
**Analysis of Florida's Regional Planning Councils'
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies**

January 2011 – Review Draft #1

Executive Summary

The Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and Florida's Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) have committed to updating their five-year strategic plans to support goals for founding Florida's new economy using the framework of the Six Pillars™ of Florida's Future Economy developed by the Florida Chamber Foundation. The Six Pillars include: Talent Supply & Education; Innovation & Economic Development; Infrastructure & Growth Leadership; Business Climate & Competitiveness; Civic & Governance Systems; and Quality of Life & Quality Places. More information about the Six Pillars can be obtained at: <http://www.flchamber.com/six-pillars/overview/>.

The most current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) developed by the eleven Regional Planning Councils were reviewed (*Revision Dates: 3-2011, 2-2010, 1-2009, 5-2007*). It was learned that the goals and objectives in the CEDS plans address significant projects that were related to the Six Pillars, which should greatly ease the alignment of the new plans to increase economic development with the Six Pillars framework and the State of Florida's statewide five-year strategic plan. Below is an overview of selected findings from the review.

Talent Supply & Education

- Every region has identified education and related efforts to improve the supply of talented workers as a key component of their plan to create jobs, raise wages and foster prosperity.
- Most regions have identified the need to attract or produce high-tech workers by investing in research capacity or cultivating biotech clusters.
- Many regions have also stressed the need to improve collaboration among workforce boards, trade schools, colleges and local employers to ensure that training programs are preparing local residents with skills that employers are seeking.

Innovation & Economic Development

- Each region has stressed the importance of encouraging innovation and progress in its local economy by promoting economic development.
- Regions must achieve a balance between a healthy focus on investing in their economic strengths to maximize competitive advantages, and the ongoing need to diversify regional economies so they are not dependent on the fortunes of a single industry or group of industries.
- Stronger business incubators can also help unleash entrepreneurship by linking small businesses with access to investment and expertise.
- Innovation can boost even traditional industries such as agriculture, mining and forestry, which could be aided by a push toward usage of renewable energy.

Infrastructure & Growth Leadership

- Each region recognizes the need to ensure adequate infrastructure exists to accommodate growth.
- A key goal identified by many regions is to create housing and transportation systems that allow citizens to live relatively near where they work.
- A strategy of encouraging denser communities better serviced by air, rail and road systems would also help protect Florida's open spaces, and preserve our agricultural industries.
- Investing in better infrastructure will help Florida take advantage of emerging export markets and promote the state's efforts to benefit from new trade enabled by a widened Panama Canal.

Business Climate & Competitiveness

- Each region cited important policy goals to promote a favorable climate for business growth and entrepreneurship.
- A key goal identified by a majority of regions is to assist business and job creation by increasing access to capital investment for local small businesses.
- Several regions stressed the importance of encouraging development of larger industrial sites that can attract and accommodate large-scale employers such as product and equipment manufacturers.
- Some regions cited the importance of reducing business costs such as taxes and insurance premiums to improve the local business climate.

Civic & Governance Systems

- Nearly every region stressed the importance of bringing together stakeholders to adopt a clear economic vision for their region and promote greater collaboration to achieve it.
- To empower such governance, several regions propose supporting leadership programs to build networks of relationships between public and private economic development leaders.
- To aid decision-making, regions propose greater use of economic data and research.
- Some regions encourage more active participation and civic voluntarism by retirees.

Quality of Life & Quality Places

- Efforts to attract a highly educated, sought-after, and mobile work forces depend on convincing potential residents that the region is a desirable place to live, work, and raise a family.
- Several regions stressed the importance of ensuring infrastructure and public services that create a quality of life that attracts talented, creative people and supports a successful business climate. This includes housing alternatives that allow citizens to live and work in the same community, near quality schools and health care systems that they can access through alternatives to automobiles.
- Further proposals address greater access to history, the arts, cultural facilities, special events, festivals, sports, and outdoor recreation through preservation of open spaces and waterways.

In summary, each CEDS plan addresses many significant projects related to the Six Pillars. The pillars receiving the most emphasis within the existing plans include: Talent Supply & Education, Innovation & Economic Development, and Infrastructure & Growth Leadership. With the collaboration and coordination among state, regional, and local economic development agencies, implementation of strategies described by regions will help ensure that the Sunshine State's future is both sustainable and prosperous.

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Introduction

Section 20.60, Fla. Stat. (2011) requires the Division of Strategic Business Development in Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to develop a 5-year statewide strategic plan for Florida, identifying strategies for the promotion of business expansion, industry clusters, job creation, foreign investment, and workforce development, among other priorities.

Vital in this effort aimed at achieving Gov. Scott's vision of getting Floridians back to work are Florida's 11 Regional Planning Councils, which also operate as Economic Development Districts under the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration.

Under their enabling statute, the Regional Planning Councils (RPCs) are Florida's "only multipurpose regional entity that is in a position to plan for and coordinate intergovernmental solutions to growth-related problems on greater-than-local issues, provide technical assistance to local governments, and meet other needs of the communities in each Region." Section 186.502(4), Fla. Stat. (2011).

As part of their federal duties for the EDA, each Council is required to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for its region, after engaging in an ongoing, participatory planning process that includes input from leaders representing major interests of the community. Each CEDS is designed to guide economic growth by fostering a more stable and diversified economy, to assist in the creation of jobs and to improve the living conditions of the region's residents. It also provides a mechanism for coordinating the efforts of individuals, organizations, local governments, and private industry concerned with economic development.

As Florida works to consolidate its economic development efforts, collaboration among DEO in Tallahassee and the eleven RPCs across Florida offers a new opportunity to work together to create jobs and encourage a stable and diverse economy that offers improved living conditions and prosperity for Floridians across our state.

To that end, both DEO and Florida's Regional Planning Councils have committed to updating their strategic plans to support goals for founding Florida's new economy using the Six Pillars framework:

- Talent Supply & Education;
- Innovation & Economic Development;
- Infrastructure & Growth Leadership;
- Business Climate & Competitiveness;
- Civic & Governance Systems; and
- Quality of Life & Quality Places.

CEDS Review Findings

To gauge the ease with which existing economic development strategies can be aligned using the Six Pillars framework, the Division of Strategic Business Development has analyzed the most current CEDS of each Regional Planning Council:

- 1) CEDS 2010 Revision, submitted by the **West Florida Regional Planning Council**;
- 2) CEDS September 2007, submitted by the **Apalachee Regional Planning Council**;
- 3) CEDS revised Jan. 27, 2011, submitted by the **North Central Florida Regional Planning Council**;
- 4) CEDS revised Aug. 21, 2009, submitted by the **Northeast Florida Regional Planning Council**;
- 5) CEDS 2010, submitted by the **Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council**;
- 6) CEDS adopted Sept. 21, 2011, submitted by the **East Central Florida Regional Planning Council**;
- 7) CEDS 2007, submitted by the **Central Florida Regional Planning Council**;
- 8) CEDS adopted Sept. 10, 2007, submitted by the **Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council**;
- 9) CEDS updated 2011, submitted by the **Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council**;
- 10) CEDS updated Sept. 2007, submitted by the **Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council**; and
- 11) CEDS updated Sept. 2007, submitted by the **South Florida Regional Planning Council**.

This analysis found the goals and objectives in each plan to address significant projects related to the Six Pillars, which will greatly ease the effort to update the plans to increase economic development coordination among the RPCs and the State of Florida. While the EDA requires the CEDS to be organized around goals and objectives – compared to DEO’s new business plan that encompasses goals, strategies and tactics – many of these projects can be compared and contrasted under either rubric.

Each goal, strategy, tactic and objective identified in each region’s CEDS plan has been identified and published in an Excel document. An analysis of each plan finds that although different regions may share similar critical economic development goals, there may be differences in their emphasis of particular components within their respective plans. These goals are discussed below along with brief excerpts summarizing the relevant provisions of each region’s plan for ensuring that the Sunshine State’s future is both sustainable and prosperous.

Talent Supply & Education

Talent Supply and Education addresses issues related to the quality and availability of Florida’s workforce, including the education and training programs – from pre-kindergarten to postsecondary education – that develop Florida’s future workforce.

Every single region has identified education and related efforts to improve the supply of talented workers as a key component of their plan to create jobs, raise wages and foster prosperity. Most regions have identified the need to attract or produce high-tech workers by investing in research capacity or encouraging biotech clusters. Below the PhD level, many regions have also stressed the need to improve cooperation and collaboration among workforce boards, trade schools, colleges and local employers to ensure that training programs are preparing local residents with the skills that businesses and employers are looking for. Still other regions stress the need for a holistic approach toward ensuring communities have sufficient affordable housing, transportation networks and cultural programs to entice educated knowledge workers to make the area their home.

Representative CEDS goals from regions in the category of Talent Supply & Education

West Florida: * Develop programs to provide skill sets to support growth in knowledge-based industries.

* Encourage collaboration between workforce development boards and stakeholders to tailor solutions to local needs.

* Promote school systems and universities as a tool to strengthen workforce.

Apalachee: * Work with local colleges to establish a career training academy to provide training needed and identified by industry stakeholders.

North Central Florida: * Build educational and leadership capacity for economic development in the region.

Northeast Florida: * Improve education to ensure curricula are preparing children to compete for jobs.

Withlacoochee: * Develop a higher-skilled labor force through improved access to post-secondary education.

East Central Florida: * Attract and grow knowledge-based industries and an innovative workforce by expanding education and training systems and recruiting research capacity.

Central Florida: * Work with colleges and schools to train students with skills to serve emerging employers.

Tampa Bay: * Create and maintain programs to address education and training needs of the region's industries and to attract knowledge workers who can serve local growth businesses.

* Attract a dynamic workforce to the region by offering affordable housing, equality education and health systems, cultural facilities, special events, festivals, and sports.

Southwest Florida: * Create a skilled labor force by providing training, facilities and transportation.

* Partner with colleges and universities to create a strong workforce to serve knowledge industries.

Treasure Coast: * Promote the development of a new four-year educational institution in the region.

* Coordinate with local school boards, community colleges, universities and workforce development boards to encourage and develop education/training support programs that will benefit existing and new businesses and employees.

South Florida: * Encourage youths to complete high school and additional training in demand by local employers, and increase the percentage of residents receiving advanced degrees to support emerging high -tech industry clusters.

Innovation & Economic Development

Innovation and Economic Development addresses issues directly related to the future growth of Florida's economy, including emerging business opportunities. Key emphasis areas include research, development, and commercialization of new technologies and innovations; entrepreneurial and business start up activities; global trade and investment; and economic diversification.

Each region has stressed the importance of promoting innovation and progress in its local economy by promoting economic development. Yet not every corner of Florida can afford to devote its business development efforts toward becoming a world-famous hub for high-tech biomedical engineering. Several regions, especially those representing rural areas, emphasize that there is still much work to do to ensure access to basic health care, transportation and education services in underserved communities. Similarly, there is a need to provide additional job opportunities in existing industries over the short to medium term to ensure that the young and educated are not forced to leave in order to earn a living. There are opportunities for innovation even in traditional industries such as agriculture, mining and forestry, which could be aided by a push toward usage of new biofuels.

Regions that are home to urban areas and where the state's leading universities are located, however, stress the importance of diversifying urban economies by attracting new science research centers and high-tech industries by promoting collaboration between academic science and industry innovation. Such goals stress the importance of creating stronger business incubators to help unleash the entrepreneurial energies of local residents by linking up small business owners with access to investment and venture capital.

These two divergent approaches illustrate the inherent tension between two true statements: First, it is important for economic development leaders to invest in their region's economic strengths to ensure that clusters that already exist are nurtured and growing. Especially when it comes to university programs, it is far preferable to create deeply-respected world-class programs in a few key areas than to dilute finite resources by spreading them too widely and shallowly. But second, there is a dangerous risk in leaving a regional economy dependent on the fortunes of a single industry or group of industries. If the collapse of the housing market or the impact of the Gulf oil spill have taught any lesson, surely it is that Florida's economy is in urgent need of diversification. How Florida's economic development efforts achieve balance between focus and diversification will help determine how successful our state will be in coming years.

Representative CEDS goals from regions in the category of Innovation & Economic Development

West Florida: * Support development of entrepreneurial companies that introduce new IT, life science and medical technology to the region.

* Recruit companies to invest in biofuel production to boost existing agricultural resources.

Apalachee: * Attract a large Original Equipment Manufacturer to the region to diversity the region's economy and create jobs in manufacturing and other sectors.

* Develop the region as a potential source for biomass fuel products to maintain market value for mature tree stands.

North Central Florida: * Create a new business incubator program for the region to create more opportunities for entrepreneurship.

Northeast Florida: * Create regional employment centers through development of regional megasites that can accommodate large employers, and assist small businesses through creation of Northeast Florida incubators.

Withlacoochee: * Increase employment in health care through investment in hospitals, medical research facilities and medical technology campuses.

East Central Florida: * Diversify economy by growing clusters in life sciences, aerospace, clean energy and oceanographic research.

Central Florida: * Develop business incubator networks to support new businesses, including biomedical facilities to catalyze new industry.

Tampa Bay: * Improve the capacity of small businesses within distressed communities, and promote international trade and exports through improved infrastructure.

Southwest Florida: * Implement regional rural catalyst projects and build a regional entrepreneurship and incubator network.

* Promote development of industries such as the Health and Life Sciences.

Treasure Coast: * Encourage development of industry clusters by connecting capital networks with local entrepreneurs, recruiting businesses in high-wage industries, and identifying suitable locations for business expansion in the region.

South Florida: * Nurture emerging bio-tech, defense and creative economy clusters by supporting collaboration between public, private and university researchers in areas like alternative fuels and solar energy.

Infrastructure & Growth Leadership

Infrastructure and Growth Leadership focuses on providing the infrastructure, development patterns, and other policies and investments needed to support the future geographic growth and development of Florida. Infrastructure is defined broadly to include transportation, telecommunications, energy, water, and waste management. Usage of the term “growth leadership” rather than “growth management” emphasizes a proactive, forward-looking approach to future land use, conservation, and development decisions. This category also addresses key functions such as disaster preparedness and recovery.

While Florida’s economy has shared in the nation’s economic troubles, it is clear our state will continue to experience tremendous population and economic growth during the coming decades. How Florida channels, guides and provides for this growth will affect our environment, economy and quality of life far into the future.

Each region recognized the need to ensure that adequate infrastructure exists to accommodate future growth. A key goal identified by many regions is to create housing and transportation systems that allow citizens to live relatively near where they work. Shorter commutes mean less money spent on gas and highways, creating less pollution and sprawl, and granting citizens and governments more time and money to invest in other priorities. A strategy of encouraging denser communities better serviced by air, rail and road systems would also help protect Florida’s open spaces, preserve our agricultural industries, and ensure that residents and visitors can continue to enjoy Florida’s natural beauty for generations to come.

Investing in better infrastructure would also help Florida growers and manufacturers take advantage of emerging export markets and promote efforts by our state to benefit from new trade opportunities presented by a widened Panama Canal. Ensuring that residential population growth occurs nearer such multimodal transportation infrastructure will reduce costs while preserving pristine water resources that help make Florida a world-class place to live, work and play.

Representative CEDS goals from regions in the category of Infrastructure & Growth Leadership

West Florida: * Create the financial, technical and physical infrastructure to encourage research & development businesses, including new business park sites to incubate new businesses.

* Create a housing inventory that will meet the long-term sustainable need of allowing citizens to live and work in the same community.

* Connect economic development and land use planning to create a quality of place that attracts talented, creative people and supports a successful business climate.

Apalachee: * Preserve deepwater port functionality and rail service at Port St. Joe to protect the community’s industrial base.

* Increase availability of quality first response health care to areas outside the Tallahassee service area. [Note, this would also support the Quality of Life & Quality Spaces Pillar.]

North Central Florida: * Guide infrastructure development where needed, such as a centralized sanitary sewer system in key municipalities, to accommodate future growth.

Northeast Florida: * Improve and expand infrastructure including highways, commuter rail, water and sewer networks, and natural gas lines.

* Create a regional land-use plan that will create a sustainable, full-service community through equitable distribution of transportation infrastructure and support facilities such as schools, hospitals and libraries.

Withlacoochee: * Expand industry use of multimodal transportation facilities through industrial parks serviced by highways, freight rail and airports.

East Central Florida: * Identify and protect sensitive environmental lands, improve connectivity of transportation systems and enhance mobility by avoiding sprawl and connecting higher density urban centers with multi-modal transportation corridors.

Central Florida: * Develop infrastructure such as water quality and treatment centers, and public transportation.

Tampa Bay: * Encourage seaports and airports to increase international commerce and promote inbound investment and outbound trade, and promote a regional perspective on transit, highway, seaport, airport, rail and multi-use infrastructure.

* Promote appropriate use of natural resources through economic development consistent with environmental management goals, and maintain food, forestry, agriculture and horticulture industries.

Southwest Florida: * Invest in regional innovation network infrastructure to create wider broadband access and connectivity.

* Invest in airport projects in the region and create road, highway and railroad infrastructure to accommodate future growth.

Treasure Coast: * Coordinate with local governments and utility providers to determine the need for enhanced infrastructure facilities to encourage sustainable business growth.

* Assist local governments in upgrading or expanding their infrastructure facilities by identifying potential funding sources and completing grant applications for potential improvements.

South Florida: * Increase the region's economic efficiency through enhanced transportation and transit infrastructure that decreases commuting times and fosters a sense of community.

Business Climate & Competitiveness

The Business Climate and Competitiveness Pillar addresses issues related to Florida's competitive position as a location to do business. Key issues include business costs, taxation, regulatory issues, and the legal environment. [Note, this would also support the Civic & Governance Systems Pillar.]

As Florida strives to reduce its jobless rate and recover from the housing bust, Governor Scott has made it a top priority to ensure Florida's business climate becomes the most competitive in the nation. Similarly, each region cited important policy goals to advance a favorable climate for business growth and entrepreneurship.

A key goal identified by a majority of regions is to assist small business creation by increasing access to capital investment for local small businesses to promote the creation of jobs and wealth in Florida's communities. Some regions aim to tackle this objective through promotion of local business incubators, while others propose creating a venture capital clearinghouse to connect capital networks with local entrepreneurs.

Several regions also stressed the importance of encouraging development of larger industrial sites that can attract and accommodate large-scale employers such as product and equipment manufacturers. Due to the state's unique historical development, Florida lags in manufacturing partly because of the absence of preexisting industrial sites and the difficulty in today's regulatory environment of permitting new sites and ensuring their service by adequate infrastructure. To attract large-scale employers through development of regional employment centers, many regions encourage local governments to expedite permitting of such infrastructure and industrial site improvements. Several regions also stress the importance of coordinated comprehensive land use planning to ensure adequate utility capacity.

Finally, several regions listed the importance of reducing business costs such as taxes and insurance costs to improve the local business climate. Regions further encouraged cooperation by economic development authorities across county lines wherever possible to avoid expensive duplication of review processes.

Representative CEDS goals from regions in the category of Business Climate & Competitiveness

West Florida: * Increase access to venture capital to attract and create new business startups.

* Create an environment that encourages developers to develop larger industrial and business incubator sites.

* Promote local and state legislation that addresses business issues such as taxes, insurance costs and brownfields.

Apalachee: * Work with local and state authorities to expedite permitting of infrastructure and industrial site improvements in the region, and coordinate land use amendments to ensure adequate utility capacity.

North Central Florida: * Encourage cooperation by regulatory and economic development authorities across county lines wherever possible to reduce business costs and avoid expensive and unnecessary duplication of review processes.

Northeast Florida: * Make Northeast Florida conducive to small business success by increasing access to capital and shared services through local business incubators.

* Expedite permitting procedures for development within regional employment centers.

Withlacoochee: * Support expedited permitting of industrial sites.

East Central Florida: * Increase local companies' access to early stage capital investment.

Central Florida: * Support incubator projects that encourage entrepreneurship, self employment and small business expansion.

Tampa Bay: * Assist small businesses to expand in the region through access to capital by creating a venture capital clearinghouse.

* Provide incentives such as enterprise zones to stimulate redevelopment of distressed areas, and eliminate institutional barriers to business in disadvantaged areas.

* Improve the efficiency of regulatory review and reduce redundancy between reviewing agencies.

* Encourage protection of agricultural and forestry resources through incentives and preferred tax status for active agricultural lands.

Southwest Florida: * Expedite permitting of key infrastructure projects at areas such as airports to ensure they are implemented as soon as funding is available.

Treasure Coast: * Increase availability of financing to entrepreneurs and small businesses, and better connect venture and angel capital networks across the region with Treasure Coast entrepreneurs.

South Florida: * Remove obstacles for biotech, creative, and defense sectors, and provide incentives for pilot projects directed at use of alternative fuels and green building.

Civic & Governance Systems

Civic and Governance Systems addresses issues related to Florida's government structures and civic organizations, and how they work together with the private sector to shape Florida's future economy. This category includes issues such as ethics, elections, Constitutional amendment reform, government efficiency and accountability, justice and legal systems, and civil society. For purposes of Florida's statewide strategic plan, the emphasis is on ensuring that Florida's state and local government agencies are able to develop and implement policies, plans, and programs necessary to support future economic development activities and to invest in Florida's future. A secondary emphasis is on the role of civic and nonprofit organizations in supporting the State's economic goals.

Governor Scott's plan to consolidate the state's economic development functions within DEO to promote clarity of vision and efficiency of administration fulfilled one of his primary campaign promises. Similarly, nearly every region has stressed the importance of bringing stakeholders together to adopt a clear economic vision for their region and promote greater collaboration between business, political and community leaders to achieve it. This includes encouraging regional cooperation, collaboration, and trust between local, regional, and state agencies on economic development issues, and fostering better communication across counties to improve regional economic competitiveness.

To empower such governance, several regions propose supporting "leadership" programs to build networks of relationships between public and private economic development leaders that can serve as channels of communication. Examples of these include regional dialogues and agenda-setting forums for stakeholders across jurisdictional boundaries to discuss workforce, infrastructure, development, innovation, and regional marketing issues. To aid such efforts, some regions also propose greater use of data and research to facilitate economic development, combined with efforts to better coordinate with local governments to provide such information and aid decision-making.

Finally, a few regions addressed the issue of encouraging more active participation and voluntarism by older persons and retirees in our state. Currently, Florida ranks near the bottom on measurements of voluntarism and civic engagement by seniors. Given the large number of such retirees present in our state and their many years of varied expertise and experience, even a slight change toward building a greater culture of engagement could reap significant civic dividends for our state and its communities.

Representative CEDS goals from regions in the category of Civic & Governance Systems

West Florida: * Encourage regional cooperation, collaboration and trust between local governments, regional and state agencies on economic development issues to maximize opportunities for regional competitiveness.

* Expand initiatives for collaboration between the military, business, education, government and the community to enhance economic vitality and community cooperation.

Apalachee: * Coordinate with local governments to identify and permit industrial sites, and collaborate with public and private utility providers and secure inter-local agreements and land-use amendments to ensure capacity.

North Central Florida: * Encourage multi-county collaboration to empower business development in the region, and support leadership programs that build relationships between public and private economic development leaders in the region.

Northeast Florida: * Increase intergovernmental collaboration in local government land use decisions to create a regional land use plan that fosters sustainable communities and ensures access to shared services for local small businesses.

Withlacoochee: * Expand cooperation between agencies to grow non-base economic sectors.

East Central Florida: * Cooperate with regional Economic Development Commissions and Enterprise Florida to increase access to capital investments in the region.

Central Florida: * Support a cooperative network of resources among local counties, CFDC, FHREDI and CFRPC, and collaborate with both public and private sector leaders on EDA programs.

* Apply REMI modeling when reviewing economic development initiatives.

Tampa Bay: * Promote partnerships to meet the region's economic challenges, coordinate with social service agencies to promote economic opportunities for the unemployed, and establish communication networks between public and private agencies engaged in economic development.

* Encourage active participation and voluntarism of older persons and retirees in communities. [Note, this would also support the Quality of Life & Quality Spaces Pillar.]

* Educate businesses about workforce retention and loan assistance programs through a regional information center. [Note, this would also support the Infrastructure & Growth Leadership Pillar.]

* Create a regional homeland security task force to address region's vulnerability to natural and man-made threats.

Southwest Florida: * Strengthen partnership with Enterprise Florida, DEO and the Central Florida Regional Planning Council to enhance marketing of regional catalyst projects.

* Build relationships between regional businesses, current incubator projects and venture capitalists by promoting the Center for Leadership and Innovation at Florida Gulf Coast University.

Treasure Coast: * Adopt a clear economic vision for the Treasure Coast and promote collaboration between business, political and community leaders to achieve it.

* Research information that will facilitate economic development efforts and coordinate with local governments to provide such information and aid decision-making, and work with the region's economic development organizations to coordinate communications and marketing the region for business expansion. [Note, this would also support the Business Climate & Competitiveness Pillar.]

* Coordinate with local governments and public and private utility providers to determine the need for infrastructure improvements to ensure future capacity for business development. [Note, this would also support the Infrastructure & Growth Leadership Pillar.]

South Florida: * Continue regional dialogues and agendas among private sector entities across jurisdictional boundaries, and establish a workforce-related leadership program.

Quality of Life & Quality Places

Quality of Life and Quality Places addresses issues related to Florida's attractiveness as a place to live and visit. Key issues include community development, arts and culture, environmental stewardship, public health and wellness, safety and security, equity, and diversity.

Issues of crime, mobility, culture and environment can seem attenuated from other pillars that directly address business development and job creation. Efforts to attract a highly educated, sought-after and mobile work force will falter unless potential residents are convinced the region will be a desirable place to live, work, and raise a family. Similarly, efforts to revitalize distressed areas likely will fail unless investors believe such areas are safe and secure in which to do business.

Accordingly, several regions stressed the importance of ensuring infrastructure and public services that create a quality of life that attracts talented, creative people and supports a successful business climate. This could include housing alternatives that allow citizens to live and work in the same community, near quality schools and health care systems that they can access through alternatives to automobiles.

Fostering a sense of community and place also includes access to history, the arts, cultural facilities, special events, festivals and sports. It also includes access to outdoor recreation through preservation of open spaces and waterways for recreation and ecotourism. Some rural regions also addressed the need for better availability to quality first-response health care.

Some of the more creative proposals within this pillar come from regions that propose more comprehensive resources and services to enable children and their families to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency and prevent crime, poverty, and other social problems before they set in. This could also include offering more robust and accessible childcare programs to make it easier for parents to work, in the knowledge that their children are in a safe and secure environment.

Representative CEDS goals from regions in the category of Quality of Life & Quality Places

West Florida: * Create an inventory of housing alternatives to allow citizens to live and work in the same community, live-work centers. [Note, this would also support the Infrastructure & Growth Leadership Pillar.]

* Preserve waterways for recreation and ecotourism.

* Connect economic development and land use planning to create a quality of place that attracts talented, creative people and supports a successful business climate.

* Redevelop brownfield sites to remedy pollution and create valuable real estate to benefit communities, businesses and the economy.

Apalachee: * Increase availability of quality first response health care to areas outside Tallahassee.

Northeast Florida: * Create a sustainable, full-service community with alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle commuter trips.

East Central Florida: * Avoid sprawl by promoting denser urban development to improve mobility between residential, commercial, educational and recreational assets to enhance quality of life.

Central Florida: * Develop projects that improve the region's quality of life by preserving natural resources, improve transportation mobility and develop eco-tourism projects to attract visitors and offer recreational opportunities to residents.

Tampa Bay: * Ensure a sustainable community offering affordable housing, quality education and health care systems, historical and cultural facilities, special events, festivals and sports.

* Support the region's artistic and cultural facilities, the preservation of historic and archeological properties, and the expansion of wellness and preventive health programs.

* Support comprehensive resources and services for children and families enabling them to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency and prevent crime, poverty, and other social problems.

Southwest Florida: * Pursue principles of sustainability in connection with economic development to offer efficient transportation options for residents.

South Florida: * Create cultural and recreational opportunities to attract creative workers, provide incentives for public art, and foster a built environment that provides a sense of community for a creative and dynamic workforce.

* Preserve accessible childcare to make it easier for parents to work and improve mobility through public transit and pedestrian uses.