



# **SAFEguard Initiative Report**

Presented to Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court  
Tuesday, June 30, 2009



# County Executive Office

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### Introduction

In an effort to implement certain safeguards for improving accountability, transparency and efficiency in county government, the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court created the SAFEguard Initiative and appointed committee members on April 28, 2009.

### Purpose

The acronym "SAFE" stands for Systems & Procedures, Audits, Fiscal Controls, and Efficiency. The purpose of the SAFEguard Initiative is to accomplish the following objectives:

- Identify specific internal controls to better manage County operations and funds,
- Identify and eliminate waste and redundancy in County operations, and
- Improve accountability and transparency in County operations.

### Committee Members

Named by Commissioners' Court on April 28, 2009, the SAFEguard committee consists of key precinct and departmental representatives from across the County.

Name	Title	Department/Office
Valde Guerra	Executive Officer	County Executive Office
Sofia Hernandez	Economic Development Coordinator	County Judge's Office
Noe Montez	Budget Manager	Commissioner Precinct 1
Humberto Garza	Chief Administrator	Commissioner Precinct 2
Mingo Villarreal	Chief Administrator	Commissioner Precinct 3
Gloria Beltran	Chief Administrator	Commissioner Precinct 4
Raul Silguero	Budget Officer	Department of Budget & Management
Daniel Flores	Director	Buildings and Grounds
Ray Eufrazio	County Auditor	County Auditor's Office
Alfredo Zamarripa	Office Manager	County Treasurer's Office
Esther Cortez	Director	Human Resources
Renán Ramirez	Chief Information Officer	Information Technology Department
Martha Salazar	Purchasing Agent	Purchasing Department
Jose Peña	Right of Way Director	Right of Way Department



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### **Meetings**

Since its creation on April 28, 2009, the SAFEGuard Committee met on six occasions, on the dates listed below:

- Friday, May 22, 2009
- Thursday, May 28, 2009
- Wednesday, June 3, 2009
- Wednesday, June 10, 2009
- Thursday, June 11, 2009
- Friday, June 26, 2009



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### Executive Summary

At the request of Commissioners' Court, the County Executive Office led the SAFEGuard Initiative, including coordinating and running the committee meetings, updating the Court and committee members on all activities, and ensuring the information was accessible to the public via the County website.

In examining the efficiency and transparency of current Hidalgo County practices, the committee was tasked with gathering ideas for improvement from committee members, from County employees, and from the general public. These recommendations included activities that were aimed at improving office processes, encouraging transparency concerning County business and proceedings, and maximizing the investment of taxpayer funds.

Over the course of two months, the committee compiled over 50 proposed activities for the Court to consider implementing under the SAFEGuard Initiative. The committee then worked to closely review the status and feasibility of each proposed activity and decide on those activities to recommend to Commissioners' Court for implementation. While the committee carefully reviewed every proposed activity that was submitted, it is important to note that some proposed activities were not identified for implementation in this report.

After completing its meeting schedule and closely examining all proposed activities, the SAFEGuard Committee hereby submits this preliminary report. This report includes the activities that were identified by the committee to recommend to Commissioners' Court for implementation under Hidalgo County's SAFEGuard Initiative.

These recommendations are being submitted to the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court for review, consideration, and appropriate implementation of the activities and initiatives contained herein.



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### **SAFEguard Committee Identified Activities**

- 1. Develop and implement procedures to more effectively track contract and project dates and timelines.**
- 2. Develop and implement a contract approval process and include all relevant departments in major pre-construction or pre-project meetings.**
- 3. Have Commissioners' Court examine a countywide "no take-home vehicles" policy.**
- 4. Examine a County Morgue Facility to eliminate the need for separate contracts for autopsy facilities and transport of dead bodies.**
- 5. Further examine creating a County Engineering Department to handle road and bridge work in-house as opposed to hiring outside consultants.**
- 6. Centralize grants process (research, analysis and management) via the Budget Department to ensure all aspects of funding are taken into consideration (i.e., matching funds, sustainability beyond grant period, cost to County).**
- 7. Outsource to a third-party 1-800 service for reporting fraud and have Sheriff's Office receive the call information with issues routed to the appropriate agency or department.**
- 8. Finalize the countywide Time and Attendance Policy to address payroll and timekeeping issues as approved.**



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- 9. Develop a Central Purchasing and Receiving System to standardize the purchases of supplies and equipment, and implement relevant policies and procedures.**
- 10. Implement a system to run background checks on every new employee and implement relevant policies and procedures, including defining violations that would bar employment and identifying the types of background checks to be conducted.**
- 11. Centralize the Human Resources department. Identify those departments or offices that have HR positions and rename or reclassify to “personnel specialist” or similar position title.**
- 12. Develop and implement a training division in HR for general training necessary for all county staff.**
- 13. Implement countywide Global Positioning System (GPS) on all vehicles, and implement relevant policies and procedures including conducting analysis on savings and studies on County vehicle use to identify and eliminate waste or misuse.**
- 14. Centralize the Information Technology department. Identify those departments that have IT positions and rename or reclassify.**



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### **Appendices**

Included as appendices to this report are the complete committee remarks and notes on the identified activities (Appendix I: SAFEGuard Identified Activities).

The committee felt it necessary to ensure every proposed activity was fully considered. Therefore, included as an appendix (Appendix II: Other Activities) are those suggested activities that were not identified as recommendations for implementation, along with committee responses to each, identifying those that have already been implemented, are in progress, or are not feasible.



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### **Appendix I: SAFEGuard Identified Activities**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 1*

<b><i>Original Description of Activity</i></b> Streamline Auditors & Purchasing procedures to make it easier for departments, including having a calendar for expiring items (i.e., expiring contracts) so service does not lapse.	
<b><i>Relevant Department/Office</i></b> Auditor's Office, Purchasing	<b><i>Feasibility</i></b> Feasible
Recommended By: Joe Pena	
<b><i>Remarks:</i></b>  SAGE has fields to input/track contract dates.	

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## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

**Develop and implement procedures to more effectively track contract and project dates and timelines.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 2*

### ***Original Description of Activity***

Improve management of construction projects to ensure all appropriate parties are fully kept abreast during entire project's duration.

### ***Relevant Department/Office***

Auditor's Office, Relevant Departments

### ***Feasibility***

Feasible

Recommended By: Daniel Flores

### ***Remarks:***

If looking to centralize certain functions (as IT, HR, etc), why would County want to expand Auditor roles into departments?

County Auditor's role is to audit, and has autonomy over cerertain duties. Cannot assign in individual departments. Suggestion for departments to be more proactive on front end. Prior to work commencing, sit with auditor. Solution also depends on good project management system.

\*Original wording was "Assign an auditor/accountant to each location (Precinct or larger), to have firsthand knowledge/screening of each project & delay for payment or additional documents will be eliminated." Combined with other recommendation "Closely monitor purchases and construction projects to ensure County is maximizing on investment"

Make a policy to have auditor's office attend pre-construction meeting.

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## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**Develop and implement a contract approval process and include all relevant departments in major pre-construction or pre-project meetings.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEGuard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEGuard Identified Activity # 3*

<b><i>Original Description of Activity</i></b> Reduce the number of vehicles that are taken home and thus reduce gas consumption.	
<b><i>Relevant Department/Office</i></b> Executive Office	<b><i>Feasibility</i></b> Feasible
Recommended By: Marty Salazar	
<b><i>Remarks:</i></b>	

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## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**Have Court look at approving countywide “no take-home vehicles” policy.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 4*

<b><i>Original Description of Activity</i></b> Construct a morgue facility and eliminate the need for separate contracts for autopsy facilities, transport of dead bodies, etc.	
<b><i>Relevant Department/Office</i></b> Executive Office	<b><i>Feasibility</i></b> Feasible
Recommended By: Marty Salazar	
<b><i>Remarks:</i></b>  Initiative has started. Purchasing Dept is in communication with Orange County, Florida. Completely surplus all existing equipment. Identify county-owned property & facility.	

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## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

**Examine a County Morgue Facility to eliminate the need for separate contracts for autopsy facilities and transport of dead bodies.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 5*

<b><i>Original Description of Activity</i></b> Create an engineering department to handle all road and bridge work as opposed to engaging engineers. This would not eliminate separate engagements for non road and bridge work.	
<b><i>Relevant Department/Office</i></b> Executive Office	<b><i>Feasibility</i></b> Feasible
Recommended By: Marty Salazar	
<b><i>Remarks:</i></b>	

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### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**Further examine creating a County Engineering Department to handle road and bridge work in-house as opposed to hiring outside consultants.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 6*

<b>Original Description of Activity</b> Establish a grants research/analysis/writing/management department.	
<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office	<b>Feasibility</b> Feasible
Recommended By: Valde Guerra	
<b>Remarks:</b>  Old recommendation was "Establish a committee (Executive Office, Budget, Commissioner's representative) to meet with state administrators regarding grant-funded county departments," which is already an internally implemented activity. Expanded on recommendation to include establishing a grants research/analysis/writing/management department.	

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## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

**Centralize grants process (research, analysis and management) via the Budget Department to ensure all aspects of funding are taken into consideration (i.e., matching funds, sustainability beyond grant period, cost to County).**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 7*

<b>Original Description of Activity</b> Implement a 1-800 number to report fraud.	
<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office	<b>Feasibility</b> Feasible
Recommended By: Judge Salinas, Owls	
<b>Remarks:</b>	

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### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**Outsource to a third-party 1-800 service for reporting fraud and have Sheriff's Office receive the call information with issues routed to the appropriate agency or department.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 8*

<b><i>Original Description of Activity</i></b> Eliminate departmental timekeepers' ability to modify time punches, and instead have employees complete and submit a form signed by their supervisor approving modification.	
<b><i>Relevant Department/Office</i></b> Executive Office, IT	<b><i>Feasibility</i></b> Feasible
Recommended By: Valde Guerra	
<b><i>Remarks:</i></b>	

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## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**Finalize the countywide Time and Attendance Policy to address payroll and timekeeping issues as approved.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 9*

<b>Original Description of Activity</b> Develop a Central Purchasing, Receiving, Warehousing and Distribution Center, Policy, and Procedure	
<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office, Purchasing, Budget	<b>Feasibility</b> Feasible
Recommended By: SAFEguard Committee	
<b>Remarks:</b>	

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### COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

**Develop a Central Purchasing and Receiving System to standardize the purchases of supplies and equipment, and implement relevant policies and procedures.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 10*

<b><i>Original Description of Activity</i></b> Conduct criminal background checks on all new hires.	
<b><i>Relevant Department/Office</i></b> Human Resources	<b><i>Feasibility</i></b> Feasible
Recommended By: Owls	
<b><i>Remarks:</i></b>  Background checks should be made of every selected candidate. HR can obtain a LEXIS NEXIS account.	

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## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**Implement a system to run background checks on every new employee and implement relevant policies and procedures, including defining violations that would bar employment and identifying the types of background checks to be conducted.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 11*

<b><i>Original Description of Activity</i></b> Consolidate departmental Human Resources positions into centralized HR Department.	
<b><i>Relevant Department/Office</i></b> Human Resources	<b><i>Feasibility</i></b> Feasible
Recommended By: Raul Silguero	
<b><i>Remarks:</i></b>	

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### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**Centralize the Human Resources department. Identify those departments or offices that have HR positions and rename or reclassify to “personnel specialist” or similar position title.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 12*

<b><i>Original Description of Activity</i></b> Develop and implement a centralized training division in HR for general training necessary for all county staff (i.e. Sexual Harassment; Ethics, Etc.)	
<b><i>Relevant Department/Office</i></b> Human Resources	<b><i>Feasibility</i></b> Feasible
Recommended By: Marty Salazar	
<b><i>Remarks:</i></b>	

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### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**Develop and implement a training division in HR for general training necessary for all county staff.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 13*

<b><i>Original Description of Activity</i></b> Extend GPS use on ALL County vehicles	
<b><i>Relevant Department/Office</i></b> IT	<b><i>Feasibility</i></b> Feasible
Recommended By: Renan Ramirez, Ray Eufracio	
<b><i>Remarks:</i></b>  Conduct study on vehicle use to identify waste (i.e., sitting idle)	

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### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**Implement countywide GPS on all vehicles and implement relevant policies and procedures including conducting analysis on savings and studies on County vehicle use to identify and eliminate waste or misuse.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *SAFEguard Identified Activity # 14*

<b><i>Original Description of Activity</i></b> Consolidate departmental Information Technology positions into a centralized IT Department.	
<b><i>Relevant Department/Office</i></b> IT	<b><i>Feasibility</i></b> Feasible
Recommended By: Valde Guerra	
<b><i>Remarks:</i></b>	

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### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**Centralize the Information Technology department. Identify those departments that have IT positions and rename or reclassify.**



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### **Appendix II: Other Activities**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 1*

<b>Description</b> Conduct internal audits along with external audits.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Auditor's Office
<b>Status</b> Implemented	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Owls	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**This recommendation has already been implemented. The County is statute compliant in regard to audits. The County Auditor's Office already conducts internal audits on County departments; Purchasing Department also conducts asset inventories. In addition, the County also has an external audit done annually.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 2*

<b>Description</b> Analyze and review departmental budget requests to ensure budget approval is justifiable.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Budget
<b>Status</b> Implemented	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Ray Eufrazio	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**Hidalgo County's Department of Budget and Management already reviews departmental budget requests to ensure budget approval is justifiable.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 3*

<b>Description</b> Shorten Commissioners' Court agenda by moving more items to consent.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> To Be Determined
<b>Status</b> Implemented	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Jaime Ortiz	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**As previously discussed at Court, this recommendation is already implemented. The County can implement this recommendation internally to have departments & offices shorten agenda item wording to reflect the action requested.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 4*

<b>Description</b> Implement a paperless Commissioners' Court and encourage the use of laptops and supporting documents	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office
<b>Status</b> Implemented	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Sofia Hernandez	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**This recommendation has already been implemented. While this has already been implemented as an option for Commissioners' Court, is it a matter of preference for the members of the court.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 5*

<b>Description</b> Establish a system to require approval prior to contacting legal counsel for advice to minimize duplication of efforts(Atlas & Hall/ADA).	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office
<b>Status</b> Implemented	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Ray Eufrazio	

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### **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**This recommendation has already been implemented, and will be addressed internally. "Strengthen Current Procedure." instead of "Establish." Have Commissioners' Court finalize procedure that only governing body (as a whole) can authorize contacting Atlas & Hall. Department Heads will have to authorize with Valde. Tony Mendoza is the contact now. Develop an outreach/directive to departments/offices so they know whom to contact.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 6*

<b>Description</b> Ensure all employees, including department heads, clock in and out all day long.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> TAAP	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office
<b>Status</b> Implemented	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Owls	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**Already implemented for Commissioners' Court departments. TAAP policy, when tied to payroll, will address this issue. Refer to SAFEguard Identified Activity #4.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 7*

<b>Description</b> Reduce travel and training (even if local) to events that are necessary to earn CEUs or maintain certifications, etc.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office
<b>Status</b> Implemented	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Marty Salazar	

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### **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**County is currently implementing internally, due to current financial situation. For future reference, perhaps a directive from court can minimize travel to only truly necessary events. Or have all travel go through Commissioners' Court for approval. Or restrict line item transfers to increase travel expense line item.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 8*

<b>Description</b> Impose a 90-day freeze on hiring.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office, Human Resources
<b>Status</b> Implemented	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Owls	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court has imposed a hiring freeze, for the remainder of the year, on all Departments that report to the Court. Although the Court cannot impose a similar freeze on Elected Official Departments, the County Judge has asked all Elected Officials to assist the Court by limiting the filling of General Fund vacant positions to only those positions that are critical to the operation of their respective department. Postponing the filling of vacant positions will help reduce expenditures and assist the County in addressing projected budget shortfalls due to current economic conditions.

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 36*

<b>Description</b> Implement a better inventory control system to track assets.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> IT
<b>Status</b> Implemented, Ongoing	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: IT Staff	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

Hidalgo County's Purchasing Department has implemented 100% complete inventory and plans to complete Fixed Asset staffing in order to continue and complete inventory control system. It then becomes the department's responsibility to maintain their assets. Explore RFID tags on high-dollar items (weapons, vehicles, heavy equipment, etc.)

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 9*

<b>Description</b> Expand Time and Attendance Program to ensure ALL county departments & elected offices are participating.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> TAAP	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office, IT
<b>Status</b> In Progress	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Valde Guerra	

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### **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**Already implemented for Commissioners' Court departments. TAAP policy, when tied to payroll, will address this issue. Refer to SAFEguard Identified Activity #4.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 10*

<b>Description</b> Develop and Implement a countywide Time and Attendance Policy	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> TAAP	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office, IT
<b>Status</b> In Progress	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Valde Guerra, Renan Ramirez	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**Already implemented for Commissioners' Court departments. TAAP policy, when tied to payroll, will address this issue. Refer to SAFEguard Identified Activity #4.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 11*

<b>Description</b> Implement Employee Classification & Compensation Project.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> Classification & Compensation Project	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Budget & Management
<b>Status</b> In Progress	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Raul Silguero	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

The Hidalgo County Employee Classification & Compensation Project is currently in progress, and proposed to be implemented in September 2009.

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 12*

<b>Description</b> Develop County Administrative Management Handbook.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Budget & Management
<b>Status</b> In Progress	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Raul Silguero	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**Hidalgo County's Department of Budget and Management is in the process of developing a County Administrative Management Handbook.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 13*

<b>Description</b> Implement Selected Applicant Enrollment Process.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> Selected Applicant Enrollment Policy/Procedure	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Budget & Management, Human Resources, etc.
<b>Status</b> In Progress	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Raul Silguero	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**The Hidalgo County Selected New Employee Enrollment Policy and Procedure will be presented for approval to Commissioners' Court in June 2009.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 14*

<b>Description</b> Require more justification from departments to demonstrate need for staffing (i.e., workload analysis data) when creating new positions.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Human Resources
<b>Status</b> In Progress	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Ray Eufracio	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

Hidalgo County's Department of Budget and Management already requires justification for departments when requesting new positions. DBM is also in the process of developing workload standards and workload performance measures to implement in departments.

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 32*

<b>Description</b> Eliminate all cell phones except for disaster related events and use pagers.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> Cell Phones	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office
<b>Status</b> In Progress	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Marty Salazar, Renan Ramirez	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**The Hidalgo County Wireless Communication policy is in the revision process and will be revisited in Court.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 33*

<b>Description</b> Examine an E-government initiative to comprehensively utilize the county website and other technology resources to increase access to and efficiency of government services and resources.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> E-Gov	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> PIO, IT
<b>Status</b> In Progress	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Cari Lambrecht	

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## COMMITTEE RESPONSE:

The County is already implementing an E-Government initiative with its website, and is exploring additional methods to incorporated under this initiative.

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 15*

<b>Description</b> Conduct an independent, external audit of AT&T Phone Bills	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> IT
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Feasible
Recommended By: Marty Salazar, Renan Ramirez	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**The County may address this activity as an internal issue.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 16*

<b>Description</b> Centralize computer purchases and standardize on equipment.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> NEW: Central Purchasing, Receiving, Warehousing, Distribution Project	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> IT
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Feasible
Recommended By: IT Staff	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**The proposed Central Purchasing, Receiving, Warehousing, Distribution Project should address this issue. Refer to SAFEguard Identified Activity #1.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 17*

<b>Description</b> Standardize office furniture as opposed to choices by departments or elected offices	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> NEW: Central Purchasing, Receiving, Warehousing, Distribution Project	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Purchasing
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Feasible
Recommended By: Marty Salazar	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**The proposed Central Purchasing, Receiving, Warehousing, Distribution Project should address this issue. Refer to SAFEguard Identified Activity #1.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 18*

<b>Description</b> Standardize office supplies and further truly consider a long-term supply inventory program for other commodities (i.e. office supplies, preventative maintenance items for HVAC, auto, trucks, etc.)	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> NEW: Central Purchasing, Receiving, Warehousing, Distribution Project	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Purchasing
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Feasible
Recommended By: Marty Salazar	

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### **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**The proposed Central Purchasing, Receiving, Warehousing, Distribution Project should address this issue. Refer to SAFEguard Identified Activity #1.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 19*

<b>Description</b> Limit number of employees that are issued a County cell phone to only those that truly need them to conduct their jobs.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> Cell Phones	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Feasible
Recommended By: Ray Eufracio	

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### **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**The Hidalgo County Wireless Communication policy is in the revision process and will be revisited in Court.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 20*

<b>Description</b> Implement salary caps in every department, for every employee.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> Classification & Compensation Project	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Budget
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Owls	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**The Hidalgo County Employee Classification & Compensation Project should address this issue. The project is currently in progress, and proposed to be implemented in September 2009.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 21*

<b>Description</b> Conduct departmental personnel audits to ensure that the employee is actually performing what job description entails and that.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> Classification & Compensation Project	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Human Resources
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Ray Eufrazio	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**The Hidalgo County Employee Classification & Compensation Project should address this issue. The project is currently in progress, and proposed to be implemented in September 2009. Personnel performance reviews are departmental responsibility and should measure against job description. In addition, when departments request job reclassification, job audits can be done.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 22*

<b>Description</b> Implement a Zero Tolerance Policy	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Human Resources
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Owls	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**Hidalgo County has sufficient policies in place that address standards of conduct & consequences.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 23*

<b>Description</b> Ensure employees wages are comparable to duties and responsibilities performed.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> Classification & Compensation Project	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Human Resources
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Ray Eufrazio	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**The Hidalgo County Employee Classification & Compensation Project should address this issue. The project is currently in progress, and proposed to be implemented in September 2009.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEGuard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 24*

<b>Description</b> Conduct study to ensure County-owned buildings are fully utilized.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> To Be Determined
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Ray Eufrazio	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

The County may address as an internal issue.

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEGuard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 25*

<b>Description</b> Closely monitor purchases and construction projects to ensure the County is maximizing on investment.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> To Be Determined
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: Ray Eufracio	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**Duplicate. See SAFEGuard Activity #5.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 35*

<b>Description</b> Standardize all purchases (supplies, equipment, etc) to maximize return on investment.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b> NEW: Central Purchasing, Receiving, Warehousing, Distribution Project	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Executive Office, Purchasing, Budget
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Applicable
Recommended By: SAFEguard Committee	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**Duplicate: See SAFEguard Activity #1**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 26*

<b>Description</b> Attempt to implement a Health Insurance employee/employer program with employees sharing costs.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Budget & Management (Employee Benefits Division)
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Feasible
Recommended By: Marty Salazar	

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### **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**This recommendation is not feasible at this time. The County could perhaps revisit in the future if necessary. When revisited, a suggestion would be to not start with existing employees but with new hires.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEGuard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 27*

<b>Description</b> Random drug test all county employees.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Human Resources
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Feasible
Recommended By: Owls	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**Courts have already ruled that the County cannot random drug test all employees. Executive Office can revisit with legal on this issue.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 28*

<b>Description</b> Make a standard contract so not to go through legal all the time.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Purchasing
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Feasible
Recommended By: Joe Pena	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**While the Purchasing Department is in middle of this process of standardizing procurement packets, this recommendation is not feasible, as legal will always have to review and approve form and ensure the contract addresses County's interest.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEGuard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 29*

<b>Description</b> Set time limits per agenda item	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> To Be Determined
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Feasible
Recommended By: Jaime Ortiz	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**This recommendation is at Commissioners' Court discretion.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 30*

<b>Description</b> Centralize and/or subcontract out certain services (i.e., clerical, custodial), and reassign/retrain affected personnel	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Human Resources
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Feasible at this time
Recommended By: Renan Ramirez	

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### **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**Long-term Project: Hidalgo County can conduct a comprehensive study addressing areas that can be identified for subcontracting (as approved by governing body), and conduct cost analysis.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 31*

<b>Description</b> Install and maintain gas pumps for all departments (with fuel budgets) in order to purchase bulk and reduce pump card purchases	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> Purchasing
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Feasible at this time
Recommended By: Marty Salazar	

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### **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**This recommendation is not feasible at this time, but could potentially be examined in the future.**

# HIDALGO COUNTY SAFEguard INITIATIVE

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## *Other Activity # 34*

<b>Description</b> Develop and implement a document storage program for District Clerk and reduce expense of outsourcing the service.	
<b>Related Project (If Applicable)</b>	<b>Relevant Department/Office</b> District Clerk
<b>Status</b> Proposed	<b>Feasibility</b> Not Feasible at this time
Recommended By: Marty Salazar	

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## **COMMITTEE RESPONSE:**

**This recommendation is not feasible at this time, but could potentially be examined with the District Clerk's Office in the future.**