort.
- Also locating a new facility farther west and north to be better positioned to serve north side growth, and preferably accessible by transit.
- Increasing cultural arts staffing given the growth and success of numerous annual community events in Edinburg, working out to one major festival each month.
- Continuing to work toward an arts district in central Edinburg, with the new Arts, Culture, Events (ACE) Center as another new anchor for the area.
- Relying on partnerships with other City departments and external groups to address event planning and management challenges involving Downtown accessibility, parking and public safety.
- Continuing beneficial relationships with various educational, institutional and community partners.

North Inset



City (South)



Acres: 10 50 100

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

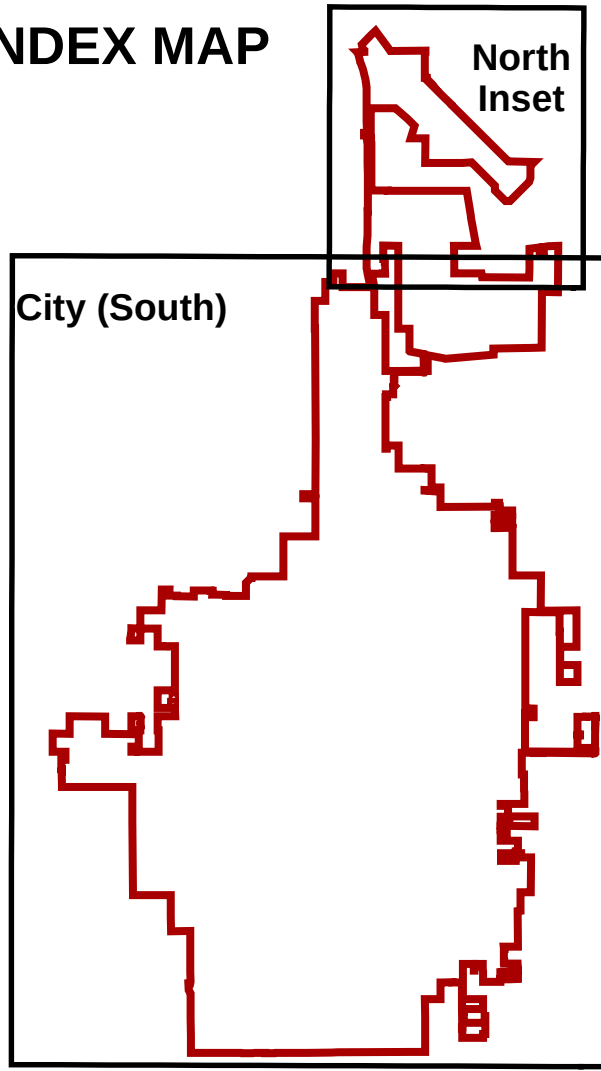
Future Land Use and Character

Edinburg, TX

Comprehensive Plan

DRAFT 09/24/24

INDEX MAP



Legend

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- Park
- Lot Boundary
- Future Land Use and Character**
 - Agriculture (Not in New Classes)
 - Auto-Urban
 - Downtown District
 - General Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Mobile Home (Not in New Classes)
 - Multi-Family Residential (NEW)
 - Neighborhood Commercial
 - Office Business Park
 - Suburban
 - Urban
 - Urban University
- Map Area Still In Review
- Potential Land Use Designation Assigned

NOTES:

Properties marked with a light green hash are currently zoned Agriculture and Open Space. As a priority item, a potential future land use designation has already been assigned to these parcels, even though reviews of the parcels in their vicinity may still be pending.

A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations nor establish zoning district boundaries.