

City of Johnson City

STRATEGIC WORK PLAN



CITY COUNCIL

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Amended by the City Council on February 6, 2024.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A **Strategic Work Plan** is a living document created by the City Council to guide future policy decisions and Staff actions. Each year, the City Council revisits the document to remind itself of the City's vision, mission, history, goals, and work tasks.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision for Johnson City includes a well-planned community, ensuring small town values that consider our town's rich history, resulting in an improved quality-of-life for all Johnson City citizens and those who visit.

MISSION STATEMENT

To promote and enhance quality-of-life thru the advancement of excellent services, superior infrastructure, and community growth and public safety.

HISTORY

Johnson City, the county seat of Blanco County, is at the junction of U.S. Highways 281 and 290, twelve miles north of Blanco in the central part of the County. Settlers living along the Pedernales River in the rugged central part of the County, among them one James Polk Johnson, for whom the town was later named, thought that the county seat at Blanco was not accessible, so, in 1876, they called for an election to move the courthouse closer to the geographical center of the County. When this attempt failed, the citizens followed Johnson's lead and began publicizing the idea of establishing a new community. The site chosen was on land originally granted to James Fentress, which belonged to Johnson. A post office was established there in 1878, and, soon afterwards, town lots were offered for sale. In 1879, the people successfully petitioned for an election to choose a new county seat but were defeated. Meanwhile, the town continued to grow, especially bolstered by the construction of Johnson's two-story office building and his hotel. He also donated lots for schools. In 1890, another county seat election, a hotly contested one, made Johnson City the County seat.

Though its new status boosted the economy of the community, Johnson City did not get modern utilities until the 1930s, when Lyndon Baines Johnson, a relative of the founder of the City, sponsored legislation that introduced full electric power to the area under the Lower Colorado River Authority and the Pedernales Electric Cooperative. After Johnson became a United States Senator and began his climb to the presidency, telephone service rapidly progressed from the old magnetic box phones to dial service and then to worldwide service. In addition, when he returned from the White House, Johnson made the United States a gift of his lands, now the Lyndon Baines Johnson National Historical Park.

Johnson City, for many years mainly a ranch trade center, had a steady tourist business from its origins. Though the number of businesses dropped from twenty in 1914 to seven in 1933, it rose to forty-two in the mid-1950s, when the town was incorporated. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Johnson was President of the United States, the major income in Johnson City came from the tourist industry, and the number of businesses rose to fifty-two. By 1986, the number had dropped to twenty-six. The town's newspaper, the Record-Courier, was established in 1883. The population fluctuated from 400 in 1925 to 950 in the late 1940s, and from 660 to 800 between the late 1960s and the mid-1980s. Johnson City continues to be mainly a tourist center. In 1990, the population was 932. That figure increased to 1,191 by 2000. The U.S. Census Bureau 2020 population was 1,627.

Mary H. Ogilvie, "Johnson City, TX," Handbook of Texas Online, accessed December 20, 2020, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/johnson-city-tx>.

The following goals, priorities, and projects are not listed in priority order.

GOAL 1 | PROMOTE TOURISM
short-term goal (2024 - 2026)

PRIORITY ONE:

Maintain Johnson City Visitor Center operations during dates and times established by the City Council, and continue to promote and encourage day-tripping and other forms of tourism within Johnson City.

PROJECTS

- Staff the Visitor Center, as necessary, to maintain operations on established dates and times.
- Coordinate volunteers, on an as needed basis, to increase dates and times of Visitor Center operations.
- Seek, fund, and, if necessary, construct a permanent Visitor Center facility.
- Ensure ongoing maintenance of the Visitor Center and distributed marketing materials to regional attractions and lodging. See Goal No. 6 below.

PRIORITY TWO:

Construct and/or maintain tourism-friendly infrastructure, services, and safe accessibility within Johnson City.

PROJECTS

- Identify and fund alternative transportation methods, such as pedestrian / bicycle facilities and trolleys, within the City's main commercial corridors and Downtown District.
- Reduce vehicular speed limits on U.S. Hwy. 290 / Main St. and U.S. Hwy. 281.
- Maintain existing entry signage welcoming residents and visitors to the City.
- Create and/or encourage distinctive and aesthetically pleasing streetscaping and signage within the City's main commercial corridors (U.S. Hwy. 290, U.S. Hwy. 281, and N. Nugent Ave.).
- Install and/or encourage the development of sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, streetlighting, and improved directional signage within the City's main commercial corridors.

PRIORITY THREE:

Coordinate with the National Park Service to establish and expand educational programs at the LBJ National Historical Park, including, but not limited to, living history exhibits at the Johnson Settlement and LBJ Boyhood Home, in order to increase education and history-based tourism.

GOAL 2 |

INCREASE / EXPAND CITY REVENUE STREAMS mid- to long-term goal (2026 - 2030)

PRIORITY ONE:

Increase Municipal sales and use tax collections.

PROJECTS

- Negotiate and execute a sales and use tax allocation agreement with the North Blanco Co. Emergency Services District No. 1 (ESD).
- Refer to Goal Nos. 1 and 7 herein.

PRIORITY TWO:

Proactively identify and apply for grant funding through governmental and other sources.

PROJECTS

- Seek assistance from regional, State, and Federal sources, such as the Pedernales Electric Cooperative (PEC), Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), to fund Municipal projects.
- Refer to Goal Nos. 4 and 5 herein.

PRIORITY THREE:

Proactively monitor the Texas Legislature; take all available steps to defeat legislation that attempts to erode municipal authority, impose an unfunded mandate, or is otherwise detrimental to cities; and take all available steps to adopt legislation that attempts to increase / expand municipal revenue streams.

**GOAL 3 | IMPROVE CODE ENFORCEMENT
short-term goal (2024 - 2026)**

PRIORITY ONE:

Transition from a complaint-driven to a proactive Code Enforcement / Animal Control program.

PROJECTS

- Routinely conduct windshield surveys and/or “ride-alongs” to identify Code-related deficiencies.
- Address dilapidated structures.

PRIORITY TWO:

Maintain a Code Enforcement / Animal Control Department.

PROJECTS

- Provide the tools necessary for the Code Enforcement / Animal Control Officer to identify, respond, and correct Code violations throughout the City in a timely manner.
- Provide continuing education for the Code Enforcement / Animal Control Officer.
- Utilize FundView’s Code Enforcement Module for the identification, tracking, and correction of Code Enforcement / Animal Control issues throughout the community.
- Utilize a citizen request module to receive citizen complaints and/or comments and rectify said issues in a timely manner.

PRIORITY THREE:

Initiate a public relations campaign to educate the public on Code of Ordinances requirements. Refer to Goal No. 6 herein.

PROJECTS

- Utilize the City’s website, social media platforms, utility billing statements, and other appropriate mediums to educate the public on:
 - Municipal Code of Ordinances;
 - Citizen request platforms;
 - Short-term rental unit registration requirements and Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) collection and remittance;
 - Trash can removal requirements; and
 - All other identified Code Enforcement issues.

PRIORITY FOUR:

Address short-term rental units and their impact on the availability of affordable single-family housing within Johnson City.

GOAL 4 |

INCREASE / EXPAND CITY FACILITIES & STAFFING short- to mid-term goal (2024 - 2028)

PRIORITY ONE:

Expand and/or relocate the Municipal Complex to accommodate current and future needs.

PROJECTS

- Conduct a feasibility study to determine Municipal Department needs, space planning, associated costs, and the appropriate Municipal Complex location(s).
- Secure funding for Municipal Complex expansion and/or relocation.

PRIORITY TWO:

Ensure that any expansion / relocation of the Municipal Complex includes multi-use facilities to accommodate City / community activities and increase community engagement.

PROJECTS

- Utilize, within State regulations, Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) Funds for the Municipal Complex expansion / relocation.

PRIORITY THREE:

Increase staffing within Administrative and Public Works / Utility Departments.

PROJECTS

- In partnership with the Johnson City Independent School District (JCISD) and regional community colleges, create an internship program to attract, train, and hire area residents. The partnership goal is to increase the availability of a basic workforce for Municipal and other local purposes.
- Ensure, as feasible, that Utility Department net profits remain within the Water & Wastewater Utility Fund to fund additional staffing and infrastructure improvements.

PRIORITY FOUR:

Address the lack of a Municipal firefighting service within Johnson City and its impact on community fire protection and the City's Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating, and the inability to utilize future sales and use tax revenues for the same due to current ESD sales and use tax collections.

GOAL 5 |

IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE mid-term goal (2026 - 2028)

PRIORITY ONE:

Evaluate and rectify identified deficiencies in the City's current infrastructure.

PROJECTS

- Sidewalks
 - Fund, through grants and/or TxDOT assistance, and construct infill sidewalks on major thoroughfares.
- Utilities
 - In accordance with the City's Capital Improvements Plan, fund and construct wastewater treatment plant capacity improvements.
 - Identify, fund, and construct needed water and wastewater infrastructure improvements that increase infrastructure longevity, availability, and capacity.
 - Encourage private development that funds, through economic development programs, and constructs identified water and wastewater infrastructure improvements.
- Fire Protection Devices
 - Add, replace, and/or repair existing nonfunctional fire hydrants and valves throughout the City.
 - Increase the number of fire hydrants on U.S. Hwy. 290 / Main St.
- Streets. Update annual Street Improvement Plans for City Council review and approval during the Municipal Budget process.
 - Utilize a pavement management module to document street and signage condition indexes, deficiencies, treatments, and/or replacements.
 - Evaluate all readily available street surface treatment options and recommend surface treatments that offer long-term results and are cost effective.
 - Prioritize and correct street sub-base failures. Correctly installed street sub-base provides strength and support for pavement, proper drainage, and prevents pavement settlement.
 - Implement a "Complete Streets" model when drafting annual Street

Improvement Plans.

- A “Complete Streets” model considers all infrastructure located within municipal rights-of-way, including, but not limited to, right-of-way vegetation, culverts and other drainage structures, sidewalks, signage, pavement, and street striping.
- Regularly mow / trim rights-of-way.
- Regularly remove debris from all culverts and drainage structures.
- Regularly address damaged sidewalks, signage, pavement, and street striping. Include parking spaces, road crossings, et. cetera when proposing street striping.
- Regularly route and fill street cracks.
- Regularly replace faded and/or ineffective signage.

PRIORITY TWO:

Add accessible public parking within the Downtown / Historic Overlay District.

PROJECTS

- Plan and implement an accessible public parking lot on City-owned property near the intersection of Lady Bird Lane and E. Elm St.

PRIORITY THREE:

For safety and security purposes, improve outdoor lighting along public rights-of-way and in public spaces.

GOAL 6 |

IMPROVE MARKETING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT short-term goal (2024 - 2026)

PRIORITY ONE:

Amend the City’s Marketing Plan to create a community identity, highlighting President Lyndon B. Johnson (e.g. “Presidential City”, “Presidential Home”, etc.), and attract education and history-based tourism. The Marketing Plan should focus on the City’s centralized location and quick access to parks and recreation activities.

PROJECTS

- Marketing efforts should utilize a variety of mediums suitable for all age categories, and said efforts should focus on the City’s history, convenient location, community pride, low crime rate, good schools, unique businesses, position as the County seat with access to ample social and governmental services, and what to see/do/eat in the City.
- Create citizen advisory committees to promote citizen involvement in Municipal marketing efforts (e.g. HOT Fund Advisory Committee and General Marketing Committee).
- Implement a “We are Johnson City” marketing campaign and host the following types of activities on an annual or more frequent basis:
 - Citizen of the Year award;
 - Mayor for a Day;
 - Coffee with Cops; and
 - JCISD field trips to City Hall.
- Increase the City’s social media presence across:
 - Instagram;
 - Facebook;
 - Twitter;
 - Nextdoor;
 - LinkedIn; and
 - YouTube.

PRIORITY TWO:

Increase community engagement through programs / activities that involve residents and community stakeholders.

PROJECTS

- Host City-sponsored events for community enjoyment and increased tourism and lodging within the City. Community events should reflect the community’s identity.

- Host community stakeholder networking opportunities for City Officials and Staff and PEC, LCRA, JCISD, National Park Service (NPS), etc. representatives.
- Create welcome packets for residents and business owners.

PRIORITY THREE:

Implement a marketing campaign informing the community of the dangers of Oak Wilt.

PROJECTS

- Partner with the City Arborist, AgriLife, and the Texas Forest Service to create an educational campaign on Oak Wilt.
- Seek funding for Oak Wilt eradication projects.
- Increase Code Enforcement activities pertaining to trimming Oak Wilt-susceptible trees in non-permitted parts of the year (e.g. February 1 – July 1).

GOAL 7 |

PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT short- to mid-term goal (2024 - 2028)

PRIORITY ONE:

Encourage redevelopment of substandard commercial properties and infill projects.

PROJECTS

- Amend the Code of Ordinances to allow for flexibility regarding septic systems, densities, setback requirements, lot sizes, and other subdivision and zoning-related matters.

PRIORITY TWO:

Economic development marketing efforts should highlight the City's history, convenient location, community pride, low crime rate, good schools, unique businesses, position as the County seat with access to ample social and governmental services, and what to see/do/eat in the City. Refer to Goal No. 6 herein.

PRIORITY THREE:

Minimize, as much as possible, NPS control over current and future commercial properties.

PRIORITY FOUR:

Assist the single-family residential housing development community.

PROJECTS

- Provide Staff assistance to the single-family residential housing development community on securing necessary zoning and related matters.
- Support annexation of single-family residential housing developments.

PRIORITY FIVE:

Promote the development of single-family residential housing.

PROJECTS

- Promote the City through a variety of mediums to the single-family residential housing development community.
- Consider the use of economic development incentives for affordable and unique housing options (e.g. not tract homes).

PRIORITY SIX:

Assist the lodging development community.

PROJECTS

- Encourage the development of quality lodging within or near the City's Downtown District.
- Provide Staff assistance to the lodging development community on securing necessary zoning and related matters.
- Support annexation of quality lodging developments.

PRIORITY SEVEN:

Promote the development of quality lodging.

PROJECTS

- Promote the City through a variety of mediums to the lodging development community.
- Consider the use of economic development incentives for lodging developments located within the Downtown District and/or providing increased walkability throughout the community.

PRIORITY EIGHT:

Evaluate and refine current marketing and communication plan efforts for the development and real estate community.

PROJECTS

- Ensure easy access to complete and pertinent development information on the City website and through other electronic mediums.
- Use social media and other mediums to promote development opportunities.
- Attend trade and similar events and distribute information directly to the development and real estate community.
- Create a permitting packet / flow chart for new businesses and other commercial enterprises desiring to do business in Johnson City.

PRIORITY NINE:

Better communicate the City's commercial growth strategy within the corporate City limits and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).

PROJECTS

- Promote development within the Downtown District and along all commercial

corridors (U.S. Hwy. 290, U.S. Hwy. 281, and N. Nugent Ave.).

- Promote the sustainability of groundwater resources.
- Encourage general economic activity, tourism, ~~alcohol-based tourism~~, and ecotourism.
- Target essential businesses, such as restaurants, retail establishments, small corporate or regional headquarters, small-scale grocery stores, hospitals, hotels, and all other business types housed within buildings of 25,000 sq. ft. or less. Efforts should be made to limit professional services within the Downtown / Historic Overlay Districts.
- Highlight the benefits of being located within the corporate City limits.
- Encourage annexation if located in the ETJ.

PRIORITY TEN:

Utilize all available economic development incentives to encourage and support the City's commercial growth strategy.