



# A SUMMARY OF KEY POLICIES AND GOALS

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**Parking and Transportation**  
**Retail Mix and Variety**  
**Housing in the Heart of the City**  
**Land Use and Urban Design**  
**Arts, Entertainment and Culture**  
**Funding and Management**



The following guiding actions and statements were developed to guide the implementation of the Heart of the City Plan. First and foremost, this plan represents the culmination of many other plans and recommendations dating back to the 1970's, and many of those recommendations that have not been carried out are valid today. These statements are also derived from direct feedback from citizens, shoppers and visitors in the streets of the district, a citywide citizen survey, and the voices of many interested citizens and public officials who have worked to improve the Heart of the City over the years.

**PARKING  
AND  
TRANSPORTATION**

THE PLAN WILL STRIVE TO:

**MAKE THE HEART OF MCALLEN, THE BUSINESSES AND INSTITUTIONS, AND THE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS LOCATED IN THE AREA MORE PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED AND FRIENDLY WHILE STILL BEING ACCESSIBLE AND PROVIDING EASY AND IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO PARKING NEAR ALL USES IN THE DISTRICT.**

**THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:**

1. PRIORITIZING THE PEDESTRIAN

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- Continuing to develop pedestrian amenities in public rights-of-way, such as wide sidewalks, shade and places to rest
- Improving access between parking areas and major retail and entertainment areas
- Placing major parking areas in accessible but unobtrusive locations

2. IMPROVING PARKING IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- Provide additional close in parking in structures and surface lots
- Work to improve alley parking for employee parking
- Develop a structure to manage parking district-wide, instead of one lot at a time
- Develop strategies to fund parking while still keeping the cost to the customer affordable
- Develop ways to use parking as an incentive to build in key areas of the heart of the city
- Improve wayfinding to major parking areas

3. IMPROVING ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- Improve traffic flow along 10th street as a key priority
- Begin to adjust and convert the one-way flow to two-way flow in portions of the district
- Create key vehicular gateways to the district from Bicentennial, 10th, and Business 83

**DOWNTOWN/URBAN  
RETAILING**

THE PLAN WILL STRIVE TO:

**MAKE DOWNTOWN A HIGHLY SOUGHT AFTER RETAIL DESTINATION FOR THE CITY AND THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY REGION.**

**THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:**

1. ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING CURRENT BUSINESSES

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- Business retention plan that includes marketing strategies for existing retailers
- Addressing key retailer concerns such as close-in and adequate parking

2. ATTRACTING COMPLEMENTARY USES AND TENANTS TO THE HEART OF THE CITY DISTRICTS

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- Recruitment of new restaurants and casual dining locations to new downtown spaces
- Development of a Downtown Mercado
- Recruitment of major anchor type developments on larger tracts of land such as the old civic center site
- Provide additional pedestrian-friendly landscaping/streetscaping (private/public) as a means of attracting new businesses to the Heart of the City

3. ATTRACTING DIVERSE USES TO SERVE A BROAD RANGE OF VISITORS, RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- Pursue additional restaurants and entertainment uses
- Pursue additional office uses to create a close-in market for uses in the area
- Increase the amount and quality of residential developments in the Heart of the City area



**DOWNTOWN/URBAN HOUSING**

THE PLAN WILL STRIVE TO:

**MAKE THE HEART OF THE CITY A VIBRANT 24-HOUR COMMUNITY BY INCREASING THE AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF AVAILABLE HOUSING IN THE HEART OF THE CITY.**

**THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:**

1. PRESERVING AND IMPROVING THE EXISTING HISTORICAL HOUSING STOCK

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Provide improved buffering between historical areas and new land uses  
Create incentives to preserve historical structures, both residential and non-residential

2. IMPROVING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK SO THAT IT HAS AN IMPROVED APPEARANCE

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Create incentives to improve existing housing structures  
Provide developer incentives to construct compatible new housing that improves overall housing property values in the area

3. PROVIDING BETTER QUALITY HOUSING THAT IDENTIFIES THE HEART OF THE CITY AS A DESIRABLE PLACE TO LIVE IN MCALLEN

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Provide incentives to create higher density housing with greater area amenities such as walking trails, plazas and urban beautification  
Provide incentives to create new and different housing types, such as two story townhouses and rowhouses that fit on narrow urban lots

**EMPLOYMENT**

THE PLAN WILL STRIVE TO:

**ATTRACT EXISTING AND NEW BUSINESS TO REMAIN AND TO LOCATE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY DISTRICT.**

**THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:**

1. FOCUSING ON THE HEART OF THE CITY AS ONE OF THE KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TARGETS OF THE CITY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PICTURE

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Create incentive packages that attract businesses to the Heart of the City  
Create promotional materials and efforts that offer the Heart of the City as an location option for new retail and office uses  
Create recruitment efforts that focus on attracting entertainment uses to the Heart of the City



**LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN**

THE PLAN WILL STRIVE TO:

RECOGNIZE LANDSCAPING AND URBAN DESIGN FEATURES AS A KEY COMPONENT OF THE HEART OF THE CITY, AND INTEGRATE THEM INTO ALL ACTIONS IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

**THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:**

1. BUILD URBAN DESIGN INTO EVERY CITY ACTION IN THE DISTRICT:

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Include urban design components into every project, including infrastructure projects, and include adequate funding

Include major urban design into major expansions of city hall and other city functions

Request that other governmental entities in the area also include major urban design components into their Heart of the City projects.

2. ESTABLISH RELATIVELY HIGH STANDARDS FOR URBAN DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES IN THE HEART OF THE CITY, SO THAT OVER TIME THE AREA CAN BE TRANSFORMED INTO THE PLACE TO BE IN MCALLEN

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Create strong design guidelines that reinforce area standards for urban design and landscaping, but allow creativity

3. ESTABLISH LOCALLY GENERATED FUND SOURCES FOR HEART OF THE CITY URBAN DESIGN

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Create a TIF funding source that maintains district generated property taxes in the area for re-use for district projects.

Provide adequate management oversight of these funds so that they are used to increase the viability of the area.

**MANAGING AND MARKETING DOWNTOWN**

THE PLAN WILL STRIVE TO:

CREATE A COHESIVE AND FOCUSED MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE WHOSE ONE GOAL IS TO REDEVELOP AND PROMOTE THE HEART OF THE CITY

**THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:**

1. ESTABLISHING A MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE WITH ADEQUATE FUNDING AND STAFFING TO FOCUS ON MARKETING THE HEART OF THE CITY

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Create a management mechanism modeled after tried and successful management mechanisms in other similar communities

Identify a secure funding source to recruit a high quality experienced person to guide the Heart of the City redevelopment

Provide a suitable period of time for start-up funding and support, identified as a minimum of three years

Identify adequate funding, generated by the District, such as parking funds, a TIF district or locally collected donations to provide for marketing the Heart of the City district

Provide adequate support for the Management Structure through other area economic development entities such as the Chambers of Commerce and the McAllen Economic Development Corporation



**TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY**

THE PLAN WILL STRIVE TO:

INCREASE HEART OF THE CITY ATTRACTIONS THAT WILL DIVERSIFY THE MIX OF TOURISTS AND VISITORS COMING TO THE HEART OF THE CITY

**THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:**

- 1. CONSIDER LOCATING NEW MUSEUM, ART AND CULTURAL FACILITIES WITHIN THE HEART OF THE CITY

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Actively pursue clustering new cultural facilities within the Heart of the City so as to facilitate visitors coming to the Heart of the City  
 Locate other key facilities such as cultural schools and a new main library in the cultural cluster so as to create an even stronger local and visitor attraction  
 Use the clustering of cultural facilities to create outdoor cultural spaces and event places  
 Focus on outdoor art as part of the cultural attraction of the Heart of the City

- 2. ATTRACTING ENTERTAINMENT USES TO THE HEART OF THE CITY

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Attract night-time entertainment uses that attract both local residents and visitors to the Heart of the City. These may include restaurants, nightclubs, theaters, and arcades.  
 Support the El Rey Theater as a pioneer cultural facility in the Heart of the City  
 Create a high quality downtown "Mercado" that becomes a monthly attraction and a place to acquire both inexpensive and high quality artesanato pieces and other border wares.

**PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

THE PLAN WILL STRIVE TO:

CREATE ENHANCED PLAZAS AND GREEN SPACES IN THE HEART OF THE CITY THAT LEND A MORE ATTRACTIVE APPEARANCE TO THE HEART OF THE CITY

**THIS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:**

- 1. PROVIDING DENSITY BONUSES TO DEVELOPMENTS THAT CREATE MINI PLAZAS AND POCKET PARKS AS PART OF THEIR DEVELOPMENTS

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Require green space and streetscape development as part of new projects in the Heart of the City as shown in the architectural guidelines for the Heart of the City  
 Provide development bonuses for the creation of open space and plazas in the Heart of the City. By doing this, it will also serve to increase the density of the Heart of the City, which is a goal of the plan.

- 2. CREATING OUTDOOR PLAZAS AND GREEN AREAS AS INTEGRAL PARTS OF THE EXPANSION OF CITY HALL AND NEW CULTURAL FACILITIES

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Provide adequate public funding for green areas as part of these projects