

The public is invited to attend a county-wide public meeting to discuss transportation and economic initiatives for Blanco County on Tuesday, February 18 from 4-6pm at the Blanco County Annex: Hoppe Room, 101 E. Cypress, Johnson City. The meeting is the next step toward the adoption of Blanco County's Transportation and Economic Development Plan. The five-year plan is developed in partnership with TxDOT and the Capital Area Council of Governments(CAPCOG) and identifies transportation and economic opportunities that can be targeted and addressed through local strategies by the cities and county; TxDOT and CAPCOG will continue to work with these local governments over the next five to seven years toward implementation of prioritized projects.

The planning process, which started in April of 2019, included meetings with county officials, discussions with the TxDOT engineer's office, meetings of community and business stakeholders to discuss economic development, a community survey and a briefing to Commissioners Court. The County continues to experience growth and needs to have a good understanding of its impact and what steps need to be taken to address it, according to Judge Bray who commented that "the goal is to balance safety and mobility with desirable economic growth".

Two work sessions of the transportation stakeholder committee also covered a wide range of issues including signage, crosswalks, signalization and widening of roads, driveways and merging issues, parking in downtowns, street lighting, and transit services. The economic development committee identified a wide range of issues focused on keeping the local economy strong and making sure small businesses can find employees. "Tourism and recreation activities will continue to be a driver for the area's economy, but we heard several comments about attracting new companies," explained Rachel Steele, CAPCOG's Director of Community and Economic Development. Other types of employers would provide some economic diversification but without addressing the shortage of housing, workers would need to be recruited from surrounding counties which is not very feasible, she added.

The public meeting will allow the community to view existing and upcoming TxDOT projects, provide last minute comments on the TxDOT roadway system and discuss economic development recommendations prior to the final document being presented to Commissioners Court in March.