

# SUCCESS STORY

Rio Grande City approves comprehensive planning effort to guide land use and policy



## Priorities to Address



Lacking a Comprehensive Master Plan, the Rio Grande City Commissioners adopted a resolution to support technical assistance from the WOW-E team and their partner, Texas Target Communities, TxTC, to conduct a planning process focused on land use, policy, and partnership development.

## PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGE

According to County Health Rankings over one in four residents in Starr County is considered physically inactive. Perceptions gathered during WOW-E windshield surveys, round tables, key informant interviews, walking audits, and site inventories depict limited access to infrastructure promoting safe walking and physical activity. Limited access to healthy infrastructure promoting health and reducing disease presents the need to make partner driven policy and environmental changes.



TEXAS A&M  
**AGRILIFE**  
EXTENSION



Working on Wellness Environments is a program of Texas A&M Agrilife Extension made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# APPROACH

Rio Grande City's Director of Planning and Code Enforcement participated in a WOW-E Action Institute and demonstration on walkability in the downtown area. During this time, the City conveyed a need to conduct a Comprehensive Master Plan. This would build on the existing efforts related to walkability in the downtown area as well as current planning work on Thoroughfare and Drainage planning being conducted by consultants.

WOW-E planning experts worked with Rio Grande City staff to devise a proposed process focusing on strong citizen engagement, partnership development, and feasibility analysis. This also entailed supporting Rio Grande City in co-partnering with the Texas Target Community, TxTC program at Texas A&M. This program offers planning support for rural communities using University faculty expertise and a student service learning approach.

Rio Grande City's planning team requested a WOW-E mini-grant to support the City's first ever comprehensive plan.

## RIO GRANDE CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Public Engagement Strategy



### PUBLIC MEETINGS

designed to reach and bring the general public together - aligns with Texas Open Meetings Act



### TASK FORCE MEETINGS

leadership, decision making



### FOCUS GROUPS

In depth perspective on the organizational level



### POP UPS

equitable and brings engagement to the general public



### SURVEY

systematic, representative feedback

# RESULTS

The planning process in partnership with Rio Grande City, AgriLife WOW-E, and TxTC will occur from May 2021 through September 2022 and includes:

- State of community
- Public engagement
- Visioning & values
- Land use and development
- Policy recommendations, and
- Feasibility analysis
- Implementation strategies

Local Commissioners approved the Scope of Work and authorized staff to apply for a WOW-E mini-grant on April 14, 2021.



**AGENDA OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
CITY COMMISSION OF RIO GRANDE CITY, TEXAS  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021 6:00PM  
COMMISSION CHAMBERS, CITY HALL (Virtual)  
5332 E. U.S. Highway 83, Suite A Rio Grande City, Texas**

- E) Discussion and possible action to approve the scope of work and authorize staff to apply for the WOW-E Grant for the Comprehensive Master Plan.

# SUSTAINING SUCCESS

The process will take place May 2021 - September 2022. The process will rely on local advocacy such as an internal support team from the City, a task force comprised of local champions, and a detailed citizen engagement framework. Furthermore, the process has support from the Commissioners, EDC, and WOW-E Coalition.

