



CITY OF  
**DICKINSON**

Comprehensive  
Economic Development  
Strategic Plan

Approved August 2023

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# INTRODUCING

The City of Dickinson has been very aptly described by some as a hidden gem. Over the course of recent decades, this community with a storied history has quietly settled into a role as a bedroom community providing an affordable place to enjoy “bayou living”. It is a role that is needed within the area; however, as trends and demands change and the community matures, it needs to be more. Fortunately, the community has the assets, the potential and the drive to become more.

Moving forward will have its challenges. The community has limited undeveloped land remaining, is relatively unknown to investors, and no commercial destinations upon which to build.

Dickinson has the ingredients to be an economically sustainable and highly marketable community. To make that happen it needs a plan.

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan is designed to uncover the unique market position that belongs to the City of Dickinson and provide that focused and unified plan for getting there.

Over the course of four phases, the plan:

- identifies the current market position of Dickinson,
- recognizes those elements that make the community special as well as others that make it vulnerable,
- compares against trends in the market and peer communities,
- establishes a unique market position,
- identify concepts and strategies for achieving that unique market position, and
- craft an implementation program for moving forward.

Along the way the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan examine all aspects of economic development from building a strong community identity to a sustainable program for attracting new investment in the businesses desired by the community and in the manner that is best for the Dickinson.

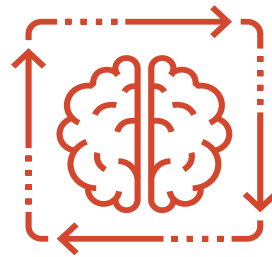


# The Planning Process



**Phase I**  
**UNDERSTANDING**

The planning process begins with an honest understanding of current conditions and the efforts undertaken to move forward. How did the community evolve to where it is today? What makes the Dickinson community unique in comparison to other communities in the Bay Area Houston region? What is getting in the way? Is the community on the right track?



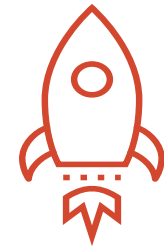
**Phase II**  
**BRAINSTORMING**

Phase II establishes the desired market position and conceptualizes solutions that can help Dickinson realize its full economic potential. Built upon the results of the first phase, Brainstorming envisions physical enhancements, programmatic changes, partnerships, new ideas, and new approaches to established ideas. This phase creates new possibilities for the city while discarding elements that could be getting in the way of success.



**Phase III**  
**RECOMMENDING**

Phase III transforms the concepts established during the Brainstorming phase into a series of actionable recommendations. Each of the various recommendations is grounded in reality to ensure that it can be accomplished by the City of Dickinson and its partners. Phase III also establishes measurable targets by which to define the success of the plan.



**Phase IV**  
**IMPLEMENTING**

Finally, the planning process concludes with an implementation program of the action items recommended in the previous phase. The implementation phase prioritizes recommendations and adds a level of detail including a general concept of cost, partners that mutually benefit, and potential funding sources.

# Economic Development Activities

There are a number of ways in which the City of Dickinson and its partners can work together to shape the community's economic future. Economic development professionals have been historically taught that the measure of economic success is the number of "primary jobs" brought into the community - those jobs that result in an exportable product. Today that measure of success is viewed from a variety of lenses, including:

- Community investment
- Increased municipal revenues
- New businesses created
- Expanded businesses
- Jobs retained
- Increased wealth

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan recognizes this expanded view of economic success. It focuses on building a holistic program for Dickinson that addresses all aspects of economic development from business attraction and focus on small business development to creating a strong community identity and building local capacity.



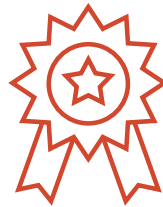
**ENTREPRENEURSHIP &  
SMALL BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT**



**BUSINESS  
RECRUITMENT &  
ATTRACTION**



**EXISTING BUSINESS  
RETENTION &  
EXPANSION**



**COMMUNITY MARKETING &  
BRAND IDENTITY**



**INFORMATION DELIVERY &  
ECONOMIC GARDENING**



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &  
CAPACITY BUILDING**

# UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY

Evaluating the City of Dickinson's current market position begins with an honest assessment of the area, its current character and conditions, and its plans for the future. That assessment cannot be completely understood through statistics or opinions alone. It requires looking at the community holistically through a variety of lenses. To get the most accurate representation, understanding the community involves data collection, constituent and stakeholder interviews, examination of relevant market trends, comparison to peer communities, and professional observations.



## WHAT WE HEARD

An overview of perceptions, challenges and opportunities as experienced and expressed by community stakeholders and topic area specialists.



## DEMOGRAPHIC & MARKET OVERVIEW

A snapshot of the current demographic, socioeconomic and market conditions in the City and the region.



## PEER COMMUNITY REVIEW

A brief physical, fiscal and statistical comparison with select other communities.



## TRENDS ANALYSIS

Statement of specific trends that are important to the district and its primary activities and industries.



## OBSERVATIONS

Professional observations made by the consultant team with regards to economic challenges and opportunities facing Dickinson.

# What We Heard

Listening to the community and key constituents provides invaluable insight that often cannot be seen or assessed in numbers and studies. As part of the initial assessment, a series of interviews were conducted with key constituents in the community and those associated with local market dynamics. The interviews allowed for a better understanding of the perceptions, challenges and opportunities facing the City of Dickinson. Information from these interviews has been categorized into highlights of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges.

## Key Findings:

- The common strength of the community is Dickinson Bayou, the cedar trees and the overall feeling of being in nature - although public access to both water and trees is limited.
- Dickinson has no strong sense of identity beyond the bayou and serving as a bedroom community.
- The community lacks the destinations that drive people to the area to shop, dine or enjoy entertainment beyond activities in Paul Hopkins Park or along the bayou.
- Dickinson has many of the resources, partners and tools in place but some may struggle with a new economic direction.
- The community lacks ownership or presence of many of the amenities demanded by both residential and commercial markets, including trails, local parks and green spaces, recreational facilities, and places to “hang out”.

# Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Challenges

## Strengths:

- Dickinson Bayou makes Dickinson a different kind of waterfront community with a “bayou lifestyle”
- Nature and trees remain prominent throughout large parts of Dickinson providing an untamed charm to the community that visibly sets it apart
- Paul Hopkins Park as a centrally located space along the major spines of the community - Dickinson Bayou and FM 517. The park is owned and maintained by Galveston County
- Location between Houston and Galveston along IH-45 provides a wealth of access and places Dickinson in proximity to the surrounding area’s amenities and work opportunities
- Dickinson ISD is continuing to gain credibility and is actively partnering with nonprofits and other education institutions to provide students with a path to the workforce and/or college
- A number of private or nonprofit organizations are focused on enhancing various aspects of the community including the Historic Society, the Art Guild, Keep Dickinson Beautiful and the recently established Destination Dickinson
- Economic development resources in place including a management district and economic development corporation
- Businesses such as Marais have proven that Dickinson can sustain well placed specialty dining and retail
- A rich history as a recreation destination
- Local disposable income is greater than many realize and is available to spend locally



*Courtesy of City of Dickinson*

## Weaknesses:

- Dickinson has very limited space remaining for new development and no room for growth outside of its limited ETJ
- The community currently has no sense of identity outside of its role as a bedroom community and its attachment to the bayou and trees
- Access to the bayou is very limited for the public leaving some to feel like it is only available to those that have access to waterfront property
- No organized industrial, business or office park
- The city has relied on Galveston County for parks and open spaces. As a result the city has an extremely limited role in creation and maintenance of parks, open spaces, trails and activities
- Lack of quality of life activities and amenities needed to be competitive in today’s marketplace including places for people young and old to “hang out”
- No recreational facilities in town. Organized activities use facilities outside of Dickinson
- Need for top tier events and programming to draw an audience from Dickinson and the surrounding area
- The physical environment of Dickinson seems “tired, grungy and out-of-date”
- Lack of a clear understanding of economic development roles of various entities and a common vision for moving forward
- City has been boom and bust and has not built upon its historic success
- Local disposable income is being spent in surrounding retail centers and on experiences in other communities



## Opportunities:

- Lack of definition and features makes downtown a “blank canvas” for innovation and redevelopment
- Dickinson is an opportune location for boutique retail and dining, particularly in downtown
- Community has new leadership that has provided a new energy and a new philosophy toward growth
- Public/private efforts to create a mixed use redevelopment in the vicinity of IH-45 and FM 517 and an innovative new business as an office/mixed use anchor to downtown
- Redevelopment potential across Dickinson, particularly with a focus on creating destinations
- Staff have undertaken a number of new initiatives to spur development/redevelopment throughout the community
- The City is undergoing a number of planning projects including a comprehensive plan, parks master plan, downtown planning, bicycle and pedestrian route planning and amendment to development regulations
- Dickinson can be described as a “hidden gem” or “diamond in the rough”
- The opportunity is there to have an economy that is unique to the area
- Diversity in market product and the subsequent tax base
- Remote, satellite and small scale office market
- Strategically located density can add value and meet a desired market



*Courtesy of City of Dickinson*

## Challenges:

- Maintaining a balance between preserving and monetizing natural resources and amenities, including Dickinson Bayou
- Redevelopment is more complicated than “green field” development, making it difficult to attract new investment based only on market potential
- Embracing a new way of thinking about community and economic development and the roles required for success by public sector partners may be difficult in some instances
- Dickinson has a perception problem that ranges from poor to unrecognized, including among the development/investment community
- Potential desire by some to continue focus on Dickinson as a bedroom community and large lot development
- Creating an environment both interesting and appropriate enough to keep locals spending locally
- Perception of the area as floodprone as a result of Harvey

# Demographic & Market Overview

The demographic & economic overview provides a snapshot of key characteristics and market conditions that are likely to impact or influence the market potential of the City of Dickinson. The study provides an overview of the types of households in the area, their market preferences, and labor pool characteristics. The study also allows for an understanding of the businesses in the community and their economic health. A review of these characteristics allows for a better understanding of the categories of individuals that are investing in the community based on their reasons for being there, whether through working, shopping, dining, starting a business or similar activity.

## Population & Labor Force Key Findings:

- Dickinson is an exporter of labor. Daytime population of the city is 81.9 percent of the total population. In comparison the daytime population of the Houston MSA is 99.7 percent of the total population. Similarly, the percentage of daytime population in Dickinson classified as workers is also significantly lower than Galveston County or the Houston MSA.
- The median age of the population of Dickinson is roughly 36.4 years and in terms of race the community has a Diversity Index of 74.1 (meaning that there is a 74.1% chance that two Dickinson residents chosen at random will belong to two different race or ethnic groups). Galveston County is older and less diverse while the Houston MSA overall is younger and more diverse.
- Dickinson is behind in income and in overall wealth, but not to the magnitude that is perceived. The median household income in Dickinson is approximately \$67,769 - lower than Galveston County but nearly equal to the Houston MSA. The wealth index (compares area wealth to national figures) indicates that Dickinson is below the national average while both Galveston and the Houston MSA are higher.
- The majority of residents of Dickinson aged 25 or greater have attended college or acquired a degree with a greater percentage holding an Associates Degree than Galveston County or the Houston MSA.
- Occupations chosen by Dickinson residents largely correlate to both education and income statistics. Residents aged 16 or greater are more likely to work in blue-collar or service oriented jobs than residents of the county as a whole or the larger Houston MSA.
- Dickinson households are more likely to be homeowners and to be able to afford doing so. A housing affordability index measures affordability of housing in a community with 100 indicating that the average household in the area can qualify for a loan to buy a home at the median value. A higher number equates to greater affordability. Dickinson has an affordable housing index of 168 while the county and MSA were 143 and 131, respectively.

## Population & Labor Force Characteristics

	Dickinson	Galveston County	Houston MSA
<b>Population</b>			
2000 Total Population	15,853	250,158	4,693,161
2010 Total Population	19,029	291,309	5,920,416
2021 Total Population	20,724	346,558	7,246,553
2021 Total Daytime Population	16,965	322,610	7,230,353
Workers	5,468	138,911	3,404,845
Residents	11,497	183,699	3,825,508
Workers as Percent of Daytime Population	32%	43%	47%
2021 Median Age	36.4	38.8	34.9
<b>Race</b>			
White Alone	68.6%	71.2%	56.5%
Black Alone	11.5%	12.7%	17.6%
Asian Alone	2%	3.4%	8.1%
Hispanic Origin	36.9%	26%	38.5%
Diversity Index	74.1%	67.7%	81.2%
<b>Households</b>			
2021 Households	7,266	128,475	2,511,058
2021 Average Household Size	2.84	2.66	2.85
All Households with Children	39.0%	36.3%	40.9%
Multi generational Households	6.3%	5.1%	6.2%
<b>Income</b>			
2021 Median Household Income	\$67,769	\$74,565	\$68,727
2021 Wealth Index	93	116	107

Source: ESRI, 2022

	Dickinson	Galveston County	Houston MSA
<b>Education of Population 25+</b>			
High School Graduate or Less	41.6%	34.9%	38.2%
Some College or Associates Degree	35.9%	32.6%	27.4%
Bachelor's or Graduate Degree	22.6%	32.4%	34.4%
<b>2020 Employed Population 16+ by Industry</b>			
Construction	14.7%	9%	10.4%
Manufacturing	8.2%	9.8%	9.7%
Retail Trade	10.1%	8.9%	10.2%
Services	45.9%	50.3%	45.5%
<b>2020 Employed Population 16+ by Occupation</b>			
White Collar	59.8%	65.5%	62.7%
Management/Business/Financial	17.2%	19.3%	18.7%
Professional	22.3%	26.7%	23.9%
Services	16.0%	14.9%	13.6%
Blue Collar	24.3%	19.7%	23.7%
Construction/Extraction	9.8%	5.9%	7.6%
<b>Housing</b>			
Owner Occupied Housing Units	66.3%	58.3%	56.9%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	26.5%	25.3%	34.5%
Vacant Housing Units	7.2%	16.5%	8.6%
Median Home Value 2021	\$211,806	\$245,665	\$248,636
2021 Housing Affordability Index	168	143	131
Percent of Income for Mortgage (%)	13.1%	13.9%	15.2%

Source: ESRI, 2022

# Tapestry Segmentation

ESRI’s tapestry segmentation provides a detailed description of America’s neighborhoods. U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinct segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition. This information provides a snapshot of the different households that dominate a neighborhood or other area and allows for a better understanding of the typical household’s demographic and socioeconomic characteristics including information on lifestyle, habits, interests, spending patterns and skill sets. This information is commonly used by retailers and businesses to provide insights regarding potential customers and their behavior and spending patterns. It also provides an understanding of underserved markets.

Approximately 96.7% of households in Dickinson fall into one of ten segments. A more detailed description of the top seven segments - those that represent five percent or more of households provides a glimpse into anticipated spending and lifestyle habits.

## Key Findings

- The tapestry segments reveal both diversity and similarity in the majority of classifications and largely tracks with the demographic and socioeconomic traits of the community.
- More than 44 percent of households in Dickinson fall into the “Urban Edge Families” and “Up and Coming Families” categories. Both are comprised of younger families with a median age that is a bit below median age of the city as a whole. Education level is lower among Urban Edge Families as is

the anticipated median household income and medium net worth.

- “Midlife Constants”, “Comfortable Empty Nesters” and “Heartland Communities” comprise nearly 23 percent of Dickinson households. Unlike Urban Edge Families and Up and Coming Families, these segments are older, established households with a median age between 42 and 48 years. Midlife Constants and Comfortable Empty Nesters have a higher net worth than their younger peers.
- The vast majority of segments prefer a single family home, although others such as “Home Improvement” and “Metro Fusion”, by desire or

necessity, are more likely to live in multifamily units.

- Several of the tapestry segments make outdoor activity a priority including events and time together as a family.
- While all segments indicate a strong work ethic, the type of work is likely to range. This fits with demographic data that depict a community with a greater percentage of persons with some college or an Associates Degree, as well as a slightly higher percentage of blue collar workers compared to Galveston County or the Houston MSA.

### Top Ten Tapestry Segments, Dickinson

Rank	Tapestry Segment	Percentage	Cumulative
1	Urban Edge Families (7C)	33.2%	33.2%
2	Up and Coming Families (7A)	10.9%	44.1%
3	Midlife Constants (5E)	9.7%	53.8%
4	Home Improvement (4B)	8.7%	62.5%
5	Metro Fusion (11C)	8.1%	70.6%
6	Comfortable Empty Nesters (5A)	6.9%	77.5%
7	Heartland Communities (6F)	6.2%	83.7%
8	Rustbelt Traditions (5D)	4.6%	88.3%
9	Pleasantville (2B)	4.3%	92.7%
10	Workday Drive (4A)	4.0%	96.7%

Source: ESRI, 2022

## Overview of Top Tapestry Segments

<b>1</b>	<b>Urban Edge Families (7C)</b>	Residents are young married couples with children and grandparents. They live far from the city in more affordable areas. Their expenses are focused on family and outdoor activities, as well as televisions and videogames.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 17% have a college degree</li> <li>▪ 66% participate in labor force. .</li> <li>▪ Median Age: 32.5</li> <li>▪ Diversity Index: 84.1</li> </ul>	<p>Median HH Income - \$50,900 Median Net Worth - \$59,400</p> <p>Housing Type: Single Family Median Value - \$145,900</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Up and Coming Families (7A)</b>	Residents are younger, more mobile and ethnically diverse than the previous generation. Their homes are new; their families are young. This is one of the fastest-growing markets in the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 67% have some college education or degree</li> <li>▪ labor force participation rate of 71%</li> <li>▪ low unemployment at 4.6%</li> <li>▪ Median Age 31.4</li> <li>▪ Diversity Index: 73.9</li> </ul>	<p>Median HH Income - \$72,000 Median Net Worth - \$122,700</p> <p>Housing Type: Single Family Median Value - \$194,000</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Midlife Constants (5E)</b>	These residents are seniors or close to the retirement age, predominantly married couples, that live in smaller communities outside the urban core.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Labor force participation rate is 31%.</li> <li>▪ 63% have an high school diploma or some college.</li> <li>▪ 42% of households receive Social Security and 27% receive retirement income.</li> <li>▪ Median Age: 47</li> <li>▪ Diversity Index: 36.2</li> </ul>	<p>Median HH Income - \$53,200 Median Net Worth - \$138,300</p> <p>Housing Type: Single Family Median Value - \$154,100</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Home Improvement (4B)</b>	These residents are married-couple families, homeowners living in low-density, suburban areas. These families are diverse, spend money on restaurants and home improvement projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most households have 2+ workers, and low unemployment rates. They enjoy working from home when possible.</li> <li>▪ Median Age: 37.7</li> <li>▪ Diversity Index: 65.7</li> </ul>	<p>Median HH Income - \$72,100 Median Net Worth - \$190,400</p> <p>Housing Type: Single Family/Multi-Family Median Value: \$192,600</p>

Source: ESRI, 2022

## Overview of Top Tapestry Segmentation

<p><b>5 Metro Fusion (11C)</b></p>	<p>These are diverse residents, recently moved to their home, which is usually a rented space in an apartment building. These residents are hard working, but with a low median income.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Over 50% of households are either single parent or single person households.</li> <li>▪ Majority of residents are renters.</li> <li>▪ Median Age: 29.3</li> <li>▪ Diversity Index: 84.6</li> </ul>	<p>Median HH Income - \$35,700 Median Net Worth - \$12,200</p> <p>Housing Type: Single Family/Multi-Family Average Rent: \$898</p>
<p><b>6 Comfortable Empty Nesters (5A)</b></p>	<p>These residents are part of the Baby Boomers, with more than half being 55 or older. They live in single family homes, mostly in the suburban areas or small towns and own one or two vehicles. Most are still employed but many are transitioning to retirement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 36% are college graduates, 68% with some college education.</li> <li>▪ Low unemployment rate of 4%.</li> <li>▪ Labor force participation 61%.</li> <li>▪ Median Age: 48</li> <li>▪ Diversity Index: 33</li> </ul>	<p>Median HH Income - \$75,000 Median Net Worth - \$293,000</p> <p>Housing Type: Single Family Median Value: \$203,400</p>
<p><b>7 Heartland Communities (6F)</b></p>	<p>These residents are older and close to retirement. Their homes are paid off and their children have moved. They enjoy the outdoors and support community events and local businesses and buy american products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Labor force participation is less than 60%.</li> <li>▪ Workers are mostly white collar and skilled.</li> <li>▪ Workers are employed in the manufacturing, construction, utilities, health-care and agricultural industries.</li> <li>▪ Median Age: 42.3</li> <li>▪ Diversity Index: 31.5</li> </ul>	<p>Median HH Income - \$42,400 Median Net Worth - \$70,900</p> <p>Housing Type: Single Family Median Value: \$95,700</p>

Source: ESRI, 2022

## Business & Industry

The City of Dickinson has a relatively small and service focused business community by nearly every measure. While the community includes some concentration at the intersection of IH-45 and FM 517, it largely consists of linear development along the major roadways such as FM 517 and SH 3.

### Key Findings:

- Businesses in Dickinson are truly small businesses. The average business in the community is likely to employ 8.2 employees - significantly smaller than the average of 14.4 employees in Galveston County.
- Businesses in the community make far less in sales than their county counterparts. In fact, sales per capita in Dickinson (\$50.44) are slightly more than half of those in Galveston County (\$98.87).
- More than one of every five businesses and employees in Dickinson are a part of the retail industry. When adding those involved in Accommodations & Food Services as well as Other Services (such as automotive services, home and garden goods repair and maintenance, and personal care) then the percentage increases to nearly half of all employees in Dickinson.
- Galveston County enjoys a series of strong industrial clusters however it is very unlikely that any are drawing their strength from Dickinson. Nearly all major industry clusters in the county are related to the maritime and petrochemical industries - both of which are prominent outside of the community.
- Dickinson residents may choose to shop and dine locally where possible, however, given sales data many retail expenditures are taking place outside of the community, although this is much more difficult to determine with the continued rise of e-commerce. “Leakage” into surrounding communities is particularly likely due to proximity to commercial centers along FM 646 in League City, the outlet mall in Texas City, and Baybrook Mall near Webster.
- Consumption outside of the community is the likely cause for below normal expenditure for Dickinson businesses across all major service categories. In comparison, according to the potential spending index, Galveston County and the Houston MSA perform higher than the national average.

	Dickinson	Galveston County
Total Businesses:	563	11,303
Total Employees:	4,624	162,369
Average Number of Employees per Business	8.2	14.4
Total Sales (\$000)	\$1,045,244	\$34,265,823
Sales Per Capita	\$50.44	\$98.87
Total Residential Population:	20,724	346,558
Employees per 100 Residents	22	47
Daytime Population	16,965	322,610
Daytime to Total Population	81.9%	93.1%

Source: ESRI, 2022



Industry by NAICS Codes	Dickinson				Galveston County			
	Businesses		Employees		Businesses		Employees	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	0.2%	2	0.0%	22	0.2%	76	0.0%
Mining	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	0.2%	313	0.2%
Utilities	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	0.2%	310	0.2%
Construction	43	7.6%	273	5.9%	826	7.3%	6,140	3.8%
Manufacturing	11	2.0%	55	1.2%	290	2.6%	4,379	2.7%
Wholesale Trade	7	1.2%	81	1.8%	252	2.2%	2,314	1.4%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>1,059</b>	<b>22.9%</b>	<b>1,835</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>16,697</b>	<b>10.3%</b>
Transportation & Warehousing	10	1.8%	199	4.3%	205	1.8%	2,406	1.5%
Information	7	1.2%	14	0.3%	175	1.5%	1,813	1.1%
Finance & Insurance	28	5.0%	121	2.6%	561	5.0%	4,682	2.9%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	31	5.5%	141	3.0%	662	5.9%	3,169	2.0%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	29	5.2%	163	3.5%	869	7.7%	5,488	3.4%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	4	0.7%	43	0.9%	39	0.3%	739	0.5%
Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	18	3.2%	92	2.0%	339	3.0%	3,024	1.9%
<b>Educational Services</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>9,458</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
Health Care & Social Assistance	41	7.3%	323	7.0%	<b>855</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>64,422</b>	<b>39.7%</b>
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	12	2.1%	96	2.1%	284	2.5%	3,243	2.0%
<b>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>17,972</b>	<b>11.1%</b>
<b>Other Services (except Public Administration)</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>16.2%</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>1,498</b>	<b>13.3%</b>	<b>8,034</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
Public Administration	16	2.8%	226	4.9%	298	2.6%	7,135	4.4%
Unclassified Establishments	30	5.3%	12	0.3%	896	7.9%	555	0.3%
Total	563	100%	4,624	100%	11,303	100%	162,369	100%

Source: ESRI, 2022

## Top Industry Clusters, Galveston County, Q4 2021

NAICS 6-Digit Industry	Quarterly Establishments	September Employment	Total Quarterly Wages	Average Weekly Wage	Total Quarterly Location Quotient
NAICS 488330 Navigational services to shipping	14	512	10,902,771	1,647	50.28
NAICS 325199 All other basic organic chemical mfg.	7	633	20,006,158	2,420	31.46
NAICS 488320 Marine cargo handling	13	1,160	9,767,566	668	10.79
NAICS 424710 Petroleum bulk stations and terminals	5	203	4,321,394	1,646	9.87
NAICS 811310 Commercial machinery repair and maintenance	25	783	17,257,836	1,714	7.41
NAICS 483113 Coastal and great lakes freight transport	3	75	1,043,555	1,080	7.23
NAICS 445220 Fish and seafood markets	4	77	626,597	595	6.82
NAICS 237990 Other heavy construction	14	471	10,068,686	1,644	6.31
NAICS 441222 Boat dealers	20	162	2,323,239	1,099	6.08
NAICS 442291 Window treatment stores	4	43	530,549	928	5.54
NAICS 541350 Building inspection services	12	89	1,347,212	1,182	5.36
NAICS 448150 Clothing accessories stores	15	196	1,322,167	521	5.32

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021

## Consumer Spending

Dickinson households spend less across all major categories of expenditures than their counterparts throughout Galveston County and the Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area. They are also most likely to spend less in each category than the national average, albeit by a relatively small amount - except in education. Dickinson households are likely to only spend 88 percent of the national average on education.

TRADE AREA CAPTURE	1 mile	3 miles	5 miles
2021 Population	7,270	42,615	111,173
2021 Households	2,691	14,744	39,048
2021 Median Disposable Income	\$70,684	\$74,787	\$76,193
2021 Per Capita Income	\$36,646	\$37,915	\$39,588

Source: ESRI, 2022

CONSUMPTION BY CATEGORY	Average Spent per Household			Potential Spending Index		
	City of Dickinson	Galveston County	Houston MSA	City of Dickinson	Galveston County	Houston MSA
Apparel & Services	\$2,020.01	\$2,306.25	\$2,327.76	95	109	110
Education	\$1,519.91	\$1,773.73	\$1,800.98	88	103	104
Entertainment/Recreation	\$3,059.59	\$3,540.68	\$3,416.66	95	110	106
Food at Home	\$5,224.34	\$5,919.43	\$5,877.43	96	109	108
Food Away from Home	\$3,654.17	\$4,125.41	\$4,211.84	96	109	111
Health Care	\$6,003.26	\$6,944.53	\$6,560.38	96	111	105
Household Furnishings & Equipment	\$2,182.48	\$2,493.41	\$2,456.72	97	111	109
Personal Care Products & Services	\$862.66	\$982.20	\$975.33	96	109	109
Shelter	\$19,110.61	\$21,465.38	\$21,864.52	95	106	108
Support Payments/Cash Contributions/Gifts in Kind	\$2,324.48	\$2,694.96	\$2,601.83	97	113	109
Travel	\$2,409.53	\$2,753.04	\$2,708.42	95	109	107
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs	\$1,082.94	\$1,238.87	\$1,208.62	98	112	109

Source: ESRI, 2022

## Commercial Development

### Office

Office space in Dickinson is relatively limited. Only 64 buildings are classified by CoStar as office structures offering roughly 441,000 square feet of space. On a 5 Star rating system (5 being the highest quality), more than one-third of office buildings in Dickinson are considered 3-star while the remainder are rated 1 or 2-star. Approximately 85 percent of buildings are 1-story and the remainder are 2-stories. Occupancy rates in 2021 were higher than 92 percent and the asking price to rent available space was slightly higher than Galveston County, but lower than the Houston MSA as a whole.

### Retail

Approximately 1.4 million square feet of retail space is spread throughout Dickinson, primarily along corridors such as IH-45, FM 517 and SH-3. Approximately 2 percent of the 145 retail centric buildings in Dickinson are rated 4-star while more than 55 percent are considered 3-star structures. The remaining percentage is rated either 1 or 2-star. At more than 97 percent occupied, the retail market in Dickinson can be considered “constrained” even as the market struggled through a pandemic and the increasing rise of e-commerce. Despite demand, available asking rent in Dickinson remains lower than Galveston County or the Houston MSA.

OFFICE		Dickinson	Houston MSA	Galveston County
Availability	Availability Rate	15.4%	22.1%	9.0%
	Available Asking Rent/SF	\$25.14	\$28.88	\$23.15
	Occupancy Rate	92.2%	81.1%	95.2%
Inventory	Existing Buildings	64	10,710	527
	Under Construction Avg SF		53,300	106,000
	12 Mo Delivered SF	0	4,400,000	0
Sales Past Year	Asking Price Per SF	\$121	\$159	\$187
	Total For Sale SF	57,400	12,100,000	211,000
Demand	12 Mo Net Absorp % of Inventory	8.4%	0.2%	1.3%

RETAIL		Dickinson	Houston MSA	Galveston County
Availability	Availability Rate	3.3%	6.0%	4.8%
	Available Asking Rent/SF	\$15.6	\$19.41	\$17.09
	Occupancy Rate	97.1%	94.6%	96.2%
Inventory	Existing Buildings	145	30,080	1,637
	Under Construction Avg SF		20,400	30,100
	12 Mo Delivered SF	7,500	3,500,000	41,200
Sales Past Year	Asking Price Per SF	\$1,453	\$266	\$164
	Total For Sale SF	7,100	9,000,000	584,000
Demand	12 Mo Net Absorp % of Inventory	-0.2%	1.5%	1.0%

Source: CoStar, 2022

# Commercial Development

## Multi-Family

The multifamily market in Dickinson includes more than 2,600 units spread across 67 buildings. The majority of multifamily buildings are 1 to 2-stories. The majority of multifamily buildings in Dickinson are rated 1 to 2-stars, while 38 percent are categorized as 3-star. The remaining 10 percent are rated as 4-star. At more than 95% occupied the multifamily market is considered “constrained”. Rents in Dickinson are lower than Galveston County and the Houston MSA, thereby further certifying the community as an affordable place to live.

## Industrial

Despite the lack of a dedicated industrial park, the City of Dickinson is still home to roughly 524,000 square feet of industrial space spread across 67 structures. Buildings in the community are both single and multi-tenant. Approximately 55 percent of industrial buildings are categorized as 1-star while another 37 percent are considered 2-star. The remaining 8 percent includes both 3 and 4-star structures. As with office and multi-family, the occupancy rate for industrial space in Dickinson is high enough - almost 96 percent - to be considered a “constrained” market. Available asking rent per square foot is higher than in Galveston County and the Houston MSA.

MULTIFAMILY		Dickinson	Houston MSA	Galveston County
Availability	Vacant Units	122	59,087	2,332
	Asking Rent/SF	\$1.10	\$1.39	\$1.33
	Studio Asking Rent		\$1,124	\$672
	1 Bedrom Asking Rent/Unit	\$937	\$1,106	\$1,018
	2 Bedroom Asking Rent/Unit	\$1,061	\$1,363	\$1,244
	3 Bedroom Asking Rent/Unit	\$1,324	\$1,552	\$1,589
Inventory	Existing Buildings	29	5,112	351
	Average Units per Building	90	151	74
	12 Mo Delivered Units	0	20,490	1,103
Sales Past Year	Asking Price Per Unit		\$98,239	\$88,500
	Total For Sale Units	21	3,003	284
Demand	12 Mo Net Absorp % of Inventory	1.0%	4.1%	2.0%

INDUSTRIAL		Dickinson	Houston MSA	Galveston County
Availability	Availability Rate	6.1%	8.9%	17.8%
	Available Asking Rent/SF	\$10.99	\$7.77	\$4.11
	Occupancy Rate	95.9%	94.2%	85.5%
Inventory	Existing Buildings	67	20,424	485
	Under Construction Avg SF		117,000	
	12 Mo Delivered SF	0	22,600,000	186,000
Sales Past Year	Asking Price Per SF	\$83	\$87	\$88
	Total For Sale SF	27,600	22,500,000	157,000
Demand	12 Mo Net Absorp % of Inventory	0.4%	5.6%	3.3%

Source: CoStar, 2022

# Peer Communities Review

A peer community review allows for an assessment of Dickinson's general economic variables and tools in comparison to communities with some level of similarity, including population, presence of a prominent water body and income. To the extent possible, the selection included a mix of local communities and others found throughout the State of Texas.

The following were chosen as peer communities:

- Webster
- Friendswood
- Lake Jackson
- Murphy

An effort to find peer communities will always result in some similarities as well as major differences. For example, Webster has fewer residents than Dickinson but well more than double the number of businesses. Lake Jackson has 50 percent more residents, but very similar percent of homes that are owner occupied and median housing value. While there will always be similarities and differences, a comparison is valuable to better understand Dickinson's economic perspective.

## Key Findings

- In comparison to the selected peer communities, Dickinson may not offer the highest population or level of income, however it offers strong housing affordability and retail sales. All of the communities, with exception to Webster, had a daytime population that was lower than the total population.
- Dickinson is among the most affordable office markets but, at more than 92 percent, has one of the lowest occupancy rates. The retail market in Dickinson is also among the most affordable but enjoys one of the highest occupancy rates.
- Similar to office and retail, the multifamily market is among the most affordable in regards to asking rent per square foot and for rents overall. The industrial market, from the standpoint of general demographics is comparable to the peer communities.
- Dickinson may not have the population, income or number of businesses of peer communities, but from the perspective of economic infrastructure, the community has laid an impressive groundwork from which to build a strong economic strategy.
- Dickinson has historically been more aggressive in its use of Chapter 380 economic development agreements than other communities. In terms of the number of current agreements in place, Dickinson has 15. In comparison, Murphy has the second highest number of active agreements with a total of 5.
- Dickinson has a management district in place and is in the process of establishing tax increment reinvestment zones. The only other community actively using either tool is Friendswood. The West Ranch Management District in Friendswood assists in development of the residential master planned community of the same name.
- None of the peer communities appear to have invested heavily in establishing a clear community identity and slogan. Webster is the only community that doesn't include a tree in its brand identity logo and may also offer the most inspiring slogan.
- The Dickinson Chamber of Commerce brings value to the community, including the 2022 Visitor's Guide, but it does not appear to offer economic attraction and retention services to the level provided by peer communities.

## Demographics & General Business Information

	Dickinson	Friendswood	Lake Jackson	Murphy	Webster
<b>Population</b>					
2021 Total Population	20,724	40,427	30,079	22,406	12,145
2021 Median Household Income	\$67,769	\$109,528	\$82,996	\$131,135	\$55,105
2021 Median Disposable Income	\$55,359	\$87,693	\$67,602	\$103,980	\$46,154
2021 Median Net Worth	\$152,954	\$535,619	\$221,563	\$607,089	\$19,980
2021 Total Daytime Population	16,965	35,018	28,765	20,043	20,375
<b>Housing</b>					
Total Housing Units	7,831	14,703	12,595	6,186	6,457
Percent Owner Occupied	66%	78%	61%	94%	16%
Percent Renter Occupied	27%	18%	32%	5%	71%
Percent Vacant	7%	3%	7%	1%	13%
2021 Median Home Value	\$211,806	\$316,378	\$211,877	\$381,871	\$300,526
2021 Housing Affordability Index	168	176	207	174	109
<b>Businesses</b>					
2021 Total Businesses	563	1,383	947	505	1,458
2021 Total Employees	4,624	9,690	11,549	4,144	17,658
2021 Total Sales	\$1,045,244	\$1,643,296	\$1,659,877	\$555,607	\$2,731,464
2021 Unemployment Rate	7.9%	6.4%	6.6%	5.9%	8.4%

Source: ESRI, 2022

## Business Markets by Community

<b>OFFICE</b>		<b>Dickinson</b>	<b>Webster</b>	<b>Friendswood</b>	<b>Lake Jackson</b>	<b>Murphy</b>
<b>Availability</b>	Availability Rate	15.4%	7.5%	18.1%	0.9%	5.8%
	Available Asking Rent/SF	\$25.14	\$31.17	\$27.58	\$24.00	\$29.94
	Occupancy Rate	92.2%	96.1%	91.7%	99.1%	95.0%
<b>Inventory</b>	Existing Buildings	64	113	94	46	18
	Under Construction Avg SF	N/A	10,300	106,000	N/A	N/A
	12 Mo Delivered SF	0	13,000	0	0	0
<b>Sales Past Year</b>	Asking Price Per SF	\$121	\$243	\$227	\$140	\$358
	Total For Sale SF	57,400	26,400	16,000	not provided	not provided
<b>Demand</b>	12 Mo Net Absorp % of Inventory	8.4%	2.9%	0.9%	0.8%	8.4%

<b>RETAIL</b>		<b>Dickinson</b>	<b>Webster</b>	<b>Friendswood</b>	<b>Lake Jackson</b>	<b>Murphy</b>
<b>Availability</b>	Availability Rate	3.3%	8.1%	7.3%	4.1%	3.6%
	Available Asking Rent/SF	\$15.6	\$18.12	\$22.99	\$8.79	\$32.64
	Occupancy Rate	97.1%	94.3%	93.4%	96.2%	98.1%
<b>Inventory</b>	Existing Buildings	145	260	196	122	65
	Under Construction Avg SF	N/A	10,000	16,000	N/A	16,700
	12 Mo Delivered SF	7,500	105,000	500	17,900	9,200
<b>Sales Past Year</b>	Asking Price Per SF	\$1,453	\$152	not provided	not provided	\$295
	Total For Sale SF	7,100	67,600	96,000	14,400	not provided
<b>Demand</b>	12 Mo Net Absorp % of Inventory	-0.2%	2.0%	0.9%	2.1%	2.8%

Source: CoStar, 2022



<b>MULTIFAMILY</b>		<b>Dickinson</b>	<b>Webster</b>	<b>Friendswood</b>	<b>Lake Jackson</b>	<b>Murphy</b>
<b>Availability</b>	Vacant Units	122	542	148	428	not provided
	Asking Rent/SF	\$1.10	\$1.37	\$1.35	\$1.24	not provided
	Studio Asking Rent	N/A	\$1,369	\$701	\$830	not provided
	1 Bedrom Asking Rent/Unit	\$937	\$1,019	\$1,085	\$953	not provided
	2 Bedroom Asking Rent/Unit	\$1,061	\$1,289	\$1,384	\$1,170	not provided
	3 Bedroom Asking Rent/Unit	\$1,324	\$1,552	\$1,671	\$1,369	not provided
<b>Inventory</b>	Existing Buildings	29	28	19	22	not provided
	Average Units per Building	90	314	141	156	not provided
	12 Mo Delivered Units	0	0	249	0	not provided
<b>Sales Past Year</b>	Asking Price Per Unit	not provided	not provided	N/A	N/A	not provided
	Total For Sale Units	21	8	N/A	N/A	not provided
<b>Demand</b>	12 Mo Net Absorp % of Inventory	1.0%	1.3%	6.6%	3.7%	not provided

<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>		<b>Dickinson</b>	<b>Webster</b>	<b>Friendswood</b>	<b>Lake Jackson</b>	<b>Murphy</b>
<b>Availability</b>	Availability Rate	6.1%	6.1%	7.6%	N/A	6.0%
	Available Asking Rent/SF	\$10.99	\$10.1	\$11.4	N/A	\$20.00
	Occupancy Rate	95.9%	95.3%	93.6%	100.0%	94.0%
<b>Inventory</b>	Existing Buildings	67	78	32	2	4
	Under Construction Avg SF	N/A	30,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
	12 Mo Delivered SF	0	32,600	13,000	0	0
<b>Sales Past Year</b>	Asking Price Per SF	\$83	not provided	\$125	N/A	N/A
	Total For Sale SF	27,600	15,000	43,900	N/A	N/A
<b>Demand</b>	12 Mo Net Absorp % of Inventory	0.4%	2.2%	-0.9%	18.1%	-6.0%

Source: CoStar, 2022

## Economic Infrastructure at a Glance

	<b>Dickinson</b>	<b>Friendswood</b>	<b>Lake Jackson</b>	<b>Murphy</b>	<b>Webster</b>
Economic Development Corporation	Dickinson EDC	Friendswood Downtown EDC, Community ED Committee	Lake Jackson Development Corporation	Murphy EDC	Webster EDC
EDC Type	Type B	Type B	Type B	Type B	Type B
Chamber of Commerce	Yes	Friendswood Chamber of Commerce	Brazosport Area Chamber of Commerce	Murphy Chamber of Commerce	Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce
Convention & Visitors	Directed to Chamber	No, city website	Brazosport Convention & Visitors Council	No	Bay Area of Houston CVB
TIRZ	In Progress	No	No	No	No
Management District	Dickinson MD	West Ranch Management District	No	No	No
Chapter 380 Agreements	Yes (15)	Yes (3), Chapter 380 Municipal Grant Program (downtown)	Yes (4)	Yes (5)	Yes (2)
Other Incentives	Tax Abatement	Neighborhood Empowerment Zone No. 1 (downtown)	Tax abatement	Murphy Municipal Development District, Murphy Community Development Corporation, Tax abatement, Murphy Unites shop local,	Tax abatement
Branding					
Logo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slogan	"Dickinson, The Natural Choice"	"Live Here Work Here"	"City of Enchantment"	"Life Lived at Your Pace"	"Gateway to the Future"

# Relevant Global & Regional Trends

## General Real Estate Trends

- Mixed-use development that is highly walkable and includes residential, office, and retail/entertainment components is on the rise as more people seek opportunities to add “live, work, and play” experiences into everyday life. While initially a trend in urban areas, mixed-use development now also brings an urban environment into small cities and suburbs.
- The pandemic altered the concepts of work and home in a number of ways, but perhaps none more so than the “work from home” concept. Small towns and areas with extraordinary quality of life stand to be the biggest beneficiaries of the trend, particularly those places that can also provide that quality at an affordable cost.

## Retail Market Trends:

- The concept of retail has been transforming and that transformation accelerated as a result of the pandemic.
- Brick and mortar storefronts are changing in footprint and format to create a smaller, more intimate experience.
- The retail market is now divided into “experience” and “convenience” with convenience based retail competing increasingly with online activity.
- Interest in retail as part of a larger experience has bolstered clustered, walkable retail such as is available in downtowns and mixed use centers.
- Experience is increasingly tied to open spaces, entertainment, and social opportunities.
- Tying storefronts to other channels, including online shopping, mobile apps and more was already accelerating prior to the pandemic but quickly became a staple for many small businesses throughout the country. Focus is increasingly on building omnichannel strategies to create a unified experience for customers.
- Direct to consumers retailers are opening brick and mortar stores.
- The concept of a “storefront” has evolved to incorporate alternatives that allow for more affordable entry into the market and a different user experience, including:
  - Temporary markets such as evening markets, art markets and more create require limited commitment while building upon an event
- Pop-up retail allows for temporary retail to “try out” a concept or rotate locations. Concepts can range from mini-storefronts in a single structure to kiosks and an integrated shopping experience. Direct to consumer pop ups are gaining popularity.
- Containers, trucks and similar concepts allow for temporary (or permanent) arrangements.
- Experience has become critical to retail, including “instagrammable” opportunities that can build a social media following.
- Online retail concepts have strengthened and grown the home-based business market.
- Former inline retail spaces, including anchor sites, are increasingly occupied by services ranging from healthcare and education to fitness and activity centers.

## *Food & Beverage Trends:*

- Food and beverage has expanded beyond storefronts to a variety of concepts, including:
  - Markets
  - Pop-up venues
  - Rotating restaurants
  - Food halls
  - Food trucks and other temporary concepts
- Meal delivery services have become a staple of the food and beverage industry.
- Shared kitchen and ghost kitchen concepts have seen increased popularity as a result of the increase in meal delivery service demand.
- Consumers are increasingly seeking unique dining and drinking experiences.
- Farm to table continues to increase in popularity in response to environmental concerns and rising supply costs.
- As with retail, building a social media following is playing an increasing role as a means of attracting customers.
- Restaurants, bars and similar food and beverage concepts are playing an increasing role in creating walkable destinations, alongside retail, entertainment and possibly office and residential activity.

## *Office Market Trends:*

- Suburban and small town office space has become increasingly attractive as employees seek proximity to home. Satellite space is expected to become more common.
  - Amenities and adaptable space have become important for the office market as people look for a more satisfying sense of experiences at work as well as during off-hours. Emphasis is being placed on building and site design, with common areas, walkability, and amenities integrated into the space itself or nearby.
  - The concept of “office space” continues to fracture and transform from the traditional concept to alternatives with greater flexibility and less formality, including short-term and remote opportunities. Example formats such as co-working spaces, flex space, business incubators, and accelerator spaces are playing an increasingly strong role in the marketplace and filling a series of previous gaps in the market.
  - Space for startups and entrepreneurs have grown from a novelty to a highly desired hub for collaboration and sharing of ideas. Business incubators, accelerators and maker spaces are proving to be an essential ingredient for communities seeking to capture businesses from the ground up.
  - Office space is increasingly desired in areas with other activities including live/work, second floor office space in activity centers or downtown areas and more.
- Demand is rising for complementary amenities and “healthy” spaces that allow for physical and mental wellness including access to outdoor spaces, fitness centers and pet-friendly spaces.
  - Many companies are experimenting with a form of hybrid work model with more of a balance between working remotely and in the office.
  - Employees value flexibility in their hours and location of work and are more likely to prioritize lifestyle over proximity to work, even if it means taking a pay cut.
  - Regardless of location in a major employment center or suburban space, employees will continue to prefer space in vibrant and trendy setting with access to different activities, amenities, services and experiences. Recognizing the trend, employers interested in capturing young entrepreneurial talent are adapting to incorporate “cooler” and “fresher” space.

## *Residential Trends:*

- Movement away from major urban centers and higher density living as a result of the pandemic is beginning to ebb as desire to be near activity centers returns.
- Hybrid work and work from home concepts play a role in the changing concept of home both in single family and multifamily development, including consideration of workspace and increased access to amenities. For multifamily development, those amenities can also mean private offices/work spaces, meeting facilities and/or co-working spaces.
- Walkability, cycling, access to active green spaces, and recreation opportunities are increasingly important, giving an edge to walkable small cities that can offer both charm and access to amenities without a car.
- Roof terraces, courtyards and other small scale outdoor “oases” are becoming increasingly popular.
- Single home developments as a rental option to multifamily structures is growing in demand as residents seek flexibility but desire the perks of single family living.

# Observations

Observations represent insights from the consultant team based upon results from What We Heard, Demographics & Market Overview, Peer Review and Relevant Trends coupled with professional understanding and expertise. Observations are, in part, a summary of the market position of the City of Dickinson in its current condition and following current trends. Equally important, they serve as the foundation upon which to reposition the district to remain uniquely market competitive.

## Nature is natural to Dickinson

Arroyo de Cedros - River of Cedars. The early Spanish description for the banks of Dickinson Bayou continue to represent the most defining traits of the City of Dickinson. The bayou winds through the entirety of the community. It is the place where community meets wildlife habitat. It is a part of a common bond that stitches this community together - along with the accompanying canopy of trees, most particularly cedar trees. The trees and bayou combined evoke a sense of nature unlike anything available in surrounding cities. It is the image of listening to owls in the backyard, kayaking or boating along the bayou, relaxing in a hammock, or simply driving through a forest rather than nonstop commercial strip centers.

The majority of individuals through interviews and general discussion immediately noted the importance of the bayou and the trees to this community and its identity. They are not wrong. Together they can be the foundation for a unique and marketable community identity - if they can be readily available to everyone in the community.



*Dickinson Bayou at Evening  
Courtesy of City of Dickinson*

**Your most prized assets are largely out of your hands.**

The very vast majority of the land along Dickinson Bayou as well as much of the property on which trees are found are under private ownership. Paul Hopkins Park is an exception but it too is currently owned by another public entity - Galveston County. While the bayou provides great waterfront views for a number of residents, the limited amount of public access means that the primary method of enjoying Dickinson Bayou is through the park or by boat.

The City has recently recognized this as an issue of importance and is creatively seeking opportunities to create public access to the waterway, including a plan to acquire roughly 50 acres of green space at various locations on the bayou.

The majority of the established wooded areas are on private property which is - and should be - subject to development. The City attempts to protect the existing tree canopy through the tree preservation ordinance and collaboration with property owners. The ordinance does not preclude the removal of “qualifying” or “significant” trees, but it does require coordination and permits for removal as well as a plan for replacement, including increased replacement for removal of too many mature trees.

**Continuing to be the bedroom community.**

During discussion and in listening sessions, a number of people have referred to Dickinson as a “bedroom community”, both as a positive and a negative. In both instances it is easy to understand why.

In truth, Dickinson has played the role of bedroom community since the 1890s. That trend continued through the InterUrban, the highway system, oil and gas, NASA and more. Over time Dickinson quietly became an affordable alternative that offered the benefits of access to water in a natural setting.

Maintaining status as a quality bedroom community can be difficult and demands change. New residents expect a different style of development and a suite of amenities such as trails, bicycle lanes, open spaces, recreational facilities, as well as proximity to places to shop, dine and work.

Unfortunately Dickinson has few of those amenities. More, development as a bedroom community has resulted in limited growth in commercial activities that could be a source of shopping, dining, working and municipal revenue.

### **The highs and lows of being “close to it all”.**

Dickinson enjoys proximity to any number of destinations. For shopping, Tanger Outlets is in Texas City, a heavy concentration of national brands is located minutes away in League City along FM 646 and Baybrook Mall is within a 15 minute drive. For entertainment, Kemah Boardwalk and Space Center Houston are less than 20 minutes away and both Pleasure Pier in Galveston and Minute Maid Park in Houston are a little more than 30 minutes from Dickinson, in addition to all of the places in between. Work opportunities are equally close as are colleges and universities. Dickinson can truly state that it is in close proximity to most of the privileges that the Houston metro area has to offer.

On the other hand, the downside of proximity is that Dickinson has no real destination or critical mass of its own. Downtown is currently more of a concept than a reality with limited anchors or sense of place. As previously noted, even amenities desired by residents such as trails and sports facilities are located in other communities.

Dickinson does have opportunity and it has the local buying power to support community businesses and destinations. Marais and Gator’s Bar and Grill are examples of unique local restaurants that prove demand for two entirely different segments of dining and entertaining. A mixed use redevelopment project planned along Water Street may include activities that meet local needs and create a draw.

### **The best impressions of Dickinson are not the first impressions.**

As the adage goes, first impressions are critical and can sometimes be the only impression that matters. Whether physical or by word of mouth, the first impressions of Dickinson are not reflective of the community’s potential.

From a physical perspective entry into Dickinson is not particularly memorable. Traveling along IH-45 the community largely blends into League City to the north and Texas City to the south with little fanfare. Inline commercial activity along IH-45 and FM 517 is largely similar to most inline retail before it is broken up by the view of Dickinson’s cedars. Entry along SH 3 from League City is equally nondescript. Gateway signage exists but it is not uniform and is overwhelmed

Public perception of Dickinson is a similar struggle. In interviews and public dialogue Dickinson is not perceived as a community ripe for investment, particularly from a sociodemographic perspective. In point of fact the numbers tell a different story. It is true that income, buying power, education and the like are lower than the surrounding area - but not substantially. As an example, within a 1 mile area of IH-45 and FM 517 disposable income is \$70,684. Within a five mile radius that figure grows by only 7.2%. Dickinson is, after all, called a “hidden gem” for a reason.



### **Dickinson lacks a clear identity.**

Community identity can be difficult for many cities and Dickinson is certainly no exception. When asked to describe the community's identity, individuals most often cited the bayou, the trees, boating, and the community's role as a bedroom community. Some of these may be elements of identity, but none of them adequately tell Dickinson's story.

The City of Dickinson had a previous slogan of "City on the Rise" before adopting the more recent version of "Dickinson, The Natural Choice". While the prior version may have been intended to be inspiring it could describe numerous cities across the country and provides no local frame of reference. The more recent slogan comes much closer to telling the story of Dickinson.

A strong identity is a local rallying point. It can help to build confidence and local pride. It can also help to quickly define for others - investors, tourists, and competitors - what they can expect from this community. It then becomes the basis for building a community brand, including physical improvements such as gateways, landscaping, signage and artwork. and the source for marketing material. The new slogan is a strong match but until it is fully embraced it remains only that - a slogan.

Without a strong sense of identity the story of Dickinson is going largely untold or told by others and in a way that is not necessarily to the community's benefit.

### **This can be a place of business.**

It is true that the city lacks a commercial core, destinations, or a business park. It is also true that the city is nearing build out. However, it should not be misconstrued that Dickinson isn't a place where business can occur. Some property remains for new development. Equally important, several of the most critical areas of the community could be candidates for redevelopment.

The City of Dickinson has been a place of business before and it has history as a recreation destination.

The City of Dickinson does have a limited population but businesses follow labor pools, trade areas, and critical mass, not municipal boundaries. Dickinson has buying power as does the surrounding area. It has a labor pool that is attractive to specific commercial and industrial employers and is surrounded by an even larger workforce.

Property in the area is relatively affordable and both retail and industrial space is greater than 95 percent occupied. Office space is greater than 92 percent occupied in a post-pandemic market that has pushed a larger share of employees to work from home.

As noted in trends, business is changing. It is doing so in ways that could benefit Dickinson in the right circumstances.

**The tools are in place, the leadership is here, now for the instruction manual.**

Over time, the community has assembled a number of tools that are highly beneficial to economic development. The city has established the Dickinson Economic Development Corporation as well as the Dickinson Management District - both of which can actively play a role in a variety of economic development functions. The city has utilized Chapter 380 economic development agreements and is currently in process of establishing a set of tax increment reinvestment zones. In addition to these tools, the city has a number of partners that could be invaluable to economic development including Destination Dickinson, the Dickinson Historical Society, and Dickinson ISD.

For a period of time, the city struggled to build stability and collaboration among staff, elected officials and other local leaders. New leadership beginning with the City Manager bring a new perspective to the community and a drive for success.

With many of the tools in place, potentially willing partners at the ready and strong leadership at the helm, the Dickinson community is ready for a push toward economic prosperity.

Completion of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan will provide the unified vision that will allow for common focus and a clear path forward.

# BRAINSTORMING

## *Proposed Focus:*

Brainstorming represents the discovery of ideas and solutions that will lead to a future of prosperity and wealth for the City of Dickinson and those residents, business owners and property owners that choose to invest in the community. The concepts that are developed as part of this process capture those elements that make Dickinson truly unique and uniquely marketable in comparison to other communities. They build on the natural strengths and opportunities of the community and address weaknesses and threats.

The Brainstorming section represents a transition from understanding the community to establishing the basis for a fully implementable economic development program.

Brainstorming efforts focus on creating both a common vision and movement to a more balanced economy for the community.

### **1. Changing Perceptions & Celebrating Dickinson.**

Dickinson has numerous positive attributes and those are the story that deserves to be told. The community may be a “diamond in the rough”, but the focus should be on the “diamond” and less on the “rough”.

**2. Keeping Locals Local.** Dickinson has local buying power. Keeping that buying power in Dickinson is essential to economic sustainability. A commercial base must be enticing to locals before it can be attractive to others.

**3. Growing the Way You Deserve.** Dickinson can and should be selective in the types and quality of development that occur in the community. Put simply, not all development is in the community’s best interest. Being choosy now can pay long term.

**3. Establishing Great Places and Drawing People In.** Attractions and sustainable placemaking are an evolutionary process and realizing their full potential can take, time, tremendous effort and partnership - but the character of places can dictate redevelopment patterns and their economic impact.

**4. Developing a Vibrant and Unique Retail, Entertainment and Dining Scene.** People have choices in the surrounding Bay Area. Dickinson can become the community where people spend their time and money, but the experience must be unique and worth repeating.

**5. Strengthening Industrial and Office Presence.** Industrial and office growth is a necessity to create a more balanced local economy that includes increased tax revenue and local jobs. Fortunately Dickinson can creatively incorporate and support both.

**6. Prioritizing Small Business Growth.** Dickinson’s market position and physical attributes are highly compatible with a focus on small and mid-size businesses. The good news is that small business is also highly compatible with the community brand.

**7. Aligning Economic Infrastructure.** An aggressive economic program requires a finely tuned suite of tools and resources. Aligning and refining programs, regulations, incentives, and partnerships with entities that can impact economic development is a key ingredient to being market-competitive.

# Concept One:

## Fully Embrace Your Brand

Too many communities see a brand as a logo and slogan - something that can change with trends. The Dickinson Brand is much more. It represents what is uniquely marketable about Dickinson. It should be immediately relatable to locals while also giving investors and guests an impression of what they can expect from the community. The brand may be visionary but it must also be honest. Equally important, it must be a brand that Dickinson can grow into.

The City of Dickinson has recently adopted a new tagline of “Dickinson, the Natural Choice”. The tagline directly addresses the most unique and marketable element of Dickinson’s identity and one which is appealing to all segments.

Conceptual brand for the community:  
“The Natural Choice”

Conceptual adjustment to tagline:  
“Naturally Dickinson”

The adjusted tagline increases simplicity and can appeal to a broader audience, including locals that must also buy into the brand.

### Brainstorming Ideas

**Market to the Community.** Locals are easily the most forgotten audience of any marketing effort. To be successful, establish a program designed to promote the brand to area residents, business owners and others for purposes of building local pride and establishing an army of community ambassadors. An example of recommendations could include:

- Deeply immersing the brand into the city’s website and any other methods of outreach to the community.
- Incorporating the brand into the community through signage, gateways, and other recognizable methods.

**Market to External Audiences.** The traditional audiences of any marketing effort, including potential economic investors, industries, tourists and anyone interested in spending both time and capital in Dickinson. Materials include marketing for advertisements, brochures and social media, including those to a targeted audience. Promotions could include:

- Nature-related items such as seed packets or seed “cards”
- Branded guitar picks or similar event-based promotions
- Nature, fitness or recreation based advertisements/campaigns designed to inform but creatively reinforce the community brand

**Co-Brand with Partners and Local Business.** Branding guidelines should include methods for co-branding with partners such as Galveston County, Dickinson ISD, College of the Mainland, the Historical Society and others. Equally important, it should allow for co-branding with area businesses, developers and others as a means of building a unique identity that extends to local investors - and grows the brand in the process. Examples include:

- A special version of the brand used by the business community that displays as “made in Dickinson”, “A Dickinson business” or similar. A similar adaptation could be used in collaboration with DISD.
- Partnership with a fitness/nature-related business to promote wellness and recreation-based exercise as a local cobranding effort.

**Build the Brand into Development Codes and Capital Projects.** Truly embracing the brand means ensuring that it is incorporated into new development, redevelopment and other improvements where possible. Dickinson’s natural assets are its tree canopy and the bayou - both in a natural state. Development codes can be enhanced to incorporate water and/or trees as part of any project, but done in a way that reinforces the natural feel of the community. Pedestrian paths, trails, new open spaces, community facilities and other improvements can also enhance the brand in the same manner.

**“Grow” an Incentive Program.** Consider a marketing and branding program that simultaneously and intentionally expands the local tree canopy and bolsters the community’s identity. Examples include:

- Acquiring and providing trees to new projects or major redevelopments (that add canopy above the required amount)
- including saplings and other nature-related materials as part of a “Naturally Dickinson welcome basket” for new residents or property owners.
- Establishing a community arbor that is maintained by a local organization and becomes part of a larger effort to preserve and build upon the community’s natural assets. The program could be directly tied to DISD as part of a unique horticulture program designed to provide students with a unique set of skills and a potential career path related to natural and environmental resources.

**Celebrate the Uniqueness of Dickinson.** Dickinson staff have recognized the value of celebration and initiated an effort to increase the number and awareness of events and activities. There is always an opportunity for more. The “Natural Choice” brand and “Naturally Dickinson” tagline reflect a variety of traits that make this community stand apart. From the location of the former InterUrban rail line and the city’s former gambling houses to birdwatching and boating there is plenty to leverage into activities, programs and events. Examples include:

- A 40s era community “throwback weekend” conducted in locations throughout Dickinson that could include “gambling halls”, 40s era restaurant nights, and other activities.
- Music, art, and theater are a part of today’s Dickinson and can be celebrated through more events similar to Red, White and Bayou.
- Street fairs or similar events in which one or more local streets are closed for an event or activity
- Nature and fitness based programs and events discussed in more detail in Concept Four.

# Concept Two:

## Small is Big for Dickinson

Bigger is not always better and this is particularly true in Dickinson. For a variety of previously discussed reasons, the community has seen limited large scale growth while surrounding communities have aggressively expanded. While that growth has provided a number of benefits, communities throughout the region have gradually lost their “small town charm” and character. Dickinson has an opportunity to capitalize on its position in a way that will not only make it unique, but also build much needed prosperity in the process.

Small town.

Small business.

Small scale development and redevelopment.

A focus on “small” is not exclusive. Dickinson has a number of areas in which large scale redevelopment is both needed and preferred. But celebration of small has a particularly powerful opportunity in Dickinson and one that fits the community’s identity, benefits the city’s demographic and fills a growing regional void.

Large scale development projects can be catalytic and provide immediate returns. Small scale projects, on the other hand, are slower to grow and provide a significant return, but they tend to have deeper roots and broader impact on local prosperity. Dickinson is fortunate to be in a position to pursue both for a more balanced economic development program.

### Brainstorming Ideas

**Become a Specialty, Boutique Shopping and Services Destination.** Many of the surrounding communities are increasingly becoming destinations for national brand and franchise shopping. Some have attempted to maintain a boutique shopping presence with little success, particularly in a setting that maintains small town character. An area in and/or near the original downtown could offer an excellent opportunity to promote and slowly grow a highly walkable boutique shopping cluster. Examples of methods of supporting a “downtown” specialty cluster include:

- Designate a specialty shopping “district” within the general downtown area.
- Improve infrastructure in the area as needed, including public parking, if warranted.
- Establish a grant program for new construction or rehabilitation an existing structure within the designated “district” into a boutique storefront, restaurant or complementary business.
- Create a “district” online presence that promotes the area and provides a digital space for businesses that are part of the boutique shopping experience.

**Craft a Robust Small Business and Entrepreneurship Program.** Small business provides an opportunity to collaborate with partners such as College of the Mainland and local lenders to create a unique program that urges potential and existing business owners to bring their concept or growing microbusiness to Dickinson. Aggressively “leaning into” small business has multiple benefits ranging from creating a diverse and sustainable economy to increasing the attractiveness of Dickinson to an expanded audience. It also offers the benefit of decreasing outmigration of daytime population and reducing leakage for goods and services.

**Embrace Incremental Development.** Incremental development promotes small scale redevelopment, largely by individuals within the local community. The program introduces the concept of real estate redevelopment to a broader audience and promotes a range of improvements from residential rehabilitation to small scale commercial and mixed use development without reliance exclusively on the established development community. Incremental development can provide another avenue for building local prosperity and taking advantage of skill sets of a number of Dickinson residents.

**Promote a Small Business “Graduation” Pipeline.**

Growth is a goal of most small businesses, but cost and availability of affordable space can make expansion difficult. This is particularly relevant in Dickinson where available space is currently very difficult to find. Dickinson can assist in small business growth by promoting development of a variety of “graduation” options for businesses. A “graduation” pipeline provides a variety of physical options for businesses to grow at a reasonable cost and pace. Examples of facilities that could be part of a graduation pipeline include:

- A food truck court that is stand alone or part of a larger commercial or mixed use activity.
- A small business and startup incubator space, perhaps in collaboration with an education institution or as an extension of an established regional incubator.
- A shared kitchen, “ghost” kitchen and/or virtual restaurant coupled with the potential for a local delivery service (if needed).
- Shared retail that allows for multiple businesses in a larger space (an excellent means of repurposing “big box” space).
- Flexible lease space with the ability to expand or “build to suit” as needed for retail, service, offices or industrial activity where appropriate
- Pop-up retail space in vacant structures/ storefronts.

**A Small Business Development Challenge.** A “challenge” provides the dual benefits of promoting small business development, but in a way that publicizes Dickinson’s creative effort to grow the local economy. The challenge represents a competition in which individuals “pitch” development of a small business in Dickinson. The winning business receives a grant to develop or grow a business in Dickinson. The challenge could potentially become an annual event. Preference could be given to businesses that could further the community brand or fill an important need. Potential business owners could present to a committee of judges in a pitch format. Funding for an annual program could include reduced rent from a participating property owner (either in a designated area that the city is seeking to redevelop or using a more scattered approach), a grant to assist in buildout or more.

# Concept Three:

## A Community of Places

The City of Dickinson is undertaking a number of studies, several of which are recommending specific locations for placemaking as well as guidance regarding scale of development/redevelopment and urban design. Places are critical to the future of Dickinson. The Economic Development Strategic Plan promotes places as the most effective means of:

- encouraging locals and guests to spend time and disposable income in town
- increasing property value, retail sales and potentially overnight stays
- improving perception of the community, and
- offering a catalytic impact on surrounding areas.

To be most effective, places should offer a unique experience worth visiting - and repeating. Places are often most successful if they offer a mix of speciality retail, unique dining, businesses that stay open during the evening, entertainment, recreation or other attractions - all within a walkable area. The critical mass of activities is dependent upon the intent of place.

### Brainstorming Ideas

**Small-Town Downtown.** Downtown Dickinson is the most logical location to establish a destination with a focus on boutique specialty retail and distinctive dining in a highly walkable, small town atmosphere. Density and scale should be limited - at least in the area that promotes boutique shopping. Scale could be increased in other areas of downtown to strategically add residential density and to support mixed use activities such as those surrounding Project Genesis.

**Bayou Lifestyle Entertainment.** Dickinson Bayou offers a unique and highly desirable backdrop for distinctive restaurants and small scale entertainment venues, as proven by the success of Marais. Limited activity clusters could celebrate the presence of the bayou while still respecting its roles as a source of recreation, a wildlife corridor, and a backdrop for waterfront homes. Clusters should be strategic and preferably connect to other areas such as downtown and activity adjacent to the interstate, including the proposed mixed use development along Water Street.

**Promote Strategic Density.** Dickinson may have limited space for growing out, but it has a number of locations well positioned for growing up. Density is too often a frightening term associated with large scale development that is entirely out of scale and appropriate to the community. However, when developed with the right design and location, the added density can create an added dimension to the local economy, including the additional rooftops and buying power to support places, additional storefronts to add to the local economy, and needed office space that can keep residents local and add to local buying power.

**National Brands in the Mix.** Aging commercial centers and strip commercial retail in proximity to IH-45 and FM-517 offer a prime location for redevelopment in a true experience-based lifestyle center format featuring the increased density described above and a mix of national brand retail and franchises, along with residential and potential office activity. Urban footprint amenities and other features could allow the location to be uniquely marketable in comparison to surrounding national brand commercial centers in nearby cities. A proposed mixed-use “town center” could also occur in the open, available area of east Dickinson if the surrounding space in other communities develops to the density that is anticipated.



**Parks, Plazas and Social Spaces.** The City of Dickinson has made a priority of pursuing open space and public recreational opportunities along Dickinson Bayou that is critical as the first substantial park amenities to be owned and operated by the city and because of the effort taken to ensure public enjoyment of the city's most treasured resource. While parks, plazas and other social spaces are most recognized for their quality of life impact they also play a role in marketing, community perception, and programmed events and activities.

**Be a Land Assembler.** Property redevelopment can be, put simply, complicated. The City of Dickinson, the Economic Development Corporation and the management district all have the capacity to acquire, assemble and prepare property for redevelopment, thereby removing added cost and complexity and improving marketability. Doing so not only allows the city to spur private reinvestment and facilitate creation of places, but also allows the city to have additional input into type of activity and design of development.

# Concept Four:

## Nature is Big Business

Nature is not only critical to the identity of Dickinson, but it also provides a variety of economic niches around which businesses and industries can be developed. Many aspects of nature are certainly not exclusive to Dickinson (birdwatching as an example); however, economic niches are not often captured by the community with the greater resources but rather the community that aggressively utilizes and markets the resources at its disposal.

### Brainstorming Ideas

**Ecotourism as an Added Value Market.** Dickinson Bayou presents an obvious opportunity for ecotourism. Ecotourism and the Dickinson community brand are highly compatible in that both require a level of conservation and enhancement of the natural assets of the community to be effective. The City is already recognized as a location for bird watching and Paul Hopkins Park is designed in a manner that invites visitors directly into the natural ecosystem along the shores of Dickinson Bayou. Natural areas in park spaces acquired along the bayou could add to the ecotourism experience.

**Adventure and Fitness.** Recreation activities have been a part of Dickinson since creation of the Dickinson Picnic Grounds in the 1890s, including races along the bayou. The bayou is a natural outlet for activities such as fishing and kayaking. These opportunities could be the source of a larger focus on adventure and fitness. Dickinson could add locations and programming over time that transform the concept of nature into a niche market for tournaments, race events and other sources of rugged activity - including occasionally closing all or a portion of streets for events. Examples include fishing tournaments, kayaking/paddleboarding and other races and any unique events that can associate Dickinson and fitness. Events could be extended into parks or other open spaces to include activities with obstacle courses, climbing walls or bootcamps.

**Promote Nature Based Small Business.** Increasing access, quality and quantity of preserved nature can open doors to nature based businesses. Examples include kayak/paddleboard rentals, fishing equipment and tours (in addition to those already taking place) that are based out of Dickinson and that extend into the surrounding area - some of which could include a stop at local businesses along the bayou for entertainment and refreshments. It may be of interest for partners of the City of Dickinson to subsidize some businesses for the short term to build momentum.

**Environmental Sciences.** From multiple points of view the City of Dickinson is well positioned as a location for research and business development in the many fields associated with environmental sciences. Partnership with education institutions from DISD and College of the Mainland to Texas A&M could result in specialty programming, a business incubator devoted to environmental sciences, and more. Owning a brand associated with nature places Dickinson in the competition for “Energy 2.0” companies. More, it places Dickinson in the unique position to be at the forefront of study related to stormwater management, flood reduction/adaptation and climate change.

# Concept Five:

## Dickinson as a “Home” Office

Dickinson has not historically been known as an office location and the number of facilities that are exclusively devoted to office space are limited. However, the city is particularly well located for limited scale office activity, particularly in a post-COVID decentralized environment.

Space constraints and proximity to major employment centers likely ensures that Dickinson will not see a substantial shift to office development. Nevertheless, an increased presence of office space will further add to the diversity of the local economy, bolster the area daytime population and add a critical ingredient to potential mixed-use activity.

### Brainstorming Ideas

**A welcome home for small business.** Retail and dining are certainly not the only small businesses that could benefit from redevelopment efforts in Dickinson. The community can provide a viable alternative location to small businesses that seek to be closer to home or that seek to be part of the the community’s unique character. Today’s small scale office market tends to be interested in locating in proximity to experiences and places such as those recommended for Dickinson. Small business opportunities could range from residential conversion to location on an upper floor of a mixed-used development, including those areas of added density discussed previously.

**Be a home for satellites.** Many major companies seeking to maintain their existing employment base are decentralizing into a series of satellite spaces. Dickinson is poised to take advantage of satellite opportunities in the Clear Lake region thanks in part to strong interstate access and the same central location that historically drew people to the area from Houston and Galveston. Similar to other office opportunities, firms today will most likely be drawn to locations that offer a range of unique experiences. Placemaking in locations such as along Water Street and downtown will better position Dickinson to be competitive in the satellite office market.

**Coworking and Other Shared Experiences.** An increasing number of small businesses and satellite spaces seek to reduce office cost or work best in an environment that fosters collaboration. Coworking space or similar shared office opportunities are a growing solution. While initially most popular in larger cities, the market has evolved in a way that coworking space is now viable for Dickinson. Coworking space can often have a greater level of flexibility and is sometimes located in former warehouses or national brand retail spaces.

**Home Sweet Remote Office.** Many office employees that now work from home would prefer to conduct business outside of home but do not need a formal office space. Those employees seek solitude in coffee shops, restaurants, parks, and similar locations. Dickinson can capture a greater portion of the remote audience by ensuring that space is available in an environment conducive to remote work, including presence of interesting food and beverage shops and public spaces with high-speed wifi.

# Concept Six:

## Welcome Industry to Town

The City of Dickinson has not historically emphasized pursuit of industrial development and with available space shrinking, a large scale industrial presence is unlikely. However, there is an important role for industry in Dickinson. City staff have sought space to introduce limited scale industry into the community - and for good reason. Industry plays a tremendous role in diversifying the economy while also adding jobs, product and an enhanced tax base.

With the general lack of significant industry, it is unsurprising that Dickinson does not have an identified industrial niche and surrounding industrial concentrations of heavy industry are not necessarily directly transferable or desirable. In some ways this works to the community's favor. It allows Dickinson the freedom to focus on new technologies and emerging industrial trends - some of which are indirectly related to regional strengths. "Energy 2.0", for example, provides an entry into the energy sector for communities that were not in a position to capitalize on the region's oil and gas focus beyond serving as home to employees.

### Brainstorming Ideas

**Prepare for Opportunity.** Dickinson should begin to position itself to strategically pursue industrial activity that is well suited to the community. This includes creating space for a limited scale industrial park with the necessary infrastructure to support today's market. Lack of railroad access and proximity of property to major roadways has limited Dickinson's attractiveness to heavy industry but those same limitations are less important to light industries and clean technologies. The City should be proactive in building the brand into an industrial park program - perhaps through a master plan and an incentive program that incorporates natural tree canopy and creatively designed shared detention.

**Be Home to Complementary Activities.** The region's major industries, particularly the energy sector, have a strong history of creating "spinoff" opportunities for third party services. Products available internationally can sometimes create opportunity closer to home. Similarly, new trends in maritime, energy, aerospace and medical sectors create demand that didn't previously exist. Dickinson can position itself to be attractive to these new demands through strong marketing, collaboration within industry leaders, and coordination with educational institutions to offer a pipeline of appropriately skilled labor.

**Small is Well Suited to Industry too.** Retail and services are not the only areas in which small business provides an opportune niche for Dickinson. The region lacks a means of easing into industrial markets for those thinking of beginning or growing an industrial-based business. Dickinson could consider development of a makerspace with the facilities and resources to assist local entrepreneurs with an idea to become small businesses. That level of entrepreneurial energy not only increases the likelihood of successful entry into industry, it also changes the perception of Dickinson into a community that seeks and celebrates innovation at all levels. A makerspace and industrial small business development program is an excellent opportunity for collaboration with educational and industrial partners.

**Grow What you Know.** While limited, Dickinson does have scattered industrial activity. In those places where appropriate the community should collaborate with its existing industrial businesses to consider relocation and expansion or continued growth in place.

# Concept Seven:

## Sharpen the ED Toolkit

Dickinson is very well positioned from the standpoint of “economic infrastructure” - the tools in place for business attraction and expansion. City leaders have recently added the use of tax increment reinvestment zones (TIRZs) into its existing arsenal. Key to successful use of these tools is a strong and well-organized program that extends from initial marketing to final construction.

### Brainstorming Ideas

**Build an Encompassing Incentives Policy.** Dickinson has accomplished the first difficult task by simply putting critical tools in place, including a management district, an economic development corporation, reinvestment zones, and a Chapter 380 program. An encompassing incentives program can recognize and fully utilize the benefits of each program as well as others such as tax abatement, freeport exemptions and more. A single incentives policy also provides both clarity for all parties and a clear set of guidelines as to when incentives can be applied. It allows Dickinson to prioritize the types of activities that it seeks to reward - from initial attraction to the quality and design of construction. It also provides an opportunity to integrate the community brand into incentives, as well as the recommendations of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

### **A True Business Retention and Expansion Program.**

City staff recognize that attraction is only one step toward successful economic development. A strong and ongoing business retention and expansion program helps to ensure that the needs of local businesses are heard and that those businesses choose to stay in the community. It is far more cost effective to maintain and grow existing businesses than to pursue relocating businesses. More, BR&E provides a strong sense in the local community that local government and business partners are responsive, engaged and appreciative - keys to building a strong reputation as a truly business-friendly community. Business retention and expansion is often a task managed by the local chamber of commerce or sometimes through the management district. Fortunately, Dickinson is well positioned to use both in its BR&E efforts or an alternative entity if appropriate.

**Establish a Economic Development Focused 501(C)3 Organization.**

While the City of Dickinson has built a quality set of tools to promote economic development there are still some activities that are better suited for another partner. Creation of a 501(c) (3) economic development organization would provide the City a partner entity that can taken on specific economic development tasks and receive funds from a wide variety of sources. Examples of added flexibility provided by a partner 501(c)3 organization include:

- the ability to raise funds, pursue grants/ foundations, and accept donations for purposes of economic and community development activities
- to conduct activities that are more appropriate to the nonprofit than the Economic Development Corporation such as a robust business retention and expansion program or promotion of an event or activity
- to facilitate community development projects that ultimately improve local economic conditions.

**Align Economic Policy and Development Codes.**

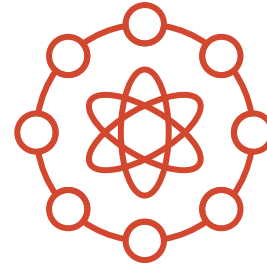
Development codes are often considered either “barriers to development” or “business friendly” but in any case they are rarely tooled to match the community’s economic development direction. Simply put, there are times when development codes should be a barrier to economic development - particularly the type that could inhibit the desired economic direction of the community. Development codes in Dickinson should:

- place a high priority in incorporating the community’s brand where possible, including residential, commercial and industrial activity.
- transition to incorporate and promote standards for redevelopment
- offer flexibility for mixed use and other integrated concepts, including those that occur incrementally.
- promote a range of housing options beyond the traditional single-family subdivision and garden-style apartment complex.

# RECOMMENDING A PATH FORWARD

Recommendations move beyond general concepts into specific steps toward an economic development program that is authentic to Dickinson and capable of building local economic prosperity. Recommendations are designed specifically to move the community from its current market position to one that is better suited to the community.

Each recommendation includes a description, additional details where necessary, and a series of steps to be taken to bring the recommendation to reality. Recommendations are reflective of four major themes - each of which is critical to the success of the economic development strategic plan.



## DEVELOP AND PROMOTE THE BRAND PROMISE

Those tasks that can build and promote a Community Brand that is authentic to Dickinson and that can be uniquely marketable in the region. Understanding and celebrating the community's unique market position is critical to sustainable economic growth.



## CREATE UNIQUE DESTINATIONS AND ATTRACTIONS

Builds upon the recommendations of both this plan and the larger Comprehensive Plan by designating opportunities to keep locals shopping and spending locally and also being attractive to others throughout the region.



## BUILD A DICKINSON-CENTRIC BUSINESS MIX

A thriving business community, including retail, dining, entertainment, hospitality, service, office and industrial activity. Focus is on small business and entrepreneurship, nature-based business, "Energy 2.0" and the remote workforce



## REFINE THE ECONOMIC TOOLKIT

The events, activities, regulations, policies, incentives and similar that allow the city to nudge the market in a desired direction. Amendments and enhancements to the Toolkit allow Dickinson to meet its Brand Promise and protect and promote its most valuable assets.

# Number One:

## Establish Dickinson's Brand Promise

A Community Brand is most valuable and authentic when it is reflective of the Community's Identity. While the City may not fully recognize it, all of the traits needed to understand the community's identity and build an extremely authentic and marketable brand are there. Based upon indepth study of area to understand the current and desired market position, including history, character data and conversations with area stakeholders, Dickinson's community identity and therefore the essence of its Community Brand should be forged upon the following Building Blocks:

### *Building Blocks to Dickinson's Community Identity*

**Nature.**

**Adventure.**

**Can-Do.**

**Community.**

**Teamwork.**

**Small.**

**Roots.**

Each of these Building Block terms is reflective of a trait of Dickinson as a people and as a community. Each is distinctive but not necessarily exclusive to the community. However, combined, these traits form the basis of a marketable and unique Brand Promise - the experience that people can expect when visiting or investing in Dickinson.

The Building Blocks that define Dickinson can be embedded in a Brand Promise and to subsequent marketing efforts in a way that is attractive to every recommended audience, including:

- **Locals.** Residents, property owners and business owners that have already invested in Dickinson
- **Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners.** Individuals looking to start, grow or relocate a small business. Retail, entertainment, food and beverage, office, service, hospitality or industry. If it fits the mold and mentality, it has a place in Dickinson.
- **Remote Workers.** Individuals with the ability to locate and work where they desire compared to where they must.
- **Visitors and Tourists.** Dickinson has the potential to be an interesting place to visit for shopping, dining, entertainment, events and activities.



From the perspective of business, city government should add the following Key Words to the Brand Promise:

*Key Words Business should  
use to Describe Dickinson  
Local Government*

**Responsive.**

**Resource.**

**Partner.**

Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Hire a Brand Consultant/Expert or Marketing Agency. A community brand should almost never be completed internally - although community involvement is key. A brand requires marketing expertise and a lack of bias.
2. Consider "Naturally Dickinson" as an initial slogan that simply refines the slogan currently under use by the City.
3. Consider a critique and potential adjustments to the Dickinson Logo and Slogan. Allow the brand consultant to critique the Dickinson Logo and Slogan follow-up to development of the Brand Promise.
4. Celebrate the Brand! Unveil the new brand as part of a new, but highly authentic to Dickinson, push to reshape the image of the community locally, regionally, and to potential investors.

# Number Two:

## Expand the Current Brand Style Guide & Communications Strategy

A Community Brand requires clear and consistent messaging by all parties as well as an understanding that even the simplest communication by the city and its partners is an opportunity to reinforce the desired image and identity of Dickinson. The Brand Style Guide and Communications Strategy are critical tools to both manage and promote use and messaging of the Community Brand.

Dickinson already offers the essence of a strong style guide. Once the Brand Promise has been identified and adopted, the style guide should be revisited and enhanced to further expand on correct application of aspects of the Brand Promise, including the logo and slogan. This will be particularly relevant if, as a result of development of the Brand Promise, the City establishes an updated logo and slogan.

The style guide should address the following:

- The logo and appropriate visual and marketing applications, including permitted variations (and sometimes examples of misuse)
- The slogan and appropriate visual and marketing application (including placement alongside the logo)
- The color palette, including definition of the permitted core and secondary color schemes
- The typography palette, including font names and

appropriate application (and, as noted previously, some examples of misuse might be helpful)

- Imagery and specific visuals that are appropriate reinforcement of the community brand and perhaps examples of the appropriate placement of the logo. Messaging is critical and imagery of even the most mundane social media posts or advertisements can either enhance or hinder the city's ability to build identity.
- Language, including use of building block words, tone, and sentence structure.

The Communications Strategy plays a variety of roles for the City of Dickinson including the way both external and internal audiences receive messaging from the city. It is an important means of not only reinforcing the brand, but specifically portraying city government as Responsive, a Resource, and a Partner.

The City of Modesto, California provides an outstanding example of a powerful Communications Strategy, including methods of incorporating common themes of the Brand Promise into all aspects of communication, from everyday messaging by specific departments to coordination with local media.

Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Consider Utilizing the Brand Consultant/Expert or Marketing Agency to Expand the Style Guide. The current city staff have proven ability to develop a style guide so the use of an outside entity is optional and could range from development to guidance
2. Consider a survey of area residents to determine the types and methods of messaging that are desired/preferred by area residents and business owners.
3. Define the audiences for a Communications Strategy and the best methods for outreach
4. Provide a set of strategies for communications that addresses all aspects of outreach, include communications by each department of the city
5. Regularly critique and update the Communications Strategy to continue to keep it current with needs, audiences and outlets

# Number Three:

## Establish a “Bridge Brand”

Dickinson will not immediately personify the brand. If it does, then the brand isn't lofty enough! In the interim, a “bridge brand” sends the message that the brand is a “work in progress” that gives the visitor or investor an understanding of what Dickinson is becoming.

A good bridge brand should:

- Focus on the aspects of the brand that the City of Dickinson can fulfill immediately.
- Provide the message of the overall brand that Dickinson is growing into (An example is a “pardon our dust” campaign).
- Evolve and keep people aware of progress in an interesting way.
- ONLY be used once the City of Dickinson is committed to a path forward and actively implementing it. The bridge brand sets an expectation.

Once the Community Brand is sufficiently established then the bridge brand can be removed.



*Ottawa, Canada established a bridge brand “I Dig Elgin” to aid in maintaining excitement about the corridor while it underwent construction improvements. Fun signage made passersby aware that the community remained open for business.*

Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Coordinate with a Marketing Agency to establish a creative bridge brand that can evolve as Dickinson comes closer to fulfilling its Brand Promise. The City may choose to conduct this exercise in-house if it maintains the staff qualified to complete the task.
2. Seek out creative ways to integrate the bridge brand into community projects, private efforts and other activities that bring Dickinson closer to achieving the Community Brand.

# Number Four:

## Enhance the City's Use of the Community Brand

There is no better location to begin to reinforce Community Identity than those areas where the municipality has total control - on its virtual and physical property. Dickinson is used to the idea of placing the logo (and sometimes a slogan) on city website, letterhead, business cards, and on city vehicles. This is a good start. However, there is a difference between logo placement and intentional branding.

Examples of enhancements could include:

- Reconstruction of the city's main webpage to include rotating (and regularly updated) images that personify the Community Brand.
- Critique of the city website with a focus on creative methods of personifying the terms Responsive, Resource and Partner, particularly for business and economic development ranging from the ease of finding information to the type of information that is available.
- Reconsideration of current business cards, forms, handouts, and other information to creatively express the Brand Promise and represent the terms Responsive, Resource and Partner.
- Replace the current application of the logo and slogan on city vehicles with an alternative design that is bolder, more representative of aspects of the Community Brand, and consistently within the parameters of the Brand Style Guide.

Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Conduct and prioritize an inventory of the city-owned virtual and physical opportunities to introduce or reinforce the Community Brand.
2. Conduct a design critique of the current city website with specific emphasis on introducing improvements that directly reflect the Community Brand while also providing delivery of services and information in a manner that emphasizes government as Responsive, a Resource and a Partner.
3. Consider redesign of all printed material from business cards and letterhead to forms and handouts to best reflect the Community Brand.
4. Creatively incorporate the Community Brand into city vehicles in a manner that reinforces the brand in a consistent manner, ranging public works vehicles and to public safety.



Website for Pottsboro, Texas

# Number Five:

## Expand and Refine the City's Social Media Presence

The internet provides one of the most cost effective means of presenting the Community Brand to both internal and external audiences. From messaging on Facebook to the image presented on Twitter, Instagram or another social media site, the digital realm can help provide information or change perception with near-immediate benefits. At the same time, if not effectively managed, the digital experience can have the same result as driving through many communities - forgettable to disastrous.

Social media can offer the opportunity to correspond to the public, the region and the digital audience as a whole by:

- Placing a human face on government - including the many employees that make up the city's staff.
- Providing immediate access to information associated with an event or emergency.
- Market the image, activities, and other important traits of the community.

In each case the City has an opportunity to promote the community and its Brand Promise - in some cases more subtly than others.



*The National Parks Service uses its social media presence to capture captivating images of nature, inform the public of useful information - and to present parks as fun and creative.*

### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Establish social media as a critical element of the city's Communications Strategy.
2. Develop and initiate a social media campaign that introduces the Community Brand to residents of Dickinson and the surrounding region - preferably in a way that is highly memorable.
3. Establish a tone that can be conveyed in every social media post - with exception of emergency situations.
4. Ensure that ALL social media activity is managed through a common source for consistency, particularly as departments become comfortable with the requirements of the Communications Strategy and learn to embrace and exemplify the Community Brand.
5. Regularly utilize analytics to establish metrics and adjust to either attract or maintain the target audience.

# Number Six:

## Align Local Partners with the Brand Promise

Dickinson’s Brand Promise will not only be applicable to the City of Dickinson. The Building Blocks of the Brand Promise are equally applicable - with some slight modification or addition - to nearly every potential local partner, including but certainly not limited to:

- Dickinson ISD
- Dickinson Economic Development Corporation
- Destination Dickinson
- Dickinson Historical Society
- Dickinson Art Guild
- Keep Dickinson Beautiful
- Dickinson Management District
- Galveston County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1 (WCID No. 1)

While it is not expected that all parties adopt the same logo and slogan (although some have with modification in other communities), it is hopeful that each organization can embrace and utilize Dickinson’s Brand Promise, particularly those civic and nonprofit organizations that work only within the same municipal limits.

### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Coordinate with potential partners in advance of development of the Brand Promise about the prospect of alignment based upon the findings of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.
2. Consider an expanded (and possibly more general) Brand Style Guide and Communications Plan that establishes how partner entities can build upon and market the Brand Promise for the community.
3. Collaborate to establish policies and/or practices that partner entities may consider to assist in fulfilling and enhancing the Brand Promise.
4. Seek out opportunities to co-brand products and marketing materials where appropriate.
5. Consider options for assistance to city affiliated nonprofit organization to ensure that aspects of the Brand Promise are incorporated into policies, materials and websites.



Brand Family for Waupaca, Wisconsin, as designed by CivicBrand.

# Number Seven:

## Give the Brand a Physical Presence in Public Places

Physical treatments are an excellent way to introduce Dickinson to guests. However, they are only effective when working together as a cohesive system and with a common message. This is not to say that the logo or slogan appears everywhere; rather, that in public places the community make every effort to reflect the Building Blocks of the Brand Promise.

Opportunities to physically integrate the brand into public places:

- Improved gateway treatments along all major roadways and with particular emphasis on the gateway at IH-45 and FM517.
- Blade (street) signs that occur throughout the city.
- A new sign and site enhancements at the City Hall campus.
- Landscaping improvements at major intersections and along roadways.
- A streetscape furniture program that includes benches, kiosks, trash receptacles, banners, lighting and other elements to be applied when appropriate
- Intersection enhancements, particularly those at major intersections.
- Improvements to Dickinson's public facilities and sites that accentuate the Brand Promise.
- Other public facilities throughout the community as appropriate.
- Murals on public facilities where appropriate



Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Hire a landscape architecture/signage consultant team to develop a consistent gateway system that reflects the Community Brand and prioritizes gateways treatments.
2. Consider expanding the gateway plan to become a broader streetscape enhancement program including blade signs, street furniture, banners, lighting (if desired), a landscape treatment palette, and intersection treatments standards. If desired, the streetscape enhancement plan could include conceptual design at priority locations.
3. Design a new sign at the City Hall campus that incorporates digital signage using the most recent technology (this serves information, marketing and hazard preparedness functions).
4. Establish a capital improvements program specifically for purposes of regularly upgrading gateways, important locations and streetscapes and initiate improvements.
5. Incorporate the Building Blocks of the Brand Promise into Requests for Qualifications and contracts for improvements to existing facilities or construction of new facilities with the challenge to incorporate the Brand Promise into sites, structures, recreational improvements and more.
6. Encourage partners such as Dickinson ISD, Galveston County, and Texas Parks and Wildlife to integrate elements of the Brand Promise into facilities or amenities in the city limits.

## Number Eight:

### Build a Distinct Co-Brand with Local Businesses

Local government and its public and nonprofit partners are not the only options available to the city in the arena of co-branding. Local businesses often take tremendous pride in their location and may already market location as part of their company branding and identity.

Businesses and the city alike could benefit from a “Made in Dickinson” co-brand or a similar branding tagline. The co-brand could be particularly relevant to businesses that create a product, but it could prove useful to other businesses with some fun and creative thinking.



*Co-Branded material as part of the Kentucky Distilled brand for the City of Frankfort by North Star.*

#### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Inventory existing locally owned businesses that produce a product that could benefit from co-branding.
2. Develop a “Made in Dickinson” program designed to co-brand the city and locally owned businesses that create a product.
3. Design a series of co-branding options fitting to Dickinson and local small businesses with a focus on the “Made in Dickinson” concept.
4. Add use of the “Made in Dickinson” logo and slogan into the Brand Style Guide or offer a separate guide for use by locally owned small businesses.
5. Consider adding a “Made in Dickinson” section to the city’s Economic Development website (or another site if more appropriate) to promote shopping local and to bolster the concept.
6. Incorporate the “Made in Dickinson” program into marketing efforts and into the city’s Communications Strategy.
7. Collaborate with targeted businesses to provide local product at trade shows and events.



# Number Nine:

## Create Brand-Focused Marketing Materials

From advertisements to merchandise the City of Dickinson has a tremendous opportunity to introduce the Community Brand to a variety of audiences. While it may be appropriate to introduce the “bridge brand” at the outset, the community will want to slowly focus increasingly on all aspects of the Brand Promise.

Creativity and authenticity will be key to grasping and keeping the attention of the audience with marketing materials. Concepts could integrate or include:

- Nature related items such as seed packets/cards or saplings;
- Adventure gear fitting to the audience such as fishing or kayaking;
- Environmentally friendly/outdoor items such as reusable water bottles and collapsible cups;
- Collaboration items co-branded with local small businesses such as coffee, candy, chocolate, or even spirits;
- Event related items such as branded guitar picks and fishing rods; or,
- Branded merchandise and apparel such as hats, shirts, mugs and more.

While materials are important for conferences, conventions and similar events, they are also very useful in the hands of realtors, developers, brokers, and to provide directly to potential investors.



*Marketing merchandise provided as part of a branding program developed by CivicBrand for the City of Burselon, Texas.*

### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Consider employing a marketing agency to assist with establishing initial marketing materials and advertisements.
2. Strategically select advertisement based upon specific audiences - and prioritize those audiences the city is prepared to serve.
3. Initial marketing to audiences such as small business owners may seek to lean into the concept of “adventure” and the benefits of arriving first.
4. Prepare marketing material that actively integrate the Community Brand and that stand out in comparison to peer communities.
5. Create a merchandise line based on the brand and logo and make it available at local establishments and other places where appropriate.

# Number Ten:

## Amend Codes to Naturalize and Increase the Tree Canopy

The tree canopy is one of the major components that gives Dickinson its unique natural character. Given the role that it plays, every effort should be taken to creatively maintain and expand the canopy, particularly in a more natural pattern. Changes to the development code can both promote planting and maintenance of local trees and give guidance to the manner in which new trees are planted.



### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Continue to actively enforce tree preservation requirements of the development code.
2. Amend landscape requirements (Chapter 16.10) to foster a naturalized appearance as follows:
  - Promote or require clustering of trees in a natural pattern and placement to promote a sense of the urban forest in Dickinson, including trees in parking areas if clustering can also improve pedestrian comfort.
  - Allow for irrigation in a manner that is both cost effective and more appropriate if landscaping is clustered, natural forest.
  - Require connectivity and extension of adjacent walking paths, shared use paths, trails, or bike lanes in a manner that can enhance walkability, cycling and the community brand.
  - Require a percentage of mandatory open space (where required) to be functional for purposes of stormwater management, onsite detention, and/or social activity (open space shouldn't just serve to only make development look attractive)
3. Allow for a reduction of parking requirements for purposes of expanded natural and/or urban open space.

# Number Eleven:

## Create a municipal program to promote forestation and urban forestry

Maintaining a thriving local tree canopy will require more than expansion, replacement and preservation requirements in the code. A proactive forestation program would assist in expansion efforts in a way that is unique to Dickinson and bolsters the Brand Promise. It can also provide a segway into highly Dickinson-centric marketing ideas.



### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Collaborate with local partners such as Texas A&M Agrilife Program and Dickinson ISD to research potential options to acquire or grow saplings and possibly somewhat more mature trees. Examples of options include:
  - A partnership with Trees for Houston as a major nonprofit arbor that specializes in urban tree growth to either establish a bay area affiliate or partner to grow trees at their campus.
  - Collaboration with Dickinson ISD as part of a unique horticulture and urban forestry program that could become part of a larger curriculum/career path through the school district.
  - Development of a community arbor, perhaps as part of development of an area park, that is maintained by a local organization for purposes of preserving and building upon natural assets
  - Partnership with an existing, locally owned area landscaping business.
2. Create a program that donates one or more trees to new projects or major redevelopments as a brand-building gesture (added value above code requirements) and can potentially replace trees that are damaged or dying.
3. Establish a “Naturally Dickinson Welcome Basket” program in coordination with a local organization (such as Keep Dickinson Beautiful) for new residents or business owners that includes seed cards, a sapling, and/or other nature/brand related items.

# Number Twelve:

## Foster Development of Unique Shopping, Dining and Entertainment Destinations

Dickinson needs commercial destinations that are unique enough to draw guests from the community and the surrounding area. Fortunately, the area in and near “downtown” and its connection to Dickinson Bayou offers a great location for one and possibly two unique destinations unlike those offered by surrounding communities in the region.

The Heritage Area Retail District is intended to combine the small town, highly walkable downtown feel of historic Dickinson with demand for a unique specialty, dining and entertainment destination.

The Bayou Lifestyle District is proposed to be similar to the Heritage Area Retail District but with greater focus on dining, entertainment and hospitality with access to and from the bayou.



Shopping in Salado, Texas

Associated Steps or Actions Required for either/both Districts

1. Establish a desired site for each district when appropriate.
  - A Rule of thumb is to establish sufficient area to create the “experience” including specialty shops, unique dining experiences, businesses that stay open past 6pm and open space and opportunities for events and entertainment.
  - The Bayou Lifestyle District is expected to focus more heavily on dining, entertainment and hospitality and less on specialty shopping.
2. Methods for selection of properties to incorporate into a District could include:
  - Establish boundaries internally based upon staff expertise.
  - Build upon existing plans or hire a consultant.
  - Invite the community to participate in selection.
  - Issue a Request for Information/Proposals (may require property owner “buy-in” if not fully publicly held).
  - Collaborate with a developer/development team.
3. Master plan the designated area, if needed and appropriate or, at minimum, conduct a needs assessment to determine the potential capital improvements needed, including open spaces and potential public parking.

4. Designate the selected area as a “District” for purposes of tourism and entertainment placemaking.
5. Establish an improvements program, including property acquisition, site preparation, capital improvements and other necessary major expenses anticipated to spur development/redevelopment.
  - Construct (or reimburse a private source) one or more programmable, transformational, urban open spaces within the District(s).
  - Construct public parking and/or areawide drainage detention to assist in reducing on-site parking/drainage requirements.
  - Construct and strategically locate unique placemaking amenities such as art and street furniture.
6. Create a “bridge program” that will allow for continued excitement while each district/area is under transformation. Examples include:
  - Tactical urbanism, pop-up shops, markets, and events regularly into the area to showcase some of the elements that can be expected as the area develops.
  - A community “barnraising” event in the area, including cleanup, open space development or other methods of building ownership.
  - Consistent updates on-site, via social media and other outlets to show continued momentum.
  - Consider an “excuse our dust” campaign.
7. Creatively incorporate resiliency into design of

the district and implementation of public and private practices to all extents practical, including stormwater management techniques that are engaging and functional but also designed to reinforce the Community Brand.

8. Incorporate marketing and awareness of the area into larger marketing, social media, branding efforts.
9. Establish a wayfinding/signage system to navigate guests to each district once they are in a position to help fulfill the Community’s Brand Promise.



*Entertainment at Gruene Hall, Gruene, Texas*

# Number Thirteen:

## Create an “Incubator Style” Industrial Campus

Dickinson can and should have an active industrial sector - but one that fully fits with the local character and Community Brand. An “Incubator Style” Industrial Campus could be the perfect fit. Traditional industrial parks are designed for large scale, established industries with a track record of success, particularly those that can employ a large number of people.

The “Incubator Style” Industrial Campus offers something different than is offered by peer communities and highly complementary.

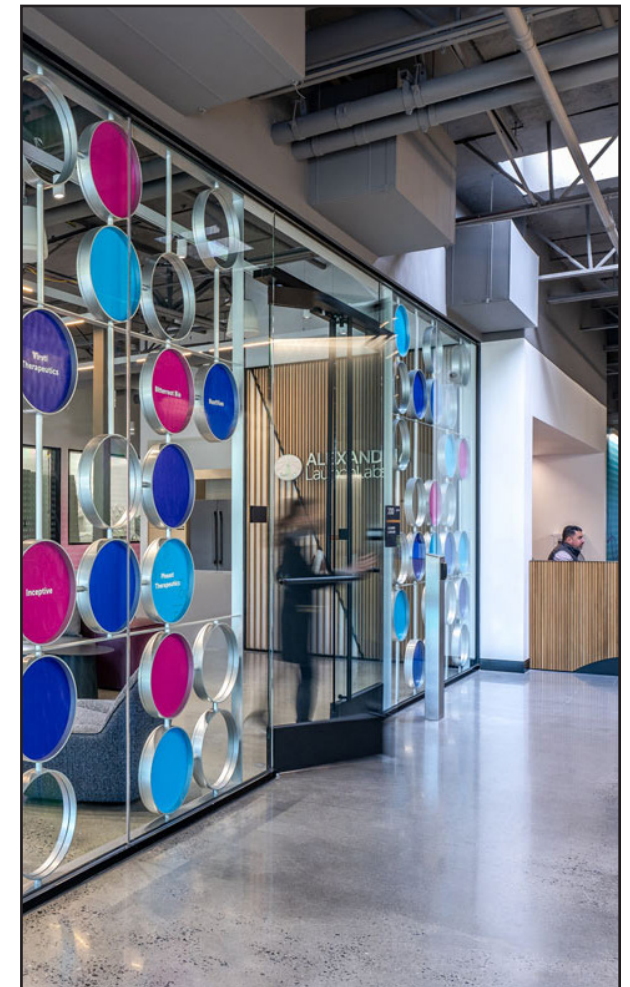
As with other sectors, the focus is recommended to be on small businesses, this allows for Dickinson to be home to a number of industrial activities - all of limited scale.

- Primary target audience: Small scale, clean-industry activities, preferably growth focused.
- Secondary target audience: Nature-based/Energy 2.0 activities that fit with the Community Brand
- Tertiary target audience: Energy, Maritime, Aerospace, Transportation, and Food (traditional strengths of the regional market)

The Incubator Style of the campus could create the same thriving, entrepreneurial atmosphere seen in small business incubators and accelerators, including indoor and outdoor collaboration spaces and potentially many of the same support services.

Coordination with surrounding communities could create a “graduation program”. Industrial businesses that outgrow the campus can find a home in one of the region’s larger industrial parks. In return, surrounding communities can refer small scale or fledgling industrial businesses to Dickinson.

A campus-style development pattern would allow the industrial park to focus on creating natural green spaces, integrated stormwater detention and potentially limited recreation opportunities. It also would allow the industrial park to blend with surrounding land uses.



Alexandria LaunchLabs, Stanford Research Park

Associated Steps or Actions Required:

1. Identify and acquire the desired site for the industrial campus.
2. Hire a professional site design team to master plan the designated area and establish an improvements program, including site preparation, capital improvements and other necessary major expenses anticipated to spur development/redevelopment.
3. Collaborate with potential partners such as College of the Mainland, UH Clear Lake, SCORE and others to establish interest in an industrial-incubator concept that provides access to resources such as education/training, data, financial support, and capacity building.
4. Consider pursuit of foundation, EDA or other support in development of the incubator-style campus, including incorporation of site amenities, naturalized landscaping, and more.
5. Consider coordination with existing business incubator networks with expertise and as potential partners in the concept.
6. Establish and implement the resource network for professional support.



*Sunshine Coast Industrial Park Natural Area*

7. Market the industrial campus on its extension of the community brand: adventure, community, can-do spirit; its distinct incubator-style focus: access to resources, collaboration, start-up “energy”; city/campus “experience” and affordability, access to nature and quality of life.
8. Promote construction of “flex-style” buildings that are more easily upgradable to remain relevant and to reflect anticipated turnover as businesses outgrow the campus.
9. Cross-pollinate industrial activities with the other small business environments in Dickinson for even greater collaboration and energy.

# Number Fourteen:

## Establish Formal Districts for Placemaking

The City of Dickinson should place emphasis on creation of four types of places that can bolster the local economy and the Community Brand by establishing “placemaking districts” through the Zoning Ordinance. Placemaking districts should include:

- The Heritage Area Retail District (previously discussed)
- The Bayou Lifestyle District (previously discussed)
- One or more Mixed Use Districts
- An Industry Incubator Campus

Each placemaking district promotes a specific set of activities, uses and design characteristics, although the Heritage Area Retail and Bayou Lifestyle Districts share a lot of common traits. By creating the opportunity for placemaking districts in the zoning ordinance, the city is making clear its intent for an area and ensuring that a minimum set of standards will be met in bringing that intent to reality.

### Heritage Area Retail (or similar) District

Traits of this District could include:

- Candidate area for the district preferred to be in or near “downtown”.
- Primary Uses include limited scale specialty retail goods establishments, restaurants and entertainment.
- Secondary Uses (perhaps by Special Use Permit or Special Exception) include incubator/accelerator/makerspace facility, multiple vendor retail cooperative, limited scale residential, commercial services/office, food trucks, temporary accessory commercial unit and outdoor entertainment.
- Uses to avoid include auto-focused services and restaurants requiring a drive-thru or franchise-formats that do not fit the character of the district.
- Limited height of two stories with three stories permitted by Special Exception except that a structure may be three stories in height if the first floor is designed for flood risk reduction.
- Minimal front yard setbacks, reduced buffering requirements and reduced on-site parking.
- Primary entry to face the street and structures to include front façade glazing requirements.
- Outdoor seating and entertainment preferred.
- Signage limited in scale and pedestrian focused.
- Centralized public parking.
- Plaza/Urban open space.
- Hours of operation, lighting, noise sufficiently flexible to allow for evening entertainment.
- Pedestrian oriented, limited volume streetscape.

### Bayou Lifestyle (or similar) District

Traits of this District could include:

- Candidate areas are connected to the waterfront with the ability to create an activity cluster.
- Generally similar in format to the Heritage Area Retail District concept.
- Primary use may also include moderate-scale mixed use development by Special Exception.
- Primary entry of a structure and glazing may face the waterfront.
- Activity spaces, outdoor seating and similar may also face the waterfront.
- Parking accommodations may include boat docks.
- Sound studies and noise buffering may be needed during events to avoid excess noise carried across the water.



### **Mixed Use (or similar) District**

Traits of this District could include:

- Candidate areas could occur along IH-45 and the proposed future town center.
- Primary Uses include retail goods establishments, restaurants, entertainment, office, and residential, including outdoor seating and entertainment.
- Limited height/density with the ability to increase density and height by meeting specific design criteria.
- A minimum acceptable open space, naturalized landscaping, urban plazas, bike/ped connectivity, amenities for base requirements of the overlay.
- An option for increased density for increased scale and investment in open space, naturalized landscaping, urban plazas, bike/ped connectivity, and amenities to enhance the social experience of guests.
- An option for increased density for structured parking.

### **Industry Incubator Campus (or similar) District**

Traits of this District could include:

- Candidate areas could include vacant or underdeveloped 20+ acre sites.
- Primary Uses include light industry and related office activities.
- Limited height/density appropriate to small-scale industrial activities. One story structures often have extended height to accommodate goods and equipment.
- Flex-style buildings preferred to provide maximum adaptability to meet the needs of incoming industrial businesses.
- A minimum acceptable open space, collaboration spaces, naturalized landscaping, bike/ped connectivity, site amenities, and heavily landscaped roadway corridors.
- Campus style development (preferred) could result in “small” lots in a more formal, urban pattern and parking to the rear of structures or natural spaces with ample green space and shielded parking.
- Managed signage, lighting and streetscape for purposes of maintaining a cohesive campus “feel”.

### **Associated Steps or Actions Required**

1. Consider options for incorporation of placemaking districts in the Zoning Ordinance. Establish a set of overlay districts or additional zoning districts.
  - Option A: Create a series of Overlay Districts that can rest atop existing traditional zoning districts.
  - Option B: Create Placemaking Districts as underlying zoning districts in the same manner as traditional districts.
2. Consider the desire to set a set of minimum standards with incentives for meeting additional standards.
  - Methods of incentivizing increased standards could include increased density, reduced parking, additional height, or a similar means of creating greater return on investment.
  - Option A: No incentivized zoning standards. This option assumes the minimum standard is the desired standard. Financial incentives could still be offered to further bolster the quality of the development.
  - Option B: Incentivized zoning standards. Allows development to meet a slightly lower threshold to develop but adds incentives sufficient to largely recoup the cost of improvements if the developer is willing to add value to the project. Financial incentives can be added as further opportunity to increase the quality of a project.

# Number Fifteen:

## Enhance Design Standards for Stormwater Management and Mobility Improvements

Much of the visual and functional character of Dickinson is established from the road and along rights-of-way. Adapting mobility and stormwater management design standards allows the city to reinforce the Community Brand through enhanced street design, changes in the streetscape, and creative use of stormwater management. The combined result is improved appearance of the community from the roadway and the addition of amenities that are attractive to a variety of desired audiences.



Associated Steps or Actions Required for either/both Districts

1. Amend current design standards for stormwater management on public and private property.
  - Amend Appendix B: Drainage Criteria to require on-site detention (if placed above ground) to be located and designed in a manner to be visible and attractive from the roadway.
  - Amendments can be completed internally but may benefit from outside expertise.
2. Hire an outside consultant team to amend current mobility and stormwater management design standards within the public right-of-way.
  - Develop a set of design standards that incorporate stormwater management, streetscape enhancements, bike lanes/shared use paths, and the possibility of roadway width reduction that can be applied where appropriate.
  - Standards can replace or complement current design standards.
  - Amendments can be completed internally but may benefit from outside expertise.
3. Adopt amended standards.

# Number Sixteen:

## Add Events, Festivals & Other Activities that Reflect the Community Brand

Nothing can draw visitors to Dickinson like a well-orchestrated event, festival or activity that is memorable and unique in its delivery. Fortunately, the community is no stranger to celebration and already offers a number of events and activities throughout the year.

Concepts for festivals, events and activities that could be used to bolster the Community Brand and draw a large audience to Dickinson could include:

- A “Dickinson Picnic Festival” or “Texas Coast Fair” event that brings a modern twist to major events held when Dickinson was the region’s playground. Both were outdoor events with a focus on fun and adventure.
- An event that takes attendees back to the 1940s - a time when Dickinson was still a recreation destination, but in some cases on the seedier side. The community can be transformed into “gambling halls”, a car show, 40s era music, and much more.
- Adventure sports and fitness events, tournaments, boot camps and more featuring activities such as kayak races, skull contests, paddleboarding, fishing, rock climbing, running (5K, tough mudder, or other), cycling (requires road closures over the short term) to name a few.
- Celebration of arts and artists with live music (as with Red, White and Bayou), art, theater or any combination of the three - and food, activities and drinks.

- A series of street fairs or other small scale events, perhaps in association with a charitable event or other activity and/or in areas where retail destinations are located or are planned.
- A niche nature based symposium/event intended to draw professionals into the area to discuss topics such as ecotourism, bayou preservation, stormwater management, or urban forestry.



### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Coordinate with area partners to determine one or two events or activities to initiate.
2. Consider use of a special event coordinator for management of an event intended to attract people to the area and reframe the image of Dickinson.
3. Consider use of Hotel Occupancy Tax revenues to advertise and promote events that could result in overnight stays in the city.
4. Anticipate an annual allocation of funds to support a limited series of events, festivals or activities.
5. Use municipal funds and in-kind services as a means of leveraging additional resources from outside entities.
6. Consider a contest or survey of the Dickinson public requesting creative ideas for a festival, event or activity, particularly one that reflects one or more of the Building Blocks of the the Brand Promise.

# Number Seventeen:

## Develop a Small Business & Entrepreneurship Program

For Dickinson, the boldest and biggest economic approach is to think small. Specialty and boutique shops. Locally owned restaurants and entertainment. Small businesses - offices, services and industries. From home based businesses and entrepreneurs to storefronts and machine shops, Dickinson is well positioned to be a home to Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs. The headquarters for small business headquarters.

Small business attraction and growth requires a somewhat different approach than efforts to attract large scale businesses. Small businesses require “incubation” - resources and a strong support network are more attractive than financial incentives. They require Community and exemplify a Can-Do spirit and Adventure - more elements natural to Dickinson.

Small businesses do have choices for location. To be successful the City of Dickinson will need to offer:

- Access to resources in a manner that is comparable to or better than other options.
- Locations for small businesses to cluster, network and build upon each other’s success.
- Cost effective space and flexibility to expand as the business expands.
- Facilities and amenities attractive to those individuals that are, by nature, entrepreneurial.
- Expertise in fostering a small business ecosystem.



### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Create a small business “incubator environment”.
  - Collaborate initially with area incubators and coworking spaces to determine steps to first bring the incubator mindset and resources to Dickinson.
2. Establish a Resource Center for Small Business and Entrepreneurship.
  - Collaborate with the Galveston County SBDC, SBA, College of the Mainland, UH Clear Lake, SCORE, lending institutions and other entities for purposes of building a highly responsive center where local small businesses and entrepreneurs can regularly have direct access to resources.
  - Coordinate with local public and private entities such as Dickinson ISD or local restaurants to provide opportunities for local small businesses and entrepreneurs to meet and collaborate.
  - Establish a means of consistent outreach and contact with small businesses to build trust and responsiveness to needs of the business community.
  - Consider partnership with University of Houston or another institution offering “economic gardening” to provide product and market related data to local businesses at minimal cost.

3. Construct a business incubator, accelerator and/or makerspace
  - Collaborate with Houston region existing providers, BAYHEP, College of the Mainland and other resources to establish the most appropriate format for Dickinson.
  - Consider incorporation of a commercial kitchen and possibility of collaboration with College of the Mainland and Dickinson ISD for a culinary program to potentially grow a local food and restaurant industry.
  - Consider partnership with an existing incubator, accelerator or makerspace to manage and possibly assist in development or retrofit of a facility.
4. Develop a series of project financing options in coordination with local lenders, partner entities and state/federal funding entities.
  - Create a micro-loan program to assist in minor startup or expansion costs, possibly in collaboration with local lenders.
  - Create a revolving loan fund to support development or expansion of local businesses.
  - Consider incorporating criteria into financing programs that promote specific business types, locations or site design.
5. Promote Dickinson as the location of choice for small business to call home - and headquarters.



*Market Village Incubator, Tionesta, Pennsylvania*



*East End Maker Hub, Houston, Texas*

# Number Eighteen:

## Build a “Graduation System” for Growth of Local Businesses

The hope of investors, the City of Dickinson, owners and entrepreneurs is that local small businesses will grow. Home based businesses will outgrow the garage. Incubated businesses will outgrow incubator space. Food trucks will need a storefront. For Dickinson, that growth can be a benefit or a detriment, depending upon availability of logical places in the community in which to relocate. Without it, businesses will be forced to leave the city that helped them to thrive.

A “graduation system” represents the ability to provide small businesses that next step location in which to grow. Fortunately, recommendations to increase density, create “destinations” and redevelop underperforming areas both within the Economic Development Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan offer multiple opportunities to incorporate space to accommodate business growth.



*Food Truck Park, Richardson, Texas*

### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Promote development of a Cooperative Retail concept in Dickinson.
  - The Cooperative concept provides an entry-level brick and mortar “storefront” to home-based local businesses at a reasonable cost or allows small retail businesses to expand their reach.
  - If an incubator, accelerator or makerspace is in place, the cooperative can serve as a retail launch site for those businesses.
  - A cooperative is preferred to be privately owned and managed but it can also work within a publicly owned building or owned and managed by a nonprofit organization.
  - Consider prompting development through incentives, an RFP process, or through direct collaboration with a private sector partner.
  - Preferred to be located in proximity to the speciality shopping area in or near downtown to serve as an anchor space and a potential “launch” site for retailers.
  - Consider cooperative retail as a “pioneer” or “catalyst” to prompt redevelopment in the Heritage Area Retail District.
  - Cooperative retail can consist of kiosks, shelves and other methods that give the appearance of a single “store” or a series of retailers with designated spaces and “walls” for flexibility while creating separation.

2. Identify one or more locations for food trucks and pop-up retail opportunities.
  - Consider food trucks and pop-up retail as complements to the Heritage Area Retail District or Bayou Lifestyle District once they are established and bridge activities to generate interest while development of Districts are underway.
  - Determine and invest in the necessary infrastructure and amenities to allow food truck courtyards and pop-up spaces to be not only feasible, but interesting places to frequent.
  - Consider establishing one or more locations where food trucks are located at least weekly to maintain interest.
  - Coordinate and potentially partner with an entity with experience in creation and management of food truck courtyards.
  - Pop-up retail opportunities may be treated similarly if utilizing trucks or trailers.
3. Promote opportunities for graduation to office or service spaces throughout Dickinson for those that outgrow the incubator and coworking spaces.
  - Consider promotion of improvement to linear commercial spaces as a means to accommodate office and service growth and reinvent corridor activity.



*The Market at 76067 Cooperative Retail Space, Mineral Wells, Texas*

# Number Nineteen:

## Promote Incremental Development

The concept of Small is equally relevant to development as it is to other business opportunities. Incremental Development represents a redevelopment approach that allows for gradual and creative reuse of existing sites and structures - most often by local individuals with interest in small scale development. It is based on the premise that anyone with an interest can potentially become a developer and therefore contribute to the growth of the community with the right resources and support network.

Incremental development is particularly useful in redevelopment of areas of the community often overlooked by large scale developers. While small in scope, incremental development offers an opportunity to gradually improve areas of the community and do so to the near exclusive benefit of local businesses and residents.



*Incremental Development, New Orleans, Louisiana*

### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Collaborate with Incremental Development Alliance to arrange for training in incremental development with local individuals potentially interested in becoming small scale developers.
  - Conduct the initial workshop to determine local interest in incremental development.
  - Advertise locally to generate interest from area residents and others, as appropriate.
  - Consider collaborating with BAYHEP and/or nearby communities to co-host the event.
  - Consider hosting a small developer “boot camp” if the initial workshop is determined to be a success.
2. Coordinate with College of the Mainland and Galveston County SBA to offer programs and classes on various aspects of small scale development.
3. Collaborate with local lenders and other development-related partners to offer information related to funding for small scale development.
4. Consider flexibility and capacity to respond to “out of the box” solutions that are sometimes a part of incremental development but not necessarily considered or permitted by codes.
  - Under appropriate circumstances a variance to code requirements may be reasonable.
  - Monitor requests to determine if code amendments are justified.



# Number Twenty:

## Define and Expand Nature-Based Business Opportunities

Nature based business is a critical component of Dickinson’s tourism and entertainment efforts thanks in large part to the presence of Dickinson Bayou. The bayou evokes opportunities associated with fishing, boating, kayaking, birdwatching and perhaps other water related activities.

The breadth of nature based businesses could be bolstered by efforts recommended by other community plans, including the parks master plan and the comprehensive plan to preserve and grow the amount of parks and recreational space, construct high-comfort bike lanes and create opportunities (permanent or temporary) to host adventure sports events.

Nature based business also extends beyond sports, tourism and events and into environmental sciences. Opportunities range from science, services and products associated with flood risk reduction to those that protect ecosystems and promote environmental management.



### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Coordinate a local “task force” to assess opportunities to expand and enhance ecotourism in Dickinson.
  - Critically inventory and assess current activities.
  - Determine gaps in the local ecotourism industry (events, seasonal and full time).
  - Define the resources needed to expand ecotourism (funding, organization capacity, access to wetlands as examples).
  - Assess the benefits of local or regional programming.
2. Determine the need and demand for nature-based business in Dickinson.
  - Low cost methods for determining the need and demand for nature-based businesses.
  - Coordinate with the local business community and area recreational entities to assess the need for nature based businesses.
  - Inventory the types of nature based businesses in the area.
  - Conduct a local survey to determine the types of nature based businesses the community would like to see and would be willing to support.
3. Develop the infrastructure needed to support nature-based business development.

# Number Twenty-One

## Prepare Land for Redevelopment

One of the best and primary functions of an Economic Development Corporation, particularly in an area that is near fully-developed, is to acquire and assemble land for the next stage of development, investment and job/revenue creation. This is particularly useful in Dickinson where surrounding communities continue to offer undeveloped property with lower development costs (once site acquisition, clearance and other needs are considered).

Dickinson is unique in that it has reserves at its disposal to make investments that are not available to other communities. By strategically utilizing an amount of those resources toward acquisition and site preparation, the city can nudge development toward desired development activity in preferred locations and designed in accordance with the city's vision. Additionally, resources can be used to acquire land and easements for purposes of creating and expanding natural areas and open spaces. In each case the community is building economic capital while simultaneously fulfilling its Brand Promise.



*Memorial Green Redevelopment, Houston, Texas*

### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Strategically utilize economic development resources to acquire sites for the following:
  - Mixed Use Redevelopment in the vicinity of IH-45.
  - “Downtown” redevelopment, including within the proposed Heritage Area Retail and Bayou Lifestyle Districts (once the general area of those districts is determined).
  - An Industrial Incubator Campus.
  - A future town center.
  - Expansion of parks, open spaces, tree canopy preservation, bayou access and other nature-based enhancements.
  - Other opportunities for community transformation when and where appropriate.
2. Prepare land for resale where appropriate.
  - Replat property, clear titles and remove encumbrances where possible.
  - Clear property to the extent necessary, including possible removal/replacement of infrastructure.
3. Improve spaces acquired or maintained for public use including:
  - Natural areas, green spaces, public plazas and gathering places, entertainment spaces/amenities, and ecotourism activities.
  - Stormwater management, parking, signage, gateway treatments, and other amenities.

# Number Twenty-Two

## Establish a Dickinson Retail/ Restaurant Challenge

Initiated in 2015 by the City of Redwing, Minnesota, the concept of a retail/restaurant challenge was created as a fun and highly visible way to encourage desired businesses to locate in downtown. The program was such a success that it has been duplicated in other communities.

The Retail/Restaurant Challenge offers an effective way to create awareness of the city's redevelopment intentions and attract desired businesses to the community. It also creates "buzz" internally as residents see the effort taken by the city and the new retail businesses and restaurants that arrive as a result.



*Retail Challenge Winner, Redwing, Minnesota*

### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Determine the types of retail or restaurants desired or needed in Dickinson based upon what is of interest to residents (perhaps through a survey) and what can meet the needs established in the Strategic Plan.
2. Seek out a local commercial property owner to establish space for the winner of the challenge (preferably in an area such as the Heritage Area Retail, Bayou Lifestyle District or Mixed-Use Districts if created at that time).
3. Collaborate with other potential partners such as lenders, foundations, College of the Mainland, local SBDC and others that could assist in financial or technical support.
4. Announce and promote a retail/restaurant challenge.
5. Invite interested parties to submit an application. Finalists would be invited to make a "pitch" to a selection committee.
6. The Challenge should focus on a strategically selected list of businesses based upon space available and types the city would like to promote.
7. The winning applicant would be provided space to open the proposed business and provided resources such as reduced rent and funds for opening costs, as well as potential technical assistance and access to additional capital.

# Number Twenty-Three

## Become the Choice Location for Remote and Hybrid Working

The concept of office is evolving and that could be to Dickinson's long term benefit. Dickinson is the perfect location for remote or hybrid work - if the right support system is in place. Dickinson remains close enough to Houston that a worker can return to the office on those necessary days. Otherwise, Dickinson could be the place where a worker simply takes advantage of the rich list of options for work - home, a local restaurant, a local park, or a coworking space - to name a few.



*Anchor Work Coworking Space, Houston, Texas*

### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Collaborate with existing and future businesses and public partners to create highly desirable remote work locations.
  - Coordinate with restaurants as well as future coffee shops, bakeries and other places to promote “hanging out” to conduct meetings and remote work.
  - Promote installation of wireless internet access in local businesses attractive to remote work.
  - Discuss the possibility of remote work opportunities at the public library or other public facilities.
2. Develop a Coworking and “Spoke” office space.
  - Consider partnership with a coworking network to host a coworking space in Dickinson, otherwise seek out a public or private partner with an interest in development and management of a coworking space.
  - Encourage incorporation of sufficient spaces to allow for companies to establish “spoke” offices as part of a more decentralized “hub and spoke” model.
  - Coordinate with partners to ensure that businesses occupying space have access to the same level of resources discussed with development of an incubator/accelerator/makerspace.

- Coworking space over the long term will be most desirable in proximity to downtown, waterfront or mixed-use destinations.
  - In the short term, consider location at a public facility, vacant storefront or other location, if appropriate.
3. Encourage residential improvements to promote remote work from home, including the possibility of Accessory Dwelling Units as a workspace.
  4. Encourage establishment of home-based businesses with reasonable restrictions to protect the residential character of neighborhoods.
  5. Establish a business license and zoning certification program for local businesses, particularly home-based businesses, that allows for the city to ensure compliance with all ordinances.
  6. Craft an on-brand marketing campaign that focuses on aspects important to remote workers, coworkers and spoke workers including Cost of Living/Affordability, Quality of Life, Proximity to Nature, and the promise of new experiences upcoming (the bridge brand).
  7. Consider installation of public wifi at facilities and locations that would be available for use by remote workers, students and others, including installation at public parks.
  8. Ensure that Dickinson residents and businesses have ready access to high-speed fiber at a competitive rate.



*Brass Tacks Remote Work Space and Coffee Shop, Houston, Texas*

# Number Twenty-Four

## Create an Encompassing Incentives Policy

As mentioned, Dickinson is fortunate to have a wealth of the tools needed to spur economic growth and is in a position to do so in a manner that will both build a long term, sustainable economy while also establishing the city as a community authentically fulfilling its Brand Promise. Key to this is a unified economic policy that aligns and fully maximizes the strengths of all city tools, including from:

- Economic Development Corporation Type B
- Hotel Occupancy Tax
- Chapter 380 Development Agreement
- Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone
- Municipal Management District
- Other State and Local resources

A single economic policy is not only a benefit to the City. It is also helpful to the development community by accounting for all resources and establishing the circumstances in which the city will consider incentives.

### Associated Steps or Actions Required

1. Establish the economic tools to be included in the economic incentives policy (those available from entities such as the Municipal Management District may require approval and cooperation by additional entities)
2. Identify priorities for which incentives will be considered such as uses, development patterns, and amenities.
3. Clarify any specific thresholds that must be met and the processes necessary to apply, agree to and receive incentives.
4. Recommended priorities for incentives include:
  - Development and Activities within the Heritage Area Retail District that:
    - Result in Specialty Shopping, Unique Restaurants or Businesses that Stay Open after 6pm;
    - Create a multi-vendor retail space;
    - Exceed design standards for the District;
    - Create or contribute to urban open space or plazas;
    - Allow for outdoor dining or other outdoor experiences; and/or
    - Contribute to public parking and appropriately designed stormwater detention.

- Development and Activities within the Bayou Lifestyle District that:
  - Result in Specialty Shopping, Unique Restaurants or Businesses that Stay Open after 6pm;
  - Create a multi-vendor retail space;
  - Exceed design standards for the District;
  - Create or contribute to waterfront ambience, urban open space, or plazas;
  - Allow for outdoor dining or other outdoor experiences; and/or
  - Contribute to public parking, including waterfront docks, and appropriately designed stormwater detention
- Development and Activities within the Mixed Use District(s) that:
  - Provide a mix of commercial uses, public spaces and amenities sufficient to result in creating a place of interest for the City of Dickinson and the surrounding area;
  - Include a sufficiently sized coworking and/or "spoke" office facility with amenities;
  - Include a sufficiently sized incubator, accelerator, and/or makerspace facility with amenities;
  - Create or contribute to open space or urban social spaces with amenities;
  - Allow for outdoor dining or other outdoor experiences; and/or
- Contribute to structured parking, urban footprint design, pedestrian-oriented internal corridors, bike/ped connectivity with adjacent uses, and the community brand.
- Development and Activities within the Incubator Industrial Campus that:
  - Provide a well connected, amenitized, campus-style development with a focus on visual forestation and appropriately designed and integrated detention;
  - Include a sufficiently sized incubator, accelerator, and/or makerspace facility with amenities; and/or
  - Meets a desired nature-based and/or Energy 2.0 focus.
- Development that exceeds standards for contributing to forestation, integrated detention, and/or enhanced bike/ped connectivity.
- Support for development or improvements to businesses that support remote work.

#### Examples of Incentives

1. Construction, contribution to or reimbursement for capital improvements, including reconstruction and amenities within the public right-of-way, public parking or shared detention.
2. Reimbursement for business/job creation, including development of an incubator, accelerator and/or makerspace or coworking site.
3. Reimbursement for brand-related urban design amenities that exceed standards established by code.
4. Grant/loan program to assist businesses in startup activities, including internal buildout, curb appeal investments, stock, marketing, signage, etc.
5. Acceptance and maintenance of improvements or amenities, including public art, publicly available open space and streetscape enhancements,

# Number Twenty-Five

## Build a Business Retention & Expansion Program

A robust Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Program is, by nature of the name, an effort to keep businesses local as they grow and expand services. It does so by establishing ongoing dialogue, building a lasting relationship and showing a level of responsiveness to local business needs. As with other efforts, the BR&E Program bolsters the three key traits the city would like to convey to local businesses - Resource, Responsive and Partner.

Traditional Business Retention and Expansion programs target large employers and those that result in “primary jobs” - those that result in a product (a good or service) enjoyed by people outside of the community. Dickinson’s economic development focus on small business and entrepreneurs (some of which will still result in primary jobs) may require some, but not considerable, adaptation.

It is critical to recognize that a well implemented BR&E Program is highly labor intensive for a limited period of time and it depends not only on EDC staff, but also local leadership and a cadre of volunteers. It is also critical to note that a BR&E Program will not only be judged by its execution, but more importantly, by follow-up actions.

Steps to Establishing and Implementing one version of a Business Retention and Expansion Program:

1. Develop a business database that, to the best of the team’s ability, includes all businesses in the City of Dickinson, including location, contact, NAICS (North American Industrial Classification System) Code, size of business, ownership type (locally owned, franchise, national brand), and other key traits (the database will be expanded, amended and perfected over time).
2. Define target audiences for the BR&E program (examples include a focus on primary employers, large employers, a mix of small/medium/large employers, or locally owned).
3. Establish and train a pool of “ambassadors” comprised of EDC staff, local leadership and other volunteers.
4. Establish a pool of interviews to conduct over a predetermined period of time and as a percentage of the target audience(s).
5. Craft a key list of questions to be covered in each interview for purposes of consistency.
6. Conduct interviews as teams (typically two ambassadors per interview) with the intent of completing the questionnaire, but also determining the needs of the business to increase success.
7. Consolidate information provided through the BR&E interviews.
8. Develop an action plan for addressing issues and findings raised, including changes to codes, policies and incentives; issues that can be addressed immediately, major capital improvements, and more.
9. Consider development of a community improvement fund that can quickly address minor capital improvements (such as fixing a crumbling corner of an intersection or potholes along a roadway).
10. Consider publishing the process and the resulting action plan as a means of showing local businesses that the City is intent in follow-up and creating an environment that allows business to thrive.
11. Celebrate the effort and the corresponding plan of action through a local event such as the State of the City.
12. Assess and amend the process for the following year, including establishing a new list of business to reach.



# Number Twenty-Six

## **Establish an Economic Development Focused 501(c)(3) Organization**

While there are a number of partner entities already in place in Dickinson another could be very useful, particularly in pursuing the type of economic development activities recommended. An economic development focused 501(c)(3) entity can serve as the nimble, nonprofit partner capable of undertaking a variety of tasks and increasing financial capital in ways that a government entity cannot.

Potential Roles a 501(c)(3) can undertake:

1. Acquire funds for implementation of activities that further the economic development strategic plan through private sector fundraising/donations, application to foundations and public sector requests for funding.
2. Conduct events, festivals and activities that may be more appropriate to a nonprofit organization, including those that could utilize Hotel Occupancy Tax resources.
3. Implement the Business Retention and Expansion Program for the City of Dickinson.
4. Coordinate and advocate for the business community.
5. Acquire, assemble, clear and convey property for purposes of economic and community development.
6. Lead implementation of the proposed resource center for the Dickinson small business community.
7. Manage activities such as the Retail Challenge or host an Incremental Development Workshop.

Associated Steps or Actions Required:

1. Identify and collaborate with legal counsel and other nonprofit entities to determine the legal requirements needed to establish the organization and to define the initial activities desired to be undertaken.
2. Clearly delineate the roles of the nonprofit organization and its relationship to both the Economic Development Corporation and the Chamber of Commerce.
3. Establish the nonprofit with a name that indicates its purpose but does not confuse the community (for example, “Economic Development Corporation Foundation” would likely spark confusion).
4. Consider colocation of the nonprofit entity with offices for the Economic Development Corporation to complement services provided by the EDC staff.

# IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The Dickinson Economic Development Strategic Plan is a comprehensive document. It would be impossible to implement each strategy immediately. Rather, implementation of the strategies and recommendations identified in this plan is expected to occur incrementally over time and through close collaboration and cooperation with various partners utilizing a variety of funds and resources.

Recommendations have been placed into one of three categories of time to be completed: immediate, midterm and long-term (initiation can begin much sooner if appropriate). Additionally, each recommendation includes implementation guidance in terms of potential partners, anticipated cost, and possible funding sources. Each is intended to be general in nature. For example, funding sources and partners for activating the Industrial Incubator Campus, creating a coworking space, or establishing a dining and entertainment destination can vary widely based upon theme, magnitude, activities, location, and more.

The Implementation Program is a checklist for realizing and achieving Dickinson’s true market position - the place in the regional economy that maximizes its strengths and sets it apart from peer communities. Each recommendation accomplished is one step closer to that market position.

The Implementation Program is also like a roadmap or a checklist intended to be highly flexible. Changes occur. Opportunities arise. Funds or partners may appear or become available sooner than anticipated. Success is not a direct route and there will be detours. Most important is that the destination remains the same.

## Category of Recommendation

Develop & Promote the Brand Promise	
Create Unique Destinations & Attractions	
Build a Dickinson Centric Business Mix	
Refine the Economic Toolkit	


## Priority (Completion)

Immediate	Within 2 Years
Mid-Term	2 to 5 Years
Long Term	5+ Years







## Estimated Cost

\$	\$50K or Less
\$\$	\$50K to \$250K
\$\$\$	\$250K to \$500K
\$\$\$\$	\$500K+









## Immediate Priority

Recommendation	Page	Categories	Owner	Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Establish Dickinson’s Brand Promise	46		City or EDC	City, EDC, Destination Dickinson	\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue
Expand the Current Brand Style Guide & Communications Strategy	48		City		\$	General Fund
Establish a “Bridge Brand”	49		City or EDC	City, EDC, Destination Dickinson	\$\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue
Enhance the City’s Use of the Community Brand	50		City	City	\$\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue, HOT Funds
Expand and Refine the City’s Social Media Presence	51		City		\$\$	General Fund
Align Local Partners with the Brand Promise	52		City	EDC, MMD, DISD, Chamber, Destination Dickinson, Dickinson Historical Society	\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue
Create Brand-Focused Marketing Materials	55		City	EDC, MMD	\$	General Fund, HOT Funds
Amend Codes to Naturalize and Increase the Tree Canopy	56	 	City		\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue






## Immediate Priority (continued)

Recommendation	Page	Categories	Owner	Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Establish Formal Districts for Placemaking	62	 	City	EDC, MMD	\$	General Fund
Add Events, Festivals & Other Activities that Reflect the Community Brand	65	 	Destination Dickinson	EDC, MMD, Destination Dickinson, Chamber/ Nonprofit	\$\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue, HOT Fund, Sponsors, Crowdsourcing, Event Collections
Create an Encompassing Incentives Policy	76		EDC	City, MMD	\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue
Establish an Economic Development Focused 501(c)3 Organization	79		City	EDC	\$\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue








## Mid-Term Priority

Recommendation	Page	Categories	Owner	Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Give the Brand a Physical Presence in Public Places	53	 	City	EDC, MMD, DISD, Galveston County	\$\$\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue, TIRZ Increment
Build a Distinct Co-Brand with Local Businesses	54		City	EDC, Chamber/Nonprofit, Private Sector	\$\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue
Foster Development of Unique Shopping, Dining and Entertainment Destinations	58	 	EDC	City, MMD, Private Sector	\$\$\$\$	General Fund, MMD & EDC Revenue, Private Investment, EDA Grant, Revolving Loan Fund (if created), Private Lending, Crowdsourcing
Create an “Incubator Style” Industrial Campus	60	 	EDC	City, MMD, H-GAC, Local Incubators, Private Sector	\$\$\$\$	General Fund, MMD & EDC Revenue, Private Investment, EDA Grant, Revolving Loan Fund (if created), Foundations such as Edward Lowe Foundation, Private Lending, Crowdsourcing
Enhance Design Standards for Stormwater Management and Mobility Improvements	64		City	H-GAC	\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue

## Mid-Term Priority (continued)

Recommendation	Page	Categories	Owner	Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Develop a Small Business & Entrepreneurship Program	66		EDC/Nonprofit	City, MMD, Chamber/Nonprofit, H-GAC	\$\$\$\$	General Fund, MMD & EDC Revenue, EDA Grant, Foundations, Revolving Loan Fund, Microloan Fund, Private Investment
Define and Expand Nature-Based Business Opportunities	71		EDC	City, MMD, Chamber/Nonprofit	\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue
Prepare Land for Redevelopment	72	 	EDC	City, MMD	\$\$\$\$	General Fund, MMD & EDC Revenue, TIRZ Revenue
Build a Business Retention & Expansion Program	78		Chamber/Nonprofit	City, EDC, MMD	\$\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue, Event Collections

## Long Term Priority

Recommendation	Page	Categories	Owner	Potential Partners	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources
Create a municipal program to promote forestation and urban forestry	57		City or DISD	Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, DISD, MMD	\$\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue, Grants such as through the USDA Forest Service, Foundations, School District Revenue
Build a “Graduation System” for Growth of Local Businesses	68		EDC	City, MMD, Galveston County	\$\$\$\$	General Fund, MMD & EDC Revenue, County Revenue, EDA Grant
Promote Incremental Development	70		MMD or EDC	City, MMD, EDC, COM, Chamber/Nonprofit	\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue, Private Investment
Establish a Dickinson Retail/ Restaurant Challenge	73	 	Chamber/ Nonprofit	City, EDC, MMD, Lenders, Property Owners, General Public	\$\$	General Fund, MMD Revenue, Private Sector
Become the Choice Location for Remote and Hybrid Working	74	 	EDC	City, MMD, TIRZ, Private Sector	\$\$\$\$	General Fund, MMD & EDC Revenue, TIRZ Revenue, Private Investment