



Department Report

DATE: September 17, 2025
FROM: Dr. Philip C. Harris, D.B.A., Director, Economic Development
SUBJECT: Monthly Report July – August 2025

BACKGROUND

During July and August 2025, the Economic Development Department advanced the City’s mission to foster inclusive growth, support small businesses, and build strategic partnerships that align with Greenacres’ long-term goals of innovation and resilience. The Department is positioning Greenacres as a city of opportunity through redevelopment planning, workforce initiatives, business support services, and international collaboration. These efforts are designed to attract investment, strengthen local businesses, and enhance the community’s long-term economic resilience.

1. Hotel Feasibility Study Update

To address the absence of local lodging, the Department launched a Lodging Needs Survey (Aug. 8–21) in partnership with Core Distinction Group. Eighteen (18) businesses, organizations, and stakeholders responded.

Key Findings:

- **Lodging Demand:** Moderate but diverse demand exists for both short-term stays and longer-term accommodations.
- **Current Gap:** Guests are redirected to hotels in surrounding cities due to a lack of options in Greenacres.
- **Community Benefits:** Strong support for a branded hotel that could generate jobs, tax revenue, and attract sports tourism, relocations, and family visits.
- **Event Space Needs:** High demand for job fairs, training sessions (30–50 attendees), and social/family events (100–300+).
- **Desired Amenities:** Complimentary breakfast, WiFi, fitness center, meeting rooms, pool, dining, and long-term stay options.

Conclusion: A branded hotel could fill significant gaps in lodging, event space, and economic opportunity, serving as a catalyst for a future downtown hub.

2. Workforce Development

2025 Business MatchMaker Conference & Expo

The Department is preparing for the 19th Annual Business MatchMaker Conference & Expo (Sept. 18–19, 2025, at West Palm Beach Airport Hilton).

- **Partners:** City of Greenacres, City of West Palm Beach, City of Riviera Beach, Palm Beach County (various departments), School District of PBC, Solid Waste Authority, TED Center, and others.
- **Goals:** Provide small businesses with access to capacity-building tools, networking, and contracting opportunities.
- **Highlights:** Workshops, exhibitor expo, small business awards, one-on-one “Power Talks” with agencies and private companies, and a networking reception.

3. Business Assistance

- **Commercial Corridor Outreach:**

Collaborating with Retail Strategies consultants and new property owners of Barclay Plaza (sold for \$11.2M) and Buttonwood Plaza (sold for \$8.4M) to strengthen tenant support and attract new retail options.

- **Business Mentoring – SCORE Partnership:**

Monthly confidential mentoring sessions launched at City Hall (third Thursday, 12–2 p.m.), offering personalized support for startups, expansions, and entrepreneurs navigating challenges.

4. Strategic Partnerships and Regional Collaboration

- **Chambers of Commerce:** Attended the Central Chamber of Commerce networking event (Aug. 19).
- **Countywide Collaboration:** Participated in Palm Beach County Economic Development Stakeholders Meeting (Aug. 28) hosted by CareerSource.

Sister Cities International Partnership

The Department has held multiple meetings with the Consulate General of Colombia in Miami and the City of Medellín, Colombia Mayor's Office Executive staff to explore Sister City opportunities.

Potential Areas of Collaboration:

- **Economic Cooperation:** Small business trade, tourism promotion tied to Greenacres' 2026 Centennial, and co-investment opportunities.
 - **Cultural Exchange:** Festivals, culinary showcases, arts, and heritage events.
 - **Academic Exchange:** Student/faculty partnerships, internships, and research initiatives between Medellín and Palm Beach County institutions.
 - **Community Engagement:** Programs fostering intercultural leadership, storytelling, and inclusion of youth and immigrant communities.
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