

## Proposed FY 2026 MEDC Budget Workshop Summary

As we begin planning for the FY2026 budget, it's clear that this cycle will involve several critical funding decisions and strategic initiatives that will shape implementation over the next four years.

The adopted comprehensive plans for 2021 and 2024 have laid a strong foundation for continued progress. As we plan for FY2026, this is an opportune time to reflect on what we've accomplished, assess current projects, and consider new initiatives on the horizon. This review will help us identify high-impact opportunities, set strategic priorities, and guide resource allocation.

To ensure effective execution, large initiatives should be phased into manageable segments, with clear implementation milestones and evaluation checkpoints. As part of this planning process, we will develop both a 'must-have' budget—covering essential priorities and core obligations—and a strategic 'wish list' that outlines aspirational projects for potential funding as resources allow.

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### Framing Our FY2026 Budget Conversation

#### 1. Celebrate Accomplishments

- Identify major wins from each planning cycle: infrastructure upgrades, successful events, business growth, downtown beautification, branding, etc.
- Use this to reinforce what strategies have delivered strong ROI and community benefit.

#### 2. Refine Event Strategy

**Goal:** Streamline event spending to prioritize quality over quantity, support tourism and downtown economic growth.

- **Evaluate all current events** using a scorecard: visitor draw, economic impact, alignment with MEDC goals, and community value.
- **Retain high-impact events** that demonstrably attract tourists or elevate quality of life.
- **Phase out lower-performing events** to free up funding for long-term initiatives.
- **Pilot quarterly “micro-events”** (e.g., Sip & Shop, Twilight Market, Open House) that are low-cost but high-engagement.
- **Partner with local businesses** to co-host or co-sponsor events

#### 3. Prioritize Downtown Revitalization

**Goal:** Reallocate funding to implement strategic downtown improvements.

**Suggestions:**

- **Invest in walkability:** crosswalks, lighting, LED Sign upgrade, street furniture, green space and pedestrian safety.
- **Support business growth:** incentives for façade improvements, digital modernization, and business recruitment.
- **Advance tourism branding:** implement a downtown brand and marketing strategy.
- **Enhance community spaces:** upgrades to the Community Building, infrastructure for markets, and public gathering areas.

#### 4. Create a Balanced Budget Framework

**Suggestions:**

- Introduce a **three-tier budget model:**
  - *Essential investments* (core infrastructure, branding, economic development)
  - *Strategic events* (select high-return events only)
  - *Innovation initiatives* (pilot projects and new ideas like micro-grants, university partnerships)
- Allocate funding toward projects that:
  - Leverage partnerships or matching funds
  - Have measurable outcomes
  - Build toward long-term MEDC strategic goals

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#### FY 2026 Budget Snapshot before revision to the events

- **Estimated Revenue:** \$896,000
- **Proposed Expenses:** \$926,544
- **Budget Deficit:** -\$30,055
- **Adjustment:** Non-renewal of *Retail Strategies – Retail Only Portion* (\$45,000)
- **Projected Surplus After Adjustment:** \$14,446

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#### Type B Sales Tax Funding Allocation

Under Type B regulations, funding for events, promotions, marketing, and sponsorships is **capped at 10% of the annual budget**. The proposed allocation is:

- **Maximum Allowable:** \$89,600

- **Includes:** Event sponsorships (formerly listed as grants), events, marketing, and advertising efforts.

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### Must-Have Budget Commitments – Consulting & Professional Services

**Total: \$229,708**

<b>Vendor / Purpose</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Ardurra – McCown Streetscape Improvements	\$136,458
HDL Companies – Sales Tax Reporting	\$5,000
Retail Strategies + Downtown Consulting	\$70,000
enCode Plus – UDC/Planning GIS Software	\$13,750
Merje / FoundDesign – McCown Street Signage	\$4,500

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### Not Included – Wish List Items for Consideration

These items are currently **not included** in the proposed budget -to be discussed during the workshop for potential future consideration or phasing:

- **Wayfinding Program (3 Phases):** \$450,000 total
  - Phase 1: \$449,350
  - Phase 2: \$125,070
  - Phase 3: \$304,095
- **TXDOT Projects** on the horizon funding TBD
- **Professional Video Services (Marketing Category):** \$30,000
- **Montgomery Neighbors (Print Advertising):** \$47,000
- **Professional Marketing & Advertising:** \$49,200
- **Wine & Music Festival:** Estimated \$50,000–\$100,000
- **Antique Festival:** Estimated \$50,000
- **Party on the Patio – Downtown Pop Ups:** \$3,500
- **Hotel Feasibility Study:** \$15,000
- **Retail Strategies Implementation of 5-year strategic plan.** Total: \$1.25M – \$1.5M
- **Branded Trademark Swag:** TBD

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### Events being removed from the calendar and budget moving forward fy' 2026

- Montgomery Water Party

- Montgomery Snow Party
- Movie Night at the Park

### Wish List Events

- Quarterly Downtown pop-up Event
- Downtown Wine / Music Event
- Antique Festival

**Retail Strategies Downtown Initiative 5-year Plan. Implementation of recommendations from the strategic plan. Short Term Goals, easy obtainable enhancements. Long term, streetscapes and master plans.**

### Estimated 5-Year Budget Summary

Policy & Administration: \$150,000

Design: \$400,000

Tourism & Promotion: \$250,000

Economic Vitality: \$300,000

Contingency + Staffing: \$150,000

Total: \$1.25M – \$1.5M

### Implementation Timeline

2025 (Year 1): Pilot grants, branding, quick wins, TERZ study

2026–2027: Infrastructure, signage, markets, lighting

2028–2029: Full streetscapes, expanded events, mural completion

Annual Review: Action Team evaluates progress and adjusts

### Four Focus Areas

#### Policy & Administration

Lays the foundation for sustainable downtown revitalization through partnerships, community engagement, and resource development.

- **Form an Action Team:** Tasked with revitalizing downtown, working alongside the City, MEDC, property owners, and other partners to implement priorities from the 5-Year Strategic Action Plan. Over time, this team should expand to mirror key focus areas: Policy & Administration, Design, Tourism & Promotion, and Economic Vitality.
- **Establish a Downtown Business Association:** Serves as a central body for business stakeholders to influence downtown's future through collective action.
  - Launch 3–5 “quick win” projects from the strategic plan that address visible needs.
  - Host a Downtown Project Night to assign roles aligned with business owners' skills and availability.

- Publicize small wins via social media and local media outlets.
- Hold follow-up events to highlight progress and introduce new projects.
- **Establishing a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TERZ)**
- **Vibrancy Grants expand traditional façade improvement programs**

## Design

Strong design enhances downtown's visual appeal and functionality, making it vibrant, walkable, and inviting.

- **Walkability & Connectivity**
  - Ensure downtown is pedestrian-friendly, especially near major highways.
  - Install Texas flags on Liberty Street (Hwy 105 to Clepper Dr) to create a gateway.
  - Add streetlight banners, bold crosswalks, and railings between sidewalks and parking.
  - Stripe parallel parking along Liberty Street; explore adding more streetlights.
  - Host a walkability tour with city officials and stakeholders to identify barriers.
- **Streetscape Vibrancy**
  - Activate sidewalks with merchandise displays, sandwich boards, and colorful storefronts.
  - Encourage business upgrades using mood boards for ideas like beer gardens, social yards, string lights, umbrellas, flexible seating, turf, and outdoor games.
  - Feature murals and art installations (e.g., "Lone Star Flag," goat & water well) for photo ops.
- **Lighting Enhancements**
  - Use rooftop parapet lighting or overhead string lights on Liberty Street for nighttime vibrancy.
  - Connect string lights to poles/buildings for a crisscross effect; add poles if needed.
  - McCown Street will undergo a streetscape upgrade with street art, pedestrian areas, trees, and shared decks (Ardurra and Kimley-Horn planning).
- **Community Building Activation**
  - Improve and better utilize the building for events.
    - Add uplighting or string lights to trees.
    - Make basic interior upgrades.
    - Host regular small-scale events.

## Tourism & Promotion

Effective promotion positions Downtown Montgomery as a vibrant, authentic destination while celebrating its unique character.

## Branding

- Develop a unified brand for Downtown and the city, with consistent logos, colors, fonts, and messaging.
- Emphasize local identity: "Birthplace of the Texas Flag," small-town charm, lake life, and the goat legend.
- Create a professional brand package to be used across organizations and events.
- Include a trademarked brand extension and licensing for local merchandise.
- Standardize social media graphics for consistency and recognition; use existing "Montgomery: Birthplace of the Texas Flag" materials as a short-term guide.

## Marketing & Outreach

- Build a cohesive external brand targeting visitors from Houston, Conroe, and College Station.
- Leverage "Historic Montgomery, TX" and "Visit Montgomery TX" profiles to maintain engaging, brand-consistent promotions.

## Events & Micro-Promotions

Focus on frequent, small-scale events that connect visitors with local businesses and create memorable experiences:

- **Open House Events** – Coordinated extended hours with promotions.
- **Baa-zar Market** – Goat-themed vendor market and shopping event.
- **Night of the Arts** – Showcase local talent through art crawls, dance, music, and classes.
- **Progressive Dinner** – Multi-stop culinary experience across downtown.
- **Sip & Shop** – Themed tasting events (e.g., Wine Down Downtown, Stars and Sips); could be ticketed fundraisers.

## Heritage & Community Events

- Expand the junior high school history scavenger hunt into a city-wide tradition.
- Launch "**Montgomery Rewind**", a weekend event series celebrating local history and buildings.
- Enhance the historic walking tour with a "Past Port" stamp challenge and prizes.
- Create a **centralized community calendar** to coordinate and publicize events.

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## Economic Vitality

Revitalization depends on understanding the retail and real estate landscape and fostering entrepreneurship.

- Analyze the market to identify redevelopment opportunities.

- Support local businesses and new ventures through targeted incentives and collaboration.
- Align promotional and event efforts with economic development goals to drive foot traffic and investment downtown.

## **Economic Vitality & Business Recruitment**

### **Farmers Market and or Lone Star 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday as a Catalyst**

- **Relocate** the successful Montgomery Farmers Market downtown (McCown Street or Community Building grounds).
- **Leverage Market Success:**
  - **Quarterly "Downtown Harvest Festivals"** with seasonal themes (e.g., cooking demos, live music, contests).
  - **Monthly "Twilight Markets"** (Fridays, 4–8 PM) with food, craft vendors, music, wine tastings, and string lighting.
  - **"Market-to-Main Street" Program** connecting vendors to local restaurants (e.g., menu items featuring market goods).
  - **Brand Integration:** Identify participating businesses as "Market Partners"; install wayfinding signage and consistent branding.
  - **Infrastructure Investment:** Improve Community Building grounds and promote events digitally.

These initiatives support entrepreneurs, create foot traffic, and help activate vacant spaces. Regular market events drive predictable revenue and strengthen downtown's identity as a hub of commerce and culture.

### **Business Recruitment Packet**

Create a user-friendly packet for potential businesses including:

- Market data summary
- Downtown map
- Focus property listings
- Incentives & approval guides
- Point of contact

With growth on the horizon, a polished packet and permitting "cheat sheet" can help attract businesses, especially as the city updates development codes.

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## **Small Business Modernization**

To stay competitive, downtown businesses must improve their digital presence. This means more than having a website—it's about creating an omni-channel experience that connects online discovery with in-person visits.

## Key Modernization Initiatives

### 1. University Partnership Program

- Partner with Sam Houston State or Lone Star College for a “Digital Downtown” initiative.
- Offer hands-on student support, workshops, and mentorship in marketing and e-commerce.
- Implement an intern program for the city, MEDC and MPD.

### 2. Google Business Profile Accelerator

- Ensure every downtown business has an optimized profile.
- Offer photography, review management training, and a “Montgomery Digital Directory.”

### 3. Micro-Grant Digital Transformation Program

- Provide \$500–\$2,500 matching grants for website upgrades, POS systems, or marketing.
- Tie grants to training modules; partner with local banks for tech loans.

### 4. Downtown Tech Ambassador Program

- Recognize and empower “Digital Champions” among business owners.
- Host peer roundtables and maintain a shared tech resource library.

## Why Google Business Profiles Matter

- Boosts local visibility by 70%
- Drives immediate visits: 56% visit within a day of searching
- Enhances trust via reviews and photos
- Improves search rankings and click-throughs
- Supports conversion: 78% of mobile searches lead to offline purchases

**Action Step:** Distribute the Google Business Profile guide (Strategy 4.3) to all downtown businesses and encourage profile claiming and updates.

## MEDC FUNDED EVENTS Revised as of June 27, 2025

### January

- State of the City Mayor Sara Countryman

### February

- **Saturday, February 15:** Lone Star Street Dance (6:30–10 PM)

### March

- **Sunday, March 8:** Texas Flag Day Celebration & Mayor's Reception.

### May

- **Friday, May 2 – Saturday, May 3:** Monty's Well
- **Saturday, May 18:** Lone Star Street Dance (6:30–10 PM, Partnership)

### July

- **Saturday, July 5:** Montgomery Water Party (9:00–3:00 PM)

### August – September

- Summer Break

### October

- **Saturday, October 11:** Movie Night (at sunset, approx. 7:19 PM)
- **Friday, October 17 – Saturday, October 18:** Montgomery Quilt Walk Partnership (10 AM–4 PM Fri/Sat)
- **Saturday, October 25:** Trick or Treat Business District (1–4 PM)

### November

- **Saturday, November 1:** Movie Night (at sunset, approx. 7:19 PM)
- **Saturday, November 8:** Lone Star Street Dance (6:30–10 PM)

### December "Christmas in Montgomery"

- **Friday, December 6:** Light Up the Park (6–8 PM)
- **Saturday, December 13:** Annual Christmas Parade (10 AM–12 PM)

## **Montgomery Police Department Events**

### **Citizen Police Academy**

- **Event Description:** Fourth annual Citizens Police Academy. CPA students will get to see and experience what the job is like "behind the curtain" for city police officers.
- **Event Dates:** April 2 through June 11, Wednesday evenings 5:45 PM to 8:30 PM

### **Faith & Blue – Montgomery Police Department**

- **Event Description:** A community event designed to build relationships, focusing on the relationship between faith-based organizations and law enforcement.
- **Event Date:** Tuesday, October 7, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

### **Shop with a Cop presented by, Montgomery Police Department**

- **Event Description:** A private charity event where local police help children purchase gifts for their families during the holidays

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### **Permits Private Events**

- Lone Star 1st Saturday: First Saturday of the month
- Sip & Stroll: April – June Every Thursday (Monthly) September - December
- Charles B. Stuart Birthday Celebration
- Mardi Gras and Crawfish Festival
- Church at Montgomery Easter Car Hop
- March 4 Our Military / Ruck for Veterans
- Gran Fondo
- Antique Festival
- Freedom Fest
- Voices from the Past (October)
- Oilman
- Christmas Marketplace, Cookie Walk and Home Tour

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### **Other**

- Mayors Roundtable
- Farmers Market – no permit needed
- Montgomery Christian Academy Dec 6 (Winter Wonderland)

## City Events 2024-2025

### **Mayor Sara Countryman State of the City**

- **Event Description:** Challenges and achievements of the past year and unveil the exciting initiatives and goals for 2025.
- **Event Date:** Thursday, January 30, 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

### **Lone Star Street Dance**

- **Event Description:** Fun family community event
- **Event Date:** Saturday, February 15, 6:30 – 10 pm

### **Texas Flag Day Celebration & Mayor's Reception**

- **Event Description:** Celebrating Historic Montgomery's proud heritage. **Montgomery's Lone Star Art Gallery** host a **Red, White, and Blue Reception**, featuring special guest **Mayor Sara Countryman**.
- **Event Date:** Saturday, March 8, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

### **Montgomery Tree Giveaway**

- **Event Description:** Community Partners, TX A&M Forest Service & Master Gardeners of Montgomery County **tree giveaway** and educational event dedicated to promoting environmental awareness and sustainability.
- **Event Date:** Saturday, March 8, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### **Movie Night at the Park X 3**

- **Event Description:** A family-friendly **Outdoor Movie Night downtown**. Bring your blankets, popcorn, lawn chairs, and your favorite people.
- **Event Dates:** March 8

### **Antique & Unique Festival Partnership**

- **Event Description:** A three-day event of unique and antiques
- **Event Dates:** Friday, May 2 – Sunday, May 4

### **Monty's Well**

- **Event Description:** Gracepoint Homes hosted a Sip, Suds and Stroll Lounge that coincides with the Antique Fest.
- **Event Dates:** Friday, May 2 – Saturday, May 3

### **Lone Star Street Dance**

- **Event Description:** Fun family community event

- **Event Date:** Saturday, May 17, 6:30 – 10 pm

### **Montgomery Water Party**

- **Event Description:** Community Partners, City of Montgomery & Conroe Lake Conroe Chamber Celebrate community and patriotism in the heart of downtown for this years Freedom Fest
- **Event Date:** Saturday, July 5, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

### **Movie Night at the Park**

- **Event Description:** A family-friendly **Outdoor Movie Night downtown**. Bring your blankets, popcorn, lawn chairs, and your favorite people.
- **Event Dates:** March 8

### **Montgomery Quilt Walk**

- **Event Description:** A two-day walk, strolling through historic downtown scenic streets featuring quilt displays and demonstrations from local quilters.
- **Event Dates:** Friday, October 17 – Saturday, October 18, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

### **Trick or Treat Downtown Business District**

- **Event Description:** A safe, family-friendly trick-or-treating event in historic downtown Montgomery.
- **Event Date:** Saturday, October 25, 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM

### **Movie Night at the Park**

- **Event Description:** A family-friendly **Outdoor Movie Night downtown**. Bring your blankets, popcorn, lawn chairs, and your favorite people.
- **Event Dates:** November 1

### **Lone Star Street Dance**

- **Event Description:** Fun family community event
- **Event Date:** Saturday, November 8, 6:30 – 10 pm

### **Light Up the Park**

- **Event Description:** A festive tree lighting ceremony, live music, captivating performances, and fun activities for all ages. Mayor Sara Countryman will announce the winners of this year's holiday contests, including the **Pole Decoration, Residential Display, and Commercial Decoration Contest**
- **Event Date:** Friday, December 6, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

## Light up Montgomery Contest

- **Event Description:** Light Up Montgomery Contest! Residents and businesses are invited to register and participate in this festive holiday decoration competition throughout November and December.

## Annual Christmas Parade

- **Event Description:** Annual Christmas Parade, themed Lone Star Christmas!
- **Event Date:** Saturday, December 13, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

## Snow Party

1. **Event Description:** A winter wonderland in the City of Montgomery Snow Party!
2. **Event Date:** Saturday, December 13, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM (following the parade)

## Deadlines for Registrations

### General

- **Applications and Permits:** Required for all events.

### Light Up the Park and Montgomery

- Registration:
  - Opens July 31
  - Closes November 1
- Judging: Tuesday, December 2
- Decoration Removal: By Monday, January 5

### Christmas Parade

- Registration:
  - Opens July 31
  - Closes November 1
- Participant Meetings:
  - Monday, November 10
  - Thursday, November 13

### Snow Party

- Child Waiver Registration:
  - Opens Tuesday, September 2
  - Closes the day of the event