



A Texas Main Street City that Bricked the World

*Closing Observations
& Recommendations
For Retail Place Makers
In The Maker Movement*

THE CITY OF FERRIS, TX

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Ferris SWOT Analysis	9
2015 Ranked SWOT Analysis	12
Ferris Strategic Plan	15
Vision Statement	18
Mission Statement	19
Vision Survey Results	21
Ferris Postscript	23

A special thanks to each of these individuals and their organizations for encouraging their participation:

Earline Jackson (Housing)

Rudy Amor (4B EDC)

Bill Pardue (4A EDC)

Michael Martinez (4A EDC)

Mayor Michael Driggers (City Council)

Jim Starr (City Council)

Angela Bruner (Main Street/Business Leader)

Taylor Frontera (Main Street/Youth)

Charles Hatfield (Planning & Zoning Commission)

Christi Farish (Planning & Zoning Commission)

Robert Scott (Ferris Independent School District)

Dennis Burn (former City Manager)

Chuck Dart (Economic Development & Main Street Director)

Tim Birdwell (Fire Department)

Brian Smith (Pastor)

Peter Byrom (Plant Manager)

Dennis Robinson (Ellis County Commission)

Carol Fendley (Business Leader)



“

Conduct a strategic plan and accomplish those goals and objectives or change the plan when needed to fit the needs of the community. Question every funding opportunity that comes up and ask themselves, does this meet our strategic plan?

-Response to Ferris Visioning Survey

”

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Ferris, Texas' 4A (or Type A) Economic Development Corporation (EDC) recognized the need for a strategic plan to help prioritize and target the strongest opportunities to enhance Ferris' Economic Development potential—with an eye on both short term objectives and longer term goals. At their initiative, the community completed a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) exercise and strategic visioning effort—as well as ideas for EDC's updated Mission and Vision.

A secondary purpose of this plan is to identify and validate potential implementation steps to put the plan into action.

Process

The Ferris 4A EDC chose Catalyst Commercial and Marty Wieder Strategic Consulting Services (the Consultant team) to help guide them through this interactive Strategic Planning exercise. The 4A EDC Board Members also included representatives of other voting bodies (i.e. City Council, Planning & Zoning Commission, Type B EDC, Main Street Board and the Ferris Independent School District) as well as the general populace to participate in this exercise, to ensure such a plan was thorough—and had the needed community input to facilitate support and implementation. The Ferris 4A EDC desired that the team schedule, plan and facilitate a structured workshop with representatives of all the aforementioned entities and key city staff professionals. These were completed on Saturday, March 28, 2015.

This event included:

1. An introduction to the participants (a total of 18 Ferris and Ellis County representatives, Catalyst and Marty Wieder) and the process—as well as a briefing on the exercise’s importance as it relates to Ferris existing efforts, as well as the City’s future budgeting and Capital Improvements Program planning (see PowerPoint presentation #1). The introduction also included a review of the Scope of Work.

From the very beginning, three main things are relative to the process:

A. The importance of working toward and delivering a worthwhile product—and a living document (one that can continue to be updated and amended in the weeks and months to come)—to the City (and for that matter citizens) of Ferris. City Council, EDC Board, ISD Board, Planning & Zoning Commission and other community organizations may use this document and associated goals to measure progress and check off (when completed), rewrite and replace priorities when necessary. This provides Ferris with a framework for future strategic planning efforts or follow-up activities, as well.

B. The Pre-Session Visioning Survey extracted insight into the community’s thoughts and desires—and results were used to draft Vision and Mission Statements, since the surveys prioritized what was most important to Ferris’ elected and appointed leaders, community catalysts and interested citizens.

C. No community desires to end up with a plan without a purpose. It is critical to keep in mind planning’s importance. Thus, the Plan would include a Postscript of suggestions, based on upon years of experience—so the City also realizes a value added set of ideas and recommendations to help Ferris deliver on the community’s most pressing wants and needs.

Strategic Planning takes time and effort, helps in budgeting and decision-making and can be managed. A Strategic Plan has many benefits to the EDC, including:

- Provides a unified and planned governmental decisions.
 - Provides City staff a functional approach for budget processing.
 - Encourages entrepreneurial ideas.
 - Outlines City goals and objectives.
 - Explores projects that best utilize area resources.
 - Creates a framework for grant and other opportunities that may present themselves.
 - Stimulates public awareness, interest and support.
2. Conducting a SWOT Analysis—evaluating Ferris’ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats—particularly from an economic development perspective. This exercise:

A. Solicited stakeholder’s issues, priorities and concerns. This allowed comments from all participants, and the pre-exercise survey even allowed the consultant some insight on the priorities of everyone involved so he could ensure all those issues or concerns were uncovered.

“The only bad idea today is the one that goes unmentioned.”

The Workshop and SWOT analysis also allowed the consultant to pass along a few of his observations about Ferris, including how the City that bricked the world has:

- Great clay (mineral enriched soil)—which could set the stage for other business opportunities.
- Genuine, authentic people—as evidenced by the number of individuals who agreed to show up and spend a half-day communicating their passions and concerns.
- Recent improvements to the Scout House. And with Ferris having so many Architecturally-significant church and assembly buildings, there are many opportunities to make that a habit.
- An increased ISO score (and its positive impact on homeowner and business insurance premiums).

As part of the SWOT analysis representatives (including Council, Type A & B Boards, Main Street Board, Planning & Zoning Commission, citizens and key City management professionals) ranked the items in order of priority, and then the Consultant team integrated various priorities (weaving in as many of their ranked comments and priorities as possible) into the resulting Strategic Plan.

Marty Wieder Strategic Consulting Services, under the guidance and direction of principal Catalyst Commercial—

1. Spent subsequent weeks fine-tuning the actual plan with a proposed set of initial action items;

2. Returned to City and held a second Workshop on Tuesday, April 28, 2015, when the Consultant team delivered the SWOT Analysis and Ranked SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) priorities that participants in the first Workshop identified at the Strategic Planning Session on March 28—as well as the Draft Strategic Plan and alternatives for participants to consider for their Mission and Vision Statements. Participants recommended streamlining and simplifying the Vision Statement. Jason Claunch of Catalyst Commercial and Marty Wieder returned to Ferris on June 1 to brief Mayor Mike Driggars and Economic Development & Main Street Director Chuck Dart—and delivered the plan to 4A EDC Board of Directors on July 16, 2015.
3. In summary, the Strategic Plan concluded with four Short Term Goals and three Longer Term Goals, as follows —
 1. *Prepare a Request for Proposals so Ferris may identify the best utility to team with in developing a wireless infrastructure for high speed internet services. (Short Term)*
 2. *Continue to schedule, plan and hold the annual April Community Pride/Clean up Day; take it even higher. (Short Term)*
 3. *Prepare now for the eventual loss of the Waste Management revenue stream—as well as what Ferris needs to fund the community’s highest priority Long Term Goal (see item 5 below). (Short Term)*
 4. *Address both the perception of drinking water*

and overall water capacity needs. (Short Term)

5. Prepare to rebuild the water and sewer system. (Longer Term)

6. Prepare now for the eventual loss of the Waste Management revenue stream. (Longer Term)

7. Study and select an appropriate niche, brand or tag line attach to Ferris' Historic Downtown. (Longer Term)

Results

The Strategic Plan that follows is intended to provide a framework for development of a more complete set of tactics in the coming Fiscal Year—and especially as the City adopts new leadership. For instance, the ranked SWOT Analysis and complimentary Strategic Plan—based upon the priorities and preferences of City, County, ISD and community officials—provides Ferris' policy and administrative leaders with the information they need to conduct additional research that quantifies and clarifies preliminary findings and elaborate on the items identified as being at the top of the Plan with more specific objectives and timetables for completion.

Moreover, the plans results identifies two options for the 4A EDC to consider for the Phase II portion of this analysis:

1. Study the best way to develop Ferris' parcels with interstate proximity (i.e. fronting IH-45) to compliment rather than compete with Downtown commerce. Create an inventory of available properties and quantify the development potential of each parcel. Consider the

impact of traffic counts, entrance and exit ramps, hard corners and signalized intersections. Evaluate what is missing (i.e. market voids) and sales tax leakage. Identify and approach fast food/fast casual restaurants and hospitality prospects to land and generate new sales and occupancy tax revenues, maximize growth potential, diversify revenue and permit Ferris to hire additional personnel to supplement its stretched City staff. (Related to Short Term Goal # 3).

2. Consider reuse of existing, vacant industrial and/or office buildings to build a business park, build an industrial park or neighborhood innovation district. (Related to Longer Term Goal #2).

FERRIS SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- *Approachable City Council*
- *Race relations*
- *Growth potential*
- *Opportunities to serve*
- *Community events*
- *In two counties*
- *Golf course*
- *Landfill/Waste Management partnership*
- *City is business friendly*
- *Façade improvement grants*
- *Safety*
- *Known boundaries*
- *Active community service organizations*
- *Family friendly*
- *Traffic*
- *FM 664*
- *Bypass*
- *Business association*
- *Sports facilities*
- *Location*
- *Development space*
- *Ease of business*
- *People*
- *Historic Downtown*
- *New businesses*
- *Space for residential*
- *Good Schools*
- *Only community to hold an Earth Day in Ellis County*
- *Financial stability of City government*
- *Affordable property values*
- *Interstate proximity*
- *Proximity to the Intermodal*
- *Lots of Churches*
- *UNT Dallas*
- *Water has gotten better*

Weaknesses

- Landfill
- Located in two counties
- Traffic
- FM 664
- Façade improvements grants
- Slower pace
- Drainage/runoff
- Appearance/look
- Code Enforcement
- No parking near Library, ball fields
- No high speed internet
- Some businesses don't allow working wireless
- Roads failing
- Drinkable water
- Workforce/labor
- Sewer approaching capacity
- Water connectivity & capacity
- Poverty mentality
- Entrance to the City
- Stretched City staff
- Lack of pride
- Need for skill sets
- City/ISD partnership
- Small Church congregations
- No sally port
- Appearance of Public Works Service Center
- At-grade railroad crossings split City into (& two crossings are unguarded)
- Wealthy, unconnected citizens
- Few things for youth

Opportunities

- Ferris Brick Museum
- Reroute 664 under railroad tracks
- Bypass
- High speed internet
- Pride of ownership
- Race relations
- Develop skill sets
- City/ISD relationship
- Downtown Niche
- Entertainment/Attraction for youth
- Bed & Breakfasts
- Develop highway frontage
- Residential property
- Vacant commercial buildings
- Downtown lofts
- Home rehab initiative
- Team with Churches
- Move Depot
- Raise capital
- New businesses with jobs
- Grow Trades Day
- Team with Waste Management annually for cleanup
- Adopt a Family/House
- Team with military for drone technology, manufacturing
- Build an industrial park
- Build a business park
- Advertise Golf Course
- Raise level of expectations
- Explore partnership with Habitat for Humanity
- Pursue grants
- Pride/cleanliness workshop
- New Public Safety Center
- Opportunity to screen Public Works Service Center
- Reuse old nursing home
- Reuse Fisd bus barn
- Cater to RV's/RV park

Opportunities (CONTINUED)

- *Outlet mall*
- *Rec center near Library & ball fields*
- *Attract tournaments*
- *Prepare to rebuild water/sewer system*
- *Educate, promote & celebrate environment quality of Waste Management*
- *Diversify revenue*

Threats

- *Drinking water (perception, expectation)*
- *Perception of neighboring landfill*
- *Resistance to change*
- *Entitlement mentality*
- *Eventual loss of Waste Management revenue stream*
- *Bypass*
- *Lack of response from TxDOT*
- *High speed rail*
- *Double-tracking of railroad and loss of City Hall*
- *Ferris water/sewer system is old and failing*
- *Divided vision for Ferris*

2015 RANKED SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- *Good Schools - 7 points (2 participants)*
- *Location - 6** [plus 2 bonus stars] (4)*
- *Space for residential - 6 (2)*
- *Historic Downtown - 5 (3)*
- *Interstate proximity - 4 (1)*
- *Landfill/Waste Management partnership - 3 (1)*
- *Development space - 2* (2)*
- *Family friendly - 1*
- *Growth potential - **

Weaknesses

- *No high speed internet - 13** (7)*
- *Appearance/look - 12** (6)*
- *Water connectivity & capacity - 5 (2)*
- *Code Enforcement - 4*
- *Drinkable water - 4 (3)*
- *Sewer approaching capacity - 4*
- *Stretched City staff - 2*
- *Few things for youth - 1* (2)*
- *Workforce/labor - 1*
- *Need for skill sets - 1*
- *No sally port - **
- *Drainage/runoff - **

Opportunities

- *Pride/cleanliness workshop - 9 (3)*
- *High speed internet - 6** (5)*
- *Opportunity to screen Public Works Service Center - 5*
- *City/ISD relationship - 4 (2)*
- *Develop highway frontage - 4*
- *Residential property - 4*
- *Build a business park - 4*

Opportunities (CONTINUED)

- Entertainment/Attraction for youth - 3*
- New businesses with jobs - 3
- Raise level of expectations - 3
- Race relations - 3
- Prepare to rebuild water/sewer system - 3 (2)
- Downtown Niche - 2
- Attract tournaments - 2
- Diversify revenue - 2 (2)
- Home rehab initiative - 1
- Build an industrial park - 1
- New Public Safety Center - 1

Threats

- Eventual loss of Waste Management revenue stream - 11 (3)
- Drinking water (perception, expectation) - 8 (3)
- Ferris water/sewer system is old and failing - 4 (2)
- Resistance to change - 4
- Bypass - 1
- Divided vision for Ferris - *





“

You can't do everything well—so you must focus on doing a few things well, the most important things.

—David R. Kolzow, President

Kolzow & Associates

”

2015 FERRIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT *Strategic Plan Goals & Objectives*

Immediate (Shorter Term) Goals

1. Prepare a Request for Proposals so Ferris may identify the best utility to team with in developing a wireless infrastructure for high speed internet services.

A. If necessary, consider reduced charges for leasing rights of way or incentivize through property tax abatements or sales tax rebates to lessen the overall cost and enhance the possibility of attracting the highest quality private infrastructure developer that will either create jobs/hire Ferris residents for utility installation or foster creation of new subcontractors (with a bias for hiring Ferris residents) to assist with these tasks.

2. Continue to schedule, plan and hold the annual April Community Pride/Clean-up Day; take it even higher. Promote it heavily.

A. Model the importance of property appearance by screening the Public Works Service Center (if possible by or perhaps even on the Pride/Clean-up Day). Include discussion of a home rehab initiative with Ferris civic organizations. Explore the value of extending this day, and the existing Ferris Trade Days, into a Keep Ferris Beautiful chapter. Leverage existing program materials available through Keep America Beautiful and Don't Mess with Texas to stimulate volunteer and financial support for similar, more frequent clean up initiatives (i.e. providing and emptying recycling bins and trash receptacles Downtown, contracted street sweeping).

3. Prepare now for the eventual loss of the Waste Management revenue stream—as well as what Ferris needs to fund the community’s highest priority Long Term Goal (see item 1 below).

A. Capitalize on Ferris’ location; do what’s necessary to foster development of highway frontage and leverage the investment of visitors/non-residents.

1. Study the best way to develop Ferris’ parcels with interstate proximity (i.e. fronting IH-45) to compliment rather than compete with Downtown commerce. Create an inventory of available properties and quantify the development potential of each parcel. Consider the impact of traffic counts, entrance and exit ramps, hard corners and signalized intersections. Evaluate what’s missing (i.e. market voids) and sales tax leakage. Identify and approach fast food/fast casual restaurants and hospitality prospects to land and generate new sales and occupancy tax revenues, maximize growth potential, diversify revenue and permit Ferris to hire additional personnel to supplement its stretched City staff.

B. In preparation for the creation of these new jobs, take into account labor and skill sets needed within the market.

1. D. Consider the results of North Texas InterLink’s annual Employer Survey. Build on the City/Ferris ISD relationship and team with the district’s quality schools to ensure preparation of the workforce and skill sets demanded in Ferris.

4. Address both the perception of drinking water and overall water capacity needs.

A. Engage a university analysis of Ferris’ ground water to gauge what may be necessary to improve water taste. Study existing capacity of water system to quantify capability of accommodating growth and growth of residential subdivisions and businesses/business parks.

Goals

1. Prepare to rebuild the water and sewer system.

- a. Position Ferris to make an application for Federal grant monies to help fund replacement of aging water and sewer facilities.*
- b. Begin to set aside funds now for any grant matches that may be necessary.*
- c. Start on documentation of the need for 1) first an engineering analysis of the extent of the system’s decline and 2) of the decline itself, again in preparation of the future grant application.*
- d. Explore possible private sector and/or foundation grants for similar studies and system replacement.*
- e. Approach area banks to assist private property owners with funding costs of water and or sewer line replacement.*

2. Prepare now for the eventual loss of the Waste Management revenue stream.

A. Consider reuse of existing, vacant industrial and/or office buildings to build a business park, build an industrial park or neighborhood innovation district.

B. Recognize the value of placing the park in or near Downtown to capitalize on walkability and support restaurants and retail—not to mention the availability of some vacant, formerly industrial buildings with large floor plates and high ceilings.

C. Accommodate PDR (Production, Distribution, Repair) enterprises which thrive on collaboration. Consider viability of leveraging the “next industrial revolution” within such a district, especially to accommodate the makers’ movement. Such a “Maker Economy” is notable for being:

- Local
- “Maker” specific
- Craft focused
- Equitable
- Sustainable

3. Study and select an appropriate niche, brand or tag line attach to Ferris’ Historic Downtown, if the PDR/Makers/neighborhood innovation district idea isn’t sufficient to breathe new life into the business community.

A. If necessary, consider either engaging a university study or hire a marketing/branding firm to assist with this task.

FERRIS VISION STATEMENT

*Ferris, Texas has taken advantage of its location just south of Dallas and done what is necessary to foster quality growth.**

**Ferris, Texas has leveraged its location just south of Dallas and put in place the infrastructure necessary to foster quality residential and commercial growth.*

“

When we have purpose and believe in a vision, it is fulfilled by who we are and what we do.

–Dan Brokke, Day Spring Cards

”

FERRIS MISSION STATEMENT

Ferris citizens, leaders and business owners generate respectable economic growth through funding and development of quality infrastructure, continued beautification and new and expanded businesses.

We cannot predict the future, but we can create it.

-Jim Collins, Great by Choice



“

*Get the city on board
with a vision for the
future – unify us!*

–Response to Ferris Visioning Survey

”

VISION SURVEY RESULTS

The one best thing about living in Ferris is:

Small town (atmosphere) that's convenient/accessible to DFW - 7
People - 3
N/A - 3
Public safety - 2

The best thing about working in Ferris is:

N/A - 7
Close to home & close to Dallas - 5

The single most important issue facing the City is:

Growth/development of commerce & residential - 8
Infrastructure - 5
Appearance/pride/cleanliness - 3

The one thing I appreciate most about Ferris is:

Friendly, unpretentious people - 11
Small Town - 3

The single most significant way Ferris has changed is:

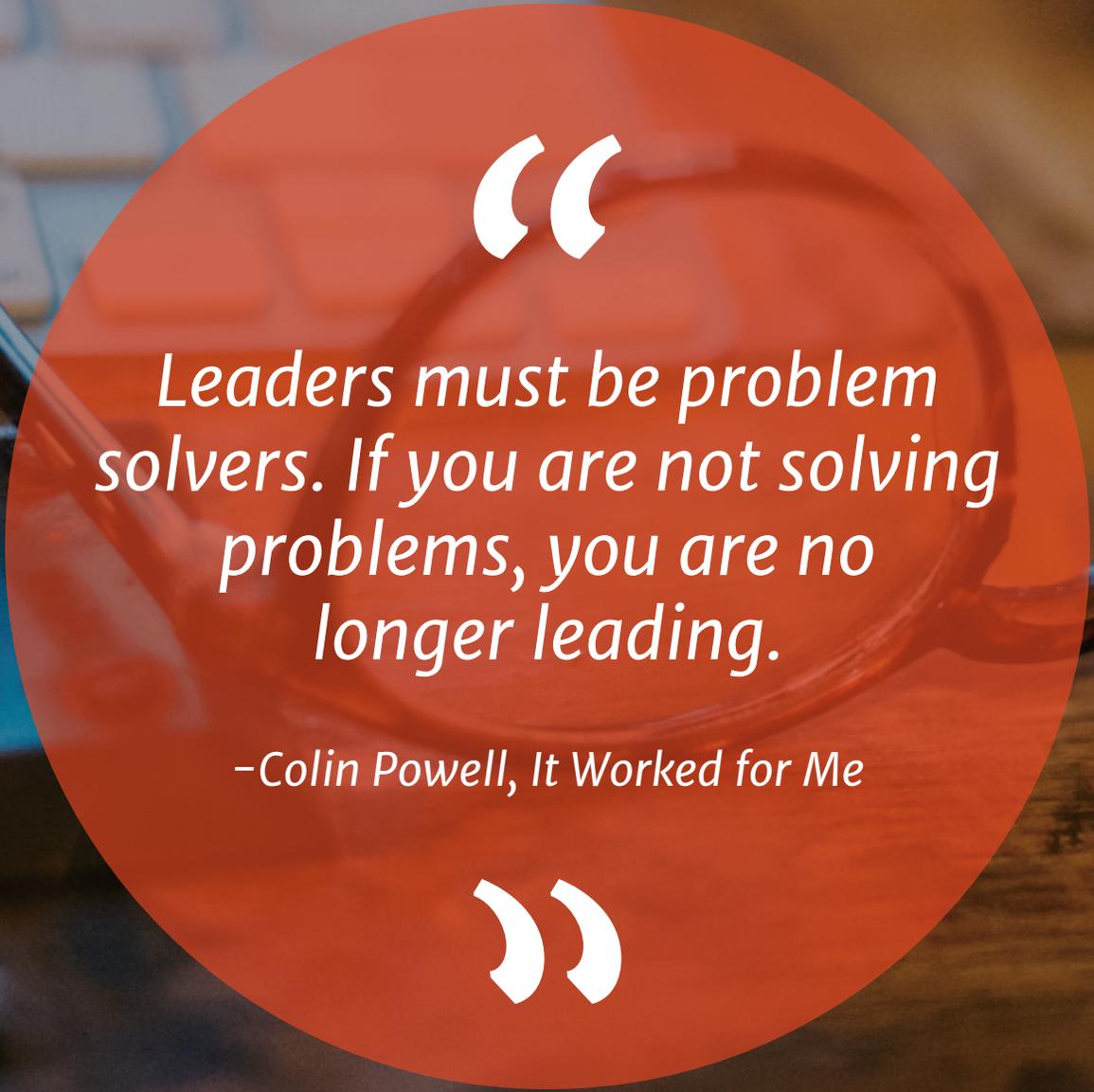
Business (churn, outside/chain ownership) - 5
Appearance (Downtown is good) - 4
Leadership (forward thinking, strong Council, City Manager)- 3
Wet (damp) for beer & wine sales - 2

The one, most significant way Ferris needs to change is:

Commerce (Downtown, tax base, industrial, incentives) - 6
Empower leaders, citizens (expand vision/plan, think outside box, set long term goals, get to know/involve community) - 5
Image (appearance of residences, marketing) - 3
Recreational opportunities - 2

The one, most important planning focus for the City's immediate future is . . .

Infrastructure (water, sewer, Wi-Fi/internet, electrical supply, beautification) - 6
Economic growth (intentional, both Downtown and "on the outskirts", to attract new businesses and residences; Marketing, exposure to DFW) - 5



“

Leaders must be problem solvers. If you are not solving problems, you are no longer leading.

-Colin Powell, It Worked for Me

”

FERRIS POSTSCRIPT:

Low Hanging Fruit And A Window Of Opportunity

The Ferris leaders, representatives and citizens who were selected or agreed to participate in the Strategic Planning Workshops embraced this idea of Colin Powell's about leaders; there's no doubt that all of you wish to be problem solvers.

*The fact that you were willing to spend four hours one Saturday communicating your thoughts and desires (not to mention how many of you returned a month later for the follow-up) proved your love for and commitment to Ferris. We're quite grateful for your time and input—and your willingness to put with my refrain that **“People support what they help create”**.*

Implementation

The tactical implementation of the resulting Strategic Plan itself should address (and begin to resolve) many of the problems you identified and prioritized that day. And as you do that, the City Council, the Planning & Zoning Commission, 4A & B Economic Development Corporation Boards, Main Street Board and Ferris Independent School District will each have opportunities to do even more leading. Nevertheless, the consulting team recognizes that the Plan client—the Ferris 4A EDC Board—are the real drivers of this effort; thus the text herein is directed at them and specifically with an eye on next steps.

Based on the 4A Board’s initial feedback, I have amended what was presented to participants on April 28 as draft Short-term Goals to instead become Immediate Goals—and those that were “Longer Term” are now simply Goals. The priorities identified by SWOT Exercise participants are needed now, and Ferris is best to pursue most all of them with a focused, united effort. Thus, I respectfully submit the following observations & recommendations.

Phase II Analysis

The consultant team recognized that Ferris is well positioned to capitalize on opportunities for retail, restaurant and hospitality “low hanging fruit” in Phase II of this analysis.

Much of the Greater Dallas market and DFW/North Texas/Metroplex region is realizing significant growth and development in these sectors—and Ferris can as well. As I mentioned in the initial Workshop, “Start with signs of

life—and generate your own heat.” I firmly believe that this approach is the best for the consultant team to take in the next stage. To help understand the local Ferris retail climate, a retail leakage analysis was run for the City. The city limits were used as the geography for which the leakage analysis was run. While this is conservative, as Ferris likely has a trade area much larger than its city boundaries, the local leakage is sufficient to underscore a need to pursue a retail strategy.

Leakage analyses are useful in understanding what local retail categories are oversupplied, undersupplied, and what retail uses could be better utilized in an area. In essence, leakage analyses help understand what retail categories are performing well locally, and what categories are losing potential consumers due to shopping outside the city. While all communities experience some leakage, the ability to recognize and strategically plan for the best retail uses to capture is crucial to service the local residents and diversify the tax base and municipal revenue streams.

Although Ferris is limited in population, it provides a base retail demand that could potentially serve the City if developed appropriately. The leakage analysis helps prove what retail categories have the most potential with local consumers. This does not account for a more regional population base, or a large share of commuters that could support additional retail in Ferris. Our analysis did project retail demand by category in the future (to 2040). This projection is beneficial in helping the city understand what retail uses may become more viable in the short and long term future.

The 2015 retail demand (a.k.a. “retail gap”) for the City of Ferris is \$6.6 million. Of the 28 retail categories analyzed, only seven are currently oversupplied in the city, and three of

those seven are auto-oriented retail services. This can likely be attributed to Ferris' location along the highly trafficked I-45 corridor.

The categories with the largest retail gap for the City of Ferris are “other general merchandise stores”, “health and personal care stores”, “clothing stores”. Perhaps more notable is the fairly large retail gap for full and limited service restaurants. In total, full and limited service restaurants account for almost \$1.2 million in unmet retail expenditures.

Another note to make regarding retail leakage in Ferris is that the 2040 demand totals are based on the City's population growth rate in previous years. Historically speaking Ferris' population growth rate has been moderate, but based upon its adjacent peers, in the coming years they share a higher forecast. Ferris is likely poised to capture some population growth in the coming years similar to nearby Red Oak (approximate ten year growth of 52%) and Wilmer (approximate ten year growth of 7.5%).

The estimated 2040 retail demand for all categories is approximately \$7.1 million. The largest of these categories are full and limited service eating places (\$1.3 million combined), “other general merchandise stores” (\$1.8 million), and “clothing stores” (\$634,000). The main takeaway here is the undersupply of “everyday” items such as food and convenience merchandise.

Given that Ferris is located on such a high volume thoroughfare, this provides the City an opportunity many small towns do not have – visibility. While many small towns may be located off major roadways on farm-to-market roads

Category	2015 Demand (Retail Potential)	2015 Supply (Retail Sales)	2015 Retail Gap
Automobile Dealers	\$3,353,636	\$4,235,523	\$(881,887)
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$212,555	-	\$212,555
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$267,137	\$357,554	\$(90,417)
Furniture Stores	\$242,164	-	\$242,164
Home Furnishings Stores	\$161,486	-	\$161,486
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$481,760	\$295,826	\$185,934
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	\$475,855	\$241,750	\$234,105
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$78,521	-	\$78,521
Grocery Stores	\$3,028,395	\$3,563,404	\$(535,009)
Specialty Food Stores	\$108,055	\$220,837	\$(112,782)
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$141,823	-	\$141,823
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$1,368,846	\$1,023,665	\$345,181
Gasoline Stations	\$1,899,830	\$11,003,864	\$(9,104,034)
Clothing Stores	\$790,550	\$196,011	\$594,539
Shoe Stores	\$132,489	-	\$132,489
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$156,435	-	\$156,435
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	\$331,341	\$109,408	\$221,933
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$98,848	-	\$98,848
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$1,043,896	\$660,324	\$383,572
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$2,130,920	\$408,020	\$1,722,900
Florists	\$19,574	\$115,798	\$(96,224)
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$112,580	\$36,201	\$76,379
Used Merchandise Stores	\$110,865	\$200,359	\$(89,494)
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$297,966	\$39,983	\$257,983
Full-Service Restaurants	\$719,974	\$154,596	\$565,378
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$1,075,188	\$452,658	\$622,530
Special Food Services	\$48,372	-	\$48,372
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$133,073	-	\$133,073
			\$6,616,200

or county roads, Ferris' location along I-45 provides the ability to capture the traffic going through the city on a daily basis. An additional source of retail demand is workforce. According to 2012 Census data, approximately 1,216 people were employed in the Ferris 75125 ZIP Code and live outside the ZIP. An additional 159 both live and work in the ZIP Code. Just under 2,000 live in the Ferris ZIP code, but are employed outside the area. Large regional employers such as the Hutchins State Jail (over 400 employees) and FedEx Ground (750 employees) create a significant amount of traffic for the area. TXDOT traffic counts from 2009 estimate an average daily traffic (ADT) of over 17,000 on I-45, and this number is undoubtedly higher in 2015. Even a small capture rate of this traffic volume will benefit local retailers and therefore the city.

Moving forward, Ferris' ability to capture the large amount of commuters as well as the highly mobile workforce will help the city gain further retail traction in the future. Capitalizing on undersupplied retail categories and finding the best uses for existing retail before the city's probably population growth will become increasingly crucial in the coming years. There's no question that Ferris is in need of new property tax values and revenues, as well as sales tax revenues, to enable most all of your prioritized tasks—and an analysis like this will give you and Chuck Dart the tools you need to help spur new restaurant and retail development.

Moreover, fostering a hotel (perhaps on land the City owns now near the Old Brickyard Golf Club) would boost club greens fees, as well as help Ferris diversify its revenues. Hotel occupancy tax revenues, while restricted in their use by the State of Texas, can be used in concert with Main Street activities, events promotion—and to fund advertising and

Category	2040 Demand (Retail Potential)	2040 Retail Gap
Automobile Dealers	\$3,521,318	-\$714,205
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$223,183	\$223,183
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$280,494	-\$77,060
Furniture Stores	\$254,272	\$254,272
Home Furnishings Stores	\$169,560	\$169,560
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$505,848	\$210,022
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	\$499,648	\$257,898
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$82,447	\$82,447
Grocery Stores	\$3,179,815	-\$383,589
Specialty Food Stores	\$113,458	-\$107,379
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$148,914	\$148,914
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$1,437,288	\$413,623
Gasoline Stations	\$1,994,822	-\$9,009,043
Clothing Stores	\$830,077	\$634,066
Shoe Stores	\$139,113	\$139,113
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$164,257	\$164,257
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	\$347,908	\$238,500
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$103,790	\$103,790
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$1,096,091	\$435,767
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$2,237,466	\$1,829,446
Florists	\$20,553	-\$95,245
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$118,209	\$82,008
Used Merchandise Stores	\$116,408	-\$83,951
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$312,864	\$272,881
Full-Service Restaurants	\$755,973	\$601,377
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$1,128,947	\$676,289
Special Food Services	\$50,791	\$50,791
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$139,727	\$139,727
		\$7,127,932

marketing activities to attract visitors, helping Ferris expand on its sense of place and realize even more in the way of sales tax revenues.

Boosting Ferris’ bottom line in this way—and likewise introducing new or expanded types of revenues—will provide your community with development momentum and empower the community to tackle the balance of your objectives.

Status	Employees
Employed in Ferris, Live Outside	1,216
Live and Employed in Ferris	159
Live in Ferris, Employed Outside	1,996

Placemaking

The team shared in the first workshop on March 28, 2015 that your Ferris wheel may be one or more wheels, to take advantage of the mineral rich soil, throw pottery—and remind prospective visitors of your brick legacy. Whether you choose to pursue that angle or not, you do have an opportunity to preserve and promote this rich history and use it to help sanctify your community’s place among many in this region (as a few participants in the SWOT Exercise Workshop pointed out, as well).

The idea of a Ferris Brick Museum—while lacking enough dots or stars to receive priority status to become a Goal or Objective (the method we used to record participants’ votes on the SWOT items) is still a valid recommendation.

Bricks are Ferris’ legacy, and you shouldn’t let anyone

forget about it. Go ahead and take steps now to capitalize on it. Ferris’ brick background is unique, and it helps sanctify you among the region’s many towns and cities. Don’t lose out on an opportunity to collect and preserve what’s left, fix it up and show it off to others. It’s a great story that deserves to be documented and repeated. And it provides—as another Workshop participant hoped—“a compelling reason for people to come to Ferris”.

And as it also relates to Ferris place making, you also have:

Great potential to foster owner-occupied retail and residences Downtown (as some are already doing)—with live/work opportunities in former industrial spaces, if they aren’t used for “maker spaces” (see much more on the Maker Movement below). As one of the SWOT Exercise participants stated in a Vision Survey response, “The Downtown area—it has a certain charm about it.” Such charm helps you set apart your community in comparison to others.

An opportunity to encourage adaptive reuse of Ferris’ architecturally-significant churches—perhaps in association with the wedding industry, for corporate retreat spaces or perhaps with exiting or future additional educational institutions.

Likewise, the resources to celebrate and document Ferris’ architectural history; take cues from what’s already here to serve as your pallet for a set of new commercial design standards. Perhaps the 4A Board could team with UT Arlington’s David Dillon Center for Texas Architecture. Hold a design charrette/workshop to both optimize existing building reuse and to establish a pro bono design

studio so existing property owners may have access to affordable design ideas for historic preservation.

Reason to seriously consider emulating neighboring Duncanville's "Duncan Switch" at your downtown Ferris Day's location; perhaps such a "community market" could be organized as a part of your next Clean Up Day (which could help insert place making into that highly ranked task). And in addition to providing citizens another way to clean out garages and sell usable items, it may also give Ferris a chance to do some "pop-up" retailing through adjoining stands, kiosks, and perhaps a food truck or two (represented by one of the Downtown restaurants?)—allowing them to test market and eventually become retail or restaurant in-line tenants (see comments on Phase II Analysis above).

Multiple locations for street art downtown or elsewhere in the City—perhaps that celebrate your Bricktown legacy. Find ways to encourage that. The art being planned for the new park Downtown offers you a great beginning to build on, and it could lead others to follow suit with your encouragement.

As I noted in the 2nd Workshop—when I presented the Draft Plan Goals and Objectives I drafted based on your SWOT Priorities—it's important that Ferris be authentic. I noted that you should "be yourselves"—and added the encouragement "Don't just try to be like your neighbors or do like they do" in the way of manufacturing or storage. Besides, warehouse and distribution provides very little in the way of jobs and your neighbor to the immediate north already has a



A person is sitting at a desk, writing in a notebook with a black pen. The desk is light-colored and has a potted plant with green, fleshy leaves on the left. A window is visible in the background, showing a bright outdoor scene. The person is wearing a red watch on their left wrist. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent orange circle in the center of the image.

“

The Maker Movement will emerge as the dominant source of livelihood as individuals find ways to build small businesses around their creative activity and large companies increasingly automate their operations.

*– John Hagel, Deloitte,
The Impact of the Maker Movement*

”



large number of large facilities for this purpose.

The City that Bricked the World – and the Maker Movement

The Maker movement (also known as the maker economy, coworking or PDR as it's also called, for "Production, Distribution, Repair) offers Ferris a way to incubate new businesses, create wealth in existing spaces—and do so with smaller capital investments through crafts.

I had the privilege of attending a session on this movement last April at the American Planning Association; among the quotes I collected that I thought sounded similar to what I've seen, what you've got in Ferris are:

“ It's an ecosystem; a clustering of local foods and products—very simpatico with traditional industrial practices”, which “gives it authenticity and energy. ”

“ Surging techs and start-ups are testing, experimenting, and need fast turnaround on products and prototypes. ”

“ Teach the hard skills that we no longer teach in high school. Allows you to test your creative bone—and stimulates the Do-it-yourself (DIY) movement. Need the space to create, fail—and do it all over again. ”



“ *Locally-made custom goods. Kitchen incubators (food processing and processing); arts & makers, green industry, media & communications.* ”

“ *Cowork and crowdsource.* ”

“ *Need dedicated production spaces of less than 5,000 SF. Must be creative with space and perception. More likely to use clean technologies.* ”

There's a real opportunity for you and Ferris to capitalize on within this movement; for instance:

1. Ferris already has a great, available building Downtown in the Long Machine Tool space—with equipment that may be used for making.

Director Chuck Dart made us aware that Ray Long's Long Machine Building still has much in the way of machines; thus Ferris may be likewise blessed with quick hitting opportunity to foster reuse, redevelopment and job creation energy.

When I asked before the first Workshop what participants hoped to see come from this exercise, one of them said “recapitalize existing warehouses”; in this way the Maker

Movement may provide you with the best, most expedient way to do that in partnership with Ray Long.

2. Very few communities in DFW have any kind of Maker plan or initiative—and it apparently there are none in South Dallas County—so it's a plum just waiting for Ferris to pick.

Dallas Makerspace is located in Carrollton; DFW Makers have monthly “meet ups”, Texas Instruments has created an annual DIY event—but it appears that’s all there is for now.

Likewise, Tarrant County has a Maker Community Foundation, UTA is looking to create a 24 hour lab for this purpose, Downtown Fort Worth Inc. included it as a component of its 10 Year Plan—and Benbrook and North Richland Hills have received grants to set up very small makers spaces with 3D printers.

And don't be afraid to look around and take cues from your neighbors on what not—and what you ought—to do. In addition to Wilmer having already built so much in the way of warehouse and distribution space, Ennis seems to continue marketing its industrial and manufacturing spaces; the presence of multiple rail lines are of benefit to both Ennis and Waxahachie. That only further substantiates the idea of a maker movement within Ferris to capture an unmet portion of the market—and help set your community aside.

Should you choose to act on this recommendation, I strongly suggest you meet with Ray Long immediately—as well as go visit some of the spaces and “meet ups” mentioned above. Likewise, make plans to attend the

2016 Maker Faire in San Mateo, California—billed as “The Greatest Show and Tell on Earth”, where they focus on the “democratization of technology.”

The Maker Movement is picking up steam since disciples recognize how “easier and more frequent access to technology and machinery”—and a sharing or spread of existing resources and skills—can help shift control of what’s made to “the non-expert” or even to students. And while having the opportunity to create and make things (as I heard it put by one, “to shape the world around you”), it also creates new patent opportunities, it’s more consistent with our Country’s free enterprise beginnings and it allows individuals to learn from their peers.

Specific tasks the 4A EDC Board could initiate to evaluate and help maximize Ferris Maker Space potential include:

- Determining what your zoning allows in the industrial areas/buildings; recommend amendments if needed.
- Creating a PDR Business or Innovation District.
- Establishing a “Ferris Made/Ferris Certified” designation for things made or repaired within the District, so those items become known the way Ferris bricks once were.
- Organizing a maker space initiative—as well as a community/business industrial forum. Get people talking about how and what is the best reuse of these vacant, industrial spaces.
- Determining what is to be the hub(s), the inspiration(s) of your innovation district? Might it not be the former wood products space in the Long Machine Tool building? Might there be other spaces downtown

which may facilitate a food hub? Perhaps a brewery or distillery? A thorough examination of your available buildings may uncover several worthwhile locations to center certain types of enterprises. An effort such as this to create place-based solutions could boost both employment and residences downtown.

- Exploring what’s been done with crowdfunding (neighboring Cedar Hill has already taken steps in that direction)—as a way to involve Ferris’ citizens and business owners in the Maker Movement, too. State law allows smaller investments to be made collectively; such crowdfunding can provide what’s needed in the way of tenant improvements or to purchase needed technology.
- Considering the right kind of parking on street to help activate the front doors of these spaces and enhance the place making within what could become Ferris’ highest pedestrian activity center.

3. And Ferris’ brick history offers you with an opportunity to help restore and pass along building crafts and trades; perhaps this is another area of focus with the Ferris ISD, Cedar Valley College and/or Navarro College (or, as I suggested at the SWOT Exercise, to reestablish the original Ferris Institute).

The Great Recession put a dagger in a key trade area here in North Texas; as home building slowed and craftsmen and women were laid off in 2008 and 2009, many of them left the profession. Some even left the region.

Maybe Ferris can be the impetus for restoration of

residential craftsmanship that’s second to none. Why not consider how the former Empire Truss facility could be used as a site for training and maintaining these building trades—since the Maker Movement has been referred to as a way to deliver “higher-touch education that’s intrinsic?”

The Ferris ISD would be an excellent partner in this endeavor—and I imagine one or more of these two-year institutions might be willing teammates, as well.

Closing Thoughts

With an eye on Ferris’s longer view—go ahead and start considering the idea of transit adjacent development; do it soon (at least within the next twelve months) to create a generator 20 years before it’s here. The rail helped establish Ferris; it could help ensure your sustainability decades from now, if and when there are Federal dollars available to make it a reality. A little planning now could help you ensure that renovations to existing structures don’t handicap you—and that all new facilities are placed well to capitalize on a possible commuter or passenger rail service.

Know that Ferris is not alone; many of the ideas of the ideas that SWOT Workshop participants raised for what Ferris needs are quite familiar. The North Central Texas Council of Governments has been involved with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process to help qualify our 16-county region for Federal grant monies—and the initial priorities shook out almost identical to yours:

1. Technology (most importantly bandwidth & fiber)
2. Water, Sewer and all utilities



3. Transportation (roads, rail and parking)
4. Public Education (particularly focused on Basic Skills)
5. Land Use

Our region as a whole is looking to “find commonalities” and then to “take the results to the private sector” for further exploration and implementation through this 18 to 24 month CEDS effort. It should be somewhat reassuring to Ferris that a majority of your “close cousin” communities are identifying and seeking similar infrastructure, technology and educational enhancements to grow their economies.

In much the same vein, the North Texas Commission completed “Project North Texas” last year (an effort made possible by Atmos Energy)—which identified three intersecting circles focused on Leadership, Education and Infrastructure. Subcategories included thoughts and ideas similar to yours, including:

- Improve civic involvement
- Commercialize North Texas innovations
- Have a 50-year water plan
- Grow the high net-worth sector of industry
- Market what we do well
- Brand sense of place
- Educate school boards on workforce needs
- Vocational trade fair
- Inspire local unification
- Tell the Region’s story . . . What we have done and the common value we offer.
- Inspire giving through skill, not just resources
- Develop a shared vision and priority agenda for the region.

Take heart that Ferris is seeking some of the same things, is in somewhat the same position, as our two largest regional organizations involving local governments and the business community. You're on a similar tract; in light of that, don't be afraid to partner with COG or the Commission—or to seek their help in implementing these Goals and Objectives.

*Finally, don't forget that this **Plan is a “living document.”** The priorities identified herein are meant to be targeted for the next two to three years; yet things can (and likely will) change. Feel free to change the plan when they do.*





“

Plans are neither successful nor unsuccessful until they are executed. And the successful execution of a plan is more important than the plan itself.

-Colin Powell, It Worked for Me

”