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City of Rosenberg, Texas

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2024–2033



CITY OF
ROSENBERG
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TIP Strategies, Inc., would like to thank the following participants who contributed to the planning process.

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TIP Strategies, Inc., is a privately held Austin-based firm providing consulting and advisory services to public and private sector clients. Established in 1995, the firm's core competencies are strategic planning for economic development, talent strategies, organizational development, resiliency planning, and equity initiatives.

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CONTENTS

- Introduction..... 1
 - The Role of the RDC..... 1
 - The Planning Process..... 2
 - The Response 6
- Action Plan..... 8
 - Goal 1. Industrial..... 9
 - Goal 2. Retail 15
 - Goal 3. Redevelopment 18
 - Goal 4. Compliance and Market Data..... 21
 - Goal 5. Public Communications and Transparency 22
 - Goal 6. Workforce Development 23
 - Goal 7. Small Business and Entrepreneurship 24
- Implementation..... 25
 - Tracking Progress..... 25
 - Fiscal Capacity..... 27
- Economic Context 29

INTRODUCTION

From its inception, the City of Rosenberg, Texas, (the City) has enjoyed a unique position within the state’s Gulf Coast region. Located a mere 30 miles outside of Houston, Rosenberg’s notable infrastructure includes three major railways, an interstate highway, and Port Freeport, all contributing to its historic reputation as a hub for industrial production and distribution. These advantages have contributed to the City’s consistently strong population growth. Rosenberg now stands ready to cement itself as a power player in the Houston metro area, competing successfully with its neighbors in Fort Bend County and other suburban communities in the region and state. Extensive data analysis has pointed to a clear trajectory of growth. It is imperative that the City play an active role to influence and guide that economic growth to the benefit of residents. Effective and proactive governance in development, planning, and finance will make beneficial growth a reality. In order to achieve its ambitions, the City must adopt a planning perspective that anticipates challenges and capitalizes on its strategic assets.

THE ROLE OF THE RDC

As the economic development organization charged with guiding the City on this path to continued prosperity, the Rosenberg Development Corporation (RDC) is positioned to play a significant role in Rosenberg’s future. The organization is not only tasked with ensuring economic expansion, but also with benefiting all City residents, driving job growth, keeping taxes low, and funding essential City functions.

Since 1995, the RDC has functioned as a Type B economic development corporation, funded by a half-cent sales tax. (See the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts for a [discussion of Type A and B economic development corporations](#).) With the aforementioned population growth, as well as foundational efforts to attract and retain job- and tax-generating businesses, the City’s sales tax revenue (and therefore the RDC’s corresponding fiscal capacity) has increased apace. The questions that the organization must answer are: what should be done with these resources, and why? The RDC’s stated mission helps navigate possible solutions to these questions: “To recruit, promote, develop, and enhance community and economic opportunities in Rosenberg by providing resources to stimulate the economy and expand the tax base.” It is clear that the RDC should be laser-focused on projects, programs, and initiatives that directly contribute to fulfilling this mission.



Image credit: Courtesy of the Rosenberg Development Corporation.

While the RDC can certainly be proud of its legacy of accomplishments, which includes the construction of the Rosenberg Civic Center and infrastructure improvements to Brazos Town Center, it cannot afford to rest on its laurels. The City has an abundance of land, especially in its extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ), although recent state legislative changes may threaten the long-term sustainability of local leadership’s control over that land. At the same time, in the absence of zoning regulation in Rosenberg, the City could easily find itself overrun with large new master-planned residential developments that would limit land-use options that contribute to the RDC’s mission. In short, residential property taxes will not be sufficient to sustain the capacity and resources of necessary City projects, initiatives, and services. Without carefully considered dedication to industrial development, retail development, and redevelopment, the RDC’s ability to anticipate and adapt to continued out-migration to the edges of the Houston metropolitan statistical area (MSA) will be limited. With this in mind, the organization has embarked on a strategic planning effort to maximize its own capabilities and deploy its resources where they will create the highest impact. The objective of this effort is to generate actionable recommendations that drive the RDC (and by extension, the City of Rosenberg) down the road to increased prominence as a premier community in the region.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

In August 2023, the RDC selected TIP Strategies, Inc., (TIP) to prepare this 10-year *Economic Development Strategic Plan* (EDSP). TIP conducted substantial stakeholder outreach and data analysis to inform a clear understanding of Rosenberg’s particular advantages. Following a three-phase approach of discovery, opportunity, and implementation, these findings led to recommendations for the RDC’s short-, mid-, and long-term efforts to strengthen the City’s economic health. The remainder of this section provides an overview of the qualitative input gathered from stakeholders, the quantitative analyses performed, and the resulting competitive analysis.

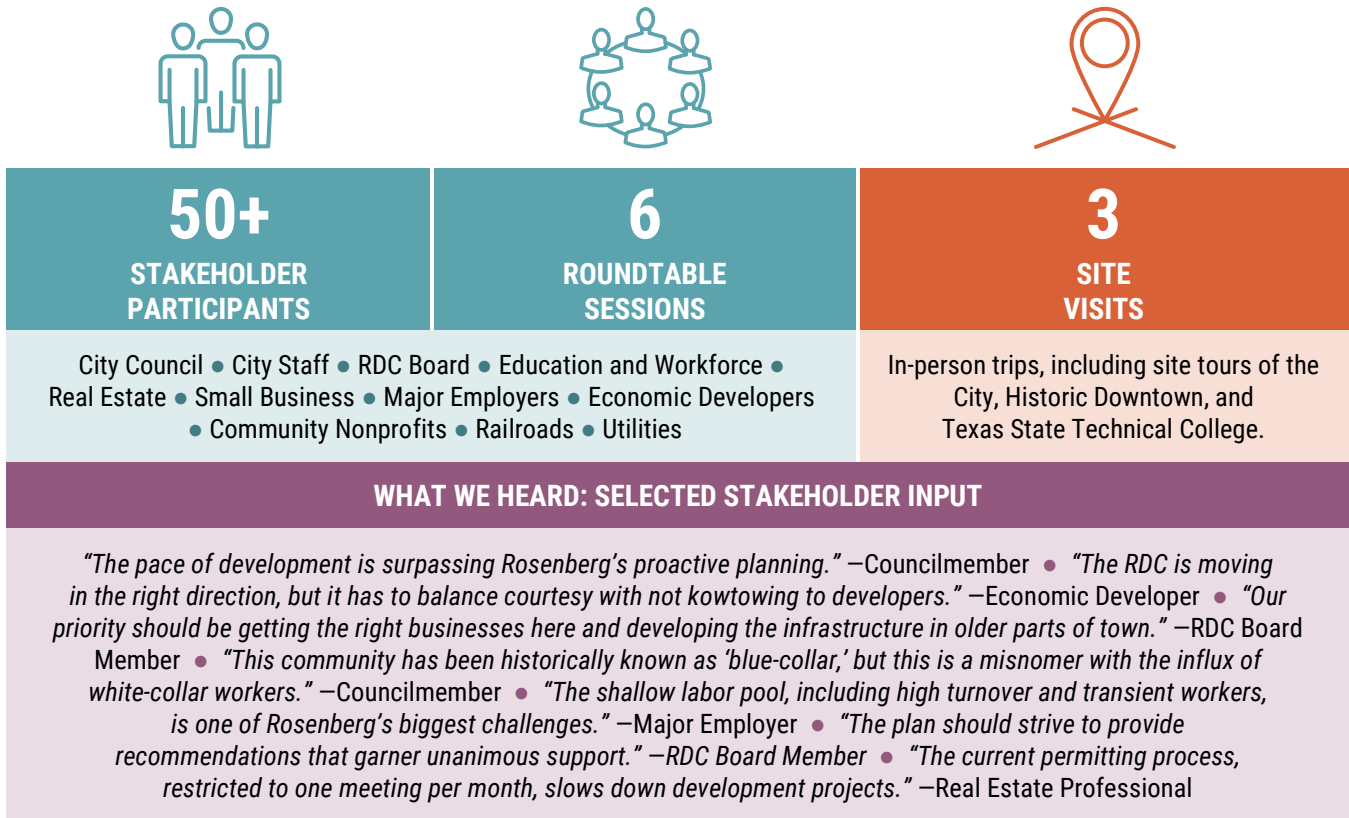


Image credit: Courtesy of the Rosenberg Development Corporation.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

During three in-person visits to Rosenberg, the consulting team conducted a robust and wide-ranging array of interviews and roundtables with relevant local stakeholders to inform the discovery process. The content of the What We Heard section in Figure 1 (page 3) is a selected summary, not an exhaustive listing or direct transcription. TIP incorporated these qualitative findings and others that emerged during the stakeholder engagement process from targeted questions about the City’s economic health into an analysis of Rosenberg’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs).

Figure 1. Stakeholder Engagement Overview



Source(s): TIP Strategies, Inc.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

As a cornerstone of the discovery process, the TIP team performed in-depth quantitative research to evaluate Rosenberg’s economic competitiveness. This task produced the most extensive data-informed assessment of Rosenberg in the City’s history.

The results were compiled in Tableau, the market-leading data visualization software for modern business intelligence. The purpose of this interactive tool is to translate virtually any raw data source into appealing, intuitive, actionable insights that help drive decision-making. Tableau can display fully interactive maps, charts, tables, and other types of quantitative visualizations, capabilities that go far beyond the usual tools like geographic information systems (GIS). TIP deploys Tableau to assist clients like the RDC with better

understanding the economic context and competitiveness of their community and to enable them to share the research with stakeholders and even feature the findings publicly online if desired.

Key findings from TIP’s comprehensive quantitative analyses are summarized in the text box at right. The Economic Context section of the EDSP includes a selection of findings from these analyses, which were divided into the following three categories.

- **Baseline Analysis.** TIP prepared a targeted assessment of factors that define the area’s overall competitiveness and are of greatest concern to economic decision-makers (e.g., sales tax, tax base, housing, quality of place, business climate). The analysis was tailored to meet project objectives and take advantage of available data resources to consider Rosenberg’s current economic position within the Houston area and identify broader economic trends that may impact the City’s future economic position. Comparisons were made to the state, the US, and agreed upon benchmarks.
- **Workforce Analysis.** TIP examined the extent to which the regional talent pipeline aligns with the needs of current and potential employers. This task used a variety of public and proprietary data to profile relevant characteristics of the regional workforce.
 - *Laborshed.* To understand Rosenberg’s laborshed, the team illustrated regional commuting patterns through an analysis of Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics data. TIP created data visualizations to show geographic differences between place of employment and place of residence.
 - *Occupational alignment.* TIP gathered employment data by occupation to analyze the regional workforce, review growth trends, and identify regional strengths. A review of current job postings in the region was used to identify the positions existing employers are currently trying to fill and to capture data on the skills and certifications they are seeking. Occupational strengths identified by this work were explored in terms of their alignment with the needs of targeted industries.
 - *Postsecondary.* To document existing postsecondary offerings by regional institutions (e.g., the University of Houston) and to illustrate the potential supply of graduates, TIP compiled published data from the National Center for Education Statistics’ Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System on the number of awards conferred for credit in relevant fields of study.
- **Land Use Analysis.** TIP performed a Citywide analysis of real estate fundamentals for major commercial or investible property types, including multifamily, office, industrial, retail, hotel, and land. These tasks relied on a combination of public and proprietary data. The analysis covered supply and demand trends to identify market opportunities for Rosenberg’s real estate product. The team reviewed leading real estate market indicators, including rents, vacancies, and construction deliveries, as well as the underlying drivers of demand in the key property types. TIP’s analysts examined the extent to which available sites and redevelopment opportunities align with targeted sectors, workforce capacity, and existing or planned infrastructure, with particular emphasis on the ETJ.

Selected Data Takeaways

See Economic Context section for detail.


- ✓ Rosenberg is growing quickly, and sales tax revenue is increasing accordingly.
- ✓ A young, diverse population can shift the narrative on income and educational attainment.
- ✓ Rosenberg’s economy has demonstrated its resilience.
- ✓ Employment has skyrocketed over the past 20 years.
- ✓ An increase in industrial real estate plays into Rosenberg’s strengths.
- ✓ A variety of sites are available for retail development.
- ✓ A growing workforce must meet the demands of industrial development.

Source(s): TIP qualitative and quantitative analyses.

COMPETITIVE POSITION

Based on the qualitative information gathered in the stakeholder engagement process, combined with the quantitative data findings described above and featured in the Economic Context section, TIP generated the following analysis of Rosenberg’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Please note this list highlights the most prominent issues and is not intended to be exhaustive. Figure 2 illustrates the findings in each of these categories, which were carefully considered and ultimately informed the development of the strategies and actions featured in the Action Plan section. The purpose of this SWOT analysis was to guide TIP’s recommendations, enabling the RDC to address identified weaknesses and capitalize on opportunities.

Figure 2. Summary of Rosenberg SWOT

 STRENGTHS	 WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land availability, including in the ETJ. • Array of developable greenfield sites. • Rosenberg Business Park completion and occupancy. • Dramatic and sustained population growth. • Strong public buy-in and momentum. • Jobs/employment growth. • Diverse demographics. • Three major railroad infrastructure and intermodal facilities. • Interstate 69 and US highway intersections. • Proximity to Port Freeport and related logistics. • Brazos Town Center as a nationally recognized retail hub. • Builders FirstSource wholesale tax revenue. • Historic Downtown character and amenities destination. • Fiscal capacity driven by tax base growth. • Successful recent bond passages (emergency response and public services facilities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilities infrastructure and associated site readiness. • Insufficient tax base diversification (dependence on Builders FirstSource and Brazos Town Center). • Branded community marketing to Houston MSA and other relocation targets. • Limited entertainment amenity options. • Speed/delays of permitting process. • Attainable housing availability (especially multifamily). • Limited retail and hotels. • Educational attainment gaps (lower higher education levels than many peers’ populations). • Disparities in socioeconomic demographics like income. • Available workforce in skilled labor. • Some roadways in need of renovation and improved maintenance. • Online presence and public communications of the RDC and City (limited branding and website/social media activity).
 OPPORTUNITIES	 THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land banking to preserve commercial usage. • Business retention and expansion program to support existing companies. • Formal site readiness efforts. • US Highway 90-A revitalization. • Increased public and leadership information. • Stronger relationships with regional and national real estate professionals. • Building on the success of the Brazos Town Center. • Pursuing and landing a large wholesale business. • Fort Bend Epicenter events and related tourism. • Foreign direct investment from international companies. • New business parks, following the model of the existing site. • ETJ annexation for new developments. • Business Improvement Grant program (e.g., façade improvements). • Better wayfinding signage. • Buildout of neighboring communities, driving new development to the City. • Future bond initiatives, modeled after the two recently passed. • Texas State Technical College facility expansion. • Cultural vibrancy as a defining characteristic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETJ opt-outs driven by recent state legislation. • Master-planned residential developments dominating land use (bedroom community). • Community support for economic development investments. • Loss of prospects to neighbors and state peers. • Continued decline of road quality. • Capacity and resource strain (both the RDC and City). • High interest rates. • Political uncertainty at local, state, and national levels. • Evolving relationship with Fort Bend County and economic development corporation (EDC). • US-Mexico border policy. • Potential loss of anchor businesses. • Increased vacancy across real estate types. • Drying up of federal infrastructure funds.

Source(s): TIP Strategies, Inc.

THE RESPONSE

Working closely with the RDC staff and the Board of Directors to identify and refine strategic direction, TIP drew on insights from the qualitative and quantitative research to create the plan framework shown in Figure 3 (page 7). The RDC's mission remains the same, but a new vision statement reflects the forward-looking orientation of the RDC's leadership. In addition, three guiding principles will assist the organization in the pursuit of this vision and in the plan's ongoing implementation.

- **Consistency.** Ensure that all economic development activities are driven by the same established vision of the RDC.
- **Predictability.** Operate in a way that empowers all existing and prospective businesses to know what they're getting.
- **Transparency.** Make the RDC the go-to point of contact for all public and private stakeholders seeking economic development information about Rosenberg.

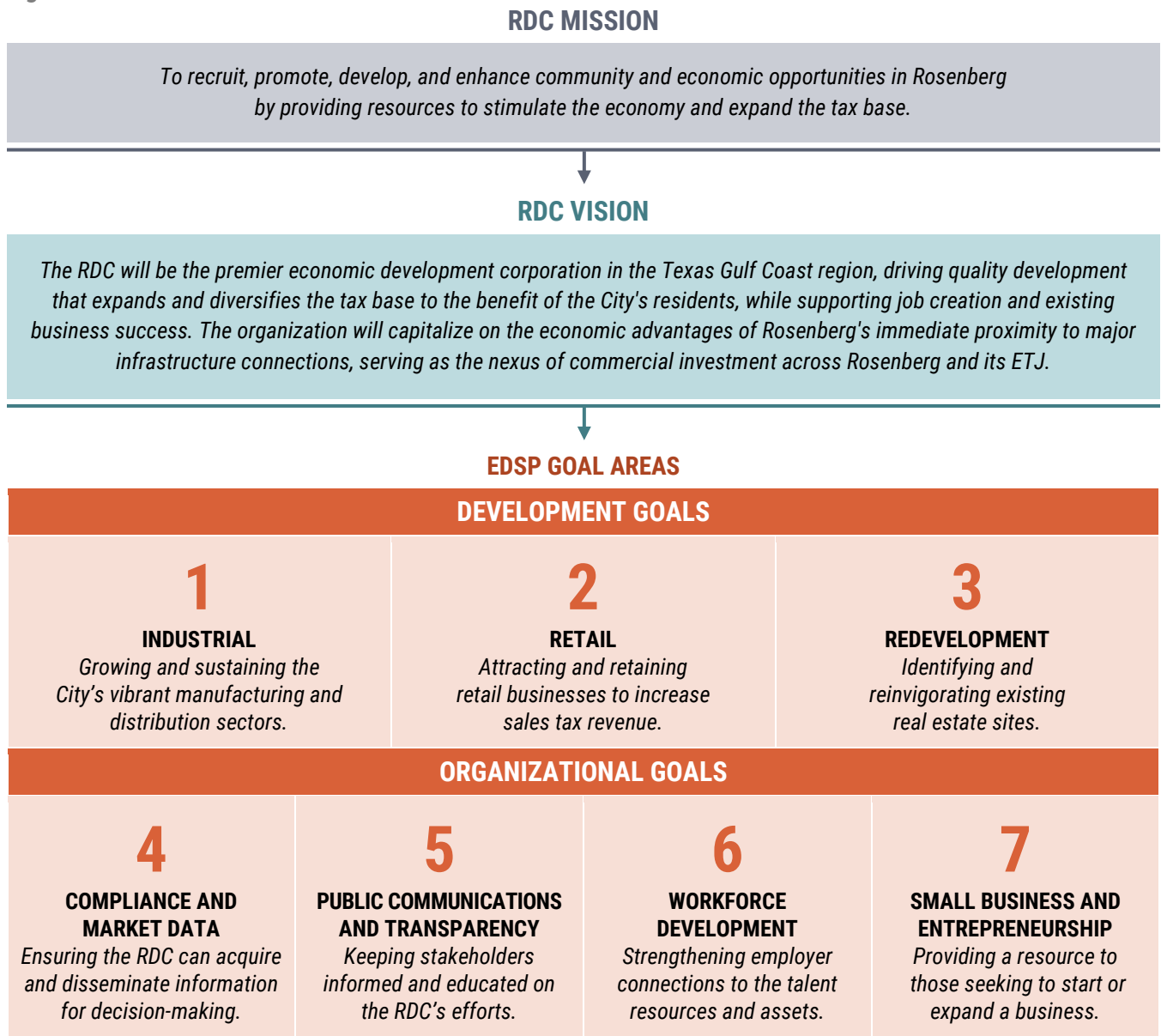
Keeping these core principles and organizational statements in mind, the EDSP seeks to maximize development opportunities in three areas: **industrial**, **retail**, and **redevelopment**. Through this approach, the RDC can help support Rosenberg's essential manufacturing and distribution sectors, strengthen the local retail sector to increase sales tax revenue, and bring new vibrancy to the City by revitalizing key corridors.



Image credit: Courtesy of the Rosenberg Development Corporation.

Figure 3 displays the EDSP framework that emerged from TIP’s comprehensive research and stakeholder engagement. By connecting the mission and vision of the RDC to concrete projects, programs, and initiatives, TIP identified seven goal areas. This framework represents the structure of the Action Plan section, which details the strategies and actions for accomplishing the identified goal areas. These areas include development-focused recommendations (Goal 1. Industrial, Goal 2. Retail, and Goal 3. Redevelopment) and organizational recommendations (Goal 4. Compliance and Market Data, Goal 5. Public Communications and Transparency, Goal 6. Workforce Development, and Goal 7. Small Business and Entrepreneurship). Following the Action Plan, the Implementation section lays out considerations related to carrying out the EDSP, including a discussion of performance measures. It is supplemented by an implementation matrix that was provided separately. The document concludes with select visualizations extracted from the comprehensive data tool that TIP provided to the RDC.

Figure 3. EDSP Framework



ACTION PLAN

After amassing a wealth of stakeholder input; conducting examinations of Rosenberg’s demographics, workforce, and real estate assets; and generating the SWOT analysis, TIP combined findings from its investigation with the RDC’s mission and vision to produce strategic recommendations to guide the organization over the next 10 years. Crucially, all of the recommended strategies that serve the plan framework shown in Figure 3 (page 7) are informed by the totality of the planning process, with TIP working hand in hand with RDC staff and the Board. This EDSP seeks to offer actionable insights that are achievable, yet appropriately ambitious. The ongoing implementation of these strategies will be critical to the future of the RDC and the City of Rosenberg.

The development-related goals (Goals 1 through 3) outline how the RDC can further leverage its existing resources to drive the City’s inevitable growth in ways that directly translate to additional revenue for the organization. This category addresses activities traditionally pursued by strong economic development organizations. Whether it’s a robust business retention and expansion program, infrastructure improvements, or effective land use, the RDC can compete nationally if these recommendations are followed. Within each of the highest-level strategies of these goals (e.g., 1.1.), TIP provides a description of *what* the strategy would entail and *why* it is an important step for the City to take. With these additional details and specific action items, the RDC and the City will be equipped to hit the ground running and make both quick and sustained economic progress.

The remaining goals (Goals 4 through 7) set out organizational recommendations that will require expanded RDC resources, whether in the form of full-time employees or ad hoc independent contractors. These goals are designed to position the RDC to meet the needs of a growing community. The RDC is currently served by three exceptional professional staff members: the Director of Economic Development, the Assistant Director of Economic Development, and the Senior Administration Specialist. To ensure the organization is able to meet the expectations of the City’s leadership and residents—and even exceed them—the RDC’s structure will need to be expanded in several areas. This expansion will accommodate increasing demands for projects and services needed to match Rosenberg’s growth. The addition of staffing resources to implement these organizational recommendations are outlined with the corresponding assigned responsibilities and preliminary tasks for these new positions. As RDC resources change, these initial tasks are fully expected to evolve moving forward. The Implementation section of the EDSP also addresses the fiscal capacity of the RDC to provide important context about the availability of funds for these purposes.

A look at the RDC’s competitive peers underscores the importance of identifying and filling new roles. The city of Schertz, Texas, has a population size nearly identical to Rosenberg’s at just over 40,000. The Schertz Economic Development Corporation employs four full-time staff. Three of the Schertz EDC positions mirror the RDC; the fourth is a Business Engagement Manager, a position that has no corollary within the RDC. This comparison indicates that the RDC hiring another full-time employee would be reasonable and practical right now. There are also EDCs in larger Texas cities that can serve as useful guideposts. For example, Pflugerville, although more populated with 66,000 residents, is a comparable Texas suburban city. The Pflugerville Community Development Corporation has a significantly more robust staff of six, which include a Finance Coordinator, a Marketing Communications Manager, a Business Retention and Workforce Director, and a Director of Business Development.

With these two categories of goals combined, the Action Plan will provide the RDC with all the tools it needs to grow and succeed in tandem with the City of Rosenberg.

GOAL 1. INDUSTRIAL

Growing and sustaining the City’s vibrant manufacturing and distribution sectors.

Although its economic footprint has certainly expanded in recent years, Rosenberg is a historically industrial city. Its strategic location along major transportation infrastructure assets provides ample opportunities for business retention, expansion, and attraction in manufacturing and distribution sectors. In order to continue to grow the City’s tax base, leadership should not shy away from building out new and existing industrial sites that enable shovel-ready development. With its significant greenfield availability, Rosenberg needs to prove to businesses and site selectors that the RDC’s commitment to industrial land use is unwavering.

Strategies and Actions

- 1.1. Construct new business parks.** *What?* Prioritize the construction and occupancy of additional industrial business parks. *Why?* In the absence of zoning regulation in the City, Rosenberg needs to create spaces for new and expanded industrial users, concentrated in a single development.
- 1.1.1.** Evaluate the successes and challenges of tenants in the existing 184-acre Rosenberg Business Park near the intersection of I-69 and FM 2218.
- Use the park’s public-private development as a model for the construction and sale of similar potential parks.
 - Identify potential private development partners for the new park(s).
- 1.1.2.** Identify available parcels and sites that have the infrastructure to serve new parks effectively, including transportation and logistics access.
- Conduct a feasibility study for the identified site(s) to determine market demand.



Image credit: Courtesy of the Rosenberg Development Corporation.

- 1.1.3. Work with City departments to identify and evaluate the potential locations.
 - 1.1.4. Convene local real estate professionals to assist in identification of potential sites and advise on potential partners and users.
 - 1.1.5. Leverage Rosenberg’s unique rail transportation assets to target potential business park tenants with related specific, manageable logistics needs.
 - 1.1.6. Follow current market demand trends of building out smaller commercial space (less than 25,000 square feet) for tenants seeking that type of space.
- 1.2. **Utilize land banking.** *What?* Pursuing the purchase of currently undeveloped land and holding ownership for future development and sale is an essential tool for proactive economic development. *Why?* Given the foreseeable trend of master-planned single-family residential developments acquiring available real estate, Rosenberg must ensure that sufficient acreage remains developable for commercial purposes.
- 1.2.1. Prioritize properties in the ETJ to preserve commercial and industrial space.
 - 1.2.2. Prioritize properties in West Rosenberg, proximate to existing infrastructure, such as the parcels at the intersection of Highway 90-A and Highway 36 and along Highway 59.
 - 1.2.3. Establish a staff-led industrial and commercial property advisory team to gauge the feasibility of potential properties and assess priorities, to include select volunteer stakeholders of interest (e.g., local real estate commercial brokers and developers).
 - 1.2.4. Create and market incentive packages associated with ownership sale of the banked land.
- 1.3. **Identify infrastructure needs.** *What?* Examine and target priority industrial sites within the City for the infrastructure investments made by the RDC needed for development. Priorities should be identified and selected based on two factors: the smallest required infrastructure investment and the largest return of developable property. *Why?* Although Rosenberg and its ETJ contain ample land, there are significant gaps in road and utilities service coverage that must be addressed.
- 1.3.1. Identify the infrastructure needs of each site.
 - 1.3.2. Evaluate the return on infrastructure investments for each site to establish short-term priorities that will maximize economic impact.
 - 1.3.3. Work with the City Engineer and other infrastructure-related departments to generate a compilation of priority sites and their infrastructure needs.
- 1.4. **Market to potential industrial users.** *What?* The RDC should create a comprehensive marketing strategy that emphasizes the advantages of Rosenberg’s significant infrastructure assets and makes the case for industrial capital investment. *Why?* The branded communication of Rosenberg’s nationally unique intersection of railroads and highways is not as coordinated and effective as it could be.
- 1.4.1. Maintain and update cataloguing and mapping of infrastructure capacity and capability throughout the City.
 - 1.4.2. Ensure that RDC staff and all City staff with economic development responsibilities are effective users of the data in Action 1.4.1.

- 1.4.3.** Conduct targeted marketing efforts to area real estate professionals and regional industrial and commercial users, with an emphasis on building new relationships with major Houston commercial real estate developers like Midway and Wolff Companies.
- 1.5. Pursue regional industrial users.** *What?* Identify and target Houston/Harris County industrial users for potential relocation or expansion, promoting Rosenberg’s strategic advantages. *Why?* The major municipal players in the Houston MSA are increasingly approaching buildout, and development is poised to move west; therefore, Rosenberg has the potential to recruit industrial businesses located in the area.
- 1.5.1.** Compile a list of regional target companies in the industries identified in this analysis.
- 1.5.2.** Establish the ongoing utilization of standardized evaluation criteria as a vetting tool to narrow the list of targets, such as the following.
- Companies operating in the RDC’s targeted industries
 - Companies employing 25 or more FTEs
 - Amount of expected capital investment
 - Economic impact of the project on the community
 - Required access to transportation assets
- 1.5.3.** Develop marketing and outreach materials specific to these ambitions.
- 1.5.4.** Conduct a regional marketing campaign to include data, marketing material, and personal contact.
- 1.5.5.** Track all RDC activities associated with these efforts.
- 1.6. Refine and expand the business retention and expansion (BRE) program.** *What?* In order to retain and grow the footprint of existing industrial companies, a robust BRE program is essential. The RDC’s existing BRE efforts include the elements listed below, along with a case study of a successful BRE program. *Why?* Strong economic development organizations across the country rely on their sustained ability to expand their tax base by not only attracting new businesses, but also actively fostering the growth of their current user base. In fact, while new business recruitment wins are sometimes seen as having greater impact, effective BRE drives a greater amount of a community’s economic progress. It is critical for the RDC to maintain these activities to uphold the three guiding principles of consistency, predictability, and transparency.
- 1.6.1.** Standardize the set of information-gathering questions to ask in every business visitation.
- 1.6.2.** Update and maintain a list of local companies, organized by industries and employer size.
- 1.6.3.** Utilize a customer relationship management (CRM) system to catalogue and measure all interactions with companies across the full communications lifecycle (contacts, interviews, service requests, etc.) for centralized data compilation.
- As needed, explore available market-leading software options to optimize these tasks.
- 1.6.4.** Distribute promotional materials to brand the BRE program.
- 1.6.5.** Maintain a comprehensive list of RDC, City, and area economic and workforce development partner resources that are available to local companies, such as financing, workforce development, and rapid response for pressing issues.

Charleston County Economic Development (CCED)

What? The CCED (Charleston, South Carolina) operates a staffed, ongoing initiative called the Business Concierge Program (BCP) that concentrates on BRE efforts. The BCP acts as the primary facilitator between industry, local government, education, and workforce development to enhance relationships with existing local companies, engaging with more than 200 businesses annually through on-site visits, small group meetings, and industry events.

In 2019, TIP generated a strategic plan for the CCED that included recommendations for the future of the BCP. These included rebranding the program, increasing visitations, organizing efforts to focus on target industries, expanding its capacity and resources, maintaining comprehensive databases, telling success stories more aggressively, and developing an early warning and rapid response strategy for identifying and responding to potential layoffs or plant closures.

Why? A strong BRE program, like the CCED's, with dedicated resources is the cornerstone of any successful economic development organization, serving on the front lines of the mission to build a vibrant and sustainable local business environment. If the RDC is to follow through on the vision described in this EDSP, emulating the BCP (adjusted to the capacity and needs of Rosenberg) would be a significant step.

1.7. Create a Site Readiness Program (SRP). **What?** Create a complete and standardized catalogue of available local sites to evaluate the shovel-ready status of each site. **Why?** When site selectors and their potential customers are evaluating prospective locations, it is imperative that they have a clear understanding of which sites feature fully serviced utilities infrastructure or service that can be built quickly. While this program does not necessarily need to be full-time staffed and organizationally formalized, the RDC can learn from communities that are operating well in this space.

1.7.1. Examine and seek to replicate best practices of successful SRPs across coverage types, including the following.

- State SRPs, such as [Tennessee](#) and [Georgia](#).
- Private companies that operate their own SRPs, such as [Duke Energy](#) and [BNSF](#).
- Local economic development organizations, such as [Sumter County, Florida](#).

1.7.2. Consider the following criteria when working with site selection and industry partners to officially certify sites.

- Availability of ownership transfer to the prospect is in place.
- All City-provided utilities services are either functioning or buildout is able to be done quickly.
- Environmental assessments have identified any areas of risk.
- The site's shape and buffer footprint are adequate for development.
- Transportation access for both employees and distribution are conducive to the prospect's needs.

1.8. Ensure the Economic Development Department is a resource of expertise in economic development.

What? Provide access to the City Council and the RDC Board to municipal finance and tax experts to detail the advantages of tax base diversification. **Why?** Professional development for not only staff, but also for all

leadership personnel, is critical for establishing a shared, detailed understanding of economic issues facing Rosenberg and their possible solutions.

1.8.1. Ensure the Department acts as the conduit for identifying specific development topics and related regional and statewide experts.

1.8.2. Continue to host identified experts to speak on the chosen topics as deemed necessary.

1.9. Build public buy-in. *What?* Conduct consistent educational public outreach on the value of economic development across a variety of specific topics. *Why?* For new (and often costly) projects and initiatives to pass local muster, the buy-in of residents is a driving force behind successful implementation.

1.9.1. Develop straightforward promotional material that clearly describes the economic impact of City and RDC investments, including tax revenue generation and benefit to residents.

- Create a series of scenarios to describe types of potential development and its return and impact.

1.9.2. Present data at open town halls and other community events.

1.9.3. Promote all outreach activities, events, and gathered data on the RDC website.

1.10. Expand the reach of collaborative efforts. *What?* Foster relationships with local, regional, and state economic development partners without relying solely on any one organization for recruitment and expansion leads. *Why?* Just as diversifying the tax base leads to more sustainable economic growth, diversifying the organizations that provide mutually beneficial information sharing and support will strengthen the RDC’s position beyond its immediate neighbors.

1.10.1. Continue to conduct regular meetings with economic development partners to ensure awareness of economic opportunities, investments, and priorities for Rosenberg.

1.10.2. Require partners to provide transparency in all prospects and projects that might be appropriate for Rosenberg.

1.10.3. Maintain reported metrics for all RDC investments into other economic development and workforce development efforts, programs, and organizations.

1.10.4. Conduct RDC-led outreach and marketing to industry within and outside of the City to encourage expansion and location decisions.

1.10.5. Where appropriate, further support regional collaborations to encourage ongoing development and investment.

1.11. Enhance relationships with the real estate community. *What?* Increase and sustain aggressive outreach to real estate developers through a range of communications avenues. *Why?* Successful economic development depends heavily on the value gained from a strong network of contacts.

1.11.1. Network proactively with brokerage firms attending regional, state, and national events.

1.11.2. Advocate for RDC presentations at regional real estate association meetings.

1.11.3. Increase the number of RDC-hosted familiarization events.

- 1.12. Leverage the Opportunity Zone.** *What?* Opportunity Zones were first created by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, intended to spur investment in economically distressed areas across the country via tax deferments on eligible gains when funneling capital through Qualified Opportunity Funds. The City contains one designated Low-Income Opportunity Zone, located on the west side along Highway 36. *Why?* Utilizing and marketing this Opportunity Zone more effectively would provide a significantly improved value proposition for potential investors.
- 1.12.1.** Supplement publicly available US Census Bureau data with up-to-date internal information on the 55-square mile Census Tract 6754, which has an approximate population of 9,200.
 - 1.12.2.** Maintain ongoing monitoring of the 38 funds in the [OpportunityDb database](#) that specifically identify Texas as a target market and foster communication with these funding partners.
 - 1.12.3.** Evaluate potential uses across the zone, including mixed-use developments, and target interested institutional investors.
- 1.13. Increase foreign direct investment (FDI).** *What?* Initiate a targeted recruitment initiative for international businesses that leverages the strategic advantages of Rosenberg’s location and industrial assets. *Why?* With international political relations with major exporters like China shifting, more companies in manufacturing and logistics and distribution are seeking to relocate operations closer to home. Rosenberg can establish itself as the nexus for industrial FDI in the region.
- 1.13.1.** Target logistics users that are utilizing West Coast seaport facilities (e.g., the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, California, together account for over 40 percent of all inbound containers).
 - 1.13.2.** Target near-shoring opportunities for international businesses seeking to relocate supply chain activities closer to the US (e.g., economic disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic and trade tariffs drive manufacturing operations to closer geographies like Mexico for cheaper and more resilient distribution channels. In 2022, new investments accounted for 48 percent of total FDI into Mexico).
 - 1.13.3.** Package marketing material in foreign languages.
 - 1.13.4.** Host international business delegations of interested investors.
 - 1.13.5.** Evaluate and pursue the investment opportunities provided by the [EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program](#). EB-5 visas (Green Cards) can be issued to immigrants and their families who meet certain capital investment and job creation requirements within established targeted employment areas (TEAs) that contain a population with high unemployment, as determined by data from the American Community Survey. City of Rosenberg jurisdictions include TEAs in Census Tracts 6758, 6755.01, 6755.03, and 6754.02.
 - 1.13.6.** Work with local international business experts and the Greater Houston Partnership’s international trade division to encourage investment.
 - 1.13.7.** Leverage Foreign Trade Zone #149 (Port Freeport) to stimulate new FDI, with an emphasis on Rosenberg’s strategic location for maritime trade.

GOAL 2. RETAIL

Attracting and retaining retail businesses to increase sales tax revenue.

With the combination of Historic Downtown and Brazos Town Center, Rosenberg is already home to substantial retail assets. Traditional shopping options are certainly a crucial driver of sales tax revenue, but it's also important to note that a single wholesaler of construction materials (Builders FirstSource) now accounts for nearly one-half of that revenue. As such, the RDC should dedicate efforts to retaining and attracting businesses across retail subsectors, further diversifying and strengthening its tax base.

Strategies and Actions

- 2.1. Expand the Brazos Town Center.** *What?* Brazos Town Center (the Center) is the retail hub for Rosenberg, ranked among the top 50 largest shopping centers in the country and attracting 9.54 million shoppers annually, thereby driving sales tax revenue in the City. The Center could be leveraged more aggressively for site expansion and construction for retail users. *Why?* Building on the existing development would increase both resident and visitor traffic, providing even greater value directly to the RDC.
- 2.1.1.** Meet regularly with the developer NewQuest Properties to understand challenges and work collaboratively on optimal solutions.
 - 2.1.2.** Advance redevelopment of the identified Cinemark site, leveraging relationships with interested real estate groups.
 - 2.1.3.** Consider modern site uses for available adjacent parcels, such as mixed retail, office, and residential spaces.
 - Advocate at the City level for appropriate mixed-use density allowances, which would supplement ground-level storefronts with multifamily housing that Rosenberg needs.
 - 2.1.4.** Target new retail tenants for attraction and expansion.
 - Target both big box and mid-size retailers with a presence elsewhere in the Houston MSA.
 - Create and distribute marketing materials focused on the future of Brazos Town Center.
 - Identify and pursue businesses with a profile that is a fit for the City and its consumer profile.
- 2.2. Pursue new wholesale retailers.** *What?* A single business-to-business (B2B) wholesale company, Builders FirstSource now generates nearly one-half of all of Rosenberg's sales tax revenue. Identifying and replicating the success of this partnership with similar businesses is imperative. *Why?* While this unique relationship is certainly promising, it also demonstrates a critical need for the diversification of the tax base to ensure economic resiliency. By attracting new wholesale retailers to Rosenberg, the RDC would address its dependence on one company and drive revenue growth.
- 2.2.1.** Continue to strengthen the relationship with Builders FirstSource by gathering direct feedback from company leadership on the benefits and challenges associated with locating in Rosenberg.
 - 2.2.2.** Identify and target wholesale businesses that fit into the supply chains of current tenants, leveraging the information gathered in Action 2.2.1.

2.2.3. Evaluate the tax revenue benefits of potential businesses and consider relevant financial incentives with high return on investment accordingly.

2.2.4. After identifying promising sites, build an incentive package in preparation for recruitment efforts targeted at wholesalers.

2.3. Create stronger relationships with retail developers. *What?* Engage and collaborate more closely with local, regional, and state retail developers across communications channels to ensure alignment on needs and priorities. *Why?* Rosenberg has the potential to serve as a regional destination for retail, even beyond Brazos Town Center, but to achieve this status, the RDC will need to make its presence known to developers in all geographies.

2.3.1. Coordinate and collaborate specifically with mixed-use developers to attract retail investment.

2.3.2. Ensure RDC staff attendance at major conferences, including at the national level, to foster new relationships with developers and site selectors.

- Examples of national events that staff should attend annually include, but are not limited to, National Retail Federation Retail’s Big Show, National Grocers Association Show, Retail Innovation Conference and Expo, Shoptalk, International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) @Red River, and National Retail Tenants Association Conference. Potential regional events include the ICSC Local Dallas and Houston area offerings with the Urban Land Institute.
- Take full advantage of in-person presence by having competitive Rosenberg customer data (e.g., demographics and trends) ready for distribution, setting meetings with networking contacts, learning valuable market insights, and always promoting the City’s competitive advantages.

2.3.3. Compile and maintain a comprehensive database of all real estate contacts with information on their priorities and interests.



Image credit: Courtesy of the Rosenberg Development Corporation.

2.4. Leverage the Fort Bend Epicenter. *What?* Celebrating its grand opening in August 2023, the Epicenter is a monumental new development in Rosenberg that houses a 230,000-square-foot arena, special events spaces, and an outdoor pavilion, accommodating large-scale sports tournaments, conferences, rodeos, and more. With such a recent and significant facility now in operation, the City should utilize these major events as a new source of retail sales revenue. Furthermore, these efforts should be considered as a component of a broader public communications and engagement strategy that drives the visibility and community support of RDC projects and programs that will substantially impact all Rosenberg residents. Strategy 2.6. describes another component of this approach. A public information strategy is included in Goal 5. *Why?* Retailers care first and foremost about foot traffic. When choosing a site, they consider the number of potential shoppers (whether residents or visitors) that will be in the immediate and surrounding area. Given the guaranteed spike in tourist attendance driven by the Epicenter, Rosenberg can benefit greatly from the increased traffic and attract new and expanded retail development.

2.4.1. Evaluate additional organizational uses for adjacent space.

2.4.2. Leverage tourist attendance at events at these venues to promote and market all existing retail assets within the City, including Historic Downtown Rosenberg.

2.4.3. Collaborate with Fort Bend County to generate resident surveys to evaluate potential new cultural events not previously considered.

2.4.4. During the engagement process described in Strategy 2.3., ensure that the Epicenter is a main feature in all marketing communications to potential retail developers.

2.4.5. Continue the current pursuit of new hotel construction on an identified site adjacent to the Epicenter, which will drive additional revenue generation associated with tourism events.

- Collaborate on an ongoing basis with Fort Bend County to make mutually beneficial decisions about land use and financing.

2.5. Maintain the standard of data gathering. *What?* Compile and utilize innovative sources of consumer data to position sites in the City as attractive for retail brokers and national retail chains. Currently, the RDC uses a service called Placer.ai to gather and package consumer data. The organization should ensure on an ongoing basis that the tool is the most effective and highest-value option for all of the data types listed below. *Why?* Communities on the cutting edge of business attraction are increasingly relying on new technologies and services to make the case to retailers. Rosenberg must keep pace with its competitors regarding the tools it uses to turn retail leads into success stories, including certain sources that may require software subscriptions. Categories for consideration include the following.

- *Geodemographic segmentation.* Lifestyle characteristics of residential households by location (e.g., socioeconomic status, children living at home, discretionary income spending behavior, hobbies, and interests).
- *Seasonality and weather.* An in-depth historical analysis that goes beyond annual and daily foot traffic to provide insights on periodic and environment-related fluctuations in consumer behavior.
- *Sales tax leakage.* The dollars lost by Rosenberg residents shopping outside the City.
- *Psychographic.* Measurements beyond demographics that gauge more nuanced customer interests, like lifestyle, opinions, and values, gathered via online behavior (cookies, social media, etc.).

2.6. Increase retail activity in Historic Downtown Rosenberg. *What?* Located within the boundaries of 1st Street to 5th Street and Avenues F to I, Rosenberg’s downtown is home to a variety of retail options, including clothing boutiques, furniture and décor, jewelry, antiques and art, and more. The eclectic character of these shops can be maintained, while also serving as a hub for an expanded retail presence. Discover Downtown currently engages in some outreach efforts to both residents and downtown businesses, which should be continued indefinitely. *Why?* The Historic Downtown district, while not unique to Rosenberg, presents an economic opportunity to leverage culturally vibrant shops as site selection attractors. The City can expand its sales tax base by increasing traffic around and within downtown (see Strategy 3.4. regarding storefront redevelopment) and marketing the area to interested retail developers.

- 2.6.1.** Hold additional and consistent listening sessions as deemed appropriate (currently held quarterly) with local community leaders to generate ideas for downtown that cater to the cultural diversity of Rosenberg residents.
- 2.6.2.** Conduct wider and higher-visibility public outreach via town halls or newsletters (currently distributed in monthly water bills) focused on the future of the Historic Downtown to assess the population’s appetite for new and expanded development and increase buy-in for potential projects.
 - Utilize the public information strategy in Goal 5 to drive increased attendance and active participation at town hall sessions.
- 2.6.3.** Evaluate potential new tactics to spur retail development in downtown, including public-private partnerships, the adjustment of current development regulations (such as multifamily housing and parking requirements), and the creation of a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ).

GOAL 3. REDEVELOPMENT

Identifying and reinvigorating existing real estate sites.

In addition to Rosenberg’s available land for new construction (and accompanying infrastructure expansion), the City also has existing sites that are in need of redevelopment. Essential renovations like signage, wayfinding, and façade improvements are straightforward and certainly achievable in the near-term. However, there are also larger scale revitalization opportunities that the RDC could spearhead to move the needle on the City’s continued economic success. Projects like the Highway 90-A planning effort and the renovation of key impression corridors merit renewed attention and follow-through.

Strategies and Actions

3.1. Revitalize US Highway 90-A. *What?* Highway 90-A is a critical piece of east-west transportation infrastructure that runs through the heart of Rosenberg and connects the City to Houston. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has been formulating renovations to the highway for years and has completed projects to improve and expand the Triple Fork connections in the west and to implement a one-way traffic plan on certain sections of Highway 90-A/Avenue H and FM 1640/Avenue I. However, a major TxDOT project to construct an overpass on Highway 90-A over the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) crossing at the City limits with Richmond has been stalled for several years. Despite the project delay for this section of the corridor, the City should not defer efforts to revitalize Highway 90-A. To renew efforts on the project, the RDC Board formed the Avenue H/Highway 90-A Revitalization Blue Ribbon Committee in July 2021 to provide coordinated leadership. The RDC should push for advancing the project as soon as possible. *Why?* One of Rosenberg’s greatest assets is its connections to vital transportation infrastructure, and that includes highways to Houston.

Furthermore, given the direct path of Highway 90-A through Rosenberg, it is one of the primary points of entry to the City, carrying with it the general impression of drivers passing through. The RDC and City leadership cannot afford to delay progress on the highway and related renovations.

- 3.1.1. Utilize the Avenue H/Highway 90-A Revitalization Blue Ribbon Committee as an internal staff asset.
- 3.1.2. Push for the completion of the project planning phase by the end of the first quarter of 2024 and set ambitious goals for timely implementation.
- 3.1.3. As the project progresses, consistently engage with residents in and near the targeted corridor from the eastern City limits to the Triple Fork area to strengthen public buy-in.

3.2. Connect the BRE program to redevelopment projects. *What?* As described in Strategy 1.6., a formal business retention and expansion program within the RDC’s operations provides critical support for commercial users. Continuing RDC BRE efforts to ensure sustainable economic development success will require ongoing identification and advocacy for redevelopment needs for business districts. *Why?* Companies require consistent and predictable support to maintain a positive environment for business success. Redevelopment of infrastructure, buildings, and available land all contribute significantly to the continued successful functioning of the businesses that form the tax base. The RDC should continue to utilize the BRE program to identify and facilitate redevelopment opportunities for the benefit of local industry by maintaining the following activities.

- 3.2.1. Leverage the consistent communications channels established by the BRE program to assess changing or increased infrastructure needs of existing commercial users.
- 3.2.2. Utilize visitations to identify potential redevelopment projects that would facilitate expansion.



Image credit: Courtesy of the Rosenberg Development Corporation.

3.2.3. Regularly inform the City Council and staff of findings gathered from BRE efforts to inform decisions about redevelopment prospects.

3.2.4. Evaluate and apply innovative organizational coalitions and financing mechanisms to potential redevelopment projects as described in Action 2.6.3.

3.3. Leverage recent successful bond packages. *What?* In November 2023, Rosenberg voters approved two bonds for the construction of both an \$18.5 million emergency services complex and a \$33 million public services complex. Given the fiscal investment required, majority support for these projects represents a turning point for the City. Their passage should form the foundation for additional future bond elections that would significantly improve conditions for both residents and businesses. *Why?* The momentum of public buy-in is a community benefit that cannot be wasted. Redevelopment efforts often need sizable fiscal dedication that are dependent on elections, and the RDC and the City should work together to harness these successes to drive project funding.

3.3.1. Begin generating a list of potential capital projects that would be good fits for bond packages (e.g., roadway improvements like those in Strategies 3.1. and 3.6.).

3.3.2. Communicate consistently with the City Council and the Mayor’s office about RDC-led bond priorities, before and after local elections, to maintain transparent collaboration across political differences.

3.3.3. As discussed in the Rosenberg *2035 Comprehensive Plan*, consider the impacts of partnering with a private entity to create a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) and fund infrastructure redevelopment support.

3.4. Utilize the Business Improvement Grant (BIG) program. *What?* As of fiscal year (FY) 2019, the RDC has operated the BIG program, which provides 50 percent matching grants up to \$10,000 to eligible businesses within the City limits. These funds can be used for façade, signage, and property improvements or demolition. Potential project applications are scored for their visual, economic, and historical/community impact. The BIG program is an admirable step, but the RDC should promote it more widely. *Why?* An economic development initiative is only as successful as its implementation. Given that the BIG program is a quite recent addition to quality-of-place efforts in Rosenberg, the full scope of its impact will depend on how many eligible businesses take advantage of it.

3.4.1. Continue to proactively identify businesses across the City that would be strong applicants for the program, conducting initial drive-throughs and communicating with prime candidates.

- Current BIG funds are not fully utilized. The RDC should promote the program and continually evaluate the need for additional financial resources to ensure the program’s ongoing success.

3.4.2. Utilize the BIG program as a mechanism that is aligned and consistent with the goals and objectives identified by the Avenue H/Highway 90-A Blue Ribbon Committee (described in Strategy 3.1.) as they pertain to redevelopment projects along the eastern corridor, near the Richmond border.

3.4.3. Promote the program more heavily with both online and printed outreach materials.

3.4.4. Market success stories of completed BIG projects.

3.5. Broaden leadership’s competitive awareness. *What?* RDC Board members and City Councilmembers could benefit from an understanding of the development landscape on a larger scale. Increasing their exposure to successful communities across the country would achieve this objective. The primary targets for these

learning experiences should be communities appropriately benchmarked, such as those in the Economic Context section of this plan. *Why?* Rosenberg’s leadership is eminently capable, but even strong leaders require ongoing professional development. Investing in their perspectives would drive continued progress on redevelopment projects.

- 3.5.1. Conduct delegation visits (“learning journeys”) to other cities that have made successful redevelopment investments, including both neighbors and more distant peers in Texas.
- 3.5.2. Produce case studies of similar communities at the national level that have completed recognized capital improvement projects and share them with leadership.
- 3.5.3. Host collaborative, informal brainstorming sessions to discuss success stories, key takeaways, and potential application to Rosenberg.

3.6. Improve gateways into Rosenberg. *What?* A central component of the perception of communities by visitors is the image offered at City access points. Coordinating across departments, the RDC should target transportation impression corridors for redevelopment investment. *Why?* Branding efforts are often concerned with online marketing via websites and social media, but the reality is often that physical spaces are equally important. Communicating and instilling positive perceptions of Rosenberg can be as straightforward as identifying and redeveloping these spaces to enhance quality of place.

- 3.6.1. Work with the City and other organizations to efficiently advance capital improvement projects along major roadways, including but not limited to the following.
 - FM 723 (Avenue D to Baker Road)
 - Spacek Road
 - Airport Avenue
 - Bamore Road
 - Benton Road
 - Kroesche Road
- 3.6.2. Complete the design and installation of wayfinding signage into key nodes across the City to better direct traffic toward community assets, like Historic Downtown Rosenberg, and ensure timely implementation of the recommendations.
- 3.6.3. Engage local and regional artists to produce beautification projects (e.g., murals) at identified locations and promote the end results on City and RDC websites.
 - Draw on the ongoing work of the City’s Image Committee to identify potential projects and coordinate implementation.

GOAL 4. COMPLIANCE AND MARKET DATA

Ensuring the RDC can acquire and disseminate information for decision-making.

Two fundamental components of any economic development effort include the acquisition and dissemination of information and the compliance monitoring of agreements (development, performance, incentive, etc.). Competing effectively in economic development requires the continued collection, storage, and dissemination of market information to prospects, clients, and project leaders. In addition to assisting in the attraction and retention of businesses and the expansion of the local economy, market information is used to track organizational performance.

With Rosenberg’s continued growth and the corresponding increase in the number of agreements, additional compliance monitoring capacity is needed. This expanded capacity not only reflects the need to administer existing agreements, but also the likely increase in demand for ensuring the benefits accrued from those agreements. Information gained from compliance monitoring also dovetails directly into the acquisition and distribution of information to stakeholders.

Creating, reviewing, analyzing, and executing development agreements that conform to established standards and processes and that are fully aligned with City and RDC plans can be time intensive. Likewise, comprehensive data monitoring and management, including the tracking of performance metrics, are a critical need. A Compliance and Market Data specialist, funded by the RDC and servicing the City, would fill these gaps and remove a substantial portion of the burden of this task from current staff duties. The responsibilities of this position would include, but are not limited to, the following strategies and actions.

Strategies and Actions

- 4.1. Establish comprehensive data standards and protocols.
- 4.2. Create a repository for all development-related agreements, which would encompass the following tasks.
 - 4.2.1. Ensure the information collected by the City Secretary’s office (the official record keeper for the City) of all agreements and relevant information related to contractual agreements between the City and/or RDC and private sector partners are identified, cataloged, and monitored.
 - 4.2.2. Maintain an annual calendar of actions, events, data collections, and reporting related to existing agreements.
 - 4.2.3. Verify compliance with the agreements in accordance with this calendar, including coordination and communications with relevant parties, as well as the preparation of reports that are provided to the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, RDC Board, and City Council, as needed.
- 4.3. Work with leadership and relevant committees (e.g., the Image Committee) to drive implementation of action items in the City’s *2024–2028 Strategic Plan* that involve compliance with codes and regulations.

GOAL 5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPARENCY

Keeping stakeholders informed and educated on the RDC’s efforts.

Economic development efforts involve the use of public funds. One of the critical elements of a successful economic development program is the use of a variety of media and communication methods to inform and educate elected leadership, City staff, citizenry, and other stakeholders on the actions, activities, and efforts of that program. This effort would not involve persuasive advocacy for specific projects, programs, or initiatives.

The near- and long-term implementation of the EDSP depends on the augmentation of public recognition and buy-in for the RDC’s many current and future functions. Recent milestones, like the passage of the fire station and public services facilities bonds and the completion of the Fort Bend Epicenter, present prime opportunities for expanding the scope of the RDC’s outreach efforts. By continuing to invest resources into the marketing capacity of the organization, the City and the RDC will be better positioned to capitalize on their successes.

To implement these processes effectively, an outside public relations strategist (or other consultant with relevant expertise) would be a valuable addition to existing resources. This professional would develop an ongoing,

sustainable marketing and public relations effort, guided by on-the-ground research that informs best practices applicable to Rosenberg. Responsibilities associated with this effort would include the following activities.

Strategies and Actions

- 5.1. Perform large-scale research on the challenges and needs of Rosenberg residents and businesses via surveys and other methods to gather actionable feedback.
- 5.2. Strengthen print media outreach via press releases to local newspapers, an annual mailer detailing the RDC’s programmatic and project progress and future plans, and notices of upcoming in-person events and public input sessions.
- 5.3. Expand the RDC’s online presence via increased social media activity, email newsletters, and website renovations.
- 5.4. Drive the hosting and attendance of town halls and listening sessions to help residents understand the details of economic development activities and expected return on investment without an advocacy component.

GOAL 6. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening employer connections to the talent resources and assets.

Having an up-to-date understanding of the local labor market (along with the trends that influence it) and the needs of current and prospective employers are increasingly critical to the practice of economic development. Strengthening connections between employers and the various elements of the workforce development ecosystem (e.g., local workforce boards, postsecondary institutions, training providers, and trade organizations) is another pivotal role being assumed by some economic development organizations.

As part of ongoing efforts, RDC staff have recognized the need for additional capacity and support related to workforce development. This role would be tasked with implementing projects, programs, and initiatives that impact the talent pool fueling the major industries and employers in Rosenberg. Institutions like Texas State Technical College, which broke ground on a new Transportation Center of Excellence facility in November 2023 that will be open by fall 2025, recognize the expanding labor needs of businesses in the City. Ongoing coordination with these service providers will greatly enhance the RDC’s ability to grow the Rosenberg workforce.

Examples of tasks to enhance the RDC’s workforce initiatives are outlined here.

Strategies and Actions

- 6.1. Act as the primary conduit between local employers and the RDC on workforce issues, such as evolving technical training needs.
 - 6.1.1. Identify relevant stakeholders to establish strong, ongoing communication channels.
- 6.2. Work with the leadership of the rapidly growing Lamar Consolidated Independent School District (especially the district’s two high schools in Rosenberg) to ensure that students are learning the necessary skills to be well prepared for successful higher education or post-graduation careers.
- 6.3. Evaluate the wraparound services challenges associated with demographics like working parents (childcare) and non-English speakers (bilingual education and training) and drive solutions.

GOAL 7. SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Providing a resource to those seeking to start or expand a business.

Small businesses and entrepreneurship are frequently cited as the backbone of the US economy. There are many existing resources to assist small business owners. The most well recognized of these is the federal Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA has developed a multitude of resources, including Small Business Development Centers, Small Business Development Corporations, the Service Core of Retired Executives, and well-established and funded financing programs. Beyond these and other public sector resources, angel investors, business incubators, and consultants can provide assistance. What is often missing is a coordinating resource to aid those seeking to start or expand a small business. To this end, the economic development actions described in this goal focus on the RDC acting as a conduit that connects potential new businesses with the information and resources needed to establish operations in Rosenberg.

TIP does not intend to recommend that Rosenberg consider or establish a small business financial assistance program of its own. There are sufficient existing financial resources available, and the creation of such programs is fraught with costs and risks that are not in the City's interest to pursue.

An individual tasked with building and maintaining relationships with Rosenberg's numerous small businesses would enhance the RDC's effectiveness. The needs of small businesses are fundamentally different from those of larger companies. Working hand in hand with small business owners requires a distinct kind of resource dedication and expertise. Given the size of Rosenberg's Hispanic population, a group that represents an increasing share of small business owners, it would also be important for this individual to be fluent in Spanish. By incorporating a new resource who shoulders at least a subset of these responsibilities (described below), RDC staff would be able to prioritize day-to-day economic development issues.

Strategies and Actions

- 7.1. Serve as the primary point of contact for all local small business concerns and programmatic requests to the RDC.
- 7.2. Create a "Business Start-up Guide" to assist new entrepreneurs with acquiring and applying knowledge of relevant processes and service providers.
- 7.3. Assist with the preparation of applications for financial support (e.g., SBA funding).
- 7.4. Act as the conduit between potential entrepreneurs and City departments for business formation.

IMPLEMENTATION

This section describes how the RDC will execute the strategies and actions that will achieve the seven goals outlined in the Action Plan. The ability to consistently and reliably track progress and measure success is paramount to any economic development plan of work. Furthermore, a comprehensive understanding of the RDC’s fiscal resources will help drive the implementation of tasks that require additional resources.

TRACKING PROGRESS

TIP’s customized implementation matrix (delivered separately), along with a robust set of performance measures that can be tailored to reflect local priorities, will allow the RDC to track progress and communicate achievements to partners and stakeholders.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Upon the plan’s completion, TIP provided the RDC with a separate implementation matrix to guide the implementation phase. The Excel-based tool captures the recommended strategies and actions, as well as an indication of roles filled by existing or new staff (the Director of Economic Development, the Assistant Director of Economic Development, the Senior Administrative Specialist for Economic Development, or additional resources that are described elsewhere in this section). The proposed timeline for action is also provided, illustrating when actions should realistically be implemented over the course of the 10-year planning horizon. Strategies and actions are marked as either ongoing or designated as priorities for year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or beyond.

Figure 4. Implementation Matrix Sample

SUPPORT STRUCTURES & STRATEGIES	LEAD STAFF MEMBER	TIMELINE FOR INITIATING								PRIORITY	STATUS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	METRIC	KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS / NOTES
		ONGOING	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEARS 6-10						
1. INDUSTRIAL. Growing and sustaining the City’s vibrant manufacturing and distribution sectors.														
1.1 Construct new business parks.														
1.1.1 Evaluate the successes and challenges of tenants in the existing 184-acre Rosenberg Business Park near the intersection of I-69 and FM 2218. • Use the Park’s public-private development as a model for the construction and sale of similar • Identify potential private development partners for the new park(s).		■								LOW	ON TRACK	\$		
			■							MEDIUM	NOT STARTED	\$\$		
										HIGH	DELAYED	\$\$\$		
1.1.2 Identify available parcels and sites that have the infrastructure and transportation and logistics access to serve new parks effectively. • Conduct a feasibility study for the identified site(s) to determine market demand.						■					COMPLETED			
1.1.3 Work with City departments to identify and evaluate the potential locations.														
1.1.4 Convene local real estate professionals to assist in identification of potential sites and advise on potential partners and users.														
1.2 Utilize land-banking.														
1.2.1 Prioritize properties in the ETJ to preserve commercial and industrial space.														
1.2.2 Prioritize properties in West Rosenberg, proximate to existing infrastructure, such as the parcels at the intersection of Highway 90 and Highway 36 and along Highway 59.														

Source(s): TIP Strategies, Inc.

The matrix is intended to be a flexible, ever-evolving tool for tracking progress toward the plan’s implementation. To this end, it includes an indicator to reflect the status of each strategy and action, along with a place to capture achievements for reporting purposes. The status indicator provides a graphic representation to aid in monitoring where each recommendation stands and to highlight items that have encountered barriers or delays or where action is required to proceed. A column indicating the priority of each item—low, medium, high—is also provided.

In addition, there are two columns to be filled out by staff moving forward: required resources and metrics. These spaces allow leadership to update the matrix on an annual basis after identifying budget and measurement targets for that year. A description of suggested metrics to track are included in the following section.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To successfully meet and exceed expectations of implementing the many strategies and actions outlined in the EDSP, the RDC will need to continuously track and evaluate its performance. By measuring and sharing progress, the RDC will bolster its image as an effective and transparent economic development organization. The following recommended metrics are not intended to be exhaustive. It will be the responsibility of the RDC to collaborate with the City to establish quantitative targets annually.

Figure 5. Potential Performance Metrics

METRIC	DESCRIPTION
Domestic migration	Net migration to Rosenberg (and total population)
Sales tax revenue	Amount of sales tax generated in Rosenberg and the portion allocated to the RDC
Domestic investment	Growth in capital investment from both existing and new businesses
Foreign investment	Growth in capital investment from both existing and new businesses based outside of the US
Land ownership	Amount of new land (acres) acquired by the City and the RDC
New business establishments	Number of new businesses in Rosenberg and year-to-year growth
Industrial space	Amount of new industrial space added (square feet) and vacancy rate
Retail space	Amount of new retail space added (square feet) and vacancy rate
Job growth	Number of jobs created and retained
BRE site visits	Number of in-person RDC visits to existing businesses in Rosenberg
Business development contacts	Number of meetings with corporate site selectors, real estate professionals, landowners, etc.
New customer contacts	Number of RDC interviews with potential new businesses based outside Rosenberg
Residents reached	Number of existing residents contacted and informed via print media
Online contact points	Number of “hits” to RDC website, social media, and email newsletters

Source(s): TIP Strategies, Inc.

FISCAL CAPACITY

The City and the RDC must work together to evaluate the sufficiency and effectiveness of the organization’s recent budgets and project expenditures. A review of the most recent RDC budget and anticipated 2024 projects suggests the organization has sufficient funds (from the existing balance and revenues) to implement the EDSP recommendations related to marketing, staffing, and capital projects. An overview of the 2022–2023 budget is presented in Figure 6. Detail for total expenditures is called out to support the narrative.

Figure 6. 2022–2023 Budget Overview
Including 219 Fund expenditures by category

	ROSENBERG DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FUND (219)	RDC PROJECTS FUND (225)	2022–2023 BUDGET TOTAL
Total Beginning Balance	\$7,281,650	\$75,480	\$7,357,130
Total Revenues	\$6,305,000	\$5,177,500	\$11,482,500
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$13,586,650	\$5,252,980	\$18,839,630
Total Expenditures	\$6,295,021	\$5,172,500	\$11,467,521
Administration	\$306,924	–	–
Marketing	\$57,000	–	–
Memberships and Services	\$81,000	–	–
Professional Services	\$482,500	–	–
Infrastructure	\$5,367,597	–	–
Total Ending Balance	\$7,291,629	\$80,480	\$7,372,109
FUND TOTAL	\$13,586,650	\$5,252,980	\$18,839,630

Source(s): Rosenberg Development Corporation.

219 Fund Expenditures: \$6,295,021

This allocation covers the various functions of the RDC that are not project-based capital investments. It includes (but is not limited to) several categories that would be directly impacted by strategic and staffing recommendations in the EDSP.

The Administration budget was \$306,924 in 2022–2023. RDC’s bylaws limit this category to a maximum of 10 percent of total 219 Fund expenditures. Applying that 10 percent limit to the 2022–2023 budget figures would result in an Administration budget of \$629,502, more than double the prior level of administrative costs. Using this calculation, the hiring of a full-time Compliance Officer is feasible and would not test this ceiling.

The most recent Marketing budget (e.g., printing and advertising) totaled \$57,000. Augmenting these resources, as described in the public information strategy in Goal 5, would have significant impact without straining overall RDC expenditures.

The 2022–2023 Professional Services budget (e.g., consulting fees) came in at \$482,500. Both the Workforce & BRE and the Small Business Liaison independent contractors would be paid out of this category. It is important to note that part of last year’s expenses was dedicated to the search for a Director of Economic Development.

225 Fund Expenditures: \$5,172,500

These expenditures represent the costs of capital projects that would be extended or augmented by the recommendations in the EDSP. As noted in the 2024 Capital Projects outline, the projected expenditures from this fund are expected to be reduced by nearly \$1 million this year, which indicates that funding for more resource-intensive projects in future years would not be excessive.

2024 Capital Projects: \$4,440,000

The RDC has allocated \$4.44 million in FY 2024 to a number of projects featured in the EDSP. Given the 10-year planning horizon, leadership should be prepared to dedicate additional funds to complete these essential investments. Notable projects, along with the corresponding strategy or action, include the following.

- **US Highway 90-A Corridor Revitalization (\$1,000,000).** As described in Strategy 3.1, this project will be a critical improvement to both the transportation infrastructure and overall image of Rosenberg.
- **Brazos Town Center (\$775,000).** Strategy 2.1 details how Brazos Town Center developments should be pursued.
- **Wayfinding signage (\$100,000).** Action 3.6.2 would be a contributing expense to this allocation.



Image credit: Courtesy of the Rosenberg Development Corporation.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

As part of the strategic planning process, TIP conducted an analysis of factors that influence Rosenberg’s competitive position. The analysis was completed as part of TIP’s initial discovery phase and included comparisons to the Houston metropolitan statistical area (MSA), the state of Texas, and the US, along with a peer group of Type B economic development corporations (EDCs) comprised of the following cities.

- Anna
- Bastrop
- Buda
- Conroe
- Fulshear
- Midlothian
- Pflugerville
- Richmond
- Schertz
- Stafford
- Terrell
- Tomball

Initial data collection began in August 2023 and the work extended for the next four months. An in-depth analysis was delivered to the RDC staff in December 2023 as a Tableau dashboard (the features of which were described earlier in the EDSP).

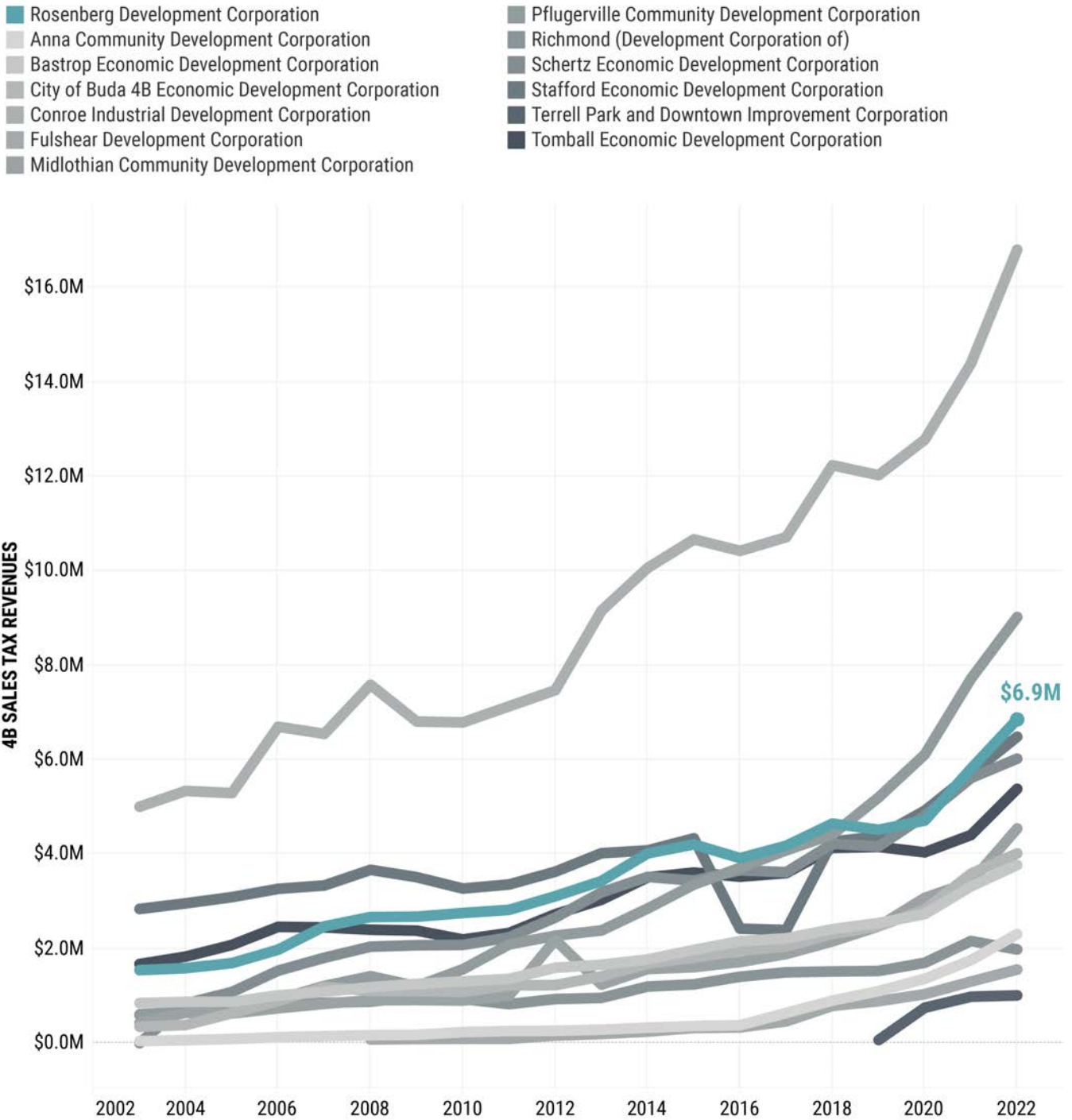
Key findings from this analysis, summarized in this section with relevant exhibits, informed and guided the direction of the EDSP. The exhibits were selected from the comprehensive quantitative analysis performed by TIP. The full data visualization dashboard contains an even deeper and wider investigation of Rosenberg’s economic strengths and weaknesses.

Rosenberg has grown quickly, and sales tax revenue has increased accordingly.

Like many of its peers in the Greater Houston area, Rosenberg’s population is growing quickly, with an influx of more than 15,000 new residents since 2000. Not surprisingly, the City’s rapid population growth has yielded increased sales tax revenue. The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts reports annual sales tax revenues of local EDCs. As shown in Figure 7 (page 30), Rosenberg, alongside many of its Type B EDC peers, has reported sustained growth in sales tax revenue over the past two decades. (Details on the rate and effective date of the Type B tax in each city, along with 2022 total taxable sales is provided as Figure 8, page 31.) Aside from the outliers of Pflugerville and Conroe, Rosenberg has emerged as a leader of the pack, surpassing Houston-area peers Stafford and Tomball. As suburban Rosenberg has expanded, retail developments along the I-69 corridor have allowed the City to capture a greater portion of the area’s sales revenue, with the potential to increase the City’s retail presence through investments in mixed-use and destination retail sites. Rosenberg’s Historic Downtown also remains an asset, with opportunities to host tourist events and to market Downtown as a site for unique and local retailers.

Figure 7. Type B Sales Tax Revenues

City of Rosenberg and selected Type B EDCs in Texas peer cities



Source(s): Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts; TIP Strategies, Inc.
 Note(s): Revenues are stated as reported in annual filings and have not been inflation adjusted.

Figure 8. Additional Details for Type B Peers

TYPE B CORPORATION PEERS	POPULATION	TYPE B TAX RATE	TYPE B EFFECTIVE DATE	TOTAL TAXABLE SALES (2022)
Rosenberg Development Corporation	37,871	0.0050000	7/1/1995	\$1,540.5M
Anna Community Development Corporation*	16,792	0.0075000	4/1/2017	\$179.1M
Bastrop Economic Development Corporation	9,531	0.0050000	7/1/1995	\$664.7M
City of Buda 4B Economic Development Corporation	14,348	0.0050000	10/1/2001	\$674.6M
Conroe Industrial Development Corporation	87,930	0.0050000	7/1/1994	\$2,585.0M
Fulshear Development Corporation	17,259	0.0050000	10/1/2007	\$155.4M
Midlothian Community Development Corporation	33,914	0.0050000	1/1/1999	\$455.5M
Pflugerville Community Development Corporation	64,007	0.0050000	1/1/2002	\$1,312.4M
Richmond (Development Corporation of)	11,768	0.0050000	1/1/1996	\$232.1M
Schertz Economic Development Corporation	41,607	0.0050000	1/1/1998	\$890.5M
Stafford Economic Development Corporation	17,170	0.0050000	7/1/1999	\$1,131.7M
Terrell Park and Downtown Improvement Corp.	17,083	0.0012500	7/1/2019	\$776.4M
Tomball Economic Development Corporation	12,333	0.0050000	7/1/1994	\$785.0M

*Anna’s Type B tax was initially effective 10/1/2006 at the rate of 0.0050000.

Source(s): 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year sample; Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): ACS population figures are provided for comparative purposes only and may not align with more recent numbers.

A young, diverse population can shift the narrative on income and educational attainment.

Figure 9 (page 32) compares Rosenberg to its Fort Bend County and Type B peers on a number of demographic characteristics. The communities of Fort Bend County are among the most racially and ethnically diverse in the nation, and Rosenberg is no exception. Among its peers, Rosenberg is one of only two cities to have a majority Hispanic population. The City of Rosenberg’s population is also much younger than that of its neighbors and peers, with well over one-half of Rosenberg residents under the age of 34. In a time of major growth for the region, this youth and diversity provides Rosenberg with an advantage among its peers; a variety of backgrounds and perspectives within the Rosenberg workforce promotes a culture of employees learning from one another and bringing diverse new ideas to the table. While these socioeconomic factors provide Rosenberg with a distinct advantage in terms of competitiveness, other factors put the City at a distinct disadvantage. Most Rosenberg residents do not hold any college degree, with nearly one-fifth of residents not having completed high school—one of the lowest educational attainment rates among its peer group. In terms of poverty status, a higher portion of Rosenberg residents fell below the federal poverty level in 2021 than that of any other peer city except one. This poverty rate is more than double that of Fort Bend County. This reality presents both challenges and opportunities for the City. Increased options for vocational training and adult education can allow the City to improve the educational attainment of its residents and develop a young, diverse workforce well-suited to meet the needs of Rosenberg’s industries.

Figure 9. Select Demographic Characteristics, 2021
 With highest share highlighted for each variable

GEOGRAPHIES	RACE/ETHNICITY					AGE		EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE
	WHITE	HISPANIC OR LATINX	BLACK OR OF AFRICAN DESCENT	ASIAN	ALL OTHER RACES	34 YEARS AND UNDER	35 YEARS AND OVER	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL	SOME COLLEGE	ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE	BACHELOR'S DEGREE	GRADUATE OR PROF. DEGREE	
ROSENBERG, TX	21.2%	57.9%	11.5%	8.1%	1.4%	55.3%	44.7%	19.2%	30.8%	21.6%	6.9%	15.7%	5.8%	16.7%
Fort Bend County, TX	31.1%	24.9%	19.9%	20.7%	3.3%	47.4%	52.6%	9.0%	17.9%	17.8%	7.2%	28.6%	19.5%	7.2%
Houston MSA	34.7%	37.9%	16.8%	7.8%	2.7%	50.3%	49.7%	15.6%	22.7%	20.2%	7.4%	21.6%	12.5%	13.3%
Texas	40.7%	39.8%	11.8%	5.0%	2.8%	50.0%	50.0%	15.2%	24.5%	21.2%	7.5%	20.4%	11.2%	14.0%
United States	59.4%	18.4%	12.2%	5.6%	4.3%	45.5%	54.5%	11.1%	26.5%	20.0%	8.7%	20.6%	13.1%	12.6%
SELECTED FORT BEND PEERS														
Fulshear, TX	57.0%	23.9%	2.6%	13.4%	3.2%	45.3%	54.7%	1.8%	8.1%	11.6%	3.1%	44.8%	30.7%	2.1%
Katy, TX	53.2%	23.7%	11.2%	6.3%	5.8%	44.3%	55.7%	5.2%	19.1%	19.8%	9.2%	26.5%	20.2%	2.2%
Missouri City, TX	20.9%	17.4%	40.3%	18.7%	2.7%	42.9%	57.1%	8.7%	19.3%	20.6%	7.3%	27.1%	17.1%	5.8%
Richmond, TX	21.9%	50.5%	22.1%	4.8%	0.7%	54.3%	45.7%	21.5%	27.6%	24.5%	8.4%	11.0%	7.0%	19.8%
Stafford, TX	16.1%	25.4%	25.6%	28.0%	4.8%	54.8%	45.2%	12.3%	25.2%	18.3%	7.0%	27.9%	9.2%	11.9%
SELECTED TYPE B PEERS														
Anna, TX	58.7%	20.7%	15.0%	2.4%	3.2%	60.6%	39.4%	11.3%	27.4%	16.4%	10.0%	24.5%	10.3%	9.3%
Bastrop, TX	56.3%	35.5%	3.8%	3.1%	1.3%	44.9%	55.1%	11.1%	28.4%	18.5%	6.9%	24.5%	10.5%	10.7%
Buda, TX	66.0%	29.4%	1.3%	0.0%	3.4%	47.6%	52.4%	1.6%	15.2%	24.1%	4.6%	41.4%	13.1%	6.0%
Conroe, TX	52.9%	30.2%	11.8%	2.9%	2.2%	52.8%	47.2%	15.6%	24.0%	21.3%	8.8%	20.9%	9.5%	11.3%
Midlothian, TX	70.9%	15.6%	8.8%	0.7%	4.0%	49.9%	50.1%	5.9%	25.6%	27.4%	6.8%	24.6%	9.7%	5.4%
Pflugerville, TX	40.7%	32.9%	15.6%	6.7%	4.0%	46.0%	54.0%	5.6%	24.1%	23.3%	8.9%	27.2%	10.9%	5.3%
Schertz, TX	48.9%	32.9%	11.0%	2.3%	4.9%	44.7%	55.3%	4.4%	22.5%	22.3%	11.5%	24.4%	14.9%	4.8%
Terrell, TX	40.7%	33.1%	23.1%	0.1%	2.9%	50.8%	49.2%	18.5%	33.8%	25.1%	5.5%	11.4%	5.7%	13.4%
Tomball, TX	60.7%	26.0%	11.1%	0.3%	1.9%	45.4%	54.6%	10.9%	22.9%	25.7%	8.5%	20.0%	12.0%	11.7%

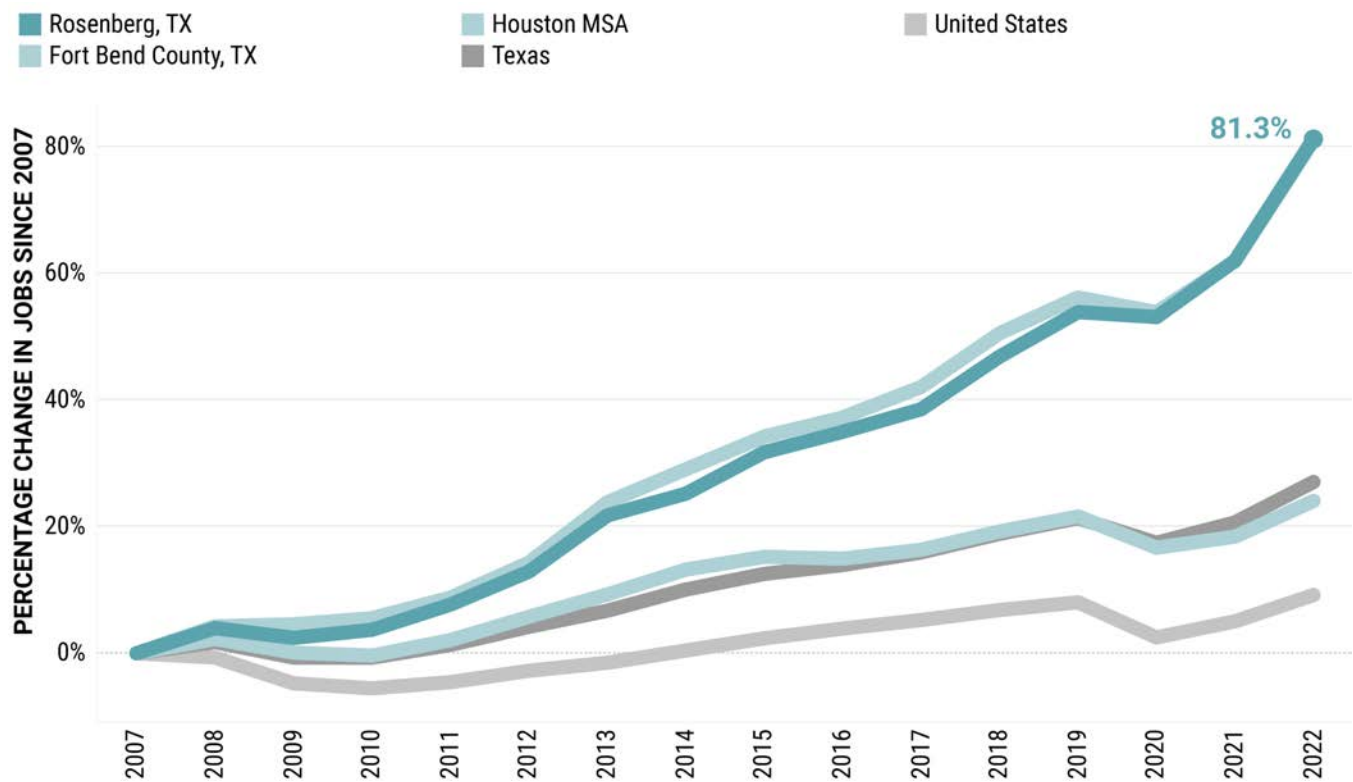
Source(s): 2021 ACS 5-year sample; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): The US Census Bureau categorizes Hispanic or Latinx as an ethnic group rather than a race. The Hispanic or Latinx group includes all races; the remaining racial groups exclude Hispanics or Latinxs. All Other Races includes Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Pacific Islanders, multiracial persons, and all other racial or ethnic identities not specified. These data are based on self-identification and reflect a social definition of race/ethnicity. Educational attainment is only measured for population 25 years and older. High school includes equivalency. Some College indicates no degree was received. Graduate or Prof. Degree includes professional degrees and doctoral programs. A person's poverty status is based on if the previous 12 months of income fell below the federal poverty level.

Rosenberg’s economy has demonstrated its resilience.

Rosenberg has demonstrated resilience in bouncing back from both major economic crises of the past two decades: the Great Recession (2007–2009) and the economic upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 10, page 33). In the years following the Great Recession, Rosenberg experienced sustained growth in employment, matching the pace of booming Fort Bend County and far exceeding the rates of the Houston MSA, Texas, and the US. After a year-over-year decline in employment numbers from 2019 to 2020, Rosenberg once again bounced back vigorously between 2021 and 2022, narrowly eclipsing the rate of Fort Bend County and leaving its other benchmark regions well behind. This banner year of recovery was led by spikes in several working-class industries; by the end of 2022, the manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, wholesale trade, and retail trade industries had all surpassed their pre-pandemic employment numbers. These target industries present further opportunity for Rosenberg to increase its post-COVID-19 pandemic employment numbers. The precipitous rise in e-commerce in recent years, bolstered by lingering pandemic-era shopping habits, means that warehouses and distribution centers will continue to be valuable assets for Rosenberg, with further development of industrial facilities and improvements to roadway infrastructure well within the scope of the City’s short-term goals. As discussed previously (see Figure 7, page 30), an increase in unique in-person retail opportunities will also help the City stand out among its peers and remain nimble in future times of economic downturn.

Figure 10. Total Employment, Recovery
 Rosenberg, Texas, and comparison areas since the Great Recession

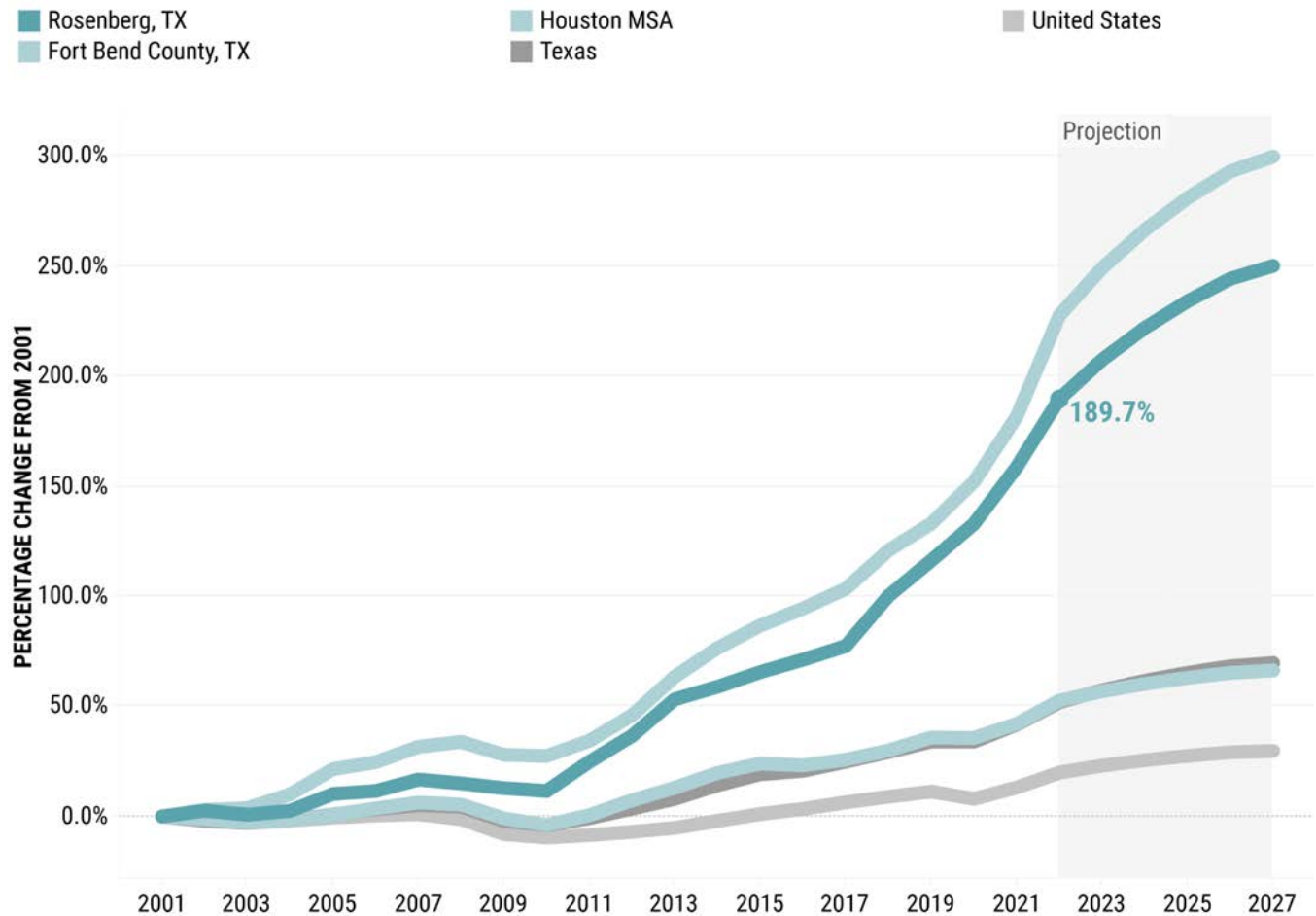


Source(s): US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); Lightcast 2023.3–Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.
 Note(s): Rosenberg, Texas, is approximated by ZIP Code 77471.

Employment has skyrocketed over the past 20 years.

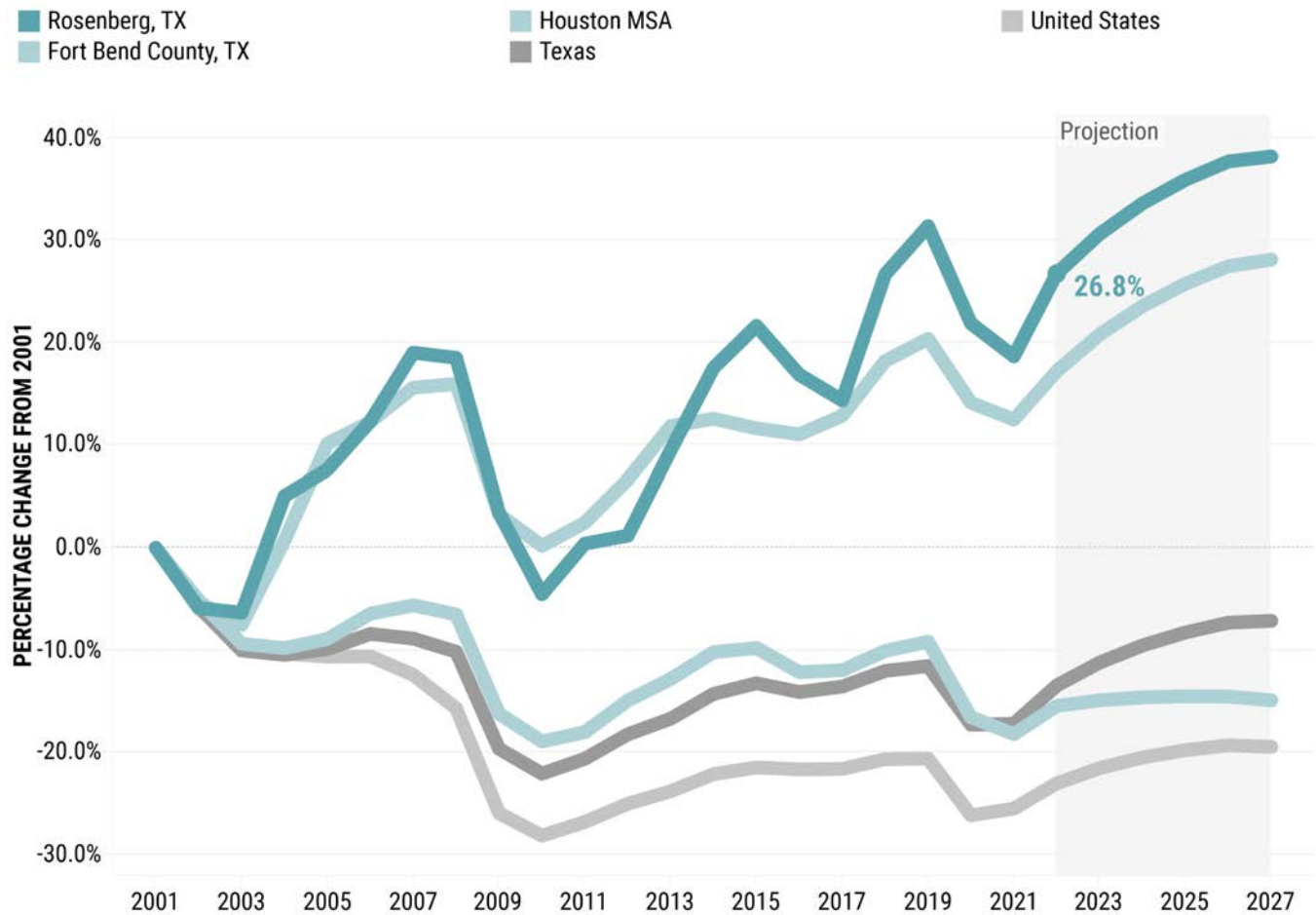
Another factor contributing to Rosenberg’s economic resilience is its rapid increase in employment over the past 20 years. In 2022, Rosenberg’s total employment was nearly 21,000, an increase of more than 12,000 from the year 2001. This rate of growth is comparable to that of Fort Bend County as a whole and well exceeds the rates of Rosenberg’s other benchmark regions. As demonstrated by its successful COVID-19 pandemic recovery (see Figure 10, page 33), this strong growth has been closely associated with Rosenberg’s industrial occupations. Both transportation and material moving (shown in Figure 11, page 34) and production (shown in Figure 12, page 35) have demonstrated sustained growth over this period that is far beyond the rate for the Houston MSA. While the Houston MSA saw growth in transportation and material moving occupations over this period (at a rate of 52.6 percent compared to Rosenberg’s 189.7 percent), the region saw a decline in production occupations. As the region continues to grow rapidly, with employment numbers climbing across most industries, there is potential for Rosenberg to further step into its role as an industrial, working-class powerhouse within the Houston area.

Figure 11. Long-Term Trends for Transportation and Material Moving Occupations



Source(s): BLS; Lightcast 2023.3—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.
 Note(s): Rosenberg, Texas, is approximated by ZIP Code 77471.

Figure 12. Long-Term Employment Trends for Production Occupations



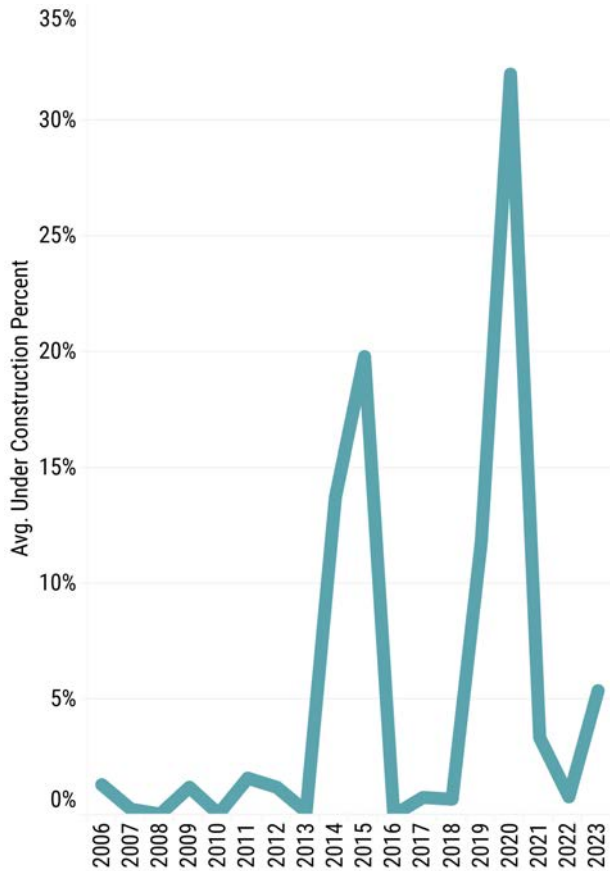
Source(s): BLS; Lightcast 2023.3—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Rosenberg, Texas, is approximated by ZIP Code 77471.

An increase in industrial real estate plays into Rosenberg’s strengths.

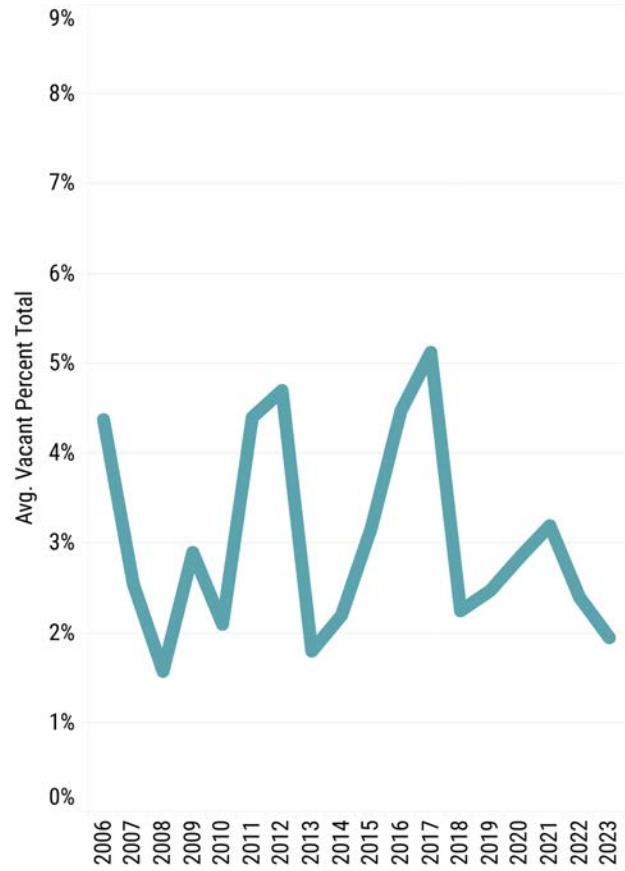
Rosenberg has seen two notable spikes in industrial building completions in recent years due largely to the construction of two major sites. In 2015 and 2020, completions of large-scale distribution centers for ALDI and Dollar Tree, respectively, represented massive increases in Rosenberg’s industrial real estate inventory (Figure 13, page 36). These developments reflect the sustained growth in industrial employment discussed previously, especially in transportation and warehousing. While the vacancy rate of Rosenberg industrial real estate has fluctuated (recently reaching its lowest rate in 10 years, as shown in Figure 14, page 36), the vacancy rate of Fort Bend County has dropped steadily, indicating an opening for Rosenberg to step into a role as a regional leader of industrial real estate. A strong regional demand for industrial space as well as Rosenberg’s proven ability to fill its recent major industrial expansions demonstrate the feasibility of increasing the City’s available square footage of industrial facilities. Developing appropriate infrastructure that meets the local demand, in conjunction with a marketing strategy targeted at Houston-area industrial users and international businesses, can allow Rosenberg to become a regional leader in the industrial real estate field, representing a significant return on its investment in warehouse space.

Figure 13. Industrial Construction Rate
Rosenberg, Texas



Source(s): CoStar Group; TIP Strategies, Inc.
Note(s): All data are estimated by CoStar as of early August 2023.

Figure 14. Industrial Vacancy Rate
Rosenberg, Texas



Source(s): CoStar Group; TIP Strategies, Inc.
Note(s): All data are estimated by CoStar as of early August 2023.

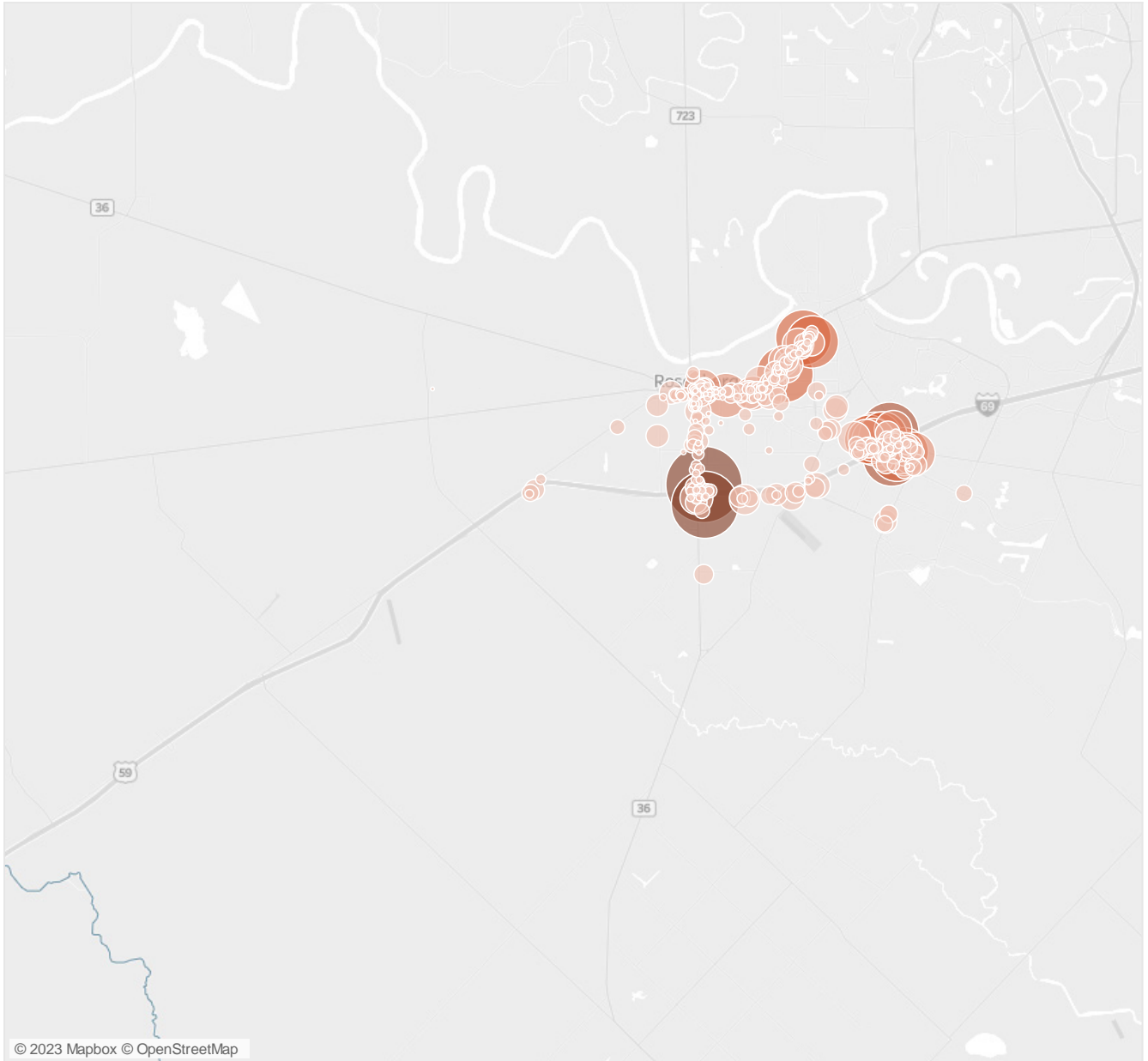
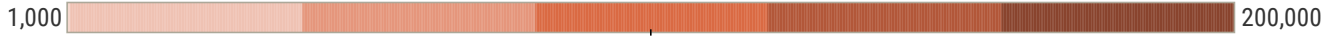
A variety of sites are available for retail development.

As the populations of Rosenberg and its neighboring communities have grown rapidly in recent years, numerous residential and commercial developments have emerged along the high-traffic I-69 corridor, including Brazos Town Center. A major commercial hub for central Fort Bend County, Brazos Town Center represents the majority of Rosenberg’s newest and most expensive retail inventory with a variety of big box retailers to attract shoppers from across the area. Brazos Town Center and its adjacent parcels provide the potential for the City to expand its retail offerings by bringing mixed-use sites to the area. There are also ample options for development in available sites outside of Brazos Town Center. The recently completed Fort Bend Epicenter provides a unique opportunity for event-oriented, mixed-use development near existing assets like the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds and the Rosenberg Civic Center. Similarly, an abundance of sites along the Highway 90-A corridor near downtown Rosenberg provides the prospect for the creation of placemaking events and culturally unique local businesses. This would provide retail space that is more easily accessible by local small businesses, as well as local shopping options that are more distinctive to Rosenberg than national retailers. Figure 15 (page 37) and Figure 16 (page 38) illustrate the distribution of Rosenberg’s retail inventory and estimated rental rates, respectively.

Figure 15. Retail Inventory in Rosenberg, Texas

RENTABLE BUILDING AREA

(square feet)



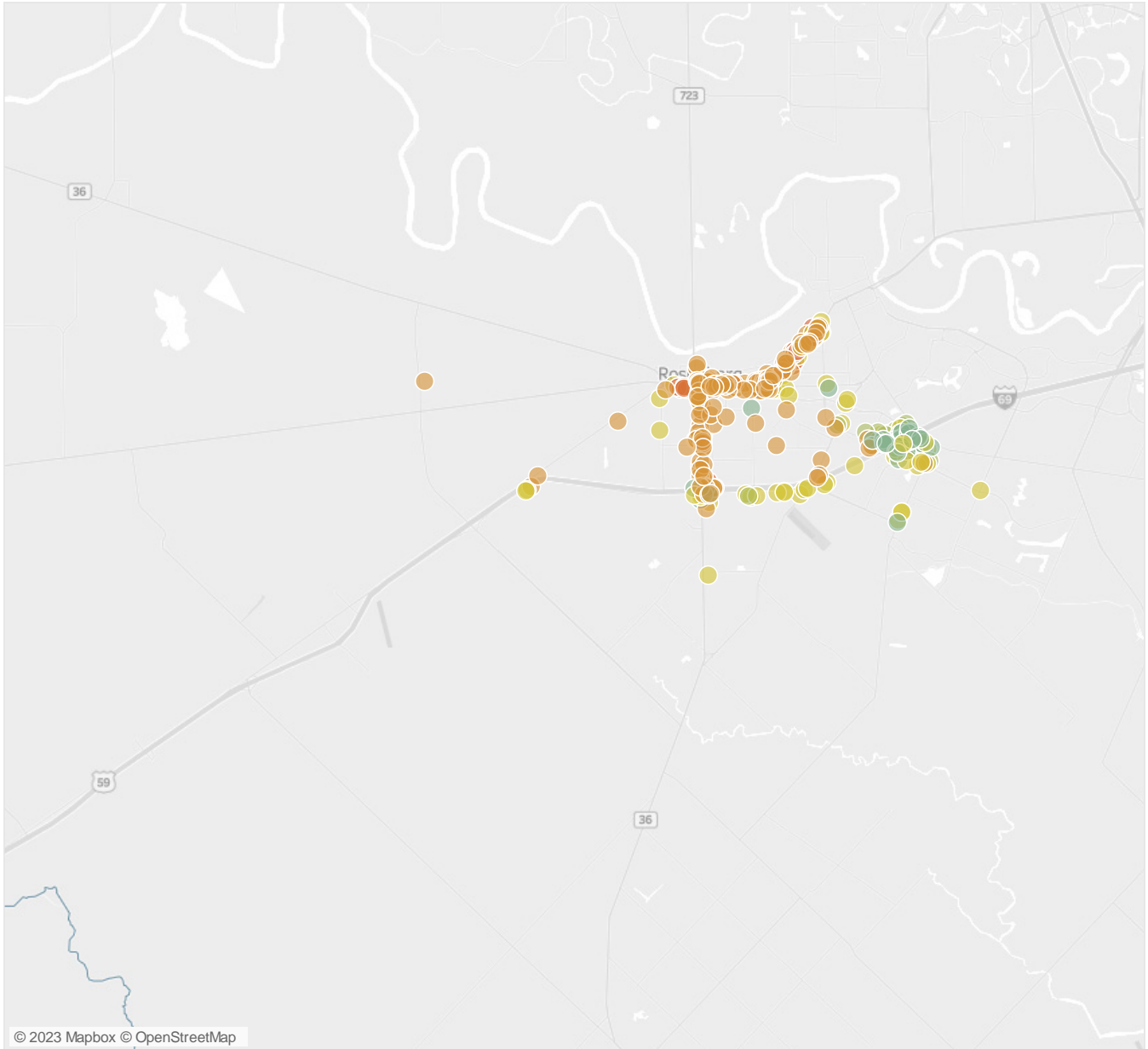
Source(s): CoStar Group; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Larger circles indicate larger buildings. All data are estimated by CoStar as of early August 2023 and represent a snapshot in time.

Figure 16. Retail Rents in Rosenberg, Texas

ESTIMATED RENTAL RATE

\$/square foot/year



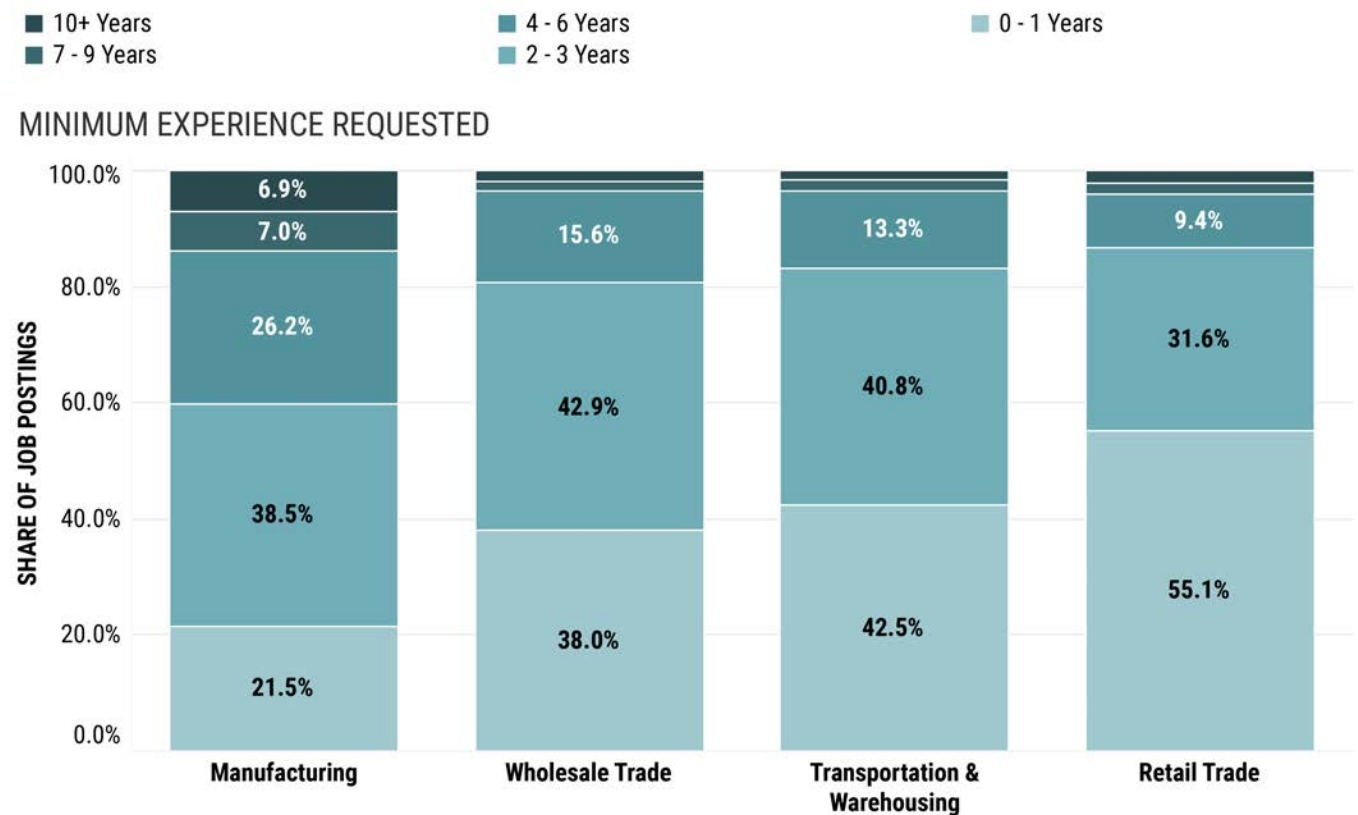
Source(s): CoStar Group; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Estimated rent levels are depicted in traffic light colors: green (higher), yellow (middle), and red (lower). All data, including rents, are estimated by CoStar as of early August 2023 and represent a snapshot in time. In instances where only a rent range is available, a midpoint is used. Rental rates are shown in US\$ per square foot per year.

A growing workforce must meet the demands of industrial development.

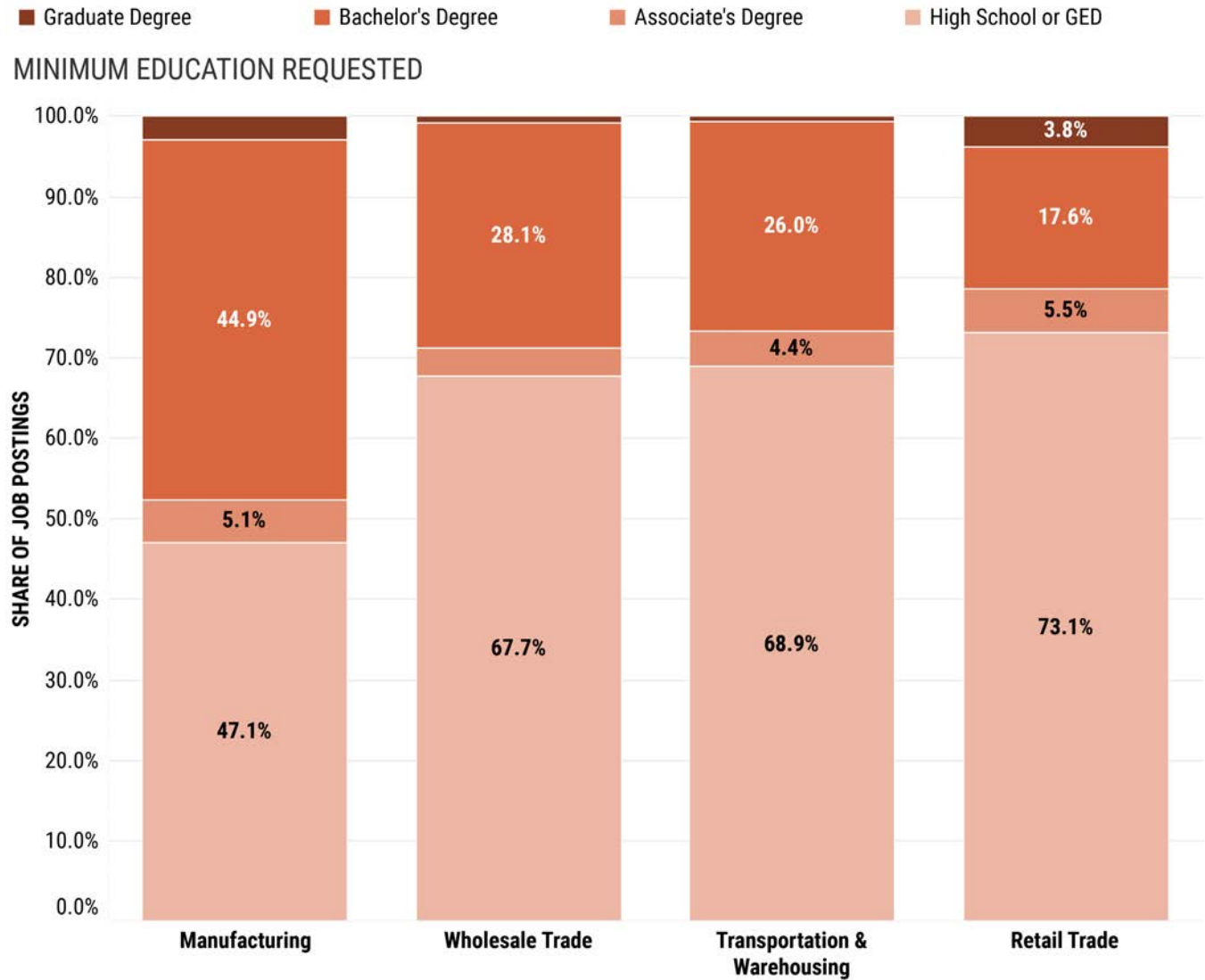
Rosenberg’s industrial employment has climbed rapidly over the past 20 years while the City has seen a notable increase in its square footage of industrial real estate. Considering this increase, it is more important that the population of Rosenberg be workforce ready, meeting the skills and qualifications required for these growing occupations. As discussed previously, Rosenberg has an extremely young population as well as relatively poor educational attainment when compared to its peers. Because of this, Rosenberg must fill the gaps that exist between the skills and experience of its existing workforce, and the qualifications requested by its target industries: manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, and retail trade. Across Fort Bend County, well over one-half of all job postings in three of the target industries request that candidates have a high school diploma or equivalent, with sizable portions of job postings in all four industries requesting a bachelor’s degree (Figure 18, page 40). In a city where one-fifth of the population has an educational attainment below the high school level, and well over one-quarter of the population is without a college degree, this represents a barrier to workforce readiness that could be addressed by an increase in vocation-specific and adult-oriented education opportunities. Additionally, many of the job postings in these industries request prior experience, something that is a barrier to such a young working population (Figure 17, page 39). Local schools have the potential to address this through an increase in career and technical courses that provide graduates with an industry-specific certification, as well as through partnerships with local employers, extending apprenticeships and part-time work opportunities to students or recent graduates.

Figure 17. Target Sector Experience Requirements



Source(s): BLS; Lightcast 2023.3–QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.
 Note(s): Job postings include non-staffing, unique, active job postings for full-time, part-time, and flexible positions, excluding internships, in Fort Bend County between October 2021 and October 2023. Figures may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Figure 18. Target Sector Education Requirements



Source(s): BLS; Lightcast 2023.3—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Job postings include non-staffing, unique, active job postings for full-time, part-time, and flexible positions, excluding internships, in Fort Bend County between October 2021 and October 2023. GED refers to the General Education Development test, a standardized test often used to meet high school equivalency requirements for postsecondary institutions and employers. Figures may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.