

NAVASOTA!™

So much, so close.

2023-2024 Strategic Plan Appendix



City of Navasota Town Hall Meeting – April 2023

Alysia Cook of Opportunity Strategies LLC facilitated a public Town Hall Meeting with residents and business owners throughout Navasota on April 4, 2023.

She asked the public eight questions. The questions and respective answers that the participants provided are listed below. These comments are in their own words and not edited.

1. What do you think are the most pressing issues facing Navasota?

- Infrastructure, road, streets
- Traffic
- Identity: newcomers & longtime residents
- Growth
- Pedestrian infrastructure
- Safety
- Loose dogs/ unleashed
- Public transportation:
 - N<->S
 - E<->W
 - Victoria St -> South
- Traffic safety - speeding in neighborhoods
- Animal control PSAs
- Heritage Meadows
 - Traffic calming needed
- Crime/gun violence
- Zoning needs/future:
 - (Where /not commercial)
 - Dual zone
 - Tri zone

- Noise – explore ordinance enforcement
 - Mufflers
 - Music
- Best place for information: navasotatx.gov
- Dedicated green space
- Junky yards /cars/RVs
 - More frequent checks by staff needed
- Signage to parks
- Trains in downtown:
 - Traffic backups
 - Stoppage
- Additional in /outs in downtown
- Red light needed at LaSalle & Blackshear
- Fire station/firetrucks can be blocked by train
- Emergency vehicles sounds /light
- Greenspace requirement in new developments
- Code enforcement
- Establish growth targets /parameters

2. What improvements would you like to see in our city's infrastructure?

- Street maintenance plan
- Sidewalk allocation space
- Real sidewalk network beyond downtown
- Smoother road surfaces vs. patchwork
- Different materials on road to lesson wear & tear: explore options
- Drainage – explore recommendations from Drainage Study
- Get big trucks to adhere to truck route
- Water quality/taste – too hard
- Sidewalk design – triangles unsafe

- Accessibility: city and storefronts
- Widen access roads – TxDot

3. What types of events or programming would you like to see in Navasota?

- Keep existing events
- Church Open House
- Keep free concerts – make longer
- Summer concerts – start later
- Display US flag & Texas flag more often
- More Town Hall meetings
- Movies in the Park
- More historical events (Washington on the Brazos)
- More advertising (Bring them here)
- Art Walk and/or other art events
- Flag design contest for kids
- Homemade ornaments at Christmas – kids
- Event after tree lighting – Shopping?
- Dated ornaments sold by merchants

4. Are there any zoning or land use policies you think are outdated or need to be revised?

- Junky vehicles
- Code enforcement
- Update Comprehensive Plan – underway
- Set-back requirements / character
- Multifamily / density
- What can property owners do with 75x75 or 50x75? –explore options/ lot size lots
- Downtown residential – designated parking needed
- Revisit tiny home options

- Workforce / attainable housing
- Proactive thoughtful housing strategies
- Revisit modular vs. manufactured homes
- Check standards on portable buildings/sheds as housing shelters
 - Dwellings: what's allowed?

5. How can the city better support small business & entrepreneurs?

- Chamber has mixers
- Great job!
- Host a business roundtable series
- Downtown business roundtables
- Encourage more business to be open on Sundays
- Job Fair – Host one

6. Are there any specific neighborhoods or areas of the city that you feel are underserved by city resources?

- Any area with bad streets
- Loose dogs in shopping center/gas station area rail/road tracks (animal control)
- Curbs & gutters
- Older historic areas
- Outskirts of town, E, W, S (lower income areas)
- Dirt streets areas: pave these for quality of life
- Have developers put in roads in new developments
- Sidewalks for parts of town where many people do not drive/have vehicles (for safety)
- More frequent updates on how city is serving them
- Run the street sweeper more often

7. What amenities would you like to see in the future that aren't currently here?

- Curbside Recycle
- Emergency plan for train disaster needed
- Household hazardous waste
- Technology recycles
- Battery recycling events
- Mosquito control (city or county?)
- Automated mail service (Federal)
- Fenced park
- Train derailment exercise /training
- Parks on west & south
- Pickleball courts
- Tornado working siren

8. What types of retail/ commercial business would you like to see here next?

- Eye doctor
- Hearing /audiology doctor
- Quick Care/ Urgent Care
- Something for kids:
 - Boys & Girls Club
 - YMCA
 - Day Camp
 - Summer Camp
- Continue to support downtown
- Whataburger
- Business near apartments
- Gas stations
- CVS or Walgreens

Stakeholder Focus Groups – April 2023

Alysia Cook of Opportunity Strategies LLC facilitated a variety of focus group meetings with stakeholders throughout Navasota on April 5, 2023. Each group is identified below, as well as the questions that were asked and the answers that the participants provided. These comments are in their own words and not edited.

Realtors & Developers

1. What type(s) of housing is needed in Navasota and at what price point or range?

- Patio homes for elderly
 - Low maintenance
 - Maintenance included
- Middle class new rentals at \$1500/month
- Low-income housing for former mobile homeowners who were flooded
- 105 towards airport – sides of road need to be upgraded
- Townhomes
- Incentivize housing developments
- Senior subsidized housing
- Resort style tiny homes and /or RV park

2. What can the city do to encourage the development of new housing and the renovation of existing housing?

- Upgrade city roads
- City should participate in road improvements for projects
- Review specs – Do the ones we adopted from College Station suit Navasota?
- Not all parts of town need to be regulated the same way

- Unrealistic to have full plans paid for / presented in advanced
- Why does city require green space then not build parks on it in development?
- Is green space still needed here?
- City should warn potential land buyers about scam sellers
- Consider land buyouts
- No need for natural gas requirements in every neighborhood

3. How can the city work with housing developers and landlords to increase the availability of affordable rental units?

- Not require so many criteria that increases costs
- Lighter regulations
- Fire hydrants vs. 85 ft. firetruck turnarounds
- Reimbursement programs to help development recoup money
- Require higher maintenance on existing apartments – increase rules & enforcement to weed out trouble tenants
- Parkland fees are too high – Over \$1K

4. Are there any existing regulations, policies, or zoning laws that the city could change to encourage more housing or retail/commercial development?

- Not require so many stiff requirements
 - Back out parking
 - Alley parking
 - Signage
- Overly difficult to work with / too much friction
- Help us look for ways to make my deal work here
- \$550 variance fee is unrealistic for every single thing
- More open discussion with developers & REALTORS – have regular meetings

- Need better consistency with Code Enforcement & Building Inspections
 - Streamline
 - Operate off of one checklist, please
- Unrealistic to require asbestos plans on a building that is only 3 years old
- Need someone in the job with local knowledge

5. What are the main challenges that developers currently face when trying to build or develop properties in Navasota, in comparison to other cities?

- Streamline inspection process
- Streamline plans examination
- Help us deal with TXDOT
- Get more feedback from professional developers who also invest elsewhere
- More commercial /retail developments - maintain our appeal

6. How can the city streamline the permitting and zoning process for developers and engineers to make it more efficient?

- Host developer discussions/workshops
- Continue to search for a quality experienced inspector to add to staff
- Fine tune ordinances to identify which ones can be loosened /which shouldn't
- Preliminary draft of plans could be helpful - not require, but please give us the opportunity
- Park set asides: encourage greater use rather than require more

Education

1. What are the main challenges and priorities currently facing the school district/ community college and how can the city help to address them?

- Blinn Applied Tech Summer Camp
- Affordable housing for single teachers & families:
 - One-income households
 - Starter homes
 - 2nd level homes
- Expand housing options /variety
- Class A apartments / duplexes
- Continue the positive information regarding our school district to attract people
- Salary range \$43,600 -> 50,000 teacher pay for 5 years & fewer, which is 68%
- 80% of students are in poverty
- After-school care would be ideal
- Boys & Girls Club
- Splash pad/pools
- Transportation challenges: public transit for students
- Shared information between educators & employees
- Youth retention & employee retention
- Share with us the workforce demands you hear from employers

2. How can the city and school district collaborate to ensure that we are producing skill sets that meet the needs of local employers so that Navasota can retain larger percentages of its youth as its future workforce?

- Connections between employers & educators – need regular discussions
- Industrial Boot Camp at Blinn College
 - Summer 2023 (2nd year)

- Help serve as a conduit between school district & Blinn
- Fall Expo (Career & Job Fair)
 - Bizzell Academy -> nontraditional students
 - Help us promote this event
 - Provide resources for contacts / employers
- High School Principal is encouraging teachers to explore careers for their students for internships and for externships for themselves (teachers)
- Open House idea at night for parents

3. Are there any specific programs or initiatives that the city could support to benefit students and the school district/community college?

- CTE programs/opportunities
- Help us spread the word
- Help us promote our Industrial Boot Camp (Summer Camp)
- Help promote the school district to families choosing new city to move
- Coordinate with Rayna to help us produce the Career Showcase
- Chamber Business Expo – way to work together

4. How can the city better support students and families facing socioeconomic challenges or homelessness?

- Help those kids' parents connect with jobs
- Transportation
- Reskill and upskill for parents too

5. Are there any infrastructure or transportation needs that the city could help the school district address?

- Students need transportation to the disciplinary facility and to Blinn College

6. How can the city and school district work better together to promote safety and security in the schools?

- City/Police work well together with school district
- More money budgeted for more Police

Industry & Business

1. What are your main workforce challenges?

- Finding suitable workers: skilled trade workers
- Keep sharing our information
- People trained in mechanics and machining
- Explore how to attract experienced workers to Navasota (especially engineers)
- Life skills needs
- Enhanced direction on City's social media to showcase employers and their available jobs more regularly
- Get us (industry leaders) an invitation to speak at Career Day in high school – connect us
 - Expose us to more students
 - Onsite showcase of facility
 - Internships
 - Passing drug tests: education

2. What is your best tool/method for finding new employees?

- Social media (posting ads)
- Employment agency
- Plan to use future City website listing
- Finder's fees (to employees)
- Recruiters
- NOV National /corporate recruiter

3. Is there any workforce skill set that your business needs that isn't being produced by a local or area educational facility (high school, CTE, Technical College, Community College, etc.)

- PLC control programmers /troubleshooting
- Mechatronics
- Math conversions/measuring tape usage
- Life skills
- What happened to the old Industrial Foundation?

4. Are there any quality-of-life amenities that Navasota needs to have that would make more of your employees move/remain here?

- Apartments and other rental housing options
- Help fix the Doctor shortage
- Family-oriented events
- More sports opportunities for kids

5. What can the city do to help make Navasota an even better place to do business?

- Litter pickup – it's embarrassing when we host our clients from out of town
- Connect us with educators: close the gap
- Host a Workforce Roundtable on a regular basis
 - Start with Quarterly
- City could recruit visitors to move here (we love living here!)
- Promote Shop Local

6. What other types of businesses (industrial, commercial, or retail) would you welcome/like to see here?

- Bigger grocery store
- Tool/supply
- Retail in optical
- Chick-fil-A
- Sit down restaurant
- Cafe/coffee shop
- TKD
- Stuff for my spouse to do
- Hobby/crafts

Boards & Commissions

1. What are the main challenges facing your board/commission?

- Never received direction from council (no onboarding, no goals)
- No job description or performance expectations
- No juvenile facilities here
- Lack of awareness by citizens of roles of commissions

- Website awareness is needed to advertise to citizens – lots of good info on city website
- Finding interested volunteers with flexible schedules
- Knowing where residents get their info

2. What can the city do/provide/offer to help your board/commission succeed?

- Help us get greater feedback from a variety of stakeholders
- Do what we say: consistency is key
- Educate residents on processes especially before they begin work
- Give Board of Adjustment tools to help make decisions / punishments
- Identify problems before they begin
- Need to create a guidebook for P&Z and Board of Adjustment & Code Enforcement to describe rules/laws

3. Do you feel like you (individually) received the proper amount of onboarding for your service (job description, performance expectations, board notebook, bylaws, governing documents, etc.?) If not, what would have made your onboarding process more productive?

- 100% No
- Educate potential board members on role and expectation – job description
- Manual to reference /board notebook
- In-person onboarding
- Criteria for selection
- Board / Commission Development Training
- Conflicts of Interest form
- Conflicts of Interest decision trees
- Attendance expectations
- Promote or require guest attendance for potential applicants prior to nominations

4. Is there any red-tape or bureaucracy at the city that hinders or hampers your board/ commission's success?

- No
- Require the other HUD-regulated organization in the city to report out like the main HUD office (Allen White)

5. Does your board/commission operate regularly from a strategic plan? If so, what is the timeframe of your strategic plans (1, 2, 3, 5-year?)

- Yes, for most, but not all
- Annual goals

6. Are there goals in your strategic plan that the city can help you achieve?

- No, already easy to work with

Health & Public Safety

1. What are the challenges you are facing in healthcare or public safety?

- Meeting the demand for services
- Revenue not matching need
- Traffic
- Crime
- Salaries:
 - Recruit/ retain
 - Sign up bonus

- Fewer people going into the Academies
- Staff shortages all over
- Prices of equipment and ammunition
- Installation time/delays

2. How can the city better support your goals/efforts?

- Council is responsive
- Legislative persuasion
- Help promote existing messaging shift from “Animal Control” to Animal Services”
- Support volunteerism
- Marketing – need greater support for Animal Services

3. What needs does your organization/team have regarding workforce skills in healthcare and public safety?

- None
- Very limited pool of potential applicants: law enforcement officers, jailers, dispatch, etc.
- Awareness about Animal Services with our law enforcement organizations and officers

4. What strategies can our city employ to enhance public safety, and how can healthcare professionals contribute to these efforts?

- Need a public health department to help guide public safety professionals
- Mental Health concerns:
 - Breakdowns
 - Not everyone needs to be jailed
 - “Jail diversion”
 - Mental health advisors

- Ensure teamwork collaboration
- Veterinarian Health Advisor
 - Reduce disease spread
 - Safety

5. How can Navasota become a healthier community?

- Healthy choice awareness
- Wellness Programs /fitness programs
- Walking trails
- Healthy food awareness with PSAs
- Continuing education for public safety

6. How can Navasota become a safer community?

- Promote “if you see something, say something”
- Public awareness
- CrimeStoppers Hotline
- Community policing presence
- Community risk reduction:
 - Used to be called “ fire prevention ”
 - Budget prohibits now
 - Weather related
 - Building pre-planning
 - Public education
 - Fire Marshal
- Accredited Fire Team & Police Team
- Kudos to working together
 - Proactive law & fire protection
- Hospital capabilities : help them grow

Downtown

1. What are the challenges in opening and operating business in downtown?

- Parking: elderly needs
- Encourage Downtown workers to park elsewhere
- Curb level step ups are dangerous: customers fall
- Need more store traffic
- Discourage property owners from raising rent too much
- City could highlight business
- Educate residents to shop local
- Directional signage / wayfinding
- Finding staff
- Construction hazards in parking lots along the creek
- Construction materials sometimes in inappropriate spaces

2. Are there any infrastructure improvements or beautification projects that the city can undertake to make downtown more attractive and inviting?

- Great job so far!
- None
- Why is RR street that direction & not opposite?

3. How can the city support and promote local businesses in the downtown area?

- Highlight our businesses on social media
- Good job on this

4. Are there any specific initiatives or programs that the city can implement to support the growth and success of downtown businesses?

- Farmers Market – keep on radar
- Provide us with a Main Street Director
- First Friday events

5. What types of workshops/seminars do you need that you're not getting elsewhere?

- Customer Service workshops
- Permitting workshops
- Business Finances
- Tax workshops
- SBA /loans/banking
- Bring our SBDC/SCORE rep to speak to us
- Technology workshops
 - Digital training, printer
 - Cloud services
 - Software

6. What types of businesses are missing/still needed to come into downtown Navasota?

- Shopping
- Arcade/pool hall
- Craft shop
- Yarn / sewing store/ quilting

Nonprofit & Governmental

1. What are the main challenges currently facing nonprofits in Navasota?

- Money
- Staff
- Place/location for meetings, projects & archives
- Participation /volunteers
- Local business donations
- All donations
- Dealing with government
 - IRS
 - Reporting /990

County:

- Awareness
- Communications/multiple platforms
- Educate public of who does what
- Identifying nonprofits to support
- Ensure fairness

2. Is there a need for a certain nonprofit here that doesn't exist yet?

- Yes, we need a YMCA or similar like a Boys & Girls club
- Tutor facility
- Senior Citizen Center with:
 - Activities
 - Workshops/awareness
 - Navigating existing programs
 - Protections

- Daytime Elder care
- Technology training
- Meals
- Entertainment
- Especially if we market ourselves as “retirement community ”

3. How can our city work more effectively with your nonprofit to address community needs/ achieve your goals?

- Provide transportation to many things in town for:
 - Students
 - Seniors
 - Community Events
 - Workforce training
- Town Hall meetings: hold in various neighborhoods, model homes, parks, etc.
- Students interns/work opportunities for students
 - Awareness /participation
- Workforce Investment Opportunity Act
 - Intern reimbursement

4. What impact has your nonprofit had on our city so far, and how do you measure and evaluate that impact?

- City has been helpful
- Two Rivers:
 - Increased Heritage Tourism
 - Bring in tourists
- Garden Club:
 - Making things beautiful
 - Bring tourists in

- Youth engagement
- Senior engagement
- Community engagement
- Number of lives we touch
- Number of meals served
- Number of senior care packages
- City helps us leverage our impact
- Number of kids in MudCats
 - Economic impact
 - Tournaments
- Nonprofits that give back to community

5. How can the city and nonprofit sector work together to leverage resources and maximize impact on important issues facing our community?

- Grimescountytexas.gov
- Existing county /city stakeholder meetings
- Communications
- Just continue – proving successful
- Continuously share existing programs, e.g. county transportation
- Health Resource Center
 - Help promote this
 - Resource guide
- We need a list of area nonprofits:
 - 211.org
 - Guidestar.org
 - United Way
- Hospital has a Senior meeting space
- Activities
- Offer a “Did you know...” series

6. How can the city support and empower nonprofit organizations to build sustainable solutions to pressing community needs?

- Again, help us communicate our offerings
- Leverage relationship to grow exposure
- Telling our success stories

Random comments

- Consistency of low-income housing city requirement – safety
- Park & Fire Fund:
 - Share with public what it is
 - What is being done with the money
- Need Emergency Services out towards airport: closer Fire/EMS
- More events for families
- Tear down abandoned properties
- More focus on neighborhoods now that downtown is thriving
- Be sure to notify residents in annexed areas that they can now vote (Elections Admin)