

Economic Development Element

GOAL I: SUPPORT AND PROMOTE BALANCED AND ORDERLY ECONOMIC GROWTH; STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES; EXPAND AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES; AND PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION FOR ALL CITIZENS.

Objective A: Freeport's economy will become increasingly diversified.

Policy A.1: Maintain a list of target private and public industries which are most suitable for the current and potential assets of the City.

Policy A.2: Work with appropriate groups to promote economic development in targeted areas.

Policy A.3: Freeport shall establish an incentive program to redirect new economic development into existing vacant buildings within the Central Business District (CBD) to hinder commercial sprawl and maintain an active commercial core and tax base in the City.

Objective B: Provide opportunities for Freeport's workforce to obtain necessary work skills to qualify for higher wage jobs.

Policy B.1: Provide community based educational support for potential entrepreneurs to develop business skills.

Policy B.2: Promote development of a comprehensive program to facilitate market identification, management training, technical assistance, and improved capital access.

Policy B.3: Facilitate the development of business incubator facilities.

Policy B.4: Support financial assistance and specialized training programs to encourage the development of small businesses, minority and women-owned businesses and disadvantaged business enterprises.

Policy B.5: Identify local and special business funding needs and work with appropriate agencies to encourage funding of economically viable businesses and disadvantaged business enterprises.

Policy B.6: Support childcare programs for single parents pursuing higher education.

Policy B.7: Provide resident organizations information on, and assistance in, completing community development corporation applications to encourage revitalization and create job opportunities in the community.

Policy B.8: Assist neighborhoods in obtaining federal planning grants to stimulate business growth and job creation in neighborhood commercial areas.

Policy B.9: Promote the evaluation and update of community training programs to meet current and projected skills needs.

Policy B.10: Support an incentive program which will include among other things, in-plant training, rapid response training, job training partnerships and education vouchers to encourage the hiring and upgrading (training) of the local workforce.

Policy B.11: Facilitate the alignment of the workforce development goals with the long-range plans of the Comprehensive Plan, the State Comprehensive Plan, and the West Florida Strategic Regional Plan.

Objective C: **Modernize and continually improve access and communication links to the City for economic development.**

Policy C.1: Pursue annexation which proves to be cost beneficial for the residents and the city itself in terms quantifiable and non-quantifiable benefits and costs.

Policy C.2: Develop, maintain, and promote the use of the Freeport port for commercial and industrial use.

Policy C.3: Promote the fiber optic capability for high speed electronic Internet linkage as an attraction for new industry and business.

Policy C.4: Establish by ordinance, minimum criteria for the location, type of treatment, construction, operation and maintenance of all private and governmental water systems. In order to create balanced economic development, all new and existing systems shall meet the minimum criteria for operation and maintenance.

Policy C.5: Freeport shall review economic development proposals for impacts upon the adopted level of service standards and for consistency of right-of-way needs with the projects listed in the TPO Long Range Plan, Six-Year FDOT Gaming Plan and Florida Intrastate Highway System Plan.