

HICKEYGLOBAL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING



Economic Development Plan Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Project Background



The Round Rock Chamber enlisted the help of Hickey Global to develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan for the region. This strategic plan aims to guide the organization's efforts over the next three to five years, focusing on enhancing economic growth, promoting innovation, and ensuring sustainable development within the community.



COMPONENTS

1. Strategies & Action Plan

Combining qualitative data gathered from stakeholder engagement with the qualitative research conducted by the Hickey Global team, we developed 53 strategies to help the Chamber enhance Round Rock's economic development ecosystem. These strategies are organized into six strategic focus areas: Marketing, Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction, Talent, Quality of Life, Strategic Partnerships, and Real Estate.

2. Stakeholder Engagement Report

Hickey Global interviewed business and community leaders virtually, in person, and through an online survey. This section presents their responses to each question and serves as qualitative research in conjunction with the collected quantitative data. Both data types contributed to developing this report's Strategies and Action Plan section.

3. Ecosystem Analysis

The Round Rock community has experienced significant growth in both population and employment, fueled by successful economic development initiatives, migration trends, and continuing domestic patterns. To provide context for Round Rock's ecosystem in relation to the broader region, macroeconomic data was analyzed for Williamson County, the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos metropolitan statistical area (MSA), and the state of Texas. Due to data availability, most economic indicators are presented at the county level, with the majority sourced from Lightcast and supplemented by information from the Census Bureau.

4. Cluster Analysis

Using established criteria to identify and validate target industries within a region, Hickey Global employed a data-driven approach to confirm target businesses' presence and contribution to local economic growth. The outcome was a comprehensive overview of current industry activity and existing strengths that could be leveraged for future expansion. The report also includes recommendations for updating the Round Rock Chamber's cluster definitions, aimed at enhancing collaboration between business development and marketing and accurately identifying the industries that Round Rock is best positioned to attract.

Executive Summary

Key Findings

STRATEGIES

The first component of the Economic Development Strategic Plan is the execution of developed strategies for implementation by The Round Rock Chamber team and other members of the economic development ecosystem. Hickey Global's team combined both the qualitative and quantitative research completed, and 53 strategies were created. These strategies have been divided into six strategic focus areas: Marketing, Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction, Talent, Quality of Life, Strategic Partnerships, and Real Estate. The recommended implementation stage for each strategy is listed on their corresponding one-pager as: short-term (1-2 years), medium-term (3-5 years), and long-term (5 years and beyond).

KEY FINDINGS

Varied Implementation Stages

By dividing the strategies into short-, medium-, and long-term implementation stages, the Round Rock Chamber team can fully understand where said strategies fit within their overall economic development plans and goals. Additionally, many of the strategies can build off one another, creating a seamless flow from one stage to the next.

Well-Balanced Focus Areas

Each strategy has been separated into one of six strategic focus areas. This allows for a focused understanding of where each strategy fits within the economic development ecosystem, how best to implement it, and who needs to be involved.

Executive Summary

Key Findings

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in creating any business development plan. Involving stakeholders—from esteemed universities and research institutions to well-established companies, ambitious startups, and other members of the economic development ecosystem—facilitates open communication, builds trust, and aligns goals. This collaboration fosters a vibrant ecosystem where knowledge and resources flow seamlessly, driving innovation and accelerating growth. Reviewing each participant’s responses was essential in developing many of the strategies created by the Hickey Global team.

KEY FINDINGS

Assets for Success

Education and workforce development are essential for Round Rock's future economic success. There is a strong emphasis on expanding partnerships between institutions such as Texas State University, Austin Community College, and local schools. The goal is to provide training in STEM fields and trade skills, increase career awareness, and ensure a robust talent pipeline that meets industry needs.

Clear Priorities

The desired key economic development priorities for the next 3-5 years include: strategically recruiting businesses, fostering target industries such as suppliers for Samsung and Tesla, investing in workforce housing and quality-of-life amenities, enhancing education and workforce development, maximizing land use through redevelopment, boosting entrepreneurship, and improving infrastructure and utilities while preserving natural resources. These priorities aim to support sustainable growth and strengthen the local economy.

Executive Summary

Key Findings

ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS

The community of Round Rock has been typified by extensive population and employment growth driven by economic development successes, migration, and ongoing domestic trends. To contextualize Round Rock's ecosystem within the overall region, macroeconomic data covering various topics has been analyzed for Williamson County, the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA, and the state of Texas. Due to data availability, most of the economic indicators are shown at the county level unless otherwise noted. Most of the data is derived from Lightcast, with additional information included from the Census Bureau.

KEY FINDINGS

Regional Successes

Round Rock has benefitted from regional growth patterns while also developing a unique profile of labor, industry, and institutions. As neighboring communities reach saturation from historical trends, Round Rock is well-positioned to achieve continued success over the coming years.

Education

Over the past five years, Round Rock's residents have become more educated, with a growing distribution of individuals achieving Associate's, Bachelor's, and Graduate Degrees. With significant levels of academic achievement in high-demand fields such as computer science and health, regional institutions like the University of Texas at Austin and Texas State University contribute to Round Rock's economic development stature.

Executive Summary

Key Findings

CLUSTER ANALYSIS

Using established criteria for identifying and validating target industries within a region, Hickey Global takes a data-oriented approach to confirm the presence of target businesses and their contribution to regional economic growth. The result describes current industry activity and existing strengths that can be leveraged for future growth. The report also includes recommended changes to the Round Rock Chamber's current cluster definitions with the aim of streamlining efforts between business development and marketing as well as capturing the precise industries that Round Rock is best suited to attract.

KEY FINDINGS

Industry Growth

At both the regional and city level, Round Rock has experienced extensive growth in population and employment over the past 5+ years. This growth has translated to an expanding base of companies in core industries such as advanced manufacturing and technology. With growth expected to continue, Round Rock is well poised to expand on recent successes and is in the privileged position of being able to direct economic development efforts to specific industries that will provide high wages and meaningful employment opportunities for current and future residents.

Cross-Cluster Opportunities

Round Rock and the surrounding region offer significant assets relevant to each of the recommended target industries. The city's proximity to Austin, its institutional assets, and the technological capabilities of its own companies and workforce positions Technology & Innovation as a key strength for businesses across sectors such as manufacturing, research, and corporate services. As such, the study identifies Technology & Innovation and Office & Management Services as key drivers of regional growth that can be leveraged for business attraction and expansion efforts regardless of industry.

Expanded Framework

Based on this study's findings, Hickey Global recommends a number of changes to the Chamber's current target industry definitions. One key change is expanding the focus on Corporate Headquarters to include other office functions such as Finance and Insurance.

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Cluster Analysis Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Cluster Analysis

COMPONENTS

- 1. Cluster Concepts:** The cluster analysis begins with a description of Hickey Global's methodology for target industry selection/validation as well as a review of key terms. The section includes a map of the geography used to analyze Round Rock's target industries as well as a chart visualizing the relationship between recommended targets and key verticals.
- 2. Industry Group Review:** The industry group review uses quadrant graphs to assess Round Rock's industries based on projected employment growth and concentrations. These graphs identify opportunities in growing industries and areas where Round Rock has a competitive advantage due to employment specializations. This review is a crucial part of the overall methodology, providing a high-level overview of the economy and quickly categorizing industries as strengths or weaknesses for further analysis.
- 3. Target Industry Definitions & Analysis:** Following the industry group review, the cluster analysis uses 6-digit NAICS codes to provide a data definition for each of the recommended target industries. The data definition is an important tool for benchmarking current industry activity against competitors and tracking future developments. Important contributors to the regional economy are highlighted as key verticals that the Chamber can use to prioritize business development efforts. Also included in the analysis are evaluations of the hiring ecosystem in the City of Round Rock as well as target occupations relevant to each industry.

INDUSTRY IDENTIFICATION & RESEARCH OF TARGET INDUSTRIES

Using established criteria for the identification and validation of target industries within a region, Hickey Global takes a data-oriented approach to confirm the presence of target businesses and their contribution to regional economic growth. The result is a description of current industry activity and existing strengths that can be leveraged for future growth. The report also includes recommended changes to the Round Rock Chamber's current cluster definitions with the aim of streamlining efforts between business development and marketing as well as capturing the precise industries that Round Rock is best suited to attract.

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Cross-Cluster Opportunities

Round Rock and the surrounding region offer significant assets that are relevant to each of the recommended target industries. The city's proximity to Austin and its institutional assets, as well as the technological capabilities of its own companies and workforce, positions Technology & Innovation as a key strength for businesses across sectors such as manufacturing, research, and corporate services. As such, the study identifies Technology & Innovation and Office & Management Services as key drivers of regional growth that can be leveraged for business attraction and expansion efforts regardless of industry.

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Executive Summary

Recommended Changes from Past Studies

The Round Rock Chamber has undergone multiple phases of target industry analysis, culminating with a target industry framework that includes the following industries:

- Aerospace & Defense
- Headquarters
- Health & Life Sciences
- Innovative Manufacturing
- Technology & Innovation

Through stakeholder engagement, correspondence between Hickey Global and the Round Rock Chamber, and data analysis, Hickey Global recommends changes to the marketing focus and scope of past target industries. These changes include:

- Removing **Aerospace** from **Aerospace & Defense**. This change reflects the current realities of Round Rock's A&D cluster as well as the emphasis on technological innovation in the region.
- Changing **Innovative Manufacturing** to **Advanced Manufacturing**. By following the more common nomenclature, prospects for manufacturing investment are more likely to recognize their own functions within Advanced Manufacturing and seek out community information from the Chamber.
- Adding **Finance & Insurance** and other office services to **Headquarters** to create **Corporate Services**. This addition captures the breadth of opportunities available to Round Rock in traded industries that are currently overlooked by the target industry definitions.

Strategies & Action Plan Summary

Strategies

Business Development Strategies

The Round Rock Chamber has partnered with Hickey Global to develop an economic development strategic plan for the region. This plan aims to guide the organization's efforts over the next three to five years, focusing on enhancing economic growth, promoting innovation, and ensuring sustainable development within the community.

The recommended Implementation Stage for each strategy is listed on their corresponding one- or two-pager as: Short Term, Medium Term, and Long Term. Short-term strategies within the context of an economic development plan typically refer to actions and initiatives that can be promptly implemented to achieve immediate results or address pressing issues, typically within 1-2 years. These strategies are designed to have a relatively quick impact, laying the groundwork for long-term success. Medium-term strategies encompass a range of initiatives to foster sustainable growth and resilience over an intermediate timeframe, usually 3 to 5 years. These strategies involve more substantial and enduring efforts compared to short-term interventions. These strategies focus on building a solid foundation for long-lasting prosperity, laying the groundwork for sustained economic development in Round Rock. Finally, long-term strategies are envisioned as transformative initiatives designed to shape the state's economic landscape over an extended period, looking 5 years and beyond. These strategies entail comprehensive and forward-looking measures, which could position Round Rock for sustained economic prosperity over many years.

CONTENT

The Strategies section includes

1. 53 strategies divided into 6 strategic focus groups,

Strategic Focus Areas



Implementation Guide

Action Plan

1. Short-Term

Short-term strategies within the context of an economic development strategic plan typically refer to actions and initiatives that can be promptly implemented to achieve immediate results or address pressing issues, typically within 1-2 years. These strategies are designed to have a relatively quick impact, laying the groundwork for long-term success.

2. Medium-Term

Medium-term strategies encompass a range of initiatives to foster sustainable growth and resilience over an intermediate timeframe, usually 3 to 5 years. These strategies involve more substantial and enduring efforts compared to short-term interventions. These strategies focus on building a solid foundation for long-lasting prosperity, laying the groundwork for sustained economic development in Round Rock.

3. Long-Term

Long-term strategies are envisioned as transformative initiatives designed to shape the city's economic landscape over an extended period, looking five years and beyond. These strategies entail comprehensive and forward-looking measures that could position Round Rock for sustained economic prosperity over many years. Long-term strategies aim to create a resilient and adaptable economic development ecosystem that can withstand evolving challenges and propel Round Rock into a prosperous future.

Strategy Role Glossary

Action Plan

- **Leader**

The Leader drives the implementation of the strategy by providing direction, oversight, and motivation to the stakeholders involved. This role is pivotal in maintaining focus on the goals, making critical decisions, and ensuring accountability throughout the process. Leaders should help to inspire collaboration, resolve conflicts, and guide teams toward achieving desired outcomes.

- **Advocate**

The Advocate champions the strategy by promoting its goals, values, and benefits to key audiences, including the public, policymakers, and potential partners. Advocates raise awareness, generate support, and secure buy-in from stakeholders whose engagement is crucial for success. This role involves communication, lobbying, and outreach efforts to build momentum and foster a positive perception of the initiatives.

- **Convener**

The Convener brings together diverse stakeholders, facilitating collaboration and dialogue to advance the strategy. This role focuses on building relationships, fostering trust, and creating partnership opportunities and shared action. The Convener ensures inclusivity, bridges gaps between groups, and creates a platform for collective contributions toward the strategy's success.

Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction



Strategic Focus Area: Business Retention, Expansion, & Attraction

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 1. Cluster Attraction Strategies:** Use the Strategy's cluster study information to focus on attracting companies from industry subsectors with a high potential for successful regional operations. Supplement that data with anecdotes from existing complementary companies.
- 2. Attract Incubator Start-Ups:** Use proximity to existing incubator and start-up community in Austin to promote graduating to a location in Round Rock. Highlight the Round Rock economic development value proposition to differentiate the market from Austin. Include talking and marketing points about the BRE program's ongoing business support offerings.
- 3. Develop Business Retention protocols:** Develop the protocols of the BRE program to refine target metrics and create accountability for reaching them. This effort can include defining an industry or initiative focus, determining how many touches each company gets per year, and identifying proactive triggers for outreach. Progress reporting to the community and other stakeholders should include clear reporting on Chamber-provided service post-outreach and any "lessons learned". Consider sharing annual details at a BRE appreciation event or special meeting.
- 4. Develop Workforce Pipeline through BRE:** Use the BRE program to connect with local industry representatives to learn more about skills requirements. Then, take that information back to the higher education representatives in the region to ensure that course offerings align with the necessary skill sets. Establish a regular meeting cadence to ensure the Chamber and community stay ahead of the curve.
- 5. Attract Samsung Suppliers:** Seek out information about their ideal supplier network and flip that information into a targeted recruitment strategy.

Marketing



Strategic Focus Area: Marketing

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 1. Build Internal Awareness:** This effort should focus on highlighting the BRE program (outlining or providing easy access to information about all its services and offerings, guidance for who should participate, and a return on investment for “buying in” (e.g. a public celebration of company wins). This effort could also be used to highlight workforce stories. Efforts to build awareness should be made in partnership with the city as its reach goes beyond the boundaries of the Chamber. An internal review of existing marketing materials should jumpstart this effort to ensure that messaging matches intentions and is comprehensive in its scope.
- 2. External Marketing Campaign:** Outbound marketing can be organized for inbound and outbound audiences. Like the internal campaign, marketing materials should be comprehensive but heavily electronic for easy access and sharing. This could be accomplished through refining information online, creating new and targeted landing pages, and utilizing social media channels like LinkedIn to spread the word. Short-term considerations may include organizing familiarization tours of the community, hosting the state in Round Rock so they can get a site visit simulation experience and grow their confidence in your ability to showcase and sell, or planning a travel calendar for outbound consultant and company visits. Long-term ideas might include launching an economic development advertising campaign that includes airport signage (static or internet access ads), radio advertisements, and starting an economic development podcast.
- 3. Establish a Value Proposition:** An economic development value proposition can do several things to help Round Rock’s marketing plan: 1) differentiate it from other markets/locations (like Austin), 2) provide a clear and concise statement the Chamber can use to summarize its economic development service offerings, and 3) offer relevant information to the target audience at the outset to pique their interest. The value proposition could also be catered to specific industries and highlight amenities of the community, like an abundance of water, etc., that speak to the needs of your audience.

Strategic Focus Area: Marketing

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 4. International Marketing Focus:** By prioritizing international markets that align well with RR's existing business base and target industry focus the Chamber can partner with other regional EDOs or lead their own trips to markets abroad. Lead generation firms can help with such efforts when given strict criteria and parameters to work. Round Rock's internationally-owned existing business base should also be included in the outreach process as they can make intros at corporate offices and provide insights about partners and suppliers who may be a good fit for the local market.
- 5. New Marketing Position:** Consider separating marketing duties and roles to differentiate between general Chamber outreach and economic development outreach. With more than one priority mission, the Chamber may be well-served by establishing two distinct marketing roles, one for general Chamber business and activities and the other dedicated to economic development. While there may be some overlap in the shared information, the economic development marketing reach can be geared toward educating internal and external audiences about programs and services, the benefits of doing business in the community, and other business-specific information. This information should be directed to a broad audience but may be segmented depending on the message. It may be easiest to accomplish this separation of information-sharing by creating a new marketing role for economic-development-specific marketing functions.

Talent



Strategic Focus Area: Talent

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 1. Regional Coordination with Education Partners:** Build upon current efforts to frequently disseminate information on regional workforce activities – such as industry round tables and the talent council. Communication with partners is of primary importance to the long-term success of a strategic plan. Working with a variety of organizations and institutions extends the impact of activities conducted by Round Rock and its partners, and structured and recurring check-ins can increase the efficacy of a given strategy while also reducing the chance of duplicating efforts. Educational institutions can benefit from this coordination effort by prioritizing underdeveloped areas and reducing overlap. In addition to collaboration at the regional level, Round Rock can leverage existing relationships with particular institutions to influence continued growth. These relationships include:
 - **Texas State Technical College:** Round Rock should gain additional insight into the College's program offerings and develop a playbook for future collaboration on industry alignment and business development efforts.
 - **Texas A&M:** Expand upon existing relationships with Texas A&M to uncover new opportunities for the Texas A&M Health Science Center in Round Rock.
 - **Austin Community College:** Community colleges represent a meaningful way of increasing equitable outcomes in educational achievement by offering high-value, lower-cost programs for local students. Round Rock can support this mission by collaborating with ACC to market programs such as Bats to Cats, which extends the talent pipeline into Texas State.
 - **Texas State:** In addition to industry alignment activities, the Chamber should work with Texas State to understand opportunities to increase the offerings for graduate degree achievement at the Round Rock campus. work to increase program for existing industries and business, work with Texas State for increased pipeline for entire degree to happen on Round Rock campus.

Strategic Focus Area: Talent

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 2. Industry and Education Alignment:** To ensure the continued growth of Round Rock's target industries, the Chamber can promote increased alignment between current and future demand for skilled talent and educational support. Because of both international trends in skill development and the technological focus of regional targets, the availability of skilled labor will remain a critical factor for business development efforts in Round Rock. As economic developers, the team has access to business leaders and can solicit information and workforce data to understand what roles will be needed in the future and what skills those roles will require. This information should be used to inform the development of programs from regional education partners, benefitting both current employers and future employees.
- 3. K-12 Partnerships:** Round Rock can leverage existing initiatives to increase educational partnerships with the K-12 system and prepare students for a career within the community. Economic development organizations are increasingly focusing on the K-12 system as traditional career and skill pathways are evolving to meet dynamic industry needs. By introducing students to job opportunities and the applicability of skills learned to future careers, future graduates can gain confidence in their ability to secure meaningful employment. The Round Rock Chamber can influence positive outcomes by supporting existing K-12 engagement efforts through the Round Rock Independent School District and regional community colleges while exploring additional initiatives such as education externships.
- 4. Career Awareness:** In collaboration with partners, increase career awareness by implementing targeted initiatives based on local opportunities. One of the most widespread barriers to meaningful employment within communities in the U.S. is outdated perceptions on the breadth of opportunities available. Career awareness can be accomplished through increased engagement with the K-12 system or by communicating directly to existing talent. Round Rock Chamber can work with local businesses and educational/workforce partnerships to market these opportunities through a shared job and talent recruitment portal, ad campaigns, and emerging media outlets to provide up-to-date information on regional successes.

Strategic Focus Area: Talent

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 5. Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area Apprenticeships:** Communicate with local manufacturers to determine the feasibility of expanding apprenticeship opportunities provided by Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area into Round Rock. Apprenticeships are often seen as an attractive alternative to academic skill acquisition, offering the stability of a meaningful career for entry-level participants. Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area supports regional manufacturers by organizing apprenticeships based on local need. To understand how this framework could work in Round Rock, the Chamber can reach out to local industry and potentially liaise between employers and Workforce Solutions to determine if there is enough demand to justify the program's expansion.
- 6. Local Workforce Collaboration:** Using existing programs as a foundation, Round Rock Chamber should find ways to support local workforce providers through collaboration and coordination. Similar to regional coordination with educational partnerships, this strategy refers to an open channel of communication and potential collaboration with workforce development providers in Round Rock. Local providers commit resources for the continued development of the local workforce. Round Rock can begin by creating and sharing an inventory of these resources and regularly follow up with providers to determine gaps in funding or resource allocation.

Quality of Life



Strategic Focus Area: Quality of Life

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 1. Downtown Development:** Transform Round Rock's downtown into a vibrant hub for residents and visitors. By enhancing downtown with unique shops, restaurants, and cultural attractions, Round Rock can position itself as a local destination. This development enriches the community and boosts local businesses, encouraging foot traffic and creating a stronger sense of identity. Public-private partnerships, grants, and engaging with property owners could be essential to revitalizing the area.
- 2. Infrastructure Development to Support Growth:** Build infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion. With Round Rock experiencing rapid growth, investing in transportation, utilities, and broadband infrastructure is vital to maintaining quality of life and attracting new businesses. Prioritizing smart infrastructure solutions, such as expanded public transit and road improvements, can help sustain economic development while alleviating congestion.
- 3. Young Professional Attractiveness:** Create amenities and opportunities that appeal to young professionals. Retaining and attracting young professionals requires focusing on nightlife, affordable housing, coworking spaces, and networking opportunities. Hosting regular professional events, increasing urban housing options, and promoting local breweries or entertainment districts could be part of this strategy to ensure Round Rock remains a desirable place for young talent.
- 4. New Parks Development and Destination Creation:** Support the City of Round Rock's current efforts to develop parks and public spaces that serve as community destinations. Parks featuring unique attractions—such as amphitheaters, water features, or adventure play areas—can draw locals and tourists. Additionally, there is a distinct opportunity to tie them in with commercial amenities in the surrounding area. These spaces encourage outdoor activities, improve mental health, and bolster community pride while supporting economic development through increased nearby business traffic.

Strategic Focus Area: Quality of Life

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 5. Lead Agency for “Cool” Commercial Recruitment:** To actively recruit trendy businesses that enhance Round Rock’s cultural appeal, establish a Kitchen Cabinet—an informal coalition of engaged advisors who understand community trends and needs. This group, composed of passionate community members sourced via social media, word of mouth, and grassroots outreach, will serve as a think tank for innovative commercial ideas. The Chamber can lead the charge by collaborating with this “coalition of the willing” to identify and attract unique, creative businesses—boutique shops, specialty cafes, experiential retailers, and other “cool” concepts—that align with Round Rock’s evolving identity. This strategy ensures Round Rock stays attuned to what resonates locally while upgrading its quality of place, drawing higher-end retail, and building a vibrant, culturally rich environment that appeals to a younger, more diverse audience.
- 6. Utilize Influencer Marketing via Social Media:** Leverage social media influencers to showcase Round Rock’s lifestyle and attractions. With TikTok’s headquarters nearby, creating partnerships with local influencers could amplify Round Rock’s appeal to a wider audience. This low-cost marketing strategy could feature local eateries, events, or scenic spots to reach younger demographics and encourage tourism and relocation.
- 7. Convert Austin Food Trucks to Brick and Mortar in Round Rock:** Help Austin-based food trucks transition into permanent establishments in Round Rock. By providing incentives such as reduced rent or grants, Round Rock could attract established food trucks looking to expand. This approach brings unique culinary offerings to the city while reducing dependency on chain restaurants, creating a more vibrant food scene.
- 8. Walkability - More Sidewalks:** Improve walkability by expanding the city’s sidewalk network. Increasing sidewalks enhance safety, encourages active lifestyles, and connects key areas, like downtown and residential neighborhoods. This also supports local businesses by making it easier for residents and visitors to explore on foot, contributing to a more connected and accessible community.

Strategic Focus Area: Quality of Life

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 9. High-End Grocery Recruitment:** Attract high-end grocery stores to improve quality of life and draw regional shoppers. Securing retailers like Whole Foods or Trader Joe's elevates the city's profile and provides desired amenities for current residents. Key steps to securing these stores are collaborating with developers, understanding the brands' criteria, and showcasing Round Rock's market potential.

- 10. Increase Daytime Activities for Downtown:** To enhance downtown Round Rock's appeal to visitors during the day, it is essential to increase activities such as farmers' markets, art fairs, or lunch-hour concerts. The Chamber should collaborate with the city's Arts & Culture Department to promote and elevate these events, creating a more vibrant and inviting atmosphere for locals and tourists. By diversifying offerings and extending business hours, we can transform downtown into a versatile destination.

- 11. Workforce Housing Development:** Address housing affordability through policies encouraging workforce housing. To support the local workforce, Round Rock could adopt zoning changes requiring developers to include affordable housing. Offering incentives for mixed-use developments and streamlining the permitting process can help ensure that housing options meet the needs of a growing population.

Strategic Focus Area: Quality of Life

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 12. More Local Restaurants and Offerings:** Promote the growth of locally owned restaurants to enhance the city's culinary scene. Offering grants, tax incentives, or marketing support for local restaurateurs can foster a unique dining culture. Highlighting these establishments through events or promotions builds community pride and differentiates Round Rock from neighboring cities.
- 13. Breweries and Wineries:** Attract breweries and wineries to cater to younger and social audiences. Developing a brewery or winery trail could serve as a regional attraction while enhancing local nightlife. Incentivizing and integrating these businesses into events such as festivals or tastings fosters economic growth and community engagement.
- 14. Potential Main Street Program or Downtown Association:** Establish a formal organization to lead downtown revitalization efforts. A Main Street Program or similar organization can coordinate beautification projects, business recruitment, and events for downtown Round Rock. To effectively manage this initiative, there is a need to hire an additional staff member within the Chamber who will focus on overseeing this program or association. The city can ensure sustainable development and an enhanced community identity by creating a central body dedicated to this area.

Strategic Partnerships



Strategic Focus Area: Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 1. BRE Coordination with Regional Partners:** Strengthen Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) efforts through regional collaboration. Collaborating with regional chambers, economic development organizations, and local governments can enhance Round Rock's ability to retain and grow businesses. Sharing resources, insights, and best practices enables a more coordinated approach to business needs, while joint initiatives—like workforce training programs or regional marketing campaigns—amplify the impact of retention strategies.
- 2. Diversify Funding Options:** Expand funding sources to ensure sustainable economic development initiatives. Beyond traditional funding, the Chamber can explore grants, corporate sponsorships, and public-private partnerships to finance its programs. Diversifying revenue streams reduces dependency on a single source and ensures that key projects, such as workforce development or infrastructure improvements, have the financial backing needed for long-term success.
- 3. Opportunity Austin Collaboration:** Continue to partner with Opportunity Austin to leverage regional economic development resources. Opportunity Austin provides access to marketing campaigns, regional data, and collaborative initiatives that benefit all partners in Central Texas. Working closely with this program allows Round Rock to align its efforts with larger regional strategies, increasing visibility to potential investors and sharing in workforce development programs tailored to the area's industries.

Strategic Focus Area: Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 4. Industry Associations (ARMA, BIO CTX, etc.):** Build connections with industry associations to strengthen local business ecosystems. Partnering with organizations like ARMA (Austin Regional Manufacturers Association) or BIO CTX fosters sector-specific growth and innovation. These associations provide networking opportunities, workforce training resources, and advocacy, ensuring Round Rock remains competitive in key manufacturing and life sciences industries.
- 5. Utilities (Oncor, Atmos):** Collaborate with utility providers to support business growth and infrastructure needs. Utilities like Oncor and Atmos are critical to ensuring reliable service and infrastructure for businesses and residents. Developing and/or nurturing strong relationships with these providers can streamline permitting, identify future growth areas, and align energy efficiency or sustainability initiatives with broader economic goals.
- 6. Williamson County EDP Collaboration:** Partner with Williamson County Economic Development Partnership to align regional efforts. Close collaboration with Williamson County EDP ensures that Round Rock benefits from county-wide initiatives, including workforce development, infrastructure planning, and business recruitment. Sharing data and aligning strategies maximizes resources and positions the region as a united front for economic opportunities.

Strategic Focus Area: Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 7. Startup/Innovation Partners:** To promote entrepreneurship, Foster partnerships with innovation hubs and startup accelerators. Collaborating with organizations like Capital Factory or Tech Ranch can connect local entrepreneurs to mentorship, funding, and resources. Establishing Round Rock as a supportive startup environment encourages business creation, diversifies the economy, and attracts younger professionals to the area.
- 8. Diversify Chamber Relationships:** Expand the Chamber's network to include diverse organizations and stakeholders. The Chamber can create a more inclusive economic development strategy by building relationships with underrepresented groups, nonprofits, and non-traditional partners. Engaging with diverse communities fosters innovation, increases collaboration opportunities, and ensures that all residents benefit from economic growth.
- 9. International Consulates & Trade Offices:** Leverage international consulates and trade offices to attract foreign investment. Partnering with consulates and trade organizations can open doors to international markets, facilitating foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade opportunities. Round Rock can host trade delegations, promote its assets abroad, and attract international businesses seeking a foothold in the U.S.

Strategic Focus Area: Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 10. Army Futures Command:** Continue strengthening relationship with the Army Futures Command (AFC) to drive defense-related innovation, foster advanced technology development, and promote Round Rock as a hub for high-tech and defense industries.
- 11. Universities (Including UT):** Build stronger partnerships with universities to support talent pipelines and innovation. Partnering with institutions like the University of Texas or Texas State University provides access to research, a skilled workforce, and cutting-edge technologies. Initiatives could include internships, joint research programs, or entrepreneurship support, ensuring that Round Rock businesses benefit from academic resources.
- 12. Governor's Office:** Work with the Governor's Office to access state-level resources and programs. The Governor's Office of Economic Development offers tools like grants, tax incentives, and business recruitment support that can benefit Round Rock. Engaging regularly with state officials ensures the Chamber stays informed of available opportunities and aligns its initiatives with broader state priorities.

Real Estate Development & Reuse



Strategic Focus Area: Real Estate Development & Reuse

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 1. Key Building Retention Plan:** Identify key facilities within Round Rock and negotiate a future control plan if the company leaves or no longer needs building or land. When companies that own their facilities leave the community or no longer need the real estate, they often dispose of it quickly at a steep discount. These discounted properties are frequently repurposed for lesser use or converted to discounted storage. By obtaining the right of first refusal or a right to market the property, the community can help control its future use. The property could also be donated to the community.
- 2. Landowner Partnerships Using Exclusive Options to Control Land:** Use exclusive options to control and develop land for business parks. Preparing sites for development is a costly endeavor. Often, communities or individuals buy land but do not have the resources to conduct studies or run water and wastewater on the property. Using exclusive options allows less money to be spent getting rights to the property, allowing resources to be spent developing the site and providing infrastructure. This speeds up the development process at a lower cost to the community.
- 3. Develop a Business Park:** Develop a community-controlled business park using exclusive options or traditional financing. Round Rock is fortunate to have a robust development community. However, based on the Round Rock Chamber data, the community could not respond to over 100 projects due to the lack of a site. These gaps in site development must be addressed by developing a community-controlled business park. Four identified sites are Avery, Robinson, Nelson, or land East of 130.

Strategic Focus Area: Real Estate Development & Reuse

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 4. Key Intersection Redevelopment:** Work with property owners at key intersections to redevelop their properties to support commercial or mixed-use development. If interested, a good example is the Texas Baptist Children's Home site. It sits at an ideal intersection for large-scale commercial development. Encourage the site's redevelopment by moving their assets to the back of the property to allow for development along Highway 79 and Mays Street.
- 5. Downtown Connection to Brushy Creek:** Develop a pedestrian pathway from the downtown commercial core to Brushy Creek. Connecting the commercial core to the creek and the associated trail system provides additional amenities to those downtown and allows people on the creek trails to access the downtown facilities. North Sheppard Street or North Lampasas Street would be two good options.
- 6. Downtown Wayfinding Signs:** Develop a system of signs to guide cars and pedestrians to key facilities downtown. The signs would create a sense of arrival as vehicles or bicycles enter the downtown area and then guide them to key attractions, facilities (library), areas, and parking. Once in the downtown area, pedestrian wayfinding signs continue to provide direction with more specificity. It uses a system of colors, shapes, displays, and other design elements.
- 7. Mixed-Use Districts:** Support developing or redeveloping areas into mixed-use districts. Plans for The District are a good example of mixed-use development. This could also be incorporated into older developments to build density or offer complementary services or facilities.

Strategic Focus Area: Real Estate Development & Reuse

Strategic Focus Areas

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- 8. Parking Lot Infill Development:** Support infill development in underutilized parking lots. Change policies to allow for infill development in underutilized parking areas. Then, identify parking areas that would benefit from the changes and contact the owner to explain the new policies and encourage development.
- 9. Shopping Center Improvement Program:** Expand the current efforts to support the beautification and use of older commercial properties. Market and expand the current Rock Round Commercial Façade and Site Improvement Grant program to encourage property owners of older shopping centers to update their building facades and enhance street scaping to improve the desirability and value of their properties.
- 10. Round Rock Retail Redevelopment Fund “R-squared”:** Create the R-squared Fund to support transformational improvements at key older shopping center locations. These projects would be beyond the Rock Round Commercial Façade and Site Improvement Grant projects in scope and cost and benefit the city.
- 11. Commercial Corridor Plans:** Create unified commercial corridor plans tying together multiple commercial centers. While focusing on individual shopping centers is beneficial, creating a personality for key commercial corridors creates a place identity. It also creates a signal and vision for property owners to enhance their properties.

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