



# American Society of Civil Engineers - Texas Section Strategic Plan 2022-2026

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## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The ASCE Texas Section Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 is provided in this document. An Introduction section is provided as a guide to the ASCE Texas Section as an organization. Next, the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan is discussed in detail. The Vision developed to guide the Strategic Plan states that *“Texas civil engineers are leaders in their communities, building a better quality of life across the street and around the world.”* The Mission Statement developed to support the Strategic Plan states that *“Advance civil engineering by protecting the public health, safety, and welfare; delivering value to our members; and creating a legacy of service.”*

ASCE Texas Section’s core values include Stewardship & Service, Professional Development & Leadership, and Advocating Civil Engineering.

## 3 INTRODUCTION

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### 3.1 BACKGROUND

With the culmination of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, the ASCE Texas Section has updated the plan for the next 5-years: 2022-2026. This updated strategic plan will continue to provide a roadmap for the Texas Section that helps guide the organizational leadership during the plan’s life. The updated strategic plan will provide continuity and consistency in the decision-making process over the next five years, similar to the previous version.

With respect to the process of updating the strategic plan, care has been taken to ensure that a wide variety of perspectives have been included in its development. Section leadership, section staff, and institute and branch leaders have all contributed to the strategic plan update. Most notably, the strategic planning retreat held in June 2021, facilitated by Dr. Stevie Dawn Blakely, maintained a philosophy of open dialogue that allows all attendees to contribute to the update of the strategic plan. Participants recommend the continued use of a third-party facilitator for future updates. Additionally, future strategic planning committee members may benefit from the planning and implementation of a member-wide survey in 2024, prior to the convening of a committee charged with preparing the next Strategic Plan. A facilitator may also prove helpful in providing guidance throughout entirety of the strategic planning process.

At the time of the Strategic Plan update, although the Texas Section had three Vice Presidents at the time of this plan update (Vice President – Technical, Vice President – Educational, and Vice President – Professional), the committee chose to align 2022-2026 strategic goals and initiatives with our core values rather than the three positions detailed in the 2017-2021 plan entitled “My STEP.” By separating the relation of initiatives and goals from the Texas Section’s governance structure, the plan allows for additional flexibility. The Texas Section’s leadership team may choose to assign various goals set forth within this plan to different officers over the years, to best meet the needs of members and balance the workload of volunteer leaders. The committee also recommends Texas Section leaders continually review the governance structure of the association to ensure its structured efficiently and volunteers are empowered to achieve the goals set herein. All Texas Section Board of Direction members are charged with advancing this Plan.

### 3.2 HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

The Texas Section is the largest geographical and one of the most active sections of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

ASCE incorporated in 1852 and has become one of the most prominent engineering societies in the world. The Texas Section was proposed in July 1913 by a group of seven engineers, including consultants and college professors, after a Texas Good Roads meeting in Corpus Christi. Following the meeting in Corpus Christi, invitations were sent announcing a meeting to be held during the State Fair of Texas to further discuss the creation of a Texas Section of ASCE. This meeting occurred on October 31, 1913 in the Old Red Courthouse in Dallas. J.C. Nagle was elected the Texas Section's first president, and J. F. Witt was elected secretary.

The first branch was formed in Dallas in 1924. Other branches were formed in the late 1930's, including the Fort Worth, Brazos and the Lower Rio Grande Valley branches. Seven more branches were formed in the early 1950's. Currently, there are 15 branches and 21 student chapters comprising the Texas Section.

Committed to promoting, encouraging, and recognizing civil engineering excellence and professional growth, the Texas Section holds the annual ASCE Texas Civil Engineering Conference - CECON™, the Student Symposium, and other seminars and events throughout the year. The Texas Section also hosts the biennial ASCE Texas Legislative Drive-In and produces the quadrennial *Texas Infrastructure Report Card*. In general, the branches of the Texas Section hold monthly meetings, with guest speakers and topical discussions. The *Texas Civil Engineer* online magazine connects members and presents the best of civil engineering information in Texas.

The Texas Section office was initially located in a consulting engineer's office. Later, universities were able to provide office space, and a faculty member served as secretary to the Section. In 1989, a permanent office, including full time paid staff, was established in Austin.

As a testament to the leadership and influence of the Texas Section, seven (7) members of this Section have served as president of ASCE, at the Society-level. The Texas Section continues the tradition of advancing professional knowledge and improving the practice of civil engineering, demonstrating a daily commitment to sustaining the profession and a more resilient, built community.

### 3.3 GLOSSARY

*As defined by ASCE Global Policy Statement 417*

**Diversity:** Range of human differences, encompassing the characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, the following characteristics: race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity and expression, age, national origin, religious beliefs, work sector, physical ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, physical appearance, and cognitive differences.

**Equity:** Fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, achieved by intentional focus on their disparate needs, conditions and abilities. Achieving equity requires understanding of historical and systemic patterns of disparity to address and eliminate barriers and remove participation gaps as part of a comprehensive strategy to achieve equitable outcomes and social justice.

**Inclusion:** Intentional, proactive, and continuing efforts and practices in which all members respect, support, and value others. An inclusive environment provides equitable access to opportunities and resources, empowers everyone to participate equally, and offers respect in words and actions for all.

*As defined by ASCE Global Policy Statement 418*

**Sustainability:** A set of environmental, economic, and social conditions –the “Triple Bottom Line” –in which all of society has the capacity and opportunity to maintain and improve its quality of life indefinitely, without degrading the quantity, quality, or the availability of natural, economic, and social resources.

*As defined by ASCE Global Policy Statement 518*

**Resiliency:** The ability to plan, prepare for, mitigate, and adapt to changing conditions from hazards to enable rapid recovery of physical, social, economic, and ecological infrastructure. Improving resilience before or following a hazard event should engage physical infrastructure and social systems with adaptive capacity to ensure rapid return to functionality, accounting for interdependencies within and across all sectors.

### 3.4 STAKEHOLDERS

During the activities and business of the ASCE Texas Section, there are many stakeholders that the Section has an interest in and vice-versa. As the Texas Section updated its 5-year strategic plan, it is important to recognize these stakeholders and ensure that these relationships are considered as the plan is implemented.

There are six (6) distinct stakeholder groups. They are:

- Internal ASCE Texas Section Stakeholders (including members and potential members)
- The General Public
- Academic Institutions
- Professional Societies
- Government Entities
- The Business Community

Table 1 presents examples of specific stakeholders within these six groups.

**Table 1—Texas Section Stakeholders**

Internal ASCE Texas Section Stakeholders	Academic Institutions	General Public
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members</li> <li>• Potential Members</li> <li>• Volunteer Leaders</li> <li>• Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Community Colleges</li> <li>• K-12</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique Communities</li> <li>• Engineering Families</li> <li>• Non-Profit Organizations</li> <li>• Clients and Customers</li> </ul>
Professional Societies	Government Entities	Business Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASCE Global</li> <li>• ASCE Region 6</li> <li>• ASCE Technical Institutes</li> <li>• ACED</li> <li>• TCEL</li> <li>• TPWA</li> <li>• TPMA</li> <li>• NCEES</li> <li>• WEF</li> <li>• AWWA</li> <li>• SEAOT</li> <li>• Minority Engineering Societies</li> <li>• EWP</li> <li>• IAI</li> <li>• TSPE</li> <li>• TWCA</li> <li>• TAME</li> <li>• EWB</li> <li>• Community Engineering Corps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislators</li> <li>• Local Elected Officials</li> <li>• Federal Agencies</li> <li>• State Agencies</li> <li>• Texas Board of Professional Engineers</li> <li>• Texas Water Development Board</li> <li>• Border States</li> <li>• International Partners</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• Counties</li> <li>• Regional Districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Engineering Companies</li> <li>• Contractors</li> <li>• Consultants</li> <li>• Manufacturers and Suppliers</li> <li>• Technology Companies</li> <li>• Communications Companies</li> <li>• Energy Suppliers</li> <li>• Advertisers</li> <li>• Exhibitors</li> <li>• Sponsors</li> </ul>

### 3.5 PROGRAMS

The ASCE Texas Section provides a variety of educational, social, recognition and relationship building opportunities for stakeholders across Texas and other ASCE regions.

Subscribing members (paid Section dues) of the Texas Section receive the following:

- Reduced registration fees to educational activities
- Leadership roles and development opportunities such as the annual Leadership Development Weekend
- Recognition through Section and Branch awards and honors programs
- Access to civil engineering community forums, publications, educational activities, and career information
- Access to advocacy events such as the biennial ASCE Texas Legislative Drive-In

Non-members are also welcome to attend events and meetings, access information on the award-winning website including monthly *Texas Civil Engineering* (TCE) news, and participate in educational and Branch/Section activities.



### **3.6 FINANCIALS**

The ASCE Texas Section is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and is committed to the good stewardship of member funds. The Section has an annual operating budget of approximately \$600,000 in addition to approximately \$180,000 for ASCE Texas CECON. Section revenues are generated from membership dues, meeting profits, and registration for other educational activities such as technical webinars. A healthy financial reserve is maintained and includes low risk investments. The Board of Direction is responsible for oversight of the Section finances including the review of monthly financial reports prepared by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), and annually approving the operations budget, which is managed by Section staff. The Treasurer is an officer of the Section and serves on the Executive Committee. The Treasurer serves as the Chief Financial Officer, oversees the budget process, Section investments, reserve funds, operating funds and collaborates with a financial adviser to provide long-term financial planning advice. The Assistant Treasurer assists the Treasurer and serves as the CECON Comptroller. The Section conducts regular audits as a best practice and is in full compliance with all State and Federal requirements of its nonprofit status.

### **3.7 DEVELOPMENT**

As a member based and volunteer driven organization, the ASCE Texas Section seeks to grow membership through providing greater value to the civil engineering community, creating more educational and relationship building opportunities through its leadership laboratory, and encouraging better infrastructure and environmental stewardship throughout the State. As the Texas Section seeks to raise awareness of the role of civil engineering and its importance to our communities and society at large, we encourage volunteering and mentoring as a vehicle for demonstrating our value.

### **3.8 MANAGEMENT**

The ASCE Texas Section is governed by a Board of Direction, which includes an Executive Committee of elected officers, ex-officio staff members (Executive Director and Secretary), and branch representatives from across the State. Appointed standing and task committees develop the Section's programs. The Section has a full time, professional staff team made up of the Executive Director, Operations Specialist, and Communications Specialist to manage the day-to-day operations of the organization. An approved Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules of Operation (i.e., Leadership Handbook) outline the basis of the organizational structure, roles and responsibilities, and general operating procedures.

### **3.9 FACILITIES**

At the time of this plan update, the ASCE Texas Section office was located at 1524 S. Interstate 35, Suite 180, Austin, TX 78704. This leased space includes a small conferencing area. The Board of Direction has indicated a preference for a lease arrangement over property ownership at this time, however the current office space is under consideration following increasing rental rates in Austin and the hybrid work model adopted by the staff team. Expected growth of the Section and the "new normal" of office space functionality in a post-pandemic environment will require a review and analysis of staff and facility requirements by the Office & Personnel Committee.

## 4 THE 2022-2026 ASCE TEXAS SECTION STRATEGIC PLAN

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### 4.1 VISION STATEMENT

The vision statement is a guiding image of the future success and achievement of the organization that is articulated in terms of contributions to society. The vision statement is a succinct statement about what the organization will do for future generations and how the organization wants to be viewed. The vision statement developed by the ASCE Texas Section Strategic Planning Committee is as follows:

*Texas civil engineers are leaders in their communities, building a better quality of life across the street and around the world.*

### 4.2 MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement describes the needs that the organization was created to fill and answers the basic question of why the organization exists. The mission statement developed by the ASCE Texas Section Strategic Planning Committee is as follows:

*Advance civil engineering by protecting the public health, safety, and welfare; delivering value to our members; and creating a legacy of service.*

### 4.3 CORE VALUES

There are many core values that the ASCE Texas Section possesses, and the core values were considered carefully during the Strategic Initiative development process. Core values are divided into four broad groups, which allows for further refinement of the meaning of the core values. These core values and descriptors are shown in Table 2.

- *Stewardship & Service (World at Large)*
- *Professional Development & Leadership (Our Members)*
- *Advocating Civil Engineering (The Profession)*

Table 2 – Texas Section Core Values & Associated Strategic Initiatives

<b>Stewardship &amp; Service</b> <i>(World at Large)</i>	<b>Professional Development &amp; Leadership</b> <i>(Our Members)</i>	<b>Advocating Civil Engineering</b> <i>(The Profession)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance the Section for the benefit of all</li> <li>• Support and promote outreach and engagement opportunities</li> <li>• Cultivate community and public outreach partnerships, fostering member engagement in their community and local organizations.</li> <li>• Promote the work of ASCE to increase public awareness of initiatives.</li> <li>• Create opportunities for member to collaborate, share, &amp; provide mentorship.</li> <li>• Promote and build upon K-12 STEM outreach programs.</li> <li>• Grow the Section while ensuring a place for all members to engage in their community.</li> <li>• Ensure Civil Engineering and ASCE are at the forefront of emerging sustainability and resiliency practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and enhance collaboration across all levels of the Section, and its membership</li> <li>• Ensure continued development and public accessibility of the Section’s broad-spectrum of educational resources, training opportunities and initiatives</li> <li>• Host and promote continuing education opportunities to both members and non-members.</li> <li>• Increase member awareness of current programs, activities, and shared resources.</li> <li>• Strengthen collaboration and partnerships with Technical Institutes at all levels—Section to subsidiaries.</li> <li>• Make available leadership opportunities and resources for members to develop and strengthen their professional skills and marketability.</li> <li>• Continue to enhance Student Symposium as it grows into a Region 6 event.</li> <li>• Facilitate complete advancement campaigns for student and younger members emerging into young professionals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to advance Civil Engineering within the education system and profession. Establish and promote ASCE as a forefront leader in Civil Engineering throughout local and state government agencies and the community at large.</li> <li>• Improve advocacy activity through training experiences and online marketing tactics.</li> <li>• Support advancements in civil engineering [continuing and higher] education curriculum and innovative technologies.</li> <li>• Leverage the Texas Infrastructure Report Card to increase public awareness of infrastructure deficiencies and the development of [appropriate/ample], reliable funding streams.</li> <li>• Host a biennial ASCE Texas legislative advocacy activity concurrent with Texas legislative sessions.</li> <li>• Champion Texas Section membership among state and local level officials as the leading authority and technical resource for civil engineering topics.</li> </ul>

#### 4.4 OVERARCHING THEMES

As the committee was going through the plan updates, it was clear there were elements that applied to multiple goals and initiatives that should be highlighted as overarching themes to the entire document.

- Measurable Goals
  - The intent of this plan is to provide an outline from which the incoming board can choose strategic goals to focus on for the year. Part of this task will involve establishing measurable milestones for the year and evaluating the success of these goals at the end of the year. This will also be utilized to evaluate ongoing, multi-year goals.
- Financial Vitality
  - Texas ASCE prides itself on providing services and resources to its members, the profession, and the community. To accomplish this now and in the future, the section must maintain its financial vitality. The Section has worked for years to find ways to

generate additional revenue, reduce expenses where possible, and balance the operating budget.

- Communications and Marketing
  - Communication will likely remain an area for improvement. There are communication challenges between the different levels of ASCE, including marketing resources and initiatives to all levels and members. Communication and marketing impact virtually every initiative and goal set out in this plan in one way or another. Additionally, there is an ongoing evolution in the best way to connect with members, and ASCE Texas Section will need to stay up-to-date and agile in this regard to remain relevant.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  - ASCE – Texas Section is an organization dedicated to the advancement of Civil Engineering. The membership and profession are vast and diverse. Per the Oxford Languages Dictionary, diversity is the practice of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.; Equity is the quality of being fair and impartial; Inclusion is the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. To stay a leader in this profession, it is critical to maintain an environment where all engineers can feel welcome to join, collaborate and grow.
- Sustainability and Resiliency
  - The world has seen several natural disaster events that test the limits of our current infrastructure. The Civil Engineering profession is exploring how to rebuild infrastructure to withstand future events and how to reinforce existing infrastructure. Additionally, the profession continues to explore the sustainability and availability of materials that can provide the best solutions for these projects and all stakeholders it serves.

These themes should be considered and considered with the implementation of this Strategic Plan.

## 4.5 SWOT ANALYSIS

To move forward with a new Strategic Plan for the ASCE Texas Section, it is important to perform an overall assessment of where the Section currently stands. A SWOT analysis was performed. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It has been developed based on the input from the Strategic Plan working group. The SWOT Analysis provides a document to guide the Texas Section in the development of the overall strategic initiatives.

Table 3 shows the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in a bulleted form. This list was the result of extensive brainstorming and is in an unedited form. The discussion below expands on these bulleted points and organizes the bullets into distinct areas with further refinement.

Table 3 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats – Bulleted Form

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involvement in leadership especially at Society level</li> <li>• diversity of membership; multidisciplinary org</li> <li>• Global committees’ technical standards</li> <li>• part of large established organization</li> <li>• providing technical education</li> <li>• network of people</li> <li>• taking advantage of technical advances</li> <li>• communication w/ members</li> <li>• passion &amp; dedication of some</li> <li>• staff to provide continuity &amp; services</li> <li>• reputation of organization; TS is 100+ years &amp; people look to it as leader w/ answers; ethical, professional conduct</li> <li>• Public values infrastructure</li> <li>• long standing activity of members over their careers</li> <li>• core group of involved members to lead/encourage members to be active</li> <li>• strong local involvement</li> <li>• opportunity to make personal connections that grow professional relationships</li> <li>• grass roots advocacy to connect w/others on important issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographic distribution of membership &amp; size of branches</li> <li>• size of state</li> <li>• emerging media technology</li> <li>• participation at all levels</li> <li>• low visibility of TS to membership (Consider HQ to Section and Section to Branch visibility)</li> <li>• lack of focus on career growth</li> <li>• not retaining students as professional members; transitioning students to professional members</li> <li>• separation of YM at state level</li> <li>• Separation of Institute Chapter Members</li> <li>• lapsed involvement of members</li> <li>• communication by TS to Branches</li> <li>• uninvolved/disengaged/uninterested members</li> <li>• lack of involvement by VIP engineers/managers</li> <li>• number of members (move to O?)</li> <li>• IRC requires significant effort</li> <li>• Limited number of revenue streams</li> <li>• intergenerational relevance &amp; communication</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• past work &amp; changes built strong foundation</li> <li>• size of state</li> <li>• CECON &amp; Student Symposium (Region 6)</li> <li>• Advertising - Region 6 now includes Mexico</li> <li>• YMs &amp; students</li> <li>• leverage TI chapters</li> <li>• Relationships between institutes and ASCE</li> <li>• partner w/ diverse groups</li> <li>• career development (Power &amp; Tech Skills)</li> <li>• online involvement (social media platform growth)</li> <li>• community involvement</li> <li>• get YMs involved to promote profession</li> <li>• transition YM &amp; students to full membership – Mentoring &amp; Beyond</li> <li>• bring uninvolved/disengaged/uninterested members</li> <li>• up to dedicated involvement</li> <li>• increase engagement with organization</li> <li>• increase engagement with TX agencies &amp; become recognized as technical resource (TxDOT, TWDB, ...)</li> <li>• political advocacy to improve relevance</li> <li>• QBS comes up every legislative session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand on financial resources?</li> <li>• lack of perceived value, not seeing benefits of organization</li> <li>• Economy (Time demand)</li> <li>• Self-splintering (disconnected messaging...)</li> <li>• other organizations that have a narrow focus (e.g. SEAOT, FPMA)</li> <li>• capturing attention of potential members</li> <li>• Members/CEs do not hold government positions/ are not elected officials</li> <li>• online involvement &amp; community</li> <li>• not evolving to appeal to young engineers</li> <li>• other, specialized, organizations that provide more valued programs</li> <li>• get &amp; stay relevant w/ a multi-generational workforce</li> <li>• trying to be everything to everybody; what does TS need to really focus on?</li> <li>• widespread availability of online engineering education does not facilitate interpersonal interaction</li> <li>• ways to communicate with multiple generations</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build on relationships to promote infrastructure &amp; protect professional standards</li> <li>• primed to be at forefront of infrastructure discussion by the general populace</li> <li>• need for public recognition &amp; to develop funding streams</li> <li>• TS resources for Branches (office support, leadership training)</li> <li>• Increase value to members &amp; supporters</li> <li>• continued advocacy in political area &amp; increased government affairs activities</li> <li>• IRC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation that negatively impacts the profession/industry</li> <li>• do not truly understand what members &amp; future members want/need</li> </ul>
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#### 4.5.1 Strengths

The ASCE Texas Section is the largest ASCE Section, which serves as a leader in the Civil Engineering community throughout the state of Texas. The organization was established in 1913, and is part of ASCE Global, which started in 1852. Its history and reputation provide a strong foundation which provides a springboard for future growth. Many look to ASCE for leadership that provides answers for important civil engineering issues. Elected officials on a local, state, and federal level continue to reference the ASCE Infrastructure Report Card to illustrate the state of the existing infrastructure and need for additional funding.

##### Membership

The core of the ASCE Texas Section is its membership. We have a diverse leadership that is committed, passionate, and dedicated to the Section. Our members are industry leaders on local, state, national, and global levels within ASCE, and throughout their communities.

The ASCE Texas Section employs a full-time support staff to provide support to our membership, branches, and subsidiaries. Leaders in the ASCE Texas Section have shown a long-term commitment to the Section and ASCE over the course of their careers. Many of our leaders have shown a strong commitment to mentoring Younger Members (YM) and students, encouraging them to become leaders themselves.

##### Technical Education and Standards

A central mission of the ASCE Texas Section is to meet the technical needs of our members. Over the years, we have been successful in meeting this challenge. A significant factor that assists the Texas Section in meeting these needs is being part of ASCE Global. ASCE Global provides technical standards across all civil engineering specializations. This occurs through the work of numerous ASCE committees.

Technical education is a significant strength of the ASCE Texas Section. Members have access to this benefit through our annual conference, CECON, bi-monthly Section webinars, meetings and programs provided by Branches within the Section, and other sources. In addition, many branches are having online meetings due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Through adverse circumstances, Texas Section branches have managed to maintain their technical offerings and even expand their reach to membership in 2020-2021.

In general, Texas Section members can take advantage of new technical advances in the field of Civil Engineering through access to the many programs and initiatives that can be accessed via section membership.

### Relationship Building and Advocacy

Relationship building opportunities are plentiful for ASCE Texas Section members. Relationship building provides ample opportunities for member personal growth while furthering the goals of the Section. Relationship building opportunities have led to strong local involvement all over Texas as evident within the ASCE Texas Section and its 15 branches. Relationship building opportunities are demonstrated via the relationships between the Texas Section and other organizations. Relationship building provides opportunities for members to make personal connections that grow professional relationships. In addition, relationship building has been a vehicle for grassroots advocacy, which allows Texas Section members to connect with other organizations and the public on important issues.

#### **4.5.2 Weaknesses**

While the diversity of the ASCE Texas Section membership is a strength, it also poses challenges that have not been met. The organization's multi-layered structure, with many bodies and positions, often impedes decision making. The size of the Texas Section, with respect to our large membership and expansive area, also provides challenges. In particular, the large population of the state greatly expands the scope of the Texas Section's activities and can dilute its effectiveness. Additionally, representation of members across a range of diverse geographic areas throughout the state can prove difficult. The failure to adequately address these issues has led to lower levels of participation as members often lose interest and their involvement in ASCE subsequently lapses. The ASCE Texas Section needs to work to improve the overall coordination and collaboration among these various areas and recognize the unique characteristics of each Branch to maximize the efforts of the overall section.

As the Texas Section moves forward, it is important to acknowledge when strong initiatives need to be taken to the next level. On an annual basis, the board will evaluate the weaknesses and initiatives they want to focus on in setting their measurable goals for the year.

### Membership

The Texas Section exists due to its members. Providing members with growth opportunities while keeping them active and engaged will always prove to be a natural challenge behind the purpose of the Section. In recent years the Section has had difficulty with reaching certain demographics throughout the state. Currently the Section struggles to advance recent college graduates from student membership to professional membership. Identifying areas where we can help to facilitate this transition can help to close this membership gap. The Section can provide opportunities and serve this demographic through mentoring, lessons learned, and relationship building during important first steps of a career in the civil engineering industry. Additionally, developing more sustainable Section leadership and continuity can only be achieved by reaching this demographic and providing increased opportunities to get involved and serve.

Geographical constraints have always been a concern and a weakness for the Texas Section. Large populations of members and potential members are prevented from engaging with the Branches due to distance. Unreasonable travel times deter interested people from attending meetings and sometimes prevent them from joining ASCE at all.

### Communications and Marketing

Communication is a factor that can be improved in any organization. Within ASCE, there are two crucial lines of communication, Branch-Section and Section-Society. There have been criticisms that the Branches and the Texas Section struggle to communicate effectively. This immediately impacts one of the main purposes of the Section, which is to support the Branches and provide value to their members. Members throughout the state should be aware of the Section and its role within ASCE.

Another form of communication is how the Section markets itself to members and potential members. The value that the Section can provide through resources and programs must be clearly demonstrated and easily available. The Section should increase awareness of its distinct role and identity at the Branch level to best market the helpful resources and programs available to members.

In general, the Texas Section has had problems with respect to level of effort required to move forward with its initiatives. Improvements with respect to communication and marketing can help reduce this effort and lead to more accomplishments.

### **4.5.3 Opportunities**

As the ASCE Texas Section moves forward with its new strategic plan, there are many opportunities that can be capitalized upon to improve the health of the Texas Section, and improve programs and activities for its members. The Texas Section has a legacy of accomplishment, and a history of embracing change that has served the Texas Section well during its long history and has provided a strong foundation for leveraging future opportunities. The size of Texas and our membership aid the organization with respect to making opportunities a reality. The Texas Section will be able to use this legacy and leverage to partner with our Branches and Institutes throughout Texas to achieve future successes.

### Membership

Transitioning younger members and students to full memberships is a tremendous opportunity. Not only to grow our membership for financial reasons, but to provide for a sustainable continuance of leadership with younger talent and fresh ideas.

While this is a challenge, there are opportunities that can be pursued to make this transition a reality. One notable opportunity is to utilize younger members in activities that promote the profession. The emergence of online relationship building platforms and communities provides opportunities for the Texas Section to increase engagement and participation of younger members and students.

Opportunities exist to bring disinterested members up to a level of dedicated involvement. In particular, career development opportunities can stimulate this interest. The emergence of the Technical Institute chapters in the Texas Section provides additional opportunities for members to be involved and can be leveraged accordingly.

### Advocacy and Visibility

In recent years, the Texas Section has worked to increase our visibility and improve our advocacy efforts. We have a great opportunity to become a strong force with respect to political advocacy, which can potentially increase the relevance of the Texas Section.

With respect to political advocacy, there are several specific opportunities where the Texas Section can make an impact. For example, enhancing our infrastructure is the biggest advocacy opportunity for the Texas Section. We are primed to be at the forefront of infrastructure discussion in the eyes of all Texans.



We can be the voice for the public recognition of our infrastructure deficiencies and the development of sufficient and reliable funding streams. In the process, we will be able to build on relationships to promote infrastructure and protect professional standards.

#### The Texas Civil Engineering Conference (CECON) and ASCE Region 6 Student Symposium

The ASCE Texas Section has modified its conference schedule. Previously, the Texas Section held two general meetings for the membership: one in the spring and one in the fall. In 2014, the Section changed the format of its meeting schedule. CECON now serves as the annual convention for the Texas Section and is held in the fall. The Student Symposium focuses on student activities, combining the concrete canoe and steel bridge competitions while adding other professional development opportunities for students, and is held in the spring. CECON allows for a larger annual signature event, as opposed to being just one of two meetings. The Student Symposium, meanwhile, strives to improve the Section's focus on students. Together, they provide ample opportunities for the Section to meet the needs of all its members while advocating the Civil Engineering profession to the public. Moving forward, these events will continue to evolve and grow. In the process, the strategic initiatives of the Texas Section will be enhanced through these two events.

#### **4.5.4 Threats**

As the ASCE Texas Section moves forward with its Strategic Plan, it is important to note the real and potential threats that the organization faces. The Texas Section has strong traditions, dating back to 1913 that have provided a strong foundation for the success of the organization. However, in a world that changes frequently and quickly, the organization must also be wary of becoming too dependent on the traditions, essentially becoming "tradition-bound", and not moving fast enough with new ideas. One of the defining lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 was that the world could change, virtually overnight, from a hierarchical based workforce of traditions to a primarily virtual network faced with tackling issues and assignments. This tossing of tradition and trying something new is a definite threat moving forward if the Texas Section is not ready to make a similar swift shift.

#### Relevance

Today, it is more difficult to capture the attention of potential members, largely due to the nature of electronic communication and over stimulated minds. Too many civil engineers do not perceive the value of ASCE membership, and even among the current membership ranks most of the benefits of ASCE is lost. Defining this value becomes increasingly difficult if not properly channeled. The Texas Section must maintain its relevancy among its current members and expand communication along non-traditional channels to appeal to a wide range of demographics including students, young professionals, and seasoned veterans.

#### Recruiting and Retaining Members

Before beginning the recruitment process, ASCE Texas Section must identify the needs of the people they are trying to recruit and identify why civil engineers might want to join. One way to do this is by asking current members why they joined, but most times overall recruits need to:

- have a sense of belonging – the feeling that they are sincerely welcome and needed.
- share in planning the ASCE Texas Section objectives.
- know that the goals are obtainable and make sense.
- feel that what they are doing has real purpose and contributes to a greater good.
- feel that the ASCE Texas Section is making a difference.
- feel that the value of their contributions extends beyond personal gain and the group itself.

- see that progress is being made toward goals.
- share in making the ground rules by which the organization can live and work toward its goals.
- know what is expected of them and to be kept informed.
- have some responsibilities that challenge and contribute toward reaching the goals.
- have confidence in the organization leaders to lead the organization well, treat members consistently and fairly, recognize member accomplishments and trust the members.

Traditionally there are five main reasons why people join an organization:

1. Growth
  - a. learning new skills in leadership management, programming, and inter-personal relations
  - b. accepting responsibility
2. Recognition
  - a. special benefits and privileges
  - b. recognition from others
  - c. personal satisfaction
3. Achievement
  - a. seeing the achievement of a goal
  - b. developing personally
  - c. building a strong resume
  - d. satisfaction of having impact in the professional environment
4. Participation
  - a. applying new skills
  - b. managing groups
  - c. being involved in program production
5. Enjoyment
  - a. new friends
  - b. fun
  - c. for a job well done
  - d. having satisfaction in serving others

It is incumbent on the ASCE Texas Section to promote these five areas when recruiting new members.

### Advocacy

As the Texas Section moves forward, insufficient advocacy efforts, especially in the political arena, constitute a potential threat. Huge strides have been made by the ASCE Texas Section in forming political relationships, but we must be vigilant to ensure that our advocacy efforts are not diminishing. The negative effects of poor advocacy hurt our reputation, our ability to serve our members, and our ability to serve the community at large. And if there is a space that we are not filling, it may be filled by others who have different perspectives than ours. In particular, if we are not involved in government activities where legislative and executive action takes place, then we may not be happy with the results of those actions and the subsequent funding of the projects Civil Engineers design and build. There is an inherent danger in over advocating for an issue as the advocacy could be viewed as masquerading for a self-serving purpose. This has been a minor flaw of the Texas Infrastructure Report Card in that without proper advocacy the low grades in certain categories serve the interests of engineering design firms. As the Texas Section moves forward emphasis on other reports produced, such as the Addressing Flood Risk report

prepared in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, is important to show that the report card is a true reflection of the status of infrastructure in the State.

#### Other Organizations

Within Civil Engineering, there are many organizations that serve the profession in different ways. There are other specialized organizations that provide valued programs within the various civil engineering specializations. Examples of such organizations are the Structural Engineers Association of Texas (SEAOT) and the Texas Floodplain Management Association (TFMA). In an increasingly specialized world, these organizations provide a narrow focus that is appealing to many specialized civil engineers. They provide significant competition for volunteer and member attention, and we must be mindful of this environment.

By contrast, the ASCE Texas Section, which represents the entire civil engineering community, has a much broader focus. This is necessary but also challenging. We must strive to find new ways to reach specialized engineers. The ASCE Technical Institutes provide a great vehicle for providing value to the various specialties. The Technical Institutes can also partner with the specialized organizations described above to provide value to Texas Section members. Care must be taken to foster the institutes as a partner to the ASCE Texas Section otherwise members may seek to only participate in their specialized focus.

## **4.6 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

The Strategic Initiatives developed in the ASCE Texas Section Strategic Plan constitute the heart of the plan. They are the broad initiatives that future Texas Section boards and executive committees will use as a roadmap over the next 5 years as they lead the Texas Section and implement their specific priorities. As Section leadership moves forward, it is important to note that the purpose of the Strategic Initiatives discussed here is not to dictate specific actions and policies that will be undertaken. Rather, when Texas Section leadership is considering specific actions and policies, it will have the Strategic Initiatives as a guide to determine if these activities are consistent with the Strategic Plan.

The development of the Strategic Initiatives shown in this document was achieved through two distinct steps. The first step involved brainstorming and discussion among committee members with respect to goals in the Technical, Educational and Professional areas. The second step involved brainstorming and discussion among committee members that was aimed at addressing the results of the SWOT analysis. From these two steps, the final strategic initiatives have been developed and address both the functions of the ASCE Texas Section and the environment in which the Section operates. From the Strategic Initiatives, Strategic Goals were developed. The Final Strategic Initiatives and Strategic Goals for the 2017-2021 ASCE Texas Section Strategic Plan are shown below in Table 4.

The rationale and understanding of the Strategic Initiatives are presented in the Appendix of this document. The rationale captures the synthesized work leading to the Strategic Initiatives and provides suggestions of means to accomplish the Strategic Goals. To this end, it should be emphasized that the Texas Section leadership should not feel limited by the detail provided in the Appendix. Rather, as a guide for Section leadership, the Strategic Initiatives and Goals presented here will ideally ensure that the decision-making of the Section will be consistent with the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan as well as the Vision and Mission of the Section. With the Strategic Initiatives and Goals now defined, it is imperative that the Executive Committee and Board of Direction for the Texas Section develop the path forward to make these initiatives a reality.

Table 4 — 2017-2021 Texas Section Strategic Initiatives and Goals

Core Values	Strategic Initiatives	Strategic Goals
Stewardship & Service <i>World at Large</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance the Section for the benefit of all.</li> <li>• Support and promote outreach, and engagement opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate community and public outreach partnerships, fostering member engagement in their community and local organizations.</li> <li>• Promote the work of ASCE to increase public awareness of initiatives.</li> <li>• Create opportunities for member to collaborate, share, &amp; provide mentorship.</li> <li>• Promote and build upon K-12 STEM outreach programs.</li> <li>• Grow the Section while ensuring members engage in their community.</li> <li>• Ensure we are at forefront of emerging sustainability &amp; resiliency practices.</li> </ul>
Professional Development & Leadership <i>Our Members</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and enhance collaboration across all levels of the Section, and its membership.</li> <li>• Ensure continued development and public accessibility of the Section’s broad-spectrum of educational resources, training opportunities and initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host &amp; promote continuing ed opportunities (members &amp; non-members)</li> <li>• Increase member awareness of current programs, activities, &amp; shared resources.</li> <li>• Strengthen collaboration &amp; partnerships with Technical Institutes at all levels.</li> <li>• Make available leadership opportunities and resources for members to develop and strengthen their professional skills and marketability.</li> <li>• Continue to enhance <b>Student Symposium</b> as it grows into a Region 6 event.</li> <li>• Facilitate advancement campaigns for student &amp; younger members.</li> </ul>
Advocating Civil Engineering <i>the Profession</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to advance Civil Engineering within the education system, and profession. Establish and promote ASCE as a forefront leader in Civil Engineering throughout local and state government agencies and the community at large.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve advocacy activity through training experiences &amp; online marketing tactics.</li> <li>• Support advancements in CE education curriculum &amp; innovative technologies.</li> <li>• Leverage the <i>Texas Infrastructure Report Card</i> to increase public awareness of infrastructure deficiencies &amp; the development of reliable funding streams.</li> <li>• Host a biennial <b>ASCE Texas Legislative advocacy activity</b> concurrent with Texas legislative sessions.</li> <li>• Champion Texas Section membership among state &amp; local level officials as the leading authority and technical resource for CE topics.</li> </ul>

#### **4.7 IMPLEMENTATION**

Members must find the organization relevant and the purpose of the Texas Section Strategic Initiatives and Goals is to identify opportunities to remain relevant. As such, this document provides no further approaches or strategies to accomplish the Strategic Initiatives and Goals presented herein. Rather the Executive Board, consisting of Texas Section membership, should meet annually to set milestones to accomplish the strategic initiatives for the upcoming year. Planning should coincide with the Texas Section Leadership Weekend, which is an event to provide Section and Branch leadership with the skills to be successful in the upcoming year. Additionally, this timing will allow for the budgetary needs of the activities to be incorporated into the upcoming year's budget as the Budget process begins at approximately the same time as the Leadership Weekend is conducted.

## 5 APPENDIX -- STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIC GOAL RATIONALE

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### 5.1 STEWARDSHIP & SERVICE – THE WORLD

#### 5.1.1 Advance the Section for the Benefit of All

ASCE has worked diligently to expand its reach across the Civil Engineering community. That effort involves engaging practicing engineers from entry level to seasoned professionals, engaging with the educational development of students studying engineering, supporting innovative research for the industry, and inspiring future engineers at a young age.

#### 5.1.2 Support and Promote Outreach and Engagement Opportunities

As engineers continue to gain knowledge, it is critical to ensure that this knowledge is shared with the overall civil engineering community. The ASCE Texas Section is poised to be a leader in this area with the aid of online communities and continuing education. In particular, lessons learned, and case histories provide opportunities for Texas Section members to obtain this shared knowledge.

Moving forward, the ASCE Texas Section should strive to be a leader in providing superior technical content for civil engineers. To facilitate this process, it would be helpful to conduct surveys asking for educational topics and preferred delivery of material. With respect to the delivery of technical content, the survey should inquire with respect to the preference of members to utilize conferences, webinars, or a combination of both methods

With respect to topics the leadership of the Texas Section, led by the Vice President – Technical, can determine the “hot topics” that are of interest to civil engineers and determine where these presentations will be made. The ASCE News Brief provided by ASCE Global is a good source for relevant topics. In addition, the civil engineering subcategory on Reddit is a good source for finding relevant topics. The ASCE Texas Section website is also a potential source for technical topics through the groups, forums and blogging functions that provide opportunities for interested parties to gather information.

Regional technical presentations provide opportunities for civil engineers to obtain technical content without traveling long distances or spending more time than necessary. There are numerous options that can be utilized to create these presentations. First, a CECON session can be replicated or redistributed. In addition, new technical sessions can be created. Technical seminars created by Branches can also be repeated for other areas.

With the potential content sources defined, an appropriate delivery mechanism is needed. This mechanism will be a *Regional Technical Conference*. The Regional Technical Conference would take place in the spring each year. The location would be outside of the five large branch areas and would focus on smaller branches and outlying areas. Section-level Institute Chapters would provide content and support for these conferences. In addition, relationship building opportunities between the institutes and local members would be an integral part of these conferences. The conference would include one (1) day for full coverage of a given technical discipline. In addition, there would be an evening reception the night before the one-day technical session, and the local branch would host lunch on the day of the technical session. For attendees, only one night away from home will be required. In general, it is important to keep the conference simple and focused so it can be replicated annually by the local Branches at other locations. A funding agreement between the local Branch, Institute Chapter, and the Texas Section would be needed for each Regional Technical Conference. The Regional Technical Conference would be

produced by the Branch and/or Institute Chapter and would involve the Section as needed. It should be noted that it is possible to have multiple Regional Technical Conference, depending on the interests of the branches and institute chapters and demand for content.

## 5.2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP – OUR MEMBERS

The Professional Development & Leadership core values will provide members opportunities to expand their knowledge, hone skills and expertise, and master competencies relevant to professionalism and leadership. The professional growth and development of our members yields value to external organizations, demonstrating the quality of education, training, and mentoring ASCE provides.

### 5.2.1 Promote and enhance collaboration

Promoting and enhancing collaboration across all levels of the section must be exemplified at the leadership level. The leadership team can encourage collaboration across all levels of the Section by exemplifying inclusivity through the communicating of goals, vision and mission to all **members, branches, institutes, and committees**. Transparency of work will promote a culture of trust and individual accountability within our organization.

Informing membership of opportunities to engage with committees creates the interdisciplinary collaboration encourages environments which will grow our members, enhance education experiences, and develop thoughtful leaders in our profession.

### 5.2.2 Ensure Continuing Education Access for Professionals (Members and Non-members)

In civil engineering practice, continuing education is not only necessary for career development but also required to maintain licensure. In Texas, the Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors (TBPELS) requires continuing education for renewing a PE license. Additionally, many specialty certifications require continuing education for certification renewal.

The ASCE Texas Section has taken many steps in the past few years to improve both the content and availability of continuing education opportunities. As continuing education modes evolve and saturate the market, the Texas Section will continue to improve the quality, quantity, and content of the continuing education opportunities to remain relevant and serve the memberships needs.

Webinars have emerged as critical delivery mechanisms for continuing education that eliminates or greatly reduces travel time and expenses. Webinars allow the user to obtain continuing education through online means, with only a computer and an internet connection are required. This has provided benefits for individuals, companies employing civil engineers and ASCE Branches.

The ASCE Texas Section introduced its webinar program in 2008. The Section began with ethics webinars and expanded to technical webinars. Today, the Texas Section provides webinars monthly. As the webinar program moves forward, there are several areas that should be considered for advancement. These include but not limited to:

- Improve on marketing and awareness of Texas Section and National educational opportunities available to our membership (calendar of events in newsletter).
- Seek sponsorship opportunities to offer webinars to participants free of charge to encourage individual participation and group viewing, and this should be emphasized and marketed.

- Publish webinar programming farther in advance to provide flexibility and lead time companies and attendees need to fully engage in and participate.
- Competition in the webinar market must also be addressed, particularly with regards to ethics webinars.
- Expand on CECON topics to provide continuity between CECON and the webinar series.
- As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, other continuing education platforms should be explored.

To assess and improve the effectiveness of Texas Section webinar offerings, it is advised that the Section undertake a survey to measure member preferences.

Other traditional seminars, trainings, conferences also provide opportunities for members and others to obtain continuing education experience. Improving and enhancing learning experiences to explore depth vs. breadth should be addressed for conferences like CECON, where content should be balanced and optimized. Per our membership, technical content at CECON must remain a priority to assist with career advancement, growth, and competency. Promoting and emphasizing innovative and interactive learning opportunities will contribute to CECON becoming the desired premier event to attend.

Further enhancement of learning opportunities now includes ASCE Institutes, which have emerged as an asset that has allowed members to be involved in very specialized technical activities. Today, at the Section level, Institute Chapters have been established. The Section Institute Chapters should participate in developing seminar content for CECON, providing inclusivity in the planning. These seminars can also be adapted or developed for the Regional Technical Conferences. In addition, the various institutes can work together to cross connect broad topics at both CECON and the Regional Technical Conferences.

### **5.2.3 Advocacy and Visibility**

In recent years, the Texas Section has worked to increase visibility and improve advocacy efforts. The renewed involvement with the Government Affairs Committee has created opportunities to become involved with political advocacy through participation in the annual legislative drive-In and encouragement of members to participate in the national fly-In. Our involvement has influenced legislation, encouraged membership participation, and promoted the relevance of the Texas Section as “trusted advisors” to legislators.

Advocacy training has provided members the confidence to become involved and reach out and build relationships with local, state, and congressional legislators and staff to be a resource and educate our leaders on infrastructure and the civil engineering profession. Opportunities for advocacy occurs daily and is emphasized during legislative sessions.

The Texas Section is very well positioned to continue this advocacy and be recognized as the leader in this effort to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the public. For this reason, ASCE National has developed Policy Statements on major technical, professional, and educational issues of interest to the civil engineering community and the nation. Members are encouraged to become familiar with these statements when representing ASCE. Becoming Key Contacts is encouraged to stay informed of national legislation and assist ASCE National with national policy.

Enhancing our infrastructure is the biggest advocacy opportunity for the Texas Section. We are primed to be at forefront of infrastructure discussion in the eyes of all Texans. We are a voice for public recognition



of our infrastructure, noted deficiencies, and the development of sufficient and reliable funding streams. Protecting the professional standards of engineering is our mandate if we are to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. The Texas Section will continue to be impactful through monitoring of bills, being aware of policy initiatives, and informed of interim committee assignments relating to the civil engineering profession.

### 5.3 ADVOCATING CIVIL ENGINEERING – THE PROFESSION

#### 5.3.1 Continue to advance Civil Engineering within the education system and profession. Establish and promote ASCE as a forefront leader in Civil Engineering throughout local and state government agencies and the community at large.

Professional advocacy is a critical function of the ASCE Texas Section. This advocacy is important because, if effective, it will promote and protect the profession of civil engineering. With this in mind, engaging civic leaders should be a continuous priority for the Section. Civic leaders include elected officials, relevant federal, state, and local committees, business leaders such as the chamber of commerce, and general civic organizations. In addition, advocacy and education concerning certain issues should be prioritized and emphasized. These efforts should be proactive to maximize efficiency in advancing legislation or initiatives.

Advocacy is often enhanced when partnerships with other organizations are formed. This allows for coordinated efforts that reduce redundancies. In addition, greater strength is achieved with greater numbers. A Texas Section Legislative Drive-In, modeled along the lines of ASCE Global’s congressional Fly-In, should be a regular occurrence when the Texas Legislature is in session. Branch-level drive-ins and meetings should also be established where possible. These drive-ins provide great venues for promoting the infrastructure report card. The pocket cards developed initially for the 2013 Texas Section Infrastructure Report Card continue to be developed for subsequent report cards.

Keeping track of relationships between Texas Section members and civic leaders, including elected officials, is critical to maintaining an effective engagement program. Engagement of civic leaders begins with the development of relationships with elected officials. In addition, civic leaders can be brought in for speaking opportunities. Town hall meetings with leaders are also an effective tool for engagement.

The Infrastructure Report Card produced by the Texas Section is a vital public service to the state of Texas. It provides Texas residents and policymakers a detailed assessment of the condition of Texas infrastructure. The national infrastructure report card developed by ASCE Global is frequently referenced by national elected officials and the media. More awareness of the Texas Infrastructure Report Card needs to be created.

The Texas Section Infrastructure Report Card provides ample opportunities for further outreach. As mentioned previously, regular Section-level legislative drive-ins should be held and developed. There should be an emphasis on printing enough pocket cards so that they can be distributed widely throughout the state of Texas.

For issue advocacy, as with protecting the profession, partnerships should be identified and built. An example is the further development of partnerships with organizations that advocate issues that align with the advancement of infrastructure in Texas. In addition, with respect to issue stances that are taken by the Texas Section, a program should be in place that ensures that the statements are released to the

public and placed on the Section website. Updates on these stances as they relate to specific legislation should also be publicized on the Texas Section website and to the public.

### 5.3.2 Enhance ASCE Texas Section Marketing/Branding/Communications

The marketing and branding of the ASCE Texas Section is critical to the organization's overall success and its ability to project a positive image of the profession of civil engineering. In addition, effective communications are critical to conveying our message and image. It works in conjunction with effective marketing and branding efforts.

Television commercials provide an effective means to communicate with public at the local level. The expense of these commercials can be very high. However, public access television provides a relatively low-cost method for advertising the efforts of the Texas Section.

Online advertising is also a critical tool that can promote the Texas Section. These options are often at little or no cost. YouTube videos provide free advertising at a global level and should be utilized.

Brochures and print advertisements are also options for furthering the reach of the Texas Section. Brochures can be placed at visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, and other relevant locations. In addition, advertisements can be taken out in relevant publications such as *Texas Highways Magazine*.

Each year, the ASCE Texas Section awards the Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement (OCEA) award to qualified projects. These awards need to gain more publicity and more attention from the public. Marketing and branding efforts should be made to ensure that publicity for the OCEA awards is maximized. As part of this marketing program, a one-sheet/tri-fold pamphlet with historical landmarks and OCEA projects can be created. This pamphlet can be targeted to tourist hotels, visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, and other relevant entities and groups.

In general, Chambers of Commerce should be an integral part of the marketing plan. They can become involved in CECON, the Student Symposium, and landmark dedications with respect to assisting in the promotion of these events.

Social media has emerged as a powerful communications tool that can also aid the marketing and branding efforts of the Texas Section. The Section has Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts. The Facebook and Twitter pages are used to convey information to our members and the public. The LinkedIn page provides a discussion group to address Section issues and other civil engineering-related issues, including technical discussions. It should be a priority to further enhance our social media efforts to keep up with the ever-changing landscape associated with this technology. Improving and expanding our reach with our existing social media efforts is critical.

Increasing visibility is also critical to the growth of the ASCE Texas Section. Partnerships and collaborations with high-profile organizations such as the Texas Water Development Board and TxDOT will provide both visibility and substantive improvements that will aid the organization. Also, having a presence at high profile events that focus on sustainability or the nexus of the natural and built environments such as local Earth Day events will aid the Texas Section. Finally, traditional media is an asset that should be utilized to maximize outreach. Opinions and editorials written by Section leaders should be written on pertinent topics

Section/Branch communications are critical to ensuring growth at the local grassroots level. A calendar that is well-advertised and easy to find will help tremendously. In addition, the development of a Key Contact program at the Texas Section level along the lines of the same program at the ASCE Global level will allow members to quickly interact with their elected officials on urgent legislative issues. Social media can also enhance section/branch communications. Finally, strong participation on the Branch President's Monthly Conference Call with Section leadership can improve these communications.

With respect to the growth and development of the Texas Civil Engineering Conference (CECON), it is important to continue partnerships with other relevant groups. In addition, growth in the relationships with the institutes should be pursued. In general, all partners should be beneficial to the Texas Section and the mission of CECON.

The overall branding and exposure of CECON demand specific attention. A specific program within CECON planning to address these issues can be implemented. An effective marketing campaign can also form an integral part of this program. In particular, the identification of proper media outlets both statewide and industry-wide should be emphasized. To match the branding and exposure efforts of CECON, it is imperative to ensure that quality programming is the top priority for the event. With this in mind, an ongoing programming group should be developed to ensure that this occurs

### **5.3.3 Develop and Enhance CECON**

CECON has emerged as the signature event of the ASCE Texas Section and serves as the organization's annual conference. Further development of CECON is a critical strategic initiative for the upcoming strategic plan. In general, it is important to improve CECON attendance. To achieve this goal, the Texas Section should identify and work with partners that will allow CECON to become an industry-wide event with quality content.

In addition, the branding efforts and overall exposure for CECON should be increased. The *CECON Planning Manual* should be reviewed and upgraded as needed to ensure continuity that allows for efficient transitions on an annual basis.

Finally, it is critical to ensure that CECON has quality programming and content from the technical, educational, and professional perspectives. The content for CECON should be continuously developed and a multi-year approach is recommended.

### **5.3.4 Enhance Overall Professional Development**

Members of the ASCE Texas Section rely on the Section to enhance their overall professional development. In fact, it is often the reason that civil engineers become members of ASCE. It is critical to provide members with leadership training opportunities. In addition, members should be provided with career development training opportunities

### **5.3.5 Transform Students into Civil Engineering Professionals**

The transformation of students into professionals is critical to the future growth of the ASCE Texas Section. It will ensure the growth of both the profession and the Texas Section. It is important to develop and promote student/professional collaboration. There are several ways to accomplish this. Meetings at both the branch and student chapter levels provide great venues where interaction can take place. This requires professional members and student members to attend each other's meetings. Engineer-In-

Training (EIT) exam preparation also provides an opportunity for collaboration between students and professionals that is beneficial to the student population. Access to prominent civil engineering professionals also provides benefits for students, as they obtain better perspectives on the profession, and see the possibilities of their future careers. Finally, providing job-seeking opportunities such as career fairs will aid in providing students employment and thus making them professionals.

In the overall process of transforming students into professionals, the first step is to convert students into younger members of the ASCE Texas Section after college graduation. As student members are graduating, they should be invited to local branch meetings. In addition, joint meetings between branch and student chapters should be timed appropriately to capture soon-to-be graduates. Most civil engineering programs have awards ceremonies in late April or early May. It is suggested that branch Practitioner Advisors participate in these ceremonies. In addition, as students transfer to younger member status, it is important to provide them with more options for professional development outside of the workplace. It is also important to stress the enhancement of earning and career potential that comes with ASCE membership and provide specific examples where this occurs. Practitioner Advisors and Faculty Advisors should work together to improve coordination to ensure that students remain ASCE members as they transition to their professional careers. Finally, it is important to emphasize ASCE membership to new younger members and utilize optimal member solicitation techniques in this process.

### **5.3.6 Become the Professional Organization of Choice for Graduating Civil Engineering Students and Professionals**

Membership is the heart of ASCE. It is the key to the future success of the ASCE Texas Section. It is critical for the Section to increase and enhance membership in the organization. By enhancing ASCE Texas Section membership, more civil engineers will naturally want to join the Texas Section.

Transitioning student members into professional members is critical for the future success of the Section. It is important to properly and frequently utilize younger members in volunteering and leadership roles. This will significantly increase the likelihood that they stay ASCE Texas Section members for the duration of their careers.

Online involvement is also important with respect to increasing and enhancing membership. Relationship building and social media are powerful tools that members should be able to access and utilize. In addition, post-meeting communications such as surveys can be used to solicit input. Finally, online forums can be a powerful tool from the standpoint of both online learning and relationship building.

Local branches within the ASCE Texas Section provide opportunities for fellowship, relationships, and involvement. A local branch is often the key conduit for providing members with opportunities to be active in ASCE. In the process, it is also the key for maintaining membership, and allowing more interested members to pursue leadership opportunities at the Section and Global levels. The ASCE Texas Section should ensure that its 15 Branches are as strong as possible.

Organizational affiliates also provide an opportunity to increase and enhance membership. The emergence of Institutes at the ASCE Global level has proven to be very positive. The Section Institute Chapters that have been formed should also be emphasized in a way that provides Texas Section members additional benefits. In the process, the Texas Section and Section Institute Chapters should work and collaborate to maximize the benefits for both parties.

There are multiple generations of members whose needs must be served. As the older generation recedes in its activities, younger generations will hopefully increase their activities within the Texas Section and become members. However, there are generation gaps, and they must be understood and addressed. Young people are much less likely to join organizations than preceding generations. The Texas Section must address this shift and ensure that younger generations understand the value in ASCE so that they participate in the organization.

Finally, the value of ASCE membership needs to be defined, enhanced, and emphasized. This is a continuous process that must be mindful of the ever-changing society and business climate that defines today's Texas. Texas Section leadership must address the following questions

- What are other organizations doing better than us?
- Where can we strengthen our value compared to other professional organizations?
- What organizations are taking away ASCE members?

## 6 APPENDIX B – PARKING LOT ISSUES

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Harkening back to the lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic the world has now understood that an online, remote, and independent format works. Knowing that is key to moving the ASCE Texas Section forward. In-person conferences should have a virtual component associated with them to increase attendance and drive interactions.

### Pros of In-Person Conferences

- **Relationship building:** In-person conferences bring together experts from all over the state. It's a great way to build relationships and connect with people who understand the challenges and problems that you face in the workplace. Meeting people face-to-face, such as sponsors, keynote speakers, strategic partners, vendors, suppliers, and colleagues can foster growth in a professional network.
- **Opportunities:** Participating in lively discussions at conferences is a great way to generate new opportunities and get help refining concepts and ideas.
- **Improving Skills:** Conferences give you the chance to improve communication and presentation skills when meeting different types of people. Answering questions about your work or your product, chatting with other attendees, and introducing yourself to new people will help improve communications skills.
- **Goodies:** Who doesn't love coming back from a conference with a nice bag of goodies, like USB gadgets, pens, and of course stress balls!

### Cons of In-Person Conferences

- **Budget:** Conferences are not cheap. Whether you attend the conference or sponsor an event, the result is the same: it's always expensive. Between the flights, the hotels, and the restaurants, it really adds up.
- **Time:** Attending conferences is fun, but it's also very time consuming. There is a lot of planning, and you spend a lot of time travelling.
- **Stressful:** Conferences can be stressful for both sponsors and attendees because you want everything to work perfectly — and sometimes life has other plans in mind!

### Pros of Virtual Conferences

- **Cost-Effective:** Virtual conferences are much cheaper to attend than in-person conferences. There are no travel costs, and ticket prices are also significantly less expensive because producers and sponsors have much lower overhead costs.
- **A plus for introverted individuals:** Virtual conferences are particularly beneficial for people who are shy or are not too excited about meeting new people.
- **Reliable:** Virtual events are 100% reliable. There's never any need to cancel an event because of weather or even a pandemic.
- **Convenient:** All you need to access a virtual conference is a computer, webcam, and headset. You can carry on with your normal life and enjoy the event from the comfort of your own home or office.

- Statewide Reach: Virtual conferences are a great way to meet people from all over the State who would otherwise be unable to attend an in-person conference due to financial or time restrictions, or the fact that Texas is HUGE.

#### Cons of Virtual Conferences

- No Offline Interaction: There is no “offline” interaction with exhibitors and speakers, and between attendees. In-person engagement at conferences is important for building relationships.
- Distractions: Our homes and offices are full of distractions (coffee machine break, co-workers coming to tell you something, a child needing attention, etc.).
- Technical Issues: Some virtual conference platforms need attendees to download and install a program or plugin to access webinars and chats, which may be against an IT policy. There could be technical issues, and the possibility of data connectivity problems.

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