



City of Dublin  
**General Plan**

Chapter 11

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**



## **11.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The Economic Development Element guides the City of Dublin's efforts to foster business expansion and job growth, providing a framework for economic development programs and activities. While the Economic Development Element does not explicitly seek to generate fiscal benefits accruing to the City of Dublin, increased net tax revenue is a likely byproduct of the policies. The overarching objective of the Economic Development Element is to enhance the competitiveness of the City of Dublin and to promote a strong, diverse, and evolving economic base.

## **11.2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

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The City of Dublin desires to undertake economic development activities to improve its competitive position relative to other California cities. Competitiveness spans a multitude of subjective measures, including (1) attractiveness to companies, (2) attractiveness to individuals, (3) reputation/brand, and (4) innovation environment (i.e., potential for home-grown economic development). Maintaining a competitive position is critical to retaining local businesses and attracting new businesses, thereby sustaining and growing the local job base with high-value employment opportunities for current and future residents.

In addition to traditional economic development tools that focus primarily on cost-based incentives for business, the City of Dublin desires to take a more holistic view of economic competitiveness that emphasizes the importance of "quality of place" and "quality of life" factors in attracting companies and individuals. Potentially through physical improvements and other enhancements to community character, the City seeks to promote and foster a built environment that inspires and supports new economic opportunities.

Land use is central to the City of Dublin's capacity to compete for jobs and economic growth. The community's ability to develop real estate and public spaces at new and reused sites, locate interrelated companies near each other, encourage growth at key business nodes, and build vibrant, engaging, and contemporary places is vital to its competitiveness. Promoting real estate investment and achieving desirable land use outcomes is critical to positioning Dublin for economic growth and long-term economic sustainability. In addition, public development of new and reimaged civic spaces can enhance the City's attractiveness, reputation, and innovation environment.

## **11.3 RELEVANT PLANS AND POLICIES**

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Dublin has adopted a number of plans and policies to guide development. Some of these pertain to the entire City, while others have a specific area of focus. As part of the City of Dublin General Plan, this Economic Development Element provides goals, policies, and implementation measures that address the entire City, though some specific goals and policies are geographically targeted. The City's General Plan and the Eastern Dublin and Downtown Dublin Specific Plans are most relevant to the Economic Development Element.

### **A. City of Dublin General Plan**

The City's General Plan is the policy framework for development decisions. It is the highest-level policy document for the City. State law requires that the general plans include land use, circulation, open space, conservation, safety, noise, and housing elements. Additional, optional, elements may be included. All elements of a General Plan are considered equal and all other plans and policies are required by state law to be consistent with the General Plan. The Economic Development Element is an optional element of the Dublin General Plan.

The City of Dublin General Plan acknowledges that on the local level, development will be required to respond to community needs for housing, employment, and leisure opportunities and to the natural constraints of the area. In particular, regarding employment-supporting uses, the General Plan states that commercial and employment-generating uses will be located near the freeway and transit lines to facilitate efficient transportation. Accordingly, the Economic Development Element offers guidance for economic development activities in these areas, with particular focus on two important locations: (1) the Eastern Dublin Transit Center and (2) Downtown Dublin. Dublin has developed Specific Plans that cover both of these workplace locations.

### **B. Eastern Dublin Specific Plan**

The Eastern Dublin Specific Plan (EDSP) provides policy guidance for existing and future development generally east of the Iron Horse Trail and the Parks Reserve Forces Training Area (Parks RFTA or Camp Parks). New development in this area requires adoption of Planned Development (PD) zoning, which includes development regulations, architectural standards, and preliminary landscape plans. The EDSP provides for employment-generating land uses located on the west side of the planning area, in close proximity to the BART station and near I-580 and Dublin Boulevard where freeway access is convenient. In addition to at the Transit Center, the EDSP provides for office space and other employment-generating uses in additional locations within the Specific Plan area.

### **C. Downtown Dublin Specific Plan**

The Downtown Dublin Specific Plan (DDSP) provides policy guidance, development standards, and design guidelines for downtown Dublin. The DDSP replaced the Dublin Downtown Specific Plan, Downtown Core Specific Plan, San Ramon Road Specific Plan, Village Parkway Specific Plan, and West Dublin BART Specific Plan. The DDSP includes a Retail District, Transit-Oriented District, and Village Parkway District, each of which allow for office space and other employment-generating land uses, which contribute to economic development in Dublin.

## **11.4 ORGANIZATION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**

This Economic Development Element is organized according to the following structure:

### **Goals**

Goals are general and serve as a guiding principal for economic development activities.

### **Policies**

Policies divide the goals into more specific economic development guidelines.

## **Implementation Measures**

Implementation measures are specific tasks needed to achieve the goals and policies.

## **11.5 GOAL I: ECONOMIC VIBRANCY**

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Economic vibrancy is central to the City's economic development objective to enhance the competitiveness of the City and to maintain a strong and diverse economic base. Goal I: Economic Vibrancy includes policies to maintain and enhance the City's economic development programs, including through more robust marketing and branding, highly-targeted outreach, and increased regional coordination.

### **11.5.1 MAINTAIN AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNCTION**

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#### **A. Policy**

1. The City of Dublin has a well-established practice of economic development work, including a variety of programs that support business attraction and retention. Through the Economic Development Department, the City currently offers incentive programs, business training, business outreach, and business support services. The City shall maintain the function of Economic Development as a tool to promote economic vibrancy in the City and the region.

#### **B. Implementation Measures**

1. Business Incentive Programs: Maintain incentives that respond to current economic conditions and serve to attract and retain business activity in Dublin, as appropriate.
2. Business Seminars, Roundtables, and other Related Programs: Offer seminars, discussion meetings, and classes to support business owners, in partnership with the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, the Alameda County Small Business Development Center, and other business support entities, as appropriate.
3. Coordination with Regional Entities: At present, there are several regional entities working to advance economic development activities in the region. The City should continue to remain engaged as an active participant in the current efforts (i-GATE, Tri-Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau, Innovation Tri-Valley, East Bay EDA, just to name a few). Additionally, the City should coordinate with future regional economic development efforts so long as they are not in conflict with this Element.
4. Business Recognition Program: Recognize local businesses for significant anniversaries and notable contributions to the community.
5. Business Visitation Program: Meet individually with businesses to assist with retention and expansion and to raise awareness of City services available to local businesses.
6. Ombudsman Services: Facilitate permitting and other interactions between the business community and local government.
7. Maintain the Economic Development Strategy: The City shall periodically review and update

the Economic Development Strategy to ensure its relevance to evolving market and economic forces, as necessary.

### **11.5.2 MAINTAIN A COMPREHENSIVE MARKETING AND BRANDING PLAN**

#### **A. Policy**

1. The City of Dublin produces marketing materials and undertakes other activities to promote Dublin as a place for business. The City shall formalize its marketing activities by creating and maintaining a comprehensive marketing and branding plan. The marketing and branding plan should be continually updated to refresh the City's outward identity, publicizing the evolution of the City and business community, as appropriate.

#### **B. Implementation Measures**

1. Prepare a Marketing and Branding Plan: Building on the Economic Development Strategy, establish a distinct identity for the City and specify appropriate Bay Area media outlets for promotional activities.
2. Implement the Marketing and Branding Plan: Allocate staff time and/or funds to support marketing and branding efforts, as appropriate.
3. Update the Marketing and Branding Plan: Revisit the plan periodically to ensure that marketing and branding efforts are kept current.

### **11.5.3 FOCUS BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM ON HIGH-GROWTH COMPANIES**

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#### **A. Policy**

1. Retaining high-growth companies is a priority for the City of Dublin, given the potential these companies hold for job creation within the City. Targeting high-growth companies, the City should maintain a Business Visitation Program that seeks to identify and solve local economic development constraints.

#### **B. Implementation Measures**

1. Identify High-Growth Companies: Building on the Economic Development Strategy, establish and maintain a list of priority businesses for the Business Visitation Program.
2. Implement Targeted Visitation Program: Conduct business visitations and respond to cited concerns and issues, as appropriate.

### **11.5.4 PARTICIPATE IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS**

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#### **A. Policy**

1. The City of Dublin shall coordinate with local and regional entities to foster regional strengths, leveraging the efforts of organizations that seek to improve the Tri-Valley economically. Regional partners may be traditional economic development entities or other organization

that promote quality of place and quality of life through efforts to enhance the cultural and social fabric of the region.

**B. Implementation Measures**

1. Identify Priority Entities/Programs: Building on the Economic Development Strategy, establish and maintain communications with regional entities that have the potential to enhance the Tri-Valley economy.
2. Participate in Regional Economic Development Efforts: Coordinate and partner with regional economic development entities to support regional economic development efforts, as appropriate.

## **11.6 GOAL II: IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES**

Small businesses and the jobs they support are critical to the City of Dublin economy. Goal II: Improve Conditions for Small Businesses seeks to improve City practices and procedures to promote small business growth.

### **11.6.1 MAINTAIN SMALL BUSINESS-FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**A. Policy**

1. The City shall strive to offer small businesses and other City permit applicants a clear and certain building permit and inspection process. By providing permit applicants a well-defined roadmap and timeline for interactions with the City, the City will minimize the financial risk to applicants seeking to undertake new projects. Through an enhanced development services program, the City endeavors to minimize unnecessary costs of business in the City of Dublin.

**B. Implementation Measures**

1. Implement Electronic Permit Tracking System: Convert to an online building permit process.
2. Evaluate Possible Building Permit/Inspection Process Refinements: Review current procedures and consider options to improve the City permit and inspection process.
3. Implement Permit/Inspection Process Refinements: Improve City procedures, as appropriate.

## **11.7 GOAL III: DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT-SUPPORTING SITES**

Economic development and job growth will require additional workspaces in the future. *Goal III: Development of Strategic Employment-Supporting Sites* seeks to maximize the potential for development of workplace uses in the City of Dublin.

### **11.7.1 PARTNER WITH THE ALAMEDA COUNTY SURPLUS PROPERTY AUTHORITY**

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#### **A. Policy**

1. The Alameda County Surplus Property Authority (ACSPA) controls land with land use and zoning in place for over two million square feet of office development at the Eastern Dublin Transit Center, development potential that could support significant future job growth in the City. The City shall seek to strengthen its ongoing working relationship and partner with ACSPA to position County-owned Eastern Dublin sites as a jobs center for the region.

#### **B. Implementation Measures**

1. Evaluate Existing Land Uses/Zoning: In coordination with ACSPA, review current campus office sites for consistency with market demand and potential for job creation.
2. Evaluate the Potential to Offer “Shovel Ready” Parcels: In coordination with ACSPA, explore and implement, as appropriate, entitlement work (e.g., planning, architecture, and engineering) that could shorten the development project delivery timeline for end users.
3. Explore Potential for Increased Site Marketing: In coordination with ACSPA, explore and implement enhanced marketing of development opportunities, as appropriate.

### **11.7.2 SUPPORT DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS**

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#### **A. Policy**

1. With the adoption of the Downtown Dublin Specific Plan (DDSP), the City created a vision for a vibrant mixed-use center, with opportunities for development of employment-supporting uses such as office and retail space. The DDSP strives to create a walkable urban environment that when fully realized could have a dramatic positive effect on quality of place and the City’s regional competitiveness. To achieve this vision and foster economic development, the City shall pursue landowner/business coordination and partnerships to promote the continued evolution of the downtown area.

#### **B. Implementation Measures**

1. Conduct Outreach Efforts: Build support for programs and actions that progress the downtown vision.
2. Participate in Coordinated Activities: In partnership with landowners and businesses, contribute to efforts that promote investment opportunities in the downtown area, as appropriate.

## **11.8 GOAL IV: ACHIEVE THE DOWNTOWN VISION**

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Quality of place and quality of life factors are increasingly critical to economic development. The Downtown Dublin vision offers an opportunity to improve quality of place and quality of life factors

in Dublin. Goal IV: Achieve the Downtown Vision includes policies that encourage the City to be more active in downtown development, and in other strategic projects within the City.

### **11.8.1 EXPLORE POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES AND FINANCING TOOLS TO ADVANCE REAL ESTATE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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#### **A. Policy**

1. A primary challenge associated with positioning opportunity areas for new development is obtaining reliable financial resources for place-making investments, potentially including creation of public spaces (e.g., parks, plazas, and public art), streetscape and gateway improvements, infrastructure, public parking, or other strategic investments (e.g., subsidies for catalytic projects). The City should seek sources of funds and consider available financing mechanisms for strategic projects.

#### **B. Implementation Measures**

1. Identify Funding Sources and Financing Tools: Building on the Economic Development Strategy; maintain a “toolkit” of potential funding sources and financing mechanisms.
2. Identify Strategic Investments: Seek opportunities to make public investments that are likely to have positive economic development effects and advance private sector projects, as appropriate.

### **11.8.2 EXPLORE THE CREATION OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

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#### **A. Policy**

1. An Economic Development Corporation (EDC) could be established to expand the City's ability to invest in real estate ventures, potentially expediting downtown development activities through catalytic projects. The City should explore the potential for establishment of a local EDC in Dublin.

#### **B. Implementation Measures**

1. Explore the EDC Concept: Identify and analyze the range of EDC business/financial and legal models that could be appropriate for the City of Dublin and advance the concept, as appropriate.

