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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important factors that determine whether people or businesses move to Lake County is the area's livability. Among the factors that influence livability are the county's ability to provide employment opportunities, healthy businesses that provide goods and services, the quality of public services, the area's natural beauty, good schools, strong neighborhoods, and efficient traffic circulation. Maintaining our community's livability requires that we maintain a strong, sustainable local economy.

In the year 2000, 81,463 persons were employed within the county (www.census.gov) either in a full-time or part-time capacity and more than 3,000 of those employed within the county were over the age of 65. The biggest change as a result of the current population growth is the shift in focus for the population centers within the County. Historically, the Northwest portions of the County (Leesburg, Lady Lake, and Fruitland Park) along with the Golden Triangle area (Eustis, Tavares, and Mount Dora) were the population centers and economic engines of the County. In the first part of the 21st century we anticipate population growth to be the driving factor that will make South Lake (Clermont, Minneola, Groveland, and Four Corners/Citrus Ridge) an equal population center within the county. It is anticipated that a large portion of the population assigned to the unincorporated areas will be transferred to the municipalities through annexations and actual development within those communities. Staff is confident that continued work with the various municipalities of the county will yield more accurate population assignments.

The most recent data available from the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) has six business sectors leading the economic engine of the county from 2001 through 2003. The government sector (inclusive of all government enterprises from federal to state and local agencies) led the county with total employee wages in excess of \$452 million in 2003. The second leading sector was the healthcare industry, and in particular ambulatory care service providers and hospitals that, in 2003, had employee earnings in excess of \$415 million. The third leading sector in the county was the construction industry that paid over \$342 million in 2003. The retail trade, manufacturing sector and the professional group rounded out the top six business sectors for the county with \$290.4M, \$160.7M, and \$129.7M, respectively for 2003.

The goal of the Economic Element is to provide a balanced, diversified, robust economy that will attract businesses that provide high paying jobs for the citizens of Lake County. Economic activities provide jobs, goods and services, and contribute to County revenues. Because of the importance of economic activity, Lake County will support economic development through commerce parks and expansion of existing businesses, and create a climate conducive to economic growth.

Lake County is committed to working with others in the public and private sector to identify issues and develop ways to work together to promote economic development. To ensure there is a citizen perspective in economic development, Lake County will maintain a relationship with Chambers of Commerce, Lake-Sumter Community College, the Industrial Development Authority, and various citizen groups.

It is essential to acknowledge the contributions and effect to Lake County's economy that are made by surrounding communities. Understanding the interrelation of all parts of the region is vital to successfully promoting economic activity. Through staff coordination, the County will

work with neighboring counties, and also adhere to interlocal agreements with Lake County municipalities.

Lake County's residential character, natural beauty, geographic location, and high quality of living all provide a favorable atmosphere for success. Lake County fully intends to capitalize on these strengths.

DEFINITIONS

Comment [ARK1]: Move to definitions chapter

Agricultural uses: Activities within land areas which are predominantly used for the cultivation of crops and livestock including: cropland; pastureland; orchards; vineyards; nurseries; ornamental horticulture areas; groves; confined feeding operations; specialty farms; and silviculture areas.

Infrastructure: those man-made structures which serve the common needs of the population, such as: sewage disposal systems; potable water systems; potable water wells serving a system; solid waste disposal sites or retention areas; stormwater systems; utilities; piers; docks; wharves; breakwaters; bulkheads; seawalls; bulwarks; revetments; causeways; marinas; navigation channels; bridges; and roadways.

GOAL ECON 1

Lake County shall create an economic environment that will enhance the prosperity and quality of life for all of its citizens. Lake County shall promote balanced and orderly economic prosperity that will provide increased economic opportunity while reducing dependence on any one employment sector.

OBJECTIVE 1.0 DIVERSIFIED AND STABLE ECONOMY

1.1 Create a desirable business environment

Lake County shall create a desirable business environment that attracts and retains business by:

- 1) fostering an attitude that welcomes new and expanding industries;
- 2) providing necessary infrastructure on an on-going and timely basis for future business locations;
- 3) streamlining regulations and the review processes;
- 4) maintaining competitive tax and fee structures;
- 5) making business incentives available; and
- 6) supporting employee training and education programs.

1.2 Create a desirable quality of life

Lake County shall create a desirable quality of life that attracts and retains business through the protection of natural resources, promotion of excellence in education and the expansion of recreational and cultural activities.

1.3 Encourage economic development program

Lake County shall anticipate, foster and encourage an economic development program that serves the needs of business, actively markets Lake County, and continues to participate in regional economic development efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2.0 MAKE KNOWN THE BENEFITS OF LAKE COUNTY

Lake County shall promote public and private sector partnerships that fortify and expand the County's presence in the actively growing Central Florida regional business community

2.1 Strengthen Regional Presence

The County shall continue to support the Central Florida regional economy and utilize the strength of the Orlando brand name worldwide. The County shall increase its presence in the region by promoting its own unique image and identity.

2.2 Image and Identity

In partnership with the business community, chambers of commerce, municipalities, and other key stakeholders, the County will maintain a marketing program that continues to expand Lake County's presence in the Metro Orlando statistical area.

OBJECTIVE 3.0 RETAIN AND EXPAND THE COUNTY BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Lake County shall develop incentive and assistance programs designed to encourage the retention and expansion of the county's businesses and industries.

3.1 Retention of Existing Businesses

To every extent possible, Lake County will ensure that programs, assistance, and incentives which are available to new businesses will be made available to existing business as well.

3.2 Business Expansion

The County's Growth Management Department, in partnership with the municipalities, business community, chambers of commerce, and other key stakeholders will prepare on an ongoing basis a county-wide map that identifies parcels that have the potential (based upon future land use, transportation network, and availability of services) to be used for the relocation of new businesses and/or the expansion of existing businesses.

OBJECTIVE 4.0 RECRUIT NEW BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES

Lake County shall partner with the business community, chambers of commerce, municipalities, the Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission, the Lake County Industrial Development Authority, and other key stakeholders in efforts to identify and recruit high wage industries while promoting balanced, diversified and sustainable economy in the County.

4.1 Prospect Identification

Lake County will initiate an aggressive marketing program which identifies active prospects.

4.2 Target Industries and Occupations

Lake County will partner with the business community, chambers of commerce, municipalities and other key stakeholders to focus on identifying and attracting industries that will provide a higher than average wage and which will strengthen the economic base of the County.

OBJECTIVE 5.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Lake County is committed to developing a business and living environment that promotes economic prosperity and opportunity. The County will continue to engage in strategic planning to develop strategies, policies, and incentives that will allow it to remain competitive.

5.1 Direction and Focus

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism shall periodically evaluate the appropriateness of economic development goals, objectives and policies. The Department shall also periodically review and evaluate its economic development activities.. The County shall use the best available information, along with input from the business community, chambers of commerce, municipalities and other key stakeholders, in the preparation of new economic development objectives and policies and recommend revisions to the Comprehensive Plan as needed.

5.2 Effects of Fees, Taxes and Regulations

As needed, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism will present to the Industrial Development Authority an evaluation of the effect of increased fees and/or taxes and regulations on business attraction and retention. The IDA will make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners based on its findings.

OBJECTIVE 6.0 PERMITTING PROCESS

6.1 One-Stop Permitting Process

The County Department of Growth Management will implement and improve the *One-Stop Permitting Process* in keeping with section 288.1093 and section 403.973 Florida Statutes.

- 6.1.1 The County will establish a one-stop permitting system to lower development costs and reduce the gap between project review and construction.
- 6.1.2 The County will create a One-Stop Permitting system that not only allows citizens to complete the development approval process in one physical location but also allows the initiation and completion (to the extent possible) of their transactions via the internet.

OBJECTIVE 7.0 ENHANCE AND ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND EQUINE INDUSTRIES

Lake County shall develop and maintain programs designed to enhance opportunities for sustainable agricultural and equine pursuits.

7.1 Agricultural Partnerships

The County, in partnership with the agricultural community, will research programs and incentives that will help maintain viable the agricultural businesses.

7.2 Value of Agriculture

The County, in partnership with the agricultural industries, will promote the economic value of agriculture through education and marketing endeavors.

7.3 Clearinghouse of Agricultural Information

The County, in partnership with the Cooperative Extension Service, will provide a clearinghouse of information and resources to businesses in the agricultural field to help sustain the industry.

7.4 Value of Equine Industry

The County, in partnership with equine interests, shall promote the economic, recreational, and cultural value of the equine industry and related activities.

7.5 Support of Equestrian Activities

The County shall support and promote equestrian activities and special events within the County as a means of generating public interest, promoting tourism, and fueling the local economy.

OBJECTIVE 8.0 ALLOCATE ADEQUATE ACREAGE FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC NEEDS

Lake County shall identify future land use needs and ensure that adequate commercial, office and industrial acreage is available for development.

8.1 Target Areas

The Future Land Use Element establishes the Higher Intensity Development District Future Land Use Category to serve as the locations for targeted development centers.

8.2 Business-friendly Land Use Allocations

Lake County will foster and encourage the creation of additional business and commerce throughout the County. Therefore, in order to provide the necessary acreage and intensities to grow the county's economic prosperity, Growth Management staff will, in partnership with recommendations from the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, the business community, chambers of commerce, municipalities and other key stakeholders, recommend to the Board Of County Commissioners adequate areas to be designated Higher Density Development District on the Future Land Use Map.

8.3 Intensity In Planned Development Areas

The County shall evaluate and monitor the need for higher intensity in targeted development areas (Higher Density Development Districts) to assure that targeted industries and occupations are able to develop the targeted areas as economic employment centers.

OBJECTIVE 9.0 ENSURE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE TO FACILITATE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Lake County shall provide the infrastructure on an on-going and timely basis in preparation for planned economic development.

9.1 Transportation Network

The County will assure that the Transportation Element, the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan, the Schedule of Capital Improvements, and the Capital Improvement Program harmoniously focus and address the transportation needs of our existing and future business community.

9.2 Utility Services

As the County has chosen not to provide central water and sewer for the citizens and businesses of the county and is dependent on municipal and private enterprises for these services, Lake County shall coordinate with providers to ensure that central water and sewer are available to service development within the Higher Density Development District in a timely way.

9.3 Libraries, Parks and Trails

Generally referred to as quality of life indicators, the libraries, parks and trails (both wooded and blueways) must be maintained and expanded to ensure our current and future residents will continue to enjoy these amenities that add to the character of Lake County.

OBJECTIVE 10.0 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Lake County recognizes the crucial role an educated and trained workforce plays in the retention and recruitment of business and industry. Therefore, in partnership with public and private enterprise, the County will endeavor to bring advanced educational opportunities to the residents of Lake County.

10.1 Advanced Educational Opportunities

The County will actively seek and support advanced educational opportunities by working with Lake Sumter Community College, the University of Central Florida, Lake Technical Center and other educational providers to expand the technical training and college level offerings made available to the residents of Lake County. The County will also seek and support programs that increase accessibility to educational opportunities at all grade levels (inclusive of pre-K through 12th grade) for residents in all areas of the County.

OBJECTIVE 11.0 SUPPORT TOURISM

11.1 Actively Promote Lake County

The County will actively promote itself as a destination for tourism activities in Central Florida and support the tourism industry in the County.

11.2 Eco-Tourism

The County will continue to promote eco-tourism businesses and opportunities.

11.3 Tourist Development Tax

The County will continue to use the Tourist Development Tax to promote tourism in Lake County.