

TOWN OF SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

Ad Hoc Plan 2010 Committee

2010 Implementation Plan

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Presented to the Board of Aldermen: July 19, 2000.

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MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Ad Hoc Plan 2010 Implementation Committee to identify, document, and provide specific recommendations involving short and long term issues requiring planning and funding, and to present these recommendations to the Board of Aldermen for their consideration and action.

RESOLUTION NO. 620

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS, ESTABLISHING AN AD HOC PLAN 2010 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE FOR SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS; TO BECOME EFFECTIVE UPON ITS PASSAGE AND APPROVAL

WHEREAS, an Ad Hoc Plan 2010 Implementation Committee for South Padre Island should be established, to assist in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Ad Hoc Plan 2010 Implementation Committee shall be effective on October 1, 1999 and:

WHEREAS, the Ad Hoc Plan 2010 Implementation Committee will implement goals and objectives established for the Town of South Padre Island in the Plan 2010; and

WHEREAS, the Ad Hoc Plan 2010 Implementation Committee shall ascertain ways and means for funding said goals and objectives.

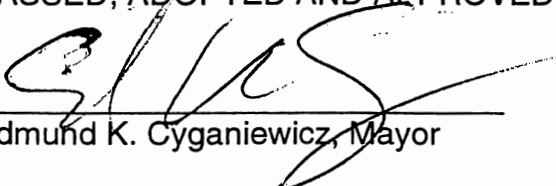
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS, that:

Section 1. The Ad Hoc Plan 2010 Implementation Committee for South Padre Island, consisting of 12 residents of the Town, is hereby established to implement the goals set forth above. The Mayor and each Alderman shall appoint 2 members each.

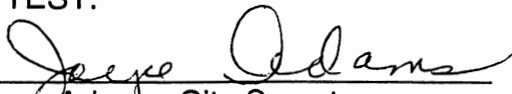
Section 2. The Ad Hoc Plan 2010 Implementation Committee shall make a report to the Board of Aldermen on or before September 30, 2000.

Section 3. That this Resolution shall be in full force and in effect upon its approval.

PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED ON October 1, 1999.


Edmund K. Cyganiewicz, Mayor

ATTEST:


Joyce Adams, City Secretary



Beach Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Beach Access

Current Situation:

The Town has twenty-three (23) dedicated public beach access points along Gulf Blvd., and one access off Padre Blvd. (White Sands). Of these 24 accesses, only six are completely improved (a “completely improved access” defined as an access that includes a paved parking area, a sign, and a dune walkover). Eight (8) accesses are partially improved, and the remaining ten (10) have no improvements whatsoever. The Town and the General Land Office (GLO) drafted a Beach Access Plan in 1993 that addressed the degree of development for each access over a time period of four years. Completion of all Town Beach Accesses was to have been completed in 1998, however, due to its controversial nature and lack of budgeting and/or funding, many of these accesses have not been developed.

Due to its highly controversial nature, and in order to better address questions and concerns, a straightforward definition of *Beach Access* might be helpful. The GLO’s definition states only: “The right to use and enjoy the public beach, including the right of free and unrestricted ingress and egress to and from the public beach.” This definition does not address parking and/or additional facility requirements.

Committee Recommendation:

Many of the committee members shared the same feeling that beach accesses should be pedestrian friendly. The general consensus of the committee is that beach accesses should not have toilets or showers; some of these accesses should be made handicap-accessible, but not all; some of these accesses should be dedicated strictly to emergency vehicular access; and that limited parking at these accesses could be developed.

Timeline of Activities:

This committee has suggested that the Town plan to develop one access per year.

Potential Funding:

Currently, an access that is paved, has a retaining wall, and a dune walkover will cost the Town approximately \$75,000 - \$90,000 to improve. Obviously, the addition of landscaping and other aesthetic improvements increase the cost, but should be considered.

The General Land Office offers CMP grants (Coastal Management Program grants) on a yearly basis. The Town has, and should continue to, submit applications for these grants. However, Town Aldermen should be educated prior to submission of these grants and should budget, at a minimum, the Town’s local match.

Other State and Federal grant opportunities should be researched and the Town should budget the necessary funds to meet its goal. Fiscal Year 2000 estimates for an improved beach access are approximately \$115,000.

Beach Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Beach Safety Issues

Current Situation:

The Town really has no methods in place to safeguard its residents or tourists from the hazards of the Gulf and the beach or even everyday accidents that might just happen to occur on the beach. Town EMS has no 4-wheel drive and cannot drive on the beach to help or rescue someone in need. In the past the Town has considered the use of lifeguards and throw-rings but due to the potential for liability, has chosen not to use these methods, and has instead relied on: "No lifeguard on duty - Swim at your own risk" printed on beach access signs.

Committee Recommendation:

Many on this Committee feel that the Town should do much more to safeguard residents and tourists and can do so by implementing the following:

- 1) Information, perhaps in the form of pamphlets, detailing the dangers of Gulf life (sting rays, man-o-wars, jellyfish, etc.), the hazards of weather conditions (riptides, undercurrents, winds, rains, floods, etc.) and the methods to deal with these dangers should be placed in every motel/hotel/condo room for visitors to read.
- 2) Safety information should also be printed on every beach access sign and should show current wind, tide, and riptide conditions.
- 3) The Town should designate a 4-wheel drive vehicle to respond to emergencies on the beach.
- 4) Emergency call boxes should be strategically placed along the beach for immediate emergency response.
- 5) The Town should encourage more Police and code enforcement presence. This presence would help deter littering and negligent behavior on the beach, as well as to act as another line of safety by helping to transport victims to beach accesses for transport by EMS.
- 6) The Town should investigate the possibility for EMS to provide an emergency response vehicle for the beach.
- 7) The use of lifeguards and throw rings should be considered periodically.

Timeline of Activities:

Many of these activities can be accomplished within a few months once appropriate funds have been found, such as the safety information brochures, safety information on beach access signs, the acquisition of throw rings, the boost in police/code enforcement presence, and the installation of call boxes. Once Town Aldermen realize the necessity for these items, then half the cost of the vehicles should be included within the yearly budget in order to buy two new vehicles in four years, to continue thereafter to allow for the replacement of each vehicle after four years of use.

Potential Funding:

In regards to safety information brochures, the Town, its leaders, and hotel/motel/condo owners and managers could very easily work together to provide this information. The Town's portion of the costs could be budgeted with the Convention and Visitors Bureau & Visitor's Bureau advertising funds. Safety information on beach access signs should be budgeted each year within the Public Works Department, as they are responsible for the placement and maintenance of these signs. However, due to the increased information requested on the signs, more money will need to be budgeted. Beach access signs now cost approximately \$290. The added information can easily increase the cost of these

signs to \$390. Beach access signs currently fall within a grant category of the GLO's yearly CMP grant cycles. The Town has, and should continue to, apply for these grants. All other items will need to be budgeted by the Town unless/ until grant opportunities arise, perhaps from the Department of Public Safety, the General Land Office, or NOAA.

Beach Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Continuous Dune Line

Current Situation:

Much of the Town's dune system has been destroyed through the development practices occurring on the beach. Mitigation requirements for development on the east side of Gulf Blvd. call for the developer to compensate "until the new, enhanced and/or damaged dune and dune vegetation is equal or superior to the damaged dune and dune vegetation" (Sec. 23-3.3 (A)(4)). This compensation could easily have filled the gaps within the Town's existing dune line. Therefore, the Town has a rather puny dune system. The Town Beach and Dune Regulations call for the creation of a continuous dune line: "The Town of South Padre Island shall develop a dune system in front of all properties to offer a protection from sever storm and beach erosion" (Sec 22-2(C)).

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee unanimously recommends that a continuous dune line be constructed from one end of Town to the other. Most dune vegetation must be transplanted from existing areas. If the Town is to take this venture seriously, it should consider contracting for the use of a nursery.

Timeline of Activities:

With the concurrence of the Aldermen and when funding becomes available, a continuous dune line can be constructed within a year or two. The construction of a dune line can easily take place simultaneously with beach renourishment, which the Town hopes to continue every two years. Each time the beach is renourished, the dune line can be enhanced, and/or reconstructed with sand also. However, planning and care should be taken, as the most problematic aspect of constructing a dune line is planting the vegetation.

Potential Funding:

Possible methods of funding include: budgeting within the Town's General Fund, using Economic Development Corporation (EDC) funds, and applying for yearly GLO CMP grants. Perhaps other grant opportunities exist from Texas Parks and Wildlife, NOAA. Since this endeavor will be a fairly expensive, Town Aldermen should begin now to budget for it. The Town should also continue its strong participation with the Texas Shore and Beach Association, an organization that lobbies to acquire funding for Texas coastal communities.

Beach Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Beach Re-nourishment

Current Situation:

According to a study by the University of Texas, Bureau of Economic Geology for the years 1937-1991, the historical erosion pattern of the Island shows that just slightly less than half of the Town's beach erodes (Oleander St. and north). The remaining portion of the Town's beach is stable or accreting (South of Oleander St.). During the last seven years (since December 1993), the Town has been investing in beach re-nourishment activities. Town residents, merchants, and tourists are all quite aware of the need to protect and enhance the Town's beach. Renourishment is necessary.

Committee Recommendation:

Since the economy of the Island is dependent upon the beach, the Committee unanimously recommends that it is essential that all beach renourishment efforts continue and that it continue to be a high priority for the Town and the Board of Aldermen.

Timeline of Activities:

The Town has worked with the Army Corps of Engineers to coordinate the Town's beach renourishment efforts with the Corp's effort to dredge the Brownsville Ship Channel every two years. The next renourishment activity is scheduled for November and December of 2000, and is expected to renourish the northern portion of the Town's beach.

Potential Funding:

The Army Corps of Engineers, the Town and its Economic Development Corporation (EDC) have all worked together to pay for these efforts in the past and should continue to do so. However, the Town should continue to explore any and all potential grant opportunities available. The Town should also continue its strong participation with the Texas Shore and Beach Association, an organization that lobbies to acquire funding for Texas coastal communities.

Beach Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Beach Cleanliness and Maintenance (Raking, etc)

Current Situation:

Due to its nature of being a beach, it tends to be a dumping ground for all of the Gulf's trash and treasures. Unfortunately, many beach goers add their trash with that of the Gulf's, thereby creating a significant volume of material. The Town, specifically, the Public Works Department, takes responsibility for cleaning the beach – both the seaweed and the trash- and does so by using front-end loaders which push and scrape this material off the beach. Many residents feel that this practice erodes the beach and picks up all shells for which residents and tourists both enjoy finding.

In an effort to reduce the litter problem by encouraging beach-goers to throw their trash in trash receptacles instead of on the ground or in the water, the Town provides a line of trashcans along the beach above the high tide line.

Committee Recommendation:

This Committee unanimously recommends that the Town invest in “modern” beach cleaning equipment – equipment that rakes the seaweed, but does not pick up the sand or the shells. The Committee also feels that, although a significant litter problem exists on the beach, additional trash barrels are not necessary. The Committee did suggest, however, that the trash barrels be painted or have the Town logo in an effort to make them more attractive and uniform.

A clean environment is necessary for the health, safety, and welfare of a Town's residents; therefore, the Town should adopt a zero-tolerance policy in regards to littering. Inasmuch as you do not speed in Los Fresnos, we do not want you to litter on South Padre Island.

Timeline of Activities:

Making the trash barrels more attractive is an activity that can take place within a month or less.

Budgeting and buying a beach rake should be a high priority.

Potential Funding:

Other than funding from the Town General Fund, the Town should continue to explore any and all grant opportunities. Grant opportunities for beach maintenance equipment funding may exist with the GLO and/or the Texas Fish and Wildlife Service and should be researched.

Landscaping Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: More use of indigenous plants & trees

Current Situation:

Due to the boom in the economy and the abundance of development on the Island, much of the native vegetation is being destroyed by being covered by fill-dirt, built over, asphalted over, and/or replaced by non-native landscape choices. The amount of green and water-pervious areas existing today is considerably less than even a year ago.

Committee Recommendation:

In an effort to cool and beautify the Island, as well as to conserve water, the Committee unanimously recommends that the Town, its residents, and developers plant more indigenous plants and trees; and in those instances that the lot is already mostly / completely paved, the Committee strongly recommends that potted plants be placed in these areas.

Timeline of Activities:

This activity can begin immediately and should be practiced continually.

Potential Funding:

Each individual property owner, developer, merchant, and government facility should do their part in making this possible.

The Town's General Fund Budget should take care of Town-owned/maintained property.

Grant opportunities from Keep Texas Beautiful, TxDOT, and Texas Parks and Wildlife may exist and should be researched.

Landscaping Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: More use of effluent water

Current Situation:

The Town uses effluent water at all medians except for the two first entrance medians (where the Balli statue and the Welcome sign are located). The use of effluent water requires a separate piping system, and that both the Town and the Water District be permitted by TNRCC. TNRCC also monitors these areas by taking soil samples to assure non-contamination of these areas. The use of effluent water, if not monitored or used in conjunction with tap water, can cause salt concentrations within the soil, which, in turn, kills many plants. This system was operational in June 1996 and the cost to install the system was approximately \$45,000. Obviously, installation of an effluent system for the entire Town would be very expensive since much of the Town does not have the required piping installed. Town officials would be encouraged to sit down and determine other areas that would be appropriate for effluent use.

Committee Recommendation:

When, if and where possible, the Committee unanimously recommends that effluent water use be encouraged as a way to lower overall water costs and conserve water. Future developers should be encouraged to install these additional pipes within their subdivisions just as they are required to install other utilities.

A new water treatment system has effluent water available and can, in turn, should be made available to the Convention and Visitors Bureau and other development on the north end of the Island. The Committee strongly recommends that the Board of Aldermen discuss this issue with the Water District and encourage them to make effluent lines and water available for current and future development

Timeline of Activities:

An ordinance can be passed to require/encourage future development to install extra pipes to allow for the eventuality of this issue.

Potential Funding:

This is a Water District and developer issue. Installation of effluent water provides significant reduction in water costs.

Landscaping Issues

Long Term Planning Issue:

Commitment to landscaping upkeep & maintenance and the need for a line item budget.

Current Situation:

The Town was awarded a grant from TxDOT in September of 1992 to begin the process of landscaping and beautifying the entrance medians along Park Road 100 just off the causeway. The installation of the 8 entrance medians took place in two phases (and two grants) of 4 medians each. Since these medians are the “welcome mat” for residents and visitors alike, the Town’s image becomes “tarnished” as these areas become brown and dreary during the hot months of summer, especially when the medians within Port Isabel stay lush and green. Since the Town is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep for all public rights-of-way, the Town needs to commit money and time for its upkeep, or modify the vegetation to that which does not require such a large amount of time and attention.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee strongly recommends that the Town commit, through the budgeting process, the funds and personnel necessary to keep the Town’s-maintained property and landscaping green and healthy. The Committee further recommends that before accepting, planning, or planting additional landscaping, that the funds be budgeted for its upkeep. Many on this Committee agree that the Town needs to act as a role model to encourage landscaping and beautification, but also get quite angry when that money is spent on these materials, only to see the plants die through lack of water or maintenance.

In order to help the Town “step up to the plate” and better act as a role model and to stand full force behind beautification issues, the Committee recommends that the Town create a line item in the budget in addition to the necessary budgeting for existing or proposed landscaping, dedicated specifically to beautification items and needs.

Timeline of Activities:

This activity should begin today and continue indefinitely.

Potential Funding:

The Town’s General Fund (via the Public Works Department) has been responsible for most of these activities.

As always, the Town should research and apply for any and all potential grant opportunities, such as from the Area Fund and other Private Foundations, Valley Proud, and donations from private citizens.

Landscaping Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: The Improvement of Padre Boulevard (Park Road 100)

Current Situation:

Padre Boulevard is the main artery through Town and sets the atmosphere for the Town. This one-hundred foot (100) right-of-way has been completely constructed with asphalt sidewalks, a four lane asphalted highway and a turning lane. Although this boulevard is flanked on either side by Island commercial development with yet more concrete and asphalt, the roadway, itself, is under the jurisdiction of TxDOT. Because of the lack of landscaping and vegetation, this area increases the heat of the Island, lacks sparkle, and does not give the welcoming, attractive appearance that some would hope the Town would adopt.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee strongly recommends that the Town push for the addition of green boulevards/medians within the turn lane of this roadway. Many on this committee feel that having tree-lined, heavily vegetated medians would add considerably to the beautification of the Town.

Timeline of Activities:

The Town should begin now to budget for this project. As this area is under the jurisdiction of TxDOT, their review and approval will take time.

Potential Funding:

Other than paying for this project through the Town General Fund, or through a bond issue, the Town can apply for an Enhancement grant from TxDOT (which is offered every two years) for the construction of the medians.

Park Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Need to acquire land for the Town.

Current Situation:

Due to the boom in the economy and the abundance of development on the Island, much of the Town's raw land is being built over and the sense of openness is being destroyed. The amount of green and water-pervious areas existing today is considerably less than even a year ago.

The Town also does not have much in the way of walking, jogging, hiking, biking trails, or park facilities. The Town's existing "trails" are asphalted areas right alongside Park Road 100, which poses not only potential traffic-related accidents, but which is also unsightly, hot, and not nearly as enjoyable as they would be on the slower, greener, side streets, or even within patches of undeveloped plots of land.

The existing parks within the Town have been designed around the use of very young children, cannot be used by most of the Town residents, and desperately need new equipment, landscaping, and shade areas.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee strongly recommends that the Town Aldermen begin NOW to acquire land for the future, and should especially consider the purchase of land north of Town. The value of raw land will only increase, and the number of these properties is reducing every day. The Town needs to invest in several of these properties for use as parks, open spaces (for people, birds, and other wildlife), future government facilities, and a community center.

Timeline of Activities:

The Town should begin to act NOW. The price of these properties will only increase, and the likelihood of saving precious wetland resource areas increases the sooner the Town acts. Specific parcels of land have been mentioned and should be seriously considered.

The Town should budget the necessary funds and work hand in hand with other conservation agencies and realtors to assure that this happens.

Potential Funding:

Funding can take place from a combination of public/private partnerships: The Town can put money on the table, as can the Town EDC. The Valley Land Fund, and the Area Fund may be in a position at a future time to help the Town financially. Valley Proud may have funds available and private individuals can be encouraged to contribute to this venture if "talked up" enough.

As always, the Town should research and apply for any and all grant opportunities. Some potential sources may be: Private Foundations, The General Land Office, Texas Parks and Wildlife, & NOAA.

Park Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Community / Recreation Center

Current Situation:

The Town has few meeting rooms available for the general public to rent or reserve. In the past, residents have used the Club Padre Facilities, but that organization has grown and now uses their facility most of the time. Before and during the construction of the Convention Centre, the hope was that citizens would be able to use those facilities for group meetings, but due to the method used to fund the construction of the Convention Centre, it is not possible for the general public to use the facility.

The Town also does not have a recreation facility that can be enjoyed by all members of the family and that offers any such recreation opportunities as tennis/racquetball/handball, swimming, weight-lifting and training, aerobics, hot tubs/saunas, etc.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that a community center begin to be developed for the Town's residents and tourists. Although many of the members do not necessarily believe they themselves would use all of the facilities mentioned above, their family, and friends as well as other Town residents and tourist would.

Timeline of Activities:

Because the Committee realizes that the cost of this will be great, they suggest that a facility begin to be designed so that it can be built in stages. Once Town Aldermen agree with this concept and begin the process, contracting an architect to draw plans should take several months. Another important item of business requires the acquisition of land for this facility. Buying property would take a year or two's budgeting, unless the people choose to use the money currently in reserves. After which the Town may wish its citizens to have input in the facility design to determine the initial phases of construction.

Potential Funding:

The Town should budget this item, or allow residents to vote on a bond issue/referendum.

Utility Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Place all Town utilities underground.

Current Situation:

Telephone, cable, water, and sewer are utilities that are now underground. The only remaining aboveground utilities are the electric power lines. The Town does have an ordinance that requires all new utility installation to be placed underground; of course, this ordinance has little to no effect on the existing lines.

CP&L has a tremendous investment in the existing aboveground infrastructure and will not replace it underground unless/until the Town provides the money to do so - somewhere in the neighborhood of \$10,000,000 for the entire Town. Even so, the primary lines (along Padre Blvd.) are not feasible/eligible for underground placement, but can still be replaced with more attractive cement poles.

Pros:

Putting the lines underground “opens” and beautifies the Island.
The potential of high winds and water to tear them down is diminished.
The potential of starting electrical fires from the highly corrosive atmosphere and adjacent vegetation is also diminished.

Cons:

The cost is tremendous.
In the event of a power outage – underground lines take utility workers a longer time to find and fix the problem.
Uncertainty exists as to whether the Island’s high saltwater table will affect the conduit and electric wire system negatively.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee strongly believes that putting the electric power lines underground would be the single most important item that could improve and beautify the Island. The Committee recommends that the Town invest in this activity.

Timeline of Activities:

Since this project is quite expensive and extensive, the Town is encouraged to begin now and work in phases. The Town can be divided into approximately 20 subdivision sections. Depending on the type of funding and public support involved, the Town may choose to work its way from the north end of the Island to the south, installing underground utilities in each subdivision each year. If the Town begins this endeavor in 2001, and installs utilities in 20 phases, this project would be completed in 2021.

Potential Funding:

Unless Town leaders can work their magic and encourage CP&L to help fund this endeavor, the Town (i.e. its tax payers) will fund this venture. Other possibilities are: taxpayers may choose to vote for a bond referendum, and grant possibilities should be explored.

Medical / Health Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Town Clinic

Current Situation:

September 15, 1999, the owners of the Town's only health clinic approached the Board of Aldermen for help because they were experiencing financial difficulties and were concerned about the clinic's future. No financial help was given at that meeting, and the clinic is still experiencing financial difficulties.

The Committee is quite concerned about the future of the clinic and strongly believes that the Town should have a working clinic for its residents and tourists. However, they do not believe that the Town should subsidize or otherwise contribute money to this enterprise.

Committee Recommendation:

Tax incentives have been suggested, but then were discarded because their help would be minimal compared to that required by the clinic.

The Committee recommends that the Town assemble a Public Health Committee that could review these issues in more depth and work to better serve both the Town and its Clinic.

Timeline of Activities:

A Public Health Committee should be assembled within a month to assist the current clinic and / or any future clinic that may come to Town. Any further actions would result from this Committee's recommendations.

Potential Funding:

Funding would need to derive from private sources or grants.

General Town Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Improve Trash collection and the litter problem

Current Situation:

The litter problem is very bad, especially after times of high tourist traffic.

Because the Island is a vacation destination, many on the Island have a lazy attitude about cleaning up after themselves, and unfortunately, the Town is left as the responsible party to clean up the mess. However, the Town has poorly enforced existing litter & trash ordinances, which contributes to the problem.

The Public Works Department spends approximately half its time on trash/litter collection and pickup. Other than that, the Beautification Committee sponsors, by donation only, a Beach Clean-up event twice a year (April and November) and an Island Clean-up once a year (April). Participation in the Beach Clean-ups is much greater than those for the Island Clean-up.

Committee Recommendation:

The degree of trash on the Island is of great concern to this Committee and they strongly recommend that the Town crack down on this problem by doing the following:

- 1) Increase the number of trashcans along Padre, Gulf, and Laguna Boulevards.
- 2) The Town should investigate the possibility of Town businesses funding and acquiring attractive, permanent, uniform trash receptacles.
- 3) Work with the Beautification Committee to come up with positive incentives for residents and businesses to reduce trash and litter, and to beautify their properties.
- 4) The Town needs to make it known that they will not tolerate littering and must get tough on those who litter by enforcing the existing ordinances, and by fining the perpetrators to the maximum extent possible.
- 5) The Town should further investigate the potential of utilizing low-risk prisoners wearing overalls with the caption "I was caught littering on South Padre Island", to pick up trash within Town limits.

Timeline of Activities:

The above recommendations can begin immediately with the backing of the Aldermen and Town residents.

Potential Funding:

The only expense necessary for this activity requires the investment of more trashcans, the funds of which can come from the general fund, and budgeted for the future, although area businesses may be encouraged to fund or help fund trash receptacles.

The Committee also recommends that the Beautification Committee receive a line-item in the budget to help with these endeavors.

General Town Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Better Code Enforcement and Police Presence.

Current Situation:

The Town already has posted good ordinances on littering, noise, crime, traffic, etc., yet much of these bad behaviors continue to plague the Island.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee feels that the Town already has appropriate ordinances on the books for many of the Town's problems: noise, litter, and crime. The overriding sentiment prevailing is that the Town does not need any more controlling ordinances; they need to enforce the ones on the books first. And they need to do that with more police presence, and more code enforcers who are proactive in their enforcement of the ordinances.

Timeline of Activities:

This item can begin tomorrow with the support of the Town Aldermen, and the City Manager.

Potential Funding:

The Town's General Fund; no additional monies are necessary immediately.

General Town Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Continue to work on street maintenance and drainage

Current Situation:

The Director of Public Works Department with the assistance of the Utilities Committee is responsible for the maintenance and drainage of Town rights-of-way and has a regular schedule for its upkeep.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee has expressed confidence in the current level of maintenance of the Town's streets and the Director of Public Works' yearly work plan. However, since this issue is important for the Town's residents, the Committee does not want to see the level of funding decreased.

Timeline of Activities:

The Committee encourages and supports the current yearly schedule of road maintenance.

Potential Funding:

The Town's General Fund, as it is now.

General Town Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Bay Access Improvements

Current Situation:

The Town has an Ad Hoc Bay Area Task Force that is currently looking into the following issues:

- 1) Bay accesses
- 2) Boat ramps
- 3) Parking for boat trailers and vehicles
- 4) Annexation of certain parts of the Laguna Madre Bay
- 5) Police patrol for the annexed area
- 6) Funding: arrive at estimated costs and recommendations for funding proposed projects.
- 7) The Final Report will be due on or before June 30, 2000.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee has no specific recommendations regarding this matter; however, they all believe these items to be important and should be pursued. They also believe that no further access be closed and that Stillman's Landing access be re-opened.

Timeline of Activities:

As the Committee has no specific recommendations, no timeline has been suggested.

Potential Funding:

Grants, private foundation monies and private funds should be explored.

General Town Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: A Second Causeway

Current Situation:

The Town has only one method of entrance and exit, the Queen Isabella Causeway, and this entrance allows only automobile traffic. No one on bike or on foot is allowed to use the bridge. Since the Town has only this one way on and off the Island, anytime traffic is stopped, the residents and visitors are trapped. Traffic comes to a complete stop any time a traffic accident occurs on or with (i.e. hurricanes, tornadoes) the causeway, and during times of peak tourist periods, where the traffic on the causeway becomes bumper to bumper. This stop in traffic frustrates many residents who have to wait hours in traffic, but what scares many citizens regarding this situation is that they are trapped and medical personnel can neither exit nor enter the Island, creating a significant health hazard for some. The residents are then stuck with no way on or off in these circumstances. The Island desperately needs to find another method to enter and leave the Island.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee unanimously agrees that a second causeway is necessary if there is no direct cost to Island residents. However, many feel that, due to the tremendous amount of money involved with this project, this item is a long-term agenda and must be constantly pushed and budgeted. The Committee also recommends that the Town seriously consider budgeting \$40,000 per year for the Town Aldermen to lobby TxDOT and the Austin legislature regarding this item.

Timeline of Activities:

The Town EDC has been working on a feasibility study of a second causeway. Once the final results of that have been published, a more definitive timeline can be developed.

Potential Funding:

This is a State of Texas responsibility.

General Town Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Parking Facilities

Current Situation:

During peak tourist periods, day tourists and visitors have very few options for public parking. The Town has had to temporarily lease property during these peak periods to allow places for visitors to park, but these areas are becoming harder and harder to acquire – either because surrounding property owners protest the adjacent parking use, or because the property has since been developed and no longer has the space for parking. When the Town does not offer it's visitors obvious places to park, they become ingenious and begin parking in areas problematic for Island residents.

Areas of high parking congestion include: the entrance medians, bay accesses, Gulf Blvd., and the Entertainment District.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee opposes any Town-owned, constructed, financed or managed parking facilities. However, the parking issue is so problematic that they did not want to give the impression that the Town should do nothing. On the contrary, the Committee recommends that the Town enforce its current ordinances, educate the public on suggested and appropriate parking areas (with signs and banners in the entrance corridors to the Island, and radio/TV/newspaper advertisements), and crack down on offenders with stiff fines and tickets.

The Committee recommends that the City investigate methods to alleviate the parking problems and would encourage private enterprise to build a parking facility.

Timeline of Activities:

Signs and banners can be ordered and placed one (1) to two (2) months after approval and support of the Town Aldermen. Enforcement can then begin once the educational signs have been placed – assuming the police and code enforcers have the support of the Aldermen and the City Manager.

Potential Funding:

The only additional funding would be that required to pay for educational advertisements and signs. The Town Convention and Visitors Bureau might be a partner in the funding with the Town. The Town General Fund can cover highway and access signs and banners, but the Convention and Visitors Bureau can slip in educational advertisements when they market and advertise the Town and its amenities.

Depending on the level of enforcement, the money acquired through the fining process might be able to help defray the Town General Fund costs.

General Town Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: A Department of Public Safety

Current Situation:

The Town operates a Fire Department and a separate Police Department. Each Department has personnel trained for such specific emergency responses.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the Town seriously investigate the possibility of combining the Police and Fire Departments to make one Public Safety Department. This assembly of emergency response personnel would be more appropriate for a Town this size as it would allow our emergency response personnel to respond to any and all types of emergencies instead of having a Department sit in wait for specific types of emergencies. By better use of personnel the Town would be in a better position to pay its trained employees a higher salary, which in turn would boost moral and prevent the high turnover.

Departments of Public Safety are found in many other communities and would be most appropriate for our community, especially with the fluctuation of tourists and emergency response needs.

Timeline of Activities:

This will be a lengthy transition process due to the training and personnel involved, as well as the time required for our employees to receive their certifications.

Potential Funding:

General fund plus any other State, Federal, and/or Public Safety Grant opportunities.

General Town Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: New City Hall for South Padre Island, TX.

Current Situation:

The City appears to have or will soon outgrow the current City Hall building which also includes the City Jail. Some have suggested that the “Reserves” be reduced to pay for the new City Hall. If this suggestion is accepted, then the “Reserves” will be reduced significantly and possibly to “0”. The “Reserves” are needed to continue City Services if and when a hurricane strikes SPI; therefore it is necessary to keep appropriate reserve funds to meet catastrophic needs. We agree that the current City Hall is inadequate and that a new facility is needed.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the City do the best job they can in selling this idea to the public. Then the Board of Aldermen should go to the citizens of South Padre Island, TX with a bond issue, if and when they decide to fund the new City Hall and allow Island residents an opportunity to vote on this issue.

Timeline of Activities:

If the Board of Aldermen decide that a new City Hall is required, then they should initiate the required procedures for presenting a bond issue to the citizens of South Padre Island, TX.

Potential Funding:

The only reasonable approach for funding is a bond issue.

General Town Issues

Long Term Planning Issue: Continued Concern for the Environment

Current Situation:

The Town's development is booming causing some concern for the impact this development is having on the amount and quality of remaining open spaces. This shift in land use can significantly impact the amount of native vegetation, brush, wildlife, specifically birds, fishing, and fish nurseries, which in turn, can have significant impact on South Padre Island's position as a Mecca for bird-watchers and fishermen. This development can significantly impact the potential to draw year-round ecotourists.

Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends the planting and maintenance of native vegetation, and to have a "continued concern for the environment, ecotourism, the regional tourism plan, and bird-watching".

Timeline of Activities:

None have been proposed.

Potential Funding:

None have been proposed.