

**To:** Pembroke Pines City Commission

**From:** Imani Sanchez, Harvard Kennedy School MPP Candidate, in collaboration with the Office of City Commissioner Maria Rodriguez

**Date:** January 13th, 2025

**Subject:** Review of Pembroke Pines Economic Development Strategic Plan

Pembroke Pines is a growing city in South Florida and the eleventh most populous city in Florida. As the city continues to grow, economic development challenges, including affordable housing, business attraction, and workforce development, have taken center stage. This memo outlines why strategic investment in economic development is critical to Pembroke Pines' long-term fiscal health and quality of life, and it presents short- and long-term strategies for the Commission to consider in addressing the city's evolving demographic and economic needs. References to *Pembroke Pines 2023 Economic Development Strategic Plan* are made throughout the memo and can be found [here](#).

## Background

- Pembroke Pines' population has grown from 171,000 (2020) to 179,000 (2025). It is the second most populous city in Broward County, behind Fort Lauderdale.
- Broward County is the second-largest and most populous County in Florida. The County has focused and invested in its urban core, particularly in Fort Lauderdale and Sunrise, which are growing in economic importance due to the presence of the *Sawgrass Mills Mall* and the *Florida Panthers*. Broward County is also seeking to expand transit through the [Premium Mobility Program \(PREMO\)](#), including proposed Brightline connections between Fort Lauderdale and Sunrise. As currently envisioned, these plans will exclude South Broward, raising concerns related to access to regional transportation, economic opportunity, and public investment for communities such as Pembroke Pines.

## Policy Suggestions

### Suggestion 1: Establish a Strong and Recognizable Pembroke Pines City Brand

A clearly defined Pembroke Pines identity is essential for the city's continued growth and for effectively positioning itself within Broward County. Strategy 1.1.2 proposes developing an image centered on health and wellness. While this approach could support tourism related to health and wellness services, expanding and formalizing Pembroke Pines' established **family-friendly identity** may better reflect the city as a whole and resonate more strongly with residents and prospective businesses.

#### Pros:

- Aligns with the city's existing reputation and resident demographics
- Supports long-term residential stability and quality of life
- Appeals to family-oriented businesses, schools, and community services

#### Cons:

- May limit opportunities to market the city as a specialized health and wellness destination
- Requires careful branding to differentiate from other family-friendly cities in the region

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- What is Pembroke Pines' current image, and what image does the city aspire to project in the future? (Objective 6.1)
- What types of tourism currently exist in Pembroke Pines?
- How do residents perceive the city's current identity, and what would they like it to become?
- What types of businesses should Pembroke Pines attract to align with its desired brand? (Strategy 2.2.7)

#### **Key Results:**

1. Design, launch, and collect responses from a **citywide resident survey**, achieving at least **10% response rate**.
2. Improve resident awareness of city economic development initiatives as measured by survey results.
3. Increase resident participation in city-sponsored programs, events, or initiatives by **X%**.

#### **Suggestion 2: Strengthen Economic Development Collaboration with Broward County**

Strengthening relationships with Broward County can enhance **Pembroke Pines' participation in broader economic development initiatives and regional planning efforts**.

#### **Pros:**

- Increases opportunities to participate in county-wide economic development projects
- Improves access to shared resources, funding, and partnerships

#### **Cons:**

- Requires additional staff time and financial resources to maintain active engagement
- May increase administrative and coordination demands

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- Which county-led initiatives or regional plans offer the greatest potential return for Pembroke Pines? (Strategy 1.1.4)
- Which county departments or agencies would be the primary partners, and what roles would each play?

#### **Key Results:**

1. Hire a **full-time Economic Development/Intermunicipal Director** to serve as the primary liaison with Broward County and community stakeholders (Strategy 2.5.1 and Objective 5.1).

2. Attend **100% of relevant Broward County meetings** related to economic development and intergovernmental coordination.
3. Establish regular communication channels with Broward County economic development staff (e.g., quarterly coordination meetings).