focus on our priorities

refreshed
Before 2030, Polk County will have a world-class, fully integrated education system that supports the needs of a vibrant, progressive community.

**EDUCATION STRATEGIES:**

1. Promote a culture which values the care and education of young children (0-6).
2. Provide an adequately funded pre-K through 12 learning environment to include an effective, appropriate curriculum.
3. Provide access to fully funded, post-secondary options and opportunities that build capacity for current and emerging global workforce needs.
4. Engage all segments of the community in fostering a culture which values education.
Before 2030, Polk County will have an economic development environment that attracts quality businesses with higher paying jobs, improves productivity and retains our youth.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:

1. Develop and maintain a competitively funded, forward-thinking economic development program that is focused on targeted sectors with high-skill, high-wage jobs.

2. Develop a progressive countywide economic development image for internal and external marketing.

3. Create an environment that attracts and retains diverse talent.

4. Expand opportunities for tourism, sports and cultural arts which make Polk County a destination of choice.

5. Support regional and super-regional partnerships to advance Polk County’s economic development efforts.
Before 2030, Polk County will have growth management and infrastructure that protect the environment, enhance quality of life, promote education and economic development, and are economically sustainable.

**INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES:**

1. Maintain smart, coordinated, comprehensive land use plans for new growth and redevelopment that provide sufficient infrastructure to support livable and economically sustainable communities.

2. Create and maintain a fully funded, coordinated, multi-modal transportation system that moves people and goods within Polk County and is regionally connected.

3. Promote stewardship of available water resources to ensure sufficient supply and reserves to support quality of life and sustain economic development.

4. Preserve and protect the natural environment and provide wildlife and pedestrian connections between development and green spaces.

5. Promote public/private partnerships to plan, develop and support information technology communication infrastructure.
Before 2030, Polk County will have a comprehensive system of government that is effective, efficient, diverse and responsive to the basic needs of its citizens.

GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES:

1. Encourage all levels of government and elected officials in Polk County to support and utilize Polk Vision.
2. Expand and sustain pro-active, intra-governmental, intra-community and regional cooperation to achieve goals and maximize resources.
3. Promote broad citizen engagement.
4. Encourage diverse revenue streams to support government services.
Before 2030, Polk County will have a quality of life that encourages diverse backgrounds to live in harmony while developing physically, spiritually, mentally and culturally within a healthy and safe environment.

**QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES:**

1. Create and promote diverse cultural, artistic and recreational opportunities.

2. Improve the quality of life through utilization of accessible, high-quality, comprehensive, prevention-based community health services designed to promote total well being.

3. Encourage community partnerships to support healthy, stable and safe families.

4. Expand and promote access to programs and services which will assist individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency.

5. Ensure the safety of all citizens through a quality public safety system.
Before 2030, Polk County will have leadership that drives the partnership with government and citizens to ensure that Polk County is a premier place to live, learn, work and play.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

1. Create and sustain a countywide culture of civic engagement.
2. Expand and sustain leadership development opportunities throughout the county.
3. Sustain a strong private-sector commitment to civic engagement.
4. Prepare and encourage youth to become engaged, responsible contributors to their community.
5. Expand opportunities for senior citizens to become engaged contributors to the community.
Polk Vision actively facilitates a process through which Polk County realizes its aspirations and full potential. Polk Vision identifies and builds awareness of community priorities, promotes partnerships and encourages accountability.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Cultivate a sense of community that fosters diversity, innovation, and pride in Polk County while emphasizing a sense of place and recognizing the many physical assets and unique cultures of the area.

**POK VISION GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

Focus on our priorities
In 2004, citizens from across Polk County, led by private, public and civic leaders, joined forces to address critical issues facing our community and develop a common purpose. Focus groups, community meetings and task forces were engaged in a nine-month process to gain insight into countywide priorities, examine strengths and weaknesses, and develop a long-term vision with strategic solutions and communitywide benchmarks. The strategies were adopted by public and private organizations, large and small, with a common goal to create our desired future.

After six years of successful development, Polk Vision leaders re-engaged the community in an effort to “refresh” the original priorities. The revised strategies and benchmarks reflect the priorities of Polk County citizens and provide an impetus for refocusing our communitywide efforts. The strategies are categorized in six areas of focus: Education, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Government, Quality of Life, and Civic Engagement. Community Benchmarks provide measurable goals which will indicate progress or setbacks in achieving our vision.

Organizations from across Polk County have the opportunity to become involved in shaping the future of the county by becoming active participants in Polk Vision as Vision Partners. Our community, through partnerships of public, private and civic organizations working cooperatively, can make the Vision a reality!

For additional information about Polk Vision and how to become involved, visit our website at polkvision.com
key community benchmarks

Education Benchmarks
A. Increase the percentage of Polk County adults, 25 and over, with a bachelor’s degree to meet or exceed the state of Florida average by 2025.

B. Narrow the gap between Polk County and the state of Florida on an annual basis in order to meet or exceed the state of Florida average by 2020 on the following measurements:
   - Kindergarten readiness
   - Reading proficiency in 10th grade
   - High school graduation rate

Economic Development Benchmarks
A. Increase job growth at an annual rate that is at least 0.5% above the state of Florida.

B. Increase the average earnings per job at an annual rate that is at least 0.5% above the state of Florida.

C. Narrow the gap between the Polk County and state of Florida business taxable value ad valorem per resident on an annual basis.

Infrastructure Benchmarks
A. Maintain an annual reduction in Failing Lane Miles.

B. Maintain an annual reduction in overall and per capita water utilization.

Quality of Life Benchmarks
A. By 2020, reduce the percentage of births to unwed mothers and the rate of births to mothers under age 18 to consistently be below the state of Florida average.

B. By 2020, decrease the percentage of individuals in poverty to consistently be below the state of Florida.