



retail strategies // downtown strategies

Slaton, Texas

Partnership Update: Year 1



APRIL 2026



Our Partnership

In the spring of 2025, the Slaton Economic Development Corporation (SEDCO) partnered with Downtown Strategies to develop a short-term strategic vision for Downtown Slaton.

The focus of the partnership was to enhance and accelerate the current revitalization efforts occurring downtown; provide a shared vision for community organizations and stakeholder groups; and spark action in the community.

As part of the Discovery Phase of the process, Downtown Strategies conducted an in-market Strategic Visioning Workshop including a Stakeholder Input Session that hosted a diverse mixture of business owners, property owners, active volunteers, and downtown residents. The input and observations gathered throughout the Discovery Phase informed the strategies outlined in this 5-year Strategic Action Plan.

The partnership then shifted to Implementation Jumpstart where Downtown Strategies assisted the local Core Team with putting the plan into action. This involved providing technical assistance and resources as well as engaging downtown stakeholders in the implementation process.

Partnership Began	April 2025
Kick-Off Call	May 2025
Strategic Visioning Workshop	August 2025
Market Analysis Delivered	October 2025
Draft Strategic Plan Delivered	November 2025
Implementation Jumpstart Begins	January 2026



Year 1

The first year of our partnership focused on learning about the existing conditions of Downtown Slaton through the Discovery phase and the development of the 5-year Strategic Action Plan. The initial year also involved providing various forms of technical assistance, support, and resources to the Core Team. A brief overview of the services and support provided throughout Year 1 is summarized below.

Technical Assistance, Support, & Deliverables

Market Analysis Presentation

October 2025

A robust retail-focused market analysis that included key demographics, trade area, retail leakage study, and consumer patterns in Slaton was presented to the Core Team. This data set serves as a great resource for the Core Team and city; and provides insight to Downtown Strategies as they formulate the Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Slaton.

A retail-focused market analysis was presented to the Core Team, providing key demographic data, trade area information, a retail gap analysis, and consumer spending patterns for the Slaton market. Although the city population is approximately 5,700, the trade area analysis identified a 10-minute drive time population of approximately 7,132 residents. This data showcases the true retail market for businesses.

The retail gap analysis identified categories where local consumer demand exceeds current supply representing significant opportunities for targeted business recruitment. Key gaps identified include:

- Full-Service Restaurants – \$8.4M+ gap
- Grocery Stores – \$7.7M+ gap
- Limited-Service Eating Places – \$7.3M+ gap
- Building Materials & Supplies Dealers – \$6.6M+ gap

This data set serves as a critical resource for SEDCO's business recruitment and incentive strategy and provides a market-driven foundation for the Strategic Action Plan.

The presentation also provided an overview of the Community Input Survey that was distributed to the broader community. The survey collected nearly 100 responses and provided great insight into the community's perceptions and values related to downtown. The Slaton, TX Downtown Community Input Survey shows that residents are generally supportive of their downtown but see room for growth and improvement. A majority visit regularly, value its historic charm and sense of community, and feel safe during the day, but many want expanded business and dining options, improved amenities, and enhanced walkability. Residents also expressed strong interest in more events and extended business hours, highlighting opportunities to increase engagement. Maintenance, aesthetics, and safety at night were noted as areas needing attention.



Five key takeaways from the survey:

1. **Business & Dining Gaps** While over half are satisfied, many respondents want more diverse retail and restaurant options, including expanded dining experiences.
2. **Events & Extended Hours** 70% support extended business hours and many regularly attend local events, signaling opportunities to grow downtown vibrancy through programming.
3. **Safety & Maintenance** Residents feel safe during the day (88%) but less so at night (68%), and satisfaction with maintenance is mixed, pointing to a need for better lighting, cleanliness, and upkeep.
4. **Walkability & Parking** Walkability is highly valued, and while most are satisfied with parking, many prefer short walking distances, making pedestrian-friendly improvements critical.
5. **Future Growth Potential** Over half of respondents would consider living downtown if housing options and amenities aligned with expectations, suggesting residential development could complement commercial revitalization.

In-market Strategic Visioning Workshop

August 2025

Downtown Strategies hosted a Strategic Visioning Workshop which included an in-depth meeting with the Core Team members, a walking tour of the downtown district, and a Stakeholder Input Session. Participants at the Stakeholder Input Session represented a diverse mixture of stakeholders from elected officials, business owners, property owners, community organizations, university representatives, and active volunteers.

Four major themes arose from the input sessions:

1. The downtown square has a strong physical foundation including active restaurants, retail, a popular farmers' market, and a beloved bakery, but the district needs help connecting the dots between pockets of activity.
2. The scale of the historic square is larger than typical small-town squares, creating challenges with walkability and pedestrian comfort that must be addressed through strategic, incremental design improvements.
3. Vacant and deteriorating properties, including several buildings being used for residential purposes at the street level, are a top concern and demand proactive policy solutions.
4. Slaton's proximity to Lubbock and the anticipated completion of a new TxDOT loop, Loop 88, that will bring traffic directly to Slaton represents a significant and growing opportunity for tourism and visitor attraction.
5. Local businesses and organizations are engaged and enthusiastic, but improved coordination and a shared promotional effort are needed to convert energy into consistent foot traffic.

5-Year Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Slaton

October 2025

Downtown Strategies developed a 5-year Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Slaton, which was presented to the Core Team in November 2025. The plan included various strategies that could be incrementally implemented to further enhance the downtown core and connect the dots between the various anchors and assets in Slaton. The strategies were organized into the four focus areas of Policy and Administration; Design; Tourism and Promotion; and Economic Vitality.





Implementation Jumpstart

Following the delivery of the Strategic Action Plan, Downtown Strategies launched the Implementation Jumpstart phase of the partnership in January 2026. This phase focuses on providing hands-on technical assistance and resources to the Core Team as they begin putting the plan into action. Our approach emphasizes a "bite-sized" implementation philosophy focusing on one or two priorities at a time to ensure meaningful progress before moving to the next initiative.

Since the launch of Implementation Jumpstart, Downtown Strategies has provided support and resources on the following initiatives:

Vacant Property Registry Ordinance (VPRO)

The City of Slaton had previously drafted a VPRO and shared it with Downtown Strategies for review. Downtown Strategies reviewed the policy and a detailed analysis of the draft ordinance with suggested enhancements, particularly around establishing visible evidence of vacancy standards and Minimum Maintenance Standards to minimize the impact of problem properties on adjacent businesses was provided. Additional resources, including a VPRO template and overview brief, were also shared with the Core Team. Notably, three downtown buildings sold as a direct result of the VPRO conversation a meaningful early win for the community.

Downtown Overlay District & Ground-Floor Residential Policies

Downtown Strategies strongly recommended that the city enact policies to prohibit ground-floor residential uses in downtown storefronts, many of which have been converted to housing and are contributing to the deterioration of the district. Downtown Strategies provided guidance on the differences between a Downtown Overlay District and a Historic District designation and outlined how an overlay district could be used to address ground-floor use restrictions and other design standards. The city attorney's office is currently working to research this topic further.

Historic District Designation

The Core Team expressed interest in pursuing a historic district designation to improve the community's identity and unlock potential funding tools. Downtown Strategies provided an overview of the differences between a National Register Historic District and a Local Historic District, along with resources from the Texas Historical Commission. It was determined that the timing is not right to pursue official historic district designation, but there were opportunities to highlight Slaton's historic downtown through signage. Mayor Shaw initiated contact with TxDOT regarding a directional sign off Highway 84, and TxDOT responded positively and is working to outline the process.

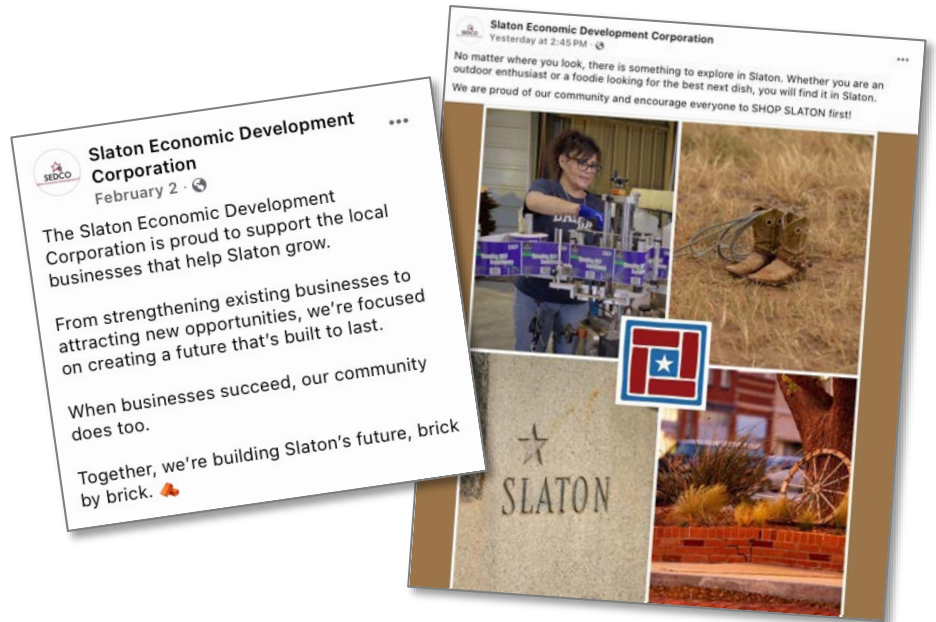
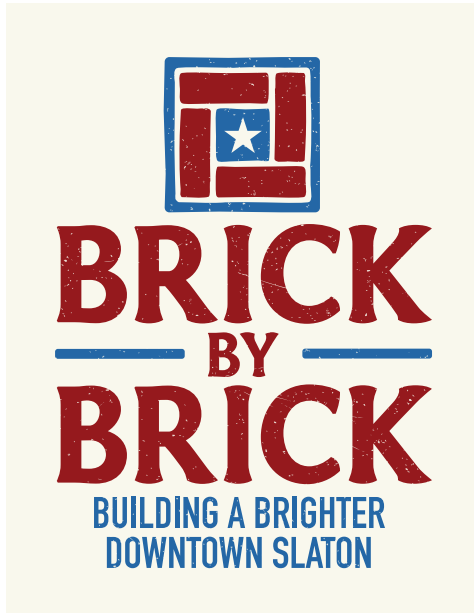
Planter & Streetscape Vibrancy Project

A community-driven planter project is in development, led by Chad Wilson of the Slaton Bakery and the local chapter of the Woodworkers of America organization. The vision is for businesses to sponsor custom wooden planters to be installed on downtown sidewalks, with businesses maintaining them. Creating repetition and visual connections throughout the square were a large focus of the Strategic Action Plan. The project is also being explored as the first official Action Team initiative, allowing Downtown Strategies to provide a structured Project Mapping Workshop and ongoing support through the implementation process in Year 2 of the partnership.



"Brick by Brick" Campaign

SEDCO has launched the "Brick by Brick" revitalization campaign as recommended in the Strategic Action Plan. Downtown Strategies created and shared digital graphics for the campaign that can be used for promotional material. A social media strategy is underway with an outsourced social media manager who has begun posting content and created a private "Slaton Economic Exchange" page for downtown business owners. Window clings featuring the "Brick by Brick" brand are in development and will be distributed to interested downtown property owners.



Year 2

The next phase of the partnership will continue to focus on Implementation Support, which will include providing technical assistance to the Core Team and deploying a proven structure for engaging downtown stakeholders in the implementation process. This will include the formation of an Action Team who will identify a short-term project to lead. Downtown Strategies will provide structure and technical assistance to the team through monthly support meetings.