

Economic Development Advisory Committee

Date: March 27, 2025
Time: 2:30 pm
Location: County Administration Building - Grace Knight Conference Room
12 SE 1 Street, 2nd Floor, Gainesville, FL 32601

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 PM.

Members Present: Romona Jackson, Elliott Welker, Ying Xu, Linda James, Alexander-Sanchez, Levy Odera, Nedra Goetling, Sarah Rockwell

Members Absent: Carrie Bush

2. Review of Agenda

Romona Jackson made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Elliott Welker and approved unanimously.

3. Approval Minutes from February 27, 2025

Levy Odera moved to approve the minutes, and Romona Jackson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Staff Presentations

4.1 EcoLoop Update and Broadening of Industry Recruitment

Staff presented an update on the EcoLoop and informed the committee of the challenges of having a singular focus on the types of companies that could be recruited to the site.

The restriction in use is limited in the Board's restrictive landuse rules for the site to just Waste-Related Service Uses. The adopted language currently says that the EcoLoop will "...develop and maintain a long-term solid waste management system, the Leveda Brown Environmental Park shall be utilized as a locale for centralized solid waste management facilities with the capacity for processing various components of the solid waste stream. The Waste-Related Services land uses shall include, but are not limited to, those uses permitted in the MS and MP zoning districts. In addition, a solid waste transfer station, salvage or recycled metal or tire

yard, storage yard, material recovery, recycling and composting, and storage/ transfer or treatment of household hazardous waste are permitted by right.

Additional uses such as solar energy technologies, wood waste processing, repair center, manufacturing, reused material artisans, educational and research facilities, biodiesel processing, low-impact development technologies (i.e. green roofs, cisterns, solar power), broadcasting or wireless communication towers, textile/ carpet remanufacturing, emerging waste technologies, distribution, and sale of goods associated with the reuse/ reclaimed materials.”

Staff made a case for expanding the options for recruitment under the following parameters as a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to amend the 2010 Planned Development Zoning Master Plan.

Ideas discussed with the Advisory Board:

- What stays the same: Keep “waste-based” and add preferred or excluded industry types.
- What don’t we want: No “burn,” No smokestack industries
- What do we want for heavy-light industrial land use types: Example Compatibles: High-tech, Aerospace, Aviation, Semi-Conductor Manufacturing
- What should we be aware of: Check in with the Airport Authority for any landuse/industry groups before soliciting (com towers problematic, compost type industries)

Elliott Welker made a motion to recommend to the County Commission that EcoLoop’s PD be amended to also allow non-smokestack industries such as but not limited to high-technology, aerospace, aviation, and semi-conductor manufacturers. Ying Xu seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

4.2 Forward Focus – Preliminary Community Comment Analysis

Staff presented some preliminary results from Forward Focus’ recent Montecocha community listening session.

Summary:

- Montechoa residents value their close-knit community and natural environment.
- They seek clearer communication, infrastructure improvements, and controlled development.
- Youth services and economic opportunities are key concerns.

Key Themes:

- **Community Engagement & Transparency:**
- **Infrastructure & Safety:**
- **Economic Development & Preservation:**
- **Youth & Family Services:**

Staff are moving to address immediate needs in the Montechoa area on the following issues.

- **Montechoa Park Development**

Park staff will meet with community members to discuss their progress on area park improvements.

- **Traffic Safety Improvements**

Public Works staff will address stop sign and road concerns ASAP.

- **Building Regulation Clarity**

Growth Management staff are setting meetings with community members with questions about building regulations.

Summary:

- Alachua County is actively responding to Montechoa residents' concerns.
- Progress is being made in park development, traffic safety, and communication on building regulations.
- Continued community engagement is a priority.

Chair Rockwell recommended that Forward Focus information can be shared with Alachua County Public Schools PIO Jackie Johnson. Ms. Johnson can forward the information to the families that attend Hawthorne and Shell schools.

5. Member Comments

6. Public Comment

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 PM.

8. Upcoming EDAC Meetings

April 24, 2025 – Location (Tentative) Sports Events Center Topic: Sports Tourism

May 22, 2025 – Location UF Innovate Mid Town; Topic: Space Commerce, Tech Transfer

June 26, 2025 – Location Grace Knight