



Into the Future



City of Pharr Comprehensive Plan Update

November 2015

Note: This report contains the most recent data, statistics, and source material available to the TEEX review team through November 2015. Maps were added from the existing plans and sources available from the City of Pharr.

Pharr Comprehensive Plan Update 2016 - 2025

November 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The dynamic growth of the City of Pharr and the surrounding region is directly related to the strategic location on the Texas-Mexico border.
- The robust infrastructure planning and focus on the future development of all areas of the City allows for objective growth projections and enhancement of the current city.
- One of the most important strategic elements is the location of the City-owned Pharr International Bridge which links an enormous daily flow of trade goods and services between the US and Mexican markets.
- The development and enhancements to the commercial and industrial trade areas adjacent to the bridge will promote the attraction of business and jobs to the City.
- Progressive enhancement to the downtown area in terms of infrastructure improvements, new business attraction, and services for the community will be critical to the resilience and sustainability of the community.
- Continued cooperation with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and regional planning entities will be critical for the enhancement of traffic flow on the two primary arteries of the City – US 83 and US 281 (co-signed with I-69).
- Branding of the City of Pharr as a growing and diverse community, and center of trade and commercial activity will facilitate all planning to enhance the sustainability of the community.
- The City of Pharr's location among numerous communities will require continued ongoing efforts to ensure Pharr is a part of all aspects of regional planning and infrastructure enhancements connecting the City with its many neighbors.
- Leadership and governance is critical to developing long term plans, objectives, and programs to highlight the distinctive aspects of the community as well as ties with the region.
- The planning for the addition of the southern Pharr land development in the ETJ is a critical component of the City's growth. Land use consideration and the services to be offered will be key to the community's growth and branding.
- The Community Outreach Citizen Survey conducted with citizens across the City provided a quality means of feedback on the priorities and services to be considered in future City planning. Items that garnered the most attention were the need for parks, a pedestrian-walkable-friendly community, enhanced public transportation, and concerns about traffic congestion.
- Youth oriented programs in sports, education, and library services are critical to the young growing City. The robust sports program is in need of expanded facilities to address the demand. The library services and programs are extensive and expanding to address the demands of the increased number of local users.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain open dialog with state, federal, and international agencies to insure smooth operations and expansion of trade via the Pharr International Bridge. The bridge is a critical strategic advantage to the community and region and bodes well for value-added commercial growth and revenue for the City of Pharr.
- Develop, craft and adopt an annexation plan and strategy to incorporate the pending Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) location and a diversified land use plan to maximize both the development of commercial services near the Pharr Bridge as well as mixed residential.
- Develop a robust 'branding' campaign to highlight the strategic location of Pharr both as a destination location for tourists and retail/hotel expansion as well as a leading international port-of-entry.
- Investment in major infrastructure to address current and future needs is paramount. Implementation of an aggressive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) given the projected near and long term population growth will be imperative.
- Reignite interest in the enhanced revitalization of the downtown commercial and retail district with use. Continued programs such as the façade improvement program and the Pharr Downtown Living Initiative are items to consider.
- Maintain an active dialog with adjacent communities to insure and capitalize on the coordination to enhance infrastructure and transportation needs, medical and health care services, educational opportunities, international trade, and business attraction to the Rio Grande Valley Region.
- Ensure development related codes and ordinances are current and the local development review process is well defined and streamlined to facilitate the continued growth of the City's new investment and a wide-range of housing options.
- Ongoing engagement with community wide groups, retailers, education leaders, citizens, and clients is needed to assure the perspective of the community is addressed with the future location, for example, of new City parks, library facilities, and public transit options.
- Remain steadfast in developing and applying for a designated Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) designation for the commercial area adjacent to the Pharr International Bridge.
- Work with local school districts and area community and technical colleges to expand technical, vocational, and specialized training.

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INTRODUCTION

PLANNING CONTEXT, LEGAL BASIS, PLANNING AREA

The Comprehensive Plan is a statement of Pharr’s vision for its future and a guide to achieving its goals over the next decade. The plan includes responsive strategies for addressing issues identified through the public planning process that are both fiscally responsible and politically feasible. This plan aims to enhance the characteristics that shape Pharr – which, in turn, influences land use compatibility, economics, mobility, and quality of life. Pharr’s Comprehensive Plan provides the legal basis for City regulations and policies that guide the physical and economic growth of the City over time.

Location

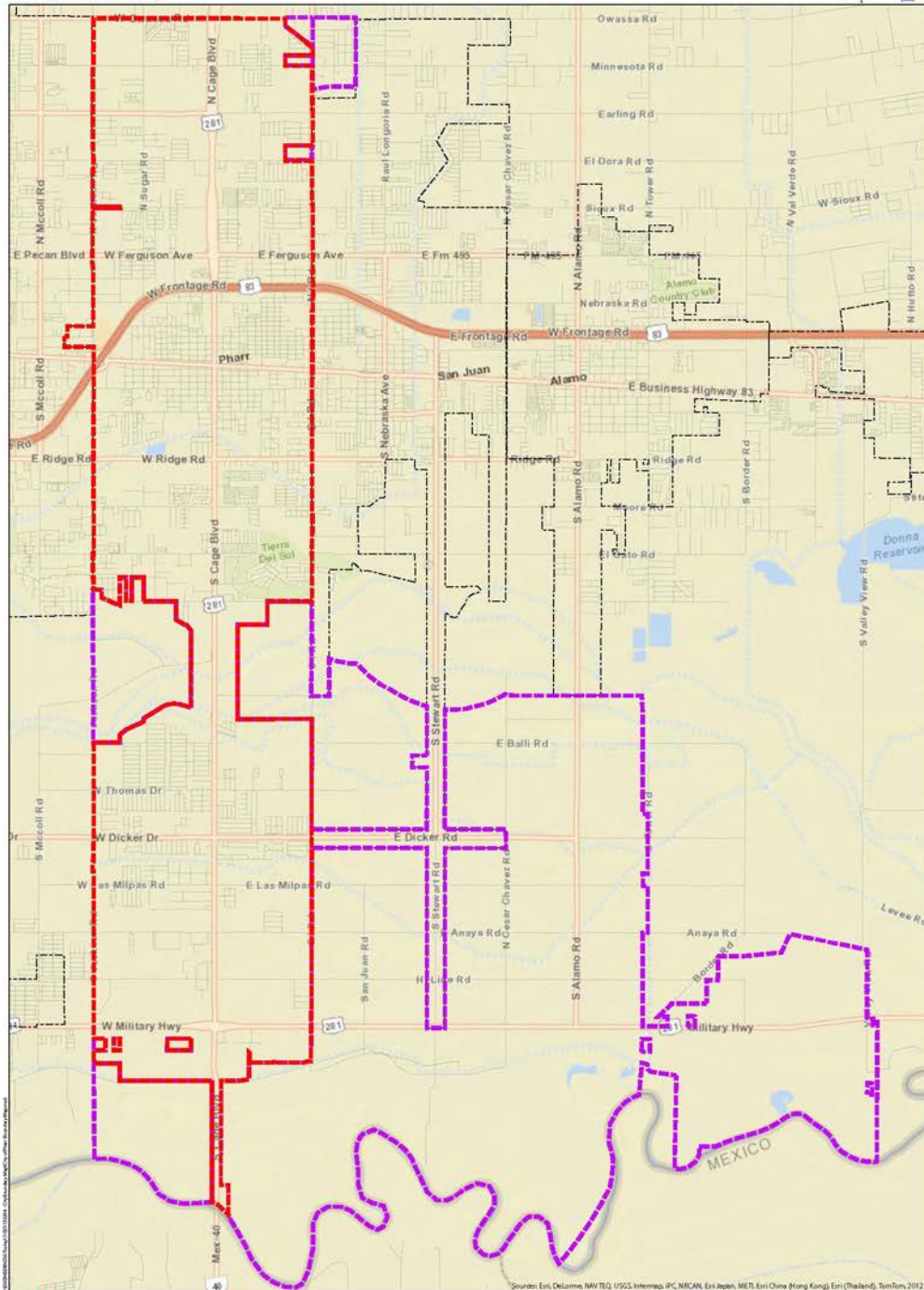
The City of Pharr is located in the southern portion of Hidalgo County in South Texas. Approximately 23.72 square miles, Pharr is located between the cities of McAllen and San Juan, and is connected via bridge to the Mexican City of Reynosa, Tamaulipas. Pharr is part of the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission metropolitan statistical area – a rapidly growing part of both Texas and the United States. Pharr is served by U.S. 281 from north to south and U.S 83 from east to west, intersecting in the middle of the City.

Planning Area

For the purposes of this plan, the planning area is described as the City limits of Pharr and its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), encompassing a total of 33,007 acres or 51.5 square miles. Of this, approximately 15,179 acres or 23.7 square miles encompasses the current City limits. Figure 1 depicts Pharr’s current City boundary map with the ETJ area outlined in yellow. The ETJ is about 17,828 acres or 27.86 square miles.

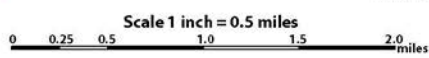
Pharr is in the southern central part of Hidalgo County which is designated in Figure 2, Hidalgo County Boundary Map.

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 Pharr City Limit Pharr ETJ

City of Pharr, Texas
Engineering Department
958-402-4221



All information displayed on this map is subject to verification by field survey or by the agency responsible for maintaining the information. This map is intended for general information only.



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Figure 2: Hidalgo County Boundary Map



Hidalgo County © Texas Almanac

Why Plan

The Texas Local Government Code grants municipalities the ability to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of a city. While cities may decide the content of their plan, comprehensive plans generally include guiding principles related to land use, transportation, utilities, and growth. This Comprehensive Plan assesses the growth and development of Pharr and provides legal basis to guide the creation and update of development regulations, including zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations.

Once adopted and established as the Comprehensive Plan guiding Pharr's physical and economic development, zoning changes should be considered and acted on in compliance with the adopted strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. This plan should be used to make decisions about private development applications, public utility extension and public infrastructure project's priorities.

Scope of the Comprehensive Plan

The scope of work includes the update of Pharr's Comprehensive Plan (2000), including the following existing sections: Image, Land Use, Economic Development, and Transportation. The plan elements have been renamed, combined, expanded upon and reordered with this update to reflect the most current data available.

A comprehensive plan does not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries, and is not a development regulation. It does, however, establish the vision for the City of Pharr that will be used to guide decisions made at all levels, from the Mayor and City Commission, to the City Manager and other City staff. The decisions made at all levels should support the vision established for the City of Pharr, making the process and outcomes more consistent and predictable for both the residents and the development community. The plan is intended to be flexible, as to respond to future uncertainty and opportunity, while specific enough to provide direction for consistent decision making at all levels.

The purpose of the Plan is to establish clear goals and policies that accommodate anticipated growth and guide future development. The Plan facilitates economic development, protects existing neighborhoods, enhances mobility, creates opportunity, and focuses on community.

PLAN CREATION PROCESS

In order to facilitate a thorough and comprehensive update to the City of Pharr's Comprehensive Plan, TEEX reviewed numerous City documents, the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, as well as conducted interviews with local, county, and state leaders.

TEEX's process to create the Plan update comprised the following:

1. TEEX collected data and input via public meetings, community outreach at City events, surveys, steering committee recommendations, and feedback from other relevant organizations.
2. TEEX reviewed this information and validated with other primary and secondary resources in order to prepare and rank for the document.
3. TEEX was then able to craft and document the plan update with the vision statement, strategies to achieve goals, and action needed to accomplish the objectives.
4. TEEX then provided a leadership review with designated City officials to preview the findings and recommendations.
5. The final step in the process is the City's adoption of the updated comprehensive plan, which TEEX will return to Pharr to present.

CITY VISION

Vision: Provide a sustainable mix of land uses that will maintain the quality of life elements that will enhance the livability of the City of Pharr and promote economic development and redevelopment at appropriate locations.

- I. Promote the City of Pharr as a community in which to live, work, and play;
- II. Protect existing residential uses from the impacts of new suburban developments;
- III. Manage growth to achieve an efficient and orderly community;
- IV. Provide a diversity of quality housing types for all ages and income levels;
- V. Promote commercial, retail, and employment land uses that are compatible with adjacent land uses and meet economic goals;
- VI. Direct development into identified growth areas;
- VII. Reduce automobile dependency in growth areas by efficient organization of land uses and other methods; and
- VIII. Promote cost efficient and logical expansion of infrastructure.

During the information gathering phase of the master planning process, City leaders were interviewed to ascertain their vision on future growth and development of Pharr. Insights were captured during one-on-one interviews and small group meetings.

Ideas the City leaders have for the next 10 years are very much in sync with Pharr's stated vision. In summary, City leaders believe:

Relationships are key to stronger communities. This includes building rapport and becoming more engaged with citizens by bringing services/activities to the citizens where they are; linking with partners from Mexico; connecting with all the school districts in Pharr; demonstrating a cooperative spirit with county cohorts and supporting the creation of a regional Metropolitan Planning Organization. Regionalism is also important in strengthening the image and perception of the Valley. City leaders want to strengthen relations with federal and state agencies who oversee International Bridge operations and assets so that further development of the bridge on both sides of the border is expedited as much as possible.

Attraction of new, and expansion of existing businesses are key to the prosperity of Pharr. By strengthening the role of the City of Pharr's Economic Development Corporation through its leadership and involvement with developers, and providing smart incentives for appropriate business attraction/expansion deals, Pharr can evolve into the place where businesses want to be. City leaders becoming involved in the beginning, when deals are being crafted (international, medical, bridge), will be in a position to have an impact on industry decisions. Reviving the Chamber of Commerce will give businesses a go-to place for networking and connecting to like-businesses. Consideration of additional big box retail stores while mindful and supportive of entrepreneurs/small business creates diversity in

the tax base. Along with increasing the tax base through business development, City leaders plan to continue the movement to have a Foreign Trade Zone in Pharr. Lastly, City leaders believe downtown revitalization will encourage more shopping and trading downtown along with business opportunities.

Accessibility to technology and information is critical to educating people out of poverty. This accessibility includes installing Wi-Fi in all schools in Pharr, having Wi-Fi accessible to all citizens in Pharr and building a research and library center in South Pharr.

Impacting Pharr's quality of life is a top priority. City leaders are focused on sponsoring festivals that are family oriented; increasing the number of parks and/or upgrading existing parks and green spaces throughout the City so that parks are easily accessible within neighborhoods; creating more of a family type community; having year-round youth programs; strengthening the community arts programs; and developing hiking, biking and walking trails. City leaders also want more fields built in order to sponsor and host outdoor sporting events. Improving roads throughout the City is also very important to the City leaders. Lastly, more affordable residential housing is a top concern.

The City should run as efficiently as possible to save tax payers money and time. Key to proficiency is consolidation of the City's grants department, reducing property taxes and water rates, beginning a water conservation program and developing leadership within the City departments (team building, establishment of an executive leadership program, leading by example). Regionalism throughout the Rio Grande Valley can maximize resources as well as present a larger force when applying for Federal and State dollars. Pharr will be known as the "Friendliest City in the Valley".

Ease of getting around in Pharr is vital to growth and development. A pledge by City leaders is the repair of all roads by 2019. Of equal importance is the building of the Congestion Relief Freight Corridor from the International Bridge to I-2, connecting the International Bridge to I69E (US77) and I69W (US281) and support of the loop tollway. Instituting a Valley-wide transportation system will aid residents and visitors and provide relief to congested areas. In order to grow both residentially and commercially, City leaders realize the importance of getting from point A to point B as quickly as possible.

Exemplary education should be accessible to all children and adults in the City. Partnering with local schools to establish noteworthy programs to engage children in learning and introduction to work skills is important to the City leaders. Increasing the number of higher education opportunities is also essential. For example promoting the recent merger to create the University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley; construction of and building of the Texas A&M Campus – South Texas; creation of a Public Safety Academy training center; creation of a diesel mechanic school in South Pharr and the extension of the medical school in order to have a hospital in Pharr, can lead to higher wages and more opportunities to live and work in Pharr.

Public safety is important as the City grows. With the increase in population and expansion of the City limits, City leaders envision an increased number of fire stations and police departments. They are also supportive of a Valley-wide Command Incident Center.

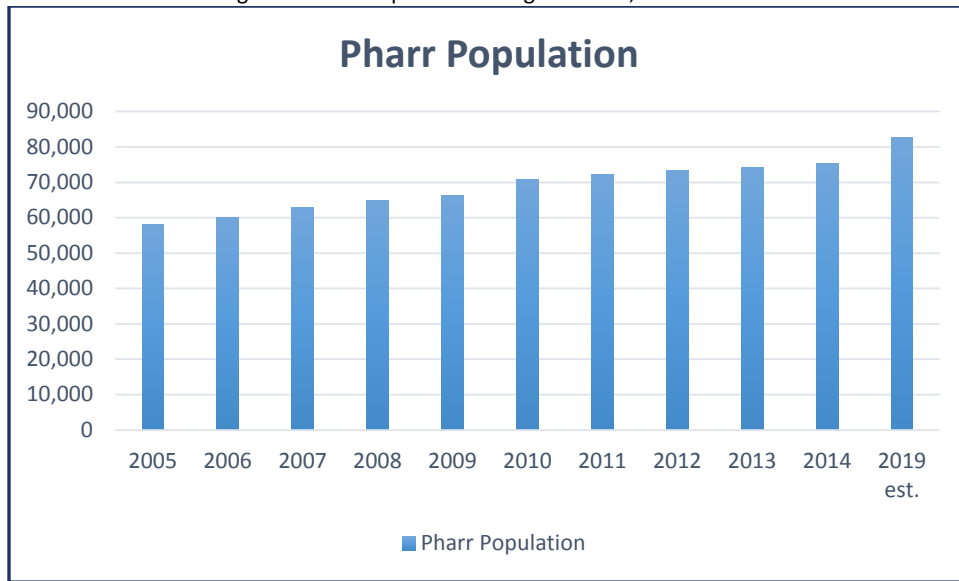
Targeted development to promote commercial, retail and land uses for economic development. City leaders realize the importance of developing available land for maximum City growth. Examples given include the land in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) – master planned community, manufacturers/maquiladoras; development of South Pharr – roads, residential, parks, retail, and produce area; downtown; and El Centro Mall & Jackson Road redevelopment.

IMAGE AND IDENTITY

Population

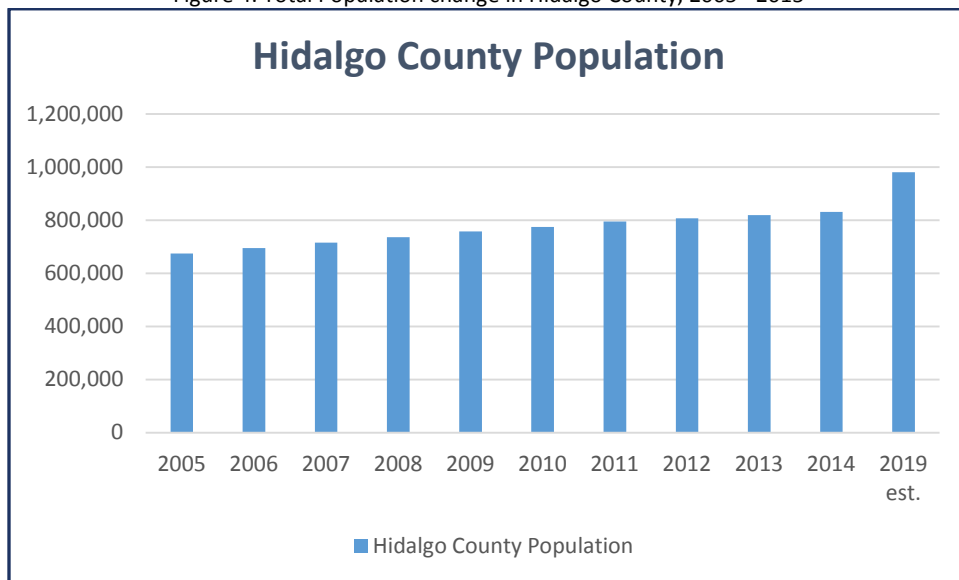
According to 2014 US Census Bureau data, Pharr's population grew from 57,926 in 2005 to 75,382 in 2014, an increase of 30.1%. The 2015 estimates place the current population of Pharr at 76,329, with an expected increase of 9.4% to 82,512 in 2019. During the same period, Hidalgo County had a 23.1% increase from 674,982 to 831,073.

Figure 3: Total Population change in Pharr, 2005 - 2014



Source: US Census Bureau, Pharr, 2015

Figure 4: Total Population change in Hidalgo County, 2005 - 2015



Source: US Census Bureau, Hidalgo County, 2015

Race and Ethnicity

The table below represents Pharr’s estimated racial and ethnic distribution as of 2015. This breakdown is shown in comparison to that of Texas, which acts as a baseline measurement.

Table 1: Pharr Race and Ethnicity Demographics

2015 Data	Pharr	Texas
White	84.5%	70.4%
Black	0.9%	11.9%
Asian	0.7%	3.8%
Native American	0.5%	0.7%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%
Two or More Races	1.7%	2.7%
Other Race	11.8%	10.5%

Source: Sites on Texas Report, Detailed Demographics for Texas and Pharr, 2015

The following table shows the demographic breakdown when looking at Hispanic population.

Table 2: Pharr Hispanic Demographics

2015 Data	Pharr	Texas
Hispanic	93.4%	38.5%
Not Hispanic	6.6%	61.5%

Source: Sites on Texas Report, Detailed Demographics for Texas and Pharr, 2015

Age Distribution

The distribution of ages in an area provides valuable insight into the region’s economic composition and income potential. By national standards, Texas has a relatively young population. Pharr has more young people under the age of 19, indicating future income potential. This distribution is shown in the following table and chart.

Table 3: Age Distribution in Pharr

Age Group	Pharr	Texas
0-4	10.1%	7.7%
5-19	27.2%	22.1%
20-64	51.4%	59%
65 and older	11.1%	11.5%

Source: Sites on Texas Report, Detailed Demographics for Texas and Pharr, 2015

According to the 2010 Census Demographic Profile, the median age nationally is 36.8; the median age for Texas is 33.6 and the median age in Pharr is 28.

Based on different income measurements, Pharr is significantly below all Texas’ averages. However, these lower income levels are offset by a lower cost of living as compared to both the surrounding area and the State of Texas.

According to WalletHub’s latest 2015 study, Pharr is the 13th fastest growing economy in all of the United States. This study was done by comparing various metrics, such as population growth, job growth, median household income growth, poverty rate decrease, and unemployment rate decrease.

Table 4: Median Household Income

2015 Data	Pharr	Texas
Median Household Income	\$33,294	\$53,818
Average Household Income	\$44,166	\$73,670
Average Family Income	\$48,115	\$83,443
Per Capita Income	\$12,789	\$26,195

Source: Sites on Texas Report, Detailed Demographics for the State of Texas and City of Pharr, 2015

Cost of Living

The cost of living in Pharr is lower than the State average and lower than the surrounding communities. The cost of living index is based on the cost of food, housing, utilities, transportation, health, and other miscellaneous factors (clothing, restaurants, etc.).

Table 5: Cost of Living

Cost of Living Based on US Average of 100 Points	
Edinburg	78
McAllen	83
Mission	80
Pharr	75
San Juan	75.7
Texas	89

Source: Sperling’s Best Place, 2015

Employment by Industry

As can be seen below, both the number of business establishments and the average employed numbers have increased in the past year, seeing an increase of 0.73% and 2.74% respectively. This too points to strong growth within Hidalgo County.

Table 6: Employees & Establishments of Hidalgo County

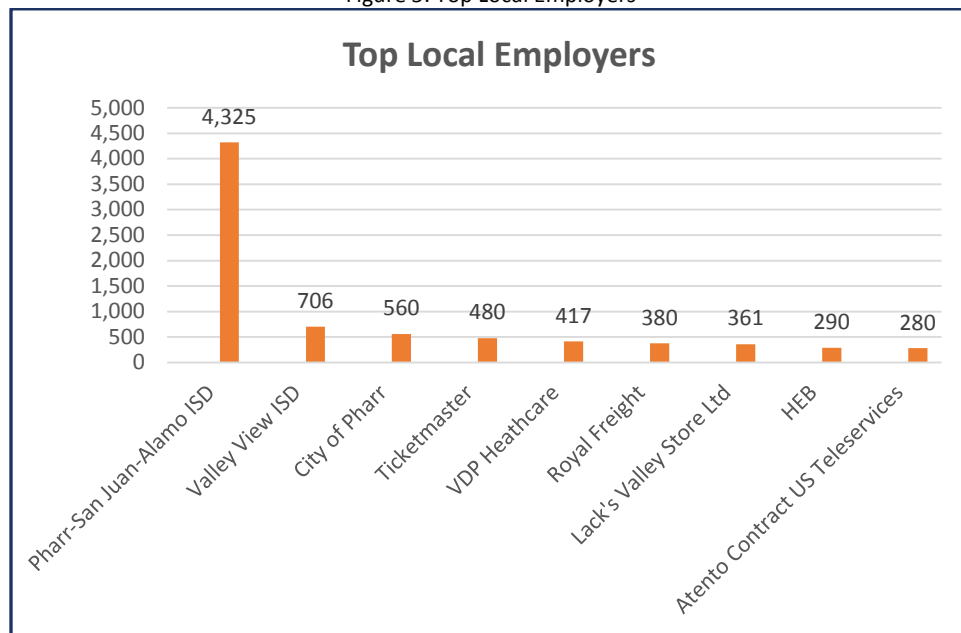
Hidalgo County – Employees & Establishments						
	Average Individuals Employed			Establishments		
	2014 1 st Qtr.	2015 1 st Qtr.	% Change	2014 1 st Qtr.	2015 1 st Qtr.	% Change
Total, All Industries	237,408	243,922	2.74%	11,836	11,924	0.73%
Construction	7,790	7,632	-2.03%	690	678	-1.74%
Education and Health Services	99,817	102,362	2.55%	2,211	2,200	-0.50%
Financial Activities	9,099	8,961	-1.52%	1,180	1,240	5.08%
Information	2,400	2,420	0.83%	131	120	-8.40%
Leisure and Hospitality	22,195	23,300	4.98%	1,087	1,110	2.12%
Manufacturing	6,342	6,681	5.35%	279	273	-2.15%
Natural Resources and Mining	6,448	6,474	0.40%	393	396	0.76%
Other Services	3,979	3,925	-1.36%	700	687	-1.86%
Professional and Business Services	15,490	15,898	2.63%	1,358	1,404	3.39%
Public Administration	11,588	12,110	4.50%	164	162	-1.22%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	52,240	54,069	3.50%	3,617	3,608	-0.25%
Unclassified	20	90	350.00%	27	46	70.37%

Source: Texas Workforce Commission 2015, Tracer2

Top Local Employers

As is typical in Texas, the top employers in Pharr are the school districts and the local government as can be seen in the chart below.

Figure 5: Top Local Employers



Source: 2014 Pharr Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Employment Growth

One resource to identify opportunities for growth is looking at the new hires in a region. New workers are defined as workers who were not working at the same business in the previous quarter. While the numbers do not indicate the quality of job or amount of pay, they do show which industries are hiring. Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade indicate the most new hires in Hidalgo County; however, Food Services and Retail Trade are historically high turnover industries.

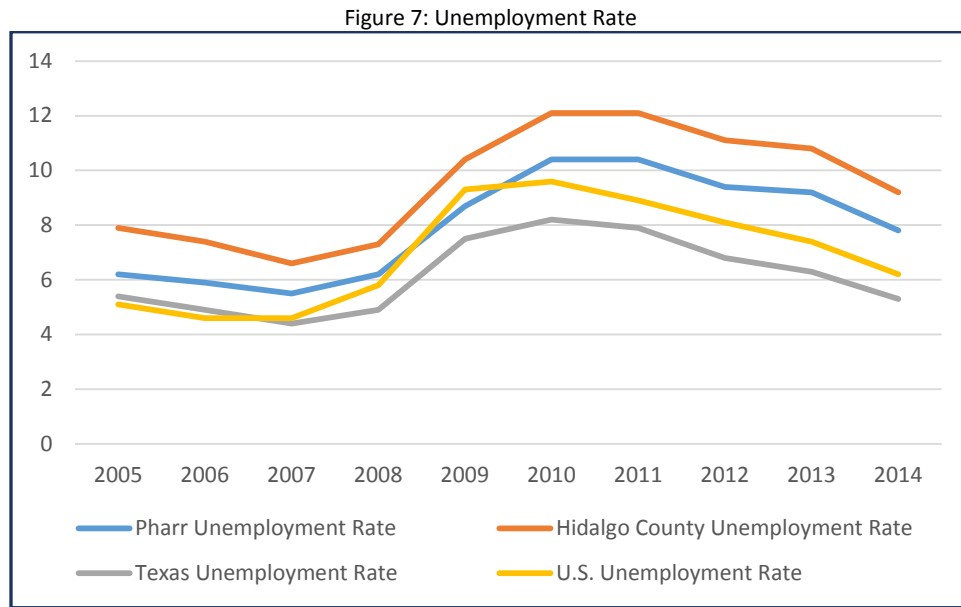
Figure 6: New Hires 2nd Quarter 2013



Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Socrates 2014, Hidalgo County Narrative Profile

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate is one of the most popular indicators for the economy’s performance in a region. The unemployment in Hidalgo County has been above the National and State Averages for the past decade. Pharr’s unemployment rate was lower than the National average in 2009 and higher the remaining years. The annual unemployment rates for Pharr, Hidalgo County, Texas and the Nation since 2005 can be seen in the table below.



Source: Texas Workforce Commission 2014

Workforce Board Area

Pharr, as a part of Hidalgo County, is included in the Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley Board Area. The other two counties in this board area are Starr and Willacy. There are six workforce offices in the board area with the office in McAllen being the closest for Pharr residents. Services are targeted to job seekers and businesses in the community. Services offered are job search assistance, referrals and payment for child care, job fairs, job and skills training and assistance matching job seekers to employer openings.

Through various data sources, the local workforce board approves targeted and demand occupations they believe will have the most job openings in the workforce board area. Following is a table which depicts the Targeted Occupations as of March 2014 for the years 2011-2018. As can be seen in the table, school teachers and assistants, registered nurses, and customer service representatives are projected to have the most openings with registered nurses paying the highest entry wage.

Table 7: Targeted Occupations as of March 2014

2014 Approved Target Occupation List *Rev. Effective 3/1/14	Job Openings 2011-2018	Avg. Hourly Wage	Entry Hourly Wage
Medical and Health Services Managers	296	\$39.87	\$22.91
General and Operations Managers	590	\$41.82	\$15.76

2014 Approved Target Occupation List *Rev. Effective 3/1/14	Job Openings 2011-2018	Avg. Hourly Wage	Entry Hourly Wage
Training and Development Specialists	101	\$22.91	\$15.16
Accountants and Auditors	848	\$21.74	\$15.25
**Computer User/Network Support Specialists	242	\$18.91	\$11.75
Elementary, Middle, and Secondary School Teachers, Except Special Education and Career/Technical Education	3,076	\$25.85	\$19.50
Teacher Assistants	1,704	\$10.48	\$7.91
Registered Nurses	2,554	\$33.70	\$21.88
Respiratory Therapists	128	\$27.31	\$18.84
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	136	\$27.84	\$18.67
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	318	\$13.31	\$9.73
Pharmacy Technicians	306	\$13.51	\$8.77
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,319	\$21.36	\$15.29
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	210	\$11.87	\$7.87
Physical Therapist Assistants	156	\$38.40	\$21.40
Correctional Officers and Jailers	370	\$17.87	\$12.80
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	673	\$20.36	\$14.41
Billing and Posting Clerks	394	\$12.34	\$8.56
Bookkeeping, Accounting, Auditing Clerks	728	\$12.75	\$8.61
Customer Service Representatives	1,694	\$10.59	\$7.86
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	251	\$10.69	\$8.12
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	373	\$19.30	\$13.16
Medical Secretaries	849	\$10.73	\$7.81
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	915	\$12.24	\$8.22
Carpenters	766	\$10.23	\$8.45
Operating Engineers & Construction Equipment Operators	213	\$12.84	\$9.37
Electricians	270	\$12.85	\$9.51
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	263	\$14.38	\$10.62
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	536	\$10.15	\$6.94
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	110	\$13.16	\$8.92
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	240	\$12.95	\$9.15

2014 Approved Target Occupation List *Rev. Effective 3/1/14	Job Openings 2011-2018	Avg. Hourly Wage	Entry Hourly Wage
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	108	\$16.73	\$10.77
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	582	\$11.87	\$8.32
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators	196	\$12.00	\$7.55
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	420	\$12.89	\$9.49
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,573	\$13.92	\$9.55

Source: Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley website, 2014

Primary Education

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo (PSJA) Independent School District (ISD), Valley View ISD, and Hidalgo ISD all provide primary and secondary education to the Pharr Area. There is also a private school system, The Pharr Oratory of St. Philip Neri, which provides education from primary through high school. There are two charter schools, Vanguard Academy which provides primary and secondary education, and Premier High School of Pharr, which provides only secondary education. PSJA ISD serves a majority of the City of Pharr, though Valley View and Hidalgo ISDs have schools that serve the community of Pharr.

Table 8: 2012-2013 Academic Excellence Indicators

Schools	PSJA ISD	Valley View ISD	Hidalgo ISD	Region 01	State
Attendance	32,051	4,760	3,306	*	5,058,939
Completion/Student Status:					
Annual Graduate Count	1,889	280	231	*	292,636
Longitudinal Graduation Rate	89.6%	92.8%	92.0%	86.1%	87.7%
TAKS Exit-Level Cumulative Pass Rate (2012)	84.0%	89.0%	89.0%	90.0%	93.0%
TAKS Exit-Level Cumulative Pass Rate (2013)	89.0%	98.0%	88.0%	91.0%	94.0%
Mean SAT Score (Class of 2012)	1301	1430	1262	1326	1422
Mean ACT Score (Class of 2012)	16.9	17.2	16.8	17.7	20.5
Economically Disadvantaged	89.0%	93.2%	88.6%	*	60.4%
English Language Learners	41.1%	55.5%	49.5%	*	17.1%
Average Years of Experience of Teachers	10.7	8.0	11.8	*	11.5
Average Actual Salaries (Teachers)	\$48,718	\$44,030	\$46,781	*	\$48,821

Source: Texas Education Agency 2013-2014, *Data unavailable

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD's (PSJA) boundaries cover a majority of the City of Pharr. PSJA's most recent snapshot put the total number of students at 32,051 across 42 campuses, which includes 25 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, 5 high schools, 3 special purpose campuses and one early start program. Increased enrollment, improved graduation rates, and higher TAKS exit-level pass rate can be seen in the following table.

Table 9: PSJA ISD Enrollment

Year	Enrollment	Longitudinal Graduation Rate	TAKS Exit-Level Cumulative Pass Rate
2012-2013	32,025	*	89%
2011-2012	31,620	89.6%	84%
2010-2011	31,424	89.9%	84%
2009-2010	31,223	86.7%	82%
2008-2009	30,537	77.6%	74%

Source: Texas Education Agency 2013-2014, *Data unavailable

Valley View ISD (VVISD)

Valley View ISD is located in the Hidalgo/Pharr Texas area and serves a growing community of approximately 10 square miles. The district currently serves only a fraction of the students PISA serves, but includes four elementary schools, one fifth grade campus, one early college school, one junior high and one high school. Increased enrollment, improved graduation rates, and higher TAKS exit-level pass rate can be seen in the following table.

Table 10: Valley View ISD Enrollment

Year	Enrollment	Longitudinal Graduation Rate	TAKS Exit-Level Cumulative Pass Rate
2012-2013	4,760	*	98%
2011-2012	4,760	92%	89%
2010-2011	4,701	92.2%	90%
2009-2010	4,626	88.9%	87%
2008-2009	4,484	77.9%	71%

Source: Texas Education Agency 2013-2014, *Data unavailable

Hidalgo ISD

Hidalgo ISD is located in Hidalgo, Texas and serves most of Hidalgo and the City of Granjeno as well as small portions of McAllen, Pharr, and San Juan. The district currently serves over 3,400 students through four elementary schools, one middle school, one alternative high school and one high school. Steady enrollment, graduation rates, and the TAKS exit-level pass rate can be seen in the following table.

Table 11: Hidalgo ISD Enrollment

Year	Enrollment	Longitudinal Graduation Rate	TAKS Exit-Level Cumulative Pass Rate
2012-2013	3,306	*	88%
2011-2012	3,289	92%	89%
2010-2011	3,435	90%	87%
2009-2010	3,495	92.9%	91%
2008-2009	3,519	87.2%	80%

Source: Texas Education Agency 2013-2014, *Data unavailable

Secondary Education

Early College High Schools

South Texas College supports eight Early College High Schools (ECHS) in the school districts covering Pharr. Each ECHS is an independent public high school designed to provide a smooth transition from high school to college allowing students to earn a high school diploma and two years of college credit including an Associate's Degree. The ECHS initiative has been very successful since its inauguration in 2002 with increases in enrollment, high school graduations and attainment of Associate's Degrees. As of November 2014, the following high schools were partnering with South Texas College:

- Hidalgo ECHS
- PSJA – High
- PSJA – Memorial
- PSJA – North
- PSJA – Sotomayor
- PSJA – Southwest
- PSJA – Thomas Jefferson-T-STEM
- Valley View

Educational Attainment

Data sources indicate the overall population in Pharr and Hidalgo County are lagging behind in educational attainment. There are more individuals than the State average over the age of 25 who stopped their education at or before grade 12. Additionally, fewer individuals in Pharr and Hidalgo County have their high school diploma, or college degrees - associates, bachelors or graduate - than in the State.

Table 12: Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment Age 25+ (2014)			
	Pharr	Hidalgo County	Texas
< Grade 9	31.5%	25.4%	9.6%
Grades 9-12	21.8%	13.6%	9.5%
High School	20.0%	24.3%	25.4%
Some College	12.4%	17.0%	22.8%
Associate Degree	2.4%	4.2%	6.4%
Bachelor's Degree	7.0%	11.1%	17.6%
Graduate Degree	4.9%	4.3%	8.7%

Source: Sites on Texas 2.0, Detailed Demographic Report on Texas, Hidalgo County and Pharr, 2014

Post-Secondary Education

University of Texas- Rio Grande Valley

The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley (UT-RGV) was founded in 1927 in Edinburg, Texas. UT-RGV is a component institution of the University of Texas System as well as a Hispanic serving institution. UT-RGV currently offers a variety of 56 bachelors', 53 masters', three doctoral and two cooperative doctoral programs within the seven colleges shown in the following table. As of fall 2013, there were 17,602 undergraduates and 2,451 graduate students enrolled.

Table 13: Areas of Study at UT-RGV

Colleges:
Arts and Humanities
Business Administration
Education
Engineering and Computer Science
Health Sciences and Human Services
Science and Mathematics
Social and Behavioral Sciences

Source: The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley

South Texas College

South Texas College (STC) is a community college located in McAllen, Texas accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. STC currently has an enrollment of over 31,000 across six campuses located in the cities of McAllen, Weslaco, and Rio Grande City. STC offers more than 100 degree and certificate programs across the areas of bachelors, associates and certificate programs.

Table 14: Areas of Study at STC

STC Areas of Study:
BACHELORS:
Applied Technology
Applied Science
ASSOCIATES
Business & Technology
Liberal Arts
Social & Behavioral Sciences
Nursing & Allied Health
Math & Science
Certificates:
Business & Technology
Liberal Arts
Nursing & Allied Health

Source: South Texas College

The Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence

In July of 2015, South Texas College submitted a proposal to the City of Pharr to develop, construct, operate and oversee the Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence on 50 – 60 acres in Pharr. After acquisition of the land from the City, construction of a 16,000 square foot training facility would begin in 2017. Initial development to Center completion would be done in three phases with Phase I being completed in 2022. Phase II involves an additional 16,000 square foot of space (years 2022 – 2027) and Phase III (years 2027 – 2037) calls for a 20,000 square foot expansion. The proposal indicates a total cost to construct the Center is projected to be \$14.5 million.

The purpose of the Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence is to provide facilities to support public safety and law enforcement training in Deep South Texas. Dual enrollment criminal justice and public safety academies in conjunction with Pharr San Juan Alamo Independent School District will be offered along with classes for credit (Pell Grant) and non-credit students (peace officers obtaining continuing education hours).

The Center will offer Associates Degrees initially and is one of only three community colleges in Texas authorized to offer the Bachelor of Applied Science Degree. Projections indicate that by Phase III

Summer 2037, over 19,300 full time equivalent students will have enrolled and attended the Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence. The Center is anticipated to have a huge economic impact in South Texas adding over \$9 million in annual economic activity, enhancing the tax base and creating more than 100 additional local permanent jobs at above average wages.

Texas A&M Campus – South Texas

In September 2015, the Texas A&M University System, in conjunction with elected leadership and education officials, announced the inauguration of a 100 acre campus in Hidalgo County, the Texas A&M South Texas Campus. The Campus will offer university level courses, and also plans to build facilities and undergraduate degrees in the following areas: engineering, engineering technology, biomedical sciences, and agriculture and life sciences. The campus facilities are expected to be open by 2017 with 100 students, then expand to 750 students over a five year period.

Image Control and Public Relations Techniques

Pharr has never had a formal image control or oversight policy. However, some of the City officials have begun attending training sessions on digital marketing, ethics and the public relations. Recently developed is the creation of the Marketing and Advertising Committee which will include an image control aspect. It will also direct priorities in marketing and content for the City. A future goal will be for the creation of formal policies to deal with any image control related activities.

Recycling

The Recycling Center is an integral part of the Pharr community. There are two permanent drop-off locations and a mobile recycling trailer. Not only does it collect over a million tons of recyclables (i.e. paper, newspaper, plastics, aluminum, tin, tires, electronic waste, batteries, glass, used oil and cardboard), but it also hosts environmental education programs, seminars, and workshops and speaker forums. The Recycling Center has also initiated a community-wide cleanup program, Operation Clean Sweep. For this the Recycling Center has received recognition from the Keep Texas Beautiful and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for its excellence in environmental education programs. The Center is currently looking to expand its programs, initiatives and centers to further improve the area, with an initiative to add a third center in 2016.

Public Health and Medical Facilities

The number of acute and psychiatric care hospitals in the Hidalgo County Profile as of February 2013 was 17, with an average total beds capacity of approximately 143.5 compared to a statewide ratio of 122.2 beds per hospital according to statistical reports from the Texas Department of State Health Services. The Texas State Board of Pharmacy data for March 2013 shows there are 183 licensed pharmacies in Hidalgo County.

According to the Texas Department of State Health Services September 2011 report, there were 1,306 direct patient care and primary care physicians who practiced in Hidalgo County. The ratio of total persons to each physician in the area was 626.0 residents per each physician. This compares to a statewide ratio of 426.3 persons for each physician in Texas.

Hidalgo County had a total of 4,194 registered nurses (RN) working in the county, representing a ratio of 194.9 persons for each RN in the area. The statewide ratio was 140.3 persons for each RN in the State.

There were 177 dentists in the study area, with a ratio of 4,618.8 persons for each dentist in Hidalgo County. The ratio of dentists per 100,000 residents was 21.7. By comparison, there was a statewide ratio of 45.4 dentists per 100,000 residents.

There were 409 pharmacists in this area, which is a ratio of 1,998.9 persons for each pharmacist. Texas has 21,306 pharmacists statewide, or a ratio of 1,214.9 persons for each pharmacist in the area.

For Hidalgo County there were 228 occupational therapists; a ratio of 3,585.7 persons for each occupational therapist. The statewide ratio was 3,806.5 persons for each occupational therapist, with a total of 6,800 occupational therapists statewide.

In conclusion, in Hidalgo County, the average bed capacity of the hospitals, the number of physicians per resident and the number of pharmacists per resident were higher than the State averages. However, the averages were lower than the State averages for the number of dentists per resident and the number of occupational therapists per resident.

Healthy South Texas Initiative

In September 2015, the Healthy South Texas Initiative pilot project was launched with an announcement by Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp and State Senator Juan Hinojosa, representing District 20. The initiative was first announced in 2014 as a means to reduce preventable diseases and their consequences by 25% in South Texas by the year 2025. This grassroots education and prevention based initiative will bring experts together from medicine, nursing, pharmacy, biomedical science, public health, architecture and agriculture extension.

The Healthy South Texas Initiative will be conducted in a 26-county region, from Cameron to Victoria which includes Hidalgo County. This initiative is modeled after the method used by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agents who advise farmers and ranchers on growing better crops and raising healthier animals; the Texas A&M Health Science staff will be advising parents on how to better nurture their children to prevent diabetes, asthma and infectious diseases. Other partners will be the A&M Schools of Dental, Medical, Pharmacy and Nursing along with expertise from the Medical Center in Houston.

This initiative has the potential to save families, taxpayers and medical personnel \$2.5 billion over a 10 year period according to Chancellor Sharp. The ultimate benefit, however will be healthier children.

Promise Zone

The City of Pharr is taking the lead to apply for and attain the region's first Promise Zone designation by the Federal government. Promise Zones are high poverty communities where the Federal government partners with local leaders to increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, reduce violent crime, enhance public health and address other priorities identified by the community.

Through collaboration and innovation, Pharr City leaders hope to improve the region's health and livability through this *Promesas del Valle* Initiative sponsored by the U.S. Housing Urban Development (HUD). Legislators, county and City elected officials, education and banking representatives, hospital officials, and workforce and training employees pledge to work together to improve the region's quality of life regardless of receiving the designation which is slated for the Spring of 2016.

A Promise Zone designation coupled with the Healthy South Texas Initiative strengthens the force behind the partnerships committed to impacting public health in the Valley.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS – IMAGE AND IDENTITY

Goal – Image and Identity

The image of the City of Pharr shall be that of a thriving community that meets the needs of its citizens and businesses in positive ways and addresses problems in a cooperative manner.

Objective A: Promote positive community identity, pride, sense of well-being, and self-image for Pharr residents and businesses.

Action 1: Initiate a “Pharr Proud” program as a cooperative effort of the City, Pharr Economic Development Corporation, and Pharr San Juan Alamo Independent School District.

Action 2: Increase enforcement of municipal codes and regulations pertaining to property maintenance, upkeep and appearance (e.g., mowing high grass and weeds, removal of old tires, etc.).

Action 3: Investigate signage options to clearly and attractively designate City offices, Parks and buildings.

Objective B: Reinforce the City’s image and identity as a family friendly and safe community for residents and businesses.

Action 1: Accentuate Pharr as a “family friendly” community.

Action 2: Increase the number of festivals/events that offer activities for children and families to foster a stronger sense of community, bring residents together from different social and cultural groups and attract visitors from outside the community.

Action 3: Improve and build sidewalks to declare a pedestrian friendly community.

Action 4: Encourage growth of activities and opportunities for art, music, theater and literature.

Action 5: Maintain and enhance City-owned parks and create additional parks that contribute to quality of life in Pharr’s residential areas.

Objective C: Foster a positive interactive relationship with the public and encourage citizen involvement.

Action 1: Continue efforts to instill a stronger sense of civic pride by encouraging involvement in public decision-making and by soliciting citizen input.

Action 2: Encourage public/private participation and cooperation in beautification efforts. Explore assistance that may be available from private/volunteer/civic groups to contribute to maintaining public areas.

Action 3: Remain dedicated to ensuring transparency related to City operations including public finances and capital expenditures to deliver City services in the 21st century.

- Objective D: Improve the health, education and livability of Pharr residents through partnerships with local school districts, higher education and health care facilities and government officials.
- Action 1: Support the Interlocal Agreement to implement the Healthy South Texas and *Promesas del Valle* initiatives.
- Action 2: Research and conduct a cost benefit analysis on the feasibility of building and operating a medical hospital in Pharr.
- Action 3: Promote innovative and quality educational programs that the local school districts implement in order to provide a positive employment base for the citizenry on an on-going basis.
- Action 4: Continue to foster a relationship and coordinate applicable City of Pharr activities with the local school districts.

LAND USE

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The community is enhanced through the quality of its growth, development, and redevelopment over time. Planning for and accommodating the future growth of Pharr is essential to ensure that the needs of the community are met today and over the next 10 years.

This chapter provides guidance for the future physical development of the City of Pharr and its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The purpose is to provide policy direction for decisions related to the investment in public and private infrastructure and the compatibility and appropriateness of land uses, including rezoning of property and individual development decisions as they relate to the community as a whole. This chapter establishes strategies and actions that enable effective planning for future growth, including the creation of opportunities to accommodate needed development.

Land use planning appropriately considers the placement of land uses and provides predictable outcomes. Planning helps to ensure quality neighborhoods, efficient infrastructure, and the creation of economic development opportunities.

Planning considerations should include:

- Accommodating projected population growth – capturing growth coming to the Rio Grande Valley and encouraging quality development by residential and commercial developers.

- Supporting economic development through attraction of new and expansion of existing businesses and quality of life – social, cultural, capital – a place where not just businesses want to locate, but families of their employees want to call home. Pharr can be the place businesses want to be. Pharr’s economy may also be spurred by downtown revitalization – bringing people back to downtown and encouraging shopping and business opportunities.

- Quality of life – festivals, parks, youth programs, school districts, arts, walking and biking trails, outdoor sporting events, pedestrian friendly, and safe.

- Infrastructure improvements in the City and the future annexed ETJ area is vital for growth. Road improvements is a top priority currently for elected officials. As decisions are made for future land use, concurrent decisions must be made for infrastructure development and improvements.

EXISTING LAND USE

Land use refers to how land is being used and how it should be used in the future in the City of Pharr.

Existing land uses in the City of Pharr include residential, commercial, industrial, parks and open space, agricultural, government owned and vacant land as recorded on the following City’s Existing Land Use Map:

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Figure 8: Existing Land Use Map, Pharr 2015



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- **Single-Family Residential** (yellow and light green) – conventional, detached single-family structures on individually platted lots;
- **Multi-Family Residential** (brown) – Includes apartment complexes, apartment buildings, triplexes and four-plexes, duplexes, and attached townhome structures;
- **Mobile Homes** (brown grid) – includes mobile homes and manufactured homes;
- **Commercial** (red and purple) – general commercial, general retail and restaurant, office buildings, and wholesales;
- **Industrial** (black and grey) – manufacturing, warehousing, assembly and distribution, light industrial office;
- **Agricultural/Parks & Open Spaces** (green dots) – active agriculture, including ranchland with livestock, cultivated cropland, orchards, vineyards, etc.; and public parks, golf courses, and other public open space.
- **Public / Semi-Public** (light grey, red stripes, blue stripes, yellow stripes) – utilities, hospitals, schools, libraries, etc.

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan noted the following:

Table 15: Existing Land Use Inside the City Limits, 2015

Land Use	Acres	Percent Total	Square Miles
Single-Family Residential	2,478.46	16.41%	3.87
Multi-Family Residential	455.75	3.02%	0.71
Manufactured Home	559.22	3.70%	0.87
Agriculture	3,816.85	25.27%	5.96
Commercial	1,441.51	9.54%	2.25
Industrial	1,081.83	7.16%	1.69
Public/Semi-Public	614.05	4.07%	0.96
Parks & Open Spaces	177.00	1.17%	0.28
Irrigation	486.83	3.22%	0.76
Vacant	1,459.40	9.66%	2.28
Streets/Right of Way	2,291.10	15.17%	3.58
PUD	240.39	1.59%	0.38
Total	15,102.39	100%	23.60

Source: City of Pharr GIS Manager

The Existing Land Use Map is not a zoning map, but a snapshot of the uses as they exist. Because of changes over time, the existing land use may not be consistent with the existing zoning of the properties or the future desired future land use of the area.

FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use plan guides land use decisions to ensure opportunities for economic development, neighborhood compatibility, a variety of housing options, adequate open space, and area for needed public facilities. As the City of Pharr's population grows over the next two decades, Pharr will need additional acreage for development.

Assuming a population of greater than 90,000 in 2035, consistent development rates and current land use patterns, land use needs will be a major consideration for attaining desired growth. Within the past 10 years, there has been continuous growth, particularly in the South Pharr area and it is the area where growth is expected to increase over the next 10 year period and beyond.

The Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) in the City of Pharr encompasses approximately 17,828 acres (27.86 sq. miles) and is located near the US/Mexico Border. The creation of the Future Land Use Plan for the City's ETJ, is intended to manage and facilitate annexation to make certain that the City of Pharr benefits from development in the ETJ. The ETJ is the City's future tax base and can support the City's ability to promote economic growth and develop a skilled workforce.

The Future Land Use Map, Pharr, 2015 which includes the ETJ area can be seen in Figure 9 with the acreage broken out as per Table 16. The future planned land use encompasses more industrial and residential areas and parks and open spaces. The Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge and another 130 acres in the Fair Grounds are in the ETJ. The Refuge is over 2000 acres and known to be the most popular and best known Wildlife Refuge in the Valley. Bird watchers come from all over the world to visit the Refuge in hopes of seeing some of the 400 species of birds. Additionally, there are numerous butterfly species and some rare snakes and other animals. It is estimated over 160,000 people visit the Refuge annually. This additional parkland space will improve the acre of parkland per population ratio much needed by the City.

Figure 9 shows the Future Land Use Map including the ETJ with the following description of types of land uses:

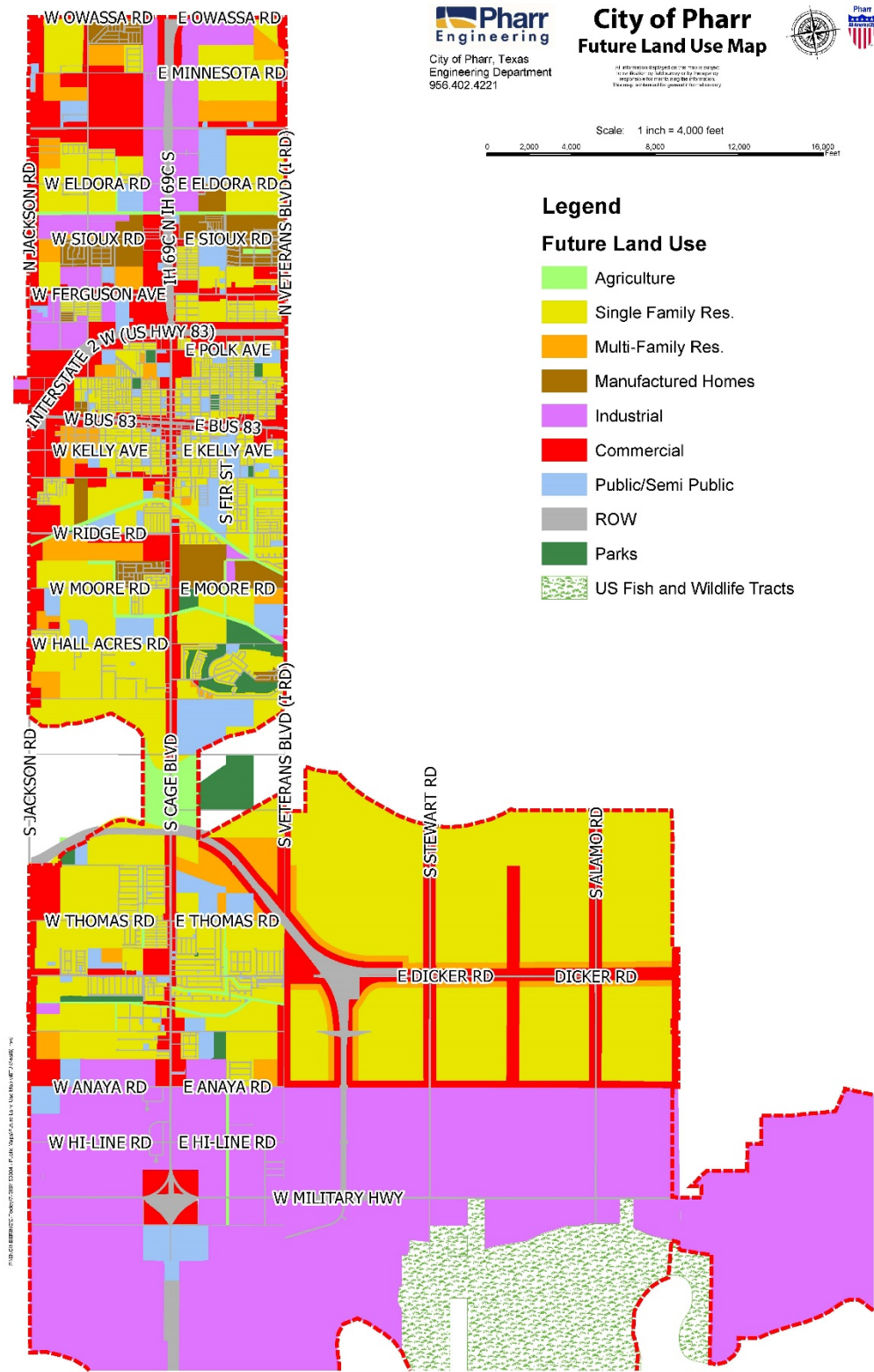
- **Single-Family Residential** (yellow) – conventional, detached single-family structures on individually platted lots;
- **Multi-Family Residential** (orange) – Includes apartment complexes, apartment buildings, triplexes and four-plexes, duplexes, and attached townhome structures;
- **Mobile Homes** (brown) – includes mobile homes and manufactured homes;
- **Commercial** (red) – general commercial, general retail and restaurant, office buildings, and wholesales;
- **Industrial** (purple) – manufacturing, warehousing, assembly and distribution, light industrial office;
- **Parks & Open Spaces** (green) – public parks, golf courses, and other public open space.
- **Agricultural** (lime green) – active agriculture, including ranchland with livestock, cultivated cropland, orchards, vineyards, etc.;
- **Public / Semi-Public** (light blue) – utilities, hospitals, schools, libraries, etc.

Table 16: Future Land Use Inside the City Limits, 2015

Land Use	Acres	Percent Total	Square Miles
Single-Family Residential	8,970.66	28%	14.02
Multi-Family Residential	1,104.27	3%	1.73
Manufactured Home	641.80	2%	1.00
Agriculture	185.58	1%	0.29
Commercial	3,289.16	10%	5.14
Industrial	11,105.29	34%	17.35
Public/Semi-Public	1,224.85	4%	1.91
Parks & Open Spaces	2,805.13	9%	4.38
Irrigation	875.57	3%	1.37
Streets/Right of Way	2,270.85	7%	3.55
Total	32,473.15	100%	50.74

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Figure 9: Future Land Use Map, Pharr 2015



Source: City of Pharr Engineering Department
A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

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This Comprehensive Plan is not a zoning ordinance and does not establish the zoning districts or zoning district boundaries for the City of Pharr. Rather, zoning is a primary implementation tool of the Comprehensive Plan. Zoning in compliance with the Plan promotes the health, safety, and general welfare of Pharr’s neighborhoods and the overall community by insuring compatible land uses, protection of existing neighborhoods and opportunities for economic growth. Currently, Pharr has 17 zoning districts, including agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial districts.

The City of Pharr has limited control over the growth and development of land beyond its incorporated boundaries. While the City does not have the authority to control the land use or density of development beyond its boundaries, the City can promote and protect the general health, safety, and welfare of persons residing in and adjacent to the municipality known as the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), the unincorporated area that is contiguous to the corporate boundaries of the City.

Pharr has the authority and responsibility to ensure that minimum subdivision standards are met in areas within Pharr’s ETJ through the review and approval of subdivision plats. The City of Pharr can also control and prevent the creation of substandard development in areas intended to become a part of the City of Pharr in the future – ensuring that these areas do not become liabilities upon future annexation. The City also has to ensure adequate water, wastewater, and street infrastructure exists to serve developments.

ANNEXATION AND ETJ GROWTH

Pharr is limited in where and how it can physically grow to capture and accommodate anticipated population growth in the area. Annexation allows, and may even require, Pharr to extend City services, regulations, and taxing authority into areas contiguous to the City limits. Benefits of annexation may include enhancement and protection of gateways, maintaining the ability to annex additional land over time, extension of development regulations and life-safety codes, and increased tax base. A cost-benefit analysis should be completed for each area anticipated for annexation. Growth of the region should be continually monitored, as it may be advantageous to annex areas prior to development.

In Texas, there are three primary ways that cities can annex contiguous property in their ETJ, as stated below. In all cases, annexed land must be in the City’s ETJ, must be contiguous to the current City limits, and is limited to no more than 10 percent of its incorporated area each year (with ‘carryover’ permitted up to 30 percent). For agricultural properties, a non-annexation agreement must first be offered to property owners that would allow them to remain in the City’s ETJ for a period of 10 years if the property is not developed.

Three-Year Annexation Plan - Since 1999, the Texas Local Government Code requires cities to adopt a three-year annexation plan. This plan must address timing of areas for annexation, requires an inventory of services and facilities, and requires a municipal service plan identifying services that will be provided to the proposed annexation areas. Annexation of areas included in the City’s annexation plan may not be annexed sooner than three years after inclusion in the plan, and such annexation must be completed within 31 days after the third year of the date the area was included. Areas included in the annexation plan, but not ultimately annexed, will not be eligible for annexation for another five years.

Exempt Annexation Process – Texas cities may annex areas without including them in the three-year annexation plan if they contain fewer than one hundred separate tracts of land on which one or more residential dwellings are located on each tract.

Property Owner Petition – Owners of land contiguous to the City limits may request to be annexed into the City limits through a petition, which must be acted on by the City Commission.

HOUSING

Master Planned Community

The City of Pharr’s strategic location and potential annexed area makes it a prime location to plan, develop and build a master planned community. There is ample room for a large scale development featuring a wide range of housing prices and styles, an array of amenities with multiple non-residential land uses. Having the time to plan in advance and getting community input, the master planned community could offer amenities that would attract active families and businesses seeking quality neighborhoods.

Pharr Housing

In the heart of the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) with an estimated population of 75,382, Pharr is strategically located to continue being a vital housing area for the region. Pharr has over an estimated 20,000 households, with 65% of homes owner-occupied and 33% renter occupied, with a very low vacancy rate of some 2%. Like many growing areas across Texas, and especially in the RGV, one of the prime aspects impacting the local market is affordability and availability. Pharr has a healthy mix of older established neighborhoods along with an expanding new residential construction. Quality, location and age of the housing stock is and will continue to be critical to the underlying tax base of the City.

A significant factor that influences the housing and rental market in Pharr is its proximity to and investment from citizens in Mexico into the region. This in-bound investment has a significant impact on economic contribution to the sales tax base of Pharr as well as an enhancement of international commercial activities that produce new capital investment and jobs. Estimated median home value as of 2013 U.S. Census data was \$71,100 (vs. \$39,000 in 2000). However, local real estate data indicated the average 2014-2015 selling price of a home was \$98,245.

The international dynamic as well as the internal growth of Pharr and the surrounding region will require an ongoing expansion of a broad cross-section of housing ranging from owner-occupied single to multi-family (i.e. duplex) as well as rental and housing for segments of the population with the greatest need for very affordable housing. New housing and revitalization of existing housing is paramount to the image and family friendly features of all communities.

Factors that influence the revitalization and expansion of housing include availability, cost of land, community support, financing programs, infrastructure, and the desire and capacity of developers to build affordable housing – to include the management of and reduction of restrictions or barriers for developer-investors to enter the market.

Pharr Housing Authority

Pharr Housing Authority operates and manages eight projects with some 235 affordable units in its public housing portfolio, with near 100% occupancy providing homes for 801 citizens as of June 2015. The average household size is 3.4 persons per household, 68% of households include children. Residents in public housing pay rent, termed the Total Tenant Payment (TTP), based on household income and is generally 30% of the resident’s income with a \$25-50 minimum rent assessment. The average tenant rent contribution of the Pharr Housing Authority is \$229.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), comparing the housing assistance distribution of the Pharr Housing Authority between public housing units (22%) and Section 8 Housing vouchers (78%) to that of all housing authorities in Texas, Pharr has a smaller proportion of public housing units than the average housing authority. The housing proportion of Section 8 vouchers under management is larger than the average housing authority in Texas. The City as of June 2015 administers 828 Section 8 vouchers. The average annual income of public housing residents is \$10,968.

In the most recent annual housing performance assessment, based on overall fiscal and property management, Pharr has scored above averages across Texas.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

For the past three decades the City of Pharr has used CDBG grants to enhance housing programs, streets, parks and public services to low and moderate income residents. The U.S. Census Bureau determines funding on statistical tracts within a community. The City of Pharr is divided into seven tracts and further sub-divided into block groups. Projects that stimulate economic development and neighborhood revitalization are an additional focus of this program. Oversight of the City's \$1.2 million CDBG grant is managed by the Community Development Division, which provides planning, oversight, and technical assistance.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Land use policies are intended to guide land use decisions and were developed based on input from the Stakeholder Committee. These over-arching policies ensure that decisions made by the City Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, and City Staff further the vision of Pharr established through this planning process.

When considering amendments to the City's Future Land Use Plan or rezoning of land, the following policies should be considered:

- The City will use the Comprehensive Plan to guide decisions on applications for development when facilities and services are not readily available or where capacity is limited.
- The City will rezone property in compliance with the City's Future Land Use Plan, when requested and appropriate.
- The City will encourage and/or direct development to areas that maximize existing water, wastewater, street, and drainage infrastructure to avoid costly infrastructure improvements and long-term operations and maintenance costs.
- The City will, overtime, improve public facilities and services to ensure that they are adequate so that appropriate development opportunities are created and encouraged.
- The City will provide opportunities for and encourage a variety of housing types to adequately house all of Pharr's residents.
- The City will encourage an economically viable and compatible pattern of future land use and development, maximizing the market value.
- The City will ensure, through land use decisions, a fiscally responsible and well-managed land development pattern, including the provision of adequate public facilities and services (streets, drainage, water and wastewater infrastructure), including both availability and capacity.
- The City will amend its development regulations to manage and provide for growth opportunities, including the creation of new zoning districts that provide market flexibility.

- The City will convene an Annexation Task Force comprised of a sub-committee of the City Commission, Planning & Zoning Commission and City Staff to determine the most feasible and politically soluble way to expand Pharr's physical size through Annexation.
- The City will plan for future annexation areas. A mix of uses will be encouraged and permitted to be flexible to more easily respond to market demands. These areas are intended to allow for new neighborhoods, office parks, and retail and restaurants nearby creating the character of a neighborhood center or village.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS – LAND USE

Goal – Land Use

There will be a balanced and diverse use of land within the City to provide for a wide range of residential opportunities, commercial activities, recreation and agriculture.

- Objective A: Encourage growth, quality development and redevelopment in downtown Pharr in order to utilize existing infrastructure.
- Action 1: Consider use of Tax Increment Refinance Zones (TIRZ) to fund infrastructure improvement projects.
- Action 2: Promote the Pharr Downtown Living Initiative, Neighborhood Enterprise Zone #1, and Empowerment Zone to encourage commercial development in the downtown district.
- Action 3: Encourage commercial development in the downtown district – ice cream shop, designated shopping area, bookstore, and other family oriented places.
- Action 4: Maintain and enhance the City’s local character in aesthetic value and land use planning through more lighting and green spaces.
- Action 5: Encourage the most desirable and efficient use of land and buildings while enhancing the physical and economic environment of downtown Pharr.
- Objective B: Ensure orderly and timely City expansion through targeted annexation, efficient utility provision and consistent development policies.
- Action 1: Identify areas in the ETJ that are feasible for annexation, based on the City’s ability to provide services.
- Action 2: Develop and adopt an Annexation Plan.
- Action 3: Secure and provide local infrastructure so that existing and future development can be served.
- Action 4: Work with major landowners, developers and builders to support developments in Pharr.
- Action 5: Regulate development within the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction in a manner consistent with the City’s objectives for future City expansion and managed growth.
- Objective C: Ensure land use planning and development regulations provide adequate opportunities to respond to market opportunities.
- Action 1: Conduct annual reviews of the City’s land use planning and development regulations and standards.
- Action 2: Develop/Renew the master plans for the City’s various departments, remove barriers to their successful development and increase marketing and promotion efforts.
- Objective D: Provide for housing diversity throughout Pharr and future annexed areas.

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Action 1: | Ensure there is adequate variety in terms of housing types within the City that will meet the affordable housing needs of all income and age levels. |
| Action 2: | Establish areas within Pharr and as the City limit expands that would be appropriate for higher end homes and/or master planned communities. |
| Action 3: | Certify that new residential areas are developed to a high standard by reviewing and revising if necessary, the existing standards for residential development. |

TRANSPORTATION

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

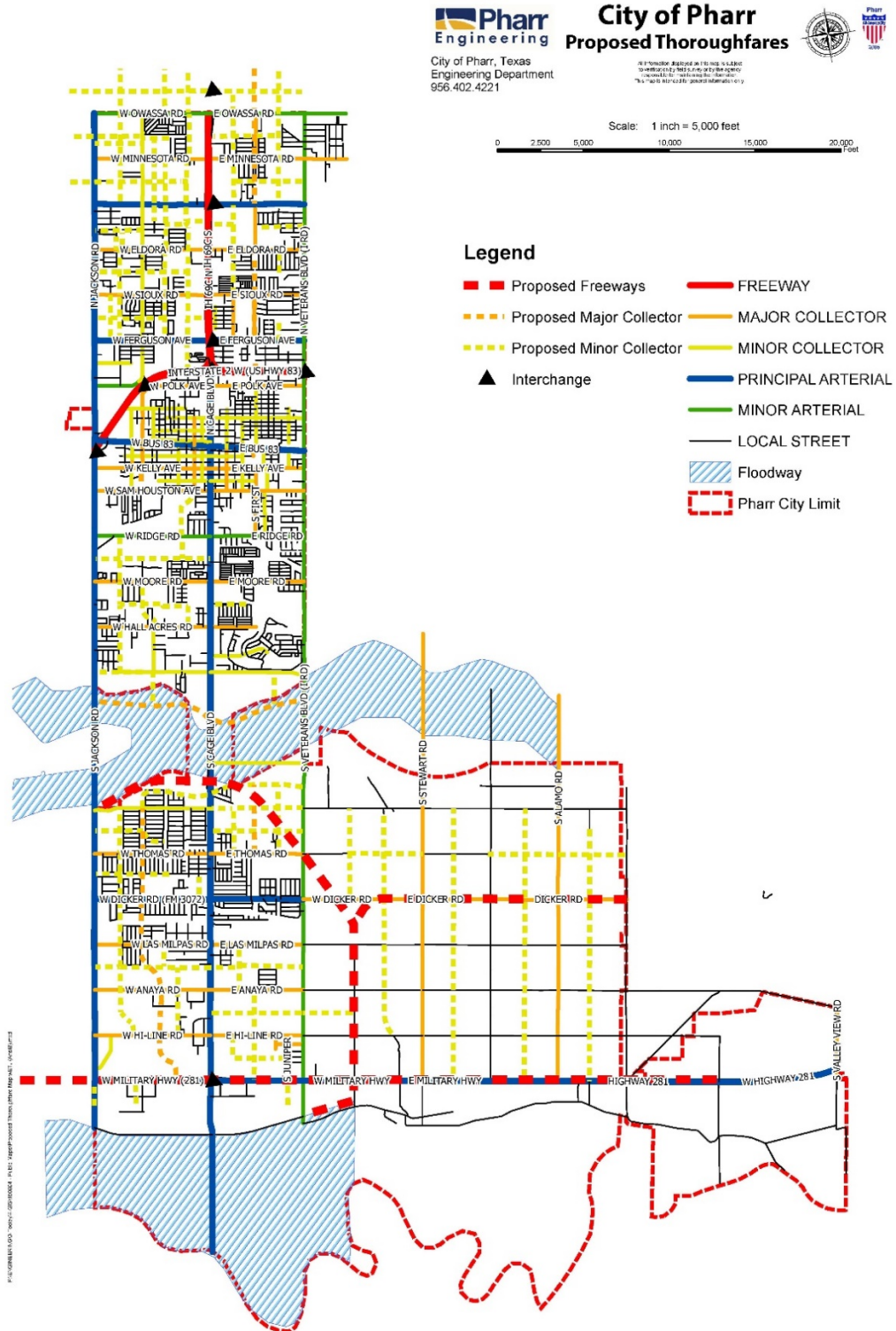
Adequate transportation facilities are vital to economic growth and quality of life in a community. The expansion of transportation infrastructure has the ability to both create opportunities and improve conditions in Pharr. Transportation planning addresses all modes of travel, including pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, transit, rail, and air. Pharr boasts a well-connected street system; however, stakeholders have voiced a desire to make the community more walkable and bicycle friendly.

This chapter describes the City's existing transportation network and future plans for the transportation infrastructure in Pharr and beyond. Included is the City's Thoroughfare Plan, identifying future locations and classifications of streets to support Pharr's growth into the future as seen in the following Thoroughfare Activity Map, Pharr. The purpose of this chapter is to ensure that Pharr's multi-modal transportation network is enhanced through both public and private investment.

Infrastructure importance in the Rio Grande Valley region gained a significant endorsement when Governor Greg Abbott signed a bilateral collaboration agreement with Mexico in early September 2015. In so doing the governor further recognized the importance of a long term partnership with Mexico to enhance the flow of international trade. The agreement to foster economic development was drafted to insure there would be continued dialogue on issues such as border security, transportation infrastructure, and energy issues.

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Figure 10: Thoroughfare Activity Map 2015



Source: City of Pharr Engineering Department

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THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The Pharr Thoroughfare Plan consists of an inventory of the existing and proposed thoroughfares and proposed road system needs in the community and linking with the communities in the region. Any planning in Pharr is connected, due to the geographical location, to any and all roadway planning and improvements in Hidalgo County. Furthermore, the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization (HCMPO), the Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority (HCRMA), and Pharr Bridge Connector Assessment (PBCA) greatly impact all traffic assessments in the City. The charge of these organizations is to determine the status and needs of the existing and future needs for new roadways.

As travel demands in the region increase with both public and commercial traffic volume, roadway improvement decisions includes assessment and planning for new right-of-ways, wider streets, crossing sections, access issues, general alignments as well as impacting zoning considerations and designations. Such planning is essential not only to the timely expansion of the local road system but also to allow the region to insure a smooth and safe flow of traffic.

Determination and forecast of future roadways is based on the assessment of both current roadways and demand/traffic flow studies. The following guidelines are generally applied in the assessment of roadway planning, studies, and implementation:

- Minimize land and right-of-way required for expanded and new streets to include effective use of resources in the planning process to designate where higher design requirement may be needed
- Maintain positive contact with the neighborhoods and citizens impacted by any planned development to include minimizing negative impacts of construction phases
- Clearly identify and categorize the usage of proposed streets, to include traffic flow, safety, and land use patterns; based on the appropriate functional right-of-way classification and forecast, to include the following:
 - Expressway -- 350 feet
 - High speed principal arterial – 150 feet
 - Principal arterial – 120 feet
 - Minor arterial – 100 feet
 - Local collector road – 80 feet
 - Frontage roads and ramps – as needed
- Determine capital budgeting requirements as well as priorities and schedules for the City’s comprehensive planning process and capital improvements program (CIP)
- Reserve adequate right-of-ways for future long-range transportation and growth improvements

Note: The Texas Department of Transportation has classification types, “facility type code”: 1-22 for each of the above six roadway designations and for use in determining eligibility for Federal highway funding.

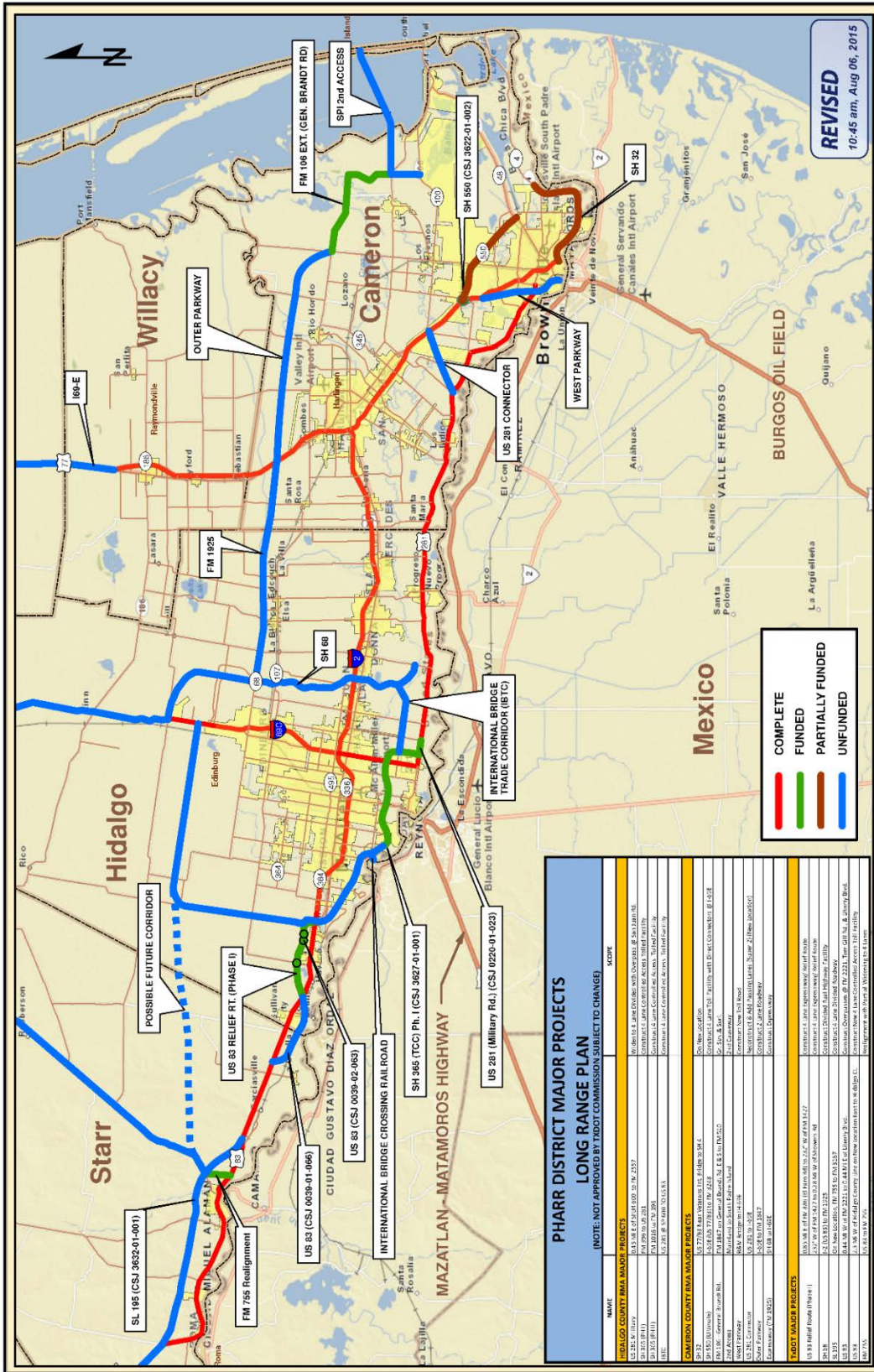
HIGHWAYS / ROADS

US highway 83 is the most traveled road in Pharr. This roadway is one of the longest north-south highways in the United States, running from Westhope, North Dakota to Brownsville, Texas through concurrent US 77. Within the State of Texas, US 83 serves as a main east-west artery connecting cities like Mission, McAllen, Pharr, San Juan, Alamo, Harlingen, and Brownsville. It allows more than 140,000 vehicles per day to pass through Pharr.

US Highway 281 has the second highest traffic count within the City, carrying more than 20,000 cars per day. This is another major north-south highway in the US, stretching from Dunseith, North Dakota to the Mexican border. US 281 virtually divides the City of Pharr in half, and acts as a main artery to Mexico via the Pharr International Bridge, which is a very important trade route.

A map of the proposed major projects in the Pharr district can be seen on the following page.

Figure 11: Pharr District Major Projects 2015



Source: Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority

THE HIDALGO COUNTY LOOP

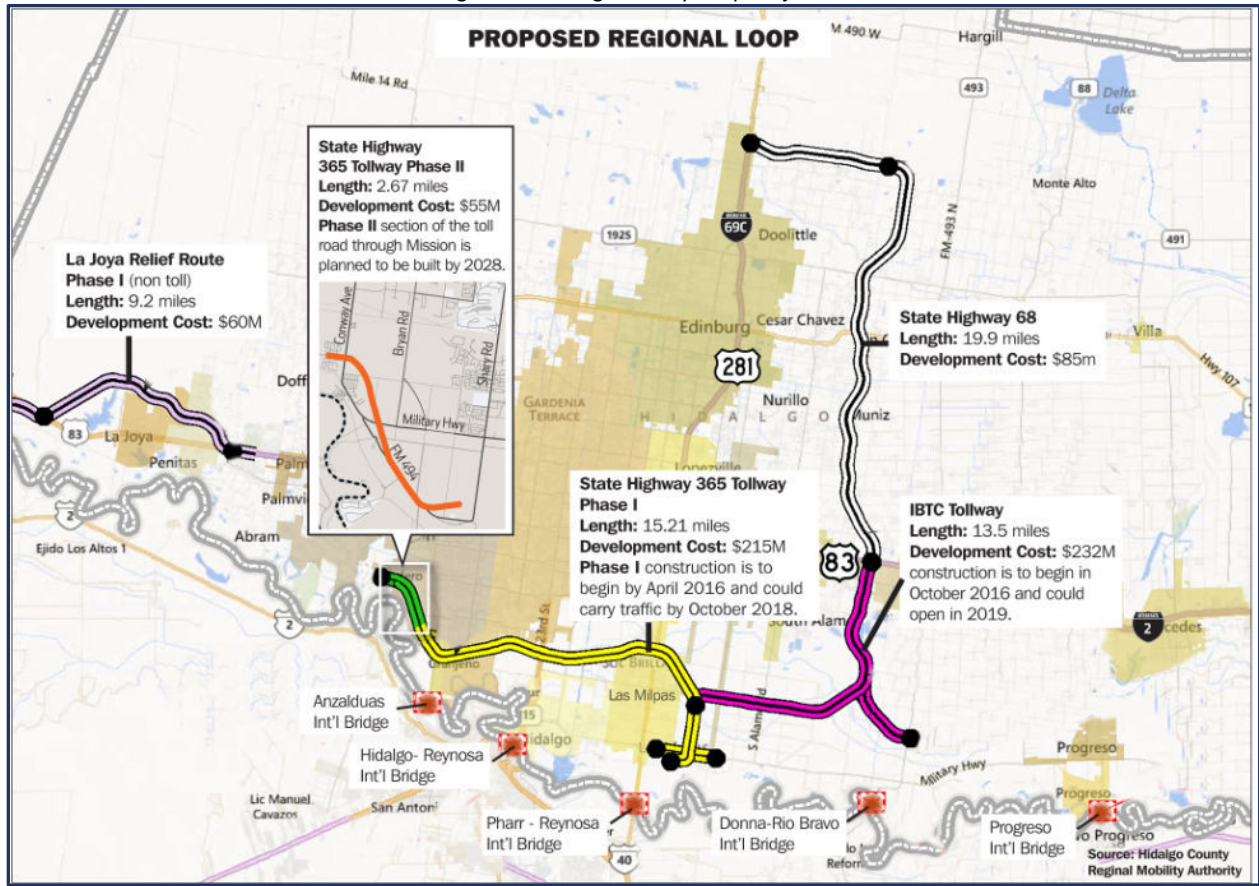
Since 2005 the Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority and the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization have been working in conjunction on the Hidalgo County Loop project. Because of the impact of increased NAFTA traffic the Hidalgo County Loop is the top priority for construction and funding. It is designed to expedite the flow of traffic into and out of the county, and is expected to reduce congestion on the local thoroughfares, lower exhaust emission, improve safety and expand economic development in the urban core of the county.

The Hidalgo County Loop is planned as a tolled facility and will connect the international bridges to Interstate 2 and then turn north to connect to Interstate 69 Central. Ultimately, the Loop will consist of 2 to 3 tolled main lanes with 2-lane frontage roads in each direction.

Transportation projects in Texas have normally been funded through the use of both local and State funds. Local governments have contributed money to cover a percentage of the right-of-way or design costs and the State has provided the remaining funds. State funding for transportation projects has not kept pace with demand because of reluctance over the last decade to raise the gas tax, which is the typical source of State transportation dollars.

Local sources of revenue are required to fund construction because the Texas Department of Transportation has informed communities around the State that there will be dramatically less money for road projects in coming years. The Hidalgo County Loop, which is using a number of innovative financing mechanisms, will include tolls for tractor trailers and heavy trucks moving freights through the county. While freight traffic is expected to be the main source of revenue, tolls will also be charged for passenger vehicles.

Figure 12: Hidalgo County Loop Project



Source: Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority

Two portions of the Hidalgo County Loop are relevant to Pharr, the State Highway 365 Tollway and the International Bridge Trade Corridor (IBTC) Tollway. Both will cost more than \$200 million. State Highway 365 Tollway construction will begin by April 2016 and could open by 2018 and IBTC Tollway construction will begin by October 2016 and could open in 2019.

State Highway 365 consists of two phases to construct toll and non-toll improvements from FM 1016 to U.S. 281. Phase 1 of construction consists of toll road improvements from FM 396 to U.S. 281, and also consists of non-toll improvements east of Spur 600 (Cage Blvd.) to FM 2557 and from Spur 29 (South Veterans Drive) to U.S. 281. Phase 2 consists of additional toll road improvements from FM 1016 to FM 396.

The IBTC consists of two phases of construction of toll improvements from Interchange with SH 365 near FM 3072 to I-2 and from the Valley View Interchange to FM 493. Phase 1 construction will consist of building two segments initially as a 4-lane toll road (two lanes each way) and building the 3rd segment as a 2-lane connector road. Phase 2 of construction will consist of toll road main lanes and an additional frontage road from the Valley View Interchange to FM 493.

BICYCLE PAVEMENT MARKING IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The City of Pharr received approval and funding from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to improve bicycle mobility in Pharr. The \$805,000 project will fund the striping or restriping of bike lanes on streets from the north end of Pharr to Military, which is Pharr's City limits. The project also

includes signage that designates bike lanes and redoing bike lane markings on City maps. The project is to begin in 2016. See Attachment I, City of Pharr Bicycle Accessible Improvement Project Map.

AIRPORTS

McAllen International Airport

The McAllen-Miller International Airport began in the 1940's with general aviation services in McAllen, Texas. By the 1960's, commercial airlines were transporting passengers. In 1993, the current terminal was built. The airport's main passenger aviation focuses on flights departing or arriving to or from George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport via United and American Airlines. The airport also provides cargo aviation services in the forms of maintenance and delivery/forwarding for companies like UPS and United Airlines. The airport is owned by the City of McAllen and has two runways 13/31 and 18/36, which have the dimensions of 2,170 x 46 meters and 804 x 18 meters, respectively. Furthermore, the airport's 20 year master plan states intentions to extend runway 13/31 to a length of 3,048 meters.

Valley International Airport

The Valley International Airport is located in Harlingen, Texas, and was originally used by the US Military for fighter pilot training during WWII. In 1967, the City of Harlingen's airport moved into the airfield and it was remodeled as recent as 1991. The airport is currently the largest airport in South Texas and is served by the four airlines United, Southwest, Delta, and Sun Country. These airlines offer destinations across the continental US as well as international flights, particularly to Mexico. Valley International also serves as the cargo hub of the Rio Grande Valley through the NAFTA CargoPort, which is used by carriers such as FedEx and DHL. The airport has three runways, 17R/35L, 13/31, and 17L/35R, which have the dimensions of 2,530 x 46 meters, 2,212 x 46 meters, and 1,813 x 46 meters, respectively.

Brownsville South Padre International Airport

The Brownsville South Padre International Airport is a City owned airfield located within an hour driving distance of the City of Pharr. The airport is served by the three airlines - United, US Airways and American. The airport also provides cargo aviation services such as "Midnight Express" in which they promise to ship packages delivered before midnight to their final destination before the sun rises. Common destinations include Detroit USA, Monterrey Mexico, and Calgary Canada. The airport currently operates on three runways, 13R/31L, 17/35, and 13L/31R which have dimensions of 2255 x 46 meters, 1829 x 46 meters, and 914 x 23 meters, respectively. The airport celebrated their 85th anniversary in 2014 and boasts future plans to build a new terminal, be serviced by more airlines and cargo services, and to extend their runway capacity to 3,048 meters to accommodate larger aircraft and heavier cargo loads.

Weslaco/Mid Valley Airport

The Weslaco Airport, FBO, is centrally located in the Rio Grande Valley and is approximately 15 miles from the City of Pharr and five minutes from Mexico. The airport is located near the Weslaco Industrial Park and land within the airport is designated as a Foreign Trade Zone. The airport currently operates one lighted runway, 5,000 x 75 foot. In addition to cargo and business services, the airport has limousine services, a fuel station, a maintenance facility on site, a customer and pilot lounge and boasts of day recreational activities close by. There are over 18 current corporate customers that rely on the Weslaco Airport for cargo/business transport logistics.

BUS STATIONS (INTER-CITY / INTRA-CITY)

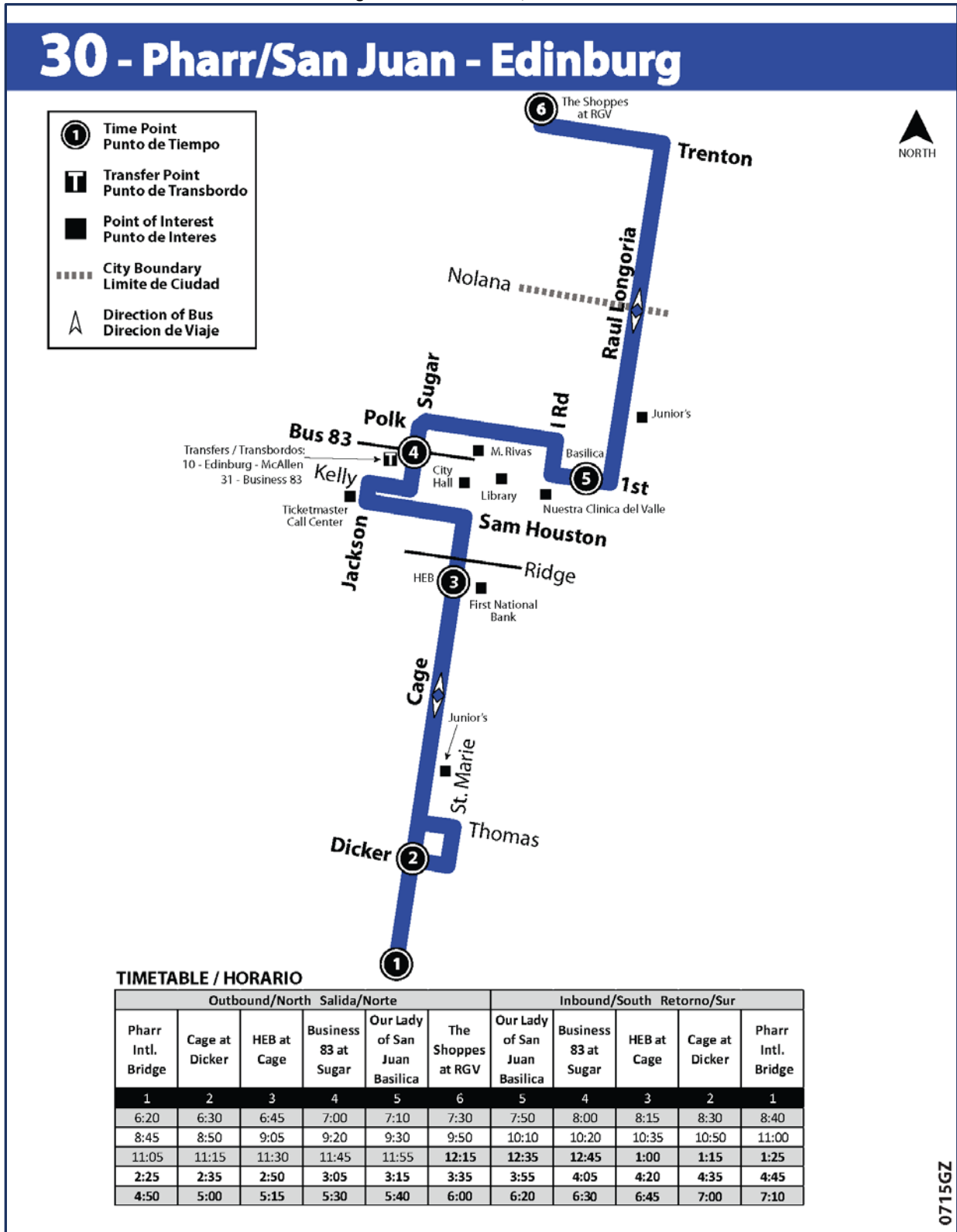
Valley Metro operates a Monday through Saturday bus line, with one bus and five bus stops, throughout Pharr. The line operates in the south and the central part of town only, but does stop by heavily-trafficked and important locations such as the Pharr International Bridge, Las Milpas, Dollar General, HEB, First National Bank, Pharr City Library, Pharr City Offices, Best Buy and Nuestra Clinica del Valle. The service even offers a flexible system which allows passengers to be picked up curbside as long as they request a pickup one day in advance and it is within half a mile of the bus route. At any time, passengers may request to stop the bus and be dropped off anywhere along the route. Figure 13 depicts the current bus route and times.

City leaders and citizens have expressed strong interest in increasing bus transportation. They feel it would decrease congestion, but also increase the number of people who might shop and eat in Pharr.

Riding the bus is a very inexpensive service as the most expensive ticket is \$1 per ride, and the price is dropped to \$0.50 per ride when buying a 20 – ride pass ticket. Seniors (60+), disabled individuals, veterans, students, and Medicare recipients have even cheaper rates, each pass is only \$0.25 per ride. Children under the age of seven ride for free. A downside to the service is there is a long wait time in between buses at each stop (2+ hours). Only one bus services the Pharr route, so the addition of a second bus would further improve the service for the residents of Pharr.

Valley Metro also operates regionally throughout the Valley, from Sullivan City to Port Isabel, and Raymondville to Brownsville. These services run more frequently than the services within Pharr and allow the Pharr residents to easily travel throughout the Valley. `

Figure 13: Bus Route 30, Pharr Route



Source: Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, Valley Metro

RAILROAD OPERATIONS

As with most areas in history, railroads played a huge part in attracting businesses and settlers to Hidalgo County. The area saw its first railroad with the arrival of the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway in 1904. This affected the county in two ways; land prices increased and the local economic base switched to farming. This drew an influx of settlers from across the country. As time progressed and advances in technology were made, dependency on rail for transport of both people and goods decreased. However, the area still holds a demand for rail services in the transport of commercial goods. There is also potential for the resurgence of passenger rail transport, however, Pharr is not currently provided with passenger rail service.

Commercial

Pharr's current commercial rail needs are serviced by the Rio Valley Switching Company (RVSC). Also known as the "Valley Railroad", the RVSC begins at an interchange with the Union Pacific Railroad in Harlingen, Texas and then extends 55 miles west to Mission, Edinburg, and the McAllen Foreign Trade Zone. The railway also extends 11 miles northwest to Santa Rosa. RVSC provides reliable, economical shipping by expanding the services offered by Class I Railroads.

At this time, studies are underway by the Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority to review congestion issues and future use of rail capacity to facilitate expansion and attraction of business.

Figure 14: Rio Valley Switching Company System Map



Source: Rio Valley Switching Company, 2014

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS - TRANSPORTATION

Goal – Transportation

The transportation network of the City of Pharr shall provide access to neighborhoods and businesses while serving mobility needs of international, interstate and intrastate trade.

Objective A: Support and improve alternative transportation modes within the City, including pedestrians and bicycles.

Action 1: Provide sidewalks and crosswalks on all arterial and collector streets.

Action 2: Develop a bikeway system of safe and efficient on-street bikeways and off-street paths to meet the recreational and alternative transportation needs of residents.

Action 3: Strengthen coordination efforts with Valley Metro to increase the number of buses, bus stops and frequency of services for residents and visitors to easily travel through Pharr and neighboring cities.

Action 4: Implement plans to mark bike lanes on designated streets.

Objective B: Provide an efficient, safe and connective transportation system that is coordinated with existing needs and with plans for future growth.

Action 1: Use the Thoroughfare Plan in conjunction with the Existing and Future Land Use Plans specifically to ensure that the various land uses within the City and ETJ are accommodated by the transportation system.

Action 2: Work closely with regional transportation planning groups to ensure that regional transportation issues, especially those that directly affect Pharr, are addressed with City input.

Action 3: Ensure that the following concerns are addressed when making decisions regarding transportation with the City:

- * Regional transportation
- * Roadway integrity (i.e., ensuring mobility)
- * Roadway maintenance
- * Adequate access to and from Pharr
- * Connections between existing roadways
- * Neighborhood traffic concerns
- * Signalization

Action 4: Investigate ways to decrease the congestion on Highway 281 (I-69C).

Action 5: Coordinate and collaborate with regional mobility planning groups to promote and support the Hidalgo County Loop, specifically the State Highway 365 Tollway and the International Bridge Trade Corridor (IBTC) portions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Business attraction and retention, job creation, income growth, and an increasing tax base are paramount to the economic well-being and quality of life for a community. Pharr is home to a growing number of businesses and industries and is well positioned for continued economic growth. Proximity to the Mexican border and a central location in the Rio Grande Valley provides a consumer base of over 10 million people within 200 miles.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the economic conditions in Pharr and establishes strategies to enable continued opportunity and growth.

E-GOVERNMENT

Pharr's e-government has seen extensive improvements in the last few years. Citizens can currently pay their utility bill and municipal citations online. The City is in the process of updating the system to create a one-stop portal for citizens and developers which will allow them to file complaints, request permits, pay fees and much more.

PharrNOW was a real-time information and event publishing system created in 2013. Since then the system has been overhauled for a next generation government output called Pharr.LIFE. The goal is to standardize all the information coming out of the City to make it easier and more accessible. Pharr is also beginning to hire marketing companies and bring on consultants to help advise the City on other possibilities and help bring them to life.

TOURISM / ECOTOURISM / SPORTS TOURISM

Located in the heart of the Rio Grande Valley, Pharr is well positioned to take advantage of the growing tourism sector across the region. Visitors – Winter Texans – from across the nation inject considerable investment in Pharr and its retail businesses. Pharr additionally has a brisk business in thousands of Mexican tourists visiting to shop, dine, and take advantage of medical services. The year-round tropical season combined with recreational facilities, libraries, and historical sites has expanded to capture inbound visitors.

One very popular sector is the growing interest in the border's wildlife sanctuaries which annually attracts many naturist and bird watchers. The City has additionally targeted the revitalization of the downtown area to expand and enhance a cross-section of new retail and dining establishments.

RESTAURANT ROW

There has been a growing focus in Pharr to develop and enhance the downtown area, to include encouragement and incentives to brand Cage Street between Sam Houston and Business 83 as "Restaurant Row." Investors and developers who create new restaurants have the opportunity to be awarded property tax reimbursements. One requirement is that each new establishment include outdoor signage that brands the location as part of 'Restaurant Row.'

Additional incentives are planned for new establishments that add increased value to the downtown district that includes added improvements such as outdoor lighting, decorative pavers, outdoor eating locations, and decorative facades. One prime qualifier to receive incentives consideration is that the

eateries established must have at least 65 percent of its gross revenue from sit-down food and non-beverage sales.

The goals are part of the overall revitalization of downtown Pharr and to add increased value to the citizens and City. Funding for such projects are through either Neighborhood Empowerment Zone or a Chapter 380 agreement.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

In 2014, the Chamber of Commerce was dissolved and incorporated into the Pharr Economic Development Corporation (EDC) as Pharr.BIZ. Businesses that joined Pharr.BIZ were invited to attend special events, participate in specialized training, have access to the online business directory, receive newsletters and were a part of the advocacy campaign initiated by the Pharr EDC. In 2015, Pharr.BIZ disbanded and there is discussion of reviving the Chamber of Commerce.

PHARR INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

The Pharr International Bridge is a key port of entry on the United States-Mexico border. The bridge connects US Highway 281 to the City of Reynosa, Tamaulipas, an essential industrial City in Mexico. The bridge handles both commercial and personal traffic and plays a key role in the economy of Pharr.

Opened in late 1994, the Pharr International Bridge is the prime economic driver in the community. The bridge and related activities accounts for a large portion of both local and regional jobs and tax revenue for the City. Considered the prime United States-Mexico port of entry for produce, trade over the bridge in 2014 accounted for over \$30 billion, an increase of nearly 8% over 2013.

In addition to the movement of produce, there has been an increase in imported capital goods to include automotive parts, electronic components, computers and crude petroleum products. Pharr's largest export at the bridge is petroleum gases totaling some \$1.08 billion annually. The Pharr Bridge is the second largest port in the nation for the export of natural gas and import of fruits and vegetables.

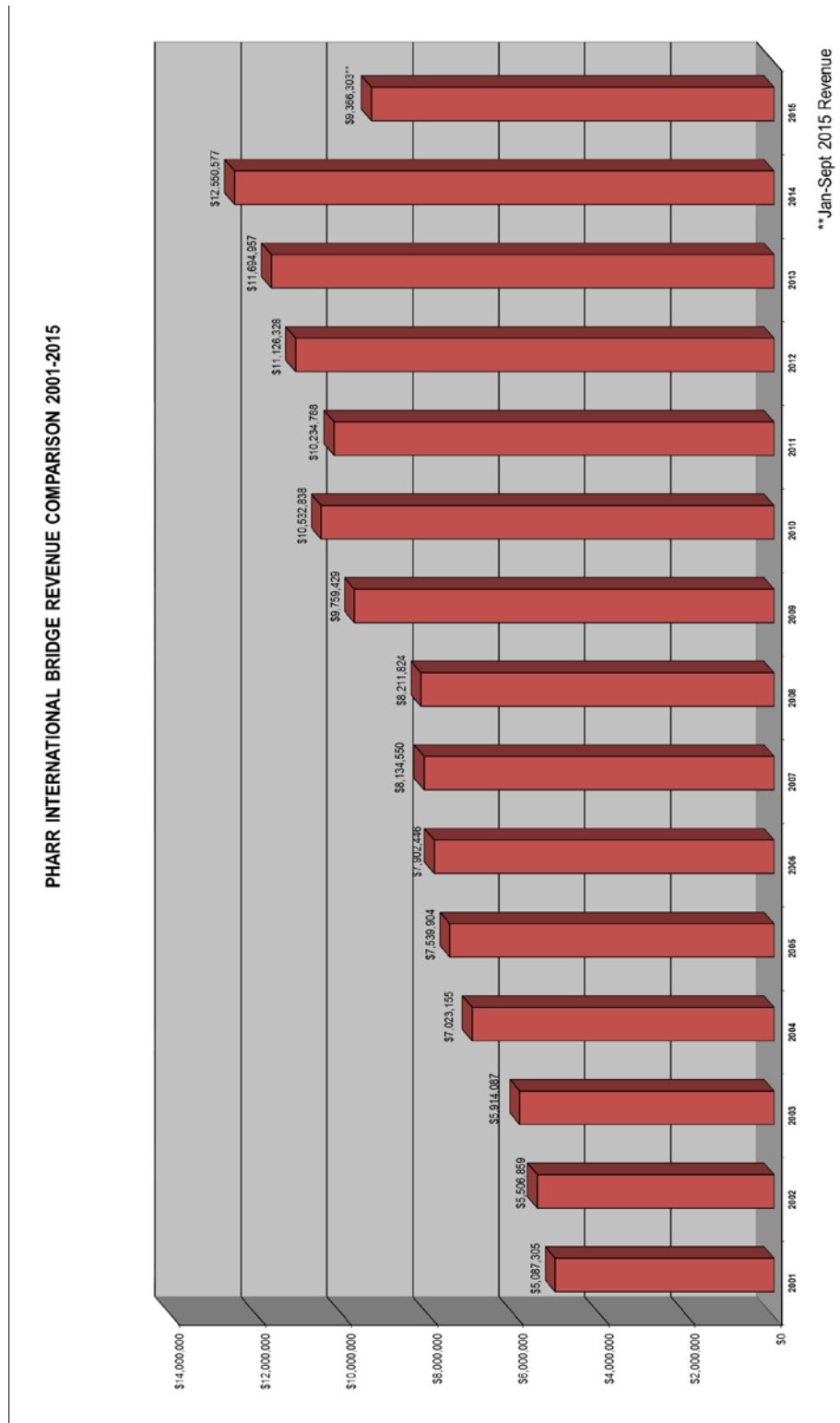
Pharr has benefited from the fact that Texas, according to an October 2015 study by the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank, is the top exporting state given the geographic proximity to Mexico and the increased trade of intermediate goods. Staging of such goods and services in the southern Pharr commercial area adjacent to the bridge is expected to grow yearly.

A key component to the increased activity in cross-border commerce is the location of and linkage of Pharr to the north-bound 'Texas Trade Corridor' which is part of the Interstate 69 expansion into the mid-west market of the country. For south-bound trade, the Pharr Bridge is on the Mexican trade route, the '*Supervia*' highway, which connects west-bound traffic through the City of Monterrey to the Pacific port of Mazatlan and east bound shipment to the port of Matamoros on the Gulf of Mexico just south of Boca Chica at the mouth of the Rio Grande River. These expanded infrastructure corridors are vital to the future enhancement and increased volume of two-way trade through the Pharr Bridge port.

Following are charts for both bridge revenue and crossings from 2001-2015. The number of annual crossings has steadily declined since 2008, yet annual revenue has steadily increased over the same time period. Bridge managers believe the decline in crossings is largely due to violence in Mexico and security issues. Other factors are recent blockades in Mexico (protestors against the Mexican Government), prolonged construction on the bridge due to inclement weather and slowing of business production during peak seasons, as well as system failures and shutdowns.

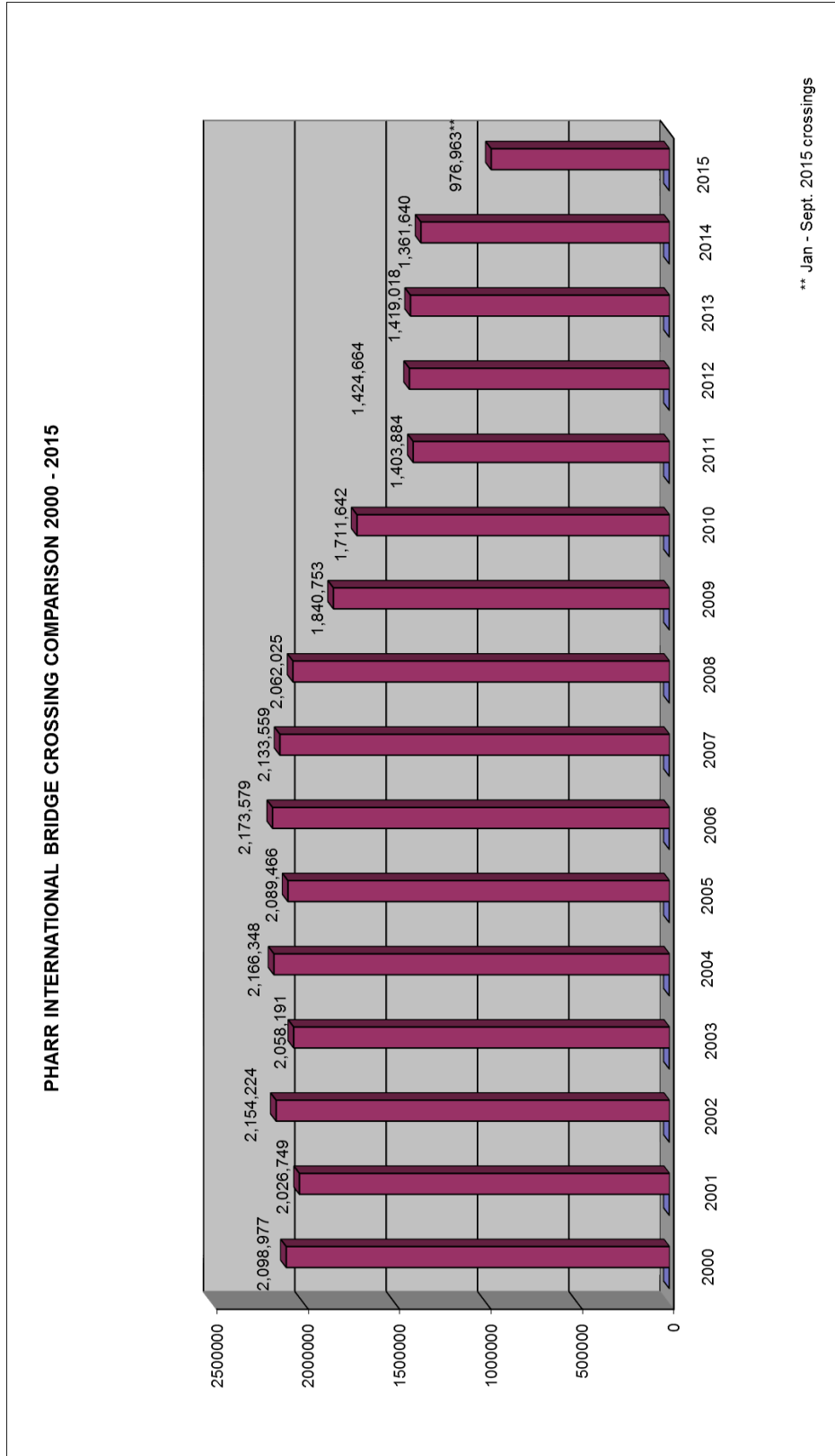
Increased revenue can be accounted for by raised toll crossing fees, charges for oversized cargo, monthly peso exchange and various rental fees to agencies who rent facilities owned by the City of Pharr.

Figure 15: Pharr International Bridge Revenue Comparison 2001-2015



Source: Pharr International Bridge Department

Figure 16: Pharr International Bridge Crossing Comparison 2000-2015



Source: Pharr International Bridge Department

International Trade Numbers

Being a key port of entry on the U.S – Mexico border, Pharr’s imports and exports have increased substantially from 2004 to 2014 due to the Pharr International Bridge. Information from the bridge indicates imports increased 81% in this 10 year period whereas exports increased 71%. According to WorldCity magazine, in the first half of 2015, Mexico was Pharr’s number one trade partner followed by China, Japan, Vietnam, and South Korea. These five trading partners account for 99.28% of trade with the world. Through the first half of 2015 Pharr’s trade with the world totaled \$15 billion.

For exports, Pharr ranked No. 31 amid the nation’s 450 “ports of entry” – airports, seaports and border crossings. Through the first six months of 2015 Pharr exported \$5.44 billion worth of goods, the following are the top 10 exports:

- Petroleum gases, other gaseous hydrocarbons
- TVs, computer monitors
- Motor vehicle parts
- Computer chips
- Insulated wire, cable
- Electrical supplies, apparatus, less than 1000V
- Gasoline, other fuels
- Computers
- Compressors and pumps
- Cotton

The import piece of the business has also seen vast increase. Pharr imported goods totaling \$9.55 billion for the first six months of 2015. Topping the list of imports by dollar value:

- TVs, computer monitors
- Motor vehicle parts
- Dates, figs, pineapples and other fruit
- Insulated wire, cable
- Electrical boards, panels and switches
- Other fresh fruit
- Reception apparatus for cellular phones
- Electrical motors, generators, not sets
- Radar and remote control equipment
- Landline, cellular phone equipment

With new bridges opening, maintaining the ease in crossing the Pharr International Bridge will play a crucial role in the border crossings and revenue Pharr will experience.

Bridge Capital Projects

The bridge project revenues are budgeted at \$17,251,400. The expenditures are budgeted at \$19,120,600. The difference to cover the expenditures will be covered by cash on hand of \$1,869,200.

The following are the main five bridge capital projects budgeted for Fiscal Year 2015-2016:

- Truck Staging Area Inside the Port of Entry
- Entrance Booth and Road Expansion
- Exit Booth Expansion

- International Trade Center Building
- BSIF Connector and Fast Lane

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING ZONES (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing Zones (TIF) allow cities and towns to borrow against an area's future tax revenues in order to invest in immediate projects or encourage present development. TIF also allows municipalities to create reinvestment zones by which various public works and improvements can be undertaken. Essentially, the property tax increases resulting from development are targeted to repay the public infrastructure investment required by a project.

TAX INCREMENT REINVESTMENT ZONE (TIRZ)

The City of Pharr Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) Number One represents an important opportunity for the City of Pharr in partnership with Hidalgo County to develop a viable long-range plan for an area of the City, which has lacked a wide range of commercial, warehouse and industrial opportunities. New commercial, office/warehouse, industrial, and logistics/distribution construction are the key components of the development program. Increased employment opportunities for Pharr and surrounding county and community residents will be enhanced through the development activity within the TIRZ.

Large tracts of land in the southern sector of the City have remained vacant due to inadequate City street infrastructure, inadequately sized or no utility lines, drainage issues, water and sewer availability, and lack of adequate fire flow. The City of Pharr TIRZ Number One - City of Pharr International Logistics Development Program represents an important opportunity for the City of Pharr in partnership with Hidalgo County to promote and encourage construction of produce warehouse facilities, industrial, commercial, office warehouse, and logistical facilities in an area of the City that has significant and varied impediments to development.

The Reinvestment Zone Financing Plan developed by the City provides that potentially \$38,616,817 of public improvements will be paid for with TIF funds.

The City of Pharr established TIRZ number one in 2011 and started implementing in 2012 for 20 years on a 2,137-acre tract of commercial land. The proposed projects include roadwork, water, sewer and drainage. This area can be seen on the map on the following page.

PHARR CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDS

The Capital Project Fund is used to account for financial resources used for the acquisition or construction of major capital facilities and infrastructure. Depending on the project, they are financed by general and proprietary resources.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

The City of Pharr has maintained a robust financial policy and prudence while addressing the challenges of growth and redevelopment in the City. Sales tax revenue makes up one fifth of general fund sources and have, according to the rating agencies, outperformed the budget in recent years due to conservative assumptions and solid economic conditions.

The general fund is also reliant on bridge toll revenues; toll receipts increasing by almost 50% since 2007. The fiscal 2015 budget is balanced and is based on conservative growth assumptions and sales tax receipts are budgeted for a moderate 5% increase in fiscal 2015. The City has solid reserve levels and strives to maintain an unrestricted general fund balance of 90 days of the current year’s budget appropriation less capital outlay and transfers out of the general fund.

The City of Pharr’s credit ratings have remained constant per the following:

Table 17: City of Pharr Credit Rating

S&P	Moody’s	Fitch
A	A2	AA

Source: Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Fiscal Year ended 9/30/14

Credit ratings are important since they effect the cost of borrowing; high credit ratings translate into lower costs for taxpayers. The City uses a mixture of debt obligations to address both the short and long term funding as well as the City’s operation, infrastructure improvements, and risk management.

GENERAL CAPITAL PROJECTS

The City’s capital projects, once put on hold for several years in order to correct their fiscal situation, has been restarted. The City’s current plans range in purpose from public service to cultural to street. Total budgeted expenditures are \$23,663,200. Funding for these projects will come from different sources including unrestricted fund balances, grants, and bond proceeds.

The following is a brief description of the capital projects budgeted for Fiscal Year 2015-2016:

- **Southside Recreational Center** - This project is to be a full service technology center with multi-purpose community training meeting rooms and a gymnasium. This will revitalize the immediate neighborhoods and promote educational progress within the community.
- **Trans-maritime**-Participation with private development on building the extension of Juniper Street for improving Industrial Freight Mobility. Extended from HiLine Road to Military Highway.
- **Traffic Signal Sioux Rd** - Design and installation of a traffic control signal for the traffic safety and traffic flow of the intersection. Improvements to include pedestrian signals and street lighting.
- **Downtown Lighting** - Revitalization downtown street lighting from Business 83 to Polk Avenue on Business 281 (Cage Boulevard) with new decorative light pole pedestals to increase both visibility and mobility safety.
- **Park Water Features** - Beautify parks with water features in three main City Parks.

- **Downtown Traffic Light Sequencing** - Downtown signalization improvement from Ridge Road to Polk Avenue consists of installing new traffic signal equipment for synchronization improvement and efficiency mobility.
- **Navarro Street** - Reconstruction of a residential roadway adding drainage, sidewalks, and lighting for improving mobility safety.
- **Hi-Line Road** - Reconstruction of a residential roadway adding drainage, sidewalks, and lighting for improving mobility safety.
- **Egly/Sugar Road** - Drainage Improvement project to alleviate the flooding occurring at the intersection. Improvement consists of building a regional detention facility in conjunction with the Pharr Housing Authority and diverting the storm water into a pond for detaining and then releasing.
- **1st Year Paving** - Improvements consist of rehabilitating asphalt in the transportation system to maximize customer satisfaction and increase mobility safety.
- **Hike and Bike Trail** - Regional linear park facility to enhance connectivity for pedestrian traffic between the cities of San Juan, Pharr and McAllen. The trail will connect the hike and bike trail system.
- **East and West Eldora Street Improvements** - Hidalgo County and City of Pharr cooperative partnership project to improve a major collector by adding capacity from a two lane roadway to a four (4) lane with a continuous left turn facility to improve mobility safety and efficiency.
- **Pharr/McAllen Lateral Drain Improvements** - Hidalgo County Drainage District No. 1 and City of Pharr cooperative partnership to develop a drainage/flood control improvement to provide flood relief within the Northwest Central areas nested between US 83, BS 83, and US 281 of the City of Pharr.
- **Anaya and Veterans Widening Projects** - Projects are to improve a major collector from a two lane facility to a four lane with continuous left turn facility to improve mobility safety, efficiency, and economic development.

The total capital funding for the 5-10 year Capital Improvement Project in the community is \$164,180,100 as outlined in the following table:

Table 18: Capital Improvement Projects

Department	5-10 Year CIP Project Cost
Utilities	\$106,464,300
Bridge	\$17,927,600
Parks	\$8,981,000
PAL	\$2,000,000
Streets	\$20,582,200
Library	\$4,425,000
Admin	\$2,500,000
Fire	\$1,300,000
TOTAL	\$164,180,100

Source: City of Pharr Finance Department

Funding options available to cities and ones that Pharr are utilizing to fund various projects include:

A Certificate of Obligation is a streamlined method of financing. A City may use to pay a contractual obligation incurred in: (1) a construction contract; (2) the purchase of materials, supplies, equipment, machinery, buildings, land, and rights-of-way for authorized needs and purposes; or (3) the payment of professional services, including services provided by tax appraisers, engineers, architects, attorneys, map makers, auditors, financial advisors, and fiscal agents.

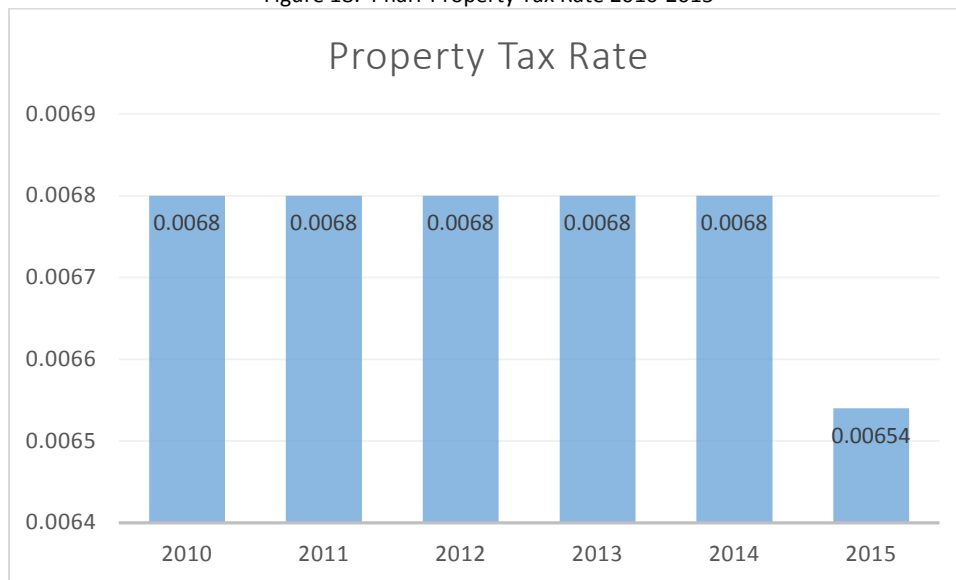
General Obligation Bonds (G.O. Bonds) are best suited for major capital projects where the commissioner's court believes that it is important to have the voters have the opportunity to pass upon the project. These bonds are issued after approval at a bond election.

Revenue Bonds are secured by the pledge of revenues of a project and are special obligations of the issuer (as opposed to general obligations) that are payable solely from the revenues derived from an income-producing facility. These bonds are not subject to a demand for payment from taxes. No election is required under state law to issue revenue bonds.

PROPERTY TAX RATES

For the past six years Pharr's property tax has been steady at 68 cents per \$100. Starting on October 1, 2015 the City will reduce its current property tax rate to 65.4 cents per \$100. This decrease represents the largest property tax reduction in 14 years. This could not come at a better time for residents who recently saw an increase on their appraised property value. The City of Pharr does not increase appraised value, instead the Hidalgo County Appraisal District appraises the property.

Figure 18: Pharr Property Tax Rate 2010-2015



Source: Pharr website, Tax Rate History, 2015

SALES TAX

According to the State of Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Pharr's retail economy generated an increase of 14% of local sales tax revenue from September 2014 to September 2015. At the same time, the total sales tax revenue increased 10%. Both of these increases are the largest year-over-year increase in sales tax collection in the Rio Grande Valley.

Figure 19: Pharr Yearly Sales Tax Revenue 2005-2014

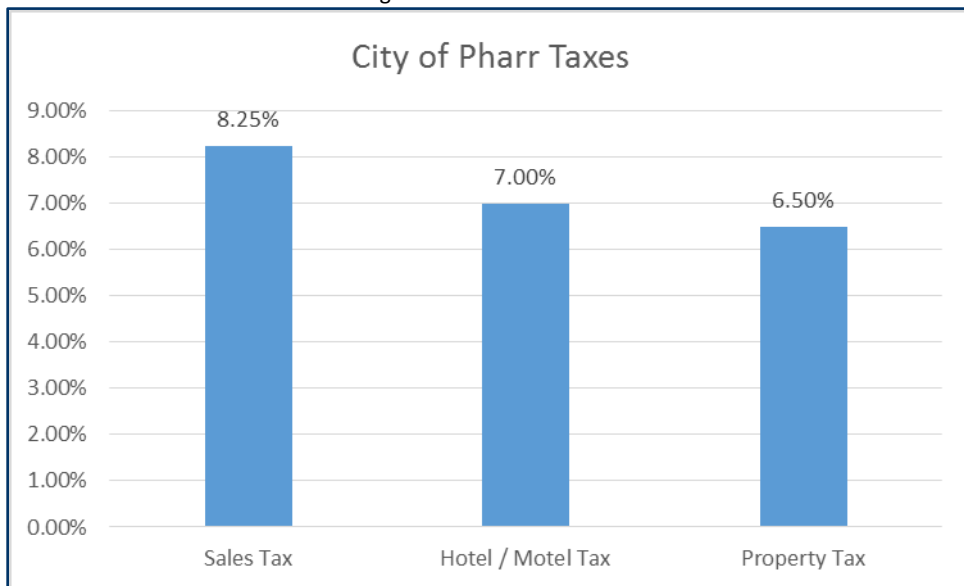


Source: City of Pharr Sales Tax Revenue Analysis, 2015

HOTEL/MOTEL TAX

The City of Pharr currently has 19 hotels and motels, and accommodates a total of 981 rooms. Pharr has a relatively low hotel/motel tax rate of 7% of which only 1% is levied by the City. According to state civil statutes, this tax revenue can be used to promote tourism, maintain and repair convention facilities, promote the arts and humanities, or any other purpose directly related to these activities. For 2014 the Hotel/Motel Tax brought in just under one million dollars to the fund.

Figure 20: 2015 Tax Rates



Source: City of Pharr website, 2015

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

Pharr utilizes many different resources to fund itself. They include:

Utility Fund – this fund accounts for fees assessed to both water & sewer and garbage & brush. The balance of the fund is restricted for utility construction, rate stabilization, and required debt service reserves.

Bridge Fund – this fund accounts for the toll fee assessed in the crossing of the Pharr International Bridge for both cars and trucks.

Community Development Fund – This fund accounts for grant revenues that meet the program objectives set forth by the U.S. Department & Urban Development in providing affordable housing, a suitable and viable living environment and expanding economic opportunities.

Parkland Fund – Created in 1999, this fund accounts for contributions that developers are required to make when creating subdivisions to provide recreational areas in the form of neighborhood and community parks.

Asset Sharing – This fund accounts for forfeitures awarded to the City by the federal and state courts and drug enforcement agencies. Revenues are restricted for police supplies and only to be used if general funding is not available.

Paving and Drainage – This fund accounts for fees added to utility bills and restricted for the purpose of street improvements.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal – Economic Development

Cooperative efforts by the City, Pharr Economic Development Corporation and citizens will support retention and expansion of existing businesses and attract new businesses in targeted economic sectors.

Objective A: Attract desirable businesses and industries.

Action 1: Aggressively market the location advantages of the City of Pharr for business and industry.

Action 2: Improve and expand industrial sites in Pharr.

Action 3: Attract retail, restaurants, motels, manufacturing and warehouse industries.

Action 4: Continue advocating for a designated Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ).

Objective B: Retain and expand existing businesses and industries.

Action 1: Support growth of existing local businesses.

Action 2: Consider establishing a Pharr Chamber of Commerce and/or being active members of the Rio Grande Valley Partnership.

Objective C: Reduce unemployment to single digit level.

Action 1: Work with local school districts to expand technical, vocational and specialized training programs.

See Attachment II: Pharr Economic Development Strategic Plan Action Plan for more goals, objectives and action items.

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COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Planning for adequate facilities and services ensures that a City can meet the demands of its growing population. Existing residents and businesses rely on a basic level of services that should be maintained and enhanced as Pharr grows both geographically and in population.

The City of Pharr provides a large range of services to its residents and businesses, including emergency services, utilities, and public facilities. This chapter identifies existing community facilities and services and provides strategies to ensure that levels of service are maintained as the City grows over the next 10 years.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Boggus Ford Event Center

The Boggus Ford Events Center is a City owned events center which hosts a wide range of entertainment events for citizens and visitors to the Rio Grande Valley. Over 17,000 square feet is available for use for ticketed and non-ticketed events. Five full time employees and numerous part time employees work at the center providing high quality customer service so that customers have a positive experience while at the center. In fiscal year 2013-2014, 71 events were held at the center with 66% of the events being ticketed. Types of events held were boxing, music and various expo fairs.

The Boggus Ford Events Center is funded through the Hotel/Motel Tax dollars. The Events Center director meets monthly with the Hotel/Motel Association where they brainstorm ideas on bringing events to the City; the who, when, what. Currently, they are working on linking hotel/motel websites with the events center so that when purchasing tickets for an event, one can also research lodging options. Additionally, posters and banners are displayed at hotels advertising upcoming events and sponsors. Lastly, they are developing a master events calendar to list upcoming events occurring at the Boggus Event Center, Pharr Library, Pharr Aquatic Center and at the Tierra Del Sol Golf Club which will be printed and posted online.

Pharr Aquatic Center

In 2008, the Pharr Parks and Recreation Department updated their long-term parks plan and found that there was a high priority demand for a community swimming pool. The existing facilities were outdated and required constant repairs, which drained resources. Through community surveys, the department discovered a desire throughout the community for a local facility. Furthermore, they discovered that members were going to other cities like San Antonio for these experiences. The initial endeavor was to be a \$3.5 million project to update and construct new facilities. Throughout the process, the department decided to exchange properties with Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD through a mutually beneficial, legal agreement. Through this cooperation came the decision to change the plans from an outdoor competition pool to a Natatorium that would benefit the community and schools who would use it to bring swim teams back. This changed the overall project to a \$10 million endeavor to be funded equally between the school district and City.

The Pharr Aquatic Center opened in the summer of 2013. Most recent projections put revenue for the summer season, their busiest time, at close to \$300,000. The facility sits on two acres and includes the following amenities:

- 6,800 square foot leisure pool
- Water play structure
- 150' body slide
- 150' tube slide
- Lazy river
- 200' raft slide 360 linear foot, 8' wide meandering river with children and adult slides
- 30' diameter children's pool
- Natatorium with a 25 meter x 25 meter, 10 lane competition pool

Tierra Del Sol Golf Club

Tierra Del Sol Golf Club is owned and operated by the City of Pharr. It is known to be amongst the best golf courses in the region and accessible to players of all levels. Tierra Del Sol offers an 18-hole course and driving range and is affordable to those wanting to play. Due to the mild climate in Pharr, the course is open year round.

Pharr Memorial Library

Located downtown, Pharr Memorial Library is a large 30,000 square foot structure. The library operates with 25 employees (75% which are full time) and a host of volunteers and college students. The library partners with higher education institutions to sponsor college students desiring a work study program.

Educational programs are offered along with community activities, art shows, book signings, and thousands of books for research and pleasure reading. Plans are underway to expand services in both north and south Pharr and offer downloadable e-books, remote access services and homebound services.

Summer reading programs include crafts, reading, movie nights, and cooking workshops, free of charge for local children. Also available to the public are fully equipped computer labs designed specifically to aid younger students with school projects, and allow adults to catch up on research, job hunting, or other productive endeavors. The library and computer lab are open each day of the week excluding major holidays.

Plans are underway to open another library, closer to South Pharr. This new center is planned to offer an array of services and be of the highest technology available. This public service will be of great value to citizens with easier access to information and resources.

Boys & Girls Club of Pharr

Boys & Girls Club of Pharr opened in 1983 and has been a valuable resource for youth from Pharr, South Pharr and surrounding communities. The Club's goals are to help children stay out of trouble, stay in school and succeed in life. As of 2014, Boys & Girls Club of Pharr had grown from a single standing unit to 12 school sites and two neighborhood sites with seven full-time staff and a host of volunteers. Programs that are offered at all the sites include: gang-violence prevention, art, drug prevention, homework help, recognition, and athletic and other life enrichment programs.

According to the 2013 annual report, the Boys & Girls Club of Pharr served more than 8,000 kids, ages 5 to 18 from the City of Pharr and surrounding communities. Most of the kids served come to the clubs several times each week and participate in a variety of activities.

Pharr Community Theater Company

The Pharr Community Theater Company provides opportunities for adults and children to experience performing arts, educational programs and the integration of cultural heritage through main stage plays,

English Immersion Theater and summer acting camps. It also provides English Language Learners with the chance to use their skills in conversational settings.

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

Law Enforcement

The Pharr Police Department provides the local law enforcement. The police department employs 181 people with 127 of them being police officers. According to the Pharr Police Chief, the department receives between 55,000 and 60,000 calls per year. Along with the headquarters office, the department has one substation in South Pharr. Police are at the International Bridge, but this is not considered a substation. Pharr has 1.7 police officers per 1000 population. The department is funded by the City, Federal and State grants, and various fees associated with vehicles and seized assets. The Pharr Police Department has implemented the Smart Policing Initiative which raises the standards for operations.

In comparison to the State averages in crimes, Pharr compared fairly well. The rate of crimes per 100,000 people was higher than the State averages in the number of rapes and assaults, but the rates were lower for robbery, murder, larceny, and auto theft.

Compared to Hidalgo County, Pharr fared well in comparison to average number of crimes. The rates of crime per 100,000 people were higher for assault and burglary while the rates per 100,000 people in Pharr were lower than the County for murder, robbery, larceny, and auto theft.

Table 19: 2014 Crime Rates of Pharr vs. Hidalgo County

Agency	Population	Murder	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Larceny	Auto Theft
PHARR PD	74,555						
Number of Offenses		1	37	221	494	1785	106
Rate Per 100,000		1.3	49.6	296.4	662.6	2394.2	142.2
County Totals - HIDALGO COUNTY	831,477						
Number Offenses		26	442	1906	5123	21,538	1278
Rate Per 100,000		3.1	53.2	229.2	616.1	2,590.3	153.7

Source: Texas Department of Public Safety, 2014

As the City increases in population and geography, careful consideration needs to be given to increasing the number of substations and personnel in order to provide public safety. The number of officers will be critical in being able to respond timely to emergency calls, whether residential, business or on the roadways.

CAPE Program

In 2013, the Pharr police department implemented a program called “Community Awareness Police Enforcement” (CAPE). The CAPE program is a community based initiative in which the police department works with the citizens to better the lives within the community. This provides a way for citizens to become more involved in the community as they are more aware of what is occurring in the community.

This gives the Pharr Police Department better information and helps them to solve problems more effectively. Citizens can call in to give information such as descriptions of suspects or vehicles.

Pharr PAL Program

The Pharr Police Athletic League (PAL) is a very active youth crime prevention program that promotes athletics and other recreational activities to encourage youth to make positive and healthy choices about their life. PAL brings youth together with police officers and other responsible adults with the purpose of creating a bond between the youth and law enforcement. The PAL program operates with seven full time employees, over 600 volunteers and within a \$700,000 budget. The four cornerstones of PAL are:

- Academic achievement
- Cultural awareness
- Artistic appreciation
- Athletic activities

Events are planned year round for children ages 3 to 18 with the majority being from low income families. Types of athletic activities offered are baseball, fishing tournaments, football, flag football, volleyball, basketball, soccer, rugby, wrestling, boxing and softball. In 2014, over 5,700 children participated in the 16 different programs allowing them many choices to be involved, stimulated and connected to positive role models.

Pharr Fire Department

The Pharr Fire Department was first established in 1922 as the Pharr Volunteer Fire Department. Today, it has 62 paid certified firefighters, 4 inspectors, and 4 fire marshals along with 10 volunteer firefighters. There are three fire stations in the City (see Figure 21: Pharr Fire Stations) fully equipped to fight fires and provide rescue operations. Besides fighting fires, the department has a multitude of community based programs, such as prevention block parties, which are held in the north, south and central parts of Pharr. They also have fire extinguisher classes for the elderly and have fire safety programs and presentations in which they send personnel, throughout the year, to all schools located in Pharr. In addition, the Pharr Fire Department is fully associated with a private ambulance service on a contract basis.

As the City increases in population and geography, the need for new fire stations and personnel will be paramount to providing quick and effective response to calls.

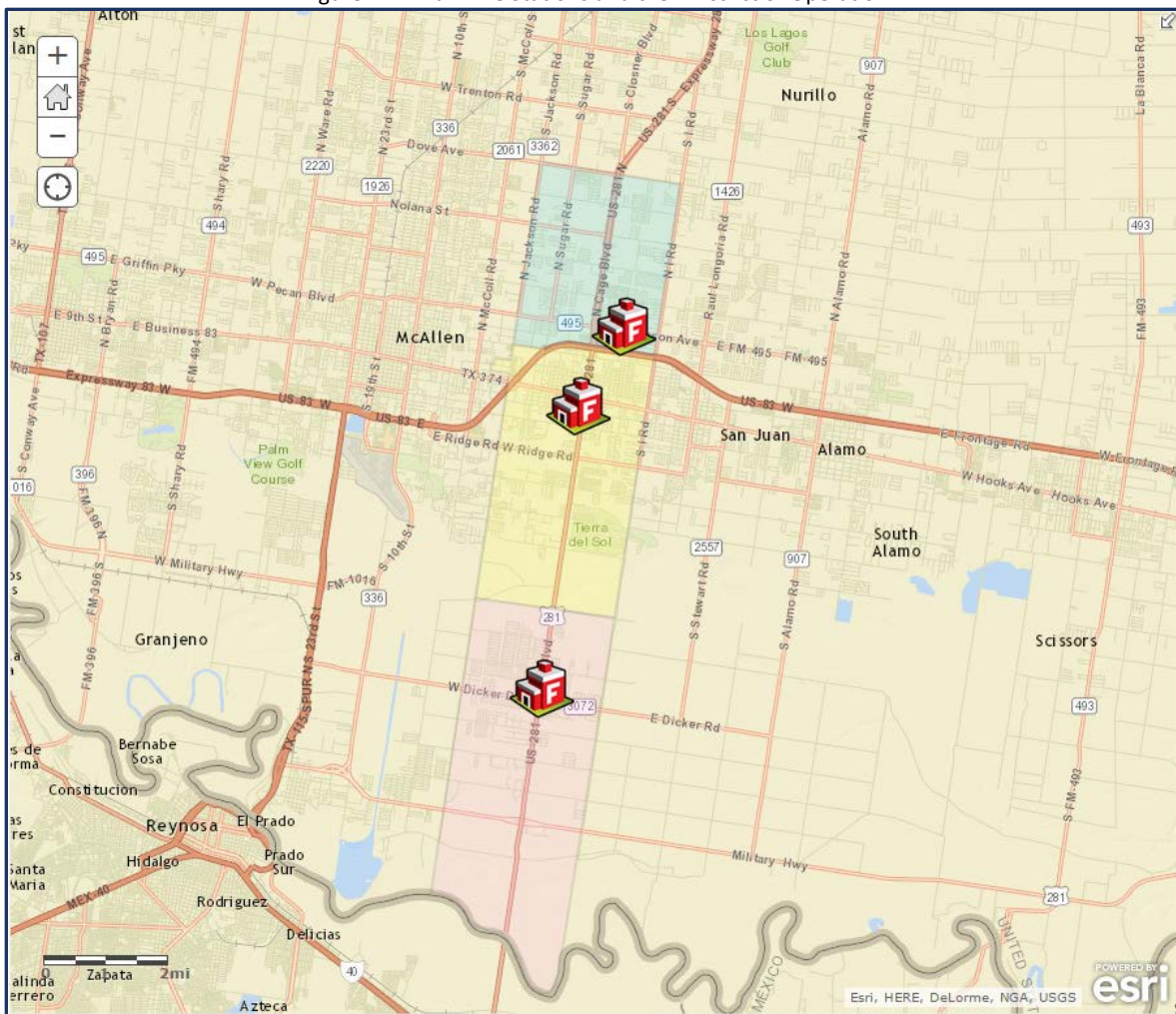
The Pharr Fire Department expanded its fire communications center through Firecomm. Firecomm's purpose is to reflect that of a regional communications center with the primary discipline of fire communications. While providing funding relief to the City of Pharr which already had an established fire communications center, Firecomm provides the City of McAllen Fire Department with its first truly dedicated fire communications center. This means the fire departments have their own high priority communications center like law enforcement communications.

Firecomm went live in June of 2012 making it the first and still currently the only operational regional communications center in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) area. Firecomm is staffed with five communications officers and one communications supervisor covering 365/24/7 a year. Firecomm operates under a national certification from the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch (NAED) as Emergency Telecommunicators which are disciplined in three public safety fields of law enforcement, fire, and Emergency Medical Services. Firecomm also utilizes the NAED's Emergency Fire Dispatch protocols to ensure the highest level of customer service is being provided to the citizens it serves.

In January of 2014, Firecomm took on the small population but large geographical community of Linn San Manuel as its third community in which it serves. Firecomm is also the only Secondary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) in the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's (LRGVDC) coverage area, allowing all 9-1-1 calls for fire to transfer seamlessly without compromising crucial data such as location and number information provided during 9-1-1 calls.

Since Firecomm's conception, faster dispatch times for fire related calls have been noticed, decreased transfer errors from primary PSAPS, faster transfers from primary PSAPS, and an increase in firefighter safety have been established. Firecomm's communications officers are trained in all disciplines of public safety communications. Because of this training and status of regional communications, Firecomm was chosen as the beta site for texting to 9-1-1 in the LRGVDC coverage area which encompasses Hidalgo and Willacy Counties. Firecomm's goals are to continue to be the first in the communications profession to push the bar and lead the Rio Grande Valley into the Next Generation of 9-1-1 and dispatching.

Figure 21: Pharr Fire Stations and their District of Operation



Source: City of Pharr Fire Department

WATER AND WASTEWATER

The availability of water has long been an issue to several geographic regions across the country, and the densely populated area of South Texas is no stranger to this. Water plays a vital role in the operation of every aspect of daily life from transport to the production of agricultural goods.

Over a decade ago, the leaders of Pharr sought to be preemptive in their stewardship of this resource and developed a master wastewater plan to identify, anticipate and overcome deficiencies in the current system. The sections of this plan focused on several factors with the most important being the change in population, which is projected to increase to 134,000 by the year 2050. This puts more strain on the land by increasing the use of land for all aspects including commercial, residential and agricultural. It is also important to consider the growth of the surrounding cities like McAllen, Edinburg, San Juan, and Alamo.

Pharr is located within Hidalgo County, which obtains water from both the Rio Grande River and the Gulf Coast Aquifer. However, only about 2% of Hidalgo County's water supply comes from ground water sources, meaning the other 98% is supplied by surface water sources.

The City of Pharr is a municipally managed wastewater utility, meaning the City currently operates its wastewater treatment plant as well as its collection system. Their Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is the first in South Texas to have a Biological Nutrient Removal system, which is critical in removing phosphorous and nitrates. This plant is currently an eight million gallon per day plant. The City also operates a "Superior Water" rated Water Treatment Plant. This plant provides 19 million gallons per day of potable drinking water to the residents and visitors of Pharr.

In addition, Strategic Partnerships, Inc. reports in their Texas Government Insider online publication that in November 2014, the Texas Water Development Board approved over \$98 million in financial assistance to aid in water related projects across the State. The City of Pharr is expected to receive \$3.525 million to aid in the purchase of surface water rights of 1,500 acre feet to help address the growing City's water needs.

2016 Rio Grande Regional Water Plan Project Summary (as it applies to Pharr)

Advanced Water Conservation

Project Source

This strategy was identified by the Regional Planning Group.

Project Description

This strategy includes methods and practices that either reduce demand for water supply or increase the efficiency of supply. These strategies include the Best Management Practices identified in the BMP Guide discussed in section 5.2.5 Advanced Municipal Water Conservation. Pharr's 2011 gallons per capita daily (GPCD) was estimated at 108, and therefore the conservation water management strategy (WMS) includes a 0.5% annual reduction in municipal use through the planning horizon.

Available Supply

The amount of water conserved with this strategy was calculated using the Unified Costing Model and is based on the conservation goal, rate to achieve that goal, and population and water demand projections.

Environmental Issues

There are no known environmental issues associated with this strategy, only benefits due to water and energy savings from conservation.

Engineering and Costing

Costs for this strategy were calculated using the gallons per capita per day (GPCD) estimated for each municipality. Because the base year GPCD was below 140, the rate was set to 0.5% reduction per year, with a minimum value of 60 GPCD. The Unified Cost Model (UCM) Advanced Water Conservation tool was used to estimate the annual costs and savings. A more detailed explanation of the methodology can be found in Section 2.5.5 Advanced Water Conservation.

Table 20: Pharr Advanced Water Conservation Cost and Yield Project

Year	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060	2070
Yield (acre-ft./year)	0	0	167	848	1,777	2,884
Total Annual Cost	0	0	\$113,704	\$577,394	\$1,209,863	\$1,963,795
Unit Cost (\$/1,000 gallons)	0	0	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00

Source: Rio Grande Water Plan Project Summary

Implementation Issues

No major implementation issues are anticipated for this strategy; however, this strategy is largely dependent on public knowledge and participation.

Raw Water Reservoir Augmentation (Potable Reuse)

Project Source

This strategy was submitted by the City of Pharr to the Regional Planning Group.

Description

This water management strategy is to augment the City of Pharr's raw water supply with reuse water. A portion of the wastewater treatment plant effluent would be treated to near drinking water standards, stored in a buffering pond, and then pumped to a raw water storage pond where it would mix with raw Rio Grande water supplied by Hidalgo County Irrigation District No. 2.

This strategy was presented to and approved by Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) in a Water Reuse Priority and Implementation Plan Report, prepared in September 2011.

Available Supply

The current plant flow of the City of Pharr wastewater treatment plant is 5 millions of gallons per day (MGD). This project would use 4 MGD of that flow initially and an additional 2 MGD is anticipated to be available in the near future. The total available supply for this strategy is 6 MGD, or 6,721 acre-ft. /year.

Environmental Issues

Potential environment impacts may be seen due to lower effluent flows to the discharge streams. These impacts could include:

- Decreases to the stream flow/level
- Change in the water quality by reducing the organic levels

- Effects to fish and wildlife that inhabit the streams

Additionally, temporary environmental impacts may be seen during construction activities, such as increased air and noise pollution. However, these effects are typical of any construction project.

Engineering and Costing

The components of this project include an advanced reclaimed water treatment plant, storage pond, and pump station to be construction next to the existing wastewater treatment plant on City owned land. A pipeline is also required to convey the reclaimed water to the raw water storage pond near the water treatment plant. The advanced treatment plant will consist of membrane filtration, reverse osmosis, and UV disinfection. Concentrate disposal from the treatment processes would be discharged to the Arroyo Colorado, with the traditional wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) discharge. It is assumed that the construction period would be 2.5 years.

Table 22 outlines the estimated project requirements used to develop the cost estimate. Treatment Level 3 (new) was used on the Unified Costing Model spreadsheet to estimate the costs for addition of the advanced treatment facilities. The total costs for this option are presented in Table 23.

Table 21: Pharr Raw Water Augmentation Project Requirements

Facility	Description
Available Project Yield	6 MGD
Pump Station	244 HP
Pipeline	20-inch; 13,200 LF
Storage	14 MG
Treatment Upgrade	Level 3

Source: Rio Grande Water Plan Project Summary

Table 22: Total Costs for Projects

Year	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060	2070
Yield (acre-ft./year)	6,721	6,721	6,721	6,721	6,721	6,721
Capital Cost	\$38,422,000	0	0	0	0	0
O&M Cost	\$2,287,000	\$2,287,000	\$2,287,000	\$2,287,000	\$2,287,000	\$2,287,000
Total Annual Cost\$	\$5,425,000	\$5,425,000	\$2,287,000	\$2,287,000	\$2,287,000	\$2,287,000
Unit Cost (\$/1,000 gallons)	\$2.48	\$2.48	\$1.04	\$1.04	\$1.04	\$1.04

Source: Rio Grande Water Plan Project Summary

Implementation Issues

Final design of the indirect potable reuse project would require approval by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Any requirements developed by TCEQ for potable reuse by the time this project is constructed would need to be met. Construction of the new pipeline may also include any of the following permits: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Sand, Shell, Gravel and Marl permit, Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (TPDES) Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, TXDOT right-of-way permit. Additionally, local public opinion of potable reuse would have to be taken into account and a public relations campaign may be required.

Rio Grande Regional Water Authority Regional Brackish Desalination Plant

Project Source

This strategy was submitted to the Regional Planning Group by the Consultant working on the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority (RGRWA) Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Water Supply Project.

Project Description

The RGRWA Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Water Supply Project is looking at options for regional solutions to supply additional water to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Although this project is not complete, preliminary investigations and previous studies performed for the region indicate that a Regional Brackish Desalination Project is a viable solution. The project would consist of three brackish groundwater desalination facilities that would each serve a different group of municipalities within the region. Pharr is located within Group 1 for this project.

Available Supply

The first phase of the Regional Brackish Desalination Project would provide Pharr with 6,700 acre-ft./year in 2020 and Phase II would provide 9,000 acre-ft./year in 2040, based on the recommendations of the Bureau of Reclamation Lower Rio Grande Basin Study.

Environmental Issues

The primary environmental issue associated with brackish groundwater supply is the disposal of concentrate. It is assumed that the concentrate will be disposed of via surface water discharge, however a specific location and total dissolved solids (TDS) limits will need to be determined during preliminary design.

Engineering and Costing

Preliminary engineering and costs for this strategy are based on the recommendations of the Bureau of Reclamation Lower Rio Grande Basin Study, which is one of the studies that the RGRWA Lower Rio Grande Valley Regional Water Supply Project is building from.

Table 24 presents the cost and yield projections for Group 1 of this project. It is important to note that the Capital Cost, Operating & Maintenance (O&M) Cost, and Total Annual Cost are for the entire Group and the Yield is only the amount supplied to Pharr.

Table 23: Pharr RGRWA Regional Brackish Desalination Project – Group 1 Cost and Yield Projections

Year	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060	2070
Yield (acre-ft./year)	6,700	6,700	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
Capital Cost	\$358,614,000	0	\$100,295,000	0	0	0
O&M Cost	\$25,394,000	\$25,394,000	\$34,169,000	\$34,169,000	\$34,169,000	\$34,169,000
Total Annual Cost\$	\$55,403,000	\$55,403,000	\$42,562,000	\$42,562,000	\$34,169,000	\$34,169,000
Unit Cost (\$/1,000 gallons)	\$3.30	\$3.30	\$1.86	\$1.86	\$1.49	\$1.49

Source: Rio Grande Water Plan Project Summary

Implementation Issues

No major implementation issues are expected for this strategy. Approval for additional concentrate disposal will be needed from TCEQ. Construction of the new facility and piping may also include purchase of land and a TXDOT right-of-way permit.

Expand Existing Groundwater Supply

Project Source

This strategy was recommended in the 2011 Regional Water Plan.

Description

This strategy is to provide additional supply to Pharr with the installation of additional groundwater wells, however the City does not currently have any groundwater wells.

Non-potable Reuse

Project Source

This strategy was recommended in the 2011 Regional Water Plan.

Description

This strategy is to use treated wastewater effluent for non-potable reuse. Pharr currently uses 5.0 MGD of non-potable reuse and they have submitted a strategy for additional wastewater treatment plant effluent to be used to potable reuse.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Goal – Community Facilities and Services

To provide a broad range of community services, safety initiatives, and recreational facilities for the residents and visitors of the City of Pharr.

Objective A: Maintain and enhance sports facilities, community event centers, and library facilities.

Action 1: Encourage community support and feedback on use and expansion of services and facilities.

Action 2: Address the growing youth sector with sports programs and value-added educational services at the community's library.

Action 3: Continue and consider increasing the number of swim meets/competitions hosted at the Pharr Aquatic Center to capitalize on mounting interest by all ages.

Action 4: Maintain a strong maintenance and upgrade of all community-wide service facilities.

Action 5: Support the plans to increase events at the Boggus Ford Event Center.

Objective B: Continue provision of public safety services to ensure an efficient and safe community.

Action 1: Maintain high standards and ongoing training in all sectors of the community's law enforcement and first responders.

Action 2: Continue active crime prevention programs, such as CAPE, PAL and community based programs.

Action 3: Inform and educate the community on the role and dedication of law enforcement, fire, and EMS services.

Action 4: Begin evaluation to locate new fire stations, police substations, libraries and other community facilities in the proposed Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction annexation area.

Objective C: Efficient and effective delivery of water and wastewater infrastructure to facilitate continued growth.

Action 1: Review and update all plans for expansion of water and wastewater services.

Action 2: Upgrade and actively maintain existing water system infrastructure.

Action 3: Review all options to expand and ensure adequate freshwater supply and infrastructure needs to address the future growth of the City.

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PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Parks and open space improve the livability of a community and contribute to the quality of life for residents. Careful attention should be paid to the expansion of the park system as the population increases. Open space is a defining characteristic of a desirable community and can promote economic growth and increase the attractiveness of a community for existing and future residents.

The purpose of this chapter is to assess park and open space needs over the next 10 years and identify strategic ways to protect and enhance the existing and future parkland with limited land remaining.

SUMMARY OF PARKS MASTER PLAN 2008

Parks and open space are an important aspect of the quality of life in Pharr. The City has several parks and more are being considered to ensure that new growth also brings new parks. The Comprehensive Parks Master Plan Update of 2008 adopted the same goals as the Comprehensive Parks Master Plan of 2000.

Pharr contains 10 parks and recreation complexes, including the Victor Garcia Municipal Park featuring a walking trail, multi-purpose gazebo, playground equipment and barbeque facilities. This park is over seven acres in size and has many trees and tropical landscaping. The Memorial Park pays tribute to the many war veterans. The City also maintains a sports complex and a tennis complex. In addition, the Parks Department offers numerous summer, fall and holiday activities.

Pharr has 57 acres of parks, and based upon current standards it would require over 300 acres of parks and recreation. However, the City is already developed and has little room for park expansion within its current City limits.

Land under City ownership could be used for parks, but the City will have to be more proactive in addressing park needs and acquiring more park sites. Purchase or donation of land should be actively pursued.

Projects and Prioritization

2009 – 2013

1. Develop land for and develop citywide park for Park Zone 1 to include baseball fields, soccer fields, and trails.
2. Develop a neighborhood park in Park Zone 1 with area appropriate improvements (swings, benches, pavilion, sidewalks, etc.)
3. Work with a consultant to determine type and size of swimming pool that would best suit community.
4. Coordinate and create partnerships with the Boys' and Girls' Club for additional parks and recreation facilities in South Pharr.

2014 – 2018

1. Acquire and develop additional land adjacent to or near parks and schools when available.
2. Acquire land for neighborhood parks and / or pocket parks in appropriate areas when available and where development is occurring.

3. Develop relationships with commercial land owners to establish partnerships
4. Plan for a central open-air amphitheater that will host citywide cultural events and festivals.

2019 – 2023

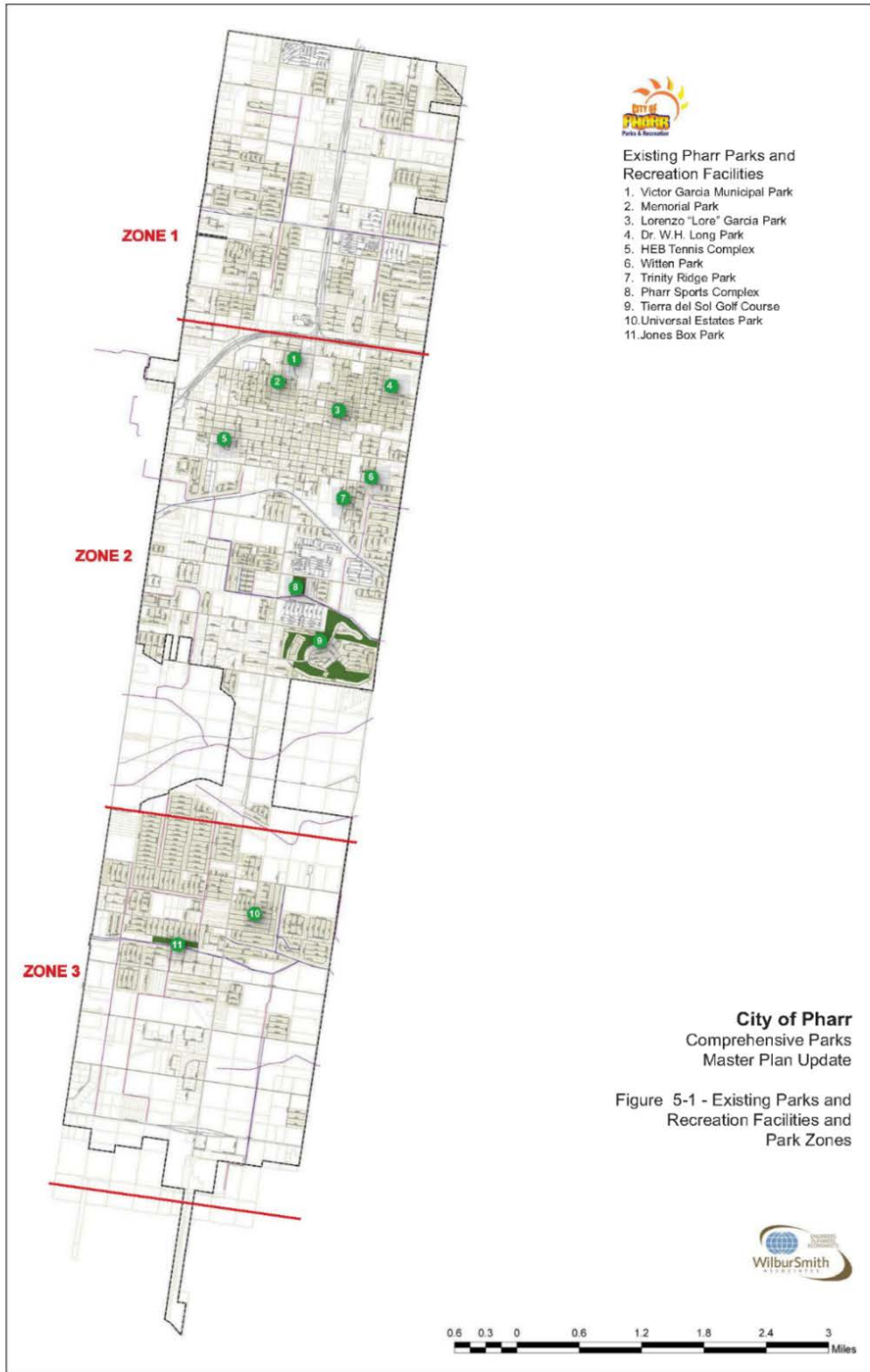
1. Plan for a multi-use indoor facility that can also serve as a youth community.

Figure 22 shows a map of the existing parks and recreation facilities located in Pharr as per the Master Park Plan of 2008.

Parks and open space provide a place for relaxation, escape, and exercise. They also help build a sense of community and are a key to making places to live, visit, and work more attractive. They serve as places to improve health and well-being and prevent disease through physical activity, relaxation, and contemplation. The development of new and the protection of existing parks and open spaces offers lasting social, cultural, and environmental benefits for the people of Pharr.

The City will expand its acreage of parks and open spaces with the annexation of the 132 acres associated with the Fair Grounds and the 2,066 acres in the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge. Both of these areas will provide much more space for exercise, relaxation and family time. Currently, the parkland and open space ratio is 11.8 acres per 1,000 population. This additional parkland acreage will bring the City to 37.4 acres of parkland and open spaces per 1,000 population which exceeds the national average of 12.9.

Figure 22: Existing Pharr Parks and Recreation Facilities



Source: City of Pharr Comprehensive Parks Master Plan 2008

REGIONAL LINEAR PARK PROJECT

The Regional Linear Park Project will provide enhanced connectivity for pedestrian traffic between the cities of San Juan, Pharr and McAllen, making it one of the biggest regional projects in the history of the Rio Grande Valley. When completed, the trail will connect the hike and bike trail system from San Juan all the way to the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley site in McAllen. The trail will be between 7.5 and 8.8 miles long with over 70% of it being in Pharr as per Proposed Option 4, Attachment III, Regional Linear Park Project. Final determination of the exact route will be determined upon completion of an assessment required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

The Regional Linear Park Project is possible due to an Interlocal Cooperative Agreement between the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Hidalgo County, and the cities of Pharr, San Juan and McAllen. These entities, in addition to funds from the Texas Department of Transportation, will pay for the project which is divided into three phases and set to begin development when all assessments and public involvement have been completed in Phase I. Complementing the trail, there will be landscaping, parking lots, lighting, security cameras, call boxes, wireless internet, water fountains and outdoor exercise equipment.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIONS – PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Goal – Parks and Open Spaces

Enhance and expand parks, recreation facilities and open spaces to meet the needs of Pharr residents for opportunities to experience the outdoors and to enhance the overall image and character of the community.

Objective A: Improve and expand the Pharr Parks System.

Action 1: Improve existing or create new playing fields/sports complex which would better serve the needs of the local and regional recreational organizations and use as a revenue source for the City.

Action 2: Implement the terms of the Interlocal Agreement between the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Hidalgo County and Cities of Pharr, San Juan and McAllen concerning the Regional Linear Park Project.

Action 3: Renovate and expand recreation facilities and programming to better meet the needs of the community, including services for Pharr’s youth and seniors.

Please see Attachment IV: Comprehensive Parks Master Plan Update Goals & Objectives 2008 for more goals and objectives directly related to parks and open spaces.

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SWOT

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis (SWOT) of the City of Pharr was conducted in November and included representatives from a cross section of local business, civic, and elected officials. The SWOT assessment serves as a vital indicator and baseline for developing a strategic plan for the future and gauge to focus on the challenges and opportunities facing the community and region. This was done at a stakeholder meeting with a free flowing discussion session focusing on key issues, areas for growth, and job creation.

This activity is divided into four sectors to assess the Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses, and Threats facing both the public and private sectors. Much of the concerns are based on the impact of the dynamic growth across the region. High on the list are concerns for water availability as the City continues to grow, border regulations on trade and crossings, the need for infrastructure to handle the growing congestion, non-competitive wages, and a lack of regionalism.

Maintaining an active dialog with the adjacent communities is of paramount importance to ensure and capitalize on the coordination of infrastructure and transportation enhancement while the entire region is experiencing rapid growth. Additionally, working with local school districts and area community and technical colleges to expand technical, vocational, and specialized training will close the non-competitive wage gap and provide a more robust workforce in the community.

The geographic location of Pharr is on one hand a boon to the City and region with the strategic advantage of the Pharr International Bridge. However, The City has limited room for growth and expansion. Development and adoption of an annexation plan and strategy to incorporate the pending Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) area and a diversified land use plan will maximize both the development of commercial services near the Pharr Bridge as well as a wide-range of housing options to facilitate the continued growth.

The Opportunities and Strengths of the community far outweigh the challenges. The City should develop a robust branding campaign to highlight the strategic location of Pharr as both a destination for tourists, retail and hotel expansion, as well as a leading international port-of-entry. The Pharr International Bridge is a critical strategic advantage to the community and region.

The Pharr International Bridge is a critical strategic advantage to the community and region.

Continued dialog with state, federal, and international agencies will insure smooth operations and expansion of trade via the bridge and bodes well for value-added commercial growth and revenue for the City of Pharr. An opportunity arising from the international bridge is the continued development and application for a designated Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) for the commercial area adjacent to the Pharr International Bridge.

This SWOT finds Pharr well positioned to benefit as the economic climate continues to improve. Pharr is a family-friendly, welcoming community with a strong sense of pride, whose recent and future growth will catapult them to meet their full potential making them “the” community of choice to raise a family and build a full life.

SWOT ANALYSIS FOR PHARR, TEXAS

NOVEMBER 2015

Strengths

- Pharr International Bridge
- Infrastructure
- Quality of life / Recreational facilities
- Comprehensive land development including, retail/housing/industrial/ incentives for businesses

Weaknesses

- Traffic congestion including, public transportation / hike & bike trails / pedestrian oriented developments
- Lack of hospitals
- Visual appeal of community including, downtown development / property code enforcement / branding and marketing
- Transportation
- Address competitive internet connectivity

SWOT

Opportunities

- Establish a designated Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) within Pharr
- Bridge infrastructure enhancement
- Continued use of TIRZ to fund improvement projects
- Visual appeal including, entertainment, housing, sanitation, and cleanliness
- University programs and the expansion of certificates to Pharr campuses
- Develop tier 1 & tier 2 suppliers network
- Trainable workforce

Threats

- Non-competitive wages
- Border Regulations on trade and crossings / federal and state regulations
- Water availability as the City continues to grow
- Lack of regionalism

IMPLEMENTATION & ADMINISTRATION

The City of Pharr's Comprehensive Plan is a long-range policy document intended to guide the decisions of the City's leadership, including the Mayor and City Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and department representatives from across the City of Pharr. The Comprehensive Plan is the guiding policy document for the decisions made on behalf of the community over time. The planning horizon is approximately 10 years, and so community leaders must remain committed over the long term with decisions that further the goals and vision of the residents of the City of Pharr.

The purpose of this chapter is to lay out a framework for implementation. This chapter includes a description of the roles and responsibilities of implementation of the Plan and establishes a process for annual review and periodic evaluation of the Plan. Key stakeholders, including Pharr residents and business owners, landowners and developers, and other influential civic groups or organizations must be re-engaged throughout the implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Public involvement may include advisory committees, public community meetings, open houses, and other public forums.

The Plan's recommendations must be integrated into City policies, programs, and daily operations, including development, project management and administration, regulation and enforcement, and provision of utilities, facilities, and/or services. The Plan must also be used in conjunction with the plans and programs of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Hidalgo County, and the surrounding municipalities and school districts.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

The Comprehensive Plan should be continually consulted to ensure that decisions that are made further the goals and strategies of the Plan. There are several specific ways in which the Comprehensive plan should be implemented, including the creation of small area action plans, zoning regulation, subdivision regulation, Capital Improvements Programming (CIP), Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and annexation.

DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Action Plans

The Comprehensive Plan is a bird's eye view of the City of Pharr. Engaging residents and stakeholders at this level is often difficult. Through a separate small area action planning process, residents can more directly affect the future of the area where they live and work. Small area action plans are focused action plans for targeted areas of the community and may include neighborhood, corridor, district, or downtown plans. These plans build on the vision and strategies adopted during the comprehensive planning process, putting them into action on a smaller scale. Small area action plans are adopted as amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan and are an implementation tool of the Plan.

Zoning Regulation

If done in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan, zoning can be one of the most effective implementation tools. Zoning most directly affects the built environment and physical form of the City and can create or alleviate compatibility issues between uses. Existing zoning districts should be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. Individual rezoning applications should be reviewed for consistency with the Future Land Use Map and the strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan before land is rezoned.

Subdivision Regulation

The purpose of subdivision regulations is to ensure that land being prepared for sale or development has adequate streets, utilities, and drainage. Subdivision regulations protect the public from purchasing properties with inadequate provision of utilities or without emergency access. The subdivision review process also ensures that public improvements meet the City of Pharr's standards prior to being dedicated to the public. In Texas, cities have the authority to extend subdivision standards into their ETJ to ensure that as areas are annexed, they do not become a liability to the City.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (CIP)

A capital improvements program is used to allocate money for major city expenditures and prioritize public investments needed to accommodate new growth, redevelopment, and ensure continued success of existing neighborhoods and commercial/business corridors. A CIP is generally a five year plan for infrastructure improvements that is reevaluated and reviewed each year to ensure money is allocated in priority areas and for priority projects. Through the CIP, Pharr can ensure a more efficient provision of services. Projects included in the City's CIP should be consistent with the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan and should strategically guide growth and development. CIP is the primary funding tool of the Comprehensive Plan.

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION (ETJ) AND ANNEXATION

The City should exercise its limited development controls in the ETJ to ensure adequate infrastructure in developed areas as they are annexed in the future. Requiring adequate fire flows, potable water and wastewater infrastructure may help Pharr influence the timing, pattern, and quality of development in the ETJ – the gateway to the City. Through annexation, the City is also able to control land use and site development standards. Benefits of annexation may include land use controls, additional area for future growth, alleviate health or life safety concerns through application of building and fire codes, and increased property/sales tax. A careful cost-benefit analysis should be done when considering annexation.

ANNUAL PLAN REVIEW

Pharr's Comprehensive Plan should be monitored to ensure that the goals of the Comprehensive Plan are relevant over time. The Plan is a living document that should be consistently reviewed and potentially amended to reflect changing desires of stakeholders and changing conditions of the community.

City staff should prepare an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the Plan, including implementation efforts over the previous year, consistency of decisions made, needed amendments to City ordinances and regulations, challenges in Plan implementation, and recommended amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan. This annual evaluation should be presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Commission in a public forum for their review and acceptance. During this annual evaluation, an action plan should be established for Plan implementation over the upcoming year.

FIVE-YEAR PLAN EVALUATION

Upon the five-year anniversary of the adoption of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Pharr's leadership should re-engage the stakeholders to assess the City's progress in the implementation of the Plan. At this time, demographic shifts and trends, original assumptions, current state of the economy, and

changes in City circumstances should be evaluated and needed Comprehensive Plan amendments should be recommended to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Commission.

Keeping the Plan current and responsive to current needs of the City of Pharr and its residents is crucial to the long-term success and implementation of the Pharr Comprehensive Plan.

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APPENDIX

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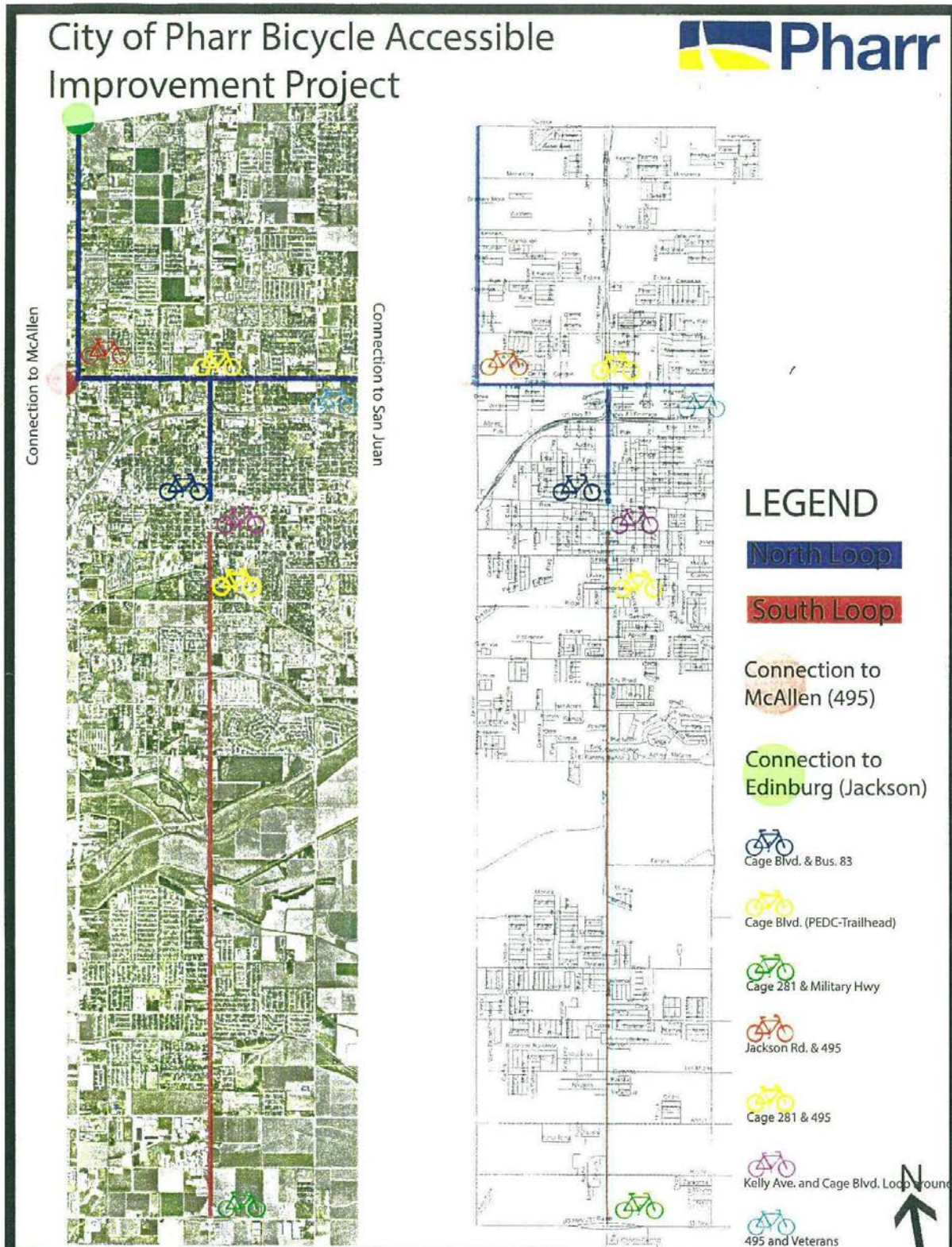
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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I	City of Pharr Bicycle Accessible Improvement Project Map
Attachment II	Pharr Economic Development Strategic Plan Action Plan, February 2015
Attachment III	Regional Linear Park Project, Option 4
Attachment IV	Comprehensive Parks Master Plan Update Goals & Objectives 2008

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ATTACHMENT I - CITY OF PHARR BICYCLE ACCESSIBLE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT MAP



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ATTACHMENT II - PHARR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN ACTION PLAN, FEBRUARY 2015

Attachment V: Pharr Economic Development Strategic Plan Action Plan

Pharr's Economic Development Action Plan

It is clear from workshops and feedback that Pharr has the leadership, vision and will to promote itself, leverage its many strengths and create a more prosperous economy while preserving its core values. As a result, maintaining open communication and transparent governance are of paramount importance in order for the community to progress.

The Pharr Economic Development Strategic Plan culminates with this Action Plan that is developed to lead, excite and unite residents, leaders and businesses to aggressively promote and build upon the many natural and acquired assets present in Pharr.

- I. ***Guiding Principle: Pharr leaders are the catalysts that create regional unity and prosperity.***

GOAL: A. Attainment and execution of a unified regional perspective and an international vision.			
ACTION STEPS	LEAD ENTITY	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	START
A1. Responses are timely to requests for information	Pharr EDC	Some response is initiated within 2 days of receipt	2 nd quarter 2015
A2. Conduct regular meetings with sister cities	City of Pharr Pharr EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule of regular meetings developed • Meetings held 	4 th quarter 2015
A3. Build and extend collaborations within the region; preparing for a metroplex	City of Pharr Pharr EDC	Collaborations with sister cities established	2 nd quarter 2016
A4. Increase communication with citizens to keep them informed of city/county/regional activities	City of Pharr Pharr EDC	Communications online and/or published include citizens of sister cities	4 th quarter 2016
A5. Establish a Leadership Lower Rio Grande Valley program, including a youth component	City of Pharr Pharr EDC	Program established for adults and youth	1 st quarter 2017

II. Guiding Principle: A comprehensive and proactive quality of life program strengthens the health, comfort and happiness experienced by citizens, visitors and businesses in Pharr.

GOAL: A. Enhance the livability in Pharr in ways that make the community more attractive to citizens and families of all ages.			
ACTION STEPS	LEAD ENTITY	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	START
A1. Involve young adults in Pharr development plans to foster a connection with the community	City of Pharr ISDs in Pharr	Young adults are on committees and involved in planning	4 th quarter 2015
A2. Develop a master plan for residential areas in efforts to attract families, safe and secure neighborhoods	City of Pharr	Master Plan developed and adopted	1 st quarter 2017
A3. Create a data base to identify and match volunteer opportunities for volunteers of all ages	Silver Ribbon Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data base established • Citizens are aware it exists 	1 st quarter 2018
A4. Plan for an Elder Ready Community - sidewalks for motorized chairs, walking to stores; health services, benches to rest	City of Pharr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan created • Plan executed 	1 st quarter 2018
A5. Promote a philanthropic support system (businesses and old families) that build/maintain parks, museum, memorials throughout the city	City of Pharr	Proposal developed and shared with community	2 nd quarter 2019
A6. Design and construct a pedestrian friendly downtown/retail area	Main Street Program	Plan is designed and adopted	2 nd quarter 2019

GOAL: B. Elevate Pharr's tourism opportunities to become the region's destination of choice for sports, outdoor and winter entertainment.			
ACTION STEPS	LEAD ENTITY	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	START
B1. Increase hosting sports camps including ProSports camps	City of Pharr	Camps increase by 5% each year	2 nd quarter 2016
B2. Host events such as craft nights, square dancing, bingo, country dancing to engage visitors	City of Pharr	Events marketed and held	3 rd quarter 2016
B3. Build outside venue for entertainment - outdoor amphitheater playgrounds	City of Pharr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan developed and adopted Venue built 	3 rd quarter 2019
B4. Increase parks & recreational areas throughout the city with hike & bike trails; bird & butterfly watching	City of Pharr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park space is increased Parks are accessible to citizens 	3 rd quarter 2020
B5. Continue development of a multi-sports complex	City of Pharr	Multi-sports complex is built	4 th quarter 2020

GOAL: C. Enhance Pharr transportation and infrastructure to meet the needs of citizens and employers.			
ACTION STEPS	LEAD ENTITY	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	START
C1. Increase code enforcement (enforcement and/or revisions to strengthen codes) so that unsightly businesses are cleaned up including their yards, no matter who owns it	City of Pharr	Decrease in unsightly businesses	4 th quarter 2015
C2. Repair streets in prime business areas	City of Pharr	Streets repaired	3 rd quarter 2016
C3. Enforce codes regarding signage along road ways and highway intersections	City of Pharr	Signage is attractive and organized	3 rd quarter 2016
C4. Improve the regional transportation system - interconnectivity with cities on both sides	Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less congestion Decrease in accidents along highways 	2 nd quarter 2020

III. Guiding Principle: Employers are able to hire highly trained and productive employees.

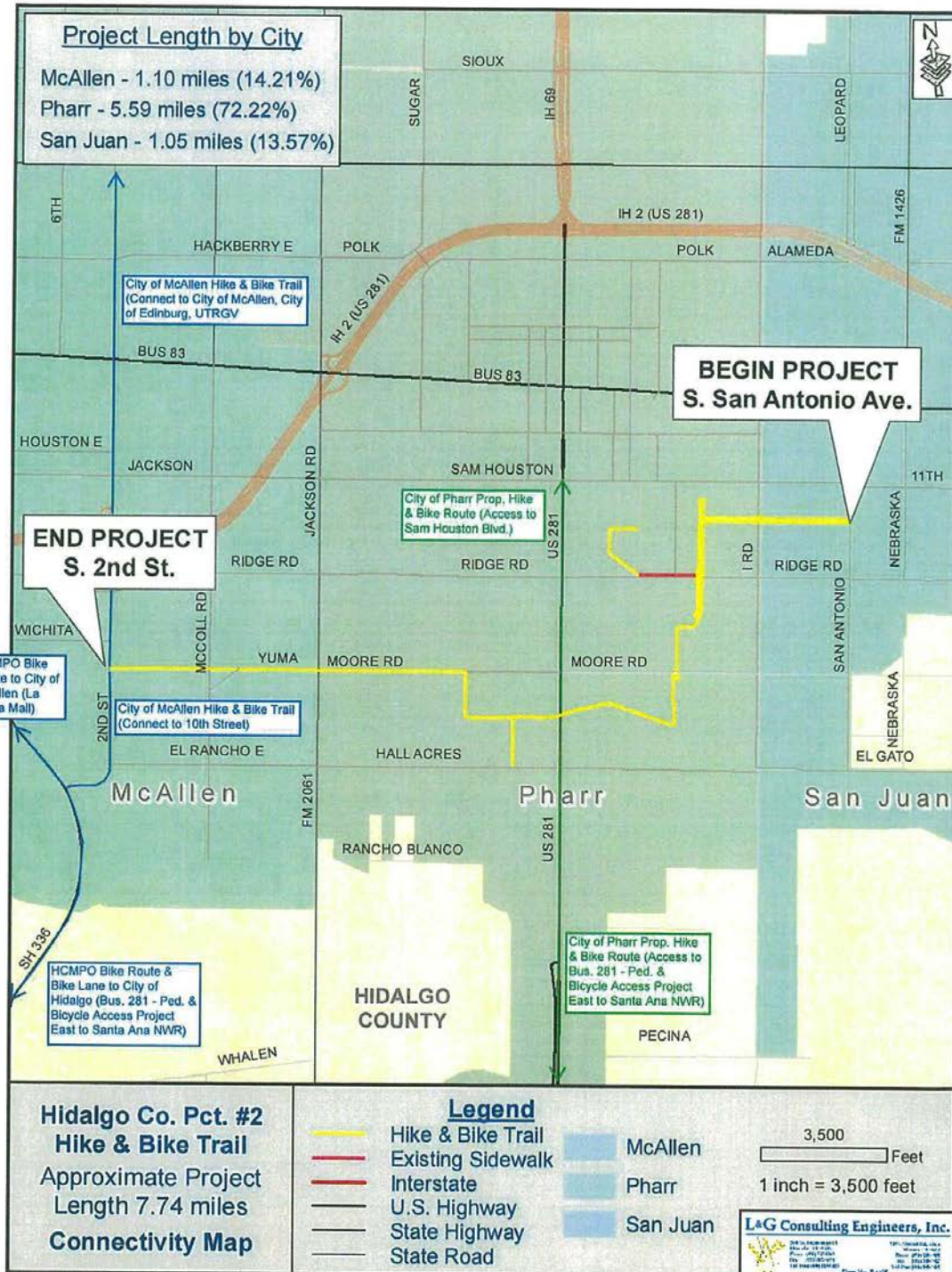
GOAL: A. Ensure that Pharr offers employers a qualified workforce well prepared to meet the needs of existing and future industry within the region.			
ACTION STEPS	LEAD ENTITY	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	START
A1. Unify goals between workforce and economic development	Pharr EDC Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goals are established Regular meetings held 	1 st quarter 2016
A2. Promote programs that aim to increase attainment of degrees - high school, certificates, associates, bachelor's, graduate	Pharr EDC PSJA ISD Valley View ISD Hidalgo ISD	Increase in attainment of degrees	3 rd quarter 2016
A3. Establish a partnership with PSJA, Valley View and Hidalgo ISDs to help shape the future bond improvements and educational needs of Pharr	City of Pharr PSJA ISD Valley View ISD Hidalgo ISD	Bonds passed to improve school facilities	3 rd quarter 2017
A4. Support efforts to open a university in Pharr	City of Pharr Pharr EDC Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Solutions PSJA ISD Valley View ISD Hidalgo ISD	Plans underway for opening a university in Pharr	3 rd quarter 2018
A5. Sponsor workforce development activities for youth and adults including workforce training facility	Pharr EDC Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce training facility is accessible to adults and youth Adults and youth are attending training programs 	2 nd quarter 2019
A6. Restore/repurpose empty buildings as substations for innovation of learning/incubators	Pharr EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empty building are identified and mapped Needs assessment done on buildings Restoration plan developed as occupants are found 	4 th quarter 2020

GOAL: B. Expand and diversify the economic base through targeted industrial development.			
LEAD ENTITY	LEAD ENTITY	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	START
B1. Review ETJ and current annexing strategy (options & opportunities)	City of Pharr	ETJ areas reviewed and considered for annexation	1 st quarter 2016
B2. Encourage attraction of light manufacturing and assembly to the region	Pharr EDC City of Pharr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment strategy developed Increase in manufacturing facilities 	3 rd quarter 2016
B3. Evaluate opportunities for development north of Nolana/Jackson Corridor - homes, stores, restaurants	City of Pharr	Plan documented to develop area	1 st quarter 2018
B4. Consider and improve coordination with the railroad to enhance logistics of commercial business	City of Pharr Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with railroad conducted Businesses feel logistics are improved 	1 st quarter 2019
B5. Creation of a Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) Airport (like Alliance)	City of Pharr	Feasibility Study conducted to assess cost/benefit of MRO	4 th quarter 2020

GOAL: C. Engage and support Pharr's existing businesses through programs and services that foster healthy businesses and encourage growth.			
ACTION STEPS	LEAD ENTITY	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	START
C1. Complete rollout of Pharr.Biz - businesses feel more united and involved, help each other, and plan to expand	Pharr EDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual evaluation of Pharr.Biz completed Increase over the year in number of members 	4 th quarter 2015
C2. Support expansion/attraction of more restaurants including those that are open late at night	Pharr EDC	Business recruitment strategy developed	3 rd quarter 2016
C3. Downtown niche is identified and cultivated	Pharr EDC City of Pharr Main Street Program	Business strategy developed to market niche	4 th quarter 2018
C4. Continue downtown revitalization - more shops, bookstore, empty spaces filled	Main Street Program City of Pharr	Master Plan developed and adopted	2 nd quarter 2020

GOAL: D. Create the path of least resistance in bridge crossings to enhance cross border trade.			
ACTION STEPS	LEAD ENTITY	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	START
D1. Support plans that keep bridge congestion minimal so that a high level of efficiency in bridge crossing remains the goal	City of Pharr	Bridge crossing data reviewed and adjustments made to decrease congestion	3 rd quarter 2015
D2. Discuss joint economic development opportunities with neighboring city officials on both sides of the border	City of Pharr Pharr EDC	Meetings held and discussions documented	1 st quarter 2016
D3. Assist in expansion/attraction of stores that attract children - like FAO Swartz, children's bookstore, clothing, games - attracting Mexican families who visit	Pharr EDC	Business recruitment strategy developed	3 rd quarter 2016
D4. Explore opportunities for Foreign Direct Investment	City of Pharr	Cost/benefit analysis completed for FDI	1 st quarter 2018
D5. Establish of a stand-alone Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ)	City of Pharr	Cost/benefit analysis completed for FTZ	2 nd quarter 2019
D6. Co-sponsor a bi-national conference to focus on innovation-driven economic development and regional collaboration	Pharr EDC	Bi-national conference held	3 rd quarter 2019

ATTACHMENT III - REGIONAL LINEAR PARK PROJECT, OPTION 4



Option 4 - 05-01-2015
(Used for TAP Appl.)

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ATTACHMENT IV - COMPREHENSIVE PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

GOALS & OBJECTIVES 2008

Attachment VI: Goals & Objectives, Comprehensive Parks Master Plan Update, 2008



Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives are the basis of the Pharr Comprehensive Parks Master Plan. They express the needs and desires of the community and reflect what the plan is intended to accomplish. They provide direction for future decisions for the park and recreation system for the entire jurisdiction of the City of Pharr.

Goals are broad statements of policy, which express the needs and priorities of the citizens. Goals allow a community with diverse backgrounds and interests to collectively agree on a common direction to achieve a desirable park, recreation and open space system. An important reason for establishing goals is to increase the awareness of citizens to the interests of the whole and to encourage communication and collaboration for future implementation.

Objectives are strategies used to accomplish the community's desires envisioned by the statement of goals. They are not actions or policies, but are means to achieve the goals. Objectives answer the question of "how" the goals are achieved.

The following are the goals and objectives for the Comprehensive Parks Master Plan for the City of Pharr developed by the Park and Recreation Committee. These are based on sound planning principles, and although developed for the 2000 Parks Master Plan, are still relevant today in planning for Pharr's future. Input from the Steering Committee as well as feedback from parks survey.

GOAL 1 *Provide a diverse blend of parks and recreation opportunities including neighborhood parks, community parks and trails, to adequately accommodate the current and future needs of the City's residents and visitors.*

Objective A Develop an even geographic distribution of parks and recreation facilities that will provide equitable opportunity activities and access for all citizens.

Objective B Assure equitable parks and recreation opportunities for all persons, especially low income, elderly and youth-at-risk citizens, recognizing the importance of accessible public facilities.

Objective C Meet the requirement for park acreage for the current and projected population in ten (10) years. Provide adequate areas for a wide range of active and passive recreation activities including baseball, softball, soccer, football, basketball, tennis, swimming, biking, bicycle motor-cross, in-line skating, shuffleboard, horseshoes, fishing, archery, picnicking, birding hiking and other popular activities.

Objective D Acquire or reserve land in identified future growth areas well in advance of ensuing development to ensure availability, protection and reasonable acquisition costs. Use, to a greater extent, the dedication of land and money in lieu of land option.

Objective E Establish policies and regulations regarding use and development of floodways, drainage ways, abandoned railroad corridors, abandoned power line easements, vacated alleys and other rights-of-way and easements.

GOAL 2 *Upgrade and expand existing active and passive recreation facilities without adversely affecting the quality of the adjacent residential neighborhoods and the park aesthetics.*

Objective A Assure that there are appropriate active and passive recreation facility needs within each of the City's parks. Identify existing opportunities and constraints to development within each of the neighborhood and community parks.

Objective B Develop an implementation program with a list of priority improvements for each of the current and future city facilities.

GOAL 3 Maintain and operate the parks, recreation and open space system in a cost-effective manner.

Objective A In yearly budgets, adequately fund the operations, facilities and programs provided by the Parks and Recreation Department

Objective B Establish a “Friends of the Park” program to solicit neighborhood involvement in maintaining and policing the public parks.

Objective C Provide a safe, clean and orderly environment for parks and recreation users, including a parks and recreation facility inspection program to identify improvement and maintenance needs.

Objective D Improve the maintenance of all parks and recreation areas and facilities by initiating preventative maintenance schedules and securing increased funding as necessary. Continue to utilize city crews for park maintenance and turf management services by increasing the manpower and equipment as additional facilities are developed.

Objective E Pursue Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) program funding administered by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as well as other grant and private funding.

Objective F Implement action items determined in the Pharr Comprehensive Trails Master Plan

GOAL 5 Support and encourage the continuance of and development of recreation activities for youth and senior citizens.

Objective A Continue to provide City-sponsored activities that provide opportunities for recreation and educational activities at city owned community centers. These programs should be encouraged and expanded.

GOAL 6 Promote the conservation of natural resources through park and recreation land acquisition, open space preservation and environmentally sensitive planning. Preserve unique natural open spaces and important

habitats for endangered species of plants and wildlife.

Objective A Identify and acquire existing natural resources which warrant protection, conservation and/or enhancement; provides habitats for endangered species or provides natural open spaces suitable for parks, recreation and both environmental and historical preservation of sites.

Objective B Encourage the preservation of open space by individuals, corporations, non-profits and public agencies to enhance the livability, aesthetic value and natural beauty of the City. Provide development incentives, regulations and policies.

Objective C Identify historical sites and places that could be the focal point of park development. Consider the historical significance of the area or persons in the naming of parks and facilities.

GOAL 7 Establish cooperative agreements and coordinated efforts with other governmental jurisdictions, educational bodies and private sector entities.

Objective A Continue and expand the mutually beneficial relationship with the School District to include not only joint acquisition of land, but joint and effective use of both school and municipal buildings and facilities, which will result in higher quality recreation opportunities at a more reasonable cost to the taxpayer.

Objective B Develop an expanded cooperative partnership with the Boys and Girls Club and similar organizations to further meet the needs of young citizens.

Objective C Establish a partnership with the County Precincts to jointly acquire, develop, operate and manage regional park and recreation facilities, activities, programs and conservation areas.

Objective D Encourage private sector participation in the provision of park and recreation opportunities by permitting innovative land development practices and creating incentives that will result in an efficient utilization of land and provide opportunities for the enjoyment of open space and preservation of the natural environment.

Objective E Enhance maintenance of the athletic facilities through an education program of seminars and in-house training with user groups and interested citizens.

Objective F Increase police surveillance of park facilities to ensure user safety and prevent vandalism.

GOAL B *Look for innovative ways to finance park facilities and improvements to supplement the Parks and Recreation Department Budget.*

Objective A Develop corporate, memorial and individual sponsorships with naming privileges for facilities, trails and gardens.

Objective B Develop a program in which personalized brick or concrete pavers could be sold and installed in parks and entrances to trails.

These goals and objectives will be used in conjunction with other sections of the Comprehensive Parks Master Plan Update to develop the priorities for implementation for the next five to ten years.

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