

## XI

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

Florida's history has been one of remarkable change: from Henry Flagler's opulent resorts and railroad, to a retirement haven (with the advent of air conditioning), to a technology and tourism rich state grown from the seeds of the space program in Cape Canaveral and Disney. Few states have literally weathered the pressures of change as well as Florida has. As the fourth most populous state in the U.S., Florida's population growth continues to drive new challenges and opportunities to the Sunshine State. The State is now projected to double in population by 2060, growing from roughly 18 million people today to upwards of 36 million in just slightly more than five decades. While the majority of this growth is anticipated to concentrate in the coastal regions of south Florida, and along the I-4 corridor between Orlando and Tampa, constraints relative to the environment, infrastructure capacity, fiscal impacts and public policy will result in pushing this growth and its economic pressure throughout the state.

Although the pressure this growth will impose on land resources, infrastructure, governmental services, and the day-to-day quality of life of Floridians is not without tremendous challenges, for rural counties like Taylor County, such pressures can help create long term economic opportunities. By implementing intelligent-growth principles, such as best land use practices and balanced environmental stewardship, Taylor County can create a quality of life that will differentiate the County from competing, less planned regions.

Capitalizing on intelligent growth alone, however, will not remedy the economic difficulties of job constrained and economically isolated rural communities, such as Taylor County. Governor Christ's re-designation of Taylor County as one of Florida's Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC) further frames the challenges facing Taylor County as it competes in today's ever changing economic landscape. According to the Governor's Executive Order, Taylor County is one of a handful of Florida counties "struggling to maintain, support or enhance job creating activity or to generate revenues for education and other critical government services such as infrastructure, transportation and safety." As the Executive Order further notes, these challenges threaten both the "well being and viability" of Taylor County. Although the RACEC designation qualifies the County for special assistance from the Governor's Office as well as other state and regional agencies and organizations, it leaves the principal task of creating an economically viable community to the citizens of Taylor County.

To embrace this task, the community engaged in the creation of a 50-year Vision for Taylor County. The preparation of the vision began in late April of 2007 and resulted in the adoption of the Taylor County Vision 2060 in September of 2008. Vision 2060 addressed not only the future development pattern that would best serve Taylor County but also addressed economic conditions in Taylor County and recommended the actions that should be considered to advance future economic development and revitalization. In conjunction with the economic analysis prepared for Vision 2060, the Taylor County Development Authority (TCDA) has prepared the Taylor County Economic Development Plan. The Taylor County Economic Development Plan provides the strategies and action plan that will allow the County to harness the pressures of Florida's dynamic growth while at the same time utilizing its available resources to support an integrated approach to economic growth which promotes regional economic health through a broader emphasis on community and human development. Taylor County Vision 2060 and the TCDA's Taylor County Economic Development Plan provide the foundation for and basis for formulating the Economic Development Element of the Taylor County Comprehensive Plan.

The economic development model embraced by Taylor County looks beyond city and county borders to the larger regional economy. Instead of targeting individual firms, this model promotes industry clusters, concentrations of interconnected businesses that can be engines for global competitiveness. It creates an environment where all businesses have the chance to succeed. The approach to economic development for Taylor County embraces the following components:

- An integrated approach where government, business, education and the community work together;
- Regional collaboration;
- Promoting Industry Clusters;
- Local focus to retain and expand business;
- Intelligent growth policies;
- Compact development;
- Environmental Responsibility;
- Human investment and Workforce Talent; and
- Poverty reduction and corporate responsibility.

The Taylor County Board of County Commissioners recognizes that incorporation of this optional Economic Development Element into the Taylor County Comprehensive Plan represents a critical link between comprehensive planning for a community and inducing successful economic development and revitalization. Having a distinctive and competitive identity will help Taylor County protect, sustain, and enhance a quality of life that is attractive for existing and future businesses and, residents and private investment.

## GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal XI. IMPLEMENT THE TAYLOR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE EXPANSION, RECRUITMENT, AND CREATION OF BUSINESSES WHICH GROW THE COUNTY'S LONG TERM AD-VALOREM TAX BASE AND RETAIN AND CREATE PERMANENT, VALUE-ADDED JOBS WHICH ADD TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF TAYLOR COUNTY CITIZENS.

OBJECTIVE XI.1 Aggressively pursue an economic development program that utilizes an integrated approach by all sectors to promote economic vitality within Taylor County, and in partnership with our neighbors in the larger region.

Policy X1.1 Government, business, education and the community should work together to create a vibrant local economy, through a long-term strategy that:

- Encourages local enterprise;
- Serves the needs of local residents, workers, and businesses;
- Promotes stable employment and revenues by building on competitive advantages;
- Protects a sustainable natural environment;
- Enhances personal freedom and the ability to pursue advancement; and
- Is capable of sustaining itself in the global marketplace.

Policy XI.2 Implement the vision for economic sustainability contained within the Taylor County Economic Development Plan and its updates.

Policy XI.3 Economic development efforts should be targeted to expand and locate businesses that drive new investment into the County, create high wage jobs which increase the standard of living in the County, and enhance skills training of existing and future residents. The growth of these value-added businesses in the County will in-turn help create the critical mass of investments, projects, and talent needed to help reduce poverty, promote jobs for existing residents, support K-12 and higher education, improve the skills of low-income individuals, address the needs of families moving off welfare, and enhance the availability in all sectors of the County for affordable transportation and housing.

Policy XI.4 Economic development efforts should give priority to supporting existing enterprises as a critical means to business expansion and job growth. Promote local industries, businesses, and employees to encourage entrepreneurship and to build locally based industries and businesses that can succeed among national competitors.

- Policy XI.5 Identify specific gaps and niches that can be filled by economic development in Taylor County. Promote a diversified range of specialized industry clusters drawing on local advantages to serve local, regional and international markets.
- Policy XI.6 Invest in and drive opportunities that advance the growth of leading-edge technologies, such as Lamda Rail, that support the ability of local enterprises to succeed, improve civic life, and provide open access to information and resources.
- Policy XI.7 Identify and implement efforts to drive targeted infrastructure to the County, advocating for State transportation initiatives to utilize Taylor County for strategic investments, such as high speed rail transportation.
- Policy XI.8 Evaluate economic development programs, investments, and subsidies based upon their long-term benefits and impacts on critical economic development objectives and the community as a whole, not just on near-term job or revenue increases.
- Policy XI.9 Because human resources are so valuable in the global economy, Taylor County will support programs that provide life-long skills and learning opportunities. The County will support the pursuit of sources of funding for investing in excellent schools, the location of post secondary institutions in Taylor County, and opportunities for continuing education and training available to all citizens.
- Policy XI.10 Taylor County will support and pursue economic development opportunities that maintain or improve the environmental and public health of the community.
- Policy XI.11 To support economic development, the County will implement the recommendations of Taylor County Vision 2060 by adopting land use policies that encourage compact, multi-dimensional land use patterns that ensure a mix of use, minimize the impact of the personal automobile, promotes walking, bicycling, and transit access to employment, education, recreation, entertainment, shopping and services, where possible. Economic development and transportation investments should reinforce these land use patterns and the ability to move people and goods by multi-modal alternatives wherever possible
- Policy XI.12 To promote an appropriate jobs-housing balance in Taylor County, all urban land use categories resulting from implementation of the

Taylor County Vision shall have a land use mix that promotes a jobs-to-housing balance as follows:

- Urban District: 0.75-1.25 jobs for each household.
- Coastal District: 0.50-1.0 jobs for each household.

Policy XI.13 Economic development efforts should support the creation and preservation of Taylor County's sense of uniqueness, attractiveness, history, cultural and social diversity, and include public gathering places and a strong local sense of place. Special emphasis shall be placed on working with appropriate state agencies to identify opportunities for providing additional, environmentally sustainable, public access points to the Gulf of Mexico and the rivers that are tributary to the Gulf.

OBJECTIVE XI.2 Implement the key recommendations of the Taylor County Economic Development Plan to induce sustainable economic development in Taylor County.

Policy XI.2.1 Create a regional industry association to take a leadership role in fostering collaborative relationships and provide functions such as common marketing, development training programs, cooperative buying, and other beneficial services that promote regional businesses.

Policy XI.2.2 Augment and appropriately fund the Taylor County Development Authority (TCDA) in a manner that will enhance the Authority's ability to aggressively implement and manage the initiatives outlined in the Economic Development Plan, including developing financial incentives to induce the expansion and attraction of targeted businesses.

Policy XI.2.3 Establish industry clusters for existing and emerging technologies with a competitive advantage for Taylor County and its workforce. Such sectors might include, for example, renewable and clean energy technologies (biofuels, solar, wind, etc.) manufacture of energy related devices, aquatic sciences related businesses, other natural-resources-based industries and technologies, and appropriate research and development related to them.

Policy XI.2.4 Designate Regional Employment Centers on the Future Land Use Map of Taylor County and pursue funding and public-private partnerships to create shovel-ready business and industrial sites within these employment centers.

Policy XI.2.5 Develop a set of workforce training incentives, such as the State's Quick Response Training and Incumbent Worker Training

Programs, to help businesses remain regionally and globally competitive.

Policy XI.2.6      The County will solicit support from regional, state and federal sources that specialize in assisting rural counties. The County will emphasize the development of transportation and utility infrastructure as a means for using public and private funding to induce growth in those areas of Taylor County where growth is encouraged by the Taylor County Vision 2060.

OBJECTIVE XI.3      Develop a One Year and Five Year Action Plan for implementing the Taylor County Economic Development Plan.

Policy XI.3.1      Develop a Five Year Action Plan focused on the areas of:

- Communication;
- Business development:
  - Competitiveness;
  - Business expansion;
  - Business recruitment;
  - Business creation;
- Regional Economic Centers; and
- Workforce/Talent.

Policy XI.3.2      The Taylor County Economic Development Authority (TCDA) shall facilitate a community-wide economic summit reinforcing the need for a collective vision and a focus on “targeted industries”.

Policy XI.3.3      The Taylor County Board of County Commissioners shall request the TCDA and Chamber of Commerce to establish four implementation/response teams to advance the four component areas of the Five Year Action Plan.

Policy XI.3.4      The Taylor County Commission shall establish a team of Economic Partners who will be charged with the responsibility of assisting the Commission and TCDA in advancing the broad objectives of the Taylor County Economic Development Plan.