



**ECONOMIC ELEMENT**  
**GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

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**Goal:**

~~Promote the growth of a strong, stable and prosperous economy through public and private economic development initiatives that preserves and enhances a high quality of life for the residents while protecting the natural, recreational, historical and cultural resources of the County.~~ Promote the growth of a strong, stable, resilient, and prosperous economy through coordinated public, private, nonprofit, and intergovernmental economic development initiatives that create local employment opportunities, support existing businesses, strengthen agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, and working lands, expand workforce and career pathways, promote fiscally responsible infrastructure investment, preserve Levy County's rural character, and protect the natural, recreational, historical, coastal, cultural, and working-land resources that define the County's quality of life.

**Objective 1: Economic Development Strategies**

~~Develop strategies and support programs that promote a diversified economic base, create high paying jobs, enhance educational and vocational job training opportunities, support existing business and industry and encourage the relocation of new business and industry.~~



Develop strategies and support programs that promote a diversified economic base, create higher-wage local jobs, support existing businesses and industries, encourage compatible new business investment, and strengthen economic sectors that complement Levy County's rural character, natural resources, working lands, infrastructure capacity, and community values.

## Economic Development Agency

~~Policy 1.1 The County designated the Nature Coast Business Development Council as the agency to coordinate the economic development activities in the public and private sectors. The County supports this economic development agency with adequate services and monies, subject to the availability of funds. The County shall continue to recognize the Nature Coast Business Development Council, or any successor economic development partner designated by the Board of County Commissioners, as a coordinating entity for public, private, nonprofit, and intergovernmental economic development activities. County support for economic development coordination shall be subject to available funding and Board direction.~~

## Marketing Program

~~Policy 1.2 The County, through its designated economic development agency, shall develop a marketing program which shall include:~~ The County, through its designated economic development partner and in coordination with municipalities, chambers of commerce, workforce partners, and other appropriate entities, should maintain and periodically update an economic development marketing and business information program that may include:

- ~~a. A centralized database containing a profile of local and regional demographic and workforce characteristics, and an inventory of available commercial, industrial, agricultural lands, buildings, and infrastructure;~~
  - ~~b. County promotional packet including a labor market survey, statistics on the wage rates, available compensation packages, training and job skill of the County;~~
  - ~~c. A list of targeted industries, including the identification of local business and industry expansion opportunities;~~
  - ~~d. An inventory of funding sources to assist existing business and industry and to encourage the new business and industry to relocate in the County;~~
  - ~~e. Any other information that would be helpful to a business considering expansion or relocation.~~
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- a. A centralized database containing a profile of local and regional demographic, workforce, wage, housing, infrastructure, broadband, and market characteristics;
  - b. An inventory of available commercial, industrial, agricultural, aquacultural, rural commercial, redevelopment, and employment-supporting lands, buildings, sites, utilities, and transportation access;
  - c. A County promotional packet or digital information portal including labor market information, wage data, available compensation packages, training opportunities, job skills, quality-of-life assets, and target industry information;
  - d. A list of targeted industries and business expansion opportunities, including agricultural, aquacultural, forestry, value-added processing, small manufacturing,



- construction trades, logistics, health care, outdoor recreation, eco-tourism, heritage tourism, and small business sectors;
- e. An inventory of local, regional, state, federal, and private funding sources, grants, incentives, and financing tools that may assist existing business expansion, new business investment, infrastructure readiness, workforce training, redevelopment, and rural economic development; and
  - f. Other information that would be useful to a business, investor, entrepreneur, nonprofit partner, or public agency considering expansion, relocation, or investment in Levy County.

## Incentives

**Policy 1.3** ~~To attract desirable new business and industry, economic development incentives may include the following: industrial development revenue bond (IRB); tax incentive; tax increment financing (TIF) and; ad valorem tax relief inducement to new business during start-up, may be granted.~~ To attract desirable new business and industry, economic development incentives may include industrial development revenue bonds (IRB), tax incentives, tax increment financing (TIF), ad valorem tax relief during business start-up, infrastructure coordination, expedited interagency coordination, grant assistance, and other tools authorized by law, where such incentives advance adopted County economic development, land use, infrastructure, workforce, and fiscal responsibility objectives.

**Policy 1.4** ~~The County shall continue to develop and support programs to ensure that adequate infrastructure, efficient transportation networks, and a sufficient amount of land is available to meet the current and future need for existing businesses and industry. The County shall continue to develop and support programs to ensure that adequate infrastructure, efficient transportation networks, broadband access, and a sufficient supply of appropriately designated land are available within municipalities, Municipal Service Districts, Rural Commercial Nodes, designated employment areas, industrial nodes, and other suitable locations to meet the current and future needs of existing businesses and industries.~~

**Policy 1.5** ~~The County shall encourage the expansion of the wholesale trade and manufacturing sectors in the County. The County shall encourage the retention and expansion of wholesale trade, manufacturing, construction, logistics, distribution, and other employment-generating sectors, particularly those that support the processing, storage, packaging, distribution, and sale of locally produced agricultural, aquacultural, forestry, and natural resource-based products.~~

**Policy 1.6** The County should support business retention and expansion efforts for existing local businesses, farms, aquaculture operations, working waterfront businesses, small manufacturers, contractors, service providers, and entrepreneurs by coordinating, providing technical assistance, planning infrastructure, forming workforce partnerships, and identifying available funding or incentive programs.

**Policy 1.7** The County shall encourage the retention, expansion, and recruitment of businesses in targeted sectors compatible with Levy County's land use pattern, workforce, infrastructure capacity, and rural character, including agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, value-added food and agricultural processing, small-scale manufacturing, construction trades, logistics and distribution, health care, education, outdoor recreation, eco-tourism, heritage tourism, marine-related businesses, and other industries that provide higher-wage local employment opportunities.

**Policy 1.8** Economic development incentives, when considered, should be evaluated based on their potential to create quality local jobs, expand the tax base, support targeted industries, use existing or planned infrastructure efficiently, avoid adverse impacts on rural residential areas and natural resources, and demonstrate a positive public purpose or return on public investment.

**Objective 2: ~~Support Educational and Job Training Programs~~ Workforce Development and Youth Retention**

~~Broaden the range of job opportunities and the employment base through support of educational and workforce development programs and initiatives.~~ Broaden the range of job opportunities and the employment base through support of educational, vocational, technical, apprenticeship, internship, and workforce development programs designed to retain local talent, provide career pathways for youth and young adults, and connect Levy County residents with local employment opportunities.

~~**Policy 2.1** Levy County will support, through the Levy County School Board, plans to market vocational/technical education to elementary and secondary school children.~~ Levy County will support, through coordination with the Levy County School Board and other workforce partners, plans to market and expand vocational, technical, career, and workforce education for elementary, middle, secondary, and post-secondary students, with an emphasis on agricultural technology, aquaculture, construction trades, electrical, plumbing, mechanics, logistics, health care, public safety, utilities, broadband/technology, and other locally needed occupations.

~~**Policy 2.2** The County will encourage state officials to increase funding for all levels of education.~~

~~**Policy 2.3** The County should coordinate with the Levy County School Board, regional colleges, workforce development agencies, municipalities, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and local employers to support career pathways, internships, apprenticeships, certifications, job shadowing, and technical training programs aligned with Levy County's target industries.~~

~~**Policy 2.4** The County will support workforce development initiatives that help retain younger residents and create opportunities for local families to live and work in Levy County, including programs in agriculture, aquaculture, skilled trades, health care, public safety, education, utilities, technology, and small business ownership.~~

~~**Policy 2.5** The County should support expanding high-speed broadband infrastructure, remote-ready workspaces, co-working opportunities, and digital skills training to enable remote work, rural entrepreneurship, home-based businesses, and technology-enabled economic activity.~~

~~**Policy 2.6** The County should coordinate with health care and emergency service providers, educational institutions, municipalities, and workforce partners to support health care, public safety, and essential service workforce pipelines that improve quality of life and strengthen the County's economic competitiveness.~~

**Objective 3: ~~Planning and Development~~ Planning, Infrastructure, and Place-Based Economic Development**

~~Facilitate economic development through the provision of public facilities and development services, land use planning, intergovernmental coordination and cooperative efforts between the public and private sectors.~~

Facilitate economic development through place-based land-use planning, public-facility coordination, infrastructure investment, transportation access, broadband expansion, intergovernmental coordination, and cooperation between the public and private sectors.

**Future Development**

~~**Policy 3.1** Provide adequate amounts of land for future development and expansion in suitable locations for agricultural/aquacultural, commercial and industrial land uses.~~ Provide adequate



amounts of land for future development, redevelopment, infill, and expansion in suitable locations for agricultural, aquacultural, forestry, commercial, industrial, rural commercial, mixed-use, recreation, tourism, and employment-generating land uses consistent with the Future Land Use Element.

~~Policy 3.2 Identify and pursue State and Federal funding sources to provide and improve infrastructure in areas of growth and/or are necessary to protect the natural resources.~~ Identify and pursue state, federal, regional, and other funding sources to provide, improve, maintain, and modernize infrastructure in designated growth areas, municipalities, Municipal Service Districts, Rural Commercial Nodes, industrial nodes, employment areas, and areas where infrastructure improvements are necessary to protect natural resources, with priority given to upgrades to existing systems and to locations where public investment can reduce scattered development and inefficient infrastructure extensions.

~~Policy 3.3 Direct and encourage commercial and industrial development in locations that are highly accessible and have adequate infrastructure to serve existing and future needs.~~ Direct and encourage commercial, industrial, mixed-use, and employment-generating development to municipalities, Municipal Service Districts, Rural Commercial Nodes, designated employment areas, industrial nodes, and other suitable locations where adequate infrastructure, transportation access, utilities, broadband, public facilities, and compatibility with surrounding uses can be demonstrated.

Policy 3.4 All applications for large-scale comprehensive plan amendments shall include a fiscal impact analysis using a methodology approved by the Levy County Planning and Zoning Department.

## Development Services

~~Policy 3.5 Develop methods to improve development services through the streamlining of planning, zoning and permitting issues and processes.~~ Develop methods to improve development services through clear procedures, interdepartmental coordination, pre-application review, digital information, and streamlining of planning, zoning, permitting, and interagency coordination processes where consistent with adopted standards and applicable law.

~~Policy 3.6 Coordinate plan review and permitting with appropriate agencies to improve the efficiency of the development review process and reduce the amount of time taken to achieve approval.~~ Coordinate plan review and permitting with appropriate local, regional, state, and federal agencies to improve the efficiency, predictability, and transparency of the development review process while ensuring consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, environmental requirements, public facility standards, and applicable law.

~~Policy 3.7 Develop and implement buffering and landscape standards through the Levy County land development regulations, to promote compatibility between Commercial/Industrial uses and other land uses.~~ Develop and implement buffering, landscaping, lighting, access management, noise, dust, truck routing, stormwater, screening, and other performance standards through the Land Development Code to promote compatibility between commercial, industrial, mining, ag-industrial, rural commercial, residential, agricultural, forestry, conservation, and public facility uses.

Policy 3.8 The County may evaluate and prioritize Growth Opportunity Areas or similar place-based economic development areas for infrastructure planning, employment growth, redevelopment, small-business development, workforce-housing coordination, and targeted public investment. Such areas should be evaluated based on land readiness, infrastructure availability, transportation access, workforce proximity, environmental suitability and compatibility, fiscal efficiency, and consistency with the Future Land Use Element.

Policy 3.9 Candidate Growth Opportunity Areas, employment nodes, or similar place-based planning areas may, where appropriate and subject to Board direction, include the Williston Urban Service Area, the Chiefland US 19/US 98 employment and mixed-use corridor, the Bronson central county government and residential node, the Fanning Springs gateway area, and inland corridor ag-



industrial clusters. Such areas shall not create development entitlements unless separately adopted through the Future Land Use Map, Land Development Code, or other implementing action.

**Policy 3.10** The County should coordinate economic development planning with transportation, potable water, wastewater, stormwater, broadband, electric utility, public safety, school, and workforce planning to support shovel-ready or investment-ready sites in suitable locations.

**Policy 3.11** The County should support redevelopment, infill, adaptive reuse, and small-town expansion opportunities in municipalities, Municipal Service Districts, Joint Planning Areas, and in existing developed areas where public facilities and services are available or planned.

#### **Objective 4: ~~Protection of Rural and Environmental Quality~~ Rural Character, Compatibility, and Environmental Quality**

Encourage the development of business and industry that enhances and preserves the rural quality of life, cultural, historical and environmental resources in Levy County. Encourage business and industry that enhances Levy County's rural quality of life, protects agricultural and forestry lands, conserves cultural, historical, coastal, recreational, and environmental resources, and promotes compatible development patterns that avoid scattered sprawl and inefficient infrastructure extensions.

**Policy 4.1** Preserve the rural quality of life through the coordination of land use and development plans for areas adjacent to municipalities and other counties. Proposed land use and development plans will be reviewed to ensure consistency with other local Comprehensive Plans, promote the efficient use of public facilities and develop compatible land use patterns. Preserve the rural quality of life by coordinating land use, infrastructure, economic development, and redevelopment plans for areas adjacent to municipalities, Joint Planning Areas, Municipal Service Districts, Rural Commercial Nodes, adjacent counties, conservation lands, springs protection areas, and coastal hazard areas. Proposed land use and development plans should be reviewed to promote efficient use of public facilities, fiscal responsibility, and compatible land use patterns.

**Policy 4.2** Levy County will provide multiple options for agricultural, aquacultural, industrial and recreation-related development through the Land Development Regulations. Levy County will provide appropriate options for agricultural, aquacultural, forestry, ag-supportive, industrial, rural commercial, recreation-related, tourism-related, and small business development through the Land Development Code, subject to location, access, buffering, environmental protection, and compatibility standards.

**Policy 4.3** Economic development activities in rural areas should be located and designed to minimize conflicts with rural residential areas, agricultural and forestry operations, conservation lands, springs protection areas, coastal hazard areas, and environmentally sensitive lands, using appropriate location criteria, buffering, access management, site design, lighting, noise, dust, stormwater, and operational standards.

**Policy 4.4** The County should consider the long-term cost of providing public facilities and services when evaluating economic development proposals, infrastructure extensions, or land use changes in rural areas, with an emphasis on avoiding premature, inefficient, or fiscally unsustainable development patterns.

#### **Resource and Cultural Based Recreational Development and Activities**

**Policy 4.5** Develop a plan to market recreational, historical and cultural resources at a local, regional and national level. Develop and maintain strategies to market recreational, historical, cultural, natural resource, coastal, springs, working waterfront, and rural heritage resources at the local, regional, state, and national level in coordination with municipalities, chambers of commerce, tourism partners, state agencies, and private organizations.



**Policy 4.6** ~~Levy County, in coordination with municipalities and Chambers of Commerce, shall encourage promotion activities for civic festivals to attract tourists.~~ Levy County, in coordination with municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, tourism partners, and community organizations, shall encourage promotional activities for civic festivals, agricultural events, aquaculture and seafood events, heritage events, outdoor recreation events, and rural community activities that attract visitors and support local businesses.

## Environmental Protection

**Policy 4.7** ~~Growth and development plans will be coordinated with appropriate regulatory and non-regulatory agencies to protect the quality of natural resources.~~ Growth and development plans will be coordinated with appropriate regulatory and non-regulatory agencies to protect the quality of natural resources, including springs, aquifer recharge areas, wetlands, floodplains, coastal resources, wildlife habitat, conservation lands, agricultural lands, forestry lands, and other environmentally sensitive resources.

**Policy 4.8** ~~Promote eco-tourism through the development and improvement of public recreational opportunities and recreational initiative including, but not limited to, the Tri-County Nature Coast Greenway.~~ Promote eco-tourism, nature-based tourism, and outdoor recreation through the development, improvement, and maintenance of public recreational opportunities and initiatives, including but not limited to the Tri-County Nature Coast Greenway, paddling trails, trails, parks, springs access, river access, Gulf access, wildlife viewing areas, and compatible resource-based recreation.

**Policy 4.9.** Levy County will continue working with local, state, and federal agencies, including but not limited to the United States Department of Agriculture, to promote new or expanding agritourism, aquaculture-related tourism, farm tours, farm-to-market activities, and agricultural or aquacultural attractions, where compatible with surrounding land uses and natural resource protection.

## Objective 5: Agricultural, Aquacultural, Forestry, and Working Lands Economy

Strengthen agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, and related working-land industries as major pillars of Levy County's economy by supporting production, value-added processing, distribution, support services, agritourism, aquaculture infrastructure, working waterfronts, and compatible rural business opportunities.

**Policy 5.1** The County should support value-added agricultural, aquacultural, and forestry activities, including packing, processing, cold storage, distribution, equipment repair, shellfish support facilities, seafood processing, farm-to-market enterprises, agritourism, and other compatible rural industries, in appropriate locations with adequate access, infrastructure, buffering, and environmental protections.

**Policy 5.2** The County should evaluate the Land Development Code to ensure that agricultural-support, forestry-support, and aquaculture-support businesses are permitted in appropriate agricultural, rural commercial, industrial, waterfront, or designated employment areas, subject to compatibility and performance standards.

**Policy 5.3** Agriculture-supportive and aquaculture-supportive industries may include equipment sales and repair, irrigation and well services, soil testing, fertilizer and feed distribution, seed suppliers, veterinary and animal health services, cold storage, packing, processing, trucking, warehousing, agribusiness finance and insurance, ag-technology, precision agriculture, seafood support facilities, and other uses that support working lands and water-dependent industries.

**Policy 5.4** When evaluating long-range land use policy changes, infrastructure investments, or Future Land Use Map amendments that involve substantial rural acreage, the County may consider potential effects on agricultural production, aquaculture, forestry operations, rural employment,



supporting businesses, and the local economic multiplier effect generated by agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, and related rural industries.

**Policy 5.5** The County should coordinate with coastal municipalities, aquaculture businesses, state agencies, and private partners to support working waterfronts, aquaculture access, seafood-related businesses, docks, processing areas, cold storage, and water-dependent support facilities, provided these activities are compatible with coastal resource protection, hazard mitigation, public access, and the Coastal Management Element.

**Policy 5.6** The County should encourage agricultural, forestry, and aquaculture operations to adopt best management and conservation practices, along with resource stewardship strategies, that support long-term productivity, water quality, natural resource protection, and economic resilience.

**Policy 5.7** The County may evaluate rural economic zones, ag-industrial clusters, or similar planning tools to support farm-to-market activities, agritourism, light industrial uses, home-based businesses, processing, storage, and distribution in locations that are accessible, compatible, and capable of being served without inefficient infrastructure extensions.

### **Objective 6: Tourism, Recreation, Cultural Resources, and Small Business Vitality**

Promote tourism, outdoor recreation, eco-tourism, heritage tourism, cultural resources, working waterfronts, small business development, downtown vitality, and entrepreneurship as compatible economic development strategies that support Levy County's rural character, natural resources, and local business base.

**Policy 6.1** The County should coordinate with municipalities, chambers of commerce, tourism organizations, state agencies, nonprofit partners, and private businesses to market and support nature-based tourism, ecotourism, heritage tourism, paddling, fishing, boating, trails, springs, coastal resources, wildlife viewing, cultural resources, civic festivals, agricultural events, aquaculture events, and rural community events.

**Policy 6.2** The County should support small-business development, local entrepreneurship, downtown revitalization, adaptive reuse, redevelopment, and infill in municipalities, Rural Commercial Nodes, Municipal Service Districts, and other appropriate areas where infrastructure and services are available or planned.

**Policy 6.3** Tourism- and recreation-based economic development should be planned and managed to protect springs, rivers, coastal resources, wildlife habitat, conservation lands, working waterfronts, agricultural lands, forestry lands, and rural community character.

**Policy 6.4** The County should support opportunities for compatible cottage industries, farm-based businesses, rural professional services, and remote work, provided these activities are consistent with residential compatibility, traffic, signage, noise, and other applicable Land Development Code standards.

**Policy 6.5** The County should coordinate economic development, housing, transportation, recreation, and public facility planning to support complete, livable communities where residents have access to employment, services, schools, parks, health care, and local businesses, without unnecessary expansion of scattered rural development patterns.

### **Implementation Review Note**

The proposed revisions above are intended to provide policy direction for County, BOCC, Planning Commission, and County Attorney review.