

DIVISION 2.400 ECONOMIC ELEMENT

SECTION 2.401 INTRODUCTIONS

The Economic Element of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan is not required by Chapter 163 FS and, therefore, is an optional element. This element is an integral part of Polk County's Comprehensive Plan and is not an isolated set of policies. This Element and the other elements of the Plan form a system of development management, which includes the Plan, the Development Regulations, and concurrency management. Supporting data and background information for this Element can be found in Appendix E.

A. Purpose

Few actions taken by County government are without some economic impact; therefore, the Board of County Commissioners felt it was important to understand the local economy and to consider the economic impact of growth management decisions. The Board of County Commissioners directed the Polk County Planning Division, in conjunction with the Economic Development Council of Polk County, Inc. and the Citizens' Advisory Committee, to provide this optional element.

The purpose of the Economic Element is to set forth the goal, objectives, and policies for economic growth in the County through the Economic Development Council of Polk County, Inc. (EDC) and the Polk Tourist Development Council (TDC). An additional purpose of this Element is to ensure that the government remains a positive force on the County's economy.

B. History

Polk County has traditionally had a local resource-based economy relying on citrus, phosphate, cattle, tourism, and retirement. In the early 1980's, a downturn in the phosphate industry, combined with a damaging citrus freeze and the loss of a major manufacturing firm, had a dramatic effect on Polk County's economy. The Board of County Commissioners recognized that decisive measures were needed to reduce the County's unemployment and provide a more stable economy.

In September 1985, the Board of County Commissioners, in conjunction with the 17 Chambers of Commerce throughout the County, established a public/private partnership through the formation of the Economic Development Council of Polk County, Inc., and charged it with uniting private businesses and local governments for the purpose of addressing Polk County's economy. In 1986, the EDC requested the Board of County Commissioners to establish, by referendum, a 2% resort tax. This referendum passed in November 1986 leading to the establishment of the Polk Tourist Development Council with a dedicated revenue source for promoting the tourism and hospitality industry. Profiles of the Economic Development Council and the Tourist Development Council can be found in Appendix E.

Since its inception, the EDC has become one of the most successful of its kind in Florida. Polk County is favorably looked upon as a key distribution center and place where businesses can profit and grow. In addition to supporting the traditional phosphate and citrus industries in the County, the Council places particular emphasis in the areas of new-industry recruitment, business assistance, international trade, television and motion pictures, and tourism. Recent trends show

that the service sector has become the fastest growing industry division. This indicates that the economy is diversifying and becoming less reliant on the resource-based citrus and phosphate industries. The diversification of the economic base and the steadily-declining unemployment rate reveal the success of the Economic Development Council.

C. Conclusions

The development of this Element is based in part on the data and analysis performed by Strategic Planning Group as found in the Polk County Economic Base Study. Throughout the study, it became apparent that many of the EDC's existing programs are successful and should be continued.

The Goal, Objectives, and Policies established within this Element reflect the County's general concerns regarding Economic Development: that continued diversification of the economy is needed; that the County should provide incentives to entice industries to the area; that land should be allocated for economic growth; and that appropriate infrastructure should be available for economic growth. The Goal, Objectives, and Policies in this Element are also designed to ensure that the Polk County Comprehensive Plan's Basic Principles (Chapter 1, Division 1.200) are met.

The objectives and policies established in this element are addressed within the following general categories:

- 1) Economic Base Maintenance,
- 2) Economic Base Diversification,
- 3) Economic Development Integrated with Planning, and
- 4) Implementation.

GOAL: To provide a diverse economic base which affords Polk County and its residents a maximal amount of economic opportunity.

SECTION 2.402 ECONOMIC BASE MAINTENANCE

OBJECTIVE 2.402-A: The County shall, through the Economic Development Council, maintain programs designed to expand and enhance the County's traditional economic base.

POLICY 2.402-A1: The Economic Development Council shall continue programs which assist existing companies in expansion efforts in order to create a minimum of 200 jobs annually.

POLICY 2.402-A2: The Economic Development Council shall continue programs which encourage and assist in the location of new companies that build on the traditional economic base in order to provide a minimum of 300 new jobs annually.

POLICY 2.402-A3: The Central Florida Development Council shall develop strategies for Polk County to provide financial, in-kind, or other incentives to assist in the expansion of existing industry.

POLICY 2.402-A4: The Polk County Planning Division and the Central Florida Development Council shall work with organizations representing the commercial agricultural industry in Polk County, including but not limited to Florida Citrus Mutual, Florida Cattlemen's Association (Polk County), and Florida Farm Bureau Federation (Polk County), in order to coordinate the future economic and land-use needs of that industry.

POLICY 2.402-A5: The Economic Development Council shall continue a program of economic diversification to mitigate the impact of any significant economic downturns in the citrus or phosphate industries.

POLICY 2.402-A6: The Economic Development Council shall continue to market and recruit film production in the County through a strategic marketing plan.

POLICY 2.402-A7: The Economic Development Council shall continue an education strategy for the formation of training programs relating to targeted industrial and commercial sectors through local institutions.

POLICY 2.402-A8: The Economic Development Council shall continue programs which encourage and assist existing businesses in the expansion of their market through international trade.

POLICY 2.402-A9: The Economic Development Council shall continue to market for trade and reverse investment opportunities through the development of an international strategic marketing plan.

POLICY 2.402-A10: The Tourist Development Council shall continue to promote tourism in the County through a strategic marketing plan.

POLICY 2.402-A11: The Tourist Development Council shall promote the upgrading and expansion of Polk County's tourism industry as measured by the industry's investment in the County, the taxes generated by tourists for the County, and the number of persons employed within the County's hospitality industry.

SECTION 2.402-B ECONOMIC BASE MAINTENANCE

OBJECTIVE 2.402-B: Polk County shall promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses within the County.

POLICY 2.402-B1: Polk County shall encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses by ensuring that the promotion of such businesses continues to be a vital component of the Central Florida Development Council's economic development program.

POLICY 2.402-B2: The retention and expansion of existing businesses shall be taken into consideration when the County performs comprehensive planning and Comprehensive Plan implementation activities.

SECTION 2.403 ECONOMIC BASE DIVERSIFICATION

OBJECTIVE 2.403-A: The County, through the Economic Development Council, shall establish and maintain programs designed to promote the recruitment of non-traditional industries to facilitate the diversification of Polk County's economic base.

POLICY 2.403-A1: The Central Florida Development Council shall continue to target non-traditional industries which are sensitive to the County's environment and its natural resources.

POLICY 2.403-A2: The Central Florida Development Council shall continue to implement a strategic marketing plan to recruit targeted industries which will provide quality job opportunities for County residents, increase the County's per capita income, and reduce the County's unemployment rate. The county will report annually target industry starts including the number of new jobs created and available wage information.

POLICY 2.403-A3: The Central Florida Development Council shall continue to develop a strategy for Polk County to provide financial, in-kind, or other incentives required to assist in the recruitment of new industry.

SECTION 2.404 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INTEGRATED WITH PLANNING

OBJECTIVE 2.404-A: The County shall ensure that land is allocated for future agricultural/commercial/industrial land uses to allow for a viable economy.

POLICY 2.404-A1: The County Planning Division shall encourage the location and clustering of major commercial and industrial activities according to the following guidelines:

- a. in close proximity to principal arterials;
- b. with access to appropriate utilities (water, sewer, electricity, gas, telephone) or to allow for provision of these utilities;
- c. with on-site rail facilities, if appropriate;
- d. with access to mass transit routes where feasible; and
- e. so as to minimize impacts to the natural environment and adjacent land uses.

POLICY 2.404-A2: The County Planning Division, in cooperation with the County Property Appraiser, has developed a parcel level Geographic information System which will be used to analyze land for its potential to accommodate future industrial/commercial uses.

POLICY 2.404-A3: The County shall continue to streamline the development review process through the use of computerized concurrency management and permit tracking to facilitate economic growth.

POLICY 2.404-A4: The County shall continue to work with the phosphate industry and Institute of Phosphate to study the feasibility of utilizing reclaimed and unreclaimed phosphate lands for uses that would enhance Polk County's economic base.

POLICY 2.404-A5: The County's Long Range Planning Division shall coordinate with the Economic Development Council to identify the location of potential Selected Area Studies and Plans for a multi-location study designed to allocate land uses for economic development within targeted cluster industries;

POLICY 2.404-A6: At the time of Development application, the County Growth Management Department and the Office of Budget and Management Services shall coordinate the implementation of a Fiscal Impact Analysis tool to evaluate the financial feasibility of proposed Development.

OBJECTIVE 2.404-B: The County, in coordination with municipal governments, shall protect the integrity of existing infrastructure and promote the development of appropriate new infrastructure within designated growth areas of the County to facilitate economic development.

POLICY 2.404-B1: The County shall continue to implement cooperative agreements between affected municipal governments to provide public water and sewer facilities for areas where economic growth is appropriate as based on Future Land Use Elements and shall review and amend those areas and agreements annually.

POLICY 2.404-B2: The County shall coordinate with the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Lakeland/Winter Haven Urbanized Areas, the Florida Department of Transportation, and local governments to expand and enhance the overall transportation network by providing reasonable access to agricultural, commercial, industrial, and office locations throughout the County.

POLICY 2.404-B3: The County shall implement land development regulations adopted in the Land Development Code to protect the capacity of and promote traffic flow efficiency on arterials and collectors by limiting road (driveway) cuts and encouraging use of frontage roads.

POLICY 2.404-B4: The County shall seek a working relationship with all active railroad companies to maintain active rail lines that could service existing and future commercial/industrial use areas as outlined in the Future Land Use Element.

OBJECTIVE 2.404-C: The County shall enter into coordinating agreements with other governmental entities which affect economic development policy and planning efforts.

POLICY 2.404-C1: The County shall continue the Economic Development Council's economic development efforts through regular meetings of the Economic Development Council.

POLICY 2.404-C2: The Central Florida Development Council shall coordinate with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council concerning regional economic development by meeting not less than quarterly.

POLICY 2.404-C3: The County shall coordinate with representatives of the School Board and other educational institutions in order to promote and enhance the overall educational attainment and job skills of Polk County residents by meeting no less than quarterly.

POLICY 2.404-C4: The Economic Development Council shall seek the input of other Polk County Departments/Divisions with regard to the Council's promotional endeavors. Polk County Departments/Divisions shall assist the Economic Development Council in their efforts where applicable.

SECTION 2.405 IMPLEMENTATION

OBJECTIVE 2.405-A: Polk County shall implement the objectives and policies of this Economic Element through appropriate techniques which include careful evaluation of proposed County actions for conformance with the policies in this Element. All objectives and policies within the Comprehensive Plan shall be considered when making growth management decisions.

POLICY 2.405-A1: The Board of County Commissioners shall continue supporting the Economic Development Council and the Tourist Development Council through appropriate funding.

POLICY 2.405-A2: The Economic Development Council shall implement the programs and plans as specified in this Element within the established time-frames.

POLICY 2.405-A3: The Tourist Development Council shall implement the programs and plans as specified in this Element within the established time-frames.

POLICY 2.405-A4: The County Administrator shall instruct the appropriate County Department Directors to conduct and implement the programs and plans contained in this Element within the established time-frames.

POLICY 2.405-A5: The Economic Development Council, shall monitor, and annually report to the Board of County Commissioners, the effect of implementing the Comprehensive Plan on economic growth and levels of employment, and make recommendations to the Board with regards to eliminating adverse impacts or strengthening or enhancing positive impacts.

Revision History Division 2.400 Economic Element	
POLICY 2.402-A3	CPA-99B-32 (Ord. 99-80) 12/15/99
POLICY 2.402-A4	CPA-99B-32 (Ord. 99-80) 12/15/99
SECTION 2.402	CPA 95A-14 (Ord. 95-42) 10/17/95
POLICY 2.403-A1	CPA-99B-32 (Ord. 99-80) 12/15/99
POLICY 2.403-A2	CPA-99B-32 (Ord. 99-80) 12/15/99
POLICY 2.403-A3	CPA-99B-32 (Ord. 99-80) 12/15/99
POLICY 2.404-A2	CPA-99B-32 (Ord. 99-80) 12/15/99
POLICY 2.404-A3	CPA-10B-04 (Ord. 10-043) 8/4/10
POLICY 2.404-A4	CPA-99B-32 (Ord. 99-80) 12/15/99
POLICY 2.404-A5:	CPA-10B-04 (Ord. 10-043) 8/4/10
POLICY 2.404-A6	CPA-10B-04 (Ord. 10-043) 8/4/10
POLICY 2.404-B1	CPA-99B-32 (Ord. 99-80) 12/15/99
POLICY 2.404-B3	CPA-10B-04 (Ord. 10-043) 8/4/10
POLICY 2.404-C2	CPA-99B-32 (Ord. 99-80) 12/15/99
POLICY 2.404-C3	CPA-99B-32 (Ord. 99-80) 12/15/99