



Physical Infrastructure

Goal: Improve regional physical infrastructure.

Objectives

- Support and sustain existing regional efforts.
- Increase collaborative efforts supporting regional infrastructure development and expansion.
- Participate and integrate the Rio Grande regional water planning group efforts.
- Integrate and support regional drainage master plan.
- Help economic development organizations generate awareness about industrial parks, transportation assets, and other components of Hidalgo County's competitive advantage.
- Protect Hidalgo County's natural environment and promote it as an economic asset.
- Establish alternative sources for water to meet the future needs of the county.

Strategic Projects

- Conduct a comprehensive review of existing infrastructure plans for consistency with the comprehensive economic development strategy.
- Monitor the Connected Texas initiative commissioned by the Texas Department of Agriculture to obtain broadband coverage maps of Hidalgo County and work with providers and residents to expand broadband access.
- Research and evaluate proven alternative water source options.



Healthcare

Goal: Establish Hidalgo County as the premier location for healthcare in South Texas.

Objectives

- Support advancement of specialized research and development initiatives that enhance the region's competitiveness in healthcare and address community health needs, such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity.
- Strengthen partnerships between nursing, allied health and workforce programs.
- Increase K-16 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) curriculum options to prepare students of all ages for high-growth, high-wage job opportunities of the future.
- Encourage and build new healthcare systems.
- Recruit and retain a competent healthcare workforce from inside and outside the region.

Strategic Projects

- Create a clearinghouse of funding sources for research and development in healthcare.
- Replicate best practices in the provision of healthcare for underserved populations.
- Maintain a task force to oversee implementation of strategic projects and action steps.
- Facilitate ongoing dialogue among hospitals, healthcare providers, institutions of higher education, K-12 and workforce development systems to increase job growth in healthcare fields.
- Secure funding of a medical school, regional simulation lab, and medical research.



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Hidalgo County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Goals, Objectives, and Strategic Projects

2011-2015





Regionalism

Goal: Bolster existing and new regional collaboration efforts.

Objectives

- Increase awareness of ongoing collaborative initiatives.
- Provide regional network planning support and technical assistance to small cities.
- Establish a system for regional collaboration on major infrastructure projects.
- Increase membership in Rio South Texas Economic Council.

Strategic Projects

- Develop a web page designed to collect and share best regional innovation practices.
- Establish a technical assistance center supported by the region to provide training and technical assistance to small cities.
- Support a campaign to inform all cities about Rio South Texas Economic Council membership.



Mobility

Goal: Meet the comprehensive mobility needs of the region.

Objectives

- Support and integrate existing MPO/MPT plans.
- Support and promote regional transportation networks/systems.
- Develop strategy for freight and passenger rail systems.
- Construct key trade corridors that connect ports to U.S. 281.
- Support development of Interstate quality corridor using existing routes.
- Diversify funding streams for transportation projects.

Strategic Projects

- Develop strategy for freight and passenger rail systems.
- Secure funding for construction of trade corridors and other regional mobility projects as identified by stakeholders.
- Complete upgrades to U.S. 281 to Interstate standards.
- Identify best practices in other regions that could be replicated to deal with the current and expected future shortage in transportation funding.



Economic Competitiveness

Goal: Grow Hidalgo County's economy.

Objectives

- Support increased cross-border trade, commerce and cooperation.
- Increase access to capital for business retention, expansion and creation.
- Ensure that industry cluster and emerging sector data is available to economic development organizations, small businesses and financial institutions.
- Ensure that sufficient community and economic development training and technical assistance opportunities are available in the county.
- Increase access to broadband service, especially in rural areas.
- Increase research and development activities in the county, particularly in high wage industries such as healthcare, life sciences, advanced manufacturing, material sciences, and high tech.
- Increase cultural and entertainment venues and activities in the county.
- Support development of ecotourism and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Strategic Projects

- Establish a venue and process for networking and capacity building of existing and emerging cross border trade and commerce efforts.
- Create an angel investor network.
- Maintain regional industry cluster and emerging sector research.
- Pursue the establishment of a regional leadership training and technical assistance center, business incubator, and research park.
- Integrate current efforts with regional broadband expansion to rural, underserved communities.
- Identify and promote business lending options that are nontraditional and meet the needs of local new and emerging businesses.
- Increase SBA innovation and technology awards and Texas Emerging Technology Fund awards.
- Conduct market analysis/feasibility study on the expansion of entertainment venues in the county.
- Coordinate countywide ecotourism marketing effort.
- Establish a regional trail system for walking, hiking, and cycling.



Workforce Competitiveness

Goal: Create a globally competitive workforce.

Objectives

- Improve secondary and postsecondary education completion rates.
- Prioritize the completion of vocational and technical training programs for workers in Hidalgo County.
- Increase adult education and literacy rates.
- Support development of career pathways for K-16 students to generate awareness about career opportunities in Hidalgo County's targeted industries.
- Expand capacity for customized training and education to support business and industry needs.
- Advocate for the development of professional schools.

Strategic Projects

- Identify and replicate best practices retention and graduation (K-12) initiatives.
- Reconstitute and implement the Building Future Talent workforce development plan.
- Facilitate an annual regional career awareness symposium for students from middle school through college.
- Conduct research related to the demand for professional schools.


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