

JOHN J. DRAGO

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

More than thirty years of extensive local government experience in managing and developing a wide range of economic development strategies to establish a high quality of life for communities, stimulate sustainable development and maintain the authentic character of communities

SUMMARY OF NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Developed workforce/affordable housing models for urban city centers and suburban cores. The models produced a resilient pro-business platform for sustained private sector investments, reduced development costs without government subsidies, and created density incentives and strategies for infill on current residential properties.

Created models for Branding, Placemaking, Smart Growth and Sustainable Economic Development. Models establishes a community's identity, vision and growth patterns.

Developed a CRA Enhancement Model that motivates private sector investments, reduces development costs for repurposing vacant buildings and properties, implemented urban sustainability accelerator (USA) schemes, establish policies for adaptive reuse of buildings in the future, improves curb appeal of existing buildings and protects the investments of buildings built on the perimeter of the CRA.

Formulated a Transit Oriented Development Model in conjunction with the Sun Rail System. FDOT used the model as part of their overall Sun Rail System marketing strategy for TODs along the entire rail corridor. The model was nationally recognized by the House of Representatives Transportation Committee and used as part of their federal commuter rail system TOD development program. Several communities in Central Florida applied the model to build TOD projects with great success.

Obtained \$418,000 in federal funding for the design of a Sun Rail Station.

Found a developer to build the first transit-oriented development valued at \$40M on the Sun Rail System corridor.

Developed a purpose-driven development code from a community vision workshop which established regulations and processes that can quickly align with changing development paradigms, created separate and well-defined development districts to control the type and rate of growth, formulated a clear set of regulations that provided predictability to the private sector and empowered developers to accept more responsibility for their development outcome as predetermined by the community. The code was adopted.

Created a streamlined development review and approval structure that reduced the total approval time, shrunk overall development cost for developers, established a Citizen Awareness and Participation Plan to ensure effective citizen participation relative to mitigating issues that impacts residents and eliminated traditional zoning. The structure was included as part of the new purpose-driven development code.

Developed a historic preservation and development code for a national registry historic district based on feedback for a vision workshop. The code established a structural forensic audit (SFA) process to preserve contributing structures from total demolition – the process exceeded federal requirements. The code also allowed current building materials to be incorporated into renovation projects to maintain the original appearance of the building and reduce maintenance costs. The code was adopted.

Managed the completion of a comprehensive marketing analysis to determine community demographics, and retail and housing trends for the purpose of targeting appropriate developers for redevelopment projects. The analysis findings provided for securing several developers to build 4 mix use (retail, office, and housing) projects estimated at approximately \$100 million.

Collaborated in the preparation of two grants totaling \$5 million for a 230 acre 5000 person population town center to acquire: public space for placemaking, 50 acres of environmentally sensitive lands (including a 300 year old hickory stand) for preservation and rights of way for public infrastructure improvements. The town center comprised 300,000 square feet of retail (medical and personal services, grocery store, restaurants and professional offices), and 2000 residential units (single and multi- family homes and a senior living facility). Walking trails were constructed in and around the town center to facilitate a 10 minute walk to the town center. 500 new jobs was created.

Negotiated a voluntary annexation agreement with a Fortune 500 Company to construct a large retail project which upon completion added approximately \$100,000 in new tax revenue annually and created 250 new jobs.

Planned and administered the design and implementation of a \$2 million downtown economic revitalization project utilizing CDBG funds. The project outcome resulted in 100% of the store fronts being leased.

Developed strategic and tactical schemes utilizing; mapping with next step approach, boundary of success development model, investment-based budgets, and organic development systems. The outcomes of the schemes in combination with one another produced an organizational culture of facilitation rather than regulation, created valuable places – not projects, adopted sound public policies for community development that is less controlling and more adaptive to changing economic environments, built a purpose-driven community development culture that increased entrepreneurial activity, and created jobs.