

## **9.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**

### **9.1 Economic Development Element**

Successful economic development for the City of Calexico can be achieved through maintaining a fiscally healthy and balanced economy that builds upon existing economic development efforts and establishes policies for future economic growth. Economic growth and awareness of regional economic development activities will assist in developing logical strategies to address more intense economic development efforts. A healthy economy not only provides local workers with adequate income to afford a better quality of life, but it also provides local government with adequate public revenues to maintain a better quality of public services. The Economic Development goals and policies should be recognized as a long term commitment that provides an organizational framework and process that can guide ongoing development efforts. Recognizing that economic development is an ongoing process, the goals and policies should provide direction to guide development activities while at the same time maintaining flexibility to respond to changing economic trends and local market conditions.

Through economic diversification combined with its geographic locations along the United States and Mexico International border, a broader tax base will provide the City with long-term benefits and economic stability. In the short-term, key improvements to the City's economic development should focus on four general areas: 1) the concentration of mixed use development in key locations of the City, 2) the development of commercial and mixed use development along Interstate 111, State Route 98, Jasper Road and Cole Road 3) revitalization of the downtown area, and 4) smart sustainable conversion and development of agricultural land to non-agricultural land. In the long-term, the Silicon Border and Eastern Industrial Corridor projects may provide engines for economic growth in the region closest to Calexico. Through future expansion of its Sphere of Influence, economic incentive programs, and cooperation with the County, the City can realize the benefits of an Eastern Industrial Corridor.

### **9.2 Economic Challenges**

Calexico faces continuing economic challenges to the planning and implementation of the future growth and development of the City. Two key regional factors are vital to this planning effort: 1) Retention of the large number of retail customers and consumers who commute from Mexicali, Mexico to Calexico and other communities to purchase goods and services at a high daily rate, and 2) Calexico's contributing role in the County's mega-agricultural industry.

Significant contributors to the local economy are winter visitors (or “snowbirds”), Mexico/U.S. border crossings, and the North American Free Trade Agreement (“NAFTA”). However, due to the prevalence of unskilled agricultural and retail occupations, median income in Calexico has remained low. The high proportion of employment in the retail industry, which is aimed at the Mexicali consumer, has left the City vulnerable to fluctuations in the relative strengths of the Mexican Peso versus the U.S. Dollar. When Peso devaluation occurs, making American goods more expensive, retail purchases decline and force many individuals into unemployment. The combined decline in retail business employment and the seasonal nature of the agricultural industry causes a high non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate. Table ED-A, identifies general economic and demographics data for the City of Calexico and Imperial County. This data provides an economic comparison between the City and county. A significant economic factor according to the California Employment Development Department (“EDD”) is the unemployment rate in this area, which in May of 2005 was 15 percent for Calexico, and 13.2 percent for Imperial County as a whole.

	Calexico	Imperial County
<b>Total Population</b>	27,109	142,361
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	46.6%	52.2%
Female	53.4%	47.8%
Median Age (Years)	29.2	31.0
<b>Majority Race</b>		
Hispanic	95.3%	72.2%
Non-Hispanic	4.7%	27.8%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	54.0%	56.6%
Non-Married	46.0%	43.4%
<b>Employment<sup>1</sup></b>		
Total Work Force of Population	9110	57,300
Employed	73.7%	80.6%
Unemployed	26.3%	19.4%
Median Household Income (in \$000)	29.0	31.9
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	6984	43,891
Detached Units	64.0%	57.3%
Multiple Units	36.0%	42.7%
Median Home Values (in \$000)	108.2	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Employment Data Source: California Employment Development Department

To meet these and other economic challenges, the City continues to take a proactive approach by participating in various State Economic Incentive Programs and Federal programs. Some of the programs in which the City participates consist of: 1) Enterprise Zone: a defined geographic area within which businesses can obtain tax benefits and other incentives designed to stimulate business investments. A Targeted Employment Area (“TEA”) provides for the establishment of employment areas comprised of census tracts that have at least 51% of its residents at low or moderate income levels. The purpose of TEA designation is to encourage businesses in the Calexico Enterprise Zone to hire eligible residents with the most need and allows the Enterprise Zone companies to earn tax credits; 2) Manufacturing Enhancement Area (“MEA”): intended to stimulate job creation in areas experiencing triple the State’s unemployment rate. It provides for state and local tax incentives to encourage business investment and promote job creation; 3) HUB Zone (Historically Underutilized Business Zone): a federal program aimed at stimulating economic growth in urban and rural areas. The program gives federal contract preferences to small businesses that are certified by maintaining an office in one of the designated HUB Zones and employing staff who live locally. The entire county of Imperial is a designated HUB Zone and therefore any certified business in Calexico may participate; and 4) Foreign Trade Zones (“FTZs”): provide special customs procedures to U.S. plants engaged in international trade-related activities. Duty-free treatment is accorded to items that are processed in FTZs and then reexported, and duty payment is deferred on items until they are brought out of the FTZ for sale in the U.S. market.

### **9.3 Revitalization of the Downtown Area**

While the City has grown at a steady rate over the past decade in terms of jobs, retail sales, and average household income, certain areas of the City need economic attention and revitalization. Due to the older nature of the downtown, revitalization is important to create a sense of place in Calexico and to promote economic development and expansion.

The downtown area should be a focal point that promotes the City’s image. An important component to creating excitement for the downtown area is to establish a lively and active environment that attracts people to utilize the area. Mixed-use residential and commercial land uses can contribute to this success. Creating a pedestrian-oriented environment, community facilities, and mixed-use land use projects with cohesive residential, retail, and office space are keys to a successful downtown.

#### **9.4 Preserving an Image to Remember**

The City's artistic values provide the basis for cultural identification throughout the City's planning efforts. Public awareness is important for encouraging and supporting the arts and cultural development of the City. Also, through direct support given to City-sponsored activities and facilities, the City also plays an important role in helping to encourage and enhance activities that support the arts. Through active involvement and support, the City can offer a better understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the arts and history within Calexico.

Within the City, a downtown revitalization strategy should include the development of an Arts Program, which focuses on providing a welcoming and stimulating environment for practicing artists to present their art to the community. A concerted effort can be undertaken to make art a more integral part of citizens' lives by encouraging the expansion of the arts in the school system, establishing new educational activities, and inviting broader participation of students and designers in local public arts opportunities in local parks as well as downtown.

#### **9.5 Establishing a Vision**

Inclusion of an Economic Development section in the City's General Plan, enables the City to be better able to plan and regulate the type of future development envisioned for the City. It also is better able to identify potential economic impacts that may effect the City's long-range policy decisions relative to land use, public services, population and growth. Economic development must sustain a plan that establishes a high priority to the assets and values of the City and its citizens.

The Economic Development Element is responsive to the City's *Vision* because it:

- a) stimulates economic revitalization in key areas of the City.
- b) creates the opportunity for economic options at strategic points to the City.
- c) offers economic potential that seeks to achieve regional recognition, strengthen the economic base of the City, and provide direct and indirect stimulation of other economic investments in the City.
- d) provides job opportunities for local workers, and overall fiscal benefits for maintaining the highest level of public services to local residents.
- e) provides economic leverage to make resources available that enhance stability in the operations and services provided by City government.

- f) contributes to the City's economic development potential by providing a choice of housing opportunities.
- g) contributes to the overall balance of residential and non-residential land uses within the City.
- h) develops and recruits new businesses that create job opportunities and utilize local skills.
- i) builds on the existing economic resources provided by Mexico.
- j) provides adequate public services and facilities to support current and future development.
- k) provides the opportunity to include arts and cultural development into the downtown revitalization plan.
- l) provides the opportunity to create a historical theme to the downtown area and inclusion of that theme into the downtown revitalization plan.
- m) creates strategies to maximize economic results such as transitioning agricultural land to non-agricultural land.
- n) provides counseling and assistance to local businesses and developers to ensure their success through the practice of sound business principles.
- o) continues to support existing local businesses, labor workforce and entrepreneurs as new business development occurs.
- p) continues to attract and retain a wide range of businesses which are compatible with regional resources, including a dependable water supply, clean air, and transportation facilities.

## **9.6 Goal, Objectives and Policies**

The City of Calexico is located in a key location of the Imperial Valley, along the U.S. and Mexico International border. The City's location and accessibility offers the opportunity to benefit as a regional location for retail, commercial, industrial and tourism activity. Also, its location offers opportunities for encouraging the development of industries in emerging markets and new technologies.

### **9.6.1 Goal**

The City should promote a healthy and diversified economic base by continuing to welcome Mexico's resources, attracting quality businesses, and encouraging existing businesses to expand their sales, facilities, and employment.

**9.6.1.1 Image****Objective 1**

The City's image can have a profound impact on economic development activities. The image presented by the City can determine the location decision of a new or relocating business. Existing businesses are more likely to expand and reinvest in a City with a positive self-image and strong sense of civic pride.

**Policy 1**

- a. Emphasis shall be made to promote and preserve the qualities and resources that contribute to Calexico's attractiveness and make the City unique.
- b. Emphasis shall be made to promote and preserve the City's cultural heritage.
- c. The City shall promote safe and well-maintained communities and neighborhoods.
- d. The City shall emphasize the environmental qualities essential to the economic health of the region.
- e. The City shall plan and develop a well-designed and effective circulation system.
- f. The City shall recognize the importance of streets and "gateways" in creating the initial impression or image of the City.
- g. The City shall promote downtown as the economic and arts/cultural center of the City.

**9.6.1.2 Economic Base****Objective 2**

A successful economic base is maintained through a healthy and balanced City economy, and the flexibility to respond to economic change.

**Policy 2**

- a. The City shall promote a team approach in developing economic development strategies and utilize key departmental staff.
- b. The City shall continue to build effective local, regional and international business partnerships.
- c. The City shall promote and continue to use technology to disseminate economic data.

- d. The City shall encourage a proactive approach in the retention of existing businesses and the recruitment of new businesses, particularly those which generate and broaden employment opportunities.
- e. The City shall provide business assistance to retain and expand existing local businesses.
- f. The City shall prepare, distribute, and routinely update a marketing package consisting of site-specific property profiles for developable parcels, local demographics, and information describing the regulatory environment and potential economic incentives.
- g. The City shall encourage and promote infill development.
- h. The City shall develop a package of economic incentive programs which benefit developers of infill projects.
- i. The City shall promote opportunities to attract retirees and seasonal residents by facilitating the development of quality second homes, condominiums, and hotels/motels in close proximity to shopping areas.
- j. The City shall encourage and facilitate highway-serving commercial development along Highway 111 and State Route 98, within the City limits. Some highway-serving commercial may be appropriate along Jasper Road and Cole Road but should be sited so as not to be incompatible with adjacent proposed residential areas.
- k. The City shall establish and implement strategies that gain and/or expand City access to the Interstate 8 corridor and promote the development of commercial service facilities.
- l. The City shall encourage mixed land use development projects and land annexations and ensure that they are fiscally neutral or beneficial to the City.
- m. The City shall continue to encourage and promote economic incentives for existing and new businesses.
- n. The City shall establish an expedited development review and approval process for new commercial and industrial projects that are consistent with the General Plan Land Use designations.
- o. The City shall work with the local K-12 school district, the County, Imperial Valley College and San Diego University to develop a skilled labor force including, but not limited to, high tech training.

### **9.6.1.3 Economic Opportunities**

**Objective 3**

The City should look to combine funds from property tax revenues with alternative methods to fund infrastructure and other public facilities, as well as other programs. Calexico, like other local governments, must rely upon a mixture of various funding sources to finance capital facilities.

**Policy 3**

- a. The City shall encourage planning of capital improvements and prioritization of infrastructure investments.
- b. The City shall promote the use of redevelopment to finance revitalization of the downtown and other redevelopment areas of the City.
- c. The City shall pursue a variety of funding approaches, including impact fees, assessments, transportation funds, and other programs to revitalize and upgrade infrastructure.

**9.6.1.4 Revitalization of the Downtown Area****Objective 4**

The City should pursue all opportunities to revitalize the downtown area to further enhance its image.

**Policy 4**

- a. The City shall explore economic development opportunities in targeted growth areas that could meet the City's economic needs, while following guidelines that ensure compatibility with the City's long-range economic strategy.
- b. The City shall encourage diversity of housing opportunities of varying densities to reinforce the downtown character.
- c. The City shall encourage the design, maintenance, and revitalization of the downtown area that enhance the quality of life.
- d. Preserve architecturally important historic structures that are capable of being adapted for viable use.
- e. The City shall encourage public/private efforts to remove old and dilapidated signs and billboards.
- f. The City shall promote a pedestrian-friendly and safe environment.
- g. The City shall explore opportunities to create "pedestrian zones" with increased landscaping, use of traffic reduction methods, adequate separation from automobile traffic, increased lighting along sidewalks.

- h. The City shall provide sufficient, conveniently located public parking in the downtown area to support a pedestrian business district.
- i. The City shall promote the use of alternative modes of transportation, including bus, bicycling and walking.
- j. The City shall promote cultural and artistic awareness as a way to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors.
- k. The City shall provide an improved sense of community through the integration of the arts into the civic identity, through cultural programs, facilities and events, and all aspects of the arts.
- l. The City shall encourage cooperation between the schools and community cultural and arts organizations to increase exposure to, appreciation of, and participation in, our cultural activities and heritage.

#### **9.6.1.5 Regional Coordination**

##### **Objective 5**

Calexico will need to become competitively aware of economic opportunities to achieve its economic development objectives. Economic development tools, including state legislative changes, may be necessary to recruit and create business opportunities.

##### **Policy 5**

- a. The City shall encourage and improve coordination of regional economic development activities.
- b. The City shall promote networking, information sharing, and coordination among local public economic development organizations, educational and job training organizations, and business groups.
- c. The City shall pursue legislative changes that would allow greater local flexibility and assist in achieving economic development objectives.
- d. The City shall continue to coordinate and cooperate with the county, state, and federal governments, as well as Mexico, to support the development of the Eastern Industrial Corridor project and the Silicon Border project.

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**Table ED-A**  
**General Economic-Demographics Data**  
**City of Calexico and Imperial County**  
**(U.S. Census Data, 2000)**

	Calexico	Imperial County
Total Population	27,109	142,361
Gender		
Male	46.6%	52.2%
Female	53.4%	47.8%
Median Age (Years)	29.2	31.0
Majority Race		
Hispanic	95.3%	72.2%
Non-Hispanic	4.7%	27.8%
Marital Status		
Married	54.0%	56.6%
Non-Married	46.0%	43.4%
Employment <sup>1</sup>		
Total Work Force of Population	9110	57,300
Employed	73.7%	80.6%
Unemployed	26.3%	19.4%
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- g) contributes to the overall balance of residential and non-residential land uses within the City.
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- i) builds on the existing economic resources provided by Mexico.
- j) provides adequate public services and facilities to support current and future development.
- k) provides the opportunity to include arts and cultural development into the downtown revitalization plan.
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## **9.6 Goal, Objectives and Policies**

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### **9.6.1 Goal**

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### **9.6.1.1 Image**

#### **Objective 1**

The City's image can have a profound impact on economic development activities. The image presented by the City can determine the location decision of a new or relocating business. Existing businesses are more likely to expand and reinvest in a City with a positive self-image and strong sense of civic pride.

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- g. The City shall promote downtown as the economic and arts/cultural center of the City.

### **9.6.1.2 Economic Base**

#### **Objective 2**

A successful economic base is maintained through a healthy and balanced City economy, and the flexibility to respond to economic change.

#### **Policy 2**

- a. The City shall promote a team approach in developing economic development strategies and utilize key departmental staff.
- b. The City shall continue to build effective local, regional and international business partnerships.
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### **9.6.1.3 Economic Opportunities**

**Objective 3**

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- a. The City shall encourage planning of capital improvements and prioritization of infrastructure investments.
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- c. The City shall pursue a variety of funding approaches, including impact fees, assessments, transportation funds, and other programs to revitalize and upgrade infrastructure.

**9.6.1.4 Revitalization of the Downtown Area****Objective 4**

The City should pursue all opportunities to revitalize the downtown area to further enhance its image.

**Policy 4**

- a. The City shall explore economic development opportunities in targeted growth areas that could meet the City's economic needs, while following guidelines that ensure compatibility with the City's long-range economic strategy.
- b. The City shall encourage diversity of housing opportunities of varying densities to reinforce the downtown character.
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- h. The City shall provide sufficient, conveniently located public parking in the downtown area to support a pedestrian business district.
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- k. The City shall provide an improved sense of community through the integration of the arts into the civic identity, through cultural programs, facilities and events, and all aspects of the arts.
- l. The City shall encourage cooperation between the schools and community cultural and arts organizations to increase exposure to, appreciation of, and participation in, our cultural activities and heritage.

#### **9.6.1.5 Regional Coordination**

##### **Objective 5**

Calexico will need to become competitively aware of economic opportunities to achieve its economic development objectives. Economic development tools, including state legislative changes, may be necessary to recruit and create business opportunities.

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- b. The City shall promote networking, information sharing, and coordination among local public economic development organizations, educational and job training organizations, and business groups.
- c. The City shall pursue legislative changes that would allow greater local flexibility and assist in achieving economic development objectives.
- d. The City shall continue to coordinate and cooperate with the county, state, and federal governments, as well as Mexico, to support the development of the Eastern Industrial Corridor project and the Silicon Border project.