

Economic Development Element



Draft Amendments

Overview

Economic Development Element

The Future Land Use Element provides the designation of future land use patterns as reflected in the goals, objectives, and policies of the local government comprehensive plan elements.

Language

The language being amended includes Goals, Objectives, and Policies. The text that is underlined is text to be added and text that is shown as ~~strikeout~~ is to be removed.

Comments

Comments listed under each proposed change indicate why the Goal, Objective, or Policy is being amended.

Please note that Goals, Objectives, and Policies that include non-substantive changes such as organization name changes and grammatical revisions are shown without comments.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Goal: Goal updated to continue the policy through the 2050 Planning Horizon.

Minor amendments throughout.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Text that is underlined is text to be added and text that is shown as ~~strikeout~~ is to be removed.

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GOAL: CREATE AND SUPPORT A DIVERSE ECONOMY IN HIGHLANDS COUNTY THAT IS CONDUCIVE TO THE PROSPERITY OF ALL RESIDENTS BY OPTIMIZING THE MOST DESIRABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC EXPANSION, BETTER JOBS, AND REVENUE GROWTH DURING THE ~~2010-2030~~ 2025 TO 2050 PLANNING PERIOD.

Comment: Goal updated to continue this policy throughout the 2050 planning horizon.

OBJECTIVE 1: MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE HIGHLANDS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

The Highlands County Economic Development Office (EDO) shall administer economic development programs recommended by the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and approved by the Board of County Commissioners for the purpose of expanding and diversifying the County's tax base while protecting the current quality of life of Highlands County residents.

Policy 1.1: Relationship between the Industrial Development Authority, the Highlands County Economic Development Office and the Board of County Commissioners

- A. The EDO shall be the County's official liaison between the Board of County Commissioners and the local business community on matters that foster and promote economic growth and diversity in Highlands County.

In this relationship, the Industrial Development Authority's (IDA's) primary role shall be advisory, to provide counsel, advice, guidance, and assistance to County staff. ~~and Recommendations~~ are taken to the Board of County

Commissioners on strategic economic planning and local economic issues, the economic climate and job profile in the County, and actions taken to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The EDO's mission shall encompass the following areas of responsibility:

1. Targeting and recruiting desirable businesses;
2. Enhancing job opportunities;
3. Promoting commerce;
4. Obtaining and distributing information that profiles local economic sectors;
5. Formulating public and private partnerships to secure the benefits of desirable economic growth;
6. Recommending courses of action or measures related to the above; and
7. Establishing benchmarks for evaluating progress.

The County recognizes that successful economic development is a partnership with the EDO, IDA, and the Economic Development Commission (EDC). The EDC is the non-profit component of economic development efforts in Highlands County. IDA board members serve concurrently on the EDC.

- B. In order to accomplish the mission statement of OBJECTIVE 1, the EDO shall continue to develop programs, special projects and plans that include activities and measures that pertain to the Goal and each Objective and Policy of this Element and to recommend amendments to the Economic Development Element.

The Board of County Commissioners may from time to time review, redefine, modify, expand, or diminish the role of the EDO and/or the IDA or may assign additional tasks or missions to the EDO.

Policy 1.2: Funding Alternatives

The EDO shall support alternate funding mechanisms to assist economic development projects and initiatives. Among the sources of funds that may be analyzed are non-ad valorem taxes, grants, user fees, millage increases pursuant to Section 159.48, F.S., in-kind services, and increases in licensing fees.

OBJECTIVE 2: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC BASE AND RETAIN AND CREATE NEW JOBS

Maintain and enhance the economic base and retain and create new jobs by supporting the retention of existing business, promoting existing business expansion, and recruiting appropriate businesses and industries.

Policy 2.1: Diversify the Economy

It shall be the policy of Highlands County, through the EDO, to continue establishing and maintaining programs identified in this Objective that expand job opportunities and diversify the economy to mitigate the impact of any significant economic downturns.

Industries shall be identified and targeted, which are sensitive to the County's environment and natural resources, and create new jobs that offer wages at or above the County median average income.

Policy 2.2: Targets for Growth

The County, through the EDO, shall maintain programs and develop new programs which:

- A. Support existing businesses and their expansion and attract businesses, both of which are sensitive to the County's environment and natural resources.
- B. Expand and enhance the County's existing economic base and assist existing companies in expansion efforts.
- C. Assist in the location of new companies in the County.

Policy 2.3: Economic Development Strategy

- A. The EDO shall partner with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council (Council) in the maintenance of the long-range Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as periodically updated, to ensure the County's economic interests are represented. The CEDS structure shall address items such as incentives for local entrepreneurship and job creation by the expansion of local business; economic diversity and self-sufficiency by expanding the tax base with targeted businesses recruitment; and enhanced employment options and labor force skills.

- B. The EDO and Council shall provide necessary reports, timely assessments, plans and strategies to ~~SelectEnterprise~~—Florida ensuring the representation of Highlands County in the state's Economic Development Strategy.
- C. The County, EDO and the IDA shall coordinate during the updates of all Economic Development Strategy's.
- D. The County shall continue to partner with the IDA in implementing the EDO's Economic Development Strategy.

Policy 2.4: Business Retention

The EDO shall organize and maintain a network for measuring community business needs and concerns through the completion of a business retention and expansion- ~~survey efforts designed to stimulate and support economic growth.~~

Policy 2.5: Information Resources

- A. The EDO shall maintain a database which establishes an information network that will provide financial and technical assistance information, seminar and activity schedules, and an inventory of industrial and commercial sites that are available in the County. Said inventory shall, at a minimum, identify the availability and capacity of infrastructure to serve each site.
- B. In order to use this database as a marketing tool for recruiting businesses into Highlands County, the EDO shall:
 - 1. Supplement the information with economic and demographic profiles about Highlands County; and,
 - 2. Introduce a methodology for analyzing the impacts of commercial and industrial relocation both into and from Highlands County.
- C. The EDO shall provide data to the extent that relocating and expanding businesses across the nation are aware of the business climate and resources in Highlands County. The EDO will continue to collaborate with all necessary resources in providing information to companies that seek to expand, as well as businesses that wish to relocate to Highlands County.

Policy 2.6: Encourage International Trade

The EDO shall ~~maintain and continue programs and~~ develop new programs that encourage and assist existing businesses in the expansion of their market through potential international trade as well as reverse investment opportunities.

Policy 2.7: Encourage Tourism

The EDO shall continue to assist the Tourist Development Council in the promotion of tourism in Highlands County.

Policy 2.8: Identify Growth Businesses

The EDO shall identify key businesses or groups of businesses in the local economy that are poised for stable and beneficial growth.

Attention shall be given to identifying those key businesses or groups of businesses that are related to commerce currently located within the County (i.e. filling backward linkages in sectors such as warehousing and distribution, medical care, recreation industries, and agricultural supports).

Policy 2.9: Target Industries

The EDO shall maintain in its Economic Development Strategy an updated list of target businesses and strategies to recruit such businesses into the County.

Policy 2.10: Business Expansion Incentives

- A. The EDO shall develop a marketing plan and provide strategies for financial and/or in-kind incentives that will assist in the recruitment of new commerce and/or the support of existing commerce.

Such strategies could provide for financial support, full or partial temporary tax or fee relief, manpower recruitment and training, facility planning and/or support and any other such items.

The EDO shall present such strategies to the Board of County Commissioners.

Policy 2.11: County to Facilitate Recruitment of Adequate Industrial Sites

- A. The County shall strive to ensure there is sufficient Industrial land with proper FLU and zoning designations and adequate infrastructure for future development including industrial parks and business campuses.

- B. The EDO shall continue to seek state or federal grants and use other resources to assist in the establishment of necessary infrastructure ~~to is in place to advance economic development. make the industrial functional.~~
- C. The EDO shall identify target development areas to increase the number of targeted industry jobs necessary to support a stronger job, tax and education base within the County.
- D. The EDO shall prepare a Strategic Economic Development locations map that indicates the areas within the County that have been identified as potential targeted development areas for new job creation.

Policy 2.12: Streamlined Development Review

- A. The County will continue to review its development approval process to identify and eliminate any unnecessary impediments to a fast, effective, and efficient development review process within the County for economic development projects.
- B. The County will use the State of Florida Expedited Permitting Process to create a Fast Track Option for Critical Economic Development projects.
- C. The County shall continue to use pre-application conferences and shall prepare and distribute guides, handouts, and other information concerning regulatory and permitting procedures affecting economic development, to streamline and expedite the application review and permitting process.
- D. The County shall work to reduce or eliminate permits, inspections, or functions that duplicate or overlap State and/or Federal permits, inspections or functions. This shall not preclude the adoption of County regulations more stringent than State or Federal regulations, if so desired by the Board of County Commissioners.
- E. The County, through the EDO will disseminate information to interested parties regarding existing and pending local legislation affecting economic development activities.
- F. The County will review its existing regulations and rectify or eliminate conflicts that may exist to improve service and expedite permit processing for new and/or expanded businesses to encourage the promotion of economic growth.

Policy 2.13: Additional Privately Owned Industrial Lands

In order to ensure that Highlands County has enough industrial land with proper Future Land Use (FLU) and zoning categories and adequate infrastructure for present and future development, the County will encourage owners of property meeting the criteria of Future Land Use Policy 1.8 to apply for amendment(s) to the Future Land Use Map for the Industrial category and rezoning(s) to Industrial. Analysis of sufficient industrial lands will be conducted, at minimum, every five years.

OBJECTIVE 3: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The EDO shall maintain partnerships with the South Florida State College, the Highlands County School District, local Chambers of Commerce, and CareerSource Heartland for the purpose of providing education and training programs that concentrate on the labor skills needed by the local business community.

Policy 3.1: Business Presentations

- A. The EDO shall continue to conduct annual, publicized presentations to inform area businesses and residents of grants, loans, and other assistance available.
- B. The EDO, shall encourage partnerships between existing and potential businesses and educational institutions to develop educational programs that will utilize new and existing technologies as they become available and widely utilized in the marketplace.
- C. The EDO, shall encourage business and trade associations to develop apprenticeship programs and internships with existing and potential businesses.

Policy 3.2: School-Based Economic Awareness

- A. The EDO shall work in coordination with public schools and other institutions to incorporate basic economic awareness in public school curricula.
- B. The County shall consider utilizing its various departments for internship opportunities, school visits, and presentations to educate students of the role of government in the local economy.

- C. The EDO shall coordinate with educational institutions and the business community to encourage the development of educational programs, which provide students with skills matching the needs of local employers.

Policy 3.3: Vocational and Advanced Training

The EDO shall partner with CareerSource as needed in the survey of local business and prospective employers to identify their job skill and manpower needs. The County shall encourage educational and other institutions to develop and implement training programs. The EDO shall foster partnerships to meet these needs, as well as attract, expand, and retain targeted, high-value industry and sustain the economy.

- A. The County and the EDO shall foster and support implementation and continuation of the Florida Career and Professional Education Act, F.S. 1003.491 to provide a planning partnership between the business and education communities.
- B. The EDO shall foster partnerships between the business and education communities in order to attract, expand, and retain targeted, high-value industry and to sustain a strong, knowledge-based economy.
- C. With the aged population in the County continuing to grow rapidly, the County shall encourage State and local nursing programs to provide training in geriatric care and shall encourage the State University System and local and regional hospitals to continue to improve geriatric services in the County.
- D. With the aged population in the County continuing to grow rapidly, the County shall encourage State and local nursing programs to provide training in geriatric care and shall encourage the State University System and local and regional hospitals to continue to improve geriatric services in the County.
- E. The County shall encourage multifamily housing and mixed use development where housing, shopping, recreation, medical and other services and facilities are in close proximity to one another, allowing senior citizens to perform needed and desired daily activities without the need to own an automobile or to drive to a destination.

OBJECTIVE 4: SUPPORT OF AIRPORTS

The County shall support airport activities that increase economic opportunities in the County; provided the opportunities do not increase any negative effects beyond an acceptable level.