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Strategic Framework

The strategic framework described in the following pages should be the touchstone for economic development across the region over the next five years. It should be the reference point for decisions, choosing to advance opportunities that reinforce the vision and goals and set aside those that conflict. While the tactics employed to achieve Elevate Northeast Florida's vision and goals may morph over time as conditions change, the framework should not.

Strategic Framework

The recommendations in this Strategy were inspired by sentiments expressed by stakeholders across the region from day one of the planning process. The messages that echoed throughout the region were:

- To reach our vision, our leaders must **work together as a region**, crossing political jurisdictions. We believe in the power of **partnerships and strong leadership**.
- Our goals must be **unabashedly bold**. We want to be challenged and have the assets and ingenuity to achieve big goals.
- We commit to intensifying activities to make our region's economy the most resilient and highest performing in the nation. Our last five-year strategy focused on becoming a more innovative region – **we want the next five years to focus on accelerating and elevating economic development**.

Elevate Northeast Florida's strategic framework, illustrated to the right, reflects these sentiments. First, the region's vision is to have the highest performing economy in the country. This future is attainable. In 2017, the Jacksonville metro had the third highest rate of job growth of all large metros in the US. Intentional investments to support industry growth and advance the region's workforce could improve the region's ranking even more in the future.

Being resilient is critical to achieving the region's vision. While the past five years have seen remarkable economic growth, remaining steady when the economy slows is a matter of resiliency. **Resiliency can be achieved through a focus on the four goals of this strategy: advancing the region's workforce, deepening and diversifying industry, strengthening the region's brand, and becoming a leading smart region that embraces innovation in all that it does.**



Strategic Framework, continued

Each Elevate Northeast Florida goal is supported by a series of strategies and priority projects for the next five years. While priority projects can evolve over time as original projects are completed and new opportunities surface, the goals and strategies themselves should remain the same over the course of implementation. This strategic framework allows for adaptability and encourages collective impact in which multiple partners across various perspectives participate in a project, work toward a shared objective, and then disband and re-group on other projects that form in support of the Strategy's goals.

EMPOWER PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVANCE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE.

- Increase consistent and coordinated employer engagement.
- Improve awareness of and participation in career pathways in the region.
- Strengthen efforts to engage youth and adults in completing their post-secondary credentials of economic value.

AMPLIFY OUR LEADERSHIP AS A PREEMINENT SMART REGION.

- Coordinate investment and partnerships to develop and grow the Bay Street Innovation Corridor.
- Activate and accelerate smart region investments.
- Improve the connectivity and efficiency of regional mobility / transit options.

EMBOLDEN OUR GLOBAL BRAND.

- Establish a strong, unified regional brand based on best practices.
- Invest in modern marketing and communications that increase positive awareness among businesses and talent.

DEEPEN OUR INDUSTRY CLUSTERS AND INTENSIFY SUPPORT.

- Invest in assets that encourage the growth of the region's target industries.
- Create a more vibrant regional entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem.
- Strengthen the region's international connectivity.



Strategic Framework, continued

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Priority projects, as listed below, are designed to be implemented within a set timeframe, for example, 12-18 months. They are designed to be discrete in nature and can be followed by additional “next step” projects that build on – intensifying and amplifying – their results. The Implementation section (04) of this report provides additional recommendations on the proposed timing of each project.

ADVANCE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

- Strengthen the region’s newly-formed Talent Advancement Network.
- Increase employer involvement in K-12 CTE and Career Academy programs.
- Create a communications campaign plan to raise awareness of target industry jobs that are in high demand and participation in career pathways into those jobs.
- Deploy a career pathways awareness communications campaign within the seven-county region.
- Re-energize Earn Up to build awareness of and sponsor credential completion initiatives.

SMART REGION

- Review and adjust existing downtown development plans, zoning, and incentives to advance Bay Street as a signature project of the smart region initiative.
- Together with the North Florida Smart Region Coalition, establish an agenda and prioritize projects for the Smart Region Master Plan.
- Involve entrepreneurs and global thought leaders in shaping our community as a preeminent smart region.
- Improve the region’s mobile app for sharing transportation information with residents.
- Galvanize a Regional Integrated Open Data Exchange (Innovation Alliance of Florida).
- Assist local jurisdictions with modernizing their collection of data.

GLOBAL BRAND

- Activate the Water Life brand theme / DNA.
- Update all JAXUSA Partnership marketing tools and business development approach to reflect the Elevate target industries and strategy.
- Increase resources and grow the team of people dedicated to promoting the region.
- Strategically identify and develop local leaders as brand ambassadors for the region.
- Invest in a targeted three-year (minimum) talent attraction campaign.

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

- Form regional councils of executives in the (1) Health & Biomedical and (2) Financial Services industries to encourage stronger partnerships.
- Strengthen marketing of JAXPort’s unique position as a hub for LNG-fueled logistics and exports.
- Update a study to quantify the true size and impact of the region’s IT workforce.
- Map the region’s innovation-driven entrepreneurship assets and networks. Develop an action plan to strengthen areas of weakness discovered during the mapping process.
- Develop a plan to create a smart region innovation center and tailored support for startups in the field of smart infrastructure.
- Add a smart infrastructure cohort into JAX Bridges and other entrepreneurship education programs across the region.
- Continue building relationships with foreign embassies and consulate offices in Washington DC and elsewhere.
- Continue implementing the Brookings Global Cities Initiative’s program of work.

