

Blueprint for Tomorrow

A Five Year Initiative

I. TRANSPORTATION / INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation will become a critical component of the Eastern Shore economy over the next five years. Creating and maintaining an effective transportation infrastructure to move residents, workers and visitors around and through our community will have an impact on current and future businesses along the Eastern Shore. Our ability to attract new business, to promote existing business and to enhance our tourism industry will depend heavily on our transportation system. Over the next five years, the Eastern Shore Chamber will:

- A. *Establish alternative public transportation linking the three cities, Mobile and Central Baldwin for tourist and local community connectivity needs*
- B. *Proactively work to improve all transportation corridors of the Eastern Shore*
- C. *Research & help establish a plan for public parking in the Eastern Shore*
- D. *In cooperation with the cities continue to implement projects to expand sidewalks and institute streetscape improvements throughout the Eastern Shore, especially in the unincorporated areas of the county*
- E. *Advocate adequate public utility infrastructure to keep pace with growth*

II. TOURISM

Tourism has become an essential component of aggressive economic development programs in many South-eastern communities. Promoting the Eastern Shore's natural beauty, access to beaches and water, recreation opportunities and shopping augment the community's stability and economic well-being. In order to expand and improve on the Eastern Shore's many tourism opportunities, this five-year program will:

- A. *Establish the Eastern Shore Tourism Council Convention and Visitors Bureau under the Chamber of Commerce. The new Tourism Council will:*
 - *Develop and implement a professional marketing program for existing area businesses to attract local and day traffic customers*
 - *Create and implement a Tourism Marketing Plan for the Eastern Shore*
 - *Help develop and implement new community-wide events to draw attention to the Eastern Shore*
 - *Research recruiting regional and national sporting events to the Eastern Shore*
- B. *Research & promote increased public access to water and waterfront properties*
- C. *Help promote and expand cultural and performing arts venues*

III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

For the Eastern Shore to realize its full potential, our community must expand its economic development efforts. Critical needs in the region include recruiting new targeted commercial and retail business compatible with our existing business and industry...attracting new high-skilled workers and high-potential retirees...and forging strong alliances among our local, state and federal government agencies to promote the Eastern Shore's economic well-being. The Eastern Shore Strategic Plan will:

- A. *Assist existing businesses to grow and prosper*
- B. *Develop and implement a Technology-based Business Incubator*
- C. *Create a Research Park / Research Center on the Eastern Shore to develop new technology jobs*
- D. *Advocate and partner with other organizations to promote affordable housing for lower income, temporary and seasonal workforce*
- E. *Establish an Eastern Shore Technology Council*
- F. *Recruit additional workforce from outside the Eastern Shore*

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IV. EDUCATION

Quality education strengthens and supports all aspects of the Eastern Shore's quality of life from preparing our young people for success, to providing an adequate workforce for economic development, to teaching young and old alike the basic skills for maintaining a healthy and productive lifestyle. The Eastern Shore five-year program will:

- A. *Expand and enhance relationships between area educators and businesses*
- B. *Support the development of a "Technology Magnate School" through the local school system to improve technical training among area students*
- C. *Research and be a catalyst in developing a plan to establish a Health Care / Medical Magnate School*
- D. *Work with existing colleges to expand Eastern Shore four-year opportunities of higher learning*
- E. *Teach "Life Basics" and "Real World Environment" in area schools*
- F. *Establish new, and improve existing enhanced technical/career education program in area high schools*

V. GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Eastern Shore is a wonderful amalgam of unique communities. Over the next five years, this program will unify all of our corporate and community leaders with our elected officials to provide a united effort with our state and federal representatives. While preserving the special characteristics that set each of our communities apart, it is imperative that we speak as one voice in addressing matters that affect the entire Eastern Shore. Over the next five years we will:

- I.
 - A. *Improve education and communication of business issues to and from Chamber members through advanced technology*
 - *Enhance and expand the Chamber's website*
 - *Establish a "one-stop" shop for business information & licensing in each city and county.*
 - B. *Improve the interface quality and time of Eastern Shore business leaders with local municipal and county governments*
 - C. *Establish a Council of Governments among Eastern Shore cities, the county and state legislators.*
 - D. *Establish a Forum among all Eastern Shore communities to meet regularly to address issues of mutual interest*
- II. *Enlist a lobbyist at the state and federal levels to represent the Eastern Shore*

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL

A responsible program of economic and community development must also address our communities' ongoing environmental needs. Improving the Eastern Shore workplace need not come at the expense of the natural environment we inhabit. We are blessed to live and work in an area of significant beauty and this program will seek to improve and expand our good fortune. The Eastern Shore initiative will:

- A. *Coordinate and assist with the implementation of a better drainage / flood control plan*
- B. *Advocate and work with the Eastern Shore cities and the county to establish a "standard" for flood control limits*
- C. *Advocate and offer assistance towards water and sewer improvements for future development*
- D. *Advocate and work with partners towards more green space / parks and a more pedestrian-friendly community*
- E. *Work with partners to improve the sources and quality of water for the area*
- F. *Advocate & support educating the Eastern Shore public regarding the benefits of a stable environment*
- G. *Advocate & support programs to preserve the Bay waterways and wildlife*
- H. *Address air quality issues and ozone concerns in the Eastern Shore*