

Economic Element



City of
ALACHUA

THE GOOD LIFE COMMUNITY

ECONOMIC ELEMENT

Mission Statement

The economic mission of The City of Alachua is to ensure that its citizens, business communities, schools, government, and area stakeholders work together for the common good to provide well-planned growth and an excellent quality of life for the community.

Goal 1: *Economic Principles*

To emphasize economic principles consistent with the City's Vision that support prosperity of the community and enhance its quality of life.

Objective 1.1: *Partnerships*

The City of Alachua shall utilize all opportunities to partner with local, state, and national economic development governmental and non-profit organizations. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

Policy 1.1.a: Actively work with local, state, regional, and national economic development organizations to provide the City of Alachua community with current and accurate information about business opportunities.

Policy 1.1.b: Actively work with Alachua County's primary economic development organization (EDO), the Council for Economic Outreach (CEO) and other EDO's as directed by the City Commission to market the community as an attractive location for compatible business and industry and to provide necessary support for existing business and industry.

Policy 1.1.c: The City will continue to consider incorporating into its annual budget funds to carry out the implementation of policy 1.1.b of the Economic Element.

Measurements

- a) *Number of new developments initiated by economic development organizations*
- b) *Number of shared economic development meetings held*
- c) *Number of inquiries about Alachua's economic climate made to local economic development organizations*

Objective 1.2: *Marketing Analysis*

The City of Alachua shall anticipate the future economic needs of the community by analyzing the past, current, and future economic trends of the local, state, and national environment. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

Policy 1.2.a: Perform an analysis at least concurrent with the City's Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) of the city's competitiveness in economic development on a local, regional, state, and national basis. Such an analysis should include but not be limited to:

- a. The city's tax and fee structure
- b. The city's zoning and land use regulations
- c. The city's urban service boundary and future land use designation
- d. The city's enclaves and annexation plans
- e. The city's utility infrastructure, including rates and capacity levels
- f. The city's available commercial and industrial buildings and land
- g. The city's labor force characteristics
- h. The city's community redevelopment plan and boundary

Policy 1.2.b: Work with the CEO and other interested economic development agencies to develop a plan to address any deficiencies found in the analysis designated in policy 1.2.a. of the Economic Element.

Policy 1.2.c: Use quality of housing inventory or residential land inventory as part of the marketing materials to entice targeted companies to relocate to our area.

Measurements

- a) Number of commercial and industrial site plan approvals*
- b) Timeliness and accuracy of City of Alachua business inventory*
- c) Distribution of marketing material produced by the City*

Objective 1.3: *Small, Women, and Minority Owned Businesses*

The City of Alachua will encourage a business climate conducive to but not limited to the development, retention, expansion, and creation of local jobs and encouraging small, women, and minority owned businesses. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

Policy 1.3.a: Promote small business owner information and training.

Policy 1.3.b: Update the Comp Plan to include provisions to support the creation of home-occupations by the time of the next EAR.

Policy 1.3.c: Support and encourage the development of public/private partnerships which assist small and minority businesses with access to affordable capital and/or technical assistance that may otherwise not be available for startup, retention and/or expansion.

Policy 1.3.d: Through the LDR maintain a diverse business mix in addition to the City's Technology Activity Center.

Measurements

- (a) Number of resources identified to address small business owner needs*
- (b) Number of new public/private partnerships identified to assist with capital and technical assistance needs*

Objective 1.4: *Agricultural Analysis*

The City of Alachua shall strengthen the city's agricultural economic base and maintain the community's agricultural character. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

Policy 1.4.a: Allow for flexible, reasonable, and complimentary non-conforming uses on land with agricultural land use and zoning to maintain the economic viability of the land.

Policy 1.4.b: Recognizing that Agriculture is a significant component of the current economic base, the City shall analyze the economic trends over the next five years to better protect the agricultural community.

Policy 1.4.c: Recognizing the economic value of Alachua's environmental character, the City shall protect Alachua's scenic surroundings to maintain the City's economic competitiveness through use of FLUM designations, land acquisition and other regulatory tools.

Policy 1.4.d: Consider creation of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to protect undeveloped agricultural land.

Policy 1.4.e: The City may consider the development of sending and receiving zones to implement an adopted TDR program.

Measurements

- a. Number of agricultural land use acres*
- b. Number of agricultural land use acres amended to different land use type*
- c. Number of agricultural land use acres added to the municipal boundaries*
- d. Growth rate of agricultural loans*
- e. Success of agricultural loans*

Objective 1.5: *Economic Rehabilitation*

The City of Alachua shall uphold a productive economic climate in all areas of the City. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

Policy 1.5.a: Identify blighted or nearly blighted areas that can be included in an inventory of existing structures that are candidates for remodeling and/or redevelopment.

Policy 1.5.b: Seek funding to aid in transforming structures in objective 1.5 of the Economic Element into the best possible use.

Policy 1.5.c: Identify areas that have access to existing infrastructure that is undeveloped or underdeveloped and consider incentives that encourage enhancements to these parcels, if appropriate.

Policy 1.5.d: Evaluate the need to expand and/or create other Redevelopment Districts to eliminate slum and blight.

Policy 1.5.e: Include a demonstration of funding for redevelopment and development projects requiring land use amendments in the City to the Mayor and Commission.

Measurements

- a) Number of structures renovated with public funds*
- b) Number of derelict areas: Existing conditions (existing use) survey results*
- c) Growth rate of property value relative to the rest of the City*
- d) Number of building permits obtained in target areas*
- e) Growth rate of or number of occupational licenses issued in target area*

Objective 1.6: *Mixed Use, Workforce Housing*

The City shall encourage the development of quality workforce housing, proximate to employment locations, at affordable prices to create opportunities for corporate investment in the City of Alachua. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

- Policy 1.6.a: Create inventory of parcels, including the required infrastructure needed to facilitate single-family and multi-family dwellings in a well-defined residential development.
- Policy 1.6.b: Consider a mix of owner-occupied and rental housing for employees that will maintain the neighborhood character and community fabric.
- Policy 1.6.c: Allow single-family and multi-family residential housing in close proximity to employment centers within appropriate land use categories and zoning districts.
- Policy 1.6.d: Encourage planned neighborhoods that have amenities such as sidewalks and other recreational opportunities that achieve walkable communities in close proximity to employers.
- Policy 1.6.e: Forge partnerships with private and public sectors to create an atmosphere that attracts employers to our community by planning for the availability of safe and energy efficient workforce housing.
- Policy 1.6.f: Consider incentives for investors, who develop workforce housing for diverse housing types and prices, by supporting grant proposals and funding requests to various agencies and organizations.
- Policy 1.6.g: Encourage the education of prospective low- to moderate-income first time home-buyers about the availability of financial and homeowner workshops that will help move them from renters to homeowners.
- Policy 1.6.h: Seek funding to aid in mixed-use neighborhood development.

Measurements

- a. *Jobs/housing balance: number of people working in Alachua divided by workforce population*
- b. *Rent/income ratio: The ratio of median annual rents of dwellings to the median annual household incomes of renters (US Dollars)*
- c. *Average travel time to work*
- d. *Amount of public funds spent on mixed-use or mixed income development*

Objective 1.7: *Central City Business District (CCBD) /Historic Preservation*

The City of Alachua shall encourage the preservation of its historic and cultural resources to strengthen the economic viability of Alachua's Central Business District and Downtown. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

- Policy 1.7.a: Enhance the economic vitality of the historic areas by considering incentives to locate diverse pedestrian friendly and culturally-oriented businesses in the historic district.
- Policy 1.7.b: Analyze the use of funds from a variety of sources to consider providing incentives for business location and expansion within the CCBD.
- Policy 1.7.c: Through innovative design, encourage pedestrian friendly and culturally oriented events in the historic district.
- Policy 1.7.d: Prioritize investing in projects in the historic and downtown redevelopment area districts.
- Policy 1.7.e: Encourage small business and entrepreneurial investors by providing promotional signs and materials that market the development of Alachua's downtown character. Funding sources will include redevelopment district tax increment funds. This may include uniform streets signage, marker plaques, or a welcome gateway sign.
- Policy 1.7.f: Consider creating a sign ordinance specifically for properties in the historic district, redevelopment district, and/or CCBD.
- Policy 1.7.g: Strive to preserve the stability of Alachua's historic charm.
- Policy 1.7.h: Evaluate the economic conditions and appearance of the historic district at least current with the EAR review.
- Policy 1.7.i: Utilize the resources of the Community Redevelopment Agency to encourage existing and new business investments and establish revitalization in the downtown area.

Policy 1.7.j: Evaluate implementing the Main Street program.

Measurements

- a. *Number of historic buildings*
- b. *Number of events held in central city business district and historic district*
- c. *Number of public dollars spent to remodel historic structures*
- d. *Growth rate of property values in historic area, downtown, and central city business district*
- e. *Number of new or replaced City signs*
- f. *Growth rate of or number of occupational licenses issued in target area*

Objective 1.8: Real Estate Analysis

The City of Alachua should proactively identify real estate market needs and encourage appropriate real estate uses in target areas. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

Policy 1.8.a: Prepare a highest and best use analysis of the four corners of the US 441/I-75 Activity Center.

Policy 1.8.b: Streamline the review of Site Plans in the US 441/I-75 Activity Center.

Policy 1.8.c: Prepare a business inventory, organized according to the North American Industrial Classification System, at least current with the EAR review.

Policy 1.8.d: Prepare a biannual real estate market analysis, which reviews retail, office, residential, and industrial land use needs.

Policy 1.8.e: Consider providing incentives to attract development types identified as underprovided in the biannual real estate market analysis. Redevelopment district tax increment funding is an appropriate, variable source of such funds.

Policy 1.8.f: Identify land with an Agricultural land use designation that is not being used for an active agri-business activity that may be converted to residential or commercial use and consider providing incentives to owners to convert these identified parcels to the residential or commercial designation without promoting urban sprawl.

Measurements

- a) *Number of site plan approvals in target areas*
- b) *Growth rate of property values in target areas*
- c) *Growth rate of or number of occupational licenses issued in target area*

Objective 1.9: Education

The City of Alachua should provide an educational climate in the city conducive to offering and improving economic opportunities to the citizens that will ensure a high quality of life for all of the community. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

- Policy 1.9.a: Promote and enhance educational and vocational customized training opportunities for workforce development in the city.
- Policy 1.9.b: Consider providing incentives for Santa Fe Community College to locate and sustain an educational center in the city.
- Policy 1.9.c: Work with Santa Fe Community College to reduce barriers to college attendance that face community members.
- Policy 1.9.d: Work with private and corporate businesses to reduce barriers to college attendance that face community members.
- Policy 1.9.e: Partner with private and corporate businesses and Santa Fe Community College to ensure maximum use of the facilities and services at Santa Fe Community College's City of Alachua educational center.
- Policy 1.9.f: Work with private and corporate businesses, Santa Fe Community College, and the community to promote and improve education for all the city's citizens.
- Policy 1.9.g: Work with the University of Florida, Santa Fe Community College, and the Alachua County School Board to promote and improve education for all the city's citizens.
- Policy 1.9.h: Encourage a technology entrepreneurship hub in partnership with the Progress Corporate Park, Santa Fe Community College, and the University of Florida.

Policy 1.9.i: Create a technology activity center to stimulate cooperative learning, research, entrepreneurial activities, and associated businesses on the US Highway 441 corridor.

Measurements:

- a) attendance rates at the city's various educational facilities*
- b) graduation rates from the city's various educational programs*
- c) variety of courses and programs offered at city's various educational facilities*
- d) variety of times the city's various educational facilities are used*
- e) types of class schedules used by city residents*
- f) student profiles of citizens who use the city's educational facilities*
- g) demographic surveys of city's businesses that use the city's educational facilities*

Objective 1.10: Recreation

The City of Alachua should provide recreational facilities and opportunities to all citizens of Alachua to enhance the quality of life and attract high quality growth to the city. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

Policy 1.10.a: Provide appropriately funded and high quality facilities for recreation.

Policy 1.10.b: Promote use of city facilities by persons of all ages and economic groups.

Policy 1.10.c: Seek grant funding as available to enhance recreational facilities and funding of events.

Policy 1.10.d: Promote a variety of parks and open space including large scale parks and neighborhood parks.

Policy 1.10.e: Pursue public/private partnerships to improve recreation opportunities within the city.

Policy 1.10.f: Work with organizations such as the Alachua Chamber of Commerce and Alachua Business League to sponsor events such as and including the July 4th Celebration, the Christmas Parade, Main Street Festival, and the Spring Festival.

Policy 1.10.g: Explore and utilize all appropriate means of funding available for recreational facilities concurrent with all development orders and Florida State Statutes.

Policy 1.10.h: Consider establishing a fund to bring youth tournaments to Alachua, with emphasis on overnight stays that will use the city's motels, restaurants and stores, such as the Babe Ruth Softball Series.

Policy 1.10.i: Recognize the value of private recreation, such as golf courses, dining, movies, and more, in attracting visitors and high quality growth and provide a business friendly environment.

Measurements

- a) *Usage of the city's recreation facilities by persons of all ages*
- b) *Usage of the city's recreation facilities for diverse types of recreation opportunities*
- c) *Number of persons attending events sponsored by the city and public/private partnerships*
- d) *Variety of times the city's recreation facilities are used*
- e) *Success of private recreational and cultural enterprises*

Objective 1.11: Transportation

The City of Alachua should provide Alachua's residents transportation access to neighboring communities and link available workers in neighboring communities to available employment opportunities in Alachua. In order to accomplish this goal, the City of Alachua may, by way of illustration, but not by way of limitation:

Policy 1.11.a: Seek appropriate mass transit to service employment opportunities available in the City.

Policy 1.11.b: Collaborate with the Gainesville Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO), Regional Transit System, Florida Department of Transportation, Workforce Development Board and private service providers to offer mass and public transportation options from Gainesville to Alachua.

Policy 1.11.c: Seek funds to support alternative transportation options.

Measurements

- a) *Number of metropolitan bus stops in Alachua*
- b) *Number of people with access to public transportation within ½ mile of home*
- c) *Number of people employed in Alachua that take public transit to work*
- d) *Number of bus routes in Alachua*
- e) *Monthly ridership rates in Alachua*
- f) *Number of people repetitively traveling between the City of Alachua and neighboring municipalities, such as Gainesville.*

DEFINITIONS

Blight (Slum and Blight): per State Statue, Chapter 163.340

An area in which there are a substantial number of deteriorated, or deteriorating structures, in which conditions, as indicated by government-maintained statistics or other studies, are leading to economic distress or endanger life or property, and in which two or more of the following factors are present:

- a. Predominance of defective or inadequate streetlayout, parking facilities, roadways, bridges, or public transportation facilities;
- b. Aggregate assessed values of real property in the area for ad valorem tax purposes have failed to show any appreciable increase over the 5 years prior to the finding of such conditions;
- c. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
- d. Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;
- e. Deterioration of site or other improvements;
- f. Inadequate and outdated building density patterns;
- g. Falling lease rates per square foot of office, commercial, or industrial space compared to the remainder of the county or municipality;
- h. Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
- i. Residential and commercial vacancy rates higher in the area than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- j. Incidence of crime in the area higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- k. Fire and emergency medical service calls to the area proportionately higher than in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- l. A greater number of violations of the Florida Building Code in the area than the number of violations recorded in the remainder of the county or municipality;
- m. Diversity of ownership or defective or unusual conditions of title which prevent the free alienability of land within the deteriorated or hazardous area; or
- n. Governmentally owned property with adverse environmental conditions caused by a public or private entity.

However, the term "blighted area" also means any area in which at least one of the factors identified in paragraphs (a) through (n) are present and all taxing authorities subject to s. 163.387(2)(a) agree, either by interlocal agreement or agreements with the agency or by resolution, that the area is blighted. Such agreement or resolution shall only determine that the area is blighted. For purposes of qualifying for the tax credits authorized in chapter 220, "blighted area" means an area as defined in this subsection.

Development: Carrying out of any building activity or mining operation, the making of any material change in the use or appearance of any structure or land, or the dividing of land into 3 or more parcels. Uses of development follow the ss. 380.04 definition.

Economic base (model): The companies that provide jobs in a given community or geographic location.

The economic base model uses a multiplier to link changes in a regional economy to changes in export activity (basis) and (2) changes in demand for more local activity (non-basic). The model assumes that money earned through exports generates demand for more local, or non-basic, activity.

Economic development: A process that begins when a community makes itself ready to accommodate the retention, startup, location, or expansion of an enterprise. Economic development occurs when a local economy is vitalized by the creation of one or more jobs, an increase in community wealth, or the useful distribution of capital that arrives from outside sources.

Economic Development Organization (EDO): A group working together for economic development.

Incentive: A motivational offer intended to persuade a prospective development to choose one location over another.

Industry classifications: A list of the types of operations or enterprises that exist under the term industrial (industry). Industrial classification is the act of organizing a list of the types industrial operations or enterprises. For example, the North American Industry Classification System.

Main Street program: A technical assistance program administered by the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State, to traditional historic commercial corridors. The Bureau conducts statewide programs aimed at identifying, evaluating, and preserving Florida's historic resources. Main Street, with its emphasis on preservation, is an effective strategy in achieving these goals in Florida's historic retail districts.

Pedestrian-oriented development: Development that is designed with an emphasis primarily on the street sidewalk and on pedestrian access to the site and building(s), rather than emphasizing personal-vehicle access and parking. Buildings generally are placed close to the street and the main entrance is oriented to the street's sidewalk. Typically, buildings cover a large portion of the site. Although parking areas may be provided, they are generally limited in size and are located at the side or rear of the buildings. This type of development also is characterized by the mix of uses within walking distance of one another, allowing people to move easily among many destinations.

Target area: An identified region or list of potential locations to be considered for expanding or relocating the operations of an enterprise or for starting up a venture. Targeting an area in preparation for doing location work generally comes at the second stage of the site selection process as described in the definition of a site search.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): A TDR program seeks to preserve landowners' asset value by moving the right to develop from a location where development is prohibited (e.g., for environmental reasons) to a location where development is encouraged. TDR works as follows: developers in urban "receiving" areas buy development rights to land in rural "sending" areas; the transfer of rights allows the developers to increase the density and intensity of their developments.

Sending zone: The environmental protection zone where development rights are separated. It is called a sending zone because the development rights are "sent" out of it.

Receiving zone: A zone where a developer buys a right to build more units than currently permitted in the local zoning ordinance. These zones "receive" development rights.

Walkable: Refers to a single route, or a system of routes, between points that is relatively short, barrier-free, interesting, safe, well-lighted and comfortable, inviting pedestrian travel.

Workforce: All workers in a location (workforce) or defined geographic area; a count or projection of the number of people working in an area.

Workforce housing: Housing that is 1) affordable to households of low and moderate income in a range of 80 -120% of area median income (AMI) and 2) in a location proximate to employment centers.