

# Aransas County Long Term Recovery Economic Development

## **Goal:**

To form an economic development organization and establish formal partnerships, contractual arrangements, and funding sources (public and private).

## **Purpose of an EDC:**

- To encourage, stimulate, and promote economic development, expansion, and diversification within the Rockport-Fulton, Aransas County, Texas area
- To lessen the burdens of government by creating a larger tax base for the benefit of all residents of the area.
- To be a catalyst for economic growth; achieve sustainable, high quality economic development success.
- To help the community speak with one voice, grow, expand, and attract targeted businesses to Aransas County through its planning, services, and support.

## **Need:**

- Diversify our economy in order to attract higher paying jobs and grow the middle class
- Perform planning studies to identify ways to strategically direct our efforts and resources:
  - Perform an asset inventory and market analysis
  - Identify targeted market/industries that meet the needs of our community
  - Create Marketing Plan to attract those targeted industries
  - Identify and implement workforce development needs
  - Make strategic investments in community assets
- Hire staff member; leverage existing Chamber resources
- One stop shop for Economic Development to aid in the recovery process

## **Budget:**

\$150,000 per year for three years; work toward long-term dedicated funding

## **Plan of Execution:**

- Community-wide support by citizenry, business, and all local jurisdictions
- Develop bylaws for an ED organization (501c3 or 501c6)
- Formation of the Board of Directors
- Hiring Staffing
- Work the already approved Long Term Recovery Plan
- Leverage recovery and Economic Dev. Administration Grants for Planning Activities
- Establish performance measures

**Please attend the following EDC Community Input Sessions:**

**EDC Community Input Evening Session**

**Tuesday, February 5, 2019**

**5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.**

**RFHS Commons**

**Free and Open to the Public**

**EDC Community Input Luncheon Session**

**Tuesday, February 12, 2019**

**11:30 a.m to 1 p.m.**

**Rockport Country Club**

**\$20 for members, \$25 for non-members - Open to the Public**

**Please feel free to give input to the following email at any time:**

**[executiveassistant@1rockport.org](mailto:executiveassistant@1rockport.org)**

**Please rest assured your input is valued. Every effort will be made to incorporate all input into the plan. It is the desire of all involved to revive the economy of the Rockport-Fulton area back to what it was before Hurricane Harvey and better.**

## GLOSSARY

TTIA- Texas Travel Industry Association  
TEDC - Texas Economic Development Council  
County - Aransas County Commissioners' Court  
CoR - City of Rockport  
ToF - Town of Fulton  
Rebuild Tx - Rebuild Texas  
RTF - Rebuild Texas Fund, a Michael & Susan Dell and the One Star Foundation Fund  
LiftFund - Microloans setup for businesses for Hurricane Harvey  
USDA - United States Department of Agriculture  
ACND - Aransas County Navigation District  
ACISD - Aransas County Independent School District  
RCAD - Rockport Cultural Arts District  
RCA - Rockport Center for the Arts  
TDC - Tourism Development Council  
Jeff Hunt of ICF - Philanthropic contributor to the Comeback Campaign  
SBDC - Small Business Development Center  
People Fund - Loans available to Small Businesses  
EDC Council - Economic Development Council  
EDC Committee - Economic Development Committee  
EDC Corporation - Economic Development Corporation 501 c 6  
EDC Foundation - Economic Development Foundation 501 c 3  
LTRT - Long Term Recovery Team  
EDA - Economic Development Administration  
APA - American Planning Association  
CBDG-DR - Community Block Development Grants - Disaster Relief  
PA - Public Assistance  
TIRZ - Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone  
TX Capital Fund - Texas Capital Fund for Economic Development  
TPWD - Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
TPW Foundation - Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation  
KACB - Keep Aransas County Beautiful  
Aransas Pathways - Aransas Pathways, a county program for building venues  
RESTORE Act - Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and  
Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast  
HUD - Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Stakeholder - an individual interested in and/or key to the effort

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Action Plan**

| <b>Priority #1: Rebuild &amp; Expand Existing / Build New Local Attractions and Venues</b> |  | <b>Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation</b>                              | <b>Integrated Use of Other Funds</b>  | <b>Timing</b>     |
|--|--|--|---|-------------------|
| <b>Assess Resources and Complete Planning</b>  |  |  |   |                   |
| Action #1  | Conduct community asset inventory  | Local Tourism Council  | Texas Tourism Council In-Kind   | May 2018          |
| Action #2  | Work with non-profit attractions, hotels, and restaurants to facilitate rebuilding and seek funding based upon priority  | County, CoR, ToF, CoC  | Rebuild Tx, Lyft Fund, USDA   | Apr 2018-Dec 2019 |
| Action #3  | Address pier restorations (private and public)   | tbd  | tbd   | 2020              |
| Action #4  | Solicit technical assistance (community assessment) by the Texas Department of Tourism to explore enhancement of existing venues and possibility of new venues (ex: ballfields for tournaments, zipline, expanded winery, brewery, theater, kayaking, paddleboarding) and ecotourism. Seek funding for recommended projects  | Local Tourism Council  | Tx Dept of Tourism  | Feb-Aug 2018      |
| Action #5  | Create a Design Manual and execute common theming/brand for public facilities, beach facilities, parks, and private sector buildings as they are rebuilt and newly built.<br>-- Incorporate streetscape, landscape, signage, banners, buildings.<br>-- Establish a process to ensure execution by all parties (public and private).  | ACND, Rockport, Fulton, County, COC, non-profits, Tourism Council & RCAD Teams | Planning grant (EDA), donations, landscape architect, Texas APA, private sector | May-July 2018     |
| Action #6  | Adopt multi-jurisdictional Incentives Policy to attract venues and specialty retail (public & private)   | CoR, ToF, County, Tourism, EDC, ACND   | Technical Assistance from LTRT  | Summer-Fall 2018  |
| Action #7  | Evaluate updated Retail Leakage report and develop an execution plan   | New EDC if established   | Private sector in-kind donation   | 2019              |
| Action #8  | Conduct business needs assessment to facilitate more business re-openings; coordinate cohesive downtown business hours and interests   | Short Term Teams, CoC, EDC   | Staff and volunteer in-kind   | 2018-2019         |
| <b>Priority #1: Rebuild &amp; Expand Existing / Build New Local Attractions and Venues</b> |  | <b>Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation</b>                              | <b>Integrated Use of Other Funds</b>  | <b>Timing</b>     |
| <b>Develop City/Town Centres to Generate Foot Traffic and New Business Attraction</b>      |  |  |   |                   |
| Action #1  | Develop, review, update Master Plans:<br>--Consolidate the Heritage District, Cultural Arts District, and Harborfront Plans into one cohesive plan.<br>--Include mixed use (housing, retail, office, city hall, county courthouse, cultural arts/heritage facility(s) etc), and mixed income.<br>--Develop a master plan for downtown Fulton to preserve its charm           | ACND, CoR, ToF, County, COC, non-profits, Tourism Council                      | Planning grant (EDA) & Texas Planning Assn (in-kind)                            | 2018-2019         |
| Action #2  | Develop arts, meeting and event venues to anchor the Districts:<br>--Develop and operate an arts/performing arts/conference center in the Cultural Arts/City Center District serving multiple arts, culture, and historic non-profit groups in the region.<br>--Rebuild the Fulton Special Events Center to increase business (weddings, reunions, special events, concerts. | All arts/culture, nonprofits; Tourism Council, CoR, ToF, RCA                   | Matching funds of 20% for EDA grant; PA, EDA, CBDG-DR                           | 2018-2020         |
| Action #3  | Pursue County Courthouse and City Hall co-location and related plaza   | CoR, County  | PA, Gov, Insurance, USDA, Mit   | 2018-2020         |
| Action #4  | Focus on working with the private sector and individual property owners to unify interests and pursuits.   | CoR, ToF, COC, ACND, non-profits, Tourism Council                              | Private sector, TIF   | 2019              |

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| Action #5  | Construct District/ Downtown / City/Town Centre Improvements:<br>--Rockport Harbor Boardwalk and Marina and related boat traffic improvements; explore sea plane project<br>--Infrastructure, landscape, streetscape, street lighting, safety signs, street signs, signage, restrooms, pedestrian improvements/safety<br>--Construct small venues (water feature for kids, playground etc)<br>--Public parking<br>--Reconstruct pier<br>--Prepare all documents and process to create a TIF | ACND, CoR, ToF, County, COC Team, bond counsel    | Planning grant, improvement grants, loans, TIRZ, EDA, USDA, PA, Tx Capital Fund, Tx Parks & Wildlife & TPW Foundation | 2018-2022                    |
| <b>Priority #1: Rebuild / Build New Local Attractions and Venues - con't</b>                 |   | <b>Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation</b> | <b>Integrated Use of Other Funds</b>  | <b>Timing</b>                |
| <b>Develop City/Town Centres to Generate Foot Traffic &amp; New Business Attraction cont</b> |   |   |   |                              |
| Action #6  | Hold group beautification and repair events. Include minor improvements to public and private infrastructure and buildings - "Extreme District Makeover"  | Short Term Teams, CoR, ToF                        | CoR, ToF  | 1 block every 6 months       |
| Action #7  | Execute beautification projects in accordance with the design standards manual to enhance sense of place  | Short Term Teams, Keep AC Beautiful               | CoR, ToF, Keep Tx Beautiful, private sector donations   | 2019-2024                    |
| Action #8  | Link/loop all venues with trails and or wide sidewalks within and outside the District. Address disconnects, bottlenecks, and conflicts.  | Aransas Pathways                                  | Grants, TIF, Tx Parks & Wildlife, TxDot   | 2018-2024                    |
| Action #9  | Address downtown flooding issues  | CoR, ToF, County                                  | Mitigation funding, USDA, Restore   | 2018 plan; 2019/20 execution |
| Action #10   | Consider combined arts incubator/housing initiative   | COC, CoR, County, RCAD, RCA Team                  | As per CAD and Housing Plan   | 2020                         |

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| <b>Priority #2: Explore Diversifying the Economy with New Target Markets and Address Necessary "Infrastructure" To Support</b> |   | <b>Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation</b> | <b>Integrated Use of Other Funds</b>                       | <b>Timing</b> |
| Action #1  | Form an economic development organization and establish formal partnerships, contractual arrangements, and funding sources. | COC, CoR, ToF, County                             | Tx ED Council, Bus. Reps, County, ACND, ISD, COC, CoR, ToF | Summer 2018   |

|  |  |                                  |                               |                    |
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| <b>Address Workforce Needs and Development</b> |  |                                  |                               |                    |
| Action #1                                      | Assess workforce skillsets and develop training programs to support target industry; Coordinate with Regional resources and institutions   | EDC, COC, ISD, Regional Colleges | COC, USDA, ISD                | Fall 2018 -2021    |
| Action #2                                      | Execute Workforce Housing Plan goals and tactics to bring employees back. Recognize that workforce is the #1 factor for business locations | CoR, ToF, County, LTRT           | tbd                           | Sum 2018-2023      |
| Action #3                                      | Develop and execute a marketing strategy for workforce recruitment   | EDC, COC, LTRT                   | tbd                           | Sum 2018           |
| Action #4                                      | Hold regional housing and jobs fair (loans, credit counseling, down pmt)   | COC, HUD, LTR Team               | \$1,000 CoR, ToF, County, HUD | Apr 2018, Aug 2018 |

|   |  |                           |                                 |                            |
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| <b>Analyze Business Recruitment Readiness and Take Actions to Address</b> |  |                           |                                 |                            |
| Action #1   | Work with the Texas Economic Development Corporation to identify new target market industries to stabilize through economic cycles   | COC, EDC, TEDC            | Tx Economic Dev Council In-kind | Fall 2018                  |
| Action #2   | Adopt multi-jurisdictional Incentives Policy for redevelopment and development   | Cities, County, ACND Team | COC, LTRT staffing              | May 2018                   |
| Action #3   | Perform Comprehensive Analysis of business site selection factors / considerations and update Economic Development Plan accordingly (see attachment "A" for details)<br>--Business and operating conditions<br>--Geographically variable costs<br>--Real estate / site<br>--Business risks | EDC, COC                  | EDC Committee work              | Winter/ spring Winter 2019 |
| Action #4   | Establish program to facilitate entrepreneurship   | EDC, COC                  | EDC Committee                   | 2022                       |

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| <b>Priority #2: Explore Diversifying the Economy with New Target Markets and Address Necessary "Infrastructure" To Support - con't</b> |  | <b>Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation</b> | <b>Integrated Use of Other Funds</b> | <b>Timing</b> |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|---------------|

| Address Healthcare Gaps and Needs |  |                   |   |           |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------|---|-----------|
| Action #1                         | Address lack of regional hospital facilities   | County            | Federal CDBG-DR grants, Tx Ag grant, USDA | 2018-2021 |
| Action #2                         | Address loss of retirement facilities:<br>--Inventory and seek rebuilding of existing centers<br>--Recruit new retirement facility providers in the event there is a long term loss of beds. | CoR, County, LTRT | Federal CDBG-DR grants                    | 2020      |

| Leverage and Enhance Aransas County Airport for Tourism and Business Diversification |  |        |             |      |
|--|--|--------|-------------|------|
| Action #1  | Update Airport Layout Plan if needed     | County | TXDOT grant | 2021 |
| Action #2  | Update the Airport Master Plan if needed | County | TXDOT grant | 2022 |

| Evaluate Fire Department Needs to Meet New Target Industry Requirements |   |                        |   |      |
|---|---|------------------------|---|------|
| Action #1   | Evaluate existing fire department resources and capabilities as it relates to target industry needs | EDC, VFD, City, County | Public safety & homeland security grants, CoR | 2024 |

| Address Where Companies Will Locate -Business Parks, Other Sites, and Buildings |   |                       |                       |      |
|---|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|------|
| Action #1   | Consider purchasing property for a business park or consider landbanking of city or county owned property for a business park   | EDC, CoR, County Team | tbd                   | 2020 |
| Action #2   | Consider constructing infrastructure to serve a new business park;<br>--As a new prospect is identified, work with Texas Dept of Agriculture on a Texas Capital Fund grant or EDA grant to extend infrastructure/utilities into the business park | EDC, CoR, County Team | Tx Capital Fund Grant | 2021 |
| Action #3   | Perform a building inventory and make recommendation to address deficits  | EDC, CoC              | Staff                 | 2019 |

| Priority #2: Explore Diversifying the Economy with New Target Markets and Address Necessary "Infrastructure" To Support - con't |  | Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation | Integrated Use of Other Funds | Timing |
|---|--|--|-------------------------------|--------|
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| Pursue Transportation Enhancements to Support Tourism and Business Diversification |   |                       |        |          |
|--|---|-----------------------|--------|----------|
| Action #1  | Review area transportation thoroughfares and pursue local/state improvements; adopt Transportation Plan (multi-modal) | EDC, CoR, County, COG | Staff  | 2023     |
| Action #2  | Address the intersection at Broadway and Business 35 for visitor convenience and safety                               | CoR, County           | TXDOT  | 2021     |
| Action #3  | Continue to pursue multi-modal transportation   | Aransas Pathways      | Grants | On-going |

| #3: Enhance Marketing and Promotion Program to Revitalize Tourism - Targets & Branding |   | Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation | Integrated Use of Other Funds      | Timing                 |
|--|---|--|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Action #1  | Communicate we are "open for business" with specific, current information in multiple media forms<br>--Track hotel availability and actively market information                     | Jeff Hunt of ICF, COC                      | Hotel Motel Funds, Rebuild Tx Fund | Jan-Apr 2018, on-going |
| Action #2  | Solidify brand (ecotourism, short getaways, active/sporting getaways) and identify funding to enhance marketing.  | Jeff Hunt, Short Term Teams                | State Hotel/Motel Grant            | Apr-June 2018          |
| Action #3  | Review tourism website and regional tourism websites; make changes/request changes to reflect targeted marketing message  | COC  | Staff                              | May 2018               |
| Action #4  | Consider pursuing year round tourism; encourage day trips to counter perceptions that there is nothing to do or no place to stay.   | COC  | Staff                              | 2018-2020              |
| Action #5  | Re-establish the venue sign wayfinding program. Inventory all venues and trails; develop and install wayfinding signage. Install promotional maps. Ensure design matches the brand. | Tourism Council, COC, Pathways             | tbd                                | Late 2018, early 2019  |

| Evaluate, Develop and Invest in Expanding Visitor Experience in the Downtown/District/ City/Town Centre Areas |  | Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation | Integrated Use of Other Funds | Timing    |
|---|--|--|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Action #1   | Adopt the Cultural Arts District and Rockport Center for the Arts strategic plans. Incorporate these goals into the Economic Development Plan. | RCAD, RCA, COC, CoR, County                | Staff                         | Fall 2018 |
| Action #2   | Activate Cultural Arts District to act as umbrella for coordinated programs and events in the District   | Cultural Arts District                     | tbd as per CAD Plan           | Fall 2018 |

|           |   |  |                             |                   |
|-----------|---|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Action #3 | Consider developing small, frequent cultural and arts programs and events. Ex: music vignettes, family entertainment, funky theme, chalk/digital graffiti | Cultural Arts District                 | \$20,000 per year           | May 2018-monthly  |
| Action #4 | Infuse more culture & art projects, Ex: mural project, public art sculpture, Harvey memorial structure  | RCAD, RCA                              | tdb as per CAD & RCAD Plans | On-going          |
| Action #5 | Consider new monthly or existing events such as: birding tours, fishing tournaments, harbor stage, auto show, music, drone racing, cruises                | Short Term Teams, Tourism Council, CAD | \$15000 Hotel Motel Funds   | June 2018-monthly |

| and Help With Recovery |  | Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation | Integrated Use of Other Funds           | Timing   |
|------------------------|--|--|---|----------|
| Action #1              | Develop a "VolunTOURing" program by attracting volunteers to spend money and help with recovery. | COC, Short Term Teams                      | Staff                                   | Mar 2018 |
| Action #2              | Develop trip packaging and referrals (lodging, transportation, activities, tours)                | COC, Short Term Teams                      | Staff                                   | May 2018 |
| Action #3              | Adopt marketing program to attract VolunTOURists to established tours.                           | COC, Short Term Teams                      | Network List, College Vol. Coordinators | May 2018 |

| , Support, and Grow Existing Businesses |  | Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation | Integrated Use of Other Funds          | Timing        |
|---|--|--|--|---------------|
| Action #1                               | Develop business recovery "Toolkit" Program based upon survey results.<br>--Assemble business resources based upon assessment (SBDC).<br>--Assemble a team for business outreach.  | COC, Short Term Teams                      | COC, Volunteers, \$td                  | Jan-Sept 2018 |
| Action #2                               | Pursue a grant program to fund building repair and enhancements, flood proofing, mitigation, and equipment   | Mitigation Team                            | Mitigation                             | Jan-Sum 2018  |
| Action #3                               | Coordinate with existing nonprofit loan programs (PeopleFund, Lift) and other funding sources (USDA), to secure funding for business building repair and enhancements, floodproofing, working capital, mitigation, and equipment | COC  | COC, Lift, People Fund, SBDC, CoR, ToF | Jan-Sum 2018  |
| Action #4                               | Provide professional assistance to help cultivate business merchandising, signage, website, and facade   | COC  | COC thru Chamber Academy               | 2019          |
| Action #5                               | Establish a program to address recruiting employees back to the community including addressing housing needs   | COC, CoR, ToF, County                      | COC                                    | Feb-July 2018 |
| Action #6                               | Consider programs for existing business expansion  | COC, CoR, ToF, County                      | TBD                                    | 2021          |

| Pursue Community Quality of Life/ Place / Sense of Place Enhancements         |  | Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation | Integrated Use of Other Funds              | Timing        |
|---|--|--|--|---------------|
| Action #1   | Develop a master plan to enhance quality of place. Focus on gateways and strategic corridors first.<br>--Include strategy to minimize code violations<br>--leverage assets such as oak trees, nature etc.<br>--Leverage a partnership with Keep Aransas County Beautiful to execute projects in the master plan and to secure grants | KACB, Pathways, CoR, ToF                   | Volunteers, state grant, private donations | 2019          |
| Pursue Community Quality of Life/ Place / Sense of Place Enhancements - con't |  | Stakeholder Responsible for Implementation | Integrated Use of Other Funds              | Timing        |
| Action #2   | Consider developing city and county demolition programs for dilapidated structures   | CoR, ToF, County                           | CDBG-DR funds                              | Fall 2018     |
| Action #3   | Pursue partnership with the YMCA to construct a city building and establish YMCA programs; identify donor  | CoR, Donor, YMCA                           | Private donation                           | 2018          |
| Action #4   | Continue debris removal at water edge, walkways, and roads (fine cleaning) in accordance with FEMA requirements  | Short Term Teams, CoR, ToF, County         | KACB, volunteers, Adopt a Hwy              | Sprg/Sum 2018 |
| Action #5   | Rebuild and improve community entrance signs (include community character/branding elements)   | KACB, Pathways, CoR, ToF                   | State Keep Tx Beautiful grant              | 2019-2020     |