

JULY 18, 2023

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO



Executive Summary

# INTRODUCTION

## About This Project

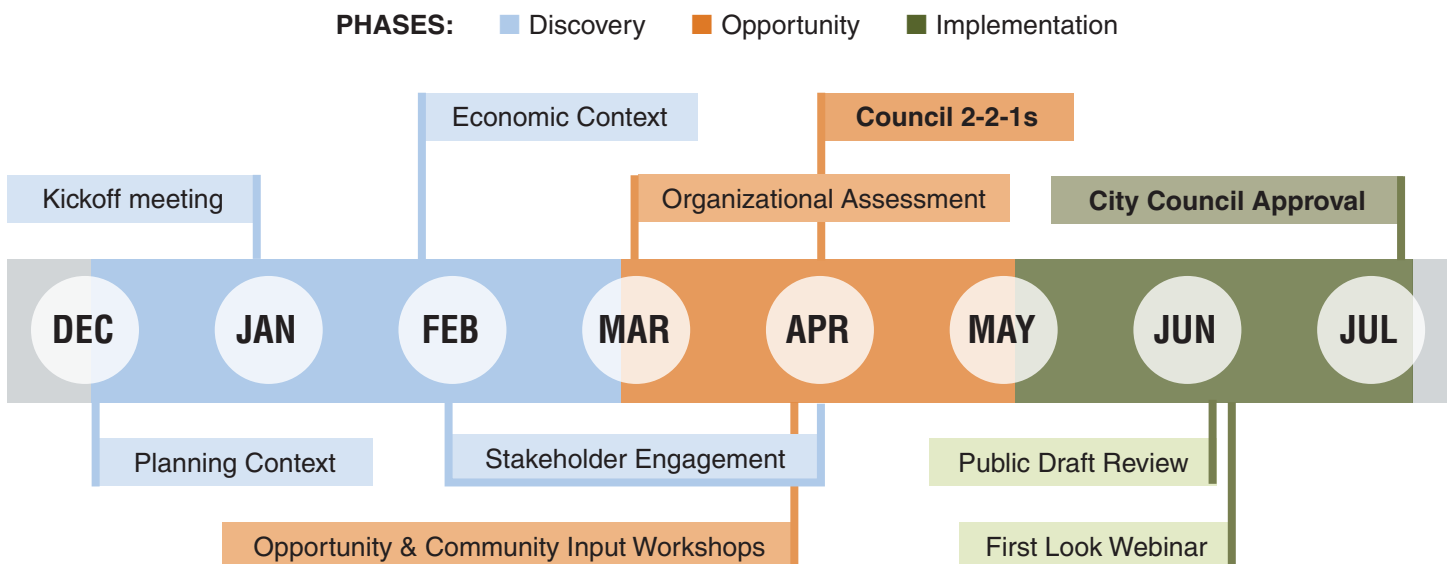
A full update of the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) was completed in Summer 2023. The update aligns with the City Council's Vision Statement and Major City Goals and incorporates other important concepts, strategies, and connection points. These areas include sustainability via the tasks outlined in the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) by including carbon neutrality, social equity, and a focus on developing a green local economy in the updated EDSP. In addition to the social equity focus outlined in the CAP, the updated EDSP focuses on ensuring that the economic development activities of the City are in line with and in support of the City's efforts toward increasing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and the DEI Strategic Plan that is under development.

## Project Goal

*The project goal is to continue to advance the economic vitality of the City of San Luis Obispo and develop strategies that strengthen the City's economic development efforts while integrating the principles of sustainability, diversity, equity, and inclusion.*

## Process

The project was conducted using TIP Strategies' three-phase approach: Discovery, Opportunity, and Implementation. The timeline for these phases and major project milestones are illustrated below.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

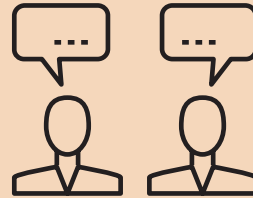


**982**  
Responses

Relationship to City of San Luis Obispo:

- 64% live and work in the City
- 11% live but do not work in the City
- 15% work but do not live in the City
- 10% Neither live nor work in the City

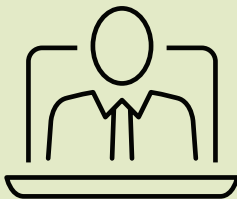
## INTERVIEWS



**9**  
One-on-One Sessions

- SLO County
- Madonna Enterprises
- Downtown SLO
- SLO Chamber of Commerce
- Jamestown LP
- Cal Poly (2)
- Visit SLO CAL
- City of SLO City Manager's Office

## ROUNDTABLES



**9**

Virtual Sessions



**275+**

Participants

City of SLO Department Heads and Key Managers

- Downtown
- Development
- Arts and Nonprofits
- Major Employers and Business Owners
- Sustainability
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- SLO Chamber Legislative Action and Economic Development Committee
- First Look Webinar
- Open City Hall

## GENERAL OUTREACH



**2**

Neighborhood and Real Estate Tours



**2**

Public Workshops

# KEY FINDINGS

The economic analysis and community engagement activities, coupled with multiple onsite visits and the experience of the consulting team, resulted in a number of findings that informed the EDSP update. The findings outlined here played a crucial role in shaping the framework for the plan update. They provided essential insights that helped to guide the recommendations and ensure that the planning effort was grounded in a realistic assessment of SLO's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

1

*Maintaining a dynamic economic and business environment.*

2

*Diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as sustainability and resiliency, are important to the community and its continued economic vitality.*

3

*Cal Poly has significant influence on the community.*

4

*San Luis Obispo's visitor economy is a critical economic driver and is part of a virtuous circle.*

5

*Systemic challenges impede talent retention and attraction.*

6

*A strategic approach to commercial development should contribute to economic growth.*





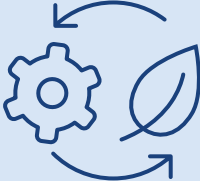
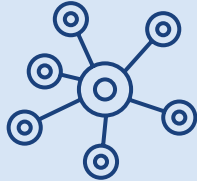

# PLAN OVERVIEW

For the 2023 EDSP, the plan framework has been updated to respond to the dramatic changes that have taken place in the intervening years, both in terms of the City's internal efforts and the external economic development landscape.

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Promote, encourage, and enhance an economic environment that is dynamic and resilient with a focus on sustainable and equitable policies, programs, and processes.*

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

 <p><b>ECONOMIC RESILIENCE</b></p> <p>Maintaining a dynamic economic and business environment</p>	 <p><b>EQUITABLE &amp; INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>Expanding economic opportunities for all residents and businesses in San Luis Obispo</p>	 <p><b>SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>Ensuring economic vitality through climate and system focused sustainable growth.</p>	 <p><b>HOLISTIC APPROACH</b></p> <p>Enhancing internal and external collaboration for effective execution and implementation.</p>	 <p><b>REGIONAL COLLABORATION</b></p> <p>Expanding partnerships with organizations across the region.</p>
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## MAJOR PILLARS

 <p><b>BUSINESS &amp; ENTREPRENEUR VITALITY</b></p> <p>Improving the local business environment and helping entrepreneurs to thrive, adapt, innovate, and grow in the face of challenges and opportunities.</p>	 <p><b>PLACEMAKING &amp; PROMOTION</b></p> <p>Maintaining the city's quality of place while increasing awareness of local amenities and fostering a sense of inclusion among residents and visitors.</p>	 <p><b>TALENT DEVELOPMENT &amp; ATTRACTION</b></p> <p>Supporting initiatives that develop the skills needed to secure quality jobs as well as attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce.</p>
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# STRATEGIES



## PILLAR 1 BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEUR VITALITY

- 1.1. BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION (BRE).** Develop a proactive and targeted approach to identify and address the needs of existing businesses, while creating an environment that fosters growth and innovation.
- 1.2. ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT.** Continue to bolster the entrepreneurial ecosystem by improving access to resources, education, and networks for entrepreneurs.
- 1.3. BUSINESS PREPAREDNESS, SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCY.** Implement disaster preparedness measures that enhance the City's ability to respond to economic disruptions and effectively support business recovery following natural disasters.
- 1.4. SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.** Continue to support the small business community to sustain growth.
- 1.5. BUSINESS SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE.** Maintain efforts to develop and grow business support infrastructure and tools.



## PILLAR 2 PLACEMAKING & PROMOTION

- 2.1. QUALITY OF PLACE PROMOTION.** Bolster efforts to promote the City as an appealing destination for all people to live, work, visit, and invest.
- 2.2. WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT.** Create an inclusive and friendly environment for residents, workers, and visitors.
- 2.3. DOWNTOWN VITALITY.** Continue to support and maintain a vibrant and dynamic urban core that attracts people and businesses.
- 2.4. CULTURAL VITALITY.** Strengthen working relationships with and maintain financial support of the arts community to enrich the cultural offerings throughout the City.
- 2.5. INCLUSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING.** Encourage inclusive neighborhood planning efforts that benefit residents and encourage both housing production and economic activity.



## PILLAR 3 TALENT DEVELOPMENT & ATTRACTION

- 3.1. SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT.** Encourage the continued strengthening of the system to create Moderate Income + jobs.
- 3.2. EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE INTEGRATION.** Develop methodologies, tools, and programs to welcome and acclimate new employers and employees to the community.
- 3.3. TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION.** Position the City as not just a place to visit but also a desirable location to live and work.
- 3.4. EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS.** Leverage educational partnerships to create and grow pathways to Moderate Income+ jobs that strengthen the local economy.



# LEARN MORE

Additional resources related to the EDSP update are available online.

## Economic Context Analysis

This interactive data report includes detail on population, demographics, internet accessibility, employment trends and specialization, the regional talent pipeline, and environmental risks and opportunities. View this analysis online at <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/tipstrategies/viz/2023SanLuisObispoEconomicContextAnalysis/Title>.

## Community Vision Survey Results

This interactive analysis includes data on respondent characteristics and community vision from the survey. View the results at <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/tipstrategies/viz/2023SanLuisObispoVisioningSurvey/MENU>.

## Economic Development Strategic Plan

View the full EDSP update at <https://www.slocity.org/business/economic-development/economic-development-strategic-plan>.

# WHAT'S NEXT

The Economic Development and Tourism (ED&T) program will update the implementation matrix at least quarterly and post the updated version to the City's website at <https://www.slocity.org/business/economic-development/economic-development-strategic-plan>.

The ED&T program will also prepare a memo to the Council in the spring of each year and a make a presentation to the Council in the fall of each year in conjunction with the update to the Council regarding the Tourism Business Improvement District.





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