

# Horizon Council

*Strategic Roadmap*



# Horizon Council

## Strategic Roadmap

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# Horizon Council Strategic Roadmap

## Executive Summary

### DEVELOPING A STRONG ECONOMY



**MISSION** To retain and encourage the expansion of existing businesses and attract new and diversified employment to Lee County. Improve the business climate to become a more globally competitive location, while continuing to drive progress through a community based unified strategic economic roadmap.

**VISION** To nurture a globally competitive business climate that continues to grow and attract thriving companies with quality jobs and career opportunities for residents while respecting those things that contribute to Lee County's high quality of life.

### CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

#### Business Advocacy



Serve as a visionary advisory body to the Lee County Commission.

Streamlining the government permitting and approval process.

Support economic development by raising private sector funds.

#### Community & Regional Partnerships



Communicate to the community a unifying economic development vision, including wealth creation and the importance of competitive business costs.

Work with regional partners to define a regional economic development initiative.

#### Global Competitiveness



Improve workforce talent and skills availability.

Improve education accountability.

Foster workforce wellness.

#### Community Wealth Building



Evaluate what type of businesses succeed here and why.

Tap into existing business and CEO networks for prospects.

#### Strategic Initiatives

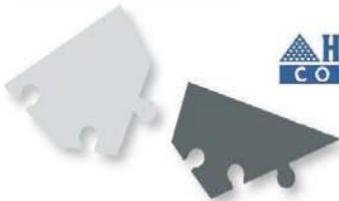


Regularly review and update the Strategic Plan.

Help the EDO define its focus, targets and pro-active marketing initiative.

### HORIZON COUNCIL 2013

The Horizon Council is Lee County's economic development public-private advisory board to the Lee County Commission. Over the summer and fall of 2012, the Horizon Council membership – representing Lee County, its five cities, ten chambers of commerce, 18 trade organizations, four educational institutions, the Industrial Development Authority, and 24 at-large business and community leaders – underwent a long range planning process led by the Executive Committee. This document summarizes the result of that effort. A complete copy of the long range plan can be found at [www.HorizonCouncil2025.com](http://www.HorizonCouncil2025.com).



# Horizon Council Strategic Roadmap

The Horizon Council is Lee County's economic development public-private advisory board to the Lee County Commission. Its membership represents Lee County, its five cities, ten chambers of commerce, eighteen trade organizations, four education institutions, the Industrial Development Authority, and twenty-four at large business and community leaders. Over the summer and fall of 2012, the Horizon Council underwent a long range planning process led by the Horizon Council Executive Committee. This document summarizes the effort and includes: an executive summary; an overview of key economic development benchmarks; a review of the role of the Horizon Council and its economic development partners; the Horizon Council Strategic Roadmap; and the Horizon Council Work Plan for 2013.

## Economic Development Overview

### Economic Development

An effective economic development initiative marshals the resources of a community to improve the quality of life for all by facilitating community wealth building, at a faster pace, and in a direction it would not ordinarily go without some guidance and deliberate push. The primary goals are to enhance job creation and the tax base. This is generally accomplished by facilitating the location, retention and expansion of high-wage, high-growth industries, while enhancing the business climate to become a more competitive location. Economic development organizations bring together community stakeholders to identify business hindrances and competitive issues, and work together to find ways to minimize and overcome them. There are 13 primary considerations for any company seeking a new location: labor, real estate, utilities, transportation, supply chain impacts, educational system, operating costs, governmental taxation and regulatory issues, environmental considerations, business interruption risks, political stability, quality of life and incentives. All should be evaluated for their competitiveness with detailed action steps to make each of them attractive to business and industry.

### A Global Economy

Today, companies operate and compete in a global economy. International markets, international trade and reverse investment strategies play an ever increasing role in economic development. A community must be a globally competitive location to attract the growth industries of tomorrow.

### The Economic Development Organization

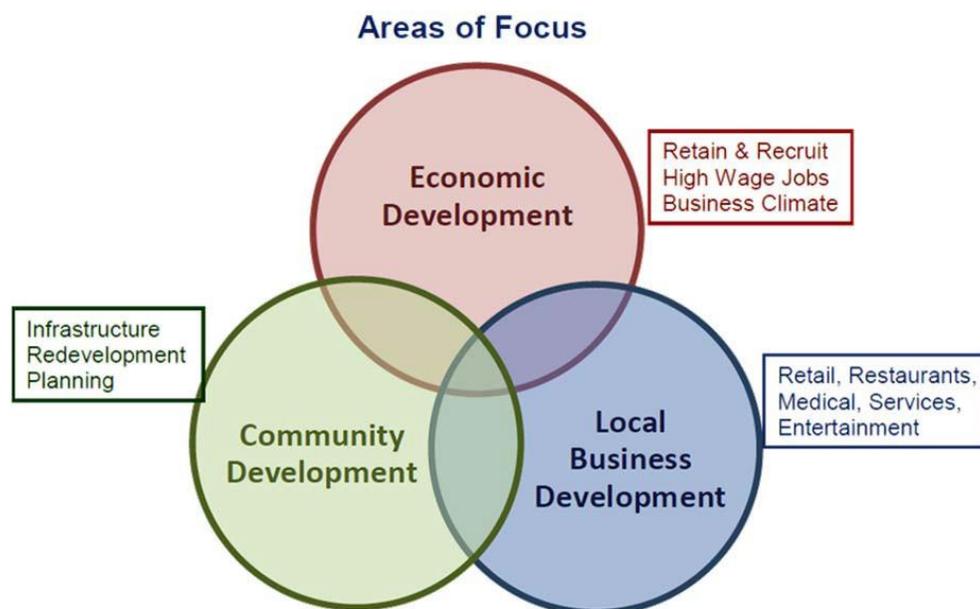
There are more than 13,000 primary economic development organizations within the U.S. and many more internationally. Some organizations are totally private, some totally public, but most are public-private partnerships. The most successful ones all share some things in common: a shared vision among the community's leadership, both public and private; a realistic understanding of the competitive strengths and weaknesses of the community; a shared desire to work together to do what needs to be done to be successful; and a sustainable funding plan to keep the momentum moving forward.

## Defining Economic Development

By definition, economic development is the effort of a community to improve its local economy by facilitating the creation of well-paying employment opportunities from new and existing wealth creating businesses; thereby improving the community's financial base, quality of life and workforce.

Economic development is a narrowly focused discipline and is often confused with business development and community development. Some activities may overlap in practice, but generally, economic development organizations focus exclusively on economic development activity, leaving community development to be a focus of government and business development to be a natural growth from the local economy.

- **Economic Development:** *Recruitment, expansion and retention of high-skill high-wage diversified industry.* Diversified industry generally means companies that bring wealth to a community by exporting their goods and services to customers outside of the local market and not relying on the local economy for income. Their primary markets are outside of the community, and they can locate anywhere their labor, business costs and supplier network is available and competitive.
- **Business Development:** *Encouragement of a variety of small businesses, retail stores, restaurants, entertainment centers, medical facilities and service-oriented businesses compatible with the demands and desires of the community.* Traditionally, business development is market-driven, based on population and household demand, and generally occurs by developers and private property owners marketing to fill planned and existing retail and office space.
- **Community Development:** *Planning for new infrastructure, business and industrial parks, residential areas, neighborhood centers, recreation areas, parks and community amenities for the existing and future population.* It also encompasses redevelopment activities, setting design standards and managing a development approval processes to accomplish desired goals.

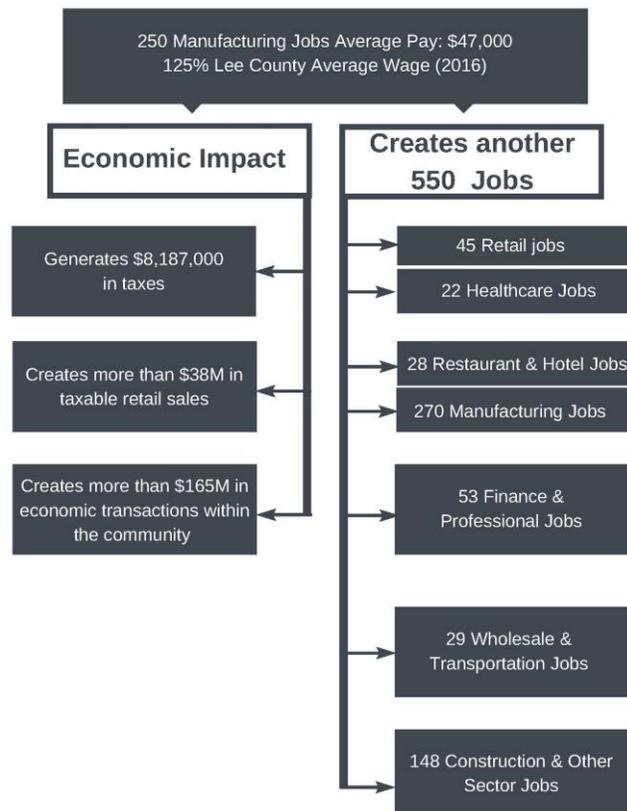


## Economic Impact of Wealth Building Industries

Wealth building companies bring new money into a community from sales derived outside of the local market; which is then circulated within the community through job payrolls, supply purchases, and capital investment. The new circulating money is received as new income to local companies dependent upon the local economy by increasing the demand for their goods and services; which spurs additional job growth. In a seasonal economy, these companies provide a level of year-round stability. For residents, the increased money circulating in the economy allows for a greater selection of local shops, dining and recreational choices, as well as enhancing local infrastructure through additional tax revenues to local governments. These companies offer higher wage jobs and career opportunities for local residents; jobs that would not be available based on the local economy by itself. Wealth building companies are often referred to as “diversified industries”, because they change the economic balance within an economy from what would naturally occur. The more diversified an economy becomes, the more stable and independent it becomes from the ups and downturns of any one industry.

A sample economic impact chart demonstrates the economic multiplier effect of a new 250 employee manufacturing facility. In addition to the 250 manufacturing jobs it creates, an additional 550 local jobs are generated in other local businesses to support the new goods and services demand from the company and its employees. The 250 new jobs spur 550 additional jobs creating a total job impact of 800 jobs, increasing local payrolls by more than \$48 million annually, and causing more than \$165 million of local economic transactions to occur that would not occur without the company locating within the market.

### Manufacturing Output Model



## Industry Attraction and Expansion

The most common approach to diversify an economy is by facilitating industry attraction and expansion. This is the cornerstone of most economic development initiatives. The company's site location selection process is not locally market driven. A pro-active recruitment and expansion strategy supported by a business benefit for the company is necessary to be successful. There are generally two levels of industry assistance: 1) location and expansion support for diversified industry and 2) pro-active target industry marketing and recruitment.

- **Project Criteria:** Typically, community based minimum thresholds are established for a company to be eligible for location and expansion support. Local minimum thresholds often include local, regional and state target industries, as well as minimum job wage and investment levels. Customary minimum thresholds include:
  - A locating or expanding business deriving at least 50% of sales from outside of the market;
  - Locating or expanding by a minimum of 10 jobs at 115% or more of the average wage;
  - Making a minimum capital investment of \$1 million.

Any business location or expansion meeting the minimum criteria becomes an economic development project and is assisted with site selection, community networking, local and state incentives, workforce recruitment and training, ombudsman services, and anything else that will facilitate the decision and location process. If a project meets the criteria, and is in a targeted industry cluster, the community support is often greater.

- **Target Industries:** A target industry is a community selected industry sector that becomes a focus for economic development marketing. Target industries should be selected only if the community is a competitive location due to the community's attributes, and the target industry is the type of business the community wants to have within its borders. A target industry initiative includes a pro-active campaign of recruitment, marketing, outreach, company visitation, enhanced incentives, and may include building a target industry catalyst (a resource to attract the industry). There is no distinction between facilitating the location of a new industry or the expansion of an existing industry within the target. Special status is often granted to the supplier network of a target industry and other cluster businesses supporting the industry. An ongoing effort to enhance the competitiveness of the community for the target industry and its suppliers, as well as developing competitive workforce hiring, training and recruitment initiatives, improves the chances of being successful. Once a target is selected, the goal of the community is to continue to build its competitive position, resources and tools, until it becomes the most globally competitive and attractive place in the world for a company within the target cluster to locate, expand and thrive. Florida has invested considerable resources defining and enhancing Florida's competitive advantages for the industry clusters on its target list.

- Clean-tech
- Life Sciences
- Information Technology
- Aviation Aerospace
- Logistics and Distribution
- Defense and Homeland Security
- Financial and Professional Services

### Florida Industry Clusters

*With a Strategic Area of Emphasis in:*

- Manufacturing
- Corporate headquarters
- Emerging Technologies

## Business Assistance

Most economic development initiatives include business recruitment (attraction) and business assistance programs. A strong business assistance program can be a good tool for connecting to local business leadership, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the business climate, and resolving workforce challenges. Most economic development organizations limit outreach to companies with at least 50% of their sales from outside the market (not dependent on the local economy), or companies with international trade building capacity. Sometimes the list will include larger private employers with 100 or more employees, that are not tourism or retail focused. Many of these companies are eligible for Florida incentives or workforce training grants. The same expansion tools and incentives are generally offered to an existing business as a new locating business, if qualified; however, qualified businesses generally make up less than 5% of all local businesses. A consistent approach to outreach can be a valuable early warning intelligence tool regarding company expansions or potential downsizing.

## Grow Your Own Strategies

Growing your own strategies include entrepreneurial development and economic gardening. Tools are put in place to attract and nurture new entrepreneurial start-ups and second stage companies. Tools include: incubators and accelerators; subsidized space with access to technical, financial and management expertise at below market rates; access to angel and venture capital; and business counseling and mentoring services.

- **Entrepreneurial Development:** Some of the most successful entrepreneur programs focus on a single industry sector often affiliated with a research university, research institute, or other catalyst project. Typically, the community funds a project or asset around which businesses will cluster. Significant resources are often required to develop competitive tools and can sometimes be partially funded through government and private grants. Unless the project is income generating and self-sustaining, long term operational funding may need to be put in place by the community. Entrepreneurial development usually takes time to produce measurable results, but is effective over the long term in creating new job clusters. A good network of angel investors and venture capital is a critical tool for success. Economic development initiatives are often involved in encouraging these tools, and stay connected by serving on advisory boards, but seldom operate the programs.
- **Economic Gardening:** Research indicates second stage companies, those with 10 to 100 employees and/or \$750,000 to \$50 million in receipts, typically have the highest growth rates. A second stage company has grown past the startup stage but not yet reached maturity. Economic gardening embraces the concept that entrepreneurs drive economies. Economic gardening programs assist existing second stage companies grow to third stage companies more quickly. Tools are put in place to connect local CEOs to other local CEOs at similar stages of business growth; and to provide, at reduced cost, access to business resources, market research and high-level technical assistance customarily available to only large firms. The goal is to spur growth to the next level in sales and employment. Economic gardening strategies help local businesses discover how to reach external markets to become wealth building companies. This is a great way to demonstrate business support for successful local businesses.

GrowFL was created in 2009 as an economic development program focused on assisting second-stage growth companies prosper in the state of Florida. By providing strategies, resources and support to second-stage companies for next level growth through Strategic Research, Peer Learning and Leadership Development, GrowFL helps companies overcome obstacles to growth and leads them towards prosperity. Based on the philosophy of Economic Gardening® — to grow existing businesses in a community, region or state — GrowFL, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute, is a critical component to the state’s economic development strategy and Florida’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. GrowFL is a statewide economic development organization certified by the National Center for Economic Gardening through the Edward Lowe Foundation.

GrowFL is driven by one goal – to cultivate scalable second-stage growth companies across the state. Second-stage companies are the backbone of Florida’s economy and the dentition of economic growth and prosperity. GrowFL, through our nationally certified team of experts, provides proven methods to help overcome unique challenges facing second-stage companies as they grow. As the only statewide organization focused exclusively on second-stage and emerging second-stage growth companies, GrowFL’s philosophy is to identify, serve and celebrate these companies that have the best potential to contribute to Florida’s economy. Second-stage companies are identified as somewhere in between a startup and a large firm and have one basic commonality – they are poised for growth. Focusing our efforts on these companies means strengthening the economy of the region and supporting the entrepreneurs who live among us.

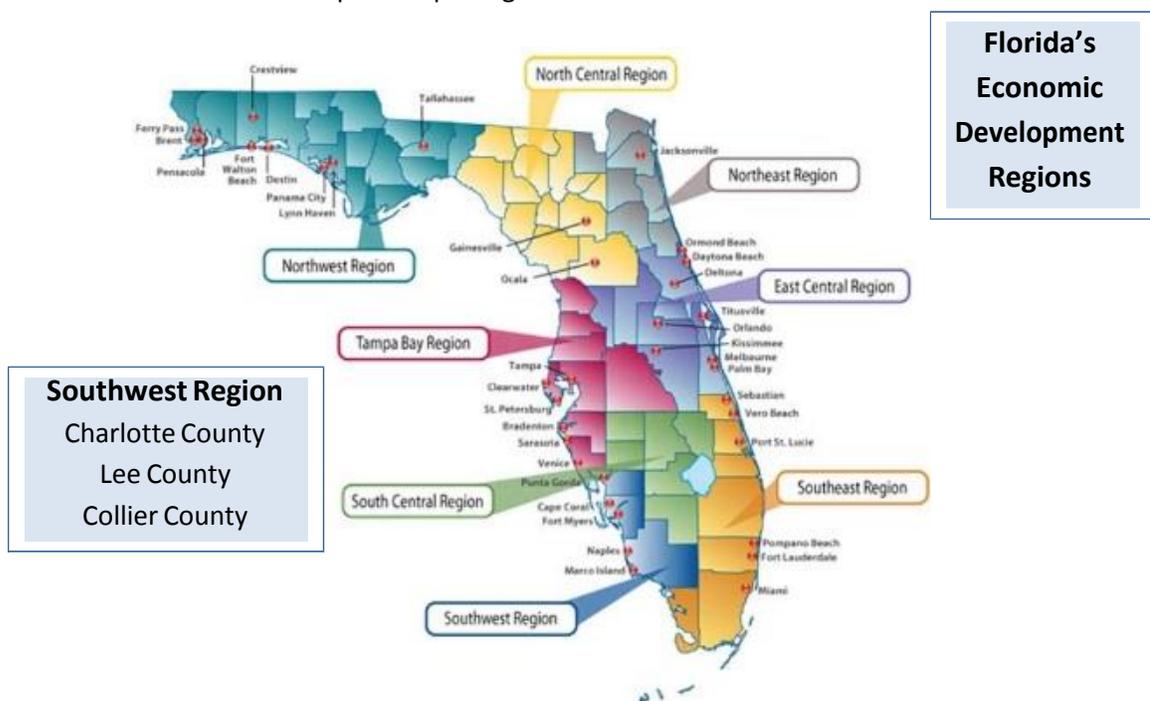
As of June 30, 2015, GrowFL assisted companies represent over 16,737 direct jobs across the state of Florida. In 2015, these companies had estimated regional sales of over \$3.4 billion and contributed regional GDP of over \$1.4 billion to the Florida economy. Between 2009 and 2015, a variety of state, local and private sector funding sources invested \$8.04 million in the GrowFL program. The activities of this program over the same time period helped generate an estimated 10,942 net new direct, indirect and induced jobs. This in turn helped contribute over an estimated total regional sales of over \$1.88 billion and total regional GDP of over \$941 million to the Florida economy. Further, these activities generated an additional \$81.18 million in total state and local tax revenues (above and beyond the cost of the program). This translates into a Net Return On Investment of \$9.10 for every \$1.00 invested into the program.

## Regional Considerations

Leveraging dollars on a regional level for economic development marketing is a popular trend throughout the U.S., and one that Enterprise Florida is encouraging Florida regions embrace. A regional program cannot eliminate the need for a local program, but it can provide shared resources and expertise that does not need to be duplicated, thereby reducing costs and leveraging resources. The two most difficult challenges in establishing and maintaining an effective regional organization are getting all of the stakeholders to agree on a regional approach and developing a sustainable funding plan. If a regional organization is doing tasks and activities that benefit the region, and the tasks and activities do not need to be duplicated at the local level, time and resources are freed up to work on making the community more competitive to win more projects.

The following activities lend themselves to a regional approach: regional branding and marketing; co-op ad placement; external public relations and journalist outreach; site consultant relationship building; research and regional studies with a county level component; target industry studies; workforce studies; web site with regional data and a searchable database; shared data base and research subscriptions; target industry outreach; and lead generation.

The greatest challenge for any regional organization is the perception that a particular community is not getting its fair share of projects. This is usually not the fault of the regional organization, but rather how ready the community is to land a project. If there are no competitively priced sites, local incentives, or location support systems in place, and the other communities have prepared themselves to a higher level, the company will most likely select the place that is easiest and most cost competitive. The goal of the regional organization is to bring attention and interest to the region. It is up to each community to put forward its best and most competitive package.



## Lee County's Economic Development Structure

The Horizon Council is the umbrella community leadership board that ties together the four major economic development initiatives for Lee County: The Horizon Council, the economic development advisory board to the Lee County Commission; the Horizon Foundation, a charitable 501(c)3 funding organization; the Industrial Development Authority, issuer of industrial revenue bonds; and the Lee County's Economic Development Office and primary implementer of economic development programs within Lee County.



**The Horizon Council** is a public-private board established in 1991 to advise the Lee County Board of Commissioners on economic development issues. The Council has up to 80 members from government, community, education and business.



**The Horizon Foundation**, a charitable 501(c) 3 organization, was established to provide a funding vehicle for businesses to invest in the long-term economic vitality of Lee County.



**The Industrial Development Authority (IDA)** is a seven-member board established in 1975 to facilitate the use of Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRDBs) as a financing tool for industrial and other qualifying projects. The IDA also reviews incentive applications for local approval of Florida's Qualified Target Industry Tax Credit incentive program, and the Lee County Job Opportunity Program. The IDA operates under Part III of Florida Statutes Chapter 159. Each IDA member is appointed by the Lee County Commission for a four-year term.



**The Lee County Economic Development Office (EDO)** provides business assistance to retain existing businesses, encourages entrepreneurship and attract new business so that Lee County has a strong economy, thriving communities, and broadly shared prosperity. The EDO provides an array of in-depth services to wealth creating businesses seeking assistance with location or expansion, free of charge and on a confidential basis. Services include: site selection assistance; demographic, research and statistical information; business meetings and local connections; employee training and recruiting; community tours; financial and incentive assistance. The EDO provides staff support to Lee County's Horizon Council, Horizon Foundation and Industrial Development Authority; and serves as Lee County's primary liaison to Enterprise Florida, Florida's public/private economic development partnership.

### Government in the Sunshine

In Florida, there is an operational challenge that is not shared by many competitor states: liberally construed open meetings and public records laws. Companies in the site selection process demand total confidentiality for legal reasons, existing workforce concerns, and competitive issues. Section 288.075 of the Florida Statutes makes certain records of private companies held by an economic development agency confidential. Upon written request from a private company, an economic development agency must maintain confidentiality regarding expansion and location plans until the information is publicly disclosed or time lapses.

## Horizon Council Strategic Roadmap

The Horizon Council Executive Committee engaged in a series of workshops to develop a framework for a strategic plan. During this process, it updated the Community Vision from 1995, as well as provided a shorter version for marketing materials. Comprehensive broad perspective discussions about the future direction of Lee County and a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) resulted in a strategic roadmap for the Horizon Council.

### Horizon Council Vision for Lee County 2025

Lee County, Florida is a vibrant community with a globally competitive business climate growing and attracting thriving companies with quality jobs and career opportunities for residents. Local schools at all levels of education are aggressively meeting the needs of all students, educating them to high standards. Municipal and county governments work together with business and community partners under a common vision seeking innovative ways to enhance economic opportunity for all.

*A revised version of the initial Vision developed in 1995.*

Lee County in the year 2025 is a unified and vibrant community with a shared vision. A positive spirit and pride exists in all aspects of the community and its leadership. Its culturally-diverse citizens are highly involved and integrated. Business and government are working together cooperatively. Public policy is a result of coordinated, collaborative strategic planning involving city and county government. Local government is responsible, focused and accountable. Tax rates are fair and equitable. One-stop permitting process is in place. Future infrastructure needs in the County are identified with funding mechanisms in place. Long range growth and environmental management plans are in effect. The urban areas of the County have affordable water and sewer. Innovative local public transportation systems are being operated effectively and efficiently. The region is well-connected and part of an efficient intrastate multi-modal transportation network. Regularly scheduled commercial airline service is available from Southwest Florida to major cities throughout the world. The airport is efficiently handling air passenger and cargo traffic, and a new I-75 interchange makes the airport very accessible. The opportunity to obtain attainable housing and health care is available to all residents. The community provides a safe atmosphere, with its crime prevention program focused on early intervention. Local schools are aggressively meeting the needs of all students, educating them to high standards. The education system integrates workforce skills and STEM (Science Technology Engineering & Math) initiatives at all grade levels. Apprenticeship programs are training skilled workers. A variety of technology and higher education institutions provide globally competitive post-secondary education opportunities. A wide range of employment opportunities encourages a majority of local high school and higher education graduates to remain in Lee County. The area continues to be a desirable destination with clean, re-nourished beaches and riverfront areas where recreational opportunities abound. Several new tourist attractions are in place. The downtowns are thriving commercial and residential areas. International travel, business activity, international trade, and a comprehensive industrial complex are thriving in and around the airport. Southwest Florida is fully integrated into the information highway at all levels of daily life and work. A wide range of resources, both public and private, are available for small business development. The County continues to attract value added jobs that are fostering our high quality of life and a diverse and healthy economic base. Lee County firms compete successfully in the global marketplace.

## Mission

Retain and encourage the expansion of existing businesses and attract new and diversified employment to Lee County; improve the business climate to become a more globally competitive location; while continuing to drive progress through a community based unified strategic economic roadmap.

## Primary Responsibilities

- Serve as the advisory body to the Lee County Commission on economic development issues;
- Raise private sector funds to support economic development through the Horizon Foundation;
- Provide vision, guidance and support to Lee County's Economic Development Office (EDO) in its mission to help improve the business environment; retain and encourage the expansion of existing business; and attract new and diversified employment.

## SWOT Analysis - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The following list was prepared as a baseline to identify ways to build on Lee County's strengths, improve its weaknesses, develop opportunities and mitigate threats.

### STRENGTHS

- I-75 Connectivity
- International Airport
- Universities, Technical & Higher Education
- Shovel Ready Sites
- Workforce Cost Value
- Competitive Incentives
- Population Growth
- Quality of Life
- Pro-business Climate
- Economic Development Partnership
- Climate & Sunshine
- Air and Water Quality
- Physical & Natural Environment Attractiveness
- Commitment to Sustainability
- Recreational Opportunities
- Tourism Industry
- Health Care Facilities
- Entrepreneurial Talent
- Proximity to Central & South American Markets
- Hurricane and Disaster Preparedness Planning
- Page Field Airport
- Security at RSW International Airport
- Six Effective Diverse Municipalities

### WEAKNESSES

- Available Jobs
- Lack of Skilled Workforce
- Low Average Wage
- Management Talent Diversity
- Not "Top of Mind" for a New Location
- International Trade Support
- Complex Regulatory Processes
- County/City Approval Process Variances
- Advanced Degree Availability
- Reduced Summer Air Service
- Public Transportation Access
- Availability of Venture Capital
- K-12 Education Achievement Levels
- Limited Apprenticeships & Internships
- Port Connectivity
- Demographics
- Flood
- Limited Rail Access
- Trucking Rates
- Proximity to US Markets
- Hurricane Threat Perception
- Perception of high levels of crime
- Limited engagement among retirees
- Generational Diversity
- Lack of Industry Clusters
- Socio-economic gap for minorities
- Attainable & Executive Housing

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Regional Connectivity
- Grow Your Own Strategies
- Export/Import Activity
- Targeted Advanced Degrees
- Technical Skills Development Partnerships
- Medical Partnerships
- Tourism & Sports Partnerships
- Regional & State Partnerships
- Aggregated MSA Designation
- Medical Marijuana
- Flood
- Engagement of International Homeowners
- P3 Readiness (Public Private Partnerships)

### THREATS

- US & Global Economies
- Oil Prices
- Hurricane Activity
- Global Competition
- Access to Capital/Liquidity
- Environmental Sensitivity/Issues & Disruption – Beach/Water Quality & Flooding
- Cyber Security
- Local Demographics Impact on Health Care Costs
- Alternative Funding/Impact Fees
- Underemployed Workforce

## Strategic Areas

The Horizon Council works through task forces or as a convener and/or facilitator with community partners to accomplish its goals across five focus areas identified as critical success factors:

1. Business Advocacy
2. Community & Regional Partnerships
3. Global Competitiveness
4. Community Wealth Building
5. Strategic Initiatives

## Goals, Objectives and Action Steps

The Strategic Areas are further refined into Goals and Objectives with Action Steps incorporated into a one-year Annual Work Plan. Action steps assign responsibility, define timelines and set forth accomplishment result measurements to be reviewed quarterly and reported annually.

### Goals:

- I. Advocate for business interests and drive progress through a unified strategic economic development roadmap.
- II. Improve the business climate to become a more globally competitive location.
- III. Identify wealth creating business prospects and provide guidance to the EDO in defining new initiatives and target marketing strategies.

### Objectives:

- Serve with a strong voice and vision as the economic development advisory body to the Lee County Commission.
- Unite community partners to achieve common goals for a better economic future.
- Bring together regional partners to define a regional economic development initiative.
- Communicate the economic development vision and issues to the local community, including the wealth creation message, and the importance of competitive business costs.
- Review and update the Horizon Council Strategic Roadmap on a regular basis.
- Raise private sector funds to support economic development activities.
- Advocate for government permitting and approval process streamlining.
- Strengthen workforce talent and skills availability.
- Champion community well-being as a competitive business issue.
- Tap into existing businesses and regional CEOs for prospects (vendors, customers, friends) and/or connections.
- Evaluate what industries are successful in Lee County and why.
- Assist the EDO in defining its focus, targets and a pro-active marketing initiative.

## Contact Information

For more information about the Horizon Council and Lee County's economic development efforts, visit [www.leecountybusiness.com](http://www.leecountybusiness.com).

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