

DRAFT BUSINESS FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN

“Simple. Smooth. Solved”

Definition of Business Friendly Principles: According to the Southern California Association of Governments’ Southern California Economic Growth Strategy adopted by the City of San Gabriel in 2011, a business friendly municipality (i) demonstrates a commitment to economic development as a priority; (ii) provides quality services to attract and retain businesses and employees; (iii) communicates effectively with businesses; (iv) responds effectively to the needs of businesses that are seeking or doing business within its jurisdiction; and (v) streamlines operations for efficient and responsive business assistance in areas of licensing, permitting, inspections and other services.

City Position: The City Council acknowledges the importance of economic development and its link to achieving the long-term funding of public safety and infrastructure improvements. Advancing long-term economic development goals will be reflected in future strategic plans of the City and annual budgets.

Business Friendly Action Plan Success: Full implementation of this plan spans up to three years of Community Development Department (CDD) operational plans and requires a budgetary commitment for the next three fiscal years above and beyond current department budget levels.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Establish a framework to implement the City Council adopted economic development policy.

GOAL 1 – Objective 1: Create consensus on the definition and role of economic development for the City of San Gabriel.
“On a scale of 1 to 10, economic development is a 10.”

Objective Summary	Actions
Consensus would allow CDD staff members to more fully embrace the city’s economic development goals and objectives. This will assist the department staff in connecting the relationship between their day-to-day activities, and the promotion of business and real estate development. The consensus will also create a more visible link between increased revenues and improvements to the quality of life for the community.	1.1.1 Establish practices evidenced by citywide economic performance indicators and business-friendly performance indicators that will enable the city to be competitive when applying for the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) Business-Friendly City Award.
	1.1.2 Incorporate an economic impact analysis into staff reports and decision making.
	1.1.3 Conduct periodic reviews of economic indicators to monitor their relevance. Institute procedures for capturing useful data to evaluate service outcomes and community impact.
	1.1.4 Develop a new mission statement with staff for CDD to focus on the advancement of economic development goals.
	1.1.5 Identify a model business friendly city for San Gabriel to use as a benchmark.

GOAL 1 – Objective 2: Formulate reality-based economic development strategies for the City as a whole and for targeted business districts. *“We must have a plan that gives businesses a reason to come and stay in San Gabriel.”*

Objective Summary	Actions
These strategies should be grounded on the recognition of fundamental shifts of the local and regional economy (decline of retail, closure of family-operated businesses,	1.2.1 Conduct a roundtable for City Council, city manager and executive management, planning and design review commissioners, CDD director and division managers on changing demographics and the impact of these trends on economic realities and reach consensus on specific economic development strategies.

growth of on-line sales, concentration of Asian businesses and investment, and small parcel size and multiple ownership patterns in the City).	1.2.2 Build on economic and demographic trends to prioritize economic development efforts . Establish guiding principles for ranking CDD projects to meet economic development goals.
	1.2.3 Formulate a comprehensive economic development strategy to be carried out under a citywide work program. The strategy will include a marketing component to identify targeted audiences, optimal communication methods, and media outlets to reach these audiences.

GOAL 1 – Objective 3: Make the benefits of economic development to the City and stakeholders apparent to decision makers and embraced by City Staff. *“If I want good streets, I need to spend my money in San Gabriel.”*

Objective Summary	Actions
The big picture benefits of economic development need to be understood across stakeholders regardless of their geographic location in the city, their residential or nonresidential interests, their culture, or their special interests. An improved perspective on economic development among City staff will increase their understanding of the link between their day-to-day work and the big picture of economic development.	1.3.1 Develop a strategy to communicate the benefits of economic development to residents , acknowledging the socio-economic transition, and which includes an active role for the City Manager and City Council.
	1.3.2 Incorporate summary of economic factors into staff reports in order to assist in making economic development a factor in decision making.
	1.3.3 Conduct education campaign for all City employees clearly showing the benefits of economic development which include providing the broadest range of goods and services to the community, infrastructure and public safety financing, creation/retention of jobs, and expansion of the tax base.
	1.3.4 Conduct a public education campaign communicating the benefits of economic development, including provision of the broadest possible range of goods and services to residents, creation/retention of jobs, and expansion of the tax base.

GOAL 1 – Objective 4: Support active and visible business advocacy that advances the City’s stated economic development goals. *“We need a new business group and one that can help educate the community about the value of economic development.”*

Objective Summary	Actions
To support active and visible business advocacy that advances the City’s stated economic development goals. The City would benefit from expanded formal connections to the business and development communities with the City leadership and CDD Staff.	1.4.1 Develop a business outreach program to improve communications and business retention with the City and address business concerns and issues. Conduct workshops for small business owners that address regulatory changes and other topics that affect business operations such as internet sales.
	1.4.2 Negotiate a service performance agreement with the Chamber to maximize the City’s ongoing investment in that organization and integrate their work with the City’s economic development goals.
	1.4.3 Establish a broadly-based business advisory committee to meet with and advise decision makers on a regular basis and to support good planning, development, and business practices.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Develop urgently needed service improvements based on customer and staff input.

Goal 2 – Objective 1: Improve service delivery to inexperienced customers. *“We must treat every applicant as a customer, not as an inconvenience.”*

Objective Summary	Actions
City staff needs to assess the capabilities and knowledge of the customer and extend their expertise according to the customers experience level, and existing language.	2.1.1 Change the permit process to begin with planning division, and improve business license and permit application processes for all types of projects.

	<p>2.1.2 Review and revise public counter procedures and handout materials for customers at varying levels of sophistication and related to typical project scopes. Clarify department wide flow charts, application forms, checklists, and timelines for permits.</p>
	<p>2.1.3 Establish categories of typical applicants that come to CDD and develop guidelines for appropriate responses to the categories.</p>
	<p>2.1.4 Provide communications that are both linguistically and culturally appropriate, including translation of documents into Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Provide for more and readily available translation services.</p>
	<p>2.1.5 Develop programs of periodic workshops for applicants on topics of general interest such as “how do I open a new restaurant.” Explore possibility of on-line instructional videos.</p>

GOAL 2 – Objective 2: Embrace and invest in technology to provide faster, more efficient and effective service with citywide databases and online E-Commerce. *“San Gabriel should have online permitting like other cities.”*

Objective Summary	Actions
<p>A coordinated electronic record approach will greatly improve information sharing and project management. There are significant opportunities to develop department-wide databases including GIS that can be accessed by all divisions which improve efficiency. Online permitting is a cornerstone of improved customer service.</p>	<p>2.2.1 Hire technology expert to ensure that the CDD’s software requirements and needs are advocated at the citywide technology committee. Expert will then delineate the priorities and phasing for the acquisition of all software services needed based on activities listed in 2.2.2 below.</p>
	<p>2.2.2 Embrace online E-Commerce by acquiring hardware and software for such activities as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● permitting (submission and review); ● permit inspections; ● Geographical Information System (GIS) for property information (zoning, permit history, schools, utilities, violations); ● public notification; ● access to GIS for external customers for property information; ● contact management; ● plan check; ● complaint and inquiry tracking; ● and case tracking.
	<p>2.2.3 Train staff on all new technology systems and its application for data collection, monitoring and reporting across divisions and departments.</p>

GOAL 2 – Objective 3: Improve group decision making to ensure timely implementation schedules for all types of projects. *“Timing for this type of project is excellent. The City has the opportunity to make process improvements before the economy recovers.”*

Objective Summary	Actions
<p>As the City establishes its priorities around economic development and the economic climate improves, CDD staff will need the decision-making capacity and process tools to manage an increased workload. This will help to reduce delays in implementing all types of projects; a lack of clarity in approval processes and decision-making responsibility is frustrating to CDD staff and customers.</p>	<p>2.3.1 Establish applicant consultation monthly meetings with formal procedures where staff meets with different types of applicants in a three tier process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. initial consultation; b. optional fee-based pre-application review based on submittal of preliminary information; and c. complete application review with direct feedback to applicants for large or complex projects after the application is deemed complete.

- 2.3.2 Establish a **Project Review Committee** including policies and procedures.
- 2.3.3 Adopt a “**case manager**” model for processing development applications and permits. For all other types of projects, create an equivalent position of “project leader.” Identify training needs and recommend specific training opportunities to support the transition to the case manager-project leader system.
- 2.3.4 Restructure the design review and planning commission agenda procedures for **concurrent processing**.

GOAL 2 – Objective 4: Improve individual staff accountability, leadership skills, and project management performance.
“I’d like to have one person on staff that was responsible for my project.”

Objective Summary	Actions
Standards for written and verbal reports will benefit all CDD staff members in understanding each others work and creating easily understood reports. These standards could include such items as demonstrating a full understanding of the task; providing analysis that supports conclusions; and focusing on resolving the customers’ problems.	2.4.1 Require all staff to adhere to guidelines for presentation to and participation in Project Review Committee meetings and Applicant Review Sessions with proper documents for presentation to other staff and to use critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.
	2.4.2 Incorporate Project Review Committee and Applicant Review Session participation and readiness into staff performance reviews .
	2.4.3 Provide specific training recommendations and outcomes for staff.
	2.4.4 Develop department performance standards based on business friendly service outcomes through the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. determine the volume and processing time for existing applications; b. develop specific time-based performance standards; and c. implement a system to monitor and report on performance.
	2.4.5 Develop evaluation criteria for selecting and prioritizing projects, allowing better of staff and financial resources .

GOAL 2 – Objective 5: Accelerate construction of funded infrastructure projects.
“Our roads need to be repaired.”

Objective Summary	Actions
There are projects that are funded by outside agencies or grants that are not being moved forward due to lack of staff/personnel. There is a risk of losing this funding.	2.5.1 Hire or contract for project management services to move grant funded projects forward to completion.
	2.5.2 Project Review Committee should evaluate the feasibility of utilizing grants prior to submitting them in order to ensure consistency with City goals and existing staff capacity.

GOAL 2 – Objective 6: Implement City Hall space planning improvements.
“Our roads need to be repaired.”

Objective Summary	Actions
The existing city hall facility does not lend itself to efficient customer service and interaction. There is currently a space planning effort underway for these physical improvements which needs to be supported to full completion.	2.6.1 Improve the public counter to create a more inviting, comfortable and useable area for all customers.
	2.6.2 Improve other non-public areas , making our operations more efficient and able to accommodate technology improvements.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Update city codes, zoning, and other regulations that hinder staff and customers from reaching desired outcomes.

GOAL 3 – Objective 1: Realign zoning codes to encourage desired development projects and create flexibility to respond to changes in development trends. *“City codes are antiquated, confusing, and inflexible.”*

Objective Summary	Actions
<p>To realign zoning codes to encourage desired development projects and create flexibility to respond to changes in development trends. There are adopted specific plans with policy goals and objectives, but implementation is infeasible because of various limitations in the existing codes, frustrating all actors. Many codes are obsolete, especially zoning (parking and signage), and do not reflect new urbanism elements called for in the planning documents.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Rewrite the zoning code to conform development standards to those set forth in adopted specific plans and to encourage desired development projects, and create flexibility to respond to changes in development trends.</p>
	<p>3.1.2 Adopt procedures to improve consistency of code interpretations and provide flexibility where appropriate.</p>
	<p>3.1.3 Reduce number of variances and conditional use permits to allow more “by right” development.</p>
	<p>3.1.4 Expand scope of existing “minor exception” ordinance to grant staff more discretion to address minor issues that do not require formal review and approval. Consider re-examining changes previously recommended by CDD staff members as “quick wins.”</p>