

# **Alachua County Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) Accomplishments Report FY2022-23/ Annual Workplan 2023-2024**

Date: November 14, 2023

Board/Committee Name: Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)

Chair 2022/2023: Elliott Welker

Board Liaison: Sean McLendon

**Brief History of Committee:** The reconstitution of the Economic Development Advisory Committee was approved by the County Commission on August 12, 2008. Its purpose is to develop and provide policy recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for promoting sustainable economic development activities within Alachua County.

**Mission Statement:** The responsibility of the Economic Development Advisory Committee shall be to develop and provide policy recommendations to the County Commission related to the promotion of sustainable economic development activities within Alachua County.

**Note from Chair:**

The Economic Development Committee was pleased with its outreach efforts to the municipalities and progress on its work plan. The County is starting to see benefits from large and small economic development capital commitments of the Board. The Committee looks forward to beginning 2024 with new members and challenges.

## **Major Accomplishments in FY2022-23:**

- 2023 Small Municipality and Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement. Continuing their outreach work from 2022, the Committee visited three stakeholders better to understand their interests and preferences for economic development. The Committee will bring the Board summary recommendations on engaging with the small municipalities as they meet with them.
  - June - Gainesville Regional Airport & Airport Authority Meeting
  - August - City of Waldo
  - September - City of Newberry
  - October - UF Innovate Sid Martin

## Findings from 2022-2023

- Per the Airport Gateway project work, the Gainesville Airport is interested in getting more shovel-ready sites online for development that can drive demand for airport services. The long-range goal should be promoting good-paying jobs in these development opportunities that employ more than just people with doctorates. The other big economic issue for working folks is affordable childcare. The City and County create an entity that can exclusively focus on creating high-quality development for the study area and looking for funding sources that support it.
- The Committee recommends that the Board engage with municipalities that want to develop shared service inter-city infrastructure projects. Hawthorne and Micanopy discussed the lack of connection to water

and wastewater systems as an economic development inhibitor and contributor to environmental degradation.

- The City of Newberry is the champion of a regional waste-water model and presented its plans to the Committee.
  - Hawthorne would like to revisit the distribution of sales tax revenue as they do not see an equivalent benefit from their overall contribution per the current inter-city formula
  - Waldo has emphasized several priority areas around increasing water pressure on Hwy 301, blueways & greenways infrastructure support, and encouraging mid-price housing developments. Related to blue ways & greenways, the Committee recommends the following specific actions as of 2023: investigate ways of partnering to support the economic development priorities between Waldo and Melrose and Waldo and Starke.
- Sports Events Complex Major Project Milestone - Facility ribbon cutting and commencement of services.
  - Oversight of the EcoLoop prospect selection methodology and review of applications for Board consideration.
    - The Committee is standing by to vet additional project applications and recommend to the Board on EcoLoop prospects.
  - Oversight of (SMAACA Grant) agriculture grants supporting small farms.
    - The Committee has provided staff feedback on improvements to the program for the 2024 funding cycle.
  - Oversight of Community Redevelopment Funds for the Gainesville Metropolitan Area - The Committee continued to oversee the Airport Gateway Phase I Analysis.
    - Airport Gateway Objective – Promote a sense of place through a unified vision of 21st-century light industrial and commercial property opportunities in the Airport-Waldo Road and 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue area (Airport Gateway). This will be achieved via three phases. The first phase will be a City-County jointly funded property analysis and a follow-up market and real estate study of the project area's industrial and commercial property. This analysis will also make recommendations suitable to guide A phase 2 master planning effort.
    - Phase 1 will also provide recommendations about governance, incentives, and public-private collaboration options to promote light industrial and commercial property opportunities.
    - Phase 2: Master Plan - The second phase will be a master planning effort. US Economic Development Administration (USEDA) matching funding will be sought in advance.
    - Phase 3: Construction - The third phase would also seek USED A funding to construct facilities and infrastructure supporting the master plan.

## Goals & Objectives for FY2023-24:

- Make recommendations on how the County can promote economic development in the small municipalities. The Committee has an ordered list of meetings. However, if cities are unwilling to participate in a discussion, staff will move on to the next city. Some conversations may come out of order depending upon the availability of the towns.

### 2024 Tentative Municipal & Stakeholder Meetings

Location	Topics
Archer	Shovel Ready Industrial Lands, P3 Utility Scale Solar PV
Lacrosse	General Discussion, Broadband Follow-up w James Woodard
Hawthorne	General Discussion, Surtax, Gas Tax Formula,
Micanopy	General Discussion, Surtax
High Springs	CRA-Downtown Redevelopment, Residential Development
Santa Fe College -Charles R. Perry Construction Institute	Construction and Technical Program, Green Jobs Pipeline

- Further explore regional water and wastewater service for communities to support economic development and environmental goals.
- Support inter-city dialog around blue ways and greenways.
- Make recommendations to promote entrepreneurship in the County
- Continue to engage with all municipal governments to hear their thoughts on economic development
- Monitor and provide recommendations to Alachua County's investment in the Sports Event Center at Celebration Pointe
- Encourage initiative to advance reliable and affordable internet infrastructure in Alachua County.
- Support the development of municipalities' bike/pedestrian plans and ecotourism for integration into a County-wide plan (Trail Towns)
- Monitor and provide input related to CRA projects for East Gainesville – particularly Waldo and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue redevelopment proposals.
- Monitor and support the Airport Gateway project in 2023 as the analysis progresses.
- Promote the reuse/circular economy potential in Alachua County (added by BoCC in 2021) - This item will include a review of the business selection criteria
- Monitor and provide recommendations for the development of the business at the Alachua County EcoLoop

## **Standing Goals:**

- Continue to encourage responsible east county development and provide recommendations to BoCC.
- Support initiatives to diversify the local economy in targeted industries.
- Provide recommendations to the BoCC regarding economic development activities and projects at the EcoLoop and East County development as needed.
- Provide recommendations, as necessary, to the BoCC related to future business development; grant funding; zoning; and, incentives zones.
- Committee will take a more public proactive role in the community in evaluating and advancing the County's competitiveness.
- Collaborate with state economic development agencies in promoting economic development in Alachua County.
- Extend invitation to smaller municipalities to participate in EDAC monthly meetings.
- Invite economic development stakeholders to attend one EDAC meeting to discuss alignment and economic development priorities in the community.
- Monitor, support as appropriate, engage, and provide input regarding the Greater Gainesville Chamber's strategic plan and implementation
- Assist County Economic Development Manager in accomplishing the goals and objectives of EDAC work plan.

Last modified September 18, 2023