

5-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan

2024-2028

BUDA

Economic Development Corporation

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Buda is a ‘carefully curated’ destination—a unique home for investors, entrepreneurs and thinkers, and residents alike.

Buda is a vibrant community in Central Texas, known for its unique blend of small-town charm and modern amenities. As a “carefully curated” destination, Buda attracts investors, entrepreneurs, and residents seeking economic opportunity and a high quality of life. With its strategic location, the city leverages access to robust educational institutions, a skilled workforce, and metropolitan resources while maintaining its distinct identity as a welcoming, close-knit community.

The Buda Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) is committed to driving the city’s economic growth by attracting investment, supporting local businesses, and fostering innovation. This 2024–2028 strategic plan builds on Buda’s existing strengths and positions the city for continued prosperity. Key factors contributing to Buda’s robust economic landscape include a strong regional economy, effective leadership, and strategic partnerships among city leaders, educational institutions, and businesses. The strategy is developed around the following assets:



Target Sectors

The strategic plan identifies advanced manufacturing, knowledge-intensive business services, and arts and entertainment as Buda’s target sectors. These industries provide a framework for business attraction and expansion, aligning with Buda’s strengths and economic goals. By focusing on these sectors, Buda is leveraging its connectivity, skilled workforce, and cultural assets to drive innovation and growth.



Strong Talent and Workforce Ecosystem

Buda’s educated and skilled talent pool is one of its most valuable assets. More than 51% of residents hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, and Hays CISD offers one of Texas’s most comprehensive career and technical education programs. Collaborating with local educational institutions like Texas State University and Austin Community College, Buda is enhancing its workforce development efforts, creating a competitive advantage for business attraction and retention.



Vibrant Small Business Community

Small businesses are the heart of Buda, contributing significantly to the city’s economic vitality. BEDC actively supports these enterprises through grants and incentives, helping them navigate city processes and thrive in a favorable business climate. Buda’s entrepreneurial spirit is further bolstered by its commitment to fostering new ventures.



Innovation and Entrepreneurship

With its proximity to Austin’s tech hub and access to a rich talent pool, Buda is well-positioned to become a center for innovation and entrepreneurship. The strategic plan emphasizes the development of an innovation hub and incubator to support startups and create an ecosystem that nurtures new ideas and businesses. Expanding startup capital resources and promoting Buda’s innovation successes will further enhance its reputation as a hub for entrepreneurial activity.



Destination Development

The plan outlines the potential for developing a destination hospitality anchor to boost tourism and economic activity. It will provide entertainment and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, supporting Buda’s growing population and expanding sales tax base. Additionally, Buda’s vibrant arts and entertainment scene contributes to its cultural identity, attracting visitors and enriching the quality of life for residents.



Unified Brand and Story

A cohesive brand story is essential for Buda’s economic development. The BEDC is committed to advancing unified destination messaging to bolster investment, attract talent, and draw visitors.

OUR 5 GOALS

Goal 1: Curating Investment

We will attract quality investment to grow Buda's economy

Goal 2: Curating Local

We will support and celebrate the businesses and entrepreneurs that call Buda home.

Goal 3: Curating Tomorrow

We will unleash Buda's innovation potential, building tomorrow's Buda today.

Goal 4: Curating Talent

We will invest in the talent that will shape the future of Buda.

Goal 5: Curating Experience

We will promote and curate Buda as a unique Central Texas experience.

The strategic plan also identifies four **"big bets"** that represent game-changing investments for Buda. These include **developing a target sector-focused attraction plan, exploring public-private partnerships for hospitality anchor development, establishing an innovation hub, and advancing unified branding and messaging.** By capitalizing on its strengths and opportunities, Buda is poised to become a leading economic and cultural destination in Central Texas.

Buda's economic development strategy is built around five key goals, with suggested strategies, resources, and actions designed to achieve them.

2. THE OPPORTUNITY

**What truly sets
Buda apart is its
small-town charm.**

A highly desirable Central Texas destination, Buda attracts skilled professionals and investment alike. Despite its modest size, the city packs a punch with its access to metropolitan amenities and assets: world-class educational institutions, an international airport, and a highly skilled workforce.

What truly sets Buda apart, however, is its small-town charm. Its downtown area is adorned with independent shops, its state-recognized schools emphasize a sense of belonging and training for a 21st-century economy, and its arts community reflects the creativity that makes the city unique. In Buda, you'll find the best of both worlds—a vibrant urban environment with a welcoming, close-knit community.

To fully realize its growth potential, Buda must adopt a comprehensive approach to economic prosperity. This involves bringing together stakeholders from across the city and coordinating efforts among economic development partners. In doing so, it is imperative to concurrently plan for the short term and strategize for the long term, employing a range of policies and partnerships to drive impactful change.

STARTING FROM A PLACE OF STRENGTH

The Buda Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) is Buda’s economic development champion, attracting investment, supporting hometown employers and small businesses, catalyzing innovation, investing in future talent, and marketing Buda’s premier Central Texas experience.

As the BEDC begins to implement its 2024-2028 strategic plan, it is operating from a position of strength. Several key factors highlight this robust foundation:

Strong Regional Economy.

Buda is strategically positioned within the thriving Austin metro area, which ranked first among all U.S. metros for job growth from 2019 to 2024, achieving a growth rate of more than 23%. This economic vitality offers a strong platform for Buda to attract new businesses and investment while supporting the expansion of existing enterprises.

Leadership and Staffing.

BEDC has solidified its leadership and staffing, which includes a diverse Board of Directors and a trusted CEO, enhancing its capacity to execute strategic initiatives. The addition of staff dedicated to communications and business development outreach ensures that BEDC is well-equipped to engage with stakeholders effectively and drive economic development efforts forward.

City Relationships.

Strong, collaborative relationships between BEDC and the City of Buda at both the staff and policy leadership levels enable coordinated efforts in economic development. This alignment ensures that BEDC can effectively implement policies and initiatives that align with the city’s goals and priorities.

Understanding of Strengths.

Buda has a clear understanding of its strengths, including its target sectors—such as advanced manufacturing, knowledge-intensive businesses, and arts and entertainment— and its real estate assets. This awareness allows BEDC to strategically leverage these strengths to attract investment and support sustainable growth.

Reputation and Trust.

BEDC has established trusted relationships and a solid reputation throughout the city. This trust is a valuable asset that facilitates collaboration with local businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations, helping to drive economic development initiatives and attract new opportunities.

Financial Position.

BEDC is in a strong financial position, with the resources necessary to support growth initiatives and investments in infrastructure and development projects. This financial stability enables BEDC to make strategic investments and invest in initiatives that will drive long-term economic growth for Buda.



BUDA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE

Buda is a thriving Central Texas community—with a population of approximately 17,000 residents—known for its fast growth and significant investments in economic development. The insights presented in this section are the result of extensive research and stakeholder engagement. This process included a comprehensive benchmarking analysis of Buda and its peer communities, an evaluation of best practices from other economic development corporations (EDCs), and an assessment of the economic impact of a destination hospitality center. Additionally, the process involved a series of stakeholder roundtable discussions, one-on-one interviews, and workshops with BEDC Board members and City Council members. A full data research assessment has been provided to the BEDC as an appendix.



“Carefully Curated” Community

A vibrant Central Texas community, Buda boasts a “carefully curated” quality of life, exceptional schools, and more, attracting an increasingly educated and diverse population. “Carefully curated,” Buda stands out in Central Texas as an ideal destination. Growing nearly 7% from 2018 to 2022, Buda offers a welcoming atmosphere for families, professionals, and businesses alike. Known for its lively downtown, placemaking, and quality schools, Buda is perfect for those seeking a balance between small-town tranquility and big-city conveniences.

As Buda grows, it is also becoming more diverse and educated. The share of Buda's population born outside of the U.S. increased by 46% between 2018 and 2022. Now, more than 51% of Buda residents have a college degree or higher, and the city boasts a median household income exceeding \$105,000. As Buda looks to the future, managing and balancing quality growth are key considerations.



Tomorrow's Economy Today

Buda's target sectors—advanced manufacturing, knowledge-intensive business, and arts and entertainment—lay the foundation for tomorrow's economy today. By strategically leveraging these target sectors, Buda can meticulously identify and support the economic landscape it envisions for both the present and the future. In the short and medium terms, Buda can concentrate on utilizing its intrinsic assets to bolster supply chains and meet the demands of advanced manufacturing. Looking ahead, Buda's investments in knowledge, technical, and professional services will be imperative for fostering a 21st-century innovation economy. Additionally, sustained growth within the arts and entertainment sector will enhance tourism, elevate the quality of life, and establish a durable, sustainable tax base for the future.



Strong Talent and Workforce Ecosystem

Buda's robust talent pool and thriving workforce ecosystem represent its most valuable asset, yet it remains largely untapped. Economic and workforce development are intricately linked today. Successful communities highlight the capabilities and skills of their residents and workforce base, as well as their training ecosystems, in investment pitches. For Buda, this is welcome news: Buda's greatest advantage to future employers is its educated talent base, with more than 51% of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher.

Hays CISD boasts one of the most comprehensive career and technical education (CTE) programs in Texas, training Buda students for careers in advanced manufacturing, robotics, technology, and entrepreneurship. BEDC's relationships with its workforce ecosystem partners are still developing. By collaborating with educational partners, such as the local school district, Austin Community College, and Texas State University, Buda can advance its workforce development approach, serving as an attractive differentiator for prospective investors and companies.



Vibrant Small Business Community

Buda's small businesses are the soul of the community. While they appreciate the BEDC, particularly its grant program, they require additional support in navigating city processes. Buda's thriving small business community lies at the core of its growth. Approximately 22% of businesses in Buda are small enterprises. Benefiting from Texas' favorable business climate, Buda's genuine quality of place—community pride, history, heritage, and recreation—makes it an excellent place to start a business. Home-based businesses further enhance the city's reputation as an entrepreneurial hub.

Demonstrating a commitment to growing Buda-based businesses, BEDC distributed small business incentives to more than 40 small enterprises between 2022 and 2023 to support building improvements, marketing, workforce development, and more. Despite these financial supports, some entrepreneurs have remarked that the navigation system for small businesses to understand city processes and obtain permitting approvals needs to be made easier.



Startup Buda

Buda has the assets that thriving innovation ecosystems require: talent, proximity to a major metro, and a host of quality-of-life assets. An innovation-focused approach could provide Buda with an edge. Startups play a crucial role in driving innovation, fostering economic growth, and spurring job creation. They bring fresh ideas to the market, challenge established norms, and disrupt traditional industries. Startups also serve as incubators for talent, providing opportunities for entrepreneurs to develop their skills and pursue their passions.

There is significant potential for Buda's startup ecosystem to add to the city's innovation fabric. However, investments and strategic direction will need to differ from traditional small business support. To better attract investors and retain founders, Buda will need to formalize its ecosystem and leverage its existing strong economic clusters and capabilities.



Robust Consumer Spending

Buda residents love their local small businesses and have signaled support for growing unique destination experiences. This trend is important for a city that heavily relies on sales tax revenue.

Fostering a vibrant experience and destination economy is vital for the “soul of Buda,” attracting and retaining the next generation of Buda residents and skilled workers. Additionally, increasing and maintaining Buda's sales tax is an economic imperative for the city. Buda residents cherish their small businesses, and their consumer spending bodes well for the city on multiple fronts.

Buda's average retail expenditures surpass the U.S. average in every retail category, highlighting the opportunity for growing and developing a vibrant retail sector. Put simply, Buda's residents possess greater spending potential than the U.S. average, largely due to having more disposable income.

Buda's destination experience is "carefully curated"—its unified brand should be too.



Possibility of a Destination Hospitality Anchor

A destination hospitality anchor—paired with innovative retail and a potential hotel/conference facility—could create year-round activities for both youth and adults, while also driving sales tax revenue. Buda, known for its family-oriented atmosphere, has 29.7% of its population under 18 years old—well above the national and Texas averages. However, despite this demographic advantage, many residents feel that the city lacks sufficient entertainment and recreational opportunities for families and young residents. Additionally, Buda needs a facility that can host community gatherings such as conferences, meetings, and regional events. As the population continues to grow, expanding the sales tax base will be essential to support and improve public services, including public safety, infrastructure, and quality-of-life amenities.

An initial market assessment suggests that developing a destination hospitality facility, serving as an anchor for new retail and entertainment experiences, could help Buda meet these needs. This development would not only provide significant recreational and entertainment options within the city but also enhance tax revenues. Adding a

recreation and entertainment facility anchored by a professional sports team is viewed as a longer-term strategy. The process of securing a professional sports team is complex and influenced by numerous variables beyond municipal control. Nonetheless, the potential economic impact of such a facility would be transformative for Buda. The modeling focused on a minor league professional team with a set number of home games. In addition to these games, the facility could host a variety of events, including concerts, conferences, and exhibitions. The modeling also examined comparable facilities and complexes in Central Texas, incorporating both indoor and outdoor spaces and uses. Considering all variables, the estimated economic impact of a sports and recreation facility in Buda ranges from \$34.8 million to \$71.9 million, with an additional \$1 million to \$1.2 million generated in sales and use tax revenue.



Vibrant Creative Economy

Buda's creative economy—music, art, film, and more—contributes to its unique identity, but growing its impact can create economic opportunity, too. Buda has a rich history as a center of arts and culture. Today, Buda's creative economy is driven by music, film, and a variety of independent visual galleries. Nearly 6% of Buda residents are employed in the arts, entertainment, hospitality, and recreation sectors.

From 2017 to 2018, the growth within Buda's arts and entertainment sector was remarkable, with positive triple-digit increases observed in eight of the top ten largest occupational groups. This rapid increase, combined with the expanding music, television, and film industries across Central Texas, positions Buda to develop a vibrant arts scene of its own. Buda's investments in local artists, arts organizations, and creative and entertainment enterprises can further contribute to the city's industry diversification goals and enhance the city's quality of life, brand, and appeal.



Unified Brand and Story

Buda's destination experience is "carefully curated"—its unified brand should be too. A cohesive story is essential for economic development today, and storytelling is crucial for fostering economic growth. A compelling narrative can engage and attract people, making it an effective tool for drawing investment, talent, residents, and visitors to a community. Increasingly, economic development organizations across Texas and the nation are investing significantly in unified community brands across marketing and digital platforms. Like its peer communities, Buda would benefit from a unified destination development brand, helping to stimulate economic growth by comprehensively showcasing its strengths and potential.



TARGET INDUSTRIES

The identification and evaluation of Buda's target industries form the foundation for future business attraction, expansion, and relocation efforts.

This process also informs the development of incentives, providing the BEDC with direction on which companies to prioritize. Ultimately, it helps shape a narrative that resonates with new enterprises, site selectors, and talent. Prior to its strategic planning, the BEDC conducted a target industry analysis to identify its industry strengths and assets, pinpointing advanced manufacturing, knowledge-intensive businesses, and arts and entertainment as key targets.

Advanced Manufacturing

Buda is strategically positioned within the Texas Triangle, offering a unique advantage for advanced manufacturing due to its excellent connectivity. Firms such as Futronic USA and Made in America Manufacturing are examples of the advanced manufacturing industry recognizing Buda as an advantageous location. Even established companies like Texas Lehigh Cement Company are expanding into new cement processes to adapt to changing manufacturing conditions in Central Texas. The city's location near major highways, Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, and proximity to the Union Pacific rail line makes it an ideal location for manufacturing businesses that require efficient logistics and supply chain operations. This infrastructure supports the movement of goods and provides manufacturers with a reliable base from which to operate, ensuring that Buda can meet the needs of modern, fast-paced industries.

The advanced manufacturing sector in the Austin metropolitan area is robust, with significant players such as Samsung, Applied Materials, and NXP Semiconductors. Buda benefits from

its proximity to these industry leaders, offering collaboration opportunities and access to an established network of suppliers and partners. This existing industry presence strengthens Buda's appeal to manufacturers looking to tap into a thriving ecosystem and leverage shared resources for innovation and growth.

A key strength of Buda's advanced manufacturing sector is the skilled workforce available in the region. With several universities and research institutions nearby, including The University of Texas at Austin and Texas State University, Buda has access to a steady stream of engineering and technology graduates. This talent pool is essential for advanced manufacturing industries, which require a workforce skilled in the latest technologies and processes. The presence of such institutions ensures that Buda can attract and retain the talent necessary to support industry growth.

Innovation is at the heart of advanced manufacturing, and Buda is well-positioned to capitalize on this trend. The sector involves integrating cutting-edge technologies such as robotics, 3D printing, and artificial intelligence to enhance productivity, reduce waste, and adapt quickly to changing market demands. Buda's focus on technology-driven manufacturing offers a competitive edge, allowing local manufacturers to produce high-value products that meet the evolving needs of a global marketplace.

The semiconductor support services industry presents a significant opportunity for Buda. Given the area's established tech ecosystem and the high demand for advanced manufacturing solutions, Buda is well-positioned to attract semiconductor equipment suppliers and design firms looking to expand in a cost-effective environment. This presents an opportunity for Buda to become a hub for semiconductor

innovation, further solidifying its place in the high-tech manufacturing landscape.

Partnerships with local educational institutions present another opportunity for Buda's advanced manufacturing sector. By fostering collaborations with universities and vocational schools, Buda can enhance workforce development and innovation. Such partnerships can lead to specialized training programs and support research initiatives that align with industry needs, ensuring that the local workforce is equipped with the skills necessary to drive manufacturing advancements.

Buda can also emphasize sustainable manufacturing practices to attract environmentally conscious manufacturers. By promoting energy efficiency, waste reduction, and the use of renewable resources, Buda can enhance its reputation as a green manufacturing hub. With companies like Krannich Solar recently opening a facility in Buda and Texas Lehigh Cement Company introducing a slag cement process, Buda is seeing the emergence of companies new and old adapting to a changing market. This focus on sustainability aligns with global trends and positions Buda as a forward-thinking community dedicated to responsible growth.

As commercial and industrial real estate costs rise in Austin, Buda has the opportunity to attract businesses seeking more affordable locations. With its competitive advantages and proximity to Austin's economic activity, Buda is an attractive option for companies looking to benefit from the region's strengths while minimizing costs. This potential for attracting new businesses further bolsters Buda's advanced manufacturing sector and supports the city's economic development goals.

Knowledge-Intensive Business Services (KIBS)

Buda's proximity to Austin, a leading technology hub, provides a substantial advantage for the knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS) sector. This strategic location offers access to a diverse and highly skilled workforce, particularly in software engineering, IT services, and other specialized fields. Buda can tap into Austin's vibrant startup ecosystem and innovation networks, making it an attractive destination for businesses seeking expertise and collaboration.

The KIBS sector in Buda is characterized by a diverse range of specialized services, including engineering, management consulting, research and development, legal services,

and IT consulting. These services are essential for supporting innovation and operational efficiency across various industries. By providing expert knowledge and skills, KIBS firms in Buda can help businesses enhance their competitiveness and adapt to changing market conditions. Furthermore, clustering KIBS increases the likelihood of Buda's highly educated workforce living and working in Buda. New small business and employment opportunities are possible with a focus on this increasingly important sector.

Buda benefits from a strong entrepreneurial culture supported by local incubators, accelerators, and co-working spaces such as Capital Factory and Tech Ranch Austin. These resources offer mentorship, funding, and networking opportunities for startups and small businesses, fostering an

environment where innovation can thrive. This culture of entrepreneurship is a key strength of Buda's KIBS sector, attracting businesses and professionals looking for a supportive community.

Access to venture capital is another strength of Buda's KIBS sector. The Austin metropolitan area is one of the top locations for venture capital investment, providing businesses in Buda with opportunities to secure funding for growth and expansion. This access to capital is crucial for startups and established companies alike, enabling them to invest in new technologies and scale their operations.

The expansion of IT and software services presents a significant opportunity for Buda's KIBS sector. As demand for technology solutions continues to grow, Buda can attract tech

companies and professionals seeking a supportive business environment with access to a skilled workforce. By positioning itself as a hub for IT and software services, Buda can further strengthen its reputation as a center for innovation.

Partnerships with nearby academic institutions offer another opportunity for growth in Buda's KIBS sector. Collaborating with universities can facilitate research partnerships, talent pipelines, and innovation initiatives, driving advancements in fields such as artificial intelligence and data analytics. These partnerships can also enhance Buda's ability to attract and retain top talent, supporting long-term economic development.

Investing in co-working spaces and business incubators can support remote workers and freelancers, fostering a dynamic environment for innovation and collaboration within the KIBS sector. By providing flexible workspaces and resources, Buda can attract a diverse range of professionals and businesses, enhancing its appeal as a business destination.

The rise of fintech in the region presents an opportunity for Buda to attract financial services firms and startups. By leveraging the growth of fintech, Buda can enhance its reputation as a center for financial innovation, attracting businesses that offer leading-edge solutions in areas such as payment processing, investment management, and lending.

Arts and Entertainment

Buda is part of a region known for its vibrant arts and entertainment scene, offering numerous opportunities to engage in cultural and creative activities. The city's access to a wide range of cultural events, music festivals, and artistic performances enhances the quality of life for residents and attracts visitors from across the region. This cultural vibrancy is a key strength of Buda's arts and entertainment sector, contributing to the city's appeal as a destination for entertainment and leisure.

Buda can capitalize on this momentum to develop its arts and entertainment offerings. Supporting local artists and creative professionals, developing performance venues and cultural spaces, collaborating with established creative industries in Austin, and emphasizing community engagement in arts and

entertainment presents an opportunity for Buda to attract more events and productions, boost tourism and local business activity, and foster a sense of belonging and pride in its cultural identity.



Buda is part of a region known for its vibrant arts and entertainment scene.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Buda is a vibrant and rapidly growing community in Central Texas, offering a unique blend of small-town charm and “big city” amenities. Its strategic location positions Buda to attract and retain businesses and talent, enhancing its economic development advantage.

The city boasts a highly educated and skilled workforce, supported by proximity to educational institutions like Texas State University and The University of Texas at Austin. Buda’s identification of its target sectors—advanced manufacturing, knowledge-intensive business services, and arts and entertainment—provides a framework for guiding future business development efforts.

Known for its exceptional quality of life, Buda offers a welcoming community atmosphere and a diverse array of cultural and recreational opportunities. With its strong foundation and forward-thinking economic development plan, Buda is well-equipped to strengthen its economic development advantage.

The defined goals, strategies, and tactics in the following economic development strategy will enable stakeholders to understand their specific roles and encourage increased collaboration among partners. This five-year plan is flexible, requiring regular review to ensure consistency with key goals and strategies while evolving with Buda’s growth and changing economic conditions. BEDC Board members and staff should examine the strategy at least annually to identify deficiencies and opportunities, updating the plan to address changing needs.

Goals of the 5-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Curating Investment

We will attract quality investment to grow Buda’s economy

Goal 2: Curating Local.

We will support and celebrate the businesses and entrepreneurs that call Buda home.

Goal 3: Curating Tomorrow

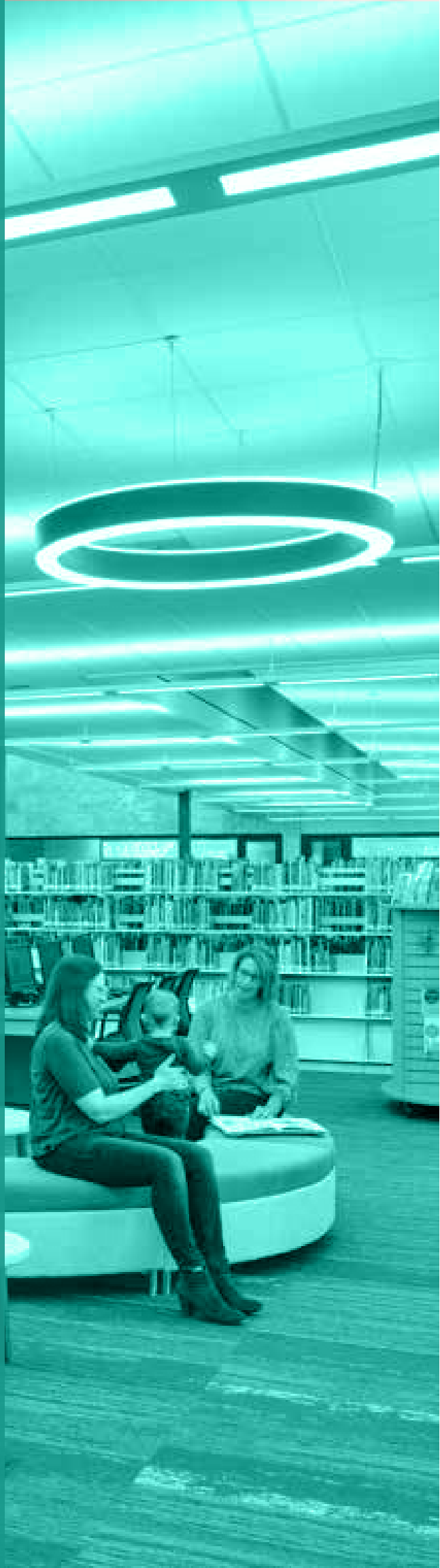
We will unleash Buda’s innovation potential, building tomorrow’s Buda today.

Goal 4: Curating Talent

We will invest in the talent that will shape the future of Buda.

Goal 5: Curating Experience

We will promote and curate Buda as a unique Central Texas experience.



Among the strategies included in the strategic plan, four are identified as “big bets”—game-changing investments for Buda. These priorities allow the BEDC to focus on the most impactful strategies:

- **Build a target sector-focused attraction plan, including a refined request for information (RFI) process and site-selection strategy.**
- **Explore a public-private partnership to create a destination entertainment or sports-focused development, anchoring new retail and experiences.**
- **Explore the development of an innovation and entrepreneurship hub and incubator.**
- **Advance unified destination messaging to bolster investment, attract talent, and draw visitors.**

GOAL 1: CURATING INVESTMENT

We will attract quality investment to grow Buda’s economy.

Buda is transforming from a suburban bedroom community into a vibrant destination—a place to live, work, and play. By strategically attracting diverse investments and businesses, especially in the city’s target sectors—advanced manufacturing, knowledge-intensive businesses, and arts and entertainment—alongside curated retail experiences, Buda will welcome fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and diverse skills. This goal will strengthen the city’s tax base and create new opportunities for residents. To achieve this, BEDC must adopt a strategic approach, preparing the business environment to facilitate quality investments with ease and community-wide support.

The following metrics should be tracked to assess implementation and impact.

- **RFIs completed**
counting the number of RFIs received, responded to, shortlisted, and won
- **New businesses and investment**
tracking the number of new businesses and investments and whether they align with target clusters and strategies
- **Employment (Total, by cluster and by project)**
tracking total jobs generated and whether they are tied to specific sectors or strategies
- **Sales tax revenue**
tracking annual sales tax in Buda and revenue generated by new retail and entertainment experiences
- **Property taxes**
tracking property taxes associated with new investments and expansions driven by BEDC incentives

STRATEGY 1.1

Build a target sector-focused attraction plan, including a refined RFI process and site-selection strategy

Buda can develop a more comprehensive and efficient approach to economic development by adopting a targeted sector strategy that emphasizes relationships and efficiency. By refining the RFI process, Buda will present itself as a city that is open for business, attracting prospects and site selectors. Moreover, by cultivating strong relationships with site selectors,

Buda will gain valuable insights into upcoming projects and investment opportunities, enhancing its visibility among businesses looking to expand or relocate to Texas.

ACTIONS

- Update the project intake form, processes, and partnership agreements to ensure a more coordinated RFI process.
- Establish systematic meetings with Greater San Marcos Partnership (GSMP) to review RFI and lead-generation opportunities.
- Identify annual recruitment trip opportunities with partners.
- Maintain and update an RFI response library, including a pitch deck and cluster profiles.
- Identify target markets, conferences, and site selectors; implement action plans as appropriate.

STRATEGY 1.2

Explore a public-private partnership to create a destination entertainment or sports-focused development, anchoring new retail and experiences

Buda is a family-oriented town. By exploring a public-private partnership to develop a destination entertainment facility, Buda could offer year-round activities for both youth and adults, further enhancing its appeal as a family-friendly community. This facility, complemented by retail and hospitality options, would not only enrich the quality of life for residents but also attract visitors from surrounding areas. Adding a recreation and entertainment facility anchored by a professional sports team is viewed as a longer-term strategy. The process of securing a professional sports team is complex and influenced by numerous variables beyond municipal control. Nonetheless, the potential economic impact of such a facility would be transformative for Buda.

ACTIONS

- Conduct comprehensive research on successful public-private partnership models for recreation developments; use those lessons learned to drive Buda’s approach.
- Identify potential sites within Buda suitable for the development.
- Explore potential partnership opportunities to expand the project’s scope and impact.
- Draft a request for proposal (RFP) outlining the project’s vision, goals, and requirements. The RFP should include criteria for developer selection, such as experience, financial capability, and proposed development plans.
- Issue the RFP and manage the selection process.

STRATEGY 1.3

Refresh BEDC's incentive program.

Buda's incentive program has been a critical tool for attracting investment to the city. However, best practices suggest that BEDC should review its economic incentive program to ensure it effectively meets the diverse needs of its growing business community. This review should include how the city supports large, medium, and small businesses alike. Revisiting the criteria for selection and decision-making will help align the program with Buda's long-term economic goals, ensuring that incentives are awarded to businesses that best contribute to the community's prosperity. An updated incentive program will not only strengthen Buda's economic resilience but also enhance its reputation as a business-friendly city committed to fostering innovation and growth.

ACTIONS

- Establish a working committee to identify gaps in the current incentive program.
- Review incentive best practices across the state.
- Analyze previous BEDC incentive deals to understand their impact, including what worked, what didn't, and what gaps persist for small and medium-sized businesses.
- Draft an updated policy and seek approval from the BEDC Board and City Council.

STRATEGY 1.4

Execute a diverse retail strategy to improve availability, grow the city tax base, and capture a greater market share.

Buda's average retail expenditures exceed the U.S. average in every category, underscoring the potential for developing a vibrant retail sector in the city. To maintain Buda's distinct character while expanding its sales tax base to fuel and support city services, the city needs to implement a retail strategy. This strategy should explore how BEDC can help diversify retail options in the community, ranging from boutique shops to larger destination shopping and dining experiences.

ACTIONS

- Develop an RFP for hiring a retail consultant to create a retail attraction strategy.
- Formulate a detailed retail strategy that targets both large retail opportunities to maximize sales tax revenue and distinctive boutique retailers to maintain Buda's unique identity.
- Establish and nurture relationships with site selectors representing retail and hospitality enterprises and brands.

- Participate in trade shows focused on entertainment, hospitality, and retail industries.
- Annually update Buda's pitch deck for entertainment and hospitality brands.

GOAL 2: CURATING LOCAL

We will support and celebrate the businesses and entrepreneurs that call Buda home.

Buda is transforming from a suburban bedroom community into a vibrant destination—a place to live, work, and play. By strategically attracting diverse investments and businesses, especially in the city's target sectors—advanced manufacturing, knowledge-intensive businesses, and arts and entertainment—alongside curated retail experiences, Buda will welcome fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and diverse skills. This goal will strengthen the city's tax base and create new opportunities for residents. To achieve this, BEDC must adopt a strategic approach, preparing the business environment to facilitate quality investments with ease and community-wide support.

The following metrics should be tracked to assess implementation and impact.

- **Business engagement**
tracking the support given to Buda employers through roundtable discussions, visits, resource needs, and more
- **Small business incentives**
tracking the number of small businesses receiving incentive dollars

STRATEGY 2.1

Grow BEDC's Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) initiative to drive recruitment and policy development.

A robust business expansion and retention initiative is a critical element of a modern economic development program. Typically, more than 70% of jobs created in a community come from established businesses. To grow and scale its BRE initiative and impact, BEDC should continue engaging in one-on-one visits with local businesses. Additionally, it should facilitate a series of roundtable discussions with key stakeholders, including major employers and policymakers, to better understand the needs of the community's businesses. These collaborative discussions will help establish curated and customized initiatives and strategies to strengthen Buda's position as a thriving Central Texas economic hub.

ACTIONS

- Host roundtables with companies in target sectors to identify specific needs and growth opportunities within Buda.
- Scale BEDC's formal business visitation plan, interviewing at least 60 employers annually in Buda.
- Utilize these engagements to identify opportunities and needs, and systematically report key findings.

STRATEGY 2.2

Develop a BEDC concierge service that matches small and creative businesses with the necessary technical, educational, and navigational support.

Buda's genuine quality of place, combined with Texas's favorable business climate, makes it an ideal Central Texas community to start a business. Small enterprises, which make up approximately 22% of businesses in Buda, are foundational to the city's economy. Implementing a BEDC concierge service that connects these businesses with essential technical, educational, and navigational support can help them continue to grow and scale. This initiative will strengthen the local business ecosystem and enhance Buda's reputation as a vibrant and supportive community for entrepreneurs.

ACTIONS

- Create a portal on the BEDC website where businesses can share their feedback with BEDC and city staff.
- Develop a process for assigning small businesses with a dedicated advisor who can help guide them through the development process or connect them with necessary resources.
- Compile a list of available small business technical, educational, and navigational resources within Buda and the surrounding areas.
- Report annually on the lessons learned from engagement with small businesses.

STRATEGY 2.3

Support Buda home-based businesses through pop-ups, mentorship, and more.

Entrepreneurship is a critical part of Buda's community identity. To help grow the next generation of Buda's businesses and entrepreneurs, the city should help expand and scale home-based businesses within the community. These businesses often serve as the starting point for innovative ideas, providing a low-risk platform for entrepreneurs to test and develop their concepts. By fostering an environment that supports these ventures, Buda can nurture local talent, drive economic growth, and promote wealth and job creation in the community.

ACTIONS

- Develop a survey to identify and catalog Buda's home-based businesses and their needs.
- Create a resource guide/center for home-based businesses.
- Host networking events to bring entrepreneurs together.
- Host an annual pop-up business week downtown featuring home-based entrepreneurs.
- Connect home-based businesses as they scale, with additional resources identified through BEDC's incubator initiative.

STRATEGY 2.4

Celebrate Buda's businesses and entrepreneurs.

Buda should actively promote local businesses of all sizes, highlighting their diversity and successes. By doing so, Buda can encourage a new wave of enterprises and entrepreneurs, making the city a desirable Central Texas community for conducting business. Supporting local businesses not only strengthens the local economy but also fosters a sense of community and identity. As these businesses thrive, they will contribute to the vibrant culture and growth of Buda, making it a dynamic destination.

ACTIONS

- Building off the success of BEDC's social media platforms, continue to promote Buda's successes across multiple communication channels: websites, blogs, social media, and direct emails.

GOAL 3: CURATING TOMORROW

We will unleash Buda's innovation potential, building its entrepreneurial ecosystem today.

With its strategic location, abundant skilled talent pool, and dynamic entrepreneurial environment, Buda possesses the essential elements for fostering an emerging ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship, poised to shape the future of the city. Establishing and nurturing an innovation ecosystem in Buda requires a comprehensive approach, encompassing physical infrastructure, networking opportunities, technological capabilities, and more. This approach should prioritize enterprises with the potential to scale and expand beyond local markets, thereby driving sustainable economic growth. By spearheading such initiatives, BEDC is laying the groundwork for the next generation of Buda-based enterprises, products, and services, positioning the city as a hub of innovation and economic prosperity.

The following metrics should be tracked to assess implementation and impact.

- **Startups supported**
counting the number of startups engaged and supported by BEDC

STRATEGY 3.1

Explore the development of an innovation and entrepreneurship hub and incubator.

Developing Buda as a center for innovation and entrepreneurship is essential for nurturing the next generation of businesses within the city. By doing so, Buda can set itself apart from other Central Texas communities and attract entrepreneurs who appreciate its exceptional quality of life. An innovation and entrepreneurship hub or incubator can act as a catalyst for collaboration among local businesses, educational institutions, and investors, enhancing Buda's reputation as a leader in innovation. This initiative will cultivate an entrepreneurial ecosystem that nurtures startups and small businesses, connecting entrepreneurs with critical resources.

ACTIONS

- Complete a site assessment for the potential site identified for BEDC's incubator/accelerator.

- Conduct an analysis of an incubator versus an accelerator and present the findings to the BEDC Board.
- Develop a work plan for the remainder of 2024 and beyond that outlines the steps necessary to open an incubator/accelerator in 2025.

STRATEGY 3.2

Expand startup capital resources in Buda, leveraging the regional investor base.

Startup capital is essential for any scalable enterprise. To position itself as an innovation center, Buda and BEDC must be well-connected within the capital landscape of Central Texas and beyond. Founders, entrepreneurs, executives, and capital providers will look to BEDC to foster connections within the community. Hosting networking events and building strong relationships with capital providers throughout the region is crucial for enhancing Buda's reputation as a startup and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

ACTIONS

- Develop a survey to identify potential investors and possible engagement opportunities with them.
- Host networking opportunities for angel investors in Buda and Central Texas.
- Create matchmaking opportunities for investors and promising Buda scale-up businesses.
- Build relationships with the investor base in Central Texas, including organizations such as Capital Factory, Central Texas Angel Network, Opportunity Austin, and others.
- Ensure businesses have access to traditional capital resources.

STRATEGY 3.3

Promote Buda's startup community.

Storytelling plays a crucial role in signaling that Buda sees itself as an innovation and entrepreneurial hub that is open for business. Entrepreneurs and investors are drawn to communities where they can connect with like-minded individuals, making it essential for Buda to promote its scale-ups and innovation successes. By doing so, Buda can create a vibrant ecosystem that attracts and retains top talent, fostering collaboration and driving economic growth.

ACTIONS

- Market Buda startups across BEDC communication channels.

GOAL 4: CURATING TALENT

We will invest in the talent that will shape the future of Buda.

Economic development today is intricately linked to talent attraction and retention. One of Buda's greatest assets to future employers is its educated and skilled talent base: more than 51% of Buda residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Hays CISD boasts one of the most comprehensive CTE programs in Texas. By collaborating with educational partners such as the local school district, Austin Community College, and Texas State University, Buda advances its workforce development approach, serving as an attractive differentiator for prospective investors and companies.

The following metrics should be tracked to assess implementation and impact.

- **CTE graduates**
counting the number of students completing Hays CISD CTE programs that align with Buda's target sectors

STRATEGY 4.1

Partner with Hays CISD to align CTE programs and career pathways with target sectors and key job creators.

Hays CISD has one of the most robust CTE programs in Central Texas. Buda's businesses—particularly those in sectors like advanced manufacturing, technology, health care, and trades—are ideal landing spots and training grounds for students in these programs. Buda businesses benefit from access to a locally grown talent pool, enhancing their workforce with skilled graduates. BEDC can collaborate with Hays CISD leaders to strengthen the connection between this talent pool and local businesses, creating a win-win situation for students and employers alike.

ACTIONS

- Host roundtables with companies and workforce development partners to discuss workforce and training needs.
- Partner with Hays CISD to connect Buda companies with CTE programs and graduates.

STRATEGY 4.2

Establish relationships with workforce and educational anchors, including Texas State, Austin Community College, and others, to identify shared priorities.

Talent is critical for economic development today and is often considered the number one factor for site selection. Buda benefits from a highly educated resident population, with 51% holding a bachelor's degree or higher, and is surrounded by important educational and workforce development partners like Texas State University and Austin Community College. Building relationships with these institutions can support Buda's economic development, business attraction, and expansion efforts. The BEDC can also connect with these institutions to further enhance the city's competitiveness.

ACTIONS

- Implement a formal visitation plan with area workforce and educational anchors, committing to at least one annual visit.
- Convene area workforce and educational anchors, such as Hays CISD, Texas State University, and Austin Community College, to discuss opportunities for engagement and collaboration with each other and with BEDC.
- Leverage workforce partnerships to support business recruitments and site visits.

STRATEGY 4.3

Create networking opportunities for Buda's young professionals.

One of the most important ways to attract and retain young professional talent is by developing local initiatives that connect young residents with one another. While young professionals in Buda appreciate the advantages of the local community, they are eager for increased engagement. By partnering with others in the community, BEDC can create opportunities for young professionals to connect, fostering a stronger bond with Buda and enhancing its appeal as a vibrant place to live and work.

ACTIONS

- Partner on events in Buda for young professionals informed by best practices in communities similar to Buda, including networking sessions and volunteer opportunities.
- Actively highlight and promote the achievements of young professionals in Buda.

GOAL 5: CURATING EXPERIENCE

We will promote and curate Buda as a unique Central Texas experience.

Storytelling and marketing play crucial roles in economic development. A comprehensive community brand can contribute to complete community building, build resident pride, and ensure a greater impact of resources. By leveraging its carefully curated messaging, Buda can position itself as a vibrant, unique destination in Central Texas.

The following metrics should be tracked to assess implementation and impact.

- **Online presence**
tracking the engagement of online marketing efforts (website, e-newsletter, social media)
- **Placemaking investments**
counting the number of placemaking investments and associated dollars (festivals, public art, concerts)

STRATEGY 5.1

Advance unified destination messaging to bolster investment, attract talent, and draw visitors.

Best practices in economic development today emphasize the importance of a unified brand story that appeals to businesses, investors, talent, and visitors. This approach ensures that messaging is consistent across all platforms and uses. A step toward a unified brand for Buda is exploring potential marketing collaborations among partners to support local businesses. By working together, these partners can create a cohesive and attractive image of Buda that enhances its economic growth and community appeal.

ACTIONS

- Partner with city and destination development partners on an economic development pitch to be used by all partners.
- Explore possible pathways for marketing collaborations to support Buda businesses.

STRATEGY 5.2

Make placemaking and destination investments, including large festivals, events, and more, to enhance Buda's quality of life.

Placemaking involves designing a robust network of public spaces and events that facilitate social activities and creative art interventions. When effectively deployed, these activities can support vibrant retail and entertainment uses, create economic opportunities, and bring diverse communities together. Downtown Buda is a strategic location for placemaking initiatives, such as festivals, events, and public art, given its cluster of civic spaces, businesses, and its growing base of residents and visitors.

ACTIONS

- Develop a systematic placemaking investment program with clear selection criteria and defined investment levels.
- Pilot the placemaking program, evaluate its impact, and scale based on findings.
- Promote all placemaking investments across BEDC communication platforms.

STRATEGY 5.3

Promote and market Buda's small businesses and city experiences to drive visitors to the city.

Buda is home to unique small businesses that have been "carefully curated" to create exceptional shopping and destination experiences for residents and visitors alike. These include live music venues, breweries, one-of-a-kind dining, and specialty shops. To ensure that Buda's destination reputation continues to thrive, the BEDC and its partners can promote and market these distinctive small businesses across a range of platforms and destinations, attracting more visitors and enhancing the community's appeal.

ACTIONS

- Collaborate with destination partners to update the inventory of Buda's destination assets, including small businesses, music, art, food, breweries, and cultural and recreational amenities.
- Develop curated destination experiences for Buda residents and target visitors; test ideas on social media.

STRATEGY 5.4

Establish a communication plan to disseminate BEDC's successes.

As the BEDC advances its strategic plan, it is crucial to share the successes of their work and the broader economic development achievements in the city with stakeholders. This practice will strengthen relationships with the City Council, business communities, and residents, fostering support for economic development efforts. It is important for the broader Buda community to understand why economic development investments are being made and the impact they are having on the community's growth and prosperity.

ACTIONS

- Develop and execute a communication plan for updating Buda stakeholders on impact, metrics, and activities.
- Host, in collaboration with city partners, an annual BEDC economic development convening.

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