



Introduction to Economic Development

The Economic Development Element is intended to guide the City’s future policy decisions in service of growing and strengthening the local economy. The Economic Development Element is not a required element of a General Plan, but the City has decided to include it in recognition that promoting economic vibrancy and resiliency is a central aspect of planning for Lake Forest’s future. While presented as a separate chapter, the policies contained within the Economic Development Element are intertwined with those found in the other Elements of the General Plan. Decisions made involving other Elements, such as land use, housing, mobility, open space, and health and wellness, necessarily impact economic development, and vice-versa.

Organization of Element

Given market conditions and trends in Lake Forest and its location in the region, there are a number of key areas in which the City has the greatest opportunity for economic growth and development. The goals and policies identified in the Economic Development Element are focused on these areas, and underscore the City’s commitment to being a place where workers, residents, visitors, and businesses can thrive, today and into the future. The six goals of the Element address the following areas of economic development

- *Economic Diversification*
- *Business Community Support*
- *Business Growth*
- *Innovation*
- *Live and Work Opportunities*
- *Enhanced Activity Centers*

Contents:

- + Economic Diversification
- + Business Community Support
- + Business Growth
- + Innovation
- + Live and Work Opportunities
- + Enhanced Activity Centers

GOAL ED-1 ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

A City with a diverse economy that fosters fiscal sustainability.

ED-1 Policies

- ED-1.1 **Land Uses.** Maintain land use policies that allow for a balanced variety of housing and business types.
- ED-1.2 **Industry and Workforce.** Pursue strategies that support the attraction and retention of diverse industries and a diverse workforce.
- ED-1.3 **Revenue Sources.** Pursue land use and business attraction and retention strategies that enhance the diversity of municipal revenue sources.

ED-1 Actions

- ED-1a Maintain an inventory of market conditions, such as market demand, labor force statistics, commercial sectors underrepresented in Lake Forest, and available sites and buildings to support business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts.
- ED-1b Establish a policy that determines when a fiscal impact analysis and/or market study shall be required for land use and development proposals and that stipulates the general contents required for such analysis.
- ED-1c Implement marketing and branding strategy identified in the City's Economic Development Action Plan.
- ED-1d Identify existing undeveloped, underdeveloped, or unoccupied sites and buildings that can be categorized as "opportunity sites" for business attraction and expansion, and possible City efforts to improve the marketability of these sites, such as zoning changes or infrastructure improvements.
- ED-1e Identify a range of incentives, including but not necessarily limited to, bonds, assistance programs, and other benefits to attract a desirable, diverse range of companies to Lake Forest.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Economic development and fiscal sustainability are addressed throughout the General Plan. The Land Use and Design Element supports a balanced mix of land uses and an aesthetically pleasing community, the Public Facilities Element ensures that community facilities and services, including schools, roads, and utilities are provided in a timely manner to serve development and that new development funds its fair share of demand for infrastructure and services.

GOAL ED-2 BUSINESS COMMUNITY SUPPORT

A community that consistently engages, collaborates with, supports, and celebrates its business community.

ED-2 Policies

- ED-2.1 **Processes.** Review, and streamline as appropriate, City regulations, processes, and procedures that impact business development and operations.
- ED-2.2 **Partnerships.** Encourage dialogue and partnership among the local and regional business community, the City, and other community-based organizations.
- ED-2.3 **Resources.** Support local businesses in identifying available resources for growth and development, including those targeted at small businesses and entrepreneurs.

ED-2 Actions

- ED-2a Maintain and expand business engagement efforts such as a business visitation program, annual business survey, business awards, and annual recognition ceremony. Partner with the Lake Forest Chamber of Commerce to improve the effectiveness of business engagement efforts.
- ED-2b Continue to prepare and share economic development marketing packages for business retention and expansion, business attraction, and business start-ups.
- ED-2c Provide information on small business assistance programs, the agencies regulating small businesses, and distribute small business resources directories.

GOAL ED-3 BUSINESS GROWTH

A community that fosters the retention, expansion, and attraction of new businesses.

ED-3 Policies

- ED-3.1 **Workforce.** Enhance factors that attract and retain a strong resident workforce, including housing, educational institutions, and cultural, recreational, and life-service amenities.
- ED-3.2 **Community Assets.** Highlight the City's assets for businesses, including a workforce with a variety of skills and education levels, high-quality recreational and retail/dining amenities for employees, access to major transportation corridors, and a proactive business environment.
- ED-3.3 **Space.** Support the development of residential and commercial formats that align with the needs and preferences of a variety of businesses and workers, including mixed-use formats.
- ED-3.4 **Regional Cooperation.** Cooperate with regional partners on economic development efforts that further overall regional competitiveness and economic strength.
- ED-3.5 **Infrastructure.** Maintain quality physical infrastructure that supports business operations and encourages business investment.

ED-3 Actions

- ED-3a Establish a business retention program that annually inventories existing industries and businesses, identifies businesses that may be at risk of closure or relocation outside of the community, includes periodic meetings with existing companies in the identified growth industries to identify service needs and assess the City's ability to address those needs, and actively seeks to retain existing businesses that are at risk of leaving the City.
- ED-3b Review, and update as necessary, zoning and other development regulations and application review and permitting process in order to ensure consistency with land use policies in this General Plan aimed at spurring job growth and economic development. Revisions may include increased flexibility regarding use types, business operations, site development standards, reduced parking standards near transit stations, or other changes intended to reduce impediments to development consistent with the goals of this General Plan.
- ED-3c Ensure that zoning and other development regulations do not include internal conflicts or other unintended development impediments that would limit full and complete utilization of sites zoned for commercial and light industrial activities, consistent with the maximum densities and development intensities allowed by the zoning code.
- ED-3d Promote the establishment of workplace alternatives, including home occupations, shared workspaces, and telecommuting.

GOAL ED-4 INNOVATION

A community that is forward-thinking, innovative, and adaptive to changing economic forces.

ED-4 Policies

- ED-4.1 **Technology.** Cooperate with neighboring communities and regional service providers to ensure that businesses and residents have access to state-of-the-art technology and data services.
- ED-4.2 **Responsiveness.** Remain aware of and responsive to future changes in business needs, including new space formats.
- ED-4.3 **Adaptation.** Periodically review the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan and Action Plan and update as needed.
- ED-4.4 **Future Trends.** Monitor and explore regional and national changes in economic trends, in order to best support existing local industries and position Lake Forest to capture growing and sustainable industry clusters.

ED-4 Actions

- ED-4a Periodically review and update the City's Economic Development Action Plan to set the short-term economic development priorities for the City of Lake Forest, to identify business engagement efforts, and target meetings with key groups and networking events.

GOAL ED-5 LIVE AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES

A community that provides the opportunities to both live and work in Lake Forest.

ED-5 Policies

- ED-5.1 **Housing.** Promote the development of more diverse housing options, including multifamily and smaller single-family units, that will support a more diverse resident workforce.
- ED-5.2 **Mixed-Use.** Encourage the development of mixed-use projects that blend residential with complementary retail, hotel, and office uses, in order to support diverse housing options and reduce driving times and distances.
- ED-5.3 **Workforce Training.** Support businesses and residents in identifying available resources for skills training and career development.

ED-5 Actions

- ED-5a Maintain and publicize information about career development and training services available through the Orange County Workforce Investment Board and adult and continuing education services available through local public and private educational institutions.

GOAL ED-6 ENHANCED ACTIVITY CENTERS

A City with vibrant and dynamic centers of commercial and community activity.

ED-6 Policies

- ED-6.1 **Public Spaces.** Promote the inclusion of public spaces within commercial and mixed-use developments where residents and workers can gather and interact.
- ED-6.2 **Live/Work/Play.** Encourage the development of active and accessible live/work/play environments in Lake Forest, through mixed-use projects that bring housing, employment opportunities, hospitality, and retail/dining amenities in close proximity to each other along major transportation corridors.
- ED-6.3 **Competitive Advantage.** Promote development of commercial centers that take advantage of Lake Forest's competitive advantages and positioning within the regional real estate market.

ED-6 Actions

- ED-6a Review and revise Zoning Ordinance, as necessary, to allow for flexibility and diversity in commercial and mixed-use development, in order to attract new and desired development typologies.