

City of Hamilton Texas
2022 Annual Citizen Survey
Letter of Introduction

Honorable Mayor Rodney Craddick
City Administrator Ryan Polster
City Council,

Dear Sirs and Ma'ams:

This brief introduction and summary is meant to provide information relative to understanding the aggregation and analysis of the report provided. The data was manually accumulated from the paper citizen surveys received relating to 2022 business, goals and needs assessment.

As this was a paper response survey there was manual data aggregation which included breaking up some responses into separated lines containing multiple answers on single lines, manual sorting to get the best available information from what was provided, and some trending identified and discussed based on response frequency. However, we have retained the accuracy, intent and spirit of the information that was provided.

It has been our privilege to provide this report to the City Government of Hamilton, Texas without charge, as an attempt to get the most value out of these surveys and assist in identifying and satisfying areas of improvements requested, needed and hopefully to be approved or advanced in some form in our near future.

Our hope is that the city residents will see this and be encouraged to respond at a higher rate next year, and elect to participate in some other ways as well. All City meetings are available for public participation for those who made comments indicating they would like to participate more and be heard.

Next, we hope Hamilton City Council, Economic Development Corporation, Mayor, and City Administrator will be able to use portions of this to identify priority needs and goals as they strive to plan our city's path forward.

This survey should also be useful to the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) of Hamilton as they plan future activities to benefit city, county and local residents with their efforts. Our sincerest hope is that this becomes a catalyst to initiate positive change in our community.

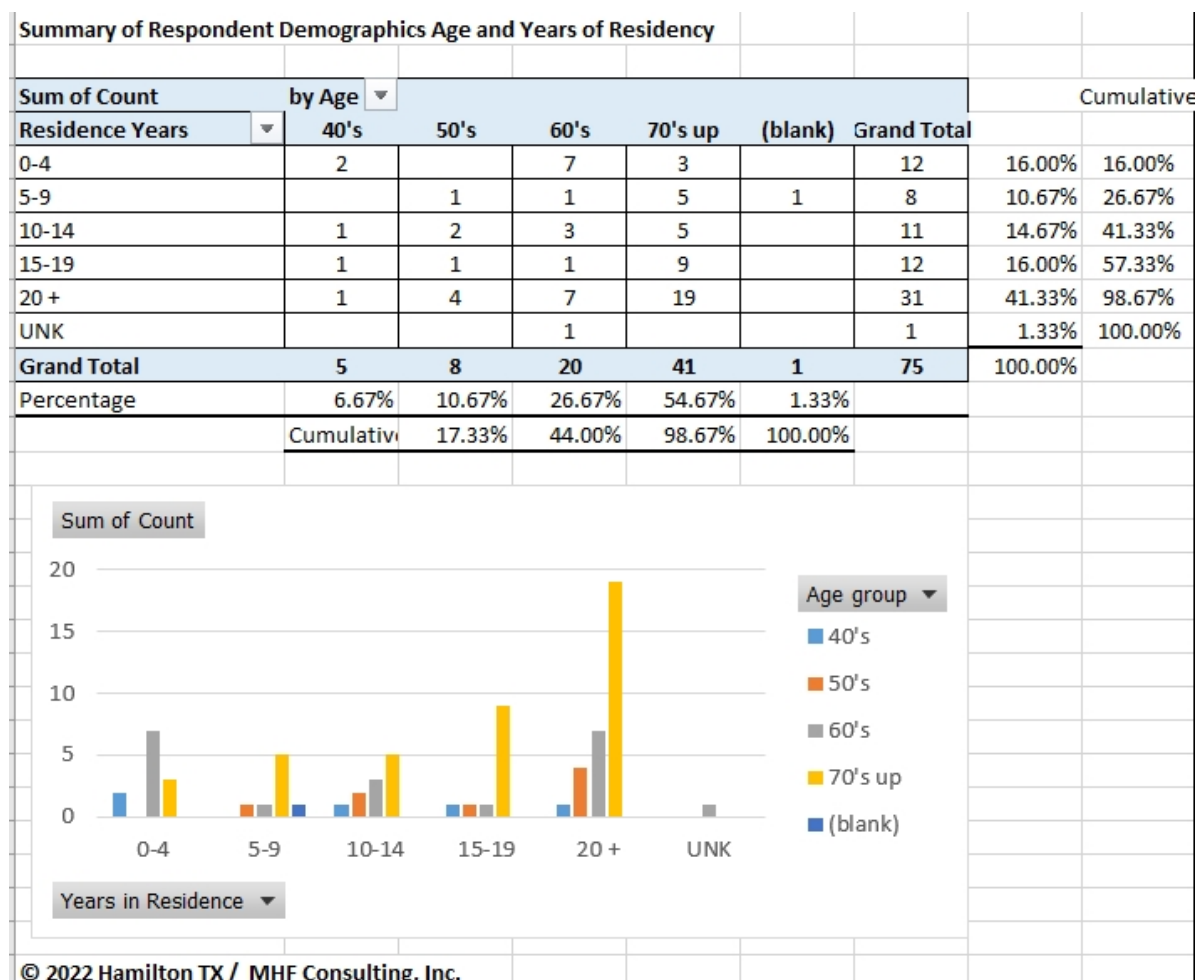
Best Regards to all,

Russell N Fail, MBA
MHF Consulting
Hamilton, Texas Resident.

Hamilton City/ County Demographics:

Demographics are important in relation to identifying the groupings of residents that the city provides services for. However, it is also essential to understand the big picture view and see the full population demographics as is reasonably possible in an effort to provide services that benefit the most people in the community.

The current population of Hamilton County Texas is 8,229 based on the April 2020 census. Of these 8,229 approximately 2,855 (37%) live in the city of Hamilton. Most residents of Hamilton County will utilize city services in some manner, and become potential employees of local businesses and consumers of local goods and services. The average household income in Hamilton is \$55,987 with a poverty rate of 22.88%. The median rental costs in recent years comes to \$607 per month, and the median house value is \$105,000. The median age in Hamilton is 42.3 years, 39.5 years for males, and 43.8 years for females.¹



There were 75 survey responses submitted in 2022, which converts to slightly less than 1% based on most recent Hamilton City population estimates. For the purpose of this survey, we will round up and call it a 1% response rate. In assessing statistics there are minimal parameters that must be adhered to in order for data and assumptions to be considered valid and representative of the population group being assessed. The Law of large numbers in mathematics states that the sample mean acquired from a set of values has a higher chance of being closer to the actual true mean and more accurate when the sample set of values is larger. The more the number of trials, the greater the likelihood of arriving at an expected mean value.

In a generality a sample set of 75 might be considered an under minimum acceptable sample size for relatively accurate representations of the entire group, but it will be assumed that this data set is a close proximal representation of the Hamilton city Population until more complete data is available. Extenuating circumstances that would help validate this assumption are the facts that individuals placed many “multiple responses”, and wrote essays on the reverse side of many of the forms, data that was also captured. It appears that there is a valid expression of wants and needs to work with.

The Survey Responses:

Section 1: **How can we improve the quality of City Services?**

1	Suggestion Categories	Sum of count
2	Airport	1
3	Business growth	6
4	Community Involvement	2
5	EDC Improvement	2
6	Employment Growth	2
7	Historic Restoration	12
8	Housing	11
9	Infrastructure	1
10	jBusinesses growth	4
11	Jet Runway	1
12	Jobs Growth	3
13	Main Street	1
14	Manufacturing Jobs/ Revenue growth	1
15	Miscellaneous	1
16	No Response	22
17	No Suggestion	1
18	Ordinances/ Clean up	14
19	Personnel changes	1
20	Retail Growth	21
21	Revenue Growth	1
22	Safety	1
23	Services	5
24	Services Cost	2
25	Services Infrastructure	2
26	Services Maintenance of Parks	1
27	Services Police	1
28	Services/ Roads	27
29	Services/ Sidewalks	3
30	Services/ Transportation	1
31	Shopping on Square	3
32	Streets	2
33	Grand Total	156

Below are success and progress notes which were compiled when listening to citizen survey responses.

Survey Responses were grouped into “like” suggestions and counted as such. These are the primary categories with discussion on suggestions provided.

1. Airport: The Hamilton airport is constantly being leveraged to bring new business and growth to the area. A 5012-foot-long runway helps to attract jet traffic and business ventures to our area. There are many financial impacts from the airport. Both direct impacts and off airport or secondary impacts are attributed to the multiplier effect to boost the economy. Direct impacts account for the initial point where money first starts circulating in the economy, where airport businesses or airport visitors spend money in town. Multiplier impacts result from the recirculation of direct impacts within the boundaries of the economy analyzed. This re-spending of money can occur multiple times and takes two forms – indirect and induced. Indirect impacts occur when companies incur business expenses. Induced impacts occur when employees purchase goods and services. Total Economic Impacts are the combination of all direct and multiplier impacts. The total economic output based on the methodology from the FAA guidelines, which has successfully quantified the benefits of airports and the airport system, shows that the Hamilton Municipal Airport attributes \$516,000 in financial output to our community. The City Council is currently promoting a new hanger project. This project will result in one new jet hangar and 10 new T-hangars. This project will bring 11 more owners into our community to spend money and provide these economic direct and multiplier impacts.
2. Business Growth: This pertains more to the Economic Development Corporation and it will be answered later in this response. The EDC is courting businesses to come into our region and our city for employment opportunities. There is a misconception that our codes, being up-to-date, are restricting businesses from coming into town. With up-to-date codes, city buildings are of higher value, giving them higher resale value. When builders abide by newer codes, insurance rates are improved as well. Other citizens expressed the desire to have more customers come into the city to purchase goods and services. A good hospital, school district, and additional housing will help to create more customers for our businesses.
3. Community Involvement: Our community members are welcome to participate in government events. This is an individual choice, but they are welcome to city council meetings and other board meetings. Any City Council meeting is accessible on Facebook. Citizens are also welcome to speak at council meetings regarding concerns that they might have within the limits posted on the council agenda.
4. EDC Improvement: This will be discussed on the EDC portion of the survey.
5. Employment Growth: There is a desire to have more employment opportunities within the Hamilton city limits and surrounding area. This implies that there is a desire among the residents to see some expansion of the city and associated growth in the variety and the numbers of our business.
6. Historic Restoration: Many comments provided, request renovation or restoration in particular of the square businesses and empty buildings. Although not historic, there's a desire for sidewalk repair, street repair and provisions for parking to encourage shopping and dining for travelers passing through town. It was expressed that the Downtown Square should be all retail and eateries, excluding lawyers or real estate business. The downtown area should be dressed up to bring customers in who are travelers and tourists in general. The City of Hamilton in conjunction with the EDC and Main Street have applied for a Transportation Alternatives grant to make the sidewalks around the square safer and more attractive and help solve some parking issues around

the Square as well. City Council directed staff to apply for the TA grant in 2021; however, Hamilton was not awarded the grant. The Council has once again encouraged staff to reapply for a 1.3 million dollar TA grant this year. TxDOT approved the preliminary application and has invited the City to submit the long application in June 2023. Based on information from the recent relief route meetings, TxDOT does have a desire to improve the pedestrian amenities in the downtown area and along US HWY 281.

7. Housing: There is a need for affordable, housing. Decent housing, in good repair, was expressed as well. There is presently a void in the availability of high-quality rental properties. Our Building and Code Enforcement department works to remedy the situation of substandard housing. Our code department only employs one full-time person. This employee strives to cover the ground that needs to be covered. It is important for the code enforcement department to have the tools, such as updated codes, that are necessary for improving housing. Although we have city lots with assessable services, future builders and homeowners must deal with the high cost of building and financing and doing this in a smaller tougher market such as ours.
8. Infrastructure: The need for infrastructure repair includes water, sewer, and streets. These repairs are the citizen's and the city council's top concerns. City council has applied for a Texas Water Development Board loan of \$2 million for a waterline replacement project. The city has also applied for another grant for \$2 million in federal funding. City council has directed staff to acquire all possible grant funding for infrastructure improvement. The city was awarded \$746,331.28 for infrastructure to include water and sewer lines. The idea was to utilize economy of scale and do one big project with this money; however, several smaller, urgent projects have stood in the way of this objective. These projects include installing an emergency chlorination system, moving the water mainline on HWY 36 West for TxDOT, replacing a sewer mainline on South Price, replacing water mainlines where the pressure is too low, and replacing a water pump and motor at the city water plant. With the economic situation of our citizenship and the current financial status of the city government, we are unable to obtain grant funding for street improvement. To address street improvement, the city council has laid out a street program that has the goal of an eight-year cycle for repairing city streets.
9. Business Growth: This item will be addressed in the Economic Development section.
10. Jet Runway: Because the runway is over 5000 feet long, it is suitable for jet traffic.
11. Jobs Growth: This is a redundancy of item number five. There is a desire for more employment and better paying jobs in the City of Hamilton, again this will fall under the economic development corporation's bailiwick.
12. Main Street: Main St., America has been helping revitalize, older and historic commercial districts for more than 40 years. Today, it is a network of more than 1200 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to build stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street Americas is a program of the nonprofit national Main Street Center, Inc., a subsidiary of the national trust in historic preservation. Main Street will be reported on in the EDC area of this survey. Hamilton is a member city of Mainstreet Texas.

13. Manufacturing Jobs/Revenue Growth: There was a suggestion that we need a manufacturer locally to provide some premium jobs, wage growth, and tax revenues. To help secure these types of manufacturing jobs, one of Hamilton's assets is its central location in the heart of Texas, and that the city has a business jet capable airport.
14. Miscellaneous: The city needs positive messaging. This could apply to many areas. Potentially a positive message could relate to advertising positive changes to outside communities and travelers. It could also be more of an internal message for the city council and government to send positive messages to the community, where the city would express the understanding of needs and all of the things that city council is doing for the community, including the street program, utility replacement, code enforcement, city lake, parks, and airport improvements.
15. No Response: Twenty-two residences submitting the survey did not provide a specific response
16. No Suggestion: This was also the response of one person.
17. Ordinances/Cleanup: 14 Responses indicated we have a need to enforce cleanup. Ordinances of flooded properties and unoccupied buildings, especially around the Square, and the trailer park/camper lots on Highway 36 were identified as eyesores. Here again, Code Enforcement is working to notify citizens of areas that need to be improved on their properties.
18. Personnel Changes: It was not identified specifically, which personnel needed to be changed, but additional comments on this suggested more employees are needed for the street program. This could also mean new employees or more qualified employees. Management has been concerned about training in all departments. Managerial staff and city employees are undergoing regular training to ensure more efficient service.
19. Retail Growth: many comments in this area were generalities, such as the need for more variety in retail merchandise available, stores staying open for later hours, the Downtown Square should be a retail and tourist hub, and there are no dress shops in town (Keep in mind this survey was completed in May 2022). We need travelers to stop and shop while passing through town. We need wage and employment opportunities. Comments also expressed the desirability for new residents to move here and more prosperity in Hamilton in general.
20. Revenue Growth: comments here could tie in with business jobs, retail growth, and so much more. The survey respondents, with their variety of responses, are indicating a desire for growth and prosperity for opportunity and expanding services and for improvement in overall opportunities here leading to better quality of life. This is not to say living in Hamilton is bad now, but simply expressing a desire for it to be improved. This overall growth and expansion would also increase city/county revenues and provide funding for budget items. When talking about growth in the city, please keep in mind that the EDC is always taking applications for board members to help cultivate this growth.
21. Safety: One response requested evaluation for a protected left turn lane on Highway 36 specific location not provided. This request would need to be considered by TxDOT engineers.

22. Services: Some respondent suggested that the city should provide a shuttle bus, a fitness center, and opportunities for individual development. Through the fitness center by the hospital, a new business on the Square, and the community center, there are opportunities for individual development. The City of Hamilton does not have a transit district and businesses and organizations have evolved to provide some of the areas for personal development. Another thing to note is that these services are available to all residents of the county and not limited to citizens of the city.
23. Services Cost: Specifically, this item refers to the monthly residential utility cost for sewer, water, and trash pickup. Residents identify this as being too expensive. The area of sewer, water and trash pickup was also identified as a big area for improvement. Sewer, water, and streets are structurally intertwined to some extent. Respondents placed high significance on this item. The city purchases treated water from Upper Leon Municipal Water District. Upper Leon serves five member cities. They are Dublin, DeLeon, Gorman, Comanche, and Hamilton. One of the factors of high priced water is due to purchasing the treated water from another entity.
24. Services Infrastructure: this was a repeat of item 8 with high volume of comments indicating this is a priority for survey respondents.
25. Services, Park Maintenance: There was a respondent who indicated that the walking trail should be mowed more frequently. In the past year, the administration moved an employee whose primary job was to oversee the parks in order to train in the wastewater and water departments. The public works department is overseeing the parks and addresses all park issues. Please submit a work order to the city utility billing department if you have a parks request.
26. Services Police: There was an overall supportive attitude for the police department. Responses indicate residents would like to see more police presence and continue the 24 hour a day police coverage. City council has responded by providing Hamilton with 24-hour police presence.
27. Services Roads: This was the highest priority item based on number of responses to the survey. It was also identified in large numbers in the EDC section. Overall, water, sewer, and street repairs were the number one concern listed in the 2022 survey. Prior to 2012, the City of Hamilton was able to obtain millings from TXDOT for road repair. Now, the contractors for TxDOT receive all the millings. Without millings to resurface roads, the city council has allowed staff to purchase equipment to do road repair in house. Instead of overlaying with millings, The City of Hamilton is reconstructing base and chip sealing roads using city employees. The cost of reconstructing roads is manageable when city staff can do the work. As mentioned in item number 8, the council has an 8-year plan for reconstructing roads.
28. Services Sidewalks: Sidewalks on the Square were specifically mentioned in relation to drawing tourism to increased retail and restaurant shopping opportunities. There was also a desire to make them handicap accessible. The City of Hamilton has applied for a Transportation Alternatives grant through TxDOT in order to improve the sidewalks around the square and to link them to the walking trail through the park. The grant would fund approximately 1.3 million dollars of renovations to rebuild sidewalks on all four sides of the square, replacing approximately 1600 linear feet of deteriorating 12-foot-wide sidewalks. The old sidewalks would be replaced with new concrete and brick pavers along the business sides of Henry Street, Bell Street, Ross Street, and Main Street downtown. All sidewalks would be ADA compliant, including 120 linear feet of

handrails and upgrade curb ramps to provide accessibility at all corners. To provide safer access to on street parking, 15 upgraded and re-stripped crosswalks, four curb extensions, and one parklet with seating will increase pedestrian infrastructure and calm traffic. Lighting improvements will improve visibility in the dark. Increasing safety and accessibility, a brick paver section on Henry Street will promote the connection of downtown to the existing 1.5 mile shared use path.

29. Services Transportation: There was a request for a shuttle bus to provide local transportation options. The Hill Country Transit District(HCTD) operates The HOP(not an acronym), a regional public transit system that serves a nine county area covering over 9000 square miles. This service is free until September 2023. To use the transportation system, you would need to call 254-933-3700 extension 5005 and register as a client. Once you are registered, you can start scheduling rides at that same phone number.
30. Shopping on the Square: Comments focused on zoning the square for retail and restaurant only, and shifting real estate offices, financial investments, and attorneys to other areas. The desire is for the square and perhaps close areas around the square to become walkable tourism shopping areas. On July 21, 2022, Council created an ordinance to allow no more than 49% of the downstairs area of a building on the square to be used as a residence. There have been no changes to regulate types of businesses.
31. Streets: This comment is duplicative, as local streets and alleys were mentioned in multiple areas as being a primary concern of residents. Streets are being improved by city public works staff. Council approved the purchase of equipment for reconstructing base and chip sealing surfaces. This has proven to be much more cost-effective than hiring contractors.

Section 2: What can city government do to be more effective?

	Responses	Totals
1	Be efficient/ effective with what you have	1
2	City Growth Needed	1
3	Doing a good job	3
4	Employee competence needed	1
5	Encourage citizen participation	4
6	Everybody get to work	1
7	Hire different employees	1
8	Hire more employees	3
9	Hire more qualified employees	3
10	Improve Garbage pickup	6
11	Listen to citizens	4
12	Listen to citizens/ encourage participation	4
13	More efficient Mgt.	1
14	More Restaurants and Retail Downtown	1
15	More Restaurants/ Retail	1
16	More retail stores	1
17	More work quantity	1
18	Need a big manufacturer here	1
19	Need Growth of city and revenue	1
20	New Businesses needed	3
21	New housing subdivisions needed.	1
22	New residential growth needed.	1
23	No response	28
24	Raise taxes fund city repairs	2
25	Reduce "red tape" for new growth	2
26	Residential growth	2
27	Retail Stay open longer hours on weekends	1
28	Revenue Growth	1
29	Revitalize the Square	5
30	Road Repair crew daily patrol	1
31	Road/Street Repairs	33
32	Stores stay open later	1
33	Utility cost too high	6
34	Vote a sales tax increase for city	1
35	Water/Sewer/Streets Repairs	10
	Grand Total	137

Survey Responses were grouped into “like” suggestions and counted as such. These are the primary categories of suggestions as to how the city government can be more effective with discussion on the suggestions provided.

1. Be efficient and effective with what you have: Recognizing that Hamilton does have limited resources to apply, we trust the governing body with the evaluation process to apply the resources to the most needed areas so that resources are used efficiently. This is very important to be effective in driving improvement.

2. City growth needed: The responses did not specify how growth should occur, only that it was needed. The comment may have referred to growth of the city in reference to businesses, job opportunities, shopping, retail restaurants, new residence, increase tax base, etc. City services, such as water, sewer, and roads are expensive to repair. Growth in the city would generate additional revenue to apply to these and other needs. Growth might also indicate a desire for the size of the city to increase, perhaps through annexation or purchase of additional land.
3. Doing a good job: This is a vote of confidence from a respondent. Unless someone has participated in the governing process, it is difficult to understand the complexity and difficulties in assessing and assigning limited resources to competing priorities.
4. Hire more qualified and more competent employees: This response and the number nine response need to be grouped together, as they differ only slightly. More qualified may refer to educational attainment, as well as relating to experience levels. Staff will have to observe specific departments where this is relevant to identify where corrective actions may be needed.
5. Encourage citizen participation: All city council and other board meetings are open to the public to view and participate per the governing rules. Please view the Hamilton city website for timing of meetings and other details, such as agendas and location.
6. Everybody get to work: This item is hard to respond to without more detail. All employees have defined jobs and standards, as well as a supervisory system in place. Employee job performance is reviewed annually, and any deviation from expected performance is addressed respectfully.
7. Hire different employees: Perhaps a resident had a bad experience. Again, there is insufficient detail to respond further.
8. Hire more employees: Hiring decisions are based on budgetary planning and city needs. The street department will be considered in next year's budget for additional employees.
9. Hire more qualified employees: This response and the number four response need to be grouped together, as they differ only slightly. There was insufficient detail to respond more than saying that employees receive in-house training amid other staff that can assist when necessary. When possible, employees are sent to training. Redundancy and training will help eliminate gaps in providing efficient and accurate services.
10. Improve garbage pickup: The city is always striving to improve services, such as waste management/garbage pickup. There is a focus on equipment repairs and reliability to keep services running efficiently and on time. This focus will continue. The solid waste contract will be renegotiated starting in May 2024. The bulk trash and brush drop off will also be a consideration when the contract is re-negotiated.
11. Listen to citizens: All city council and other board meetings are open to the public to view and participate per the governing rules. Please view the Hamilton city website for timing of meetings and other details, such as agendas and location. Your suggestions and opinions are welcomed, which is why the survey was created.
12. Listen to citizens, and encourage participation: Same as item number eleven.

13. More efficient management: There is insufficient detail with this statement. Although there is always room for improvement, specifics would help staff understand why there may be a perception of a need for more efficiency.
14. More restaurants and retail downtown: Several suggestions to this point have been received, and potential opportunities are being evaluated by the economic development corporation.
15. More restaurants/retail: Same as item fourteen.
16. More retail stores: the revitalization or historical restoration of the city square is being evaluated by the Hamilton Historical Mainstreet. In addition, other growth opportunities are being looked at. Keep in mind that the economic development corporation has among its primary responsibilities, retail commercial and revenue growth in this community. These concerns are being addressed.
17. More work quantity: More work usually means more productivity. Again, the lack of information makes it hard to respond. Whether or not this comment is speaking to a specific project or to the city as a whole is undetermined.
18. Need a big manufacture here: This is a very good concept that could provide jobs. It may also provide an increase in the city /county tax base as well as other benefits. This is a request that the EDC Economic Development Team is constantly working on.
19. Need growth of city and revenue: Slow growth over time may be a good thing for our city. This may provide more of a tax base for the city. The population has only slightly varied over the past 80 years.
20. New businesses needed: This is an item that the Economic Development Corporation is constantly working on and evaluating.
21. New housing subdivisions are needed: This was a great suggestion and would give the city businesses more customers. Due to a lack of housing, several of our workers are driving from other cities. The city is always open to working with new developers.
22. New residential growth needed: This is the same as item number 21.
23. No response: sometimes a response was left blank. We appreciate these residents filling in the surveys as many of their responses still add value to the big picture and total assessment.
24. Raise taxes to fund more city repairs: The preference would be to find federal or state grants to do city repairs. Although grants may be found for utilities, grants for road repair are usually not an option. The sales tax inside the city of Hamilton is maxed out at 2% and cannot be increase beyond that amount. An increase in property tax has been levied over the past several years. The City Council considers property tax annually, and has usually increased property tax by approximately 3% which amounts to about \$27,000 in increased revenue for the city. A 3% increase means about a \$15.00 increase per year for the average homeowner to pay in property taxes to the city. Please keep in mind, the city's portion of the property tax is a little over 1/4th of the total assessment. The balance of the assessment goes to the hospital, county and school district.

25. Reduce “red tape” for new growth: The city has a normal permitting process for new buildings, both commercial and residential. Our building inspector/code enforcement officer is always open to communication and very helpful in the building process. The city has codes to follow for building, electrical and plumbing. We hope that these codes will make the structures safer for future residents.
26. Residential growth: Same as item number 21.
27. Retail to stay open longer hours: This is another area where the Hamilton historic MainStreet and the economic development corporation have been working through promotion of special events to business owners.
28. Revenue growth is needed: All businesses would like to see revenue growth. If businesses succeed, the city will succeed.
29. Revitalize the square: This is another area where the Hamilton historic Main Street and the economic development corporation have been working. Please refer to the area of economic development for questions and answers.
30. Road/street repairs daily patrol: This comment would suggest having a patrol through town daily to identify, report, and fill potholes in order to keep the roads from deteriorating. This is a good suggestion and achievable with an increase in the number of our street employees and budgeted supplies.
31. Road/street repairs: this is the number one identified issue on every question on the survey, whether it fits into the category and answered the question or not. The city council and administration understand the desire to have sewer and water lines replaced and streets repaired. Several years ago, city council set aside five dollars per water bill base fee. This revenue goes into the discretionary fund in the Enterprise Budget. The discretionary money can then be used to supplement road repair where utility maintenance has taken place. other than the discretionary money, the money in the street budget is all that the city can use for road repair each year. Grants to repair residential streets are not often found unless they are in conjunction with a bigger project.
32. Stores open later: Same as item number 27.
33. Utility cost too high, especially commercial users: The high cost for the city has a number of factors. A major contributor to the cost of water is having to pay another facility for treatment and shipping of our water. Another factor is economy of scale. The city has fewer connections (customers) than a larger town, so the price per connection is higher. The proximity to services rendered is also a factor, as Hamilton is miles from our solid waste disposal site and miles from where Hamilton purchases water. Commercial services tend to cost more due to the higher usage and higher demand for maintenance.
34. Vote a sales tax increase for city: The city is currently maxed out at 8.25% city sales tax. For taxable purchases within the city limits, the State of Texas receives 6.25%, the county receives .5%, the city receives 1%, and the EDC receives .5%.

35. Water sewer street repairs needed: This is the same as item number 31. It is the most requested and identified category in last year's survey.

Section 3: What would improve "Economic Development"?

1	Description	Total
2	Affordable housing	1
3	Big Trucks in city	1
4	Code Compliance blighted areas	2
5	Don't Know	1
6	EDC abolished.	1
7	Encouragement	1
8	grocery Store	1
9	Historic downtown	7
10	Housing subdivisions	2
11	Individual Dvlpmt	1
12	Infrastructure	1
13	Less Regulations	5
14	Lower Commercial water rates	1
15	Main Street Program	1
16	Manufacturer needed	1
17	New Businesses	6
18	New jobs	1
19	New resident growth	1
20	No response	22
21	Parks Improvement	1
22	Retail around square	3
23	Road/Street repairs	7
24	Safety	1
25	Services Fitness Center	1
26	Services Police	1
27	Services Shuttle Bus	1
28	Sewer/Water/Street Repairs	1
29	sidewalks downtown	2
30	Street repairs	1
31	Tax Incentives for Com'l growth	1
32	Tax Incentives fot Res growth	1
33	Wal Mart	1
34	Grand Total	79

Survey Responses were grouped into "like" suggestions and counted as such. These are the primary categories under the EDC Survey lines, with some comments on suggestions provided:

1. Affordable housing - the Hamilton Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) has identified Workforce Housing as a priority. Conversations continue to take place with housing developers that have identified Hamilton as a potential project site.

2. Big trucks on city streets - this will likely be addressed by the Texas Department of Transportation during the Highway 281 Expansion Project. This is not an item for the HEDC.
3. Code compliance for blighted and un-kept areas - code compliance falls under the direction and supervision of the City Administrator and the Planning and Zoning Commission. This is not an item for the HEDC.
4. EDC should be abolished – the HEDC consists of seven board members that are members of the community. Each board member is dedicated to strengthening Hamilton’s economy, workforce, and tourism. The HEDC established a strategic plan in 2020, which guides objectives, projects, and grant allotments. Each year the HEDC provides tens of thousands of dollars to new and expanding businesses for building improvements, signage or equipment needs. The HEDC is not only governed by City Council, but by the Office of the Secretary of State. There are laws regarding how local EDC’s can operate, fund projects and market their community. At no time has the HEDC been in violation of such laws and continues to operate on a limited budget that is focused on economic growth and revitalization.
5. Don’t know – not applicable for a response.
6. Encouragement – the HEDC continues to educate the community on its roles and responsibilities. The HEDC has an office located on the Hamilton Square and encourages individuals to stop by or attend a monthly meeting.
7. Another grocery store would foster price competition – grocery chains take a variety of factors into consideration before they decide to open a new location. One of the areas they consider is the town or city population. Many of the chains require a minimum of five to seven thousand residents. Some of the chains also research average family income, average home prices and county population before they look at possible sites. Hamilton’s population has not grown in several years. It remains steady at three thousand, therefore it is difficult to recruit a new grocery provider.
8. Historic downtown renovations:
 - a. Repair streets and sidewalks including disability friendly access – the HEDC has partnered with the city of Hamilton to submit for a Transportation Alternatives Grant that would provide reimbursement for such a project. The initial application has been submitted. The project would include new sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks and would be ADA compliant.
 - b. Repair the tall façade on the “square” buildings to add historical beauty – the HEDC offers a Downtown Signage, Awning and Façade Improvement Grant, which provides grant money to building owners that want to repair or enhance their facades. The grant extends to the entire Main Street District and the application process is easy.

- c. Zoning changes to retail/restaurant and restrict real estate and law firms to make this a pure shopping/retail area with dining and perhaps music or entertainment to draw tourism – the HEDC structured a Hamilton Square Overlay Ordinance, which included such wording, and asked for general accountability to building owners. The intent was to make the Square intensely commercial and to hold building owners accountable for necessary repairs to buildings and/or store fronts. It was presented to City Council in July of 2022. The Ordinance did not receive approval because a few local business owners did not want such an ordinance to be put into place.
 - d. Longer hours of operation – this is challenging because business owners currently cannot justify the expense of having a store/restaurant open for longer hours or on weekends because there isn't enough pedestrian traffic in the downtown area. The HEDC understands that more individuals would come to the downtown area if shopping and eating venues are open, but it is difficult to ask small business owners to have such an expense until the pedestrian traffic is consistent.
 - e. Expanding the area to include connecting street areas – the HEDC has a few projects that would connect the downtown area to other areas, such as Pecan Creek. The HEDC and Main Street Program are continually researching grants and applying for funding in order to implement these projects.
 - f. Increased parking capacity for shopping/ dining customers – the HEDC will be implementing a Parking Lot Revitalization Project in 2023. This project affects the parking lot along Railroad Street, between Main Street and Henry Street. The parking lot will be completely overhauled, allowing for more parking, beautiful landscaping, and pedestrian walkways.
9. New housing subdivisions – as stated above, conversations continue to take place with housing developers that have identified Hamilton as a potential project site. Housing developers also look at population when they are researching new projects. In addition, they often look at the average household income, growth rates, school demographics and a city's current infrastructure, to determine if a housing project is needed and can be pursued with limited obstacles.
10. Individual development – not sure what this is in reference to.
11. More infrastructure – projects related to water/wastewater and street maintenance fall under the direction and supervision of the City Administrator and City Council.
12. Less regulations – not knowing which regulations this statement is referencing, it should be stated that the City of Hamilton has fewer code regulations and local ordinances than a majority of the cities within a one-hour radius. The HEDC is not responsible for creating or implementing regulations.
13. Lower commercial water rates – the HEDC is not responsible for assessing the water rates.

14. Main Street Program – the HEDC and City Council oversee this program. Hamilton received the “Main Street” designation in 2020 by the Texas Historical Commission. The program has successfully implemented bylaws, board of directors, committees, monthly meetings, monthly newsletter and so much more. The program is currently focused on revitalizing the Square to include additional lighting, benches, landscaping, and signage. The program does not receive any funding from the city or state. The HEDC provides a small amount of money for one-time projects if the budget allows. The program is heavily driven by volunteer time, in which board members are expected to volunteer ten hours a month.
15. Manufacturer needed – the HEDC is approached by manufacturers a few times a year. During discussions, the HEDC provides an overview of the city, infrastructure, population, transportation options, available sites, available buildings, traffic patterns, etc. The HEDC carefully answers every question and provides any documentation requested. Occasionally, the Governor’s Office will contact the HEDC to assist with a Request for Information (RFI) from a specific manufacturer. This information is prepared and provided to the Governor’s Office each time.
16. New businesses needed – the HEDC spends a great deal of time talking with individuals that are interested in starting a business. The HEDC partners with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Stephenville, to assist with business plans and marketing. The HEDC spends a lot of time helping new businesses obtain the proper documentation and data to complete applications for grants and/or loans. One of the biggest challenges facing new business owners is the shortage of commercial space that is available to purchase or lease.
17. New jobs – the current businesses in Hamilton continually report employee shortages. One of the primary reasons for a business to have short hours of operation or closed during days of the week is due to employee shortages. The unemployment rate in Hamilton is less than five percent, which is below the state and national average.
18. New resident growth – although the overall population of Hamilton has not seen much growth in the 2010 or 2020 Census, the last eighteen months has shown that married couples and retirees are moving from larger cities, specifically Waco/Temple/Belton/Austin, to Hamilton. The married couples are able to work remotely and the retirees know that the cost of living is less. This is a step in the right direction for Hamilton.
19. No response – not applicable for a response.
20. Parks improvement – the HEDC is partnering with the newly appointed Parks Board to enhance offerings at the various city parks. A few projects have been identified. The EDC is working towards identifying funding and project priorities.
21. Retail around square – review number 8 above.

22. Road/street repairs - projects related to street maintenance fall under the direction and supervision of the City Administrator and City Council.
23. Safety - this will likely be addressed by the Texas Department of Transportation during the Highway 281 Expansion Project. This is not an item for the HEDC.
24. Fitness center – the city of Hamilton has two fitness centers available to all residents, the Hamilton Wellness Center and Elevate Fitness. Both organizations offer a variety of classes, equipment, and resources.
25. Shuttle bus – Neither the city nor the HEDC are responsible for managing public transportation.
26. Sidewalks downtown – review number 8 above.
27. Street repairs - projects related to street maintenance fall under the direction and supervision of the City Administrator and City Council.
28. Tax incentives for commercial growth – the HEDC is willing to review any request for tax incentives, however, there is a critical balance that must be adhered to.
29. Tax incentives for residential growth - the HEDC is willing to review any request for tax incentives, however, there is a critical balance that must be adhered to.

Section 4:

**When asked “Why we like living in Hamilton Texas,” the following responses were received.
(In Alphabetical order.)**

1	Why is Hamilton a great place to live?
2	Businesses are safe
3	Caring attitude of community
4	Easy to get places
5	Freedom from excess regulation
6	Good medical facilities
7	Good Police enforcement
8	Good Schools
9	Great churches
10	Great friendly people
11	Great Library
12	Laid back atmosphere
13	Less government restrictions
14	Location, location, location!
15	Low crime rate
16	People close knit family
17	People have good hearts
18	people help others in need
19	Quiet and peaceful atmosphere
20	Small town atmosphere

Section 5:

In this segment Citizen Survey respondents were requested to rank 16 items listed in numerical order to signify the level of importance associated with each item. Some citizens ranked these items while some just indicated whether they felt an item was “important” or “not important” at this time for Hamilton.

Ranking	Item	Importance ranked by Respondents providing numerical rankings	Most important-higher %	Average Value
1	8	Improve Streets/ Alleys	62.7%	2.00
2	3	Water/ Sewer Line Replacement	60.0%	3.22
3	11	City Property Taxes	56.0%	4.74
4	12	Utility Rates/ Fees	57.3%	4.81
5	2	Blighted Property	58.7%	6.00
6	4	Employment Opportunities	60.0%	6.44
7	1	Housing Availability	58.7%	6.64
8	15	24 hour Police coverage	58.7%	6.89
9	6	Improve Storm water control	54.7%	7.61
10	16	City/ Cty Senior Center	53.3%	9.05
11	14	New FD Facility	53.3%	9.15
12	13	New PD Facility	52.0%	9.18
13	9	City Pool Renovation	52.0%	10.23
14	5	Improve Parks and Cemetary	52.0%	10.44
15	7	Improve City Lake	52.0%	12.05
16	10	City Pool Replacement	53.3%	12.20
Average Value from Responders			75	

Rank	Items were marked "Important" or "Not Important"	Important Rank	Importance votes
1	Improve Streets/ Alleys	1	26
2	Water/ Sewer Line Replacement	2	22
3	Utility Rates/ Fees	3	21
4	Blighted Property	4	20
5	City Property Taxes	5	18
6	Housing Availability	6	17
7	Employment Opportunities	7	15
8	24 hour Police coverage	8	14
9	City/ Cty Senior Center	9	14
10	Improve Storm water control	10	13
11	Improve Parks and Cemetary	11	12
12	New FD Facility	12	11
13	City Pool Renovation	13	10
14	Improve City Lake	14	9
15	New PD Facility	15	7
16	City Pool Replacement	16	6
Average Value from Responders		75	

Although the methodology indicating the importance level was slightly different in the two tables,

The overall rankings are very similar which validates both methodologies as being representative of the responses from the survey response population group.

Section 6:

Where do Hamilton residents look for news items and information?

News Source	Responses	
Hamilton Herald News	48	42.1%
Facebook/ City Website	28	24.6%
Neighbors, Word of mouth	9	7.9%
No Response	8	7.0%
Hamilton County Breaking News	4	3.5%
Public notices	3	2.6%
Whatever I can see	2	1.8%
Public workers	2	1.8%
City Council contact	2	1.8%
Community development website	2	1.8%
Church	1	0.9%
Don't watch for news	1	0.9%
Television	1	0.9%
City Council ZOOM meetings	1	0.9%

Local businesses	1	0.9%
Public workers	1	0.9%
	114	100.0%

75 surveys

114 responses

This completes the summary of responses to the 2022 Hamilton City Citizen Survey. To comment and make additional responses, please respond in short answer form as City Staff has not created an official survey response form in 2023. Please title your submission "Citizen Feedback 2023." Written comments may be turned into the City Secretary at City Hall, 200 E Main, from 8:30am – 4:00pm M-F or put in the night drop box at the City Hall West entrance at any time.

Thank you for your input and participation.

References and credits:

1. Demographics information provided by :
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/hamilton-tx-population>