

**City of Laredo
Strategic Planning Workshop
M2002-W-03**

**Laredo National Bank
600 San Bernardo, 10th Floor
Laredo, Texas 78040**

June 27, 2002

June 28, 2002, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

June 29, 2002, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

I. Call to order

II. Roll Call

Strategic Planning Session moderated by Tyler St. Clair, Weldon Cooper for Public Service: Friday, June 27, 2002.

Working Breakfast

Getting Common Ground: Using Type to Enhance Working Relationships

This session uses an inventory to help Council Members understand how they like to receive information, make decisions, and orient their lives. These differences, used effectively, can help the Mayor, Council, and staff members use their strengths collectively.

The Power of Vision

This session prepares the group for visioning and goal setting.

Working Lunch

Developing the City Council Vision

Using a simple exercise, the Council will describe the long-range changes it would like to make in the City and the best aspects of it that they would like to retain. From these, vision themes can be developed that enjoy the consensus of the group.

Developing Vision Principles

The Council will determine the policy positions that it would like to take in support of the vision. Vision Principles state broad policies that provides a framework within which the Council can make decisions and provide broad policy direction for the staff.

Saturday, June 28, 2002

Working Breakfast

Refining Vision Targets and Goals

Working Lunch

Developing Operating Guidelines

This session will be devoted to helping the Council define guidelines for Council/Council, Council/Mayor, and Council/Staff interaction.

Organizing for the Work to Come

The Council will determine an action plan to follow up on the vision, vision, principles, goals and operating guidelines. The Council will also evaluate the session.

A. Tyler St. Clair, Facilitator provided the following information:

Visioning Activity

Create a compelling image of the future of Laredo in 2020 by answering:

1. What is it about Laredo that we want to preserve/keep?
2. What is it about Laredo that we want to change?

Red Group

Betty Flores, Gene Belmares, Johnny Amaya, Jessica Hein

Keep:

- * Preserve downtown and our historical buildings
- * Prominence in international trade
- * Bridges
- * Youth in Laredo - workforce
- * River, greenspace, natural resources, Lake, creeks, water
- * Growth rate
- * Universities, educational system, community college
- * Assets: Infrastructure, transportation available, geography, land, quality of life
- * Keep and increase public-private partnerships and corporate citizenship
- * Council/Manager form of government (charter)

Change:

- * Increase amenities that contribute to quality of life (parks, entertainment)
- * Outside perception of the City (i.e. Austin)
- * Value-added jobs that provide good salaries, benefits, and upward mobility
- * Clean city
- * Educational system from K-16
- * More business friendly community
- * Staff perception of positions (citizens pay salaries)

- * Community participation
- * Perception of housing
- * Increase availability of housing (public private partnerships, promote housing for lower income sector through ownership of land)
- * Eliminate deterioration of inner city
- * Revitalization of neighborhoods
- * Increase economic development along the river
- * Revitalization of downtown
- * MSA/USA
- * Relationship with metro government
- * Park and recreation design (outside vs. inside; recreational and educational)
- * Code enforcement under one roof with cross training
- * Irrigation system installation
- * Change Charter to clarify the job description and responsibilities of elected officials. Make the municipal court judge an appointed position as a mandate from Council.
- * Funding for Council members (b/c Charter)
 - No staffing currently provided; see if staffing can serve the districts better
 - Use government students to answer phones to gain experience
- * Consolidate all taxing agencies so that residents receive one statement
- * Relocation of the Zacate wastewater treatment plant
- * Eliminate odor problems coming from storm drain and illegal sewer line connections
- * Riverfront development including parks, commercial attractions, shops
- * Provide more funding to LDF
- * SBDC providing education to small business owners helping create jobs
- * Go after business value-added jobs

Blue Group

Hector Garcia, Alfredo Agredano, John Galo, Cindy Collazo

Keep/Change:

- * Promote the City and market it for outside investors (diversification)
- * Continue CNG or H2O safer efforts with technological improvements
- * Training center should be at least 1000+ acres for runways, etc.
- * Be at 50% in our recycling efforts
- * Eliminate plastic and require biodegradable bags
- * Add riverboat at Lake and redevelop recreational areas
- * Theatres - add Spanish programming for the elderly (perhaps special showings life for kids)
- * Riverfront development
- * River Road - B5 to B1
- * Middle age - new programming; summer programming
- * Insure family values stay "small city" versus "large city"
- * Find alternate WBCA parade route so that more people can participate
- * Have developers/builders do inspections, with the City doing the final inspection
- * Expansion of medical center complex by Mercy Hospital'
- * Keep current form of local government (council/manager) and expand rep. Districts

- * Maintain our current ties with Mexico and continue economic planning with unrestricted travel to and from the two countries
- * Add Metro street cars in downtown areas
- * Develop lake at the training center similar to Lago Larry until 2020
- * Relocate Zacate treatment plant
- * Change City Charter and revamp
- * Add zoo and waterpark
- * Remove mobile homes from R3 district
- * Get businesses involved in community such as events in districts
- * Require both LISD and UISD to coordinate and get approval from the City on location, access to schools and facilities
- * Consolidation of duplicated services (schools, City, Webb County)
- * Inter-local agreement with local entities
- * Need secondary, surface, and subsurface water
- * Add air police patrol
- * Relocate railroad tracks and add two new rail bridges with sufficient grade separation
- * Develop drive in theatres
- * Add new hospital in South Laredo to insure that adequate medical facilities are available in crisis
- * High speed connectors LDO/SA/Monterrey (high speed rail)
- * Add light rail to serve Laredo and NuevoLaredo
- * Move airport location b/w Routes 359 and 59
- * Improve streets/traffic (wider streets, one way pair, add trees, reduce noise, more major collectors, compare north and south areas of City)
- * Municipal golf course
- * Major improvements to LAFB area
- * Convention Center next to LEC
- * Add new convention center in the center of the city
- * Add City Hall annex
- * Zacate Creek Riverwalk and connect with Colonia Guadalupe development
- * Instill pride and cleanliness
- * Take action on SOBs
- * Add COPS station on Hwy359
- * Add theater arts (Majestic)
- * River gondolas/boats moving b/w Laredo and NuevoLaredo
- * Add another outer loop to move traffic
- * Add direct routes for schools and LCC
- * Need another lake; develop with restaurants, etc.

Green Group

Eliseo Valdez. Juan Ramirez, Joe Valdez, Larry Dovalina

Keep:

- * Efforts in historic preservation that promote our classical architecture (Laredo National Bank and Milmo Bank buildings)
- * Rich history and culture ("Only city under seven flags")
- * Keep buildings refurbished as Laredo must capitalize on the richness of what we have in order to attract tourism
- * Maintain integrity of the river vega land similar to what they have on the Rock Creek Parkway. Use as an amenity and giant green belt in our community.
- * Our image as the most successful inland port in the nation (technologically advanced and efficient)
- * Improving workforce opportunities and the strides we have made in diversifying employment
- * Unemployment rate that is below double digits
- * Our edge in salaries and benefits for city employees (as compared to other government agencies in the area)
- * Improving the original Fort McKintosh campus with its old original outposts or designate it as a national historic landmark
- * Family values in the community, including:
 - Providing support for own family members
 - Pride in the family name, core family values
 - Keeping negative influences out
- * Competitive edge

Change:

- * Develop the downtown and riverfront to include:
 - Massive improvement of Zacate Creek, a riverwalk and and a barge that goes up and down the river carrying tourists
 - Tourist shops, coffee shops
 - Removing cars from street and closing of streets to increase pedestrian access
 - Planting trees
 - Improving buildings
 - Activities that get people walking and socializing downtown
 - Riverfront Mall demolished and a condominium development built to bring people back downtown (have amenities and park already there)
 - Activities that bring college kids and elderly people downtown
 - A transportation system that takes people crossing the border to the mall to shop
 - Light rail system that gets people back and forth across the
 - Development of massive downtown parking
- * Initiate a massive program to cleanup, develop, and protect the creeks
- * Develop a long term plan so that all the creeks are like spokes coming into a giant central park system at the river
- * Require the donation of creek land as part of development

- * Eliminate the prohibition of the water line extensions outside the City limits so we can bring more land into the City for growth
- * Make home ownership possible for more people in the community
- * Extend water lines to open up more land for development
- * Change City Charter to allow us to determine where roadways need to go and construct them versus waiting for developers go build them so we have more control over development
- * Revisit the state law as it relates to colonias
 - Give residents vouchers to buy the land they occupy
 - Take to the developers options to City owned land that they would acquire through a lottery under the condition that they would hold the ceiling price at an affordable level
- * Team up with the County (if necessary) to dredge Lake Casa Blanca and to do a structural analysis of the dam to determine its ability to retain water and to increase water impoundment. Take the Unitech effluent and run it down through the tributaries on Chacon Creek to provide a natural filtering system and to produce a constant stream in the creek.
- * Make sure the City's land use ordinance requires developers to donate their vega land to the City so that we will have a greenbelt
- * Have better police coverage, increased visibility, and response time by increasing manpower
- * Move to precinct policing versus our current "pitstops"
- * Dedicate a larger portion of the property tax to pay for public safety improvements in the community
- * Work on change at the State level to improve the City's ability to get a larger portion of collected municipal fines so that these funds stay in the City
- * Work at the State level to change the sales tax exemption given to Mexican citizens so that the City can receive more taxes
- * Change the City Charter to make the municipal court judge appointed and make the parking fine process administrative
- * Anticipate the growth of the City by planning for overpasses and adding a rail bridge to eliminate congestion
- * Develop outer loop to highway standards going from the proposed area to the proposed 5th bridge
- * More access to the Mines Road areas to I35
- * Redevelop warehouse areas currently along the Union Pacific and Tex-Mex railroads
- * Create a system where developers that don't have enough land to donate for park space can contribute to a park development fund
- * No park less than 25 acres
- * Protect existing creek areas by insuring that creeks are buffered from warehouses and future development
- * Keep warehouses from being built on the west side of the Mines Road area
- * Finish developing our parks, including the Father Magnable Park

- * Alexander Park - leverage and capitalize on funds to move the City to the next level and to create economic development opportunities
- * Construct an administrative office building downtown for the consolidation of all city offices, with an allowance for future expansion
- * Realign major streets on Mines Road off Flecha and Las Cruces and Bristol and San Lorenzo
- * Extend River Bank Road from Deerfield subdivision to Indian Sunset
- * Remove the Zacate Creek sewer plant so we can make improvements to the area
- * Expand the Civic Center to add meeting rooms and additional parking
- * Create a stronger partnership with the Laredo Development Foundation that defines expectations and includes regular reporting; consider increased funding to LDF
- * Work more closely with the school districts to leverage our resources and open up recreational facilities that will benefit both schools and the City
- * Work toward having one central airport for the two Laredos using the Laredo Airport as the principal airport for the two communities. Create two separate airports that include one for cargo that can run 24 hours a day, leaving the other for passengers. Buffer both.

Laredo City Council Planning Retreat					
June 27-29, 2002					
MBTI					
June 28, 2002					
Alfredo Agredano	I	S 41	T 27	J 39	SJ
Johnny Amaya	I 17	S 57	T 47	J 47	SJ
Gene Belmares	E 23	S 41	T 47	J 45	SJ
Elizabeth Flores	E 15	S 11	F	P 11	SP
John Galo	I	S	T	P	SP
Hector Garcia	E 9	N 9	T 37	P 25	NT
Juan Ramirez	I 13	S 37	F 9	J 19	SJ
Eliseo Valdez	E 35	S 17	F 9	J 19	SJ
Jose Valdez	I	S	F	P	SP
Larry Dovalina	E 11	S 27	T 61	P 27	SP
Cynthia Collazo	I 17	S 27	T 57	P 11	SP
Jessica Hein	I 11	S 19	T 37	J 23	SJ

Developing Strategic Targets

**for the
Laredo City Council's Vision**

Focus Question:

What themes should dominate our focus as a City Council for the next 20 years in order for Laredo to achieve its full potential in the year 2020?

Strategic Targets:

Downtown/Riverfront Revitalization

Diversification of the Economy

Clean City

Social Infrastructure

Inland Port: Whatever It Takes

Well-Planned Infrastructure

Government Services

Public Safety

Council Subgroup Action Planning:

1. Strategic Target
2. Goals (with Objectives and/or Ideas)
3. Timeframe (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 10-20 years)

Downtown/Riverfront Revitalization
Betty Flores, Juan Rivera, Alfredo Agredano

1. Develop a structure and staffing to insure that downtown/riverfront revitalization achieves its full potential.

- * Acquire staffing (this budget period)
- * Develop comprehensive downtown plan (end of 2003)
- * Develop relationships that connect the public and private sector
- * Gain access to grants and other funding

2. Develop the downtown/riverfront so that we enhance our economic base, enhance tourism, and improve our quality of life.

- * Acquire land to develop massive parking capacity (0-5)

- * Relocate Zacate wastewater plant (10-20)
- * Remove odors (0-5)
- * Continue to work with Mexico to beautify and improve traffic issues (0-5)
- * Develop light rail system (10-20)
- * Remove railroad lines (20+)
- * Eliminate abandoned warehouses (5-10)
- * Develop a strategy to put multifamily, high rise housing downtown (end of 2003)
- * Develop strategy to significantly enhance tourism (0-5)

Diversification of the Economy

Betty Flores, Juan Rivera, Alfredo Agredano

1. Initiate partnerships with educational institutions, agencies, and organizations to insure

that children are being prepared for current and future needs in Laredo.

- * Increase funding to LDF to achieve identified goals (this budget period)
- * Expand training capacity using all resources (0-5)
- * Identify a stable fund for workforce training, including scholarships (0-5)

2. Expand our position as a regional medical center.

- * Establish a Veterans Hospital in Laredo (0-5)
- * Create workforce development strategy for success as a medical center (0-5)
- * Continue to develop amenities that attract qualified medical professionals (0-5)

3. Diversity economy in all areas of Laredo to decrease traffic, stimulate the economy, and

to enable people to work close to home. (Need specific objectives below)

- * Create incentives for business
- * Improve infrastructure (roads, parks, sidewalks)
- * Develop entertainment and recreation

Clean City

Joe Valdez, Hector Garcia, Jessica Hein

1. Promote clean air in Laredo

- * Pursue emissions control strategies
- * Continue CNG or H2O safer efforts with technological improvements
- * Object to inspection stations

2. Create a trash-free city

- * Have the Environmental Services Department create and lead a comprehensive

- strategy for a trash-free city (0-5)
- * Enhance recycling efforts to insure that we are recycling 50% of all trash (5-10)
- * Create ordinance to eliminate plastic bags and require recyclable bags and non-returnable containers (0-5)
- * Create ordinance that requires all commercial development to have adequate receptacles and cleanup programs or face continuing fines (0-5)
- * Implement I35 and downtown trash reduction strategy (0-5)
- * Instill civic pride (10+)

3. Eliminate/address the City's current environmental challenges.

- * Laredo Airforce Base (0-5)
- * Implement massive program to cleanup, protect, and develop creeks (10+)
- * Revisit requirements for developers related to environmental issues (0-5)
- * Develop plan to monitor private areas under court order/TNRCC regulations (0-5)
- * Develop a strategy to eliminate selling on right-of-ways (0-5)

4. Develop an innovative beautification program that enables citizens to take pride in our community.

- * Develop strategy to address aesthetic issues (plant trees and tif grass, add sidewalks, underground electrical wires, etc.) (0-5)
- * Amend ordinance to regulate all major public buildings and park areas to place utilities underground (10-20)
- * Seek innovative beautification approaches (include issue of transient population; have residents buy trees for Arbor Day, awards for yard beautification) (0-5)

Social Infrastructure

Joe Valdez, Hector Garcia, Jessica Hein

1. Improve housing opportunities in Laredo

- * Initiate more programs for qualifying applicants
- * Develop more municipal housing (i.e. Thomas Flore Apartments)
- * Take pride in our housing program
- * Stricter guidelines for tenants
- * Develop program to modernize housing utilities (electric appliances to gas appliances; develop policy to assure that both gas and electric are provided)

2. Improve public health

- * Create satellite stations (WIC) to provide basic services that are currently provided only at headquarters (Link all clinics via fiber optics for processing)

- * Build community of medical service facilities

3. Improve parks (Update/align Parks Plan to reflect City Council's strategic goals)

- * Finish existing parks in plan (maintain existing parks, complete usage studies)
- * Revamp existing program for donated land for parks/rec use (turnkey projects)
- * Implement irrigation systems at every existing and proposed park
- * Construct municipal golf course
- * Zoo
- * Waterpark
- * Alexander Park
- * Father McNaboe
- * Create a park improvement fund for donations
- * No park less than 25 acres
- * Create ordinance requiring developers to donate vega land to City for greenbelts

4. Improve recreation centers

- * Insure that new recreation centers have technology/branch library
- * New convention center at center of City
- * Expand current civic center
- * Provide plan to identify recreation centers and parks in all areas
- * Add theatre arts (Majestic)
- * Take over Lake Casa Blanca
- * School districts partnership to utilize their facilities

5. Improve quality of life for our elderly and youth.

- * Implement summer programs to include computer classes, sewing, cooking, movies
- Inland Port: Whatever It Takes

Well-Planned Infrastructure

Eliseo Valdez, Johnny Amaya, Larry Dovalina

Note: Items in this action plan have been bulleted and may be developed as goals and objectives. Additionally, goals and objectives for these strategic targets have been combined, but should might be separated for the final strategic plan.

0-5

- * Traffic synchronization as a capital plan with action components
- * AVI - Non-commercial (north-south)
- * Use of system by NuevoLaredo and Laredo (federal and U.S. and Mexico)
- * River Drive Mall (?) buy in

- * Strategies for continued involvement with trade groups (government agencies, etc.)
- * 5th Bridge (permit, design plans)
- * EL Portal - Light Rail - Riverfront Development
- * Inspection stations at 26 mile or reverse inspection in Mexico
- * Crosstown Bus - HUB - south and north

5-10

- * Cemeteries
- * Outer loop expansion - tie at Rio Bravo
- * Bob Bullock - grade separations (Del Mar, 59, 359, Magana Hein)
- * Industrial Development - La Baranca
- * Water (secondary, surface, other than river, River Casa Blanca (permanent source, long term)
- * Landfill - 100 years
- * Roads - major collectors - better planning - more funding

10+

- * Develop air cargo transport component
- * Move railroad out of town
- * Construct two rail bridges; use old rail bridge for light rail (Use TDOT money allocated for rail separation for construction of rail improvements)
- * Double rail inside City limits
- * Redevelop former rail properties for housing opportunities
- * Light rail

Institutionalize our plan

Government Services

Gene Belmares, John Galo, Cindy Collazo

1. Revise the City Charter (0-5)

- * Municipal Court Judge (qualifications)
- * Utility extensions
- * Clearly define the role and responsibilities of the Mayor and Council
- * Prohibit City employees from seeking financial gain from city projects, events, and contracts
- * Vendor responsibility to the City (taxes, fees, fines, etc. in relation to future or existing contracts)

2. Improve and enhance customer services at all levels of government (0-5)

- * One stop and online shop

- * City Hall annex (multiple)
- * Possible use of community centers
- * Public/private partnership (i.e. pay station, H.E.B., etc.)
- * Consolidation of taxing entities

3. Create a stronger Code Enforcement Division (0-5)

- * Cross training
- * Under "one roof"
- * Increase funding
- * Increase public education
- * Increase citizen participation (i.e. TIPS program)
- * Develop air patrol schedule to assist with code enforcement on quarterly basis

4. Increase City funding through multiple sources (0-5)

- * Create a fire district fund
- * Municipal fines retention (from all law enforcement, i.e. DPS @ bridge)
- * Percentage of duties
- * Manifesto fee
- * Create additional enterprises
 - Electric billboards on bridge
 - Law enforcement/fire training center
- * Aggressive pursuit of grants (public and private)
- * Reimbursement of City provided services by federal and state agencies
- * Sponsor legislation to have class C's brought to Municipal Court

5. Grow LDF into a well-funding economic development corporation. (0-5)

- * Increase funding
- * Increase City participation
- * Widen the scope (clarify expectations, goals, and reporting)

6. Add individual staff to address council members needs (i.e. speeches, presentations, coordination, constituent response, scheduling)

Note: Address mail system at City Hall

7. Improve relationship with Metro Government (0-5)

- * Coordinate and streamline services between political subdivisions (schools, County, and Texas)
- * Implement better communication and planning processes between same
- * Create check-off list for interlocal developments (i.e. new schools)

Public Safety

Gene Belmares, John Galo, Cindy Collazo

1. Create a world class fire and public safety training facility (0-5)
 - * Acquire additional acreage (700 acres) to offer greater number of training services for all levels of law and fire agencies
 - * Create aggressive marketing program to develop revenues for self sustenance
 - * Create a long range grant/funding program to continue expansion and development

2. Review and create a well-defined and funded COPS station program. (0-5)
 - * Tie in a community participation program
 - * Reactivate neighborhood watch program
 - * Create a speed watch program
 - * Develop interlocal agreement with schools for traffic assistance

3. Create an air patrol program (0-5)
 - * Interlocal with state and federal agencies
 - * Identify funding sources outside of G.F.

4. Create a long range fire station location plan to assess future needs (0-5)
 - * Develop funding/budget plan
 - * Market or promote public/private "buy-in"
 - * Identify possible grants (public/private)

5. Develop long range security plan for bridges, airports, and water system (0-5, 10+)
 - * Develop funding/budget plan
 - * Identify funding sources, grants, reimbursements from agencies
 - * Coordinate plan with all law enforcement agencies (MSA/USA)
 - * Identify and address strengths and weaknesses
 - * Review Emergency Response Plan to add potential threats

Laredo City Council Follow Up Plan Timetable Identified on June 29, 2002	
Follow Up Item	Due Date
1. Facilitator will send initial draft of plan to the City Administration and it will be distributed to the City Council	Week of July 1, 2002
2. Mayor and City Council will review the initial plan draft and provide feedback to City Administration.	July 2002

