

Economic Development Element

GOAL 1: Create and retain jobs while maintaining and improving the quality of life in the community.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Expand economic base by promoting a diversified economy that takes full advantage of the City's strategic location, natural resources, public facilities and infrastructure.

Policy 1.1.1: The City may designate an Economic Development Representative/Agency to serve as the lead agency for implementing this Element and the coordination of City economic development activities and initiatives.

Policy 1.1.2: Develop a complete list of assets of the community, including "shovel ready" sites for development and existing vacancies of suitable commercial/industrial properties.

Policy 1.1.3: Enhance the City's website presence to include the following:

- complete list of assets of the community
- an invitation an incentives to attract new businesses,
- clear description of local incentives such as State Enterprise Zone, Ad Valorem Tax Abatement, Expedited Permitting and perhaps a certified industrial and/or commercial site,
- and links to websites of local, regional and economic development organizations.

Policy 1.1.4: Educate elected officials and community leaders on what is needed to promote healthy economic development; help them to understand the role they can play in promoting the community as a business location and motivate them to give economic development issues the highest possible priority.

Policy 1.1.5: Conduct an annual Economic Development Summit in the City with local and regional business leaders and elected officials to seek their ideas and get the community involved in the economic development process and focused on the goal to create and retain jobs.

Policy 1.1.6: Seek designation as a pilot community in the new Competitive Florida Partnership program developed by the Department of Economic Opportunity.

Policy 1.1.7: Work with Duke Energy Business Development Team to market "shovel ready" sites to business prospects.

Policy 1.1.8: Explore and seek opportunities with the Rural and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) and the USDA Rural Development Economic Development Initiatives.

Policy 1.1.9: Coordinate with the Florida Chamber of Commerce to explore funding and technical assistance opportunities for economic development in the City.

Policy 1.1.10: Work with the Florida Chamber or the Apalachee Regional Planning Council to become a participating ‘Six Pillars’ Community.

Policy 1.1.11: Coordinate with the Apalachee Regional Planning Council on its updates to the Apalachee Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, (CEDS).

Policy 1.1.12: Maintain working partner relationship with the Joe Company in its efforts to develop its holdings along the freshwater canal.

Policy 1.1.13: Coordinate with Florida’s Great Northwest Inc, to market the City and the Port of Port St Joe as part of the region as a globally competitive location for business and to work with regional partners to recruit new jobs and investment through Northwest Florida.

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Improve transportation network facilities in order to attract new businesses, create new jobs and increase tax base.

Policy 1.2.1: Support the Port Authority’s efforts to obtain funds for dredging of the Ship Channel through continued coordination with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the Governor’s office and Legislative delegation.

Policy 1.2.2: Support the Port Authority’s efforts to maintain the Port designation as an “emerging Strategic Intermodal System (SIS)” by FDOT which provides a link to federal and state funding for the Port.

Policy 1.2.3: Continue to support the efforts of the Port Authority and the Gulf County Economic Development Alliance (EDA) to market the port as a location for bulk, container or vehicle shipments to and from the region.

Policy 1.2.4: Continue to pursue FDOT’s release of grant funds to restore rail service to the City of Port St Joe to serve the Port facilities and promote general economic development in the community.

Policy 1.2.5: Continue to coordinate with FDOT and the Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority (NWFTCA) to ensure alignment of the Gulf Coast Parkway provides the most direct route from the City to I-10.

Policy 1.2.6: Explore and pursue opportunities with FDOT to strengthen the transportation system and grow the economy utilizing Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and other FDOT funding and support programs.

Policy 1.2.7: Continue to support the operation of the AN Railway as a regionally important Port to Rail component to link the port with the national rail system.

Policy 1.2.8: Participate in Sister City or Sister Port programs with developing ports in South and Central America.

OBJECTIVE 1.3: Provide quality education and responsive workforce training to support and attract new businesses.

Policy 1.3.1: Support the efforts to improve the quality of public education by ensuring schools are providing exceptional education at elementary, middle and high school levels, as well as Adult School Education programs.

Policy 1.3.2: Participate and support the coordination efforts between the economic development organizations, Gulf County Chamber of Commerce, Gulf Coast Workforce Board, Tourism Development Council, the Gulf Coast State College and School Board to respond quickly to demands for workforce training, improved skill levels and positive work ethic of the labor force.

Policy 1.3.3: Increase coordination with the Northwest Florida Manufacturers Council (NFMC) to promote development of a skilled manufacturing workforce in the region.

Policy 1.3.4: Develop and implement training programs that will complement economic diversification efforts.

Policy 1.3.5: Develop a strategy to provide vocational education programs and certificate training programs and strive to attract young students into such programs.

Policy 1.3.6: Explore opportunity to develop educational programs aimed to give students, young people and others the skills to start and effectively manage a business.

Policy 1.3.7: Develop strategy to attract and retain both college graduates and young professionals and foster entrepreneurship.

OBJECTIVE 1.4: Balance economic development while maintaining the quality of life that makes the City of Port St Joe a very unique place to live.

Policy 1.4.1: Promote Tourism as a key component of the City's economic base.

Policy 1.4.2: Conduct brand development exercise in the City to be aligned with Gulf County tourism.

Policy 1.4.3: Support the Gulf County Tourism Development Council's plans to promote tourism in the City and Gulf County and their yearly fiscal goals.

Policy 1.4.4: Protect coastal and environmental resources that support businesses and attract tourist throughout the year.

Policy 1.4.5: Explore opportunities to provide additional recreational access to St Joseph Bay.

Policy 1.4.6: Coordinate with the Small Vessel Initiative to provide tourist amenities such as the BayPark Conceptual Plan to promote the City as a Port of Call for boutique cruise lines and research vessels.

Policy 1.4.7: Maintain and enhance recreational facilities along the waterfront, including the City Pier, Port St Joe Marina, BayPark and the Shipyard Cove/Frank Pate Park as well as other small parcels acquired by the City for recreational purposes.

Policy 1.4.8: Support the Port St. Joe Marina which provides recreational access to St Joseph Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

Policy 1.4.9: Seek public and/or private funding to develop the Field of Dreams Sports Complex in the City.

Policy 1.4.10: Encourage cooperative efforts between local realtors, hotel/motel owners and restaurants, Tourism Development Council and Chamber of Commerce to market Port St Joe as a Waterfronts Florida tourism destination.

OBJECTIVE 1.5: Improve coordination and communication among local, regional and state economic development organizations to foster a more collaborative business environment and promote the assets of the City as part of the larger Northwest Florida region.

Policy 1.5.1: Hold regular meetings and workshops with representatives from local, regional and state economic development organizations to share information, challenges and opportunities.

Policy 1.5.2: Foster a positive working relationship with Gulf County government to provide a united, business-friendly introduction to the region.

Policy 1.5.3: Explore “Supercouncil” approach to economic development.

Policy 1.5.4: Establish an ongoing communications program to regularly share information among local, regional and state economic development organizations to reinforce the key messages and include success stories, information about the port facilities, railway service, tourism related updates, and other news that impact economic development.

Policy 1.5.5: Identify key LinkedIn groups specific to regional and rural economic development in Northwest Florida and monitor those groups and the discussions posted there. Contribute to discussions as an additional vehicle for sharing the City’s assets and opportunities for new businesses.

Policy 1.5.6: Use social media programs such as facebook and twitter to share information about progress on port redevelopment plans and tourism related activities.

Policy 1.5.7: Enhance relationships with Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) project managers, Duke Energy economic development representatives and other key team members to ensure they are aware of the assets available in the community.

Policy 1.5.8: Work cooperatively with the Tourism Development Council, the Port St Joe Redevelopment Agency, the Port Authority to develop advertising program for the City of Port St Joe that creates a level of awareness of the redevelopment plans of the Port facilities, and promotes the City as a tourist destination.

Policy 1.5.9: Promote cooperation and communication among the Port of Port St Joe, the Port of Panama City and Port of Pensacola as significant assets of the Northwest Florida region.

Policy 1.5.10: Support the efforts of RiverWay South Apalachicola-Choctawhatchee to promote regional tourism within the Northwest Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC) counties.

Policy 1.5.11: Promote or encourage Port St Joe as a location for annual fishing, sports, or other tournaments or festivals that will results in weekend to weeklong visitation for participating families.

Policy 1.5.12: Support development of passive and active use facilities at Highland View beaches.

OBJECTIVE 1.6: Celebrate the history and culture of the region through educational and cultural venues to attract a new demographic of visitor and increase local jobs for local residents.

Policy 1.6.1: Renovate and create a sustainable rental/maintenance program for the Centennial Building.

Policy 1.6.2: Develop the BayPark area to house learning and experiential programs such as but not limited to museums focused on traditional navigation, city/constitutional history, history of the local fishing/pilot-boat industries, and bay ecology.

Policy 1.6.3: Provide incentives for preservation of historical resources.