

About the Six Pillars™ of Florida's Future Economy



The Vision

The Foundation's strategic vision for Florida encompasses vibrant communities enjoying prosperity and high-paying jobs realized through competitive advantage in a global economy. Such a view calls us to an attainable future. It also creates a practical challenge for those who demand that their aspirations correspond with common sense.

The Six Pillars™ Framework

The framework offered to accomplish such a task is known simply as the Six Pillars. The product of years of collaboration and research by the Florida Chamber Foundation, the Six Pillars identifies the critical factors determining Florida's future: (1) Talent Supply & Education, (2) Innovation & Economic Development, (3) Infrastructure & Growth Leadership, (4) Business Climate & Competitiveness, (5) Civic & Governance Systems and (6) Quality of Life & Quality Places. The Six Pillars incorporates the work of a diverse range of stakeholders and their strategic thinking, including Century Commission for a Sustainable Future, Florida Council of 100, Enterprise Florida, Florida State University System, Workforce Florida, and 1000 Friends of Florida, among others.

This framework serves as an organizing force for strategic planning at local, regional and state levels. Its real power is in the efficiency of harnessing fragmented viewpoints into a common and consistent conversation. The Florida Chamber Foundation, along with its Six Pillars Caucus System™, released the first iteration of the Six Pillars 20-year strategic plan to accomplish the vision set forth above. To view the plan, visit our homepage at www.FLFoundation.org.

Even as you read this, community leaders from Jackson, Columbia, Palm Beach, Marion, Broward, Collier and Lee counties—as well as regional efforts, such as the Central Florida Partnership's myregion.org—are using the framework to guide their local dialogue. And the list of adopting partners is growing. The resulting priorities will differ, but the parameters and focus of the discussion are identical. Imagine then an economic agenda communicated throughout the local and state political process empowered by the simplicity of a common language. To view a local strategic plan developed around the Six Pillars visit www.economiccouncilpbc.org.

Talent Supply & Education: Florida faces an emerging talent gap — a crisis in human capital that represents a vast and growing unmet need for a highly skilled and educated workforce. In the next two decades, new products and services will be developed to address the world's most pressing environmental, medical, and transportation challenges. The site of those breakthroughs will reap the economic rewards of leadership. Without a thriving base of knowledge workers, that place may not be Florida. The time to build Florida's future workforce is now, and education and training must be its foundation.

Innovation & Economic Development: Too often relegated to the academic realms of research institutions, innovation must be every Floridian's business. Competitiveness and prosperity in the 21st century will be based on technology, knowledge and innovation. Transforming our existing business base is the key to retention and expansion. Economic development tied to innovation requires a comprehensive understanding of what is necessary and prudent to incentivize business growth. Demands for return on investment have never been greater. Legacy industries contend with pressure from the creative destruction witnessed as new industries emerge. A fluid view of the role of innovation and economic development is paramount.

Infrastructure & Growth Leadership: This pillar underscores the fundamental contributions of factors such as transportation, communications and land use to a vibrant economy. Early symptoms, if not addressed, will become crippling diseases undermining the state's economic health. Malnourished ports would turn away burgeoning international trade. Congested and deteriorating roadways and railways could choke intra- and inter-state commerce. Sprawl threatens the sufficiency of water and energy. This need not be Florida's prognosis. In contrast, smart and timely investments in strategies that are tied to sustainable infrastructure targets are the medicine for a shared economic prosperity for all Floridians.

Business Climate & Competitiveness: Owners and executives making decisions about where they call home evaluate Florida's attractiveness in respect to its competitiveness across a host of business climate factors. We should too. First, the good news. According to Florida Tax Watch, Florida ranks highly in measures of business climate owing to the absence of a personal income tax; its openness and growth in international trade; and its general hospitableness to entrepreneurs and small businesses. Unfortunately, Florida ranks poorly owing to high business costs, especially property tax burdens, state and local sales, excise and gross receipt tax burdens and general business costs. Vigilance in monitoring our position is critical to anticipating policy changes that secure our position among the most business-friendly climates in the world.

Civic & Governance Systems: Even the most ardent supporters of free markets recognize the role of structures in place to deliver services, set rules that organize business and society, and provide vehicles for the public to engage in, influence, and change the way society works. These include things like constitutional integrity, ethics and elections, redundancy, government spending and more.

Quality of Life & Quality Places: Economic and cultural sage, Richard Florida, underscores the importance of place as an integral component of prosperity. He documents the shift from generations that once chased the job and landed by coincidence in a particular city to the current cohort that selects geography first and then lands the job. Our future depends on the preservation or enhancements of a wide range of integrated elements that together express the robustness of our culture and the positive perceptions of those things that make us healthy, safe, comfortable, secure and involved.

Measurement: The Florida Scorecard™

While the Six Pillars framework offers a powerful tool for strategic planning at all levels, the Florida Chamber Foundation's objective to develop a state-wide, 20-year plan requires a commitment to measuring our current status and progress toward stated goals. The Foundation offers The Florida Scorecard, a dynamic online tool that seeks to identify and track those factors identified within each of the Six Pillars as indicative of our situation. You can view the current version of this tool at www.TheFloridaScorecard.com.

Some important indicators of progress include affordability of higher education, the rate of business formations, air quality, public transit use, litigation, permitting, emergency preparedness, crime rate, uninsured residents and low-birth-weight newborns, just to name a few. The intent is to expand The Florida Scorecard to provide regional views of performance so that local stakeholders can measure and evaluate their position respective to each other, the state and communities across the globe.

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