

City of Helotes
Economic Development Corporation
FYE 2021 STRATEGIC WORK PLAN

ADMINISTERED BY:



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Approved by the HEDC Board of Directors on March 3, 2021
Approved by the City Council on March 25, 2021.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Work Plan** is a living document created by the Helotes Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) Board of Directors to guide future policy decisions and Staff actions. Each year, the HEDC Board of Directors revisits the document to remind itself of the Corporation's mission, vision, history, and goals. The Work Plan constitutes the Annual Plan of the HEDC, mandated by Article IV, Section 4.1 of the HEDC Bylaws, and the Plan must be approved by the City Council on an annual basis.

MISSION STATEMENT

To promote, encourage, and enhance the creation of jobs, the expansion of the local tax base, and our quality-of-life through projects that assist in the retention and expansion of existing employers and which attract new employers and aid in their development and growth.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision for Helotes includes a balance of sales and property taxes that takes into account our town's historic roots and unique environment, resulting in an improved quality-of-life for all Helotes citizens.

HISTORY

The City of Helotes was incorporated in 1981 in an effort by local residents to avoid annexation by the City of San Antonio. The newly organized City of 1,535 residents rapidly transitioned from a small rural town to a suburban community. To ensure positive growth, the City Council appointed an Economic Development Committee in 1997. In 2002, Helotes citizens approved a ballot initiative to add a half-cent 4B Economic Development Sales Tax. The Helotes Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) was formed in 2003, and the HEDC Board of Directors was tasked with the administration of the dedicated 4B sales tax fund.

Today, the HEDC remains dedicated to thoughtful economic growth, and supports public and private investment in projects that improve the economic outlook of the City and enhance the quality-of-life for more than 9,000 Helotes citizens.

GOAL 1 | ACCELERATE RECOVERY

short-term term goal (2021 – 2023)

PRIORITY ONE:

Coordinate short-term economic recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic by aggregating information and allocating resources to top priorities.

PROJECTS

- Create a user-friendly database of recovery resources on the EDC website.
 - Currently developing a new EDC website to provide a better user experience and information.
- Continue communication with local business leaders to understand the short-term and long-term needs of those businesses.
 - Coordinate with Development Services to obtain new business owner contact info.
 - Email business owners when relevant information becomes available.
 - Continue scheduling site visits to stay informed of current needs or issues facing the business community.
- Stay informed of regional and national resources to assist business recovery efforts.
 - Continue to monitor available business resources and disseminate the information.
 - Work with regional partners to learn of new initiatives.
- Consider creating a digital marketing grant to assist small businesses develop or improve their digital presence / website.
- Consider funding for the Helotes Area Chamber of Commerce local gift card give back program.
- Consider re-opening the Google 360 Virtual Tour Program.

GOAL 2 | ASSESS AND IMPLEMENT A TARGETED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
long-term term goal (2021 – 2025)**PRIORITY ONE:**

Assess current market trends and identify opportunities for attracting new developments.

PROJECTS

- Survey development trends and identify any opportunities.
- Evaluate unmet community needs and target those sectors.
 - Determine community needs and wants (restaurants, brewery, distillery, entertainment, office, etc.)
- Work with property owners, brokers, and developers to attract new investments.

PRIORITY TWO:

Implement programs to encourage targeted development of restaurants, entertainment concepts, breweries, distilleries, hotels, and other mixed-use concepts.

PROJECTS

- Designate and coordinate investments into opportunity areas.
- Develop a toolbox to support economic development efforts.
 - Targeted incentives to attract desired developments
 - Infrastructure grants
 - Permit fee reductions paid by either City or HEDC
 - Fast track permitting program
 - Utilize City's impact fee credits
- Identify specific brands / concepts expanding in the surrounding area.
- Connect startups with investors and other capital resources.

**GOAL 3 | IMPLEMENT AND ENHANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING
short-term goal (2021 – 2022)****PRIORITY ONE:**

Enhance external communication of development opportunities in Helotes.

PROJECTS

- Ensure easy access to complete and pertinent development information on City and HEDC websites and through other electronic mediums.
 - Work to launch a new HEDC website in Q1 2021.
 - Contract with ReSimplifi to build a comprehensive commercial database.
- Use social media and other mediums to promote development opportunities.
 - Create posts to promote development/lease opportunities in Helotes.
- Attend trade and similar events and distribute information directly to the development and real estate community.

PRIORITY TWO:

Enhance communication to businesses of the benefits of annexation.

PROJECTS

- Identify businesses that would benefit from annexation.
- Consider targeted incentives to encourage annexation.

PRIORITY THREE:

Brand and promote Helotes as a tourism destination.

PROJECTS

- Use social media, print advertising, area partnerships, and other mediums to promote local businesses and events to the surrounding area.
- Create a campaign that promotes what to see/do/eat in Helotes.
- Continue efforts to support and fund signature festivals and events that encourage both local and visitor participation.

GOAL 4 | ADVANCE LOCAL EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

short-term goal (2021 – 2022)

PRIORITY ONE:

Foster and manage partnerships to ensure leadership and workforce development needs are met.

PROJECTS

- Maintain partnerships with area affiliates.
- Assist and/or coordinate educational programs that support existing business owners. Partners may include the following:
 - Helotes Area Chamber of Commerce;
 - UTSA Small Business Development Center;
 - Bexar County Small Business & Entrepreneurship Dept.
 - Alamo Workforce Solutions;
 - Alamo Area Council of Governments;
 - National Association of the Self-Employed;
 - National Association of Women Business Owners; and
 - U.S. Small Business Administration.
- Guide area business owners to tools and resources that will help them grow their business.

GOAL 5 | EVALUATE AND DEVELOP A VISITOR CENTER
long-term goal (2021 – 2025)**PRIORITY ONE:**

Establish a Helotes Visitor Center consisting of office space for the HEDC, Helotes Area Chamber of Commerce, Historical Society of Helotes, and other interested organizations that provide governmental, educational, and/or business-related assistance to the community.

PROJECTS

- Gather potential stakeholders and develop a memorandum of understanding.
- Identify the needs of each entity and create a preliminary site plan.
- Conduct site assessments and determine suitable tract(s).
- Complete land and construction cost estimates.
- Complete a cost benefit analysis of leasing versus ownership.
- Obtain approval from stakeholders and City Council on most viable option.