

VISION & GOALS

One of the most significant components of the Comprehensive Plan is developing a vision for the future and a set of goals to achieve that vision.

A vision statement is a declaration of an organization’s objectives. The goals provide concrete direction divided into attainable outcomes for identified elements or characteristics.

The 2020 Vision Statement for Harlingen was: *To be the International Leader of Excellence in Medicine, Industry, Transportation, Government and Education within a Thriving, Multicultural Community.*

The Vision Statement that guides this Comprehensive Plan builds on the 2020 vision while incorporating the input of Harlingen residents generated during this planning process.

The vision statement focuses on three key points:

1. Enhancing existing, measurable strengths such as public safety, higher education, beautification and other intangibles so to establish the best quality of life in the region;
2. Aggressively pursuing topnotch, high wage and diverse employment opportunities for City of Harlingen residents while equally placing importance on expanding and attracting industry; and
3. Working cohesively to create the future Harlingen with an understanding that in doing so requires the utmost effort and certain resources.

The Harlingen of tomorrow will be a wonderful place to live, learn, work, visit and play.

Harlingen has a strong economy, friendly neighborhoods, innovative schools, great parks, beautiful natural areas and a vibrant downtown.

Our City’s core areas, our reputation as a safe community and our strong transportation systems, cohesively work to support an abundant quality of life for residents.

Harlingen will continue striving to be a clean, beautiful and attractive destination for visitors and an appealing place to live for both new and existing residents of all ages and cultures.

Building on our core strengths, we will be known as a city focused on creating excellent job and career opportunities for residents. We welcome new investment in our community.

We remain leaders in transportation, healthcare, education and technology. We will have a far-reaching impact with our global and innovative thinking.

Working together, we dedicate our resources to create the Harlingen of the future.



Excellent Location and Transportation Systems



Valley International Airport



Strong Medical and Health Care Sector



Retail Sector



Downtown and the surrounding core areas



One of a kind natural resources including the Arroyo Colorado



Excellent Parks

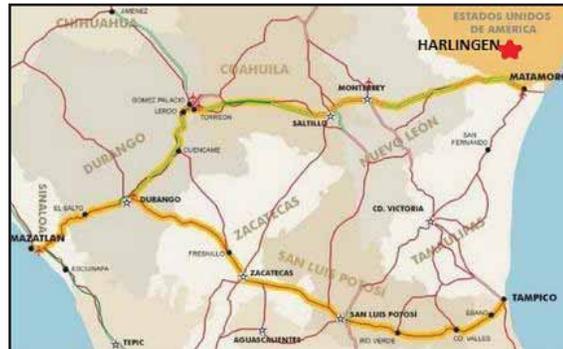
PROMOTING THE VISION

The seven key strengths that promote the vision of Harlingen are described on the following pages. These elements contribute to the high quality of life in Harlingen and serve as basis from which the vision and goals were developed.



Transportation Network

Harlingen has a good existing transportation framework at the crossroads of I-2 and I-69E. Tying into the new international infrastructure in Mexico will enhance logistic markets.



Mexico's new Pacific to Gulf of Mexico Highway can increase usage of the border crossing at Los Indios



Harlingen's roadways generally have significant capacity and create a strong framework for growth



Valley International Airport

Harlingen's airport provides a strong engine for economic growth, with excellent service, facilities, and expansion capabilities.



An aerial view of the airport.



The main entrance to Valley International Airport.
Source: Harlingen Economic Development Corporation



Medical and Health Sector

The medical industry in Harlingen represents a significant sector of the economy. Home to some of the area’s best medical facilities, health care is one of Harlingen’s greatest strengths.



Veterans administration health care center. Source: Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System, Rio Grande Valley sector management advisory council presentation



Valley baptist health system. Source: Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System, Rio Grande Valley sector management advisory council presentation



Retail

Harlingen has a growing regional retail sector. With the Harlingen Corners, Cameron Crossings, Valle Vista Mall, LIn-Dix Commercial Park, Val Commercial Catalyst, and significant room to grow, the area around the I-2 and I-69E corridor is poised to become a regional retail and entertainment hub.



New Bass Pro Shop in Harlingen. Source: City of Harlingen



Downtown Harlingen



Downtown and the Core Areas of Harlingen

The vital core area and downtown establish a unique identity for the city and have significant opportunities to be further developed and enhanced.



Jackson Street District. Source: City of Harlingen



One of the many murals in Downtown Harlingen. Source: City of Harlingen



The Arroyo Colorado flows throughout Harlingen.



Natural Areas and the Arroyo Colorado

The Arroyo offers a one-of-a-kind natural feature that runs east-west along the entire length of the city. It offers unmatched and close-in access to trails and natural areas from almost anywhere in the city. Lands adjacent to the Arroyo can leverage that proximity to create new one-of-a-kind developments.



Parks

Harlingen has a strong park system and a growing trail system, with a great variety of park amenities that offer something for everyone.



Hugh Ramsey Park, a component of the Valley-wide World Birding Center.



Ground breaking ceremony for new playground at C.B. Wood Park on Harding Ave. Source: City of Harlingen

GOALS

Goal statements begin to articulate how the vision expressed at the beginning of this section will be accomplished. The goals below describe a desired outcome for each key plan element. The accompanying objectives provide more specific insight into how to achieve the stated goal. Actions related to each of these goals and objectives are outlined in Chapter 2.

Economic Growth

Goal Statement:

“Harlingen will have a strong, diverse and sustainable economy that provides quality job opportunities for its residents and that makes the city a great place to live and work.”

Objective 1 Continue to aggressively pursue economic growth opportunities for the city.

Objective 2 Strengthen the city’s economic infrastructure.

Objective 3 Continue to target quality of life features that make Harlingen an attractive place to live.

Objective 4 Ensure that Harlingen remains an attractive investment choice.



Source: City of Harlingen

“A city is not an accident but the result of coherent visions and aim.”

Leon Krier

The Architecture of Community

Transportation

Goal Statement:

“Harlingen will continue to maintain and create excellent regional and local transportation options that enhance the character of the city and provide for all modes of travel.”

Objective 1 Plan for strong regional roadway connectivity.

Objective 2 Plan for greater local connectivity.

Objective 3 As a key community identity effort, improve the appearance of key roadways and streets to serve as gateways and major aesthetic corridors through the city.

Objective 4 In key areas, provide options for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Objective 5 Continue to strengthen Harlingen’s other transportation systems, such as Valley International Airport, rail facilities, Los Indios and the Port of Harlingen.



Source: City of Harlingen

Drainage & Utilities

Goal Statement:

“Harlingen will continue to work towards reducing the impact of flooding on the residents of Harlingen.”

Objective 1 Continue to exercise sound management for floodplain areas and stormwater drainage throughout Harlingen.

Objective 2 Maintain, improve and efficiently utilize existing drainage and flood protection infrastructure.

Objective 3 Coordinate future growth with efficient drainage infrastructure



Source: City of Harlingen

Community Identity

Goal Statement:

"The City of Harlingen, all of its residents and developers will foster a one-of-a kind image, building on the city's unique assets and constantly seeking to improve the appearance of the city. The image of the city will be considered in everything that both public and private developments in Harlingen."

Objective 1 Project a distinctive, attractive and consistent image in and along public spaces throughout the city

Objective 2 Improve the image of buildings throughout the city.

Objective 3 Expand cultural amenities and events.



Source: City of Harlingen

Parks

Goal Statement:

"Harlingen will continue to build on its exceptional system of parks, trails and indoor recreation facilities to promote the city's reputation as an excellent place to live and visit."

Objective 1 Focus on enhancing and upgrading existing parks throughout the city.

Objective 2 Continue to develop a citywide network of trails for both recreation and transportation.

Objective 3 Continue to expand facilities that create economic development and tourism opportunities.

Objective 4 Pursue park opportunities for growing areas of the city that currently are underserved.

Objective 5 Pursue opportunities for indoor recreation facilities.

Objective 6 Pursue park opportunities on the emerging West side of Harlingen.



Source: City of Harlingen

Housing and Neighborhoods

Goal Statement:

“Neighborhoods everywhere in Harlingen, both in the Core Areas of the city and in the fast growing areas, will provide a wide range of housing types. No matter their age, income or family size, anyone will be able to find housing in great neighborhoods that retain and grow in value over time. Harlingen will be known for its excellent housing choices.”

Objective 1 Protect and enhance existing neighborhoods throughout Harlingen.

Objective 2 Promote the development of unique housing types and housing locations that stand out in the region.

Objective 3 Focus on revitalizing neighborhoods within the Core Areas of Harlingen.



Source: City of Harlingen

Civic Facilities and Buildings

Goal Statement:

“Harlingen will provide civic facilities and buildings that provide high levels of customer service, allow for excellent staff performance, and that serve the needs of the community. Civic buildings will inspire community pride, but will also be models for our community in terms of cost effectiveness and energy efficiency.”

Objective 1 Assess current and future space needs.

Objective 2 Create a new “one-stop” City Hall for Harlingen.

Objective 3 Address current and future recreation and community center needs.

Objective 4 Continue to consider major civic/convention center needs.



Source: City of Harlingen

Education

Goal Statement:

"Harlingen will work with area educational entities at all levels to provide first-class learning opportunities for all residents. Ranging from early childhood learning to vocational and college degrees and even lifelong learning and continuing education, Harlingen will be known for the quality of education in the city."

Objective 1 Support all area educational entities such as, HCISD, TSTC, UTRGV and the Medical School as they pursue opportunities to improve facilities and programs.



Source: City of Harlingen

Public Safety

Goal Statement:

"Harlingen will provide first-class police and fire protection, providing the city's residents with a high level of confidence in safety."

Objective 1 Address fire protection needs for the growth areas of the city.

Objective 2 Support and maintain a high quality police department.



Source: City of Harlingen

THE FUTURE

Harlingen's future is bright - The city has many significant strengths to work with, ranging from its strategic location, its excellent roadway infrastructure, and its accessibility to the natural beauty of the Arroyo Colorado. The city has challenges that also have to be addressed, and foremost among those is what strategic steps are most important, which to tackle first, and how to fund those actions. Plan Elements discussed in this section include:

- Economic Growth
- Transportation
- Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space
- Housing & Neighborhoods
- Community Character, Identity & Image
- Civic Facilities and Buildings
- Education
- Public Safety
- Special Character Districts require specific discussion as Key Focus Areas including: (1) Downtown and the Core Areas of Harlingen; (2) Medical; (3) Valley International Airport-- Aerotropolis; (4) Regional Retail & Entertainment; (5) Emerging West Harlingen; and (6) Arroyo Colorado.

This section discusses recommendations for a wide variety of community elements. Each has its own key needs, but all are intertwined and collectively work to accomplish the goals and vision identified earlier in this chapter.

The goals, objectives, and recommendations in this section create the foundation for guiding future decisions and development. They are intended to be integrated with other more detailed plans. They provide consistency and predictability in day-to-day decision making by city staff as well as policy making by Harlingen's City Commission and other boards. The components of each element are described as follows.

Goal

A goal describes the desired outcome for a plan element. It is different from a vision in that it speaks directly about the element.

Objective

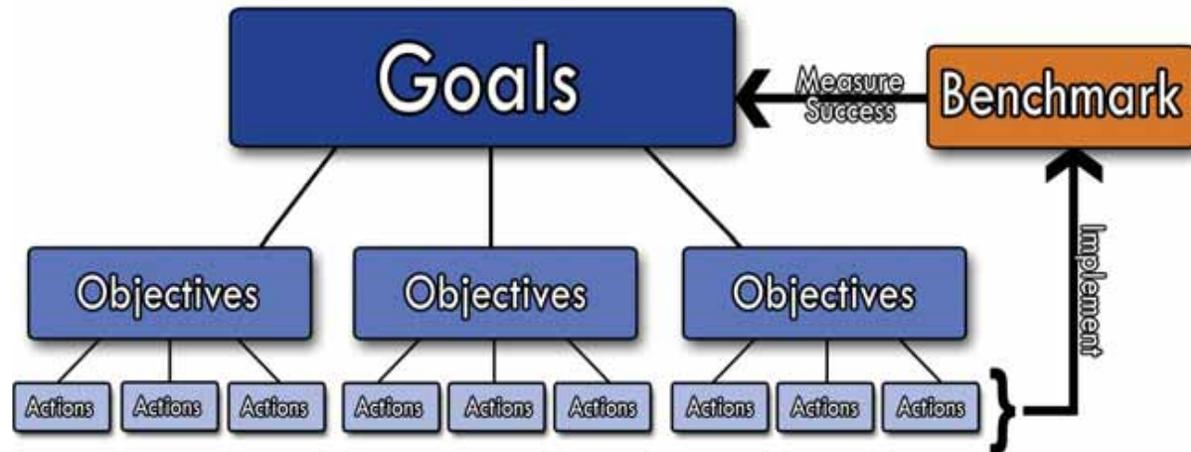
Objectives are identified statements or policies that work toward the element goal. They are more specific than the goal and address particular issues related to the element to achieve the desired goal.

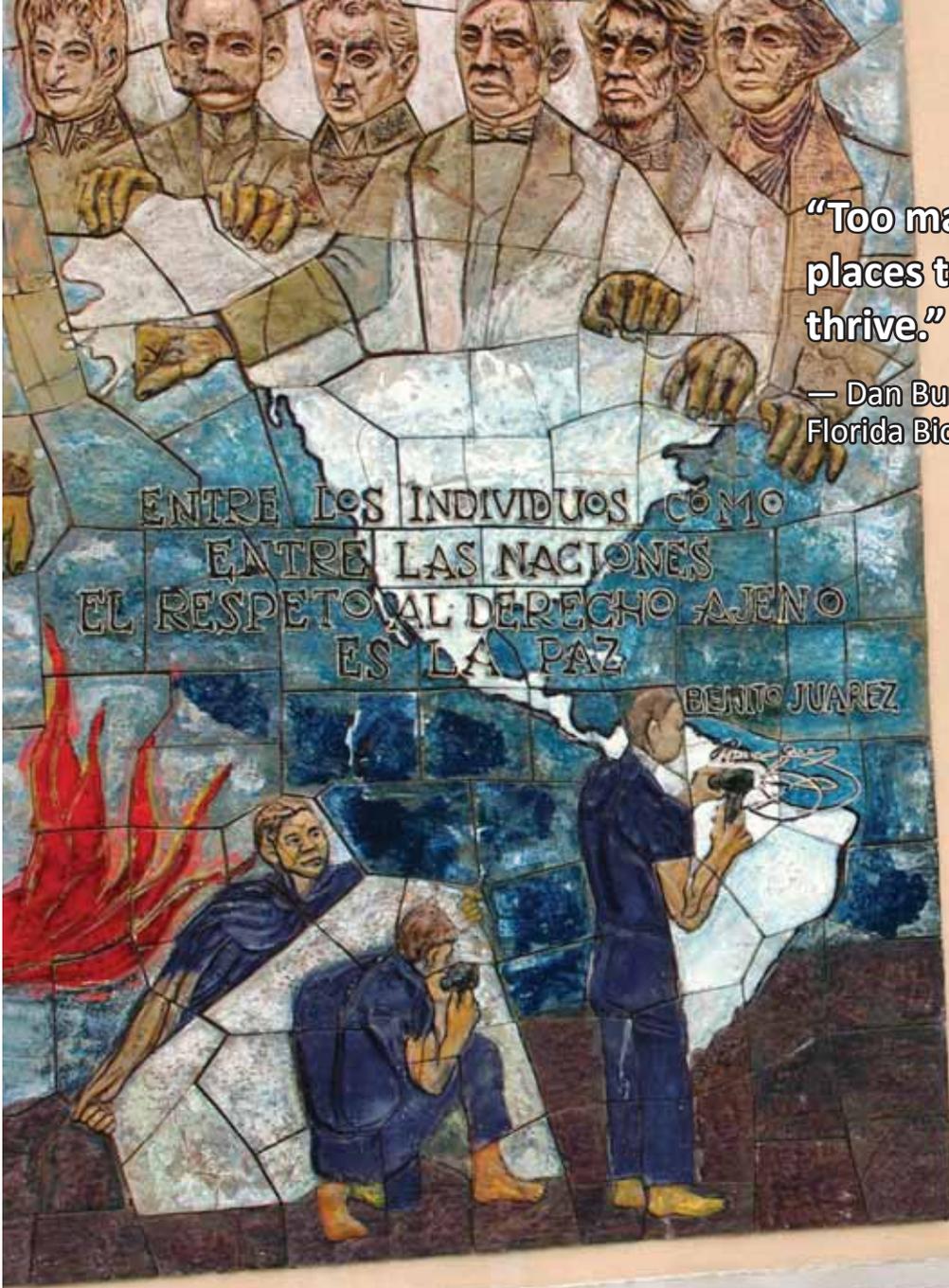
Action

Actions include specific strategies or steps to take in order to reach an objective. Action items are specific enough to include a recommended timeframe for implementation, partners or agencies for implementation, and, in some cases, a potential cost.

Benchmark

A benchmark is a target measure which the objectives and actions are working toward. It measures progress in achieving the goal over time.





“Too many cities in America have become places to survive. We need more places to thrive.”

— Dan Burden
Florida Bicycle Facilities Planning and Design Handbook, 1997



The Monument to the Liberators of the Americas, being built by stonecutters, embraces the American hemisphere. Left to right: Jose San Martin (Argentina), Jose Marti (Cuba), Simon Bolivar (Venezuela), Benito Juarez (Mexico), Abraham Lincoln and George Washington (United States of America).

In the representation and scale and technology, figures and cooperation of the US.

