Economic Development Element
of the Arroyo Grande General Plan

Prepared by the City of Arroyo Grande Community Development Department

Adopted by City Council Resolution No. 4489 on October 9, 2012
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Section 1. Background and Primary Goals

Background

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to provide a framework for residents, business owners, prospective new business owners, and City officials to guide the City’s economic growth for the next 10 years. The goals, objectives, policies and implementation measures are intended to encourage the development of the types of business and commercial activities that serve the community and promote a healthy, thriving economy. A balance is continually sought between economic vitality and the preservation of the City’s quality of life and small-town character.

Goals

There are four primary goals related to the City’s economic development that should be considered when establishing priorities, weighing economic impacts of land use decisions, and determining the progress toward policy implementation. The four goals are:

1. Create a thriving economy
2. Meet unmet community needs
3. Promote business activity
4. Provide superior customer service
Section 2. Community Image Enhancement

Objective

ED2: Develop a marketing program to enhance the City’s attractive and vibrant small town image.

Policies

ED2-1: Maintain a long range, comprehensive marketing program to promote the City as a business friendly community with small town character.

ED2-2: Create a balanced economic image of agriculture, history, technology and commerce for the City of Arroyo Grande.

ED2-3: Encourage investment through the provision of sustainable infrastructure, attainable housing opportunities and attractive commercial areas and create an awareness of business opportunities within the City.

ED2-4: Promote participation with diverse partnerships to implement improvements and programs for community development.

ED2-5: Promote businesses that foster or derive benefit from multi-modal transportation opportunities such as bike touring, bus, and car-pool commuters.

Implementation Measures

ED2-1.1: Prepare updated marketing plans identifying issues and opportunities consistent with the long-range, comprehensive marketing program.

ED2-1.2: Implement a community signage, public art, and landscaping design program by working with business groups and interest groups such as Arroyo Grande in Bloom.

ED2-1.3: Develop coordinated promotional marketing materials for the City through social media.

ED2-1.4: Leverage limited marketing dollars with local organizations such as the Economic Vitality Corporation and State
trade and commerce groups to increase the visibility of the City’s economic development programs.

**ED2-1.5:** Cultivate community pride and participation by local residents and businesses through fostered partnerships with business and non-profit groups such as Arroyo Grande in Bloom.

**ED2-1.6:** Conduct, promote, and encourage training workshops through the Arroyo Grande Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Vitality Corporation, the Cuesta College Institute for Professional Development/Business & Entrepreneurship Center, Cal Poly’s Small Business Development Center for Innovation, and Cal Poly’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

**ED2-1.7:** Continue implementing community outreach programs including active participation with the Arroyo Grande Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Village Improvement Association, and local service clubs.

**ED2-1.8:** Promote the Economic Vitality Corporation’s Revolving Loan Fund and micro-loan programs to Arroyo Grande businesses.

**ED2-1.9:** Collaborate with the support organizations that contribute to the economic well-being of Arroyo Grande, including but not limited to the Chamber of Commerce, SLO Vintners, the Economic Vitality Corporation, the Visitors and Conference Bureau, the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, Cal Poly, and Cuesta College.
Section 3. Office, Mixed Uses, Light Manufacturing, and Technology

Objective

**ED3**: Enhance business retention and expansion consistent with the General Plan Land Use Policies to promote and enhance baseline job opportunities within the City for local residents.

Policies

**ED3-1**: Encourage adequate infrastructure to support business expansions, redevelopment, and new development.

**ED3-2**: Continue outreach and networking with industry and technology groups, real estate brokers, developers, and others including accountants, lenders, and attorneys to promote and enhance baseline job opportunities within the City for local residents.

**ED3-3**: Incorporate zoning regulations that promote infill development with opportunities for retaining and expanding businesses.

**ED3-4**: Continue to balance economic goals with strong policies and programs that promote and maintain the community’s environment, quality of life, and rural character.

Implementation Measures

**ED3-1.1**: Assist the City’s small business community in retaining and expanding businesses by fostering partnerships and providing forums for information, training, and shared resources.

**ED3-1.2**: Work with the Economic Vitality Corporation to monitor and measure business trends to develop programs and policies appropriate for Arroyo Grande.

**ED3-1.3**: Continue to develop “one-stop” development-related staff meetings with businesses prior to submission of any formal applications to the City.

**ED3-1.4**: Support a citywide building and land availability database in partnership with the local real estate and broker groups.
ED3-1.5: Review and annually monitor the Home-Based Business Development Plan to support the needs of the home-based business owners.

ED3-1.6: Provide pertinent information on business development efforts and opportunities in Arroyo Grande to business owners, property owners, tenants, site locators, and other agencies to promote business expansion and head of household jobs.

ED3-1.7: Identify workforce training services and programs at Lucia Mar Unified School District (i.e. school to career programs), Cuesta College, Cal Poly, SCORE “Counselors to America’s Small Business”, San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, Mission Community Services Corporation, and the Better Business Bureau of San Luis Obispo County.

ED3-1.8: Encourage business participation in general plan and development code amendment processes through social media outreach.

ED3-1.9: Identify, amend, and approve neighborhood enhancement plans or form-based codes, including adopting appropriate environmental documents for sections of El Camino Real, Halcyon Road, and East Grand Avenue appropriate for intensified infill expansion. This will provide certainty for allowed development and to attract and facilitate larger scale (e.g. >20,000 SF) office and manufacturing uses.
Section 4. Agriculture

Objective

ED4: Encourage and support the retention and expansion of agricultural business activities.

Policies

ED4-1: Provide adequate support services and resources to maintain economically viable commercial agriculture.

ED4-2: Recognize and increase value-added agricultural opportunities.

Implementation Measures

ED4-1.1: Collaborate with the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, the U.C. Cooperative Extension, SLO Vintners, the Economic Vitality Corporation, farmers’ market associations, the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, and others to develop and implement agricultural opportunities that enhance agricultural business and tourism for the City and region.

ED4-1.2: Work with the foregoing organizations to promote the sales and expansion of value-added agricultural opportunities.
Section 5. Retail/Commercial Services

Objective

ED5: Pursue unique opportunities to promote continuity within commercial service and retail business sectors of the City.

Policies

ED5-1: Promote local patronage and strong performance in satisfying local demand for goods and services and the creation of additional jobs.

ED5-2: Continue to enhance connectivity and increase retail utilization of the East Grand Avenue corridor, the Village Core, and the Traffic Way and El Camino Real mixed-use corridors.

ED5-3: Implement revitalization and rehabilitation of historic and older structures and provide incentives for adaptive reuse.

ED5-4: Expand and enhance the Village Core as a focal point for civic and tourist activities.

ED5-5: Promote a pro-retail and hospitality program.

Implementation Measures

ED5-1.1: Assist the City’s small business community in retaining and expanding businesses through recognition events with the Chamber of Commerce and the development of social media programs.

ED5-1.2: Implement comprehensive design guidelines pertaining to both public and private improvements, including, but not limited to, building façade restoration, landscaping, street furniture installation, undergrounding of utilities, historic district character, and the development of parking facilities.

ED5-1.3: Determine the feasibility of the voluntary formation of a Business Improvement District.

ED5-1.4: Incorporate infrastructure projects into the City’s Capital Improvement Program that address deficiencies in commercial corridors that include major street reconstruction, provision of fiber-optic cable, storm drain and sewer improvements, water capacity improvements, underground utility projects, public parking
improvements, improvements to park facilities, recreation areas, community facilities, and other public buildings.

**ED5-1.5:** Work with the Village Improvement Association and the South County Historical Society to preserve the historic nature of the Village as the City’s commercial and cultural center.
Section 6. Tourism, Marketing, and Promotion

Objective

ED6: Develop a strategy that promotes the importance of tourism and capitalizes on the City’s natural resources.

Policies

ED6-1: Become an active participant in countywide tourism programs.

ED6-2: Enhance the image of the City through special events and promote and increase those events in the off-peak retail season and at sites that are economically accessible to residents and visitors alike.

ED6-3: Capitalize on development opportunities to increase lodging facilities.

ED6-4: Expand the City’s tourism potential through the Internet and social media.

Implementation Measures

ED6-1.1: Financially support the San Luis Obispo County Visitors and Conference Bureau and continue partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce.

ED6-1.2: Participate with the Vintners Association to promote City wine related business.

ED6-1.3: Continue to work with the hospitality industry to ensure overall understanding of the importance of customer service.

ED6-1.4: Promote and maintain a “tourist friendly” customer service policy within and among City staff and departments.

ED6-1.5: Work with local event coordinators, including the Chamber of Commerce, Village Improvement Association, and the San Luis Obispo County Visitors and Conference Bureau to promote special events, activities, and attractions.
ED6-1.6: Assist in planning and executing special events and promotions focusing on economic development, cultural awareness, interaction, education, and other civic causes. These may include expanded farmers’ markets, street fairs, parades, outdoor dining/cafes, wine tasting, outdoor music, and concerts in the park.

ED6-1.7: Develop additional tourist attractions and lodging in the City such as the development of cultural-related facilities.

ED6-1.8: Work with developers, landowners, and others to site and design appropriate hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, and country inns.

ED6-1.9: In collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, provide links and support a calendar of local events and activities available through social media and on the City’s website.
Section 7. Development Process

Objective

ED7: Develop a pro-business community image, including simplifying and improving the development review process.

Policies

ED7-1: Monitor and modify where necessary the development review process and identify ways in which it can be streamlined and improved.

Implementation Measures

ED7-1.1: Update guidelines for design and development review for East Grand Avenue and El Camino Real.

ED7-1.2: Prepare clear thresholds for level of project review and required improvements.

ED7-1.3: Provide a helpful pre-application service available for all prospective projects to establish a level of predictability of City requirements, concerns, process, and anticipated timelines.

- Customize the level of pre-application review according to project size.
- For larger projects, provide workshops/charrettes to facilitate the understanding of project objectives and buy-in from stakeholders.
- Scope CEQA documents considering input from public meetings and benefits depending on the anticipated magnitude of impacts.

ED7-1.4: Maximize efficiency and communication for customer service by specifying one staff contact to be a project shepherd.

ED7-1.5: Clarify responsibility and role of each advisory committee and commission, and reduce redundancy and potential conflict in project review where feasible.

ED7-1.6: Use new technologies allowing developers, builders, and business owners to submit plans, access updates, receive approved building plans, etc. via an online system to eliminate any unnecessary costly printed copies.
ED7-1.7: Explore options and consider incentives for projects that meet any of the four primary goals of this Element.

ED7-1.8: Consider both community and project-specific economic impacts of land use and policy decisions.

ED7-1.9: Provide City staff with ongoing education and training to facilitate efficient application processing, emphasize the importance of timely responses to applicants, measure progress, and provide accountability.
Section 8. Sustainability

Objective

ED8: Support and encourage a sustainable local economy.

Policies

ED8-1: The City shall encourage businesses that use green practices.

ED8-2: The City shall conduct public education and outreach to support employment opportunities that minimize the need for automobile trips, such as live/work developments, telecommuting, satellite work centers, and home occupations, in addition to mixed-use development strategies.

ED8-3: The City should purchase green products from local businesses whenever feasible.