

SETTING WAYPOINTS & THE COURSE AHEAD

CAPE CORAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN
Executive Summary



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December 2024



Acknowledgements

The Cape Coral Economic Development Strategic Plan is a comprehensive roadmap for achieving success in a uniquely challenging environment. Creation of the Strategy is not accomplished in a vacuum – there are many people and organizations that have provided valuable input to the process.

Our project team has been guided by the dedicated leadership of the Office of Economic and Business Development, the City Manager’s Office, Development Services, Public Works, Communications, Information Technology Services, the Chamber of Commerce, the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau, and more.

We would like to thank Mayor Gunter, the City Council, and the especially the residents and businesses of Cape Coral, without whose unbiased and informative opinions and recommendations this work would not be possible.

Project Team

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Photo credit: The Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village



Introduction

The City of Cape Coral is in growth mode. Its unprecedented population expansion is estimated to continue for at least two more decades, bringing the population to about 375,000 people. At that size, Cape Coral will be equivalent to the current population of cities such as Cleveland, OH, New Orleans, LA, or Honolulu, HI.

Cape Coral was developed as suburb of the more established business center of Fort Myers, with the expectation that its numerous canals and pre-platted single-family lots could easily be marketed to the American middle-income worker who was seeking a place in warmer climates to retire. That marketing model was so successful that Cape Coral's leadership has now realized that functioning as a modern city is the only forward direction that the community can take. Recognition is a first step in taking action, but a plan needs to be developed on how to get there.

The intent of this study is to prepare an Economic Development Strategic Plan which contains goals, objectives, implementation plans, and metrics. It is intended to identify the strengths of the City of Cape Coral and determine a means of leveraging those advantages to spur economic growth.

What will Cape Coral look like in twenty-five years? What type of city should it become? These are the questions that this Economic Development Strategic Plan has striven to answer.

The study has been developed in three parts. The first volume, *Setting Waypoints*, presents the foundational characteristics of the City of Cape Coral from a competitiveness and opportunity viewpoint. The main goal is to understand the complexities of this large community, its advantages and drawbacks, and its potential for sustainable growth into the future.

The second volume, *The Course Ahead*, outlines the vision for Cape Coral and defines **50** strategic initiatives within **5** major frameworks that focus on finding the way forward.

A third volume contains the Technical Report inclusive of tables, charts and graphics required for the detailed analysis of the City of Cape Coral.



Cape Coral's unique location is also its drawback. This is a city with no seaports, airports, train stations, interstate highway access, or municipal bus system. In many ways, Cape Coral is just a suburban town. But, with a growing population already exceeding metropolises such as Salt Lake City, determining what kind of city Cape Coral will become is a vital undertaking.

In many ways, Cape Coral is fortunate in that there are not many missteps that need to be corrected as other communities have need to do. But the absence of major investment in key areas such as transportation, infrastructure, affordable housing, and corporate/commercial real estate is now needed as the City grows. It is the objective of economic development to address these inadequacies by guiding civic leadership into new strategic directions that will achieve successful outcomes. But it is only through commitment, dedication, and persistence that meaningful change can be accomplished.

Volume 1 – Setting Waypoints

Competitiveness & Opportunity

Cape Coral is the **8th** largest city by population and the **3rd** largest by land mass in Florida. With a population of more than **217,000** residents, the City is experiencing high growth. As a pre-platted community, Cape Coral could have more than **375,000** residents at buildout. Dynamic population growth that is not accompanied by strong economic growth ultimately can result in an imbalance in municipal service demands and excessive costs burden on public budgets. Recognizing where Cape Coral can improve its competitive position can improve the chances of a more sustainable economy that benefits from growing employment and investment. While the Vision is more clearly articulated in Volume 2 – Strategy, the Mission of this part of the study is clearly defined:

Provide the strategic recommendations necessary to ensure that economic growth keeps pace with population growth.

To be able to develop the frameworks for strategic goals and initiatives, a great deal of initial research was required. This entailed multiple discussions with project leaders of the various departments of the City of Cape Coral, community leaders and stakeholders, and numerous business representatives.



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Project Review Committee

Members of the Review Committee who guided the plan are as follows:

- T. Sharon Woodberry, Economic Development Manager
- Matt Grambow, Special Projects Coordinator – City Manager’s Office
- Laura Dodd, Principal Transportation Planner – Public Works
- Chad Boyko, Principal Planner – Development Services – Public Works
- Amy Yearsley, City Planning Manager – Development Services
- Bill Corbett, Design and Construction Manager - Capital Projects
- Melissa Mickey, Communications Manager - City Manager's Office
- Pamela Johnson, Deputy Director, Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau
- Andreana Petersen - Business Recruitment/Retention Specialist
- Ashley Anderson - Business Recruitment/Retention Specialist

Stakeholders

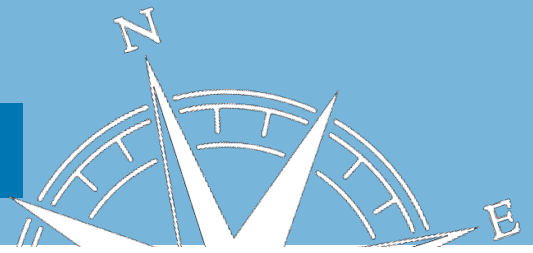
Identified stakeholders who contributed invaluable input are as follows:

- James Sommers, RE/Max - Realtor, Residential
- Joseph Bonara, Catalyst Development - RE Developer
- Charles Pease, Cape Coral Technical College - Educator
- Annette Barbaccia, Miloff Aubuchon Realty Group - Realtor, Commercial
- Donna Shuman Germain, Cape Coral Chamber of Commerce - Business Leader
- Henrik Margard, Nor-Tech Boats - Manufacturer
- Larry Nygard, Crown Development - RE Developer

Business and Civic Interviewees

Business and civic leaders who provided additional information include:

- Jeremy Vincent – Jungle Bird and Front Porch Social
- Katie Locklin – Parks & Recreation, Program Supervisor
- JoAnn Elardo – Wicked Dolphin Rum Distillery
- Jeff Mielke - Lee County Sports Development
- Steve Geiger – General Manager Safe Harbor Marina



- Gary Aubachon – Local Developer building Slipaway, a Food Truck/ Marina destination
- Michael Ilczynszn – Cape Coral City Manager
- Bill Steinke – City Council Member & TDC Board (Ex-Officio)
- Barry Kadel – General Manager Westin Hotel

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

Demographics play an important part in any economic analysis, and DCG Corplan has originated a unique methodology for organizing information into useful topics that provides demographic, economic, and social data for a broad range of categories entitled Econographics. In most instances, the 2022 US Census data projected from the one-year average of the American Community Survey (ACS) have been employed. Additionally, some non-Census business data from has been drawn from a respected commercial source, ESRI.

Competing Locations

From a detailed analysis of similar-sized communities throughout the State there are **6** Florida cities identified as direct competitors to Cape Coral:

- ❖ Fort Lauderdale
- ❖ Orlando
- ❖ Palm Bay
- ❖ Pompano Beach
- ❖ Port St. Lucie
- ❖ West Palm Beach

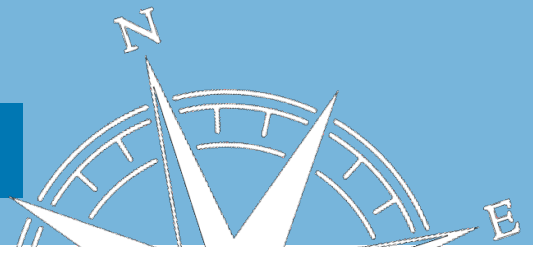
Cape Coral's **35%** growth places it **2nd** among the competing cities. Some other important demographic metrics in Cape Coral's favor are:

- ❖ English spoken at home is indicator of the impact of immigration and attitudes toward education within the household. In this comparison, Cape Coral ranks **2nd**.
- ❖ Household size equates to possible worker availability, as median incomes offer strength for retail buying power. In these two groups, Cape Coral's **2.7** average

household size and **\$76,991** median household income ranks **3rd** in each case.

- ❖ Advanced educational attainment results in increased skills and higher salaries. In the categories of Associates Certificates, Bachelors' degrees, and Graduate degrees, Cape Coral ranks **2nd**, **5th**, and **6th**, respectively.
- ❖ Higher home ownership rate denotes economic stability, whereas lower housing prices suggests affordability. In these categories, Cape Coral's **76%** home ownership rate and **\$379,600** median home value ranks the City at **3rd** and **4th** places, respectively.
- ❖ Reasonability on the Cost of Living index indicates stable economic performance. Cape Coral ranks **3rd** in this category.
- ❖ To determine the quality of life, three categories are examined: crime, healthcare, and culture. The Crime index, the Number of Physicians per 1,000 population, and the Arts, Tourism and Hospitality employment per 1,000 population are compared to the State of Florida's average to generate indices. In these three groups, Cape Coral ranks **3rd**, **4th**, and **4th**, respectively.
- ❖ Stable economies have a good balance of goods-producing and service-producing industries. The four goods-producing industries in the U.S. are (1) forestry, hunting and agriculture support; (2) mining; (3) construction; and (4) manufacturing. A ratio is produced through the division of goods-producing industry employment and service-producing industry employment. In this category, Cape Coal ranks in **3rd** place.
- ❖ Increasingly sophisticated business operations require a higher percentage of technically trained skilled workers at reasonable salary levels. In goods-producing industries, Cape Coral ranks **5th**; for service-producing industries the City's rank is **1st** place.

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- ❖ Comparative land prices for commercial (non-residential) and industrial sites indicate valuation fluctuations per market. Cape Coral ranks **3rd** in lower land costs.
- ❖ Operating profits are significantly affected by the variation in electric power costs. For commercial power rates, Cape Coral ranks in **1st** place; for industrial rates, the City is in **2nd** place.
- ❖ Commutation outside of place of residence or having 2 or more vehicles available are indicators of relative mobility for employees. In these two categories, Cape Coral ranks **4th** and **1st**, respectively.
- ❖ As a second measure of worker mobility, the daily travel time workers exhibit reinforces the intercept location potential. Cape Coral **leads** all others competition.

Public Input

Resident input was sought through use of online surveys. A Public Survey was conducted in September 2023, and an Employer Survey in May 2024. The response rate was varied, with **1,841** for the Public and **162** for the Employer surveys.

- ❖ Public response was generally unfavorable towards effectiveness of local government in addressing community concerns, citing lack of clear planning vision, desire to reduce costs, and improve visual appeal of the City.
- ❖ Employer responses centered on regulatory approvals improvement, government transparency, and business costs control.

Two business meeting “roundtables” were held, oriented at bringing more awareness of available governmental assistance to the business community. The events occurred in April 2024 at the two Cape Coral libraries.

- ❖ Focus group discussions emphasized the need to adapt to demographic changes and evolving work trends with supportive infrastructures, such as enhanced business environments, improved training facilities, and streamlined governmental processes.



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- ❖ There is a strong call for a community-driven approach to foster a conducive environment for both current residents and future economic prospects.

Tourism

Tourism interviews were conducted in June 2024. Some key takeaways from the interviews indicated that Cape Coral is situated to unlock its improved tourism driven economic potential. This is the opportune time for the city to take full advantage of its location, available land, resources, and human capital to advance the economic vitality of the city. To achieve this, it will need to move forward on several fronts:

- ❖ Build upon the city assets to enhance existing tourism products and attract new ones.
- ❖ Invest in smart infrastructure resources to support tourism related growth.
- ❖ Strengthen collaboration with private sector, public/private sector organizations, and other governments to advance tourism.
- ❖ Put plans into action, monitor progress, and adjust as needed.
- ❖ Attract more businesses that continue to contribute to the quality of life.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool that helps businesses and organizations evaluate their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This SWOT is based on a variety of qualitative and quantitative sources, including the Econographics review opinions gathered through the online survey and interview process, and the DCG Corplan Team observations. The SWOT can be defined as follows:

Strengths (S): performance worthy of continued promotion

Weaknesses (W): deteriorated performance, with unlikely capability of correction

Opportunities (O): emerging performance deserving of promotional development

Threats (T): weakening performance in danger of falling into deteriorated category and requiring immediate attention



In the following pages, the SWOT evaluation details the collective results of the input and encapsulates each category into a list of summary findings. These findings form the basis for a tactical means of developing outcomes through the use of the SWOT Matrix.

Cape Coral' Strengths

Econographics Outcomes	Online Surveys Comments	DCG Corplan Team Observations
Dynamic population growth	Living in paradise	Unique integration of land and water resources)
Literate workforce	Small town "feel"	Waterfront location fostering watersports activities
Low service industry wage patterns	Mangroves and coastal natural resources	Subtropical climate
Cost-saving commercial electric rates	Expansive water views	Engaged and informed public
Mobile labor force	Boating lifestyle	Active real estate development environment
	Proximity to major urban center (Fort Myers)	Forward-thinking political leadership
	Attraction for retirees	Large middle-class population
	Cape Coral Yacht Club	Major waterfront development of Westin Marina Village and Cape Harbour
	Large number of parks	Undeveloped natural coastal resources such as Redfish Point)
	Water resources such as Bimini Basin and Rubican Canal	Active local chamber of commerce
	One of safest cities in Florida	Active county VCB with a knowledgeable and experienced staff.
		Increasingly strong restaurant and food scene
		Major home rental market for vacationers, with home and boat
		Proximity to major urban center (Fort Myers)

Strength's Summary Findings:

1. *Dynamic growth*
2. *Civic engagement*
3. *Quality of Place*



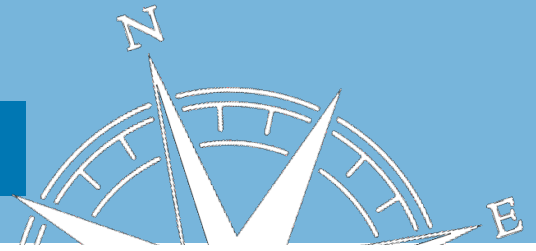
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Cape Coral's Weaknesses

Econographics Outcomes	Online Surveys Comments	DCG Corplan Team Observations
Too few younger aged workers	Lack of beaches and public waterfront	Absence of interstate highway connectivity
Rapidly aging population	Distance to I-75	Heavy traffic congestions along bridge corridors
Lack of racial/ethnic diversity	Ugliness of the city	Continuing hurricane risk
Low labor participation rate	Overdevelopment and rapid growth	Confusing street grid
High industrial rent pattern	Lack of greenspace	Suburban sprawl visual identity
Excessive travel to major airport	Destruction of mangroves and coastal resources	Isolated public waterfront use
	Continuing post-hurricane cleanups and restorations	Unavailability of ocean beaches
	Inadequate infrastructure and roadway conditions	Lack of tourism drivers
		Distance Between Attractions
		Limited Number of Hotel Rooms
		Limited access to water for additional tourism development
		Insufficient number of public boat ramps
		No Defined Visitor Domain
		Limited Night life
		Limited Tourism related signage
		Limited Retail Shopping Opportunities that are attractive to tourists
		Limited Public Transportation options
		Insufficient large businesses
		The city lacks a distinct visitor image
		Insufficient focus on tourism

Weaknesses Summary Findings:

1. *Environmental risk*
2. *Physical reality*
3. *Economic limitations*



Cape Coral's Opportunities

Econographics Outcomes	Online Surveys Comments	DCG Corplan Team Observations
Mature/senior workers for leadership positions	Development of affordable housing	Available land for expansion
Available female labor	Increasing the tree canopy	Undeveloped tourism and commerce use for canal system
More workers per household	Exciting developments such as Seven Islands	Bioretention development potential for stormwater mitigation
Adequate household spending potential	Family-oriented theme park	Environmental stewardship and resiliency leadership
Stable housing economy	Corporate office attraction and job creation	Promotion of solar and renewable energy generation
Moderate crime levels	Sports complex/convention center	Further Develop & Promote Parks & Preserves
Good quality of life drivers	More facilities for youth activities	Distinguish City's outdoor recreational assets
Commuting workforce capable of intercept		Further develop and promote the already existing cluster of attractions that are family friendly
		Enhance an already existing event schedule
		Enhance sports fields available for Sports Tourism
		Create (develop) more public boat ramps
		Develop package strategy to help promote attractions
		Educate locals on the benefits of tourism
		Engage and incentivize restaurants and merchants to take a more active role in tourism promotion and events

Opportunities Summary Findings:

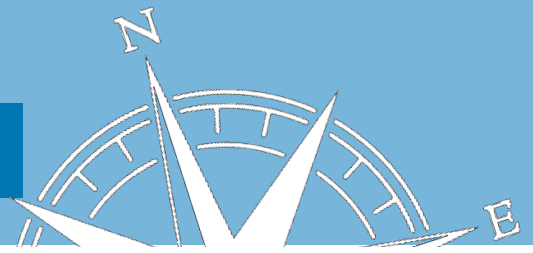
1. *Environmental resiliency*
2. *Innovative development*
3. *Economic expansion*

Cape Coral's Threats

Econographics Outcomes	Online Surveys Comments	DCG Corplan Team Observations
Too few college graduates	Apparent lack of planning in favor of expedited growth	Over reliance on Fort Myers for shopping and entertainment
Moderately high good-producing industry wage patterns	Excessive traffic congestion	Lack of gateway welcoming signage or experience
Moderately high office rents	Unenforced traffic and cleanliness codes	Over building of rental housing as opposed to townhomes or condominiums
Restricted distribution capability to US market	Rising cost of living	Not enough commercial office development
Low retail sales per capita	Too many vacation rentals	Not enough industrial development
	Lack of sidewalks	Underdeveloped downtown urban core
	Unresponsiveness of city leadership	Limited retail opportunities
	Overdevelopment of car washes, dollar stores, and storage facilities	Limited cultural facilities
	Lack of supportive infrastructure	Limited shade tree canopy, street plantings, or street beautification
	Limited retail choices	Apparent public leadership distrust
	Failure of city identity as a thriving waterfront community	Increasing traffic congestion & limited parking
		Surrounding beaches drawing tourists from Cape Coral
		Neighboring destinations increasing their tourism funding
		Concern that FT. Myers Visitor's Bureau does not sufficiently promote Cape Coral
	Insufficient data regarding Cape Coral's contribution of tourist taxes	
	Limited awareness of tourism assets among locals	
	Difficult and slow permitting process for new development	

Threats Summary Findings:

1. *Market timing & economy*
2. *Competition*
3. *Image*



A SWOT matrix was developed that compares internal values of Strengths (S) and Weaknesses (W) against the two external drivers of Opportunities (O) and Threats (T).

- ❖ Opportunities that capitalize on Strengths (S-T):
 - Evaluate means of balancing housing growth with expansion in jobs and non-residential tax revenue production.
 - Establish a public forum or outreach method that educates the public on environmental sustainability programs that are achievable and practical.
 - Establish a public forum or outreach method to discuss innovative approaches to land use that primarily serve the community.
 - Design and encourage dual-use environmental programs such as bioretention of stormwater that are both aesthetically pleasing but also functional.
 - Develop new land use guidelines that promote innovative ideas that capitalize on Cape Coral's unique character, such as canal use.

- ❖ Overcome Weaknesses to pursue Opportunities (W-O):
 - Evaluate and select resiliency solutions that can address short- and long-term impacts by major weather events.
 - Establish guidelines for new development projects that are sustainable to wind and flood impacts and that can provide dual-purpose functionality, such as a civic center serving as a hurricane shelter.
 - Recruit and pursue new business attraction that is not restricted to operate in high natural hazard areas, such as certain insurance companies.
 - Identify Cape Coral's realistic opportunity for new business attraction by evaluating industries' requirements for air, highway, water, and rail transportation services.

- ❖ Reduce vulnerability to external Threats (S-T):
 - Evaluate patterns of new population gain and entitle development of support retail and services to match growth.
 - Engage public support for new investments by demonstrating benefits to be derived locally.

- Create a public outreach to determine what retail or services categories are available in competing markets but not in Cape Coral.
- Engage the public for a series of visioning sessions to identify what type of city that Cape Coral is attempting to become.
- Utilize the best assets of Cape Coral, including new strategic approaches, to promote a new image for the city in marketing efforts.

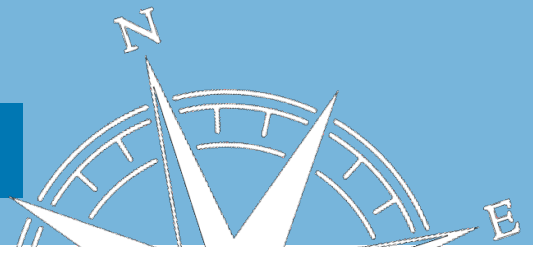
- ❖ Prevent Weaknesses from being susceptible to external Threats (W-T):
 - Making informed investment decisions based on statistical probabilities of severe weather events.
 - Ascertain that media coverage of pre- and post-weather events are balanced and reinforce mitigation and recovery efforts.
 - “Best practices” review of competing areas’ overcoming of physical limitations in marketing efforts.
 - Unbiased self-examination by leadership of Cape Coral’s assets, drawbacks, and drivers for promotion.
 - Corrective measures to be taken to reinforce workforce performance and economic development initiatives for long-term change.
 - Awareness of the influence of competing cities for new business attraction and formulation of a plan to make substantive changes where possible to alter Cape Coral’s limitations.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

In 2022, Cape Coral Business Employment was identified at **42,460** persons within **6,351** active businesses. Data for this conclusion was extrapolated from the US Census and ESRI. The five leading categories that accounted for **57%** of employment were:

- ❖ Retail Trade (**6,477** jobs)
- ❖ Healthcare & Social Assistance (**5,226** jobs)
- ❖ Accommodation & Food Services (**5,033** jobs)
- ❖ Construction (**3,974** jobs)
- ❖ Educational services (**3,489**)

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The 5 leading major occupational categories for the 42,460 employment represent **20,489** jobs or **48%** of the total local employment:

- ❖ Sales and related (**12%**)
- ❖ Office and administrative support (**11%**)
- ❖ Food preparation and serving related (**11%**)
- ❖ Transportation and material moving (**7%**)
- ❖ Management (**7%**)

The 2022 Civilian Labor force estimate for the City of Cape Coral was **102,700** persons employed in **24** categories of occupations as defined by the Census. The **5** leading occupational groups accounted for nearly **half** of Cape Coral workers:

- ❖ Sales and related (**13%**)
- ❖ Office and administrative support (**12%**)
- ❖ Management (**10%**)
- ❖ Food preparation and serving related (**7%**)
- ❖ Health diagnosing, treating pract. & other technical (**7%**)

By weighted averaging of Census Journey to Work statistics, **57%** of the Resident Labor Force, or nearly **58,000** workers are leaving Cape Coral daily to work elsewhere. Capture of a significant share of those workers must become a priority for the City going forward.

TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

The potential for economic advancement for the City of Cape Coral is evaluated by examination of the targeted industries for the area. The methodology for this analysis is the Location Quotients (*LQ*) tabular and charting technique. In this method, industry employment is plotted for the projected 2022-2030 period using Lee County and the State of Florida Long-Term Industry Employment projections. Increases in employment are generally considered as the truest indicator of business growth, revenue gains and profitability. The analysis forecasts those industries that are present in Cape Coral and that demonstrate growth opportunity or are of such legacy value that continuing efforts for sustainability are paramount.



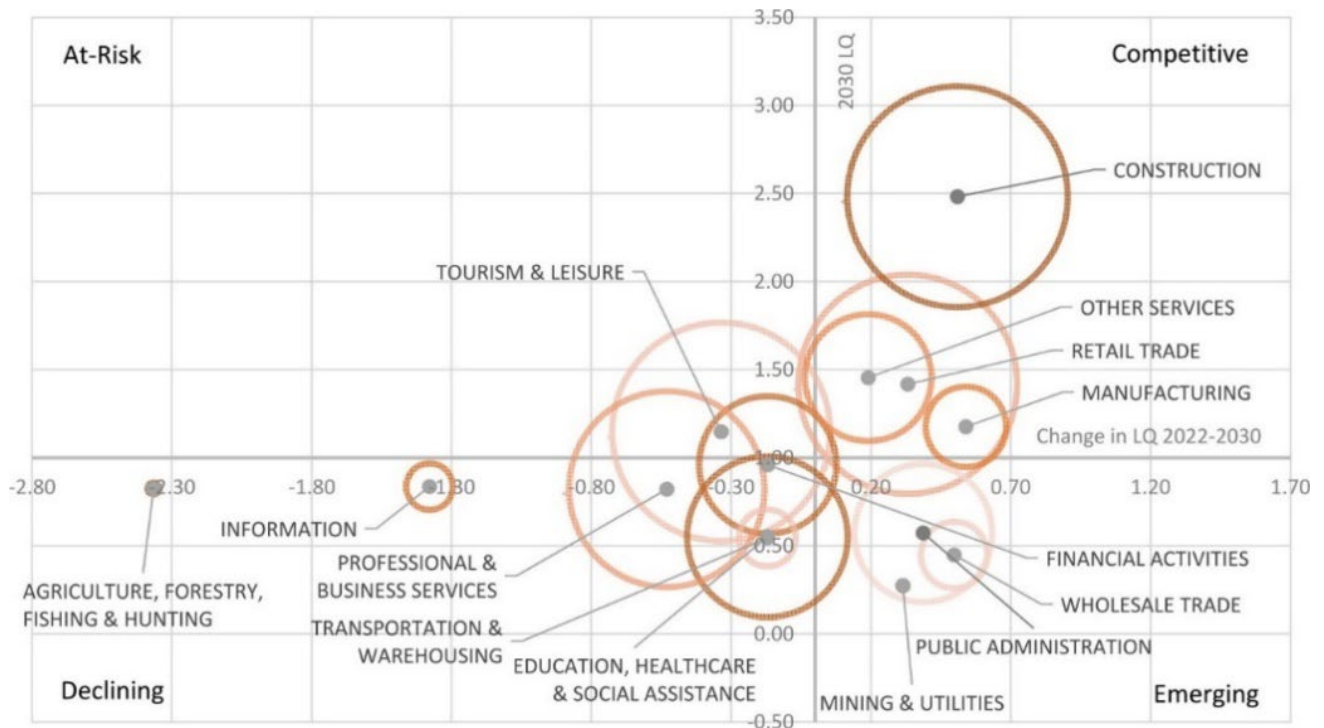
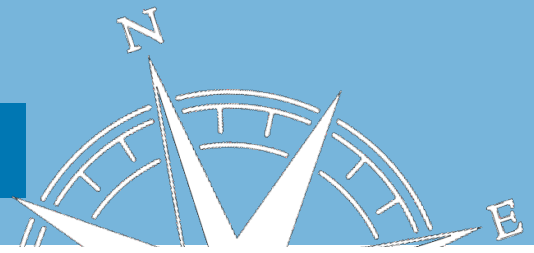
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The major industrial sectors present in Cape Coral are illustrated in the LQ chart. Each quadrant is labeled as follows: Competitive – dominant industries in the Region; Emerging – emerging industries not yet achieving critical mass; At-Risk – formerly strong industries (legacy) that are losing power and influence; or, Declining – industries that may be in danger of non-sustainability in the Region. The location of the employment “bubbles” on the chart demonstrates the industries’ role for the local economy. Year 2022 employment of **42,460** is expected to grow by **4,234** jobs by 2030, totaling **46,694** positions.

Through a rigorous process, preliminary targets are developed through the following criteria:

- ❖ Industries that do not require support. Recruitment and attraction of companies in this area should continue to be encouraged.
- ❖ Industries that require economic development efforts to bring employment to a rate comparable to that of the State of Florida’s.
- ❖ Industries that have no reported employment and are considered "missing" and therefore the establishment of the industry by new jobs.

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The outcome is the identification of **65** 4-digit NAICS industries for Cape Coral in **11** major industry sectors. These industries represent the areas where the City should focus its marketing efforts as new opportunities for economic growth and expansion. In total, these industries represent a potential employment gain of **13,640** new jobs.

By way of a “cluster mapping” technique, **8** industries “clusters” emerge as targets for Cape Coral:

- ❖ Business & Financial Services (**3,675** jobs)
- ❖ Community Services (**3,927** jobs)
- ❖ Consumer Products & Services (**1,430** jobs)
- ❖ Culinary Tourism (**123** jobs)
- ❖ Healthcare & Life Sciences (**3,087** jobs)
- ❖ Industrial Services (**256** jobs)
- ❖ IT & Media (**770** jobs)
- ❖ Sustainable Real Estate (**372** jobs)



The 13,640 forecasted total employment for the 8 targeted industry clusters will produce a total of **15,162** new jobs (direct, indirect, and induced) and an annual total economic impact of **\$3.358 billion**.

REAL ESTATE, LAND USE & INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Cape Coral's **119** square mile area is catalogued by **127,830** individual property records totaling **57,213** acres not including canals and roadways. Utilizing Lee County's Property Appraiser records, there are total of **1,575** non-residential improved properties in **38** categories of building use.

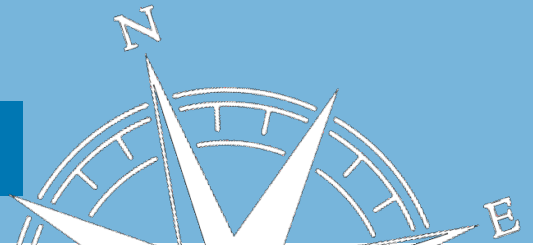
The Commercial sector is segmented into Financial, Food Service, Lodging, Mixed Use, Offices, Recreation, Retail, and Service categories. In total, there are **1,032** buildings containing **10,469,780** sf, with an average age of **32** years. In the past ten years, **1,053,921** sf of inventory has been added, or a gain of **10** percent.

The Industrial sector is segmented into: Light manufacturing; Cannery, brewery, winery; Mineral processing; and, Warehousing, distribution terminals categories. In total, there are **332** buildings containing **4,970,503** sf, with an average age of **28** years. In the past ten years, **961,909** sf of inventory has been added, or a gain of **19** percent.

The Institutional sector is segmented into: Churches, Temples; Private schools & colleges; Privately owned hospitals; Mortuary, Cemetery, Crematorium; and, Clubs, Lodges, Union Halls. In total, there are **87** buildings containing **1,227,137** sf, with an average age of **38** years. In the past ten years, **189,668** sf of inventory has been added, or a gain of **16** percent.

The Government sector is segmented into: Public County schools; Hospitals; Lee County - Other, State of Florida - Other; US Gov't – Other; and, City of Cape Coral - Other. In total, there are **108** buildings containing **4,964,644** sf, with an average age of **33** years. In the past ten years, **100,347** sf of inventory has been added, or a gain of **2** percent.

The Miscellaneous sector contains Utilities as the sole component. There are **16** buildings totaling **32,211** sf with an age of **28** yrs. In the past 10 years, no new construction has been added to the inventory, making this an inactive element. Existing construction has primarily



occurred south of Pine Island Rd. on various roadways. The average building size is **2,013** sf.

In total, the 1,575 buildings account for **21,664,775** square feet of floor space. The building stock is largely older in nature, with a weighted average of **30** years occurring. In the past ten years, **4,367,796** sf of new space has been added to the inventory, or a gain of only **20** percent. Inventory growth has been witnessed in only **half** (19) of the 38 categories. Inventory gains have been led primarily by the top five categories, totaling **3,566,051** sf or **82%** of total new space:

- ❖ Stores, one story – **1,244,050** sf (**29%**)
- ❖ Community shopping centers -- **976,568** sf (**22%**)
- ❖ Warehousing, distribution terminals -- **899,690** sf (**21%**)
- ❖ Professional buildings -- **253,765** sf (**6%**)
- ❖ Supermarkets – **191,978** sf (**4%**)

Cape Coral's two Opportunity Zones (OZ) cover approximately **5,454** acres or **9** square miles, with a total of **17,371** parcels, **6,546** of which are vacant (**37%**). The City of Cape Coral owns **75** of the vacant parcels in OZ's, set aside for future use as well as other public assets, leaving a total of **6,471** parcels or **1,962** acres of vacant land in private ownership.

Infrastructure

The City of Cape Coral Information Technology Plan 2023 recommends expansion of the City's fiber ring to additional City assets. Primarily, those assets include:

- ❖ Parks
- ❖ Fire Stations
- ❖ Utilities
- ❖ Wells
- ❖ Master pumping stations

To meet the cabling goal, approximately **142** miles of fiber optic is being installed. According to the City's Information Technology Services (ITS) Dept. approximately **40%-50%** of the objective has been met. ITS suggests that a potential of **120** miles of dark fiber cable may be in excess. A potential could exist for leasing of unused cable capacity to commercial enterprises in the area.

The City of Cape Coral has also embarked on a smart city infrastructure through the innovations shown below:

- ❖ Surveillance cameras
- ❖ Public Wi-fi
- ❖ Informational kiosks
- ❖ License plate reader

An opportunity may exist for the City's Utilities and Public Works departments to implement Real-time IoT sensors that monitor street flooding and other resiliency information that can be integrated with Cape Coral's 3-1-1 network. While the City of Cape Coral is in the process of seeking alternative electric power options, a potential benefit may be gained from mass solar generation and storage. Commonly occurring power disruptions from weather events can be partially alleviated for critical use facilities simply through adequate solar generation management.

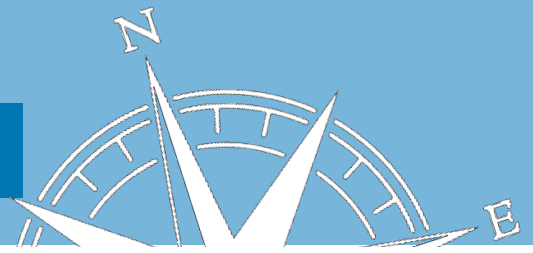
Given Cape Coral's unique location and degree of canal development, a particular emphasis is needed relative to storms and weather events. As Cape Coral continues to grow in population and impervious surface area, stormwater management will also increase in its demands on City services.

Perhaps an alternative course of action can be achieved through Low Impact Development (LID). LID is a management approach that can reduce runoff and pollutant loadings as close to its source as possible. LID includes overall site design approaches and individual small-scale stormwater management practices. These practices promote use of natural systems for infiltration, evapotranspiration, and harvesting and reuse of rainwater.



[Transportation](#)

Bus service in Cape Coral is provided by LeeTran as the City does not operate its own bus system. The bus lines serve the Southeast and Northeast Cape areas but the Southwest and Northwest neighborhoods are devoid of bus service. Future population growth is anticipated in these unserved areas and residents as well as seasonal visitors have no mass transit opportunities to utilize.



Microtransit might be able to meet coverage goals in areas that cannot support regular service in those areas not connected to fixed route systems at transit hubs. It could also serve as a tool to evaluate demand for expanded fixed route service hours or coverage.

In consideration of Cape Coral's extensive road and canal network, a serious examination of the potential of both land- and water-oriented micro transit systems should be evaluated.

WORKFORCE READINESS

Arising from Employer Survey (discussed earlier), polling indicated that **35%** of employers felt that minor job training was needed for new hires. Most business owners (**53%**) felt that government-sponsored training might be of some possible value to their business. And, **56%** felt that hiring skilled workers was the most prevalent challenge. However, only **16%** remarked that subsidized training was needed.

To identify job training requirements, a process has been developed where each 4-digit NAICS industry within the targeted clusters have the requisite occupations as provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) listed in descending order of occurrence in each industry. In total, the jobs shortfall for Cape Coral in the target clusters is **1,718** positions.

- ❖ The **1,718**-job shortfall for the Cape Coral target clusters covers **202** occupations with varying educational needs for entry, work experience in related occupation, and on-the-job training requirements. The top **20**-ranked fields cover **1,083** jobs or **64%** of the total shortfall.
- ❖ In the Cape Coral-Fort Myers MSA, there are **131** occupations in the 202 occupation shortfall list that are not accounted for, which is a total of **657** jobs. These missing figures represent **38%** of the job total and **65%** of the occupations. As educational attainment is the primary qualifier for these positions, the following summarizes the four levels of college attainment impacts:
 - The highest requirement of Doctoral or professional degree and ranked by numbers of missing jobs. For this category, **84** jobs in **17** occupations are missing from the MSA.

- For the 2nd level requirements of Master's degrees, there are **10** occupations totaling **31** jobs that are unavailable.
- For the 3rd level requirements of Bachelor's degrees, there are **28** occupations totaling **126** jobs that need filling.
- In the 4th level requirements of Associates' degrees, there are **10** occupations totaling **35** jobs that not fillable.

The observable result of this evaluation is that the MSA and likely Cape Coral in particular are weak in the depth of professional and technical personnel available to be utilized by the target industries and clusters.

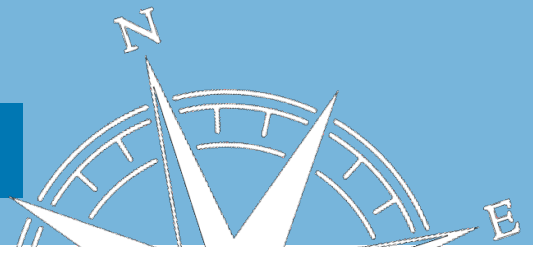
Through a comparison of the fastest-growing occupations against the target clusters shortfall jobs, **13** matches occur in the following occupational groups:

- ❖ Healthcare Practitioner and Technical
- ❖ Life, Physical, and Social Sciences
- ❖ Transportation and Material Moving
- ❖ Healthcare Support
- ❖ Business and Financial
- ❖ Construction and Extraction
- ❖ Community and Social Services
- ❖ Computer and Mathematical
- ❖ Educational Instruction and Library
- ❖ Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
- ❖ Management
- ❖ Food Preparation and Serving
- ❖ Personal Care and Service

Conversely, there are **6** occupational groups that do not match the fastest-growing categories:

- Protective Service
- Office and Administrative Support
- Architecture and Engineering
- Legal

SETTING WAYPOINTS & THE COURSE AHEAD



- Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media
- Farming, Fishing and Forestry

It can be concluded that higher educational institutions are likely to be aware of the fastest-growing occupations and training is being adequately addressed in these areas. For the areas of mismatch, however, curriculum adjustments may not be that simple.

Higher Education

Colleges within fifty miles of Cape Coral granted **12,891** degrees in 2022. The **5** leading fields of study were as follows:

1. Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities
2. Health Professions and Related Programs
3. Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services
4. Health Professions and Related Programs
5. Education

For the areas of mismatch, it is apparent that adequate attention needs to be applied in the areas of architecture / engineering, legal, and visual/performing arts.

For Architecture and Engineering, the most sought-after degree is the Bachelor's degree. In Legal, it is the Doctoral or Professional. And, in Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media, it is again the Bachelor's degree. These 4 year-plus educational commitments might suggest the need for new university or college in Cape Coral. While this is a noble undertaking, it may not be necessary as online learning has become universally accepted over brick-and-mortar requirements.

The City should be aware of the shortfall jobs forecasted in this study can be addressed by active promotion regionally and nationally. A concerted effort should be made to seek professionals and specialists to consider Cape Coral as a new place to live, work and recreate. Attracting professional talent to a city is essential for economic growth and community vibrancy.



D-H&Assoc

Volume 2 – The Course Ahead

Strategy

The Vision

The second volume, The Course Ahead, outlines the vision for Cape Coral and defines **50** strategic initiatives within **5** major frameworks that focus on finding the way forward. Building upon the mission to ensure that economic growth keeps pace with population growth. The Strategy begins with a bold new vision for Cape Coral.

A city evolving from its suburban roots into a new urban paradigm as a self-sustaining network that promotes economic vitality together with lifestyle and cultural excellence.

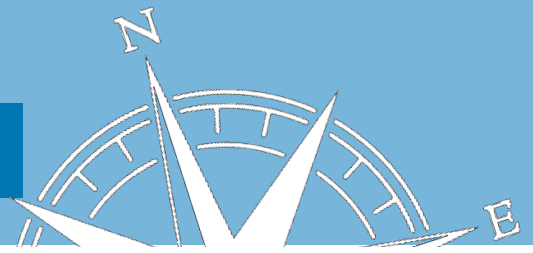
The vision statement leads to identification of themes or “frameworks” from which strategic goals and initiatives have been developed:

A city **evolving** from its suburban roots into **a new urban paradigm** as a **self-sustaining network** that promotes **economic vitality** together with **lifestyle and cultural** excellence.

Five key concepts that emerge that have unique meanings for Cape Coral, each with a series of goals for the City to follow to achieve success.

Framework 1: Evolution and Change

Cape Coral is an evolving city. Its growth in population over a such short time span of existence is extraordinary and the expectations for nearly a doubling in size again over the



next few decades is a story worth telling. At 119 square miles, Cape Coral is a large area, and its world-leading mileage of canals make the community a challenge to navigate.

Originally founded on the principal of an auto-centric suburban community, the realities of traffic congestion, the desire by residents for more urban amenities, the failure of its original plan in providing business centers, and the continuing demand on infrastructure to accommodate growth all put pressure on the basic nature of Cape Coral.

Finding a way forward so that Cape Coral has a clear concept of what type of city it is becoming is essential. Change is often a painful process, and the more that open dialogues can occur that help to address and possibly mitigate those discomforts, the better the outcome.

Goal 1.a: Public Outreach Method to Discuss Innovative Approaches to Land Use

From stakeholder interviews, public and employer surveys, and numerous conversations, an overarching issue that emerges is that Cape Coral does not appear to have any land use guidelines being utilized when approving major projects. While this is essentially untrue since there the City has Zoning controls through ordinance and code enforcement, the public nevertheless feels overlooked and is seeking some means of redressing the issue. Having a means of openly discussing how the City of Cape Coral is being shaped in the future is the thrust of this goal. The objective is to engage the public more openly on these approvals.

❖ Initiative 1.a.1: Public Visioning Sessions for Cape Coral's Growth

Semi-annual visioning on an ongoing schedule. These gatherings should be based on general discussions on what the City of Cape Coral should aspire to achieve in the future, possible directions for future planning, and comparisons with other communities nationwide that have experienced similar growth. Recommended location would be the two public libraries.

❖ Initiative 1.a.2: Committee of the Whole Public Access Website

Creation of a new website for COW and Council projects reviews. The site should include downloadable graphics, videos, and PDFs of project summaries. Upgrades through Content Management System (CMS) to be conducted as needed.

❖ **Initiative 1.a.3: Citizen Advisory Committee for Public Input on Major Projects**

Establishment of a citizen's boards to act as a representative panel to advise the City Council of public opinion on policy issues. The CAC would present the reports from the Visioning sessions, summarize public response to the COW website, and attend all COW and Council meetings.

❖ **Initiative 1.a.4: Benefit/Cost Analysis for Future Projects**

When major projects are announced, they inevitably incur major cost. Whether a private or public investment, the value to the community must be weighed, not just from an economic impact, but from a social impact as well. The Benefit/Cost Analysis (BCA) provides the tools necessary to gauge whether a project has true social merit.

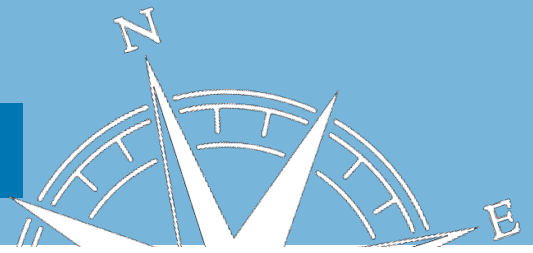
The BCA should be universally applied to all new project approvals, from both the public and the private sector. The result is a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR). A project is considered cost-effective when the BCR is **1.0** or greater. By setting a benchmark, Cape Coral can be assured that the outcomes are worth the risk taken.

Goal 1.b: Develop a Branding Identity for Cape Coral

The objective is to develop an identity for Cape Coral that recognizes small town "feel" with big city capabilities. Many people feel that Cape Coral has an intimacy that could be threatened by over development. Alternatively, others are impatiently seeking the urban amenities often found in other markets. The duality of large city and small town is a difficult challenge to answer. The objective is to develop an identity for Cape Coral that considers both viewpoints.

❖ **Initiative 1.b.1: Compelling Narrative and Tagline About Cape Coral**

Cape Coral needs a new narrative. A major advertising or marketing firm should be retained to develop a new "story" for Cape Coral that is focused on the future. The narrative needs to illustrate how the recreation-oriented lifestyle of this Florida community offers an ideal match for self-starters and home-based entrepreneurs. The engagement should also produce a new tagline phrase for the City.



❖ Initiative 1.b.2: “Call to Arts” Program

A City-wide “Call to Arts” program to be created that will attract national or possibly international attention. Local artists should be encouraged to place murals, sculpture, windchimes, and more to help educate the public about urban growth and the sophistication that implies. The City needs to explore how the competing forces of dynamic growth and change are affected by climate and nature. Given Cape Coral’s location, the influence of water, wind, and the natural environment should be enough stimulus to inspire a group of artists to engage in creative commentary.



Installation of themed pieces in “discovery” locations throughout Cape Coral would be an engaging and delightful public amenity. A significant prize allowance for a large response should be entertained.

❖ Initiative 1.b.3: Events that Celebrate Both Big City and Small-Town Living

The dichotomy of big city life and small-town living is the dilemma Cape Coral presently finds itself. Cape Coral has several events that are held yearly which are successful and enjoyable, but there is always room for additions. We recommend an ambitious scheduling of events in different parts of the City that are focused on bringing residents and businesses together. Suggestions include:

- City-wide donation drive (school supplies, baby items non-perishable food, etc.).
- Black tie gala and silent auction (local business sponsorship)
- Charity concert (concert for a social cause)
- Cape Coral heritage celebration (“Waterfront Wonderland”, for example).
- Cultural food festival (different tastes, fusion, etc.)

Framework 2: A New Urban Model

Cape Coral’s unique location is also its drawback. This is a city with no seaports, airports, train stations, interstate highway access, or municipal bus system. But, with a growing population already exceeding metropolises such as Salt Lake City, connectivity plays a crucial role in Cape Coral’s future.

Goal 2.a: Cape Coral as a Network of Interconnected Neighborhoods

In all cities, neighborhoods form the basis in which residents can most easily relate to their environment. By nature of the original design of the City, there are identifiable quadrants of Cape Coral which have geographical identity. Through the street grid, fiber optics, or water canals, a connectivity exists that helps unify the neighborhoods. This vast network that might be thought by others of as detriment should be considered as Cape Coral's strength, if the quadrants can focus on promoting their individuality.

❖ Initiative 2.a.1: Cape Coral's IT Infrastructure Promotion

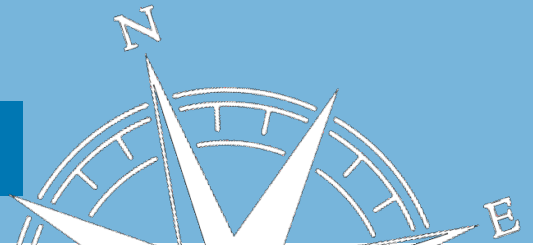
In partnership with Lee County, a robust fiber optic cable network is being installed throughout Cape Coral, bringing high-speed internet and cable television service to virtually all locations. As part of this investment, there is an opportunity to lease excess capacity or "dark" fiber to the business or academic community that will provide revenue back to the City. The connectivity advantage for business development is a strong driver.

We would recommend that the City promote its digital advantages as well as explore areas where data aggregation provided through IT infrastructure can best be used to make citizens' lives and business operations even more productive. Efforts should be undertaken to once again receive the Digital City award.

❖ Initiative 2.a.2: On Demand Water Mobility Transportation System

While electric scooters, golf carts, bike-sharing and other wheel-based micromobility vehicles are becoming prevalent in major cities, we would like to propose a new mobility system tailored to Cape Coral: On-demand water mobility. Cape Coral water taxi terminus locations at the ends of saltwater canals that are in proximity to major thoroughfares of Del Prado Blvd., Cape Coral Parkway, Veterans Parkway, or will serve the Bimini Basin should be considered. If parking areas at these ferry stops can be arranged, suitable property should be acquired. Alternatively, microtransit coordination between residential and ferry terminus locations could offer a unique transportation linkage system.





❖ Initiative 2.a.3: Four-Quadrants Commission on Neighborhood Identity and Wayfinding

The creation of an advisory 4-Quadrants Commission to study how wayfinding elements can be implemented throughout the City. This group should be made up of local merchants, active residents, and City personnel whose work or living experiences orient them more toward an individual quadrant.



Goal 2.b: Promote Policies that Focus on Infill Development and Waterfront Accessibility

Cape Coral's land platting technique has allowed thousands of families to own waterfront homes at affordable prices. With that focus on the single-family model without implementing the needed town centers or the progressive zoning methods that would allow for mixes of commercial or multi-family integrated the landscape comes the inevitable outcome of suburban sprawl. Developers are now concentrating on mixed-use projects as a solution, but a more concentrated effort is required to salvage key properties that will promote infill and access to waterfronts.

Initiative 2.b.1: Opportunity Multiplex Program

The Opportunity Multiplex Program is a methodology where higher density housing can be pre-permitted on assembled lots within Opportunity Zones. In the Level-One program, a two-story duplex is constructed on 2 combined lots. Each lot contains 4 allowed units, and a total of 8 units are produced. In the Level-Two program, 3 lots are combined to produce a triplex of 12 units. In the Level-Three program, 4 lots are combined into a quadraplex of 16 units. Pre-permitting will allow fast-tracking development for affordable housing.



❖ **Initiative 2.b.2: Cape Coral Land Bank**

Cape Coral Land Bank (CCLB) will operate in cooperation with the City as a non-profit Public-Private Partnership (P3), with the objective of acquiring and holding prime vacant properties for transferring, reselling, or reinvesting in areas where the City would like to achieve economic development outcomes. The CCLB should be able to offer incentivized property swaps to current residents such as two-for one lot transfers or above market purchase allowances to encourage existing property owners to participate in deals that ultimately are dedicated to public good. Above all else, the core mission of the Cape Coral Land Bank must be the exercise of its responsibility to achieve positive economic development results for the City.

❖ **Initiative 2.b.3: Strategic Site Assemblage Tax Credit**

The Strategic Site Assemblage Impact Fee Tax Credit will defer impact fees for road and utility capital expenses on sites that assemble at least three pre-platted housing lots for development of affordable housing. For commercial properties, the program will engage if assemblage of at least two commercial lots or an assemblage of a **50%** increased lot area accomplished by a mix of commercial or residential lots. A requirement for this incentive application in business use would be the application toward at least one the of the targeted industry clusters.

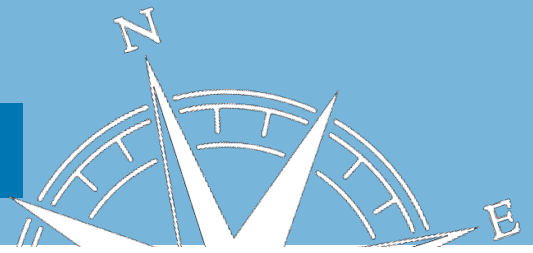
Goal 2.c: Propose Signature Developments that will Generate Identity for the City

What makes a great city? Very often it is the landmarks that distinguish a place and make it memorable in the minds of residents and visitors. Cape Coral needs a few signature projects to help give it identity and appeal. The City can facilitate such projects through planning or incentivization or it can construct them itself.

Initiative 2.c.1: Cape Coral Executive Airport

Development of an executive airport with accompanying industrial park, recreation fields, and a solar farm on a City-





owned parcel on Burnt Store Road with eminent domain acquisition of surround properties. The City would develop the land, provide the airport runway, hangars, tie-down areas, and administration building, plus utility and road infrastructure to support an industrial park built by others. A series of recreation fields and a large solar farm would also be constructed with public money.

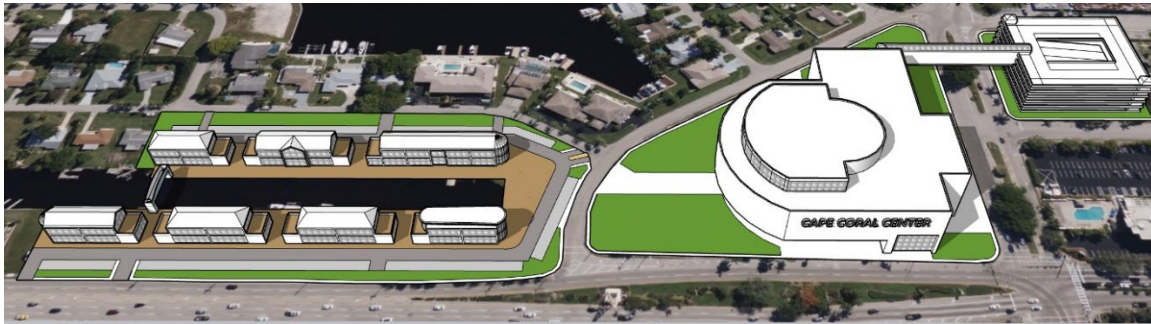
❖ Initiative 2.c.2: Cape Coral Corporate Park

Development of a business park on City-owned land along Del Prado Blvd. N. The property's high degree of wetland and protected vegetative areas requires a careful clustering of buildings that still allow the natural environment to survive is the correct approach. The City will subdivide the property and construct roads and utilities to serve several Class A office buildings, high cube warehouses, and flex industrial buildings to be built by others.



❖ Initiative 2.c.3: Downtown Civic Center & Entertainment District

The development of a new multi-function Civic Center to be constructed on a visibly dominant downtown site that will serve as a landmark for visitors and residents alike in the CRA. In support of the Civic Center, a new waterfront Entertainment District to be developed along Cape Coral Pkwy, and the Norfolk Canal. A north and South Riverwalk-style esplanade containing shops, restaurants, and bars would add the missing tourism destination that Cape Coral is needing.



Framework 3: Sustainability & Resilience

Sustainability and resilience are two concepts that are often used together to describe the ability to create systems that can withstand change and thrive in the face of it. The terms are complementary concepts that support each other.

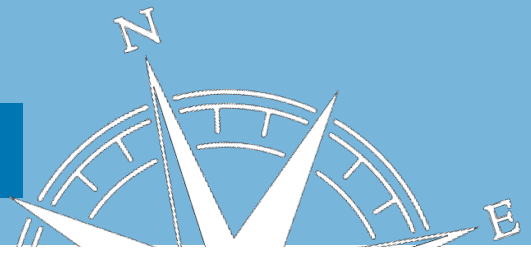
Goal 3.a: Evaluate Resiliency Solutions for Impacts by Major Weather Events

Hurricane Ian was a recent reminder of the destructive nature of major weather events. Preparedness for the future as well as utilizing resiliency techniques is imperative for coastal communities such as Cape Coral.

Initiative 3.a.1: Low Impact Storm Water Infrastructure Program

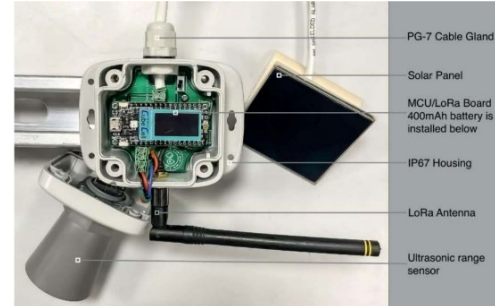
Low Impact Development (LID). LID is a management approach that can reduce runoff and pollutant loadings as close to its source as possible. The program will cover prototype development of bioretention, rain harvesting, and permeable pavement techniques for wide-spread application.





❖ Initiative 3.a.2: Cape Coral FloodWatch Program

City's Utilities and Public Works departments will be engaged to install Real-time IoT sensors that monitor street flooding and other resiliency information that can be integrated with Cape Coral's 3-1-1 network. The FloodNet technology is open-sourced and free to use.



❖ Initiative 3.a.3: Cape Blue Incentive

Cape Blue incentive will specifically promote water saving and storm water runoff control through bio-retention measures such as rain gardens, rainwater harvesting, stormwater gardens, tree boxes, xeriscaping, and permeable pavement. This is a 5-year incentive that will provide a cash grant at two levels:

- Level One: **25%** reduction in water use OR **25%** stormwater run-off mitigation
- Level Two: **50%** reduction in water use OR **50%** stormwater run-off mitigation

Goal 3.b: Educate the Public on Practical Environmental Sustainability Programs

While protecting the environment is a topic of universal concern, not everyone is cognizant of the means or impacts of using environmental sustainability tools. Cape Coral is a unique waterfront ecosystem unlike those on the Gulf shores. Sensitivity to locally relevant environmental sustainability methodologies is important, as is energy and resource conservation measures.

❖ Initiative 3.b.1: Cape Coral Eco-Newsletter and Blog

Monthly Cape Coral Eco-Newsletter that can be circulated both in print and online that discusses the roles of environmental stewards, the interaction of native plants with the built environment, energy sustainability, storm water mitigation, and other topics germane to the environment. A running blog post should accompany the online version of the newsletter.

❖ **Initiative 3.b.2: Solar Community Cooperative Task Force**

Solar Community Cooperative Task Force to be created to study where solar farms of varying sizes can be deployed throughout the City and how local community areas can directly benefit by becoming solar cooperatives.



Framework 4: Economic Vitality

Economic vitality could be called a process to improve the economic well-being of the community. It encourages employment opportunities, improves the socio-economic opportunities for citizens, expands the local tax base, and facilitates economic opportunity.

Goal 4.a: Expand the Role of the Office of Economic & Business Development

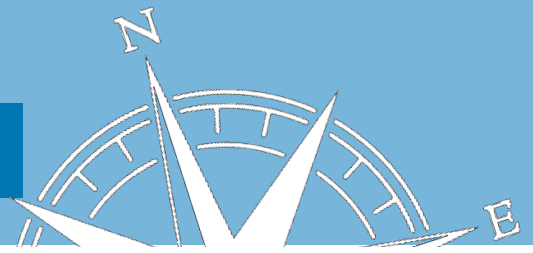
As defined in the Vision statement, it is the goal of this plan to promote economic vitality in Cape Coral, recognizing that economic growth must keep pace with population growth. This is an essential role of economic development and municipal leadership can achieve outstanding results. OEBD can play a larger role in this achieving economic vitality for Cape Coral.

❖ **Initiative 4.a.1: OEBD Elevation to Full Department Status**

Elevation of the OEBD to full department status, with some use of the General Fund to be allocated for the development of incentive packages, enhanced marketing programs, speculative development of catalyst projects, and increased staff. Additionally move the CRA under OEBD in the new department.

❖ **Initiative 4.a.2: Independent Economic Development Website**

Creation of a new website for the OEBD independent of the City’s website structure. “SiteFinders” utility and updated demographic and business data required on continuing schedule through Content Management System (CMS).



❖ **Initiative 4.a.3: Economic Impact Analyses for All Capital Expense Projects**

The role of the OEBD should be one of mediator for capital expense outlays, helping to demonstrate the viability of anticipated spending in view of strategic directions the City is planning to navigate in the future. Judicious use of EIAs can be quite beneficial in helping to chart that course. A representative of the OEBD to be educated on the use of IMPLAN EIA software and that an annual subscription be purchased for use by the City for ongoing EIA analyses.

❖ **Initiative 4.a.4: Accredited Economic Development Organization Status**

The International Council of Economic Developers (IEDC) is the premier US membership group of Economic Development Organizations (EDOs). The OEBD to apply for certification Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO). A self-examination by the OEBD to determine what milestones might be needed to be reached to achieve AEDO confirmation.

❖ **Initiative 4.a.5: One-Stop-Shop for Business Development**

The City of Cape Coral to create a One-Stop Shop for Business Development that would have mostly virtual self-services, minimal staff, printed materials for take-home, and an accompanying on-line presence. The facility to be would be administrated by the OEBD which would coordinate its activities with other departments.

Goal 4.b: Support Existing Business Retention & Expansion

Among those businesses polled, an overwhelming majority responded negatively about the permitting process for new project approvals. Maintaining a positive relationship with existing businesses is a crucial step towards economic growth. Whether by offering specialized training, business assistance, or vocational education for a new workforce, business retention and expansion is vital.

❖ **Initiative 4.b.1: Streamline the Permitting Process**

Retaining of an independent efficiency expert who can pinpoint bottlenecks in the permitting process and recommend improvement in operations. Additionally, a downloadable database of properties that will provide type of permits needed, the links to those applications from Development Services, and an approximation of the time required

to obtain approvals if the intended use is executed. This could be a coordination between the new OEBD website and the One-Stop-Shop.

❖ **Initiative 4.b.2: Cape Coral Executive Corps**

A corps of knowledgeable business leaders would undergo basic teaching training by the Cape Coral Technical College and then be paid by the City for lectures or seminars that they conduct. A survey of current residents to be conducted to ascertain the numbers and experience level of volunteers who would participate. The OEBD should create a plaque or award program to honor those individuals who will participate.

❖ **Initiative 4.b.3: Vocational Training Silos for the Trades**

From an Employer Survey conducted online, the mixed picture of training being a need for businesses probably indicates that businesses are unaware of training opportunities. When asked if partnerships with local educational institutions would be important, an overwhelming **61%** said that such alliances could be valuable.

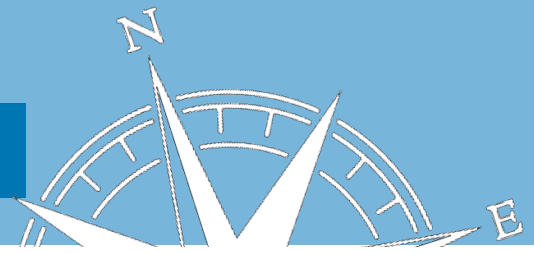
The OEBD will retain an outside consultant to canvas industry roundtables attendees and employer survey responders regarding their training needs. The results of this analysis will be furnished to the educational community to determine if vertical silos are being provided for new hires to be ready for employment, especially in the trades.

Goal 4.c: Promote New Targeted Industries and Clusters

Eight targeted industry clusters have been identified for Cape Coral. With the goal of generating **13,640** new jobs, promotion must be achieved to attract new businesses. To be effective, an incentivization for job creation, the production of industry-specific marketing materials, and tours of Cape Coral for prospective employers needs to be undertaken.

❖ **Initiative 4.c.1: Establish Working Group for Each Target Industry Cluster**

The formation of working groups for each of the **8** targeted industry clusters. Each group consists of a representative from OEBD and the City Manager's office, plus at least **3** industry leaders from the Cape Coral business community. Marketing of each cluster to be funded, plus consultation with public relations firm on the types of campaigns needed for each cluster to successfully move forward.



❖ **Initiative 4.c.2: Targeted Industry Job Creation Grant**

The Target Industry Job Creation Grant will be a performance-based incentive with multiple tiers of cash awards. The incentives would be paid to employers who can demonstrate sustainability of employment and achievement of promised hiring goals. The cash award would be paid in a three-year installment after submittal by the grantor that employment and compensation levels were met.

❖ **Initiative 4.c.3: Target Industry Prospectuses**

Marketing reports for each of the **8** targeted industry clusters should be prepared that illustrate why Cape Coral is a good “fit” for technology companies. The industry prospectuses presented in Volume 1 of this report are a good start but more needs to be done. Results of the Working Groups consultation will determine contents of each prospectus. Data developed during this study to be updated periodically. The materials should also feature available incentives and the ongoing efforts of The Course Ahead to facilitate development.

❖ **Initiative 4.c.4: Industry Familiarization Tours**

As part of a marketing and promotional strategy of the new targeted industry clusters the OEBCD will conduct Industry familiarization (FAM) tours for executives of leading companies and corporate site selectors. The City will provide marketing materials that will illustrate the new directions that Cape Coral is headed and how attraction of corporate interest would be accommodated.

FAM tours should be conducted for each cluster with special events and hospitality services prepared to highlight the industry. Travel reimbursements should be arranged to provide adequate visitor experiences for the events.

Goal 4.d: Engage Higher Education in Workforce Development

The role of higher education is essential in preparing the workforce for future jobs. While on-the-job training is widely employed, enhanced skills development must be provided for new hires or re-skilled workers in targeted industries. Successful recruitment of new employers will depend on the availability of appropriately educated labor force and



curriculum development is necessary for that support. Incubation for new business creation is also greatly dependent on partnerships with higher education.

❖ **Initiative 4.d.1: Expansion of Online Learning Opportunities**

Promote online learning as a cost-effective and reasonable alternative to expensive college education for working families. The OEBD should continue coordination with local higher education institutions in the area to expand course offerings in the shortfall curriculums so that a work-ready labor force can be utilized to successfully support the targeted industries and clusters.

❖ **Initiative 4.d.2: Cape Coral Startup Support Center**

Partnering with local higher education institutions, the Cape Coral Startup Support Center will operate as a hybrid incubator and accelerator program. While the incubator component focuses on refining startup ideas and providing a supportive environment, the accelerator component will offer more structured, intensive programs to turn startups into scalable businesses. A suitable commercial space should be obtained for use and the program should be formed as a public-private-partnership between the OEBD and angel investors or venture capitalists. The objective will be the formation of new companies in the targeted clusters.

Framework 5: Lifestyle & Cultural Excellence

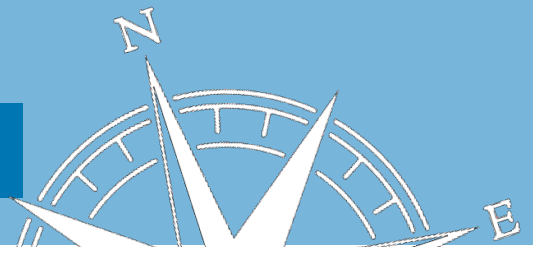
To provide excellence in lifestyle and culture pursuits, the City of Cape Coral must broaden its appeal for both residents and visitors. That may require creative approaches to those drivers that will generate more interest to the City, especially in leisure activities.

Goal 5.a: Attract the Interest of Major Retailers and Hospitality Vendors

Cape Coral has a wide range of retailers, but there is a desire by residents polled to attract more major brands to the City. With no indoor regional mall and little hotel space to promote, Cape Coral must develop a means of generating appeal to major retailers and hospitality vendors.

❖ **Initiative 5.a.1: Pop-Up Retail Fairs**

The City should consider use of “pop-up” retail events, retail fairs, and other venues to encourage chain retailers to examine Cape Coral’s large buying public and recognize the



revenue possibilities created by fulfilling the unmet desires of this growing population. The integration of entertainment or dining with retail should be promoted a way of enhancing the retail experience.

❖ **Initiative 5.a.2: Consumer Spending Potential Reports**

From this study, a significant amount of data on the retail, food services, and hospitality industries have been examined. Where and to what degree shoppers in Cape Coral spend in local establishments can be partially tracked through AI-assisted leakage analysis. However, the effect of e-commerce continues to hamper irrational gap-leakage analyses.

We recommend that a Consumer Spending Potential report be produced from these available data sources that can be used in marketing Cape Coral to prospective retailers and hospitality vendors. The report can be assembled into sections that have applicability to individual industries.

Goal 5.b: Recognize the Importance of Tourism to the Overall Economy

Although Cape Coral is not currently considered or recognized as a destination city, it is well positioned to improve its quality, status, and reputation as a tourist destination. The City needs to invest resources to enhance its attractions and events that are currently drivers of visitor activity. New attractions need to be developed, especially in light of Cape Coral's relaxed atmosphere, its connection to water, the availability to be active and involved with sports, its food scene, family friendly activities, and the many opportunities to commune with nature.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.1: Increase Activity and Access to Cape Coral's Waterfront**

The City to identify, attract, and work with private sector operators who can provide shoreline attractions, restaurants, etc. and activities such as themed boat tours, fishing, sailing lessons, jet skiing, specialty boats, kayaks, canoes, etc.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.2: Promote Experiential Tourism Product by Expanding Outdoor Activities**

The City should work with the vacation rental community and hotels to identify, develop, and promote visitor experiences such as: outdoor and water adventure activities (zip lines, flooms, boating, etc.), Food and drink (interactive experiences at restaurants and brew

masters), and Arts and culture programming (opportunities to meet artists, tour cultural and historic locations).

❖ **Initiative 5.b.3: Explore Opportunities to Work with Short-Term Rental Providers**

The City is to develop partnerships with the various rental platform sites to help with acquiring new listings and joint promotions. Partner with the Ft. Myers VCB, nonprofits, or universities to educate the destination's current and potential hosts to provide a better experience for the visitors and better manage their businesses to be more profitable. Promote Cape Coral as a desirable and remote-worker friendly destination for short-term stays that tie into tourism and leisure activities.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.4: Further Develop the Already Existing Family Activity Cluster**

The City is to engage a six-step program:

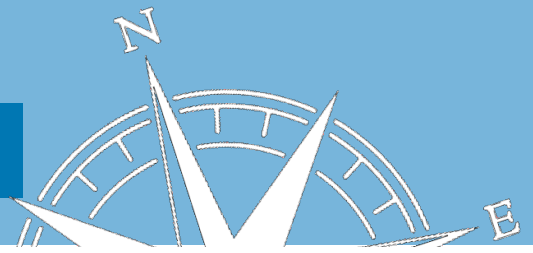
1. Bring the current attractions together to obtain ideas as to how they can work together to better deliver a coordinated product, determine what else should be added to the mix, and how to better market and brand the family activity cluster.
2. Identify additional family related activities such as disc golf, laser tag, golf driving range, and indoor gaming arcade with ax throwing, climbing walls, etc.
3. Identify supporting infrastructure, such as restaurants and retail.
4. Find interested developers to build the attractions and infrastructure.
5. Help those developers achieve their objectives.
6. Actively market this family friendly activity cluster.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.5: Further Develop Youth, Adult & Scholastic Sports Facilities**

The City is to upgrade the current sports fields and build new ones to support sports tourism. This will entail working together with the Athletic Division to develop Pickleball competitions at the new Racquet Facility and making the sports tourism visitors aware of Cape Coral's strong food scene.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.6: Enhance & Develop New Visitor-Focused Events**

The City to stimulate and act as a catalyst to create new events that will attract tourists. Develop a committee that will review the current schedule with the objective of finding



ways to enhance or create new events and festivals. Concentrate on those assets that are unique or particularly strong in Cape Coral.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.7: Support More Unique Local Dining Options & Enhanced Evening Activities**

The City will identify ways to further develop infrastructure in the “food” zones and recruit restaurant operators to open unique concepts and differing cuisines in concentrated areas. Support the growth of small food businesses that expand dining options in the City and communicate with local universities to investigate their interest in a culinary school.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.8: Encourage Cross-Promotion and Joint Packaging Among Related Attractions**

The OEBD will serve as a formal and informal convener and facilitator of partnership conversation among related attractions. These partnerships could be incentivized by promotional opportunities offered by the City or VCB. The City to create “Cape Coral Pass” that leverages partnerships between attractions, transportation services, hotels, and dining establishments to create value-packed deals that encourage tourists to explore more of what the destination has to offer.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.9: Energize & Educate Locals About Tourism in Cape Coral**

The City to promote tourist attractions and engage an overall plan to targeted locals. Host annual one-day tourism summits for key leaders and stakeholders with speakers highlighting tourism assets and potential tourism development activities. Provide space at the tourism summit for individual attractions to have booths to promote themselves.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.10: Consider a Co-Op Marketing Approach with Certain Attractions**

Co-op marketing allows attractions to access high-value placements that they would struggle to achieve with their own resources. It is important to ensure that Cape Coral organizations take greater advantage of this program and find new ways to stretch their marketing dollars and test new/emerging tactics. The City is to develop a list of attractions and businesses to target for joining co-op marketing opportunities.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.11: Tourism Leadership & Collaboration / Partnerships**

The City is to contact local leaders with a knowledge of tourism and hospitality need to be about taking an active role in leading the charge to improve the tourism environment in Cape Coral. In addition, coordination meetings with planned agendas are needed among the potential partner organizations. These collaborations and partnerships should facilitate the greater sharing of resources such as video, photography, and written content on City experiences and amenities.

❖ **Initiative 5.b.12: Engage Higher Education Institutions as a Catalyst**

The City to engage relevant individuals at the various institutions of higher education on potential areas for partnership. These include organizational and board participation, placemaking advocacy within the county and city economic development efforts. Universities may be interested partners in efforts to create workforce development pipelines that help address workforce gaps in the tourism industry and providing research and expertise through professors and internship programs.

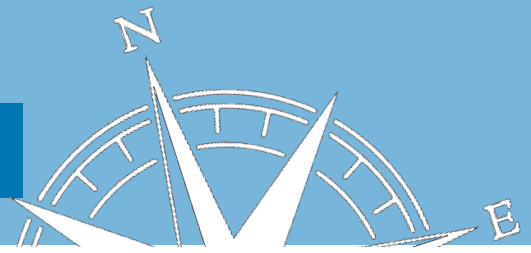
❖ **Initiative 5.b.13: Designate an Individual to be Responsible for Tourism**

The City is to assign tourism responsibility to the appropriate person who is already on staff. It should then find one or two interns to assist this person. Over time, the City is to review the current and expected future amount of tourism related work by the individual from the City Manager's office and the interns, and the return on investment from having the tourism person on staff to determine what resources are needed.

Conclusions

The City should recognize that a concentrated effort will be necessary to address these initiatives, many simultaneously, and in an orchestrated fashion that promotes new business attraction but also permits affordable entrepreneurship opportunities for Cape Coral residents.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan indicates the order in which the initiatives are implemented how they are funded, and who will administer them. And as with any strategic plan, *The Course Ahead* must be considered as a "living" document that will require periodic



examination and revisions as new elements or economic conditions are encountered will impact economic sustainability and growth.

Summary of Priorities

From a Funds-, Personnel-, or Time-intensive viewpoint, the **50** strategic initiatives can be organized into hierarchies for approach (evaluated by annual impacts). The initial **34** items of Critical Importance are as follows:

Level One Priority (low resource demand)

Critical items that require the least resource demand should be set as the first priority. These represent “low hanging fruit” will be the easiest to achieve positive outcomes. The following **9** Action items are not necessarily listed in order of need:

Strategic Initiative	Duration (years)	Total estimated Cost
Public Visioning Sessions for Cape Coral’s Growth	5	\$133,000
Committee of the Whole Public Access Website	10	\$129,100
Citizen Advisory Committee for Public Input on Major Projects	10	\$114,100
Benefit/Cost Analysis for Future Projects	10	\$187,800
Independent Economic Development Website	10	\$203,100
Economic Impact analyses for all Capital Expense Projects	10	\$403,900
Consumer Spending Potential Reports	5	\$212,300
Explore Opportunities to Work with Short-Term Rental Providers	5	\$80,000
Consider A Co-Op Marketing Approach with Certain Attractions	4	\$146,600
Public Visioning Sessions for Cape Coral’s Growth	5	\$133,000

Level Two Priority (moderate resource demand)

The **15** Action items of critical need but of somewhat greater resource demand are as follows:

Strategic Initiative	Duration (years)	Total estimated Cost
Working Group for Each Target Industry Cluster	5	\$415,300
Compelling Narrative and Tagline about Cape Coral	3	\$510,100
4-Quadrants Commission on Neighborhood Identity and Wayfinding	4	\$108,000
Opportunity Multiplex Program	10	\$1,147,000



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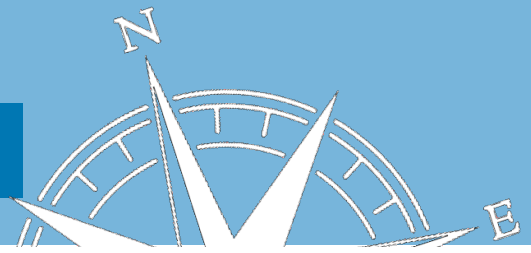
One-Stop-Shop for Business Development	9	\$2,523,800
Streamline the Permitting Process	4	\$313,000
Cape Coral Executive Corps	4	\$813,900
Target Industry Prospectuses	4	\$254,800
Expansion of Online Learning Opportunities	6	\$114,500
Pop-Up Retail Fairs	3	\$241,900
Enhance & Develop New Visitor-Focused Events	4	\$209,100
Support More Unique Local Dining Options & Enhanced Evening Activities	4	\$104,800
Encourage Cross-Promotion and Joint Packaging Among Related Attractions	3	\$192,700
Tourism Leadership & Collaboration / Partnerships	4	\$259,100
Designate To Be Responsible for Tourism	4	\$209,100

Level Three Priority (highest resource demand)

The **10** Action items of critical need but of the highest resource demand and will take the longest to accomplish with the largest funding requirements are as follows:

Strategic Initiative	Duration (years)	Total estimated Cost
On Demand Water Mobility Transportation System	7	\$8,160,800
Cape Coral Land Bank	4	\$20,000,000
Strategic Site Assemblage Tax Credit	5	\$10,000,000
Low Impact Storm Water Infrastructure Program	9	\$7,080,000
Cape Coral FloodWatch Program	9	\$3,016,400
Cape Blue Incentive	9	\$3,507,400
OEBD Elevation to Full Department Status	3	\$8,654,500
Target Industry Job Creation Grant	4	\$659,100
Cape Coral Startup Support Center	7	\$5,766,500
Further Develop Youth, Adult & Scholastic Sports Facilities	5	\$924,700

SETTING WAYPOINTS & THE COURSE AHEAD



Items of Non-Immediate Need

Although important, the remaining **16** initiatives are not immediately essential.

Low Resource demand (2 in total)

Strategic Initiative	Duration (years)	Total estimated Cost
Cape Coral Eco-Newsletter and Blog	3	\$77,400
Further Develop the Already Existing Family Activity Cluster	3	\$92,400

Moderate Resource demand (10 in total)

Strategic Initiative	Duration (years)	Total estimated Cost
Events that Celebrate Both Big City and Small-Town Living	5	\$611,000
Solar Community Cooperative Task Force	3	\$61,800
Accredited Economic Development Organization Status	3	\$77,400
Vocational Training Silos for the Trades	3	\$55,900
Industry Familiarization Tours	3	\$292,700
Increase Activity and Access to Cape Coral's Waterfront	4	\$209,100
Promote Experiential Tourism Product by Expanding Outdoor Activities	3	\$46,500
Energize & Educate Locals About Tourism In Cape Coral	4	\$129,800
Engage Higher Education Institutions as A Catalyst	4	\$104,800
Cape Coral's IT Infrastructure Promotion	4	\$104,800

High Resource Demand (4 in total)

Strategic Initiative	Duration (years)	Total estimated Cost
"Call to Arts" Program	4	\$2,442,200
Cape Coral Executive Airport	9	\$83,315,600
Cape Coral Corporate Park	8	\$55,322,000
Downtown Civic Center & Entertainment District	7	\$119,057,800

If all 50 strategic initiatives were implemented, we estimate that an overall expenditure of **\$281.3 million** would be required during an operational period of **10** years (in 2024 dollars). However, if only the action items of critical need were implemented (**34** initiatives), the total

2024-dollar cost would be **\$65.0 million**. For the non-immediate action items (**16** initiatives), the total 2024-dollar cost would be **\$216.3 million**.

In the table below, a cumulative 10-year timeline is presented. New **13,640** job growth economic impacts developed in Volume 1 totaled **\$3.358 billion** annually; however, it is assumed that job creation would take for full 10 years to materialize, so the table shows a **10%** increase yearly to reach the 10-year 100% complement.

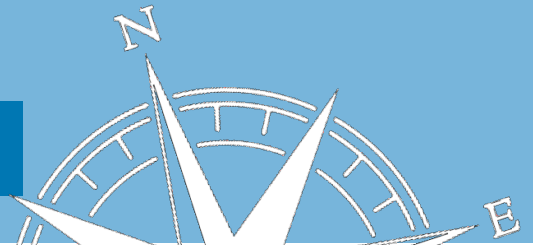
The net economic impact considers implementation of all 50 strategic initiatives. A 10-year Net Present Value (NPV) of **\$12.526 billion** represents a return to the City of Cape Coral of nearly **\$45** for each **\$1** invested in the Strategic Economic Development Plan.

10-Year Timeline	Jobs Impacts	EDSP Cost	Net Impacts
Yr. 1	\$ 335,756,000	\$ 9,250,400	\$ 326,505,600
Yr. 2	\$ 671,512,000	\$ 77,869,900	\$ 593,642,100
Yr. 3	\$ 1,007,267,000	\$ 79,282,800	\$ 927,984,200
Yr. 4	\$ 1,343,023,000	\$ 106,076,400	\$ 1,236,946,600
Yr. 5	\$ 1,678,779,000	\$ 52,922,500	\$ 1,625,856,500
Yr. 6	\$ 2,014,535,000	\$ 3,483,600	\$ 2,011,051,400
Yr. 7	\$ 2,350,290,000	\$ 3,328,600	\$ 2,346,961,400
Yr. 8	\$ 2,686,046,000	\$ 2,210,700	\$ 2,683,835,300
Yr. 9	\$ 3,021,802,000	\$ 2,154,000	\$ 3,019,648,000
Yr. 10	\$ 3,357,558,000	\$ 2,218,700	\$ 3,355,339,300
Total	\$ 18,466,568,000	\$ 338,797,600	\$ 18,127,770,400
NPV	\$ 12,806,882,000	\$ 281,253,000	\$ 12,525,629,000
Return to the City of Cape Coral for Each \$1 spent			\$ 45

Strategic Timeline

The Strategic Timeline indicates the implementation schedule for the Action items. It is assumed that each initiative would have varying mobilization lag (pink bars), a 6-month kick-off period (red bar), a distinct project work phase (orange bar), and important project review milestone(s) dates (yellow crosses). We recommend that Critically Important Action items be undertaken first.

SETTING WAYPOINTS & THE COURSE AHEAD



Critically Important Action Items		Yr.1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Yr. 5	Yr. 6	Yr. 7	Yr. 8	Yr. 9	Yr. 10
Lev1	Public Visioning Sessions for Cape Coral's Growth	Project Kick-Off	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase				
Lev1	Committee of the Whole Public Access Website	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase				
Lev1	Citizen Advisory Committee for Public Input on Major Projects	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev1	Benefit/Cost Analysis for Future Projects	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev1	Independent Economic Development Website	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev1	Economic Impact analyses for all Capital Expense Projects	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev1	Consumer Spending Potential Reports	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev1	Explore Opportunities to Work with Short-Term Rental Providers	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev1	Consider A Co-Op Marketing Approach with Certain Attractions	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Working Group for Each Target Industry Cluster	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Compelling Narrative and Tagline about Cape Coral	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	4-Quadrants Commission on Neighborhood Identity and Wayfinding	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Opportunity Multiplex Program	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	One-Stop-Shop for Business Development	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Streamline the Permitting Process	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Cape Coral Executive Corps	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Target Industry Prospectuses	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Expansion of Online Learning Opportunities	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Pop-Up Retail Fairs	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Enhance & Develop New Visitor-Focused Events	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Support More Unique Local Dining Options & Enhanced Evening Activities	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Encourage Cross-Promotion and Joint Packaging Among Related Attractions	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Tourism Leadership & Collaboration / Partnerships	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev2	Designate To Be Responsible for Tourism	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev3	On Demand Water Mobility Transportation System	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev3	Cape Coral Land Bank	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev3	Strategic Site Assemblage Tax Credit	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev3	Low Impact Storm Water Infrastructure Program	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev3	Cape Coral FloodWatch Program	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev3	Cape Blue Incentive	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev3	OEBD Elevation to Full Department Status	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev3	Target Industry Job Creation Grant	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev3	Cape Coral Startup Support Center	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase
Lev3	Further Develop Youth, Adult & Scholastic Sports Facilities	Project Mobilization (lag)	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase	Project Workphase

- Lev1 Level 1 (high priority)
- Lev2 Level 2 (modertae priority)
- Lev3 Level 3 (low priority)

Legend

- Project mobilization (lag)
- Project Kick-Off
- Project Workphase
- + Progress Review Milestone

Non-Immediate Action Items											
Priority	Initiative	Yr.1	Yr.2	Yr.3	Yr.4	Yr.5	Yr.6	Yr.7	Yr.8	Yr.9	Yr.10
NILR	Cape Coral Eco-Newsletter and Blog										
NILR	Further Develop the Already Existing Family Activity Cluster										
NIMR	Events that Celebrate Both Big City and Small-Town Living										
NIMR	Solar Community Cooperative Task Force										
NIMR	Accredited Economic Development Organization Status										
NIMR	Vocational Training Silos for the Trades										
NIMR	Industry Familiarization Tours										
NIMR	Increase Activity and Access to Cape Coral's Waterfront										
NIMR	Promote Experiential Tourism Product by Expanding Outdoor Activities										
NIMR	Energize & Educate Locals About Tourism In Cape Coral										
NIMR	Engage Higher Education Institutions as A Catalyst										
NIMR	Cape Coral's IT Infrastructure Promotion										
NIHR	"Call to Arts" Program										
NIHR	Cape Coral Executive Airport										
NIHR	Cape Coral Corporate Park										
NIHR	Downtown Civic Center & Entertainment District										

NIHR Non-immediate Need (high resource demand)
 NIMR Non-immediate Need (moderate resource demand)
 NILR Non-immediate Need (low resource demand)

Marketing Strategies

Marketing to prospective target industries and cluster companies is a lengthy process and will require funding and coordination beyond the strategic recommendations outlined hereto. But, the message that Cape Coral is on the move forward can be brought to the market's attention.

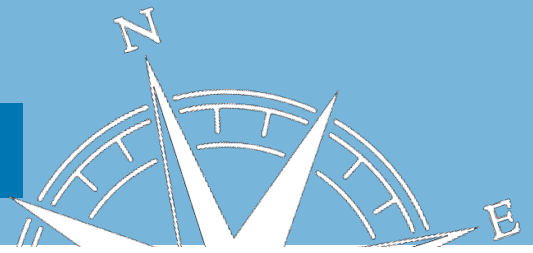
Visioning

Initiative 1.a.1 suggests that semi-annual visioning sessions be on what the City of Cape Coral should aspire to achieve in the future, possible directions for future planning. For now, the Vision statement for the Strategic Plan is this:

"A city evolving from its suburban roots into a new urban paradigm as a self-sustaining network that promotes economic vitality together with lifestyle and cultural excellence."

With continuing public input and City guidance, it is expected that the statement will change over time as well as be accompanied by an updated Mission statement. In Volume 1, the mission is identified as follows:

"Provide the strategic recommendations necessary to ensure that economic growth keeps pace with population growth."



OEBD should lead the Vision and Mission Statements activity and involve local business and government leaders in a series of round tables meetings or net forums to recognize the mutual need for the strategic economic plan (The Course Ahead) and to bring it to fruition.

Branding

Initiative 1.b.1 recommends the retaining of a qualified advertising or media firm to develop a new “brand” and compelling narrative about Cape Coral. As the selected firm develops media and graphics for the new efforts, a principle should be kept in mind. Cape Coral is an evolving marketplace trying to find a new pathway in major urban development. For many traditional marketing programs, this represents untested waters, so innovation and imagination are key. OEBD and the City must guide the branding work towards creating a unique story that will compel business leaders around the nation to focus on the City of Cape Coral for new location potentials.

Public Relations

One of the chief ways to achieve success is through a comprehensive public relations program that would highlight the advantages for business investment in Cape Coral in the relevant national and international media. As part of this strategy, we suggest the retaining of a qualified national public relations firm with expertise in economic development marketing. Among the many functions of a PR engagement, the following are key:

- Develop comprehensive strategic outreach to reach regional, national and international business media with key messages
- Define appropriate media markets based on existing research and information of the City’s profile
- Develop and maintain current lists of customized media contacts for television, radio, print, and Internet
- Create a national media kit with current background for spokespersons
- Pitch storylines to major business publications and media to heighten awareness of Cape Coral’s emerging business environment
- Secure story placement and raise the quantity and quality of favorable business coverage for the City in regional/national media

Target Industries Outreach

Attraction of interest by company executives in the targeted industry areas may be a long process, requiring several strategic approaches, including direct marketing and mail, print and digital advertising, field missions, trade shows, and media marketing.

Direct Mail Campaigns

In large corporations, “gatekeepers” (secretaries and administrative assistants) seek to protect chief executive officers from streams of unsolicited promotional materials arriving daily. Marketers must find ways to circumvent interceptors to get the CEO’s attention. While the traditional primary audience for economic development solicitation had been centralized corporate real estate executives, these departments were largely decimated by cost-cutting in recent years in favor of outsourcing to real estate consultants.

Before launching a direct mail (or e-mail) campaign, an industry-specific prospectus (e.g., Volume 1 documents) should be prepared in both glossy hard copy and electronic format. Next, verified mailing lists should then be obtained from reputable sources (such as Dun & Bradstreet/Hoovers, Standard & Poor’s, or Ward’s/Gale), requesting their advance estimate of the number of companies and number of contacts in the targeted industries or clusters.

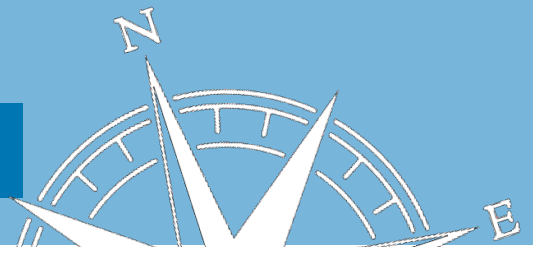
A direct marketing program should extend through a series of steps and frequent follow up to culminate in closing of the deal.

Print & Digital Advertising

Direct mail campaigns may not reach all of the potential prospects in an industry, so Cape Coral should also consider placing space advertisements in pertinent print magazines with digital channels. Such ads will broaden the dissemination of the message and should lead to more prospects in the target clusters.

Costs for advertising in general business publications, however, can be prohibitive. A better way to reach the target audiences may be through ad placements in the technical trade journals widely read by each sector.

Digital ad rates tend to be significantly less expensive than print versions. However, some recent studies have shown that print media often delivers better results in areas like



response rates, conversions, and brand recall. In advertising, digital fatigue is a growing issue and organizations that continue to leverage print in their marketing mix will see tangible results that are harder to achieve through digital channels alone.

Field Missions

A field mission draws upon business representatives from a number of identified target sectors which are deemed to hold the greatest mutual promise for new business development within the host community. Field missions help economic development organizations position themselves in markets where competition is fierce. These visits are more about opening doors and developing long-term relationships than trying to make sales or close deals.

To the extent possible, travel to meetings with active prospects in a target industry should be coordinated with calls on other potential candidate firms in the same geographic area (with dates and times confirmed in advance). Since these calls are likely to involve prospects in a broad range of industries, Cape Coral representative(s) must be briefed on key findings of the Strategic Plan report.

Trade Shows

There are thousands of trade shows held every year, and economic development agencies are renting booths in the leading shows. Some of the more important shows for the outreach on Cape Coral include:

- Consumer Electronics Show (CES)
- International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)
- MedTrade Expo & Conference
- International Manufacturing Technology Show (IMTS)
- The National Restaurant Association (NRA)
- National Association of Realtors (NAR)

Staffing a booth at trade show may not always be the most effective way of “working” the show. It may be more advantageous to bring a group of “ambassadors” to the show to meet with prospective companies.



D-H&Assoc

Each show will list exhibitors in advance usually with contact information, and a proactive telephone campaign designed to arrange brief visits at the booths of interested parties can produce marketable results.

Other effective ways of attending the show is to sponsor a hospitality suite in the accompanying hotel, and if possible, provide an off-site dinner for a group of invitees at a local restaurant. Many attendees grow tired of the constant activity of the show and especially look forward to quieter meetings and higher food quality. By attracting a smaller but more attendant group, the economic development message is easier to convey.

Radio & Television Media

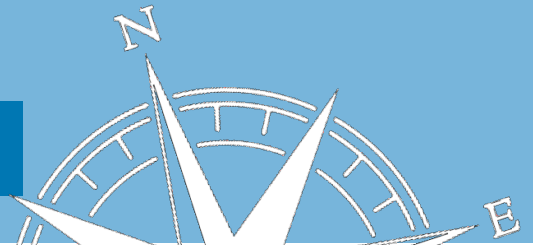
Both radio and television (broadcast or cable) offer special ways of reaching the target audience, but at differing methods and costs. State and regional economic development budgets allow for national TV advertising, but smaller areas such as Cape Coral would be most likely relegated to public access television or local radio which, unfortunately, cannot serve a broad enough base.

Cape Coral should attempt to be featured on a PBS or National Public Radio broadcast for an outstanding community achievement. It would be particularly significant if the news item focused on technical education advancements, since this is a “hot” button for the target industries. With media produced by the broadcaster, the costs for a “spot” are alleviated, and only duplication and distribution of the recorded media is necessary to have digital format available for marketing use.

Social Media

Economic development agencies use social media to primarily promote their region's business opportunities, showcase local success stories, attract potential investors, engage with the community, and build brand awareness by highlighting the unique features and advantages of their area.

One of the most influential social media channels for business is **LinkedIn**. According to current data, LinkedIn reaches over **1 billion** users across the globe, making it a platform with a massive potential audience for professional networking and B2B marketing.



Articles and posts written by guest authors that feature current or planned developments in Cape Coral can have far-reaching impacts. Placement of these publications in membership groups in LinkedIn oriented toward the targeted industry clusters can expand the network and reach the key decision-makers who will begin to take more notice of Cape Coral's potential for their business.

Familiarization Tours

A familiarization tour, also known as a FAM tour, is a trip that industry professionals a first-hand experience of a destination. FAM tours should be conducted for each cluster with special events and hospitality services prepared to highlight the industry. Travel reimbursements should be arranged to provide adequate visitor experiences for the events. While many projects and recommendations developed in this study will not yet be realized, the City can provide marketing materials that will illustrate the new directions that the City is headed and how attraction of corporate interest would be accommodated.

Initiative 4.c.4 recommends that the OEBD conduct FAM tours for executives of leading companies and corporate site selectors. The object of these tours is the showcasing of Cape Coral's potential. We suggest that the OEBD initially identify the top **3** industry clusters with the greatest interest by the City and focus these tours in those areas only. The FAM tours should have a theme oriented toward each cluster visit, with site packages and follow-up materials specifically designed to reinforce the cluster's fit for Cape Coral.

Marketing Conclusions

Marketing to prospective target industries and cluster companies is a lengthy process. It will need dedicated funding and coordination. A constant messaging is required that Cape Coral is on the move forward. The goal is effectively and successfully bringing Cape Coral to the market's attention.