

HOLD FOR RELEASE UNTIL May 10, 2013

City of La Feria
Cameron County, Texas
April 30, 2013

ENVISION A GREAT FUTURE FOR LA FERIA'S DOWNTOWN and NEIGHBORHOODS

On Tuesday, May 21, 2013 at 6:30 p.m., at the Chaparral Building, 108 South Main Street (between Primrose and Oleander), the *La Feria Neighborhood Workshop* will be held.

“The older residential neighborhoods in La Feria offer many good things—they’re close to downtown restaurants, the pool and library, and schools. Most homes are well-cared for. We have beautiful parks. La Feria is a great place to raise a family.” said Steve Brewer, Mayor of La Feria. “On the other hand, our neighborhoods face challenges--cars drive too fast, residents don’t have room to park their cars, sidewalks are missing, and some houses are deteriorated and yards are neglected,” Mayor Brewer continued.

“Similarly, La Feria has an attractive downtown. But, like lots of downtowns in this era of modern highway shopping plazas, several buildings are vacant, businesses need more customers, and the potential of Business 83 is unrealized. We need to revitalize Business 83 to create jobs, places to shop and tax revenue,” Mr. Brewer said. “I encourage all La Feria residents to come to the workshop to share their ideas.”

The *La Feria Neighborhood Plan Workshop* will provide a great opportunity for residents, business owners, and community leaders to come together to create a new vision for our downtown and neighborhoods. It’s a chance to identify what we love and want to protect and what we would like to change and improve,” said City Manager Sunny Philip.

Mr. Philip identified some of the City’s accomplishments over the last few years. “80 very nice, affordable apartments opened at Sunflower Estates. We installed solar panels to help power the water and wastewater treatment plants and save the customers money. We are getting ready to open the new Recreation Center. Streets and drainage were rebuilt in several areas. The library is being expanded. Last year, we demolished 17 dilapidated, vacant structures. All of this was done without raising the tax rate in more than 10 years.” “We have worked, and continue to work, strategically for the future by investing as much as we can in basic infrastructure needed for the future, including water, wastewater and drainage.” “La Feria has accomplished a lot. Working together, we can achieve an even brighter future,” he summarized.

La Feria was chosen by the American Planning Association to work with a Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT). For only the costs related to transportation and lodging, La Feria will receive the expertise of six professional planners with more than 100 years of experience. The CPAT will bring ideas and expertise in small town planning, place-making, urban design and landscape architecture, downtown revitalization, commercial corridors, economic development, sustainable infrastructure, improvement of quality of life, and, perhaps most importantly, helping local communities articulate their own vision of the future.

The Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT) is an American Institute of Certified Planners component of a broader APA Community Assistance Program. By pairing a multidisciplinary team of expert planning professionals from around the country with community members, key stakeholders, and relevant decision makers, the place-based initiative seeks to foster community education, engagement, and empowerment. Each team is selected for the specific expertise needed on the project to offer pro bono assistance in developing a framework or vision plan that promotes a sustainable, livable, economically vibrant, and healthy community. Communities facing a range of challenges including, but not limited to, social equity and affordability, economic development, sustainability, consensus building, and urban design are well-suited for assistance through the program. Projects focus on localities with a demonstrated need for assistance, where planning resources and expertise may not otherwise be available.

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