

## CHAPTER 11

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

### **SUMMARY**

The City of Palm Coast is committed to supporting sustainable economic growth and development strategies to enhance the quality of life for all residents, businesses, and visitors. This commitment is encapsulated in Goal 11.1, which outlines strategic objectives and policies directed at spurring economic growth by optimizing the provision of infrastructure, streamlining the development review process, proactively consider the location of employment centers, supporting small businesses, and being an affiliate in collaborative partnerships that drive economic prosperity.

### **GOAL 11.1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Foster a sustainable economic environment to create employment opportunities, business growth, and diversified tax base.** 

#### **Objective 11.1 – Robust, Diversified, and Resilient Local Economic Environment**

Foster a dynamic and robust economic environment that targets industry sectors, anticipates future industry trends, and leverages local strengths to build a diversified and resilient economy. 

**Policy 11.1.1.1** – Establish a bold and future-focused economic development plan that underpins a strong local economy and anticipates changes in industry, technology, education, workforce development, supply chains, and the evolution of technologies and production systems.

**Policy 11.1.1.2** - Prioritize the creation of opportunities for, expansion of, and retention of industry sectors that support the creation of a resilient and diverse economy and tax base by recruiting investments in targeted industries related to Advanced Manufacturing, Corporate Headquarters, Aviation & Aerospace, Logistics & Warehousing, and Healthcare Training & Research.

**Policy 11.1.1.3** – Expand the availability and skills of the City’s workforce by partnering with local and regional education entities, including the county’s public school system, career-technical schools, and colleges, to develop programs that will inspire our students, meet the educational needs of targeted industry sectors, and supply future workforce demands.

**Policy 11.1.1.4** – Maintain emphasis on the expansion of local businesses and promotion of entrepreneurs, who bring value to the City’s economy and its citizens.

**Policy 11.1.1.5** – Establish a site development process that ensures the City has an inventory of shovel-ready economic employment center sites ready to meet the needs of potential business and industry.

## **Objective 11.1.2 – Targeted Economic Employment Centers and Jobs**



Create a thriving economic environment that attracts new industries, enables existing business to expand, and creates workforce opportunities by implementing strategic land use planning, infrastructure enhancement, and community development practices in targeted locations and sites.

**Policy 11.1.2.1** – Maintain an inventory of targeted economic employment hubs that have available, development-ready sites, and suitable land uses for industrial, office professional, and commercial development. Ensure the targeted economic employment hubs have adequate land resources strategically located with access to transportation and utility infrastructure available for future business attraction and expansion.

**Policy 11.1.2.2** – Create incentives and leverage funding for the development of economic employment center through the establishment of incentive zones that prioritize capital investments that develop infrastructure critical to economic development-such as reliable transportation networks, rail, multi-modal transportation, and utilities, which will support the development of employment centers and attract new businesses.

**Policy 11.1.2.3** – Utilize private and public partnerships to allocate specific zones within the City for the establishment of significant economic employment hubs capable of hosting diverse businesses and industries. The City shall focus its economic development efforts and incentives within these economic employment hubs.

**Policy 11.1.2.4** – Promote the creation of mixed-use developments integrating housing, commerce, and office spaces to foster economic employment hubs where the workforce can live, work, and enjoy recreational activities, thus minimizing the necessity for extensive commuting.

**Policy 11.1.2.5** - Increase the attraction and retention of the City's workforce by increasing (1.) the number of amenities geared towards families, working age adults, and young people, (2.) the creation of employment opportunities, (3.) creating a greater awareness of local opportunities, and (4.) ensuring the availability of workforce housing.

**Policy 11.1.2.6** Continue to evaluate the usage of City property located in areas suitable for locations for targeted industries and economic development opportunities.

## **Objective 11.1.3 – Investment in Infrastructure**



Improve and extend the capacity of City infrastructure, public services, and related facilities to accommodate the attraction and expansion of industries and businesses.

**Policy 11.1.3.1** Foster the development of economic employment hubs by targeting specific sites that have access to needed critical infrastructure facilities, services, and systems including utilities, transportation, and communications. Promote these sites through the City's planning initiatives, economic incentives, and development practices.

**Policy 11.1.3.2** Optimize the utilization of the City's existing infrastructure, public services, and facilities by placing economic employment hubs in areas that are currently by the City's infrastructure services and systems.

**Policy 11.1.3.3** Ensure public utility infrastructure services—potable water, sanitary sewer, electric, natural gas, and others—extend to lands targeted as economic employment hubs.

Future expansion of services should be prioritized through the City's capital improvement efforts.

**Policy 11.1.3.4** Utilize the City's transportation planning efforts to support the City's economic priorities by (1.) determining economic facility needs, (2.) identifying deficiencies, and (3.) scheduling capital improvements and facility expansions through the City's Capital Improvement Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan.

**Policy 11.1.3.5** Continue to evaluate the usage of City property located in areas suitable for the installation of communications towers that are also in prime locations where coverage and service gaps of wireless service providers exist, as identified in the most recent iteration of the Wireless Master Plan.

#### **Objective 11.1.4 – Business Attraction and Retention**

Implement strategies to market, recruit, and support new and expanding businesses to (1.) create sustained economic growth and enhanced quality of life for its residents, (2.) promote the City of Palm Coast as a premier destination for business and investment, (3.) attract industries that offer well-paying jobs and contribute to economic diversification.

**Policy 11.1.4.1** – Create a regional brand to market Palm Coast as a premier destination for targeted industries and site selection consultants. The branding initiative shall consider materials that show the City as a competitor in attracting new businesses and investments.

**Policy 11.1.4.2** – Conduct a comprehensive economic study, at least every ten (10) years to identify target industries, target markets, workforce needs, and potential opportunities to create a competitive environment. This study will be used to form strategies to enhance the City's economic sustainability and growth.

**Policy 11.1.4.3** – Based on the City of Palm Coast's Targeted Industry Feasibility Study, the City shall identify specific industries and companies for recruitment, focusing on those that align with the City's objective of providing well-paying jobs. This targeted recruitment effort will help attract businesses that contribute to economic growth and job creation.

**Policy 11.1.4.4** – Develop incentive programs and streamline the permitting processes to encourage the relocation and expansion of businesses job opportunities and contribute to a robust local economy.

#### **Objective 11.1.5 – Small Business and Entrepreneur Development**

Implement policies that support and empower local entrepreneurs. Provide comprehensive support to small businesses, streamline regulatory processes, and create a collaborative environment for growth and success.

**Policy 11.1.5.1** – Continue to contract and liaise with the Florida Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to enable City staff to offer counseling, training, and resources tailored to support the City's entrepreneurs in initiating and expanding their business. Continue working with the county's workforce development providers including the SBDC and local colleges to provide essential business development services including business plan formulation, financial planning, marketing assistance, and regulatory counsel.

**Policy 11.1.5.2** – Collaborate with Business Groups, regional economic development organizations, universities/colleges, and private enterprises to create collaborative alliances between the public and private sectors, and to implement mentorship initiatives, networking gatherings, and programs for nurturing and accelerating startups.

**Policy 11.1.5.3** – Consider the implementation of online systems, dedicated project management support, and coordination among departments to minimize delays and alleviate administrative hurdles for small business startups.

**Policy 11.1.5.4** – The City shall continue to support the "Buy Local" and other initiatives aimed at boosting locally-owned small businesses by leveraging marketing strategies, hosting events, and offering incentives to encourage residents to support them.

#### **Objective 11.1.6 - Support Workforce Development Opportunities**

Attract, retain, and support Palm Coast's diverse workforce by creating a comprehensive environment that addresses housing, employment, education, community engagement, and quality of life factors, resulting in a vibrant community that offers a range of opportunities for personal and professional growth.

**Policy 11.1.6.1** – Promote the development of affordable and diverse housing options, including rental units, starter homes, and co-living spaces, by partnering with developers, non-profit organizations, and financial institutions to provide technical support for the construction of affordable workforce housing.

**Policy 11.1.6.2** – Support the growth of industries and sectors that offer career paths in targeted industries for entry-level workers, such as technology, healthcare, creative industries, and green technologies.

**Policy 11.1.6.3** - Create an internship program within the City offices to allow high-school students to work for the City during the summer months, and event possibly extend that into the school year.

**Policy 11.1.6.4** – The City shall create and support partners in the creation of internship, apprenticeship, and mentorship programs in collaboration with local businesses, educational institutions, and industry organizations to provide entry-level persons with valuable work experience and career development opportunities.

**Policy 11.1.6.5** – The City shall work closely with and support the Flagler County School system in developing K-12 programs that are forward looking and recognize the changing landscape of industry and employment, and how these changes will shape the next generation of our workforce.

**Policy 11.1.6.6** – The City shall invest in amenities and services that enhance the quality of life for entry-level workforce residents, such as parks, recreational facilities, cultural venues, and public transportation.

**Policy 11.1.6.7** – The City shall support the development of vibrant, walkable neighborhoods with a mix of residential, commercial, and entertainment options that attract entry-level workforce, families, and working age adults.

**Policy 11.1.6.8** – The City shall create opportunities for secondary school students to participate in local decision-making processes, such as youth advisory councils or ad-hoc members on community boards, to become exposed to formal, organized processes.

**Policy 11.1.6.9** – The City shall develop a targeted marketing campaign to highlight the City as an attractive destination for entry-level professionals, showcasing its career opportunities, lifestyle, and amenities.

**Policy 11.1.6.10** – The City shall utilize social media, digital platforms, and partnerships with influencers and local organizations to promote workforce development initiatives.

**Policy 11.1.6.11** – The City shall partner with the Flagler County School District and other educational institutions to target job training and establish business-mentoring programs that train the City's youth to work in areas identified as a need to serve area industry and business.

**Policy 11.1.6.12** – Collaborate with the region's post-secondary school intuitions regarding opportunities for the creation of workforce training programs for targeted industries, and highlight the existence, exceptional ability, and willingness to provide customized training programs to companies looking to establish a location in the area.

**Policy 11.1.6.13** - The City will provide technical assistance and coordinate with the Florida Department of Corrections, the Flagler County Sheriff's Office, and local and regional employers and nonprofit organizations, to assist formerly incarcerated individuals in accessing workforce training opportunities, obtaining and maintaining employment, and receiving support services necessary to thrive in today's economy.

**Policy 11.1.6.14** - The City shall coordinate with the Flagler County School District, Daytona State College, Flagler Technical Collage, employers, and other public and private partners as needed, to promote the advanced technology training and professional development opportunities to better position Palm Coast's workforce in obtaining employment in targeted industries.

### **Objective 11.1.7 – Create a Vibrant Business Climate**



Address the needs of existing businesses while attracting new investments and ensuring the city remains competitive in a global marketplace.

**Policy 11.1.7.1** – The City shall conduct a thorough assessment of existing commercial and industrial businesses within the city. This analysis shall identify strengths and gaps in the current economic structure.

**Policy 11.1.7.2** - Conduct a survey of industrial and relative commercial businesses that is based on NAICS code classification.

**Policy 11.1.7.3** - Work with local businesses, small manufacturers, and artisan businesses to assist in the evaluation of the LDC to identify barriers and codes that inhibit diversity and opportunity.

**Policy 11.1.7.4** - The City shall establish a "Fast-Track" permitting process for targeted industries or projects that meet specific criteria, such as job creation, investment thresholds, or

location within designated employment centers. This expedited process will prioritize the review and approval of these projects to facilitate their timely development.

**Policy 11.1.7.5** - Prior to application submittal, the City shall offer regular pre-application or due diligence meetings to enable applicants and City technical staff to discuss proposed development applications.

**Policy 11.1.7.6** - Implement an online permitting and licensing system to allow businesses to submit applications, pay fees, and track the status of their requests electronically. This system will streamline the process, reduce paperwork, and provide greater transparency and accessibility for businesses. The City will continue to assess and enhance these technological offerings to optimize customer service for our citizens.

**Policy 11.1.7.7** – The City shall periodically review, and if necessary, update its Land Development Code, Code of Ordinances and Technical Manuals to ensure they are consistent with best practices, and do not create unnecessary barriers or delays for new business development. Any modifications will also adhere to the 2050 Comprehensive Plan.

**Policy 11.1.7.8** – The City shall foster a welcoming environment for global direct investment by providing affordable entry opportunities for global companies that align with the city's targeted industries.

**Policy 11.1.7.9** – To cultivate an entrepreneurial ecosystem and support local businesses, the City shall establish incubators for local entrepreneurs and startups in new, existing, or surplus buildings.

**Policy 11.1.7.10** – Promote the development of CRA areas by targeting incentives and economic development initiatives in this area.

**Policy 11.1.7.11** - Support the creation of spaces that foster entrepreneurship in the City such as maker spaces, business incubators, farmer's markets, and commercial kitchens.

**Policy 11.1.7.12** – The City shall seek to recruit, maintain, and support Palm Coast's growing multi-cultural business community.

**Policy 11.1.7.13** – The City shall leverage the cultural and ethnic diversity of the community to grow its international economic and business ties.

### **Objective 11.1.8 – Maintaining a High Quality of Life**



The City of Palm Coast is dedicated to maintaining a thriving, sustainable, and engaged community.

**Policy 11.1.8.1** - The City shall continue to focus on one of our greatest assets by expanding and maintaining green spaces, parks, and recreational areas.

**Policy 11.1.8.2** – The City shall continue to be a leader in community engagement by further developing cutting edge interaction with our citizens via accessible online platform for residents to provide feedback and stay informed about city initiatives and events.

**Policy 11.1.8.3** – Promoting the use of renewable energy sources and supporting initiatives for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Policy 11.1.8.4** – Foster strong community engagement by organizing regular town hall meetings, community forums, and public consultations to ensure residents have a voice in local decision-making.

**Policy 11.1.8.5** – The City shall regularly assess and upgrade public infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water and sewer systems, and public buildings.

**Policy 11.1.8.6** – The City shall develop and maintain a comprehensive public transportation system that is efficient, reliable, and accessible to all residents.

**Policy 11.1.8.7** – The City shall promote alternative transportation modes, such as biking and walking, by creating safe and well-maintained pedestrian and cycling pathways.

**Policy 11.1.8.8** – The City shall continue to have responsive code enforcement, rental registration program, and foreclosed and abandoned properties program to maintain neighborhoods.

**Policy 11.1.8.9** – The City shall continue efforts such as neighborhood signage, gateways, medians, neighborhood assessment plans, and community development block grant programs to promote neighborhood investment.

**Policy 11.1.8.10** – The City shall continue efforts to enhance the appeal of Palm Coast for prospective residents, businesses, and tourists by emphasizing its distinctive branding, cultivating a sense of hometown identity, preserving its natural assets, promoting an active and healthy lifestyle, and celebrating its rich cultural diversity.