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ROBERTSDALE

VISION 2040



Economic Development Plan

Economic growth does not happen by chance—it requires vision, strategic planning, and a commitment to aligning opportunities with community values. A strong local economy is the foundation of a thriving city. Planning for economic development means creating conditions where businesses can grow, residents can find quality jobs close to home, and the city can provide the services and amenities that make it a desirable place to live. Economic development is not just about increasing tax revenue, it is about shaping the future of the community in ways that improve quality of life, expand opportunity, and support long-term sustainability.

Economic planning helps ensure that growth does not occur haphazardly but instead follows market strategies. By understanding regional trends, identifying sites best suited for investment, and aligning infrastructure and zoning to support targeted industries,



Robertsdale can strengthen its role as the “Hub of Baldwin County”. A vibrant business climate attracts new investment and diversifies the tax base, giving the city greater financial capacity to invest in schools, parks, infrastructure, and public safety. Strong employment opportunities encourage young people to stay in the community, support household income growth, and enhance overall quality of life. A healthy economy also fosters entrepreneurship and small business development, which adds to the character, resilience, and identity of the city.

To put this vision into action, this chapter identifies a series of **Economic Opportunity Areas**—key corridors, nodes, and destinations across the city where targeted investment and thoughtful improvements can serve as catalysts for sustained growth. The following sections explore each of these areas in detail, highlighting how they can shape Robertsdale’s economic future.



1. WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON – Economic Opportunity Areas

This Plan identifies Economic Opportunity Areas in the Robertsdale Study Area where investment and improvements can spur broader economic activity. These areas represent places with the strongest potential, that coupled with the right planning framework, can generate momentum for the types of businesses, services, and amenities residents have consistently expressed a desire for during the public engagement process.

12 areas have been identified as being well-positioned for catalytic growth, all offering unique opportunities, either as commercial corridors, catalyst nodes, or community destinations. Together they provide a roadmap for building on Robertsdale's strengths while responding to future demands.



The selection of these sites was based on established industry standards for economic development and site readiness. Factors considered include:

Accessibility and Infrastructure – strong roadway connections, access to utilities, and capacity to support future development.

Zoning and Land Use Compatibility – sites where zoning already supports commercial, industrial, or mixed-use growth, or where a few adjustments could unlock opportunity.

Market Potential and Growth Patterns – areas aligned with regional growth trends, traffic flows, and demonstrated demand.

Community Alignment – places where development would enhance Robertsdale's long-term goals while meeting resident needs for services, jobs, and amenities.

The Economic Opportunity Areas are grouped into the following categories to better prioritize future actions and investments for a targeted development strategy: four Commercial Corridors, five Catalyst Nodes, and three Community Destinations.



Commercial Corridors

Major commercial corridors are the primary economic arteries of the city, serving as both centers of commerce and gateways into the community. These high traffic corridors concentrate retail, service, and employment activities in highly visible and accessible locations, making them key drivers of local economic vitality. They not only provide space for businesses, they also shape community identity, influence perceptions of the city, and serve as catalysts for investment and focal points for redevelopment. Robertsdale has four commercial corridors: Highway 59, Highway 90, Highway 104, and the Baldwin Beach Express.

Highway 59 Corridor – Highway 59 is Robertsdale’s primary north–south thoroughfare and serves as the oldest, most visible commercial corridor in the city. With high traffic volumes connecting Robertsdale to the Gulf Coast, this gateway corridor represents the city’s most significant economic engine, containing a mix of retail, restaurants, and service-oriented businesses, but its full potential remains underdeveloped. The corridor currently lacks streetscaping, pedestrian amenities, and landscaped medians, all of which could improve the appearance and commercial appeal of the highway.



Strategic investments should bolster Highway 59 as Robertsdale’s signature corridor and focus on enhancing aesthetics, improving access management, and encouraging higher-quality development that reinforces the city’s identity as a regional hub. Streetscape improvements, coordinated signage, and pedestrian access can help attract new retailers, dining establishments, and professional offices. Long-term, this corridor has the potential to function not only as a retail center but also as a mixed-use corridor with high density and multi-family housing.



AI conceptual design of an improved 4-lane commercial corridor with adjusted setbacks, limited access, parking behind businesses, landscaped medians and sidewalks.



- ❖ **Highway 90 Corridor** – Highway 90 runs east–west through Robertsdale and has long been an important connector for both regional travel and local commerce. While most of the development is more office space, as opposed to retail, portions of the corridor are underutilized, and the roadway holds significant potential to become a more established office and neighborhood commercial gateway into the city. In addition, the corridor’s location in the north portion of the city, with easy access and connectivity to the city’s

industrial park on County Road 54, and neighboring Belforest and Daphne communities, has established this roadway as a main east to west corridor in central Baldwin County.

Future planning efforts should focus on transforming Highway 90 into an established east–west office/medical park gateway, balancing service commerce with attractive, well-designed small-scale neighborhood commercial development.

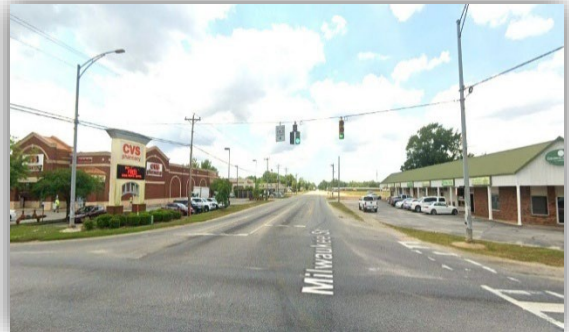


AI conceptual design of an office/medical park

❖ **Highway 104 Corridor** - Highway 104 serves as an important east–west connector linking Robertsdale to Fairhope, Silverhill, and other western Baldwin County communities. While not as heavily traveled as Highway 59 or Highway 90, the corridor carries steady local and regional traffic and functions as a gateway into Robertsdale.

Currently, Highway 104 contains a mix of residential uses, small-scale commercial activity, and undeveloped land. As Robertsdale grows, this corridor presents an opportunity for the creation of a neighborhood commercial corridor that supports local residents’ needs while expanding the city’s commercial base, closer to the city core around the Highway 59

intersection. Highway 104 could accommodate retail, professional services, small offices, and community-oriented facilities such as medical or educational uses. Investments in sidewalks, streetscaping, and access management can enhance safety and create an attractive environment for both businesses and residents.



AI conceptual design of a neighborhood commercial corridor.



- ❖ **Baldwin Beach Express Corridor** – The Baldwin Beach Express has quickly become one of the region’s most critical transportation assets, providing a direct link between Interstate 10 and coastal destinations. Robertsdale’s location along this corridor positions it to capture significant economic opportunity, particularly in commercial and tourism-support businesses.

The visibility and accessibility of the Baldwin Beach Express make it ideal for larger-format commercial development, logistics and distribution centers, and regional service

providers. The corridor also offers opportunities for Planned Unit Development (PUD) and larger village-style mixed use developments that cater to both residents and travelers. Investments in utilities, access management, and landscaping along the expressway will ensure the corridor develops in a way that enhances Robertsdale's image and maximizes its long-term economic potential.



Baldwin Beach Express

Catalyst Nodes

Catalyst Nodes are key intersections or strategic sites where a single project or coordinated investment can anchor and stimulate surrounding growth such as downtown, retail clusters, mixed-use developments, or an industrial park. Catalyst nodes act as economic spark plugs where targeted investment and development can ignite surrounding growth. These locations are highly visible, market ready, and easily accessible. Catalyst nodes often include areas near major retailers, city centers, or innovative PUD developments. When designed well, they can create ripple effects that stimulate broader economic activity all through the city. This Plan identifies/proposes four Catalyst Nodes in Robertsdale:

- ❖ **Downtown Robertsdale** – Downtown Robertsdale is the cultural and civic heart of the community, home to City Hall and a collection of historic buildings that embody the city's identity. Downtown serves as a catalyst node for both community gathering and commerce. However, like many small towns, downtown faces challenges from shifting retail patterns and the draw of highway-oriented development. Revitalizing this area is essential to strengthening Robertsdale's economy and will serve as a catalyst for broader economic vitality.

As discussed in *Chapter 5 – Downtown Revitalization Vision*, rehabilitation efforts should focus on improving building facades, expanding pedestrian amenities, creating incentives for local businesses and adaptive reuse of historic buildings that spark entrepreneurial activity. Coordinated wayfinding, streetscape improvements, pedestrian amenities, and parking improvements will ensure that downtown functions as a welcoming, walkable environment. Downtown reinvestment, paired with targeted infrastructure improvements, will catalyze the downtown economy and surrounding area.

- ❖ **Intersection of Highway 59 and County Road 48** – This intersection, with the Walmart Super Center and the Wawa convenience store, has established itself as a high-traffic, fast-growing, commercial hub. With strong regional draw and consistent consumer activity, this node represents a prime opportunity for additional retail, dining, and commercial development. Its visibility and accessibility make it an ideal location for anchor tenants, chain restaurants, big-box retail, and hotel lodging that serve both residents and regional visitors.



Future planning efforts should ensure the creation of a dynamic retail and service center at this intersection, with businesses that meet regional demand and enhance convenience. Development should include cohesive design, with safe pedestrian connections, coordinated access points, and attractive landscaping. By clustering complementary businesses and improving the surrounding streetscape, this Catalyst Node will continue to evolve into key economic hub for Robertsdale. The city can lobby specific businesses, such as Publix, Hilton, or Bealls Outlet Store, by submitting a market proposal to these targeted companies.



AI conceptual design



- ❖ **Baldwin Beach Express Village Concept** – The intersection of Highway 90 and the Baldwin Beach Express is one of Baldwin County’s most promising Catalyst Nodes. Although outside Robertsdale’s municipal limits, this high-visibility location offers a unique opportunity to create a PUD or Village Design development that blends commercial, residential, and recreational uses into a cohesive community destination. Modeled after successful precedents such as Providence Village in Huntsville, AL this area could serve as a “gateway village” that draws new residents and travelers, while providing commercial and recreational opportunities to the community. Baldwin County has currently zoned parcels at this intersection as commercial. The city should consider annexing west to this intersection, as this area serves as a major gateway into Robertsdale and directly influences surrounding development patterns. Annexation would allow the city to guide growth in alignment with the community’s vision and goals.

Key features of a Village Design concept include a walkable, mixed-use community where residential, retail, dining, office, and civic spaces are integrated into a cohesive, compact layout. This concept emphasizes pedestrian-oriented streets, public gathering spaces, interconnected sidewalks and trails, architectural consistency, and a blend of housing types that support diverse lifestyles. The design encourages social interaction, reduces reliance on automobiles, and fosters a strong sense of place and community identity. With proper planning and zoning support, this intersection has the potential to become a Village Design development, establishing a new high density residential/commercial sub-center of Robertsdale that compliments city’s existing commercial corridors and downtown.

Village Design mixed-use developments could be considered for other Baldwin Beach Express intersections along the Robertsdale municipal limits, so long as the connecting roadway (Wilters Street, Highway 104, Fairground Road, or CR 48), has the traffic carrying capacity and wide right-of-way to accommodate improvements. Traffic studies are encouraged for these types of large-scale mixed-use developments to ensure public safety and adequate capacity. The proximity of the Blackwater River and Rock Creek present opportunities for a nature trail component to this type of development.

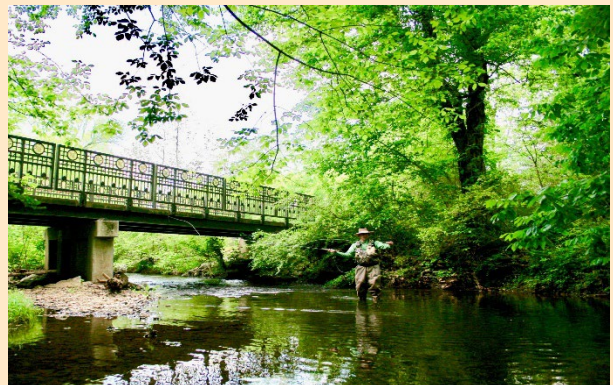
Case Study: Village of Providence (PUD), Huntsville, Alabama

The Village of Providence is a 305-acre, master-planned, mixed-use Traditional Neighborhood Development, permitted as a Planned Unit Development. Conceived in a 2002 design charrette, it organized housing, retail, offices, civic space, and a greenway around a compact town center,

transforming a five-lane suburban arterial into a walkable main street. It consists of a town center with restaurants, shops, offices, and a hotel, anchored by public spaces and connected to surrounding neighborhoods via a street network and trails. It includes a residential mix of single-family homes, townhouses, brownstones, and apartments, as well as an on-site elementary school. A natural greenway adjacent to a creek integrates into the neighborhoods and connects them to commercial, civic, and recreational areas.



The Village of Providence was designed to demonstrate that a suburban infill PUD can deliver a walkable “new downtown neighborhood”, mixing uses and housing types with commercial and public spaces, to create a community “center” that competes with conventional commercial corridors while reinforcing a sense of place and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) standards. The project has attracted roughly \$400 million in investment and won the 2014 Best in American Living Award from the National Association of Home Builders. Despite being entitled for 700 homes, on-site employment reportedly exceeded 2,000 jobs, illustrating a robust jobs-housing balance uncommon for suburban projects. Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) describes Providence as a “spectacular economic success” with some of the region’s best urbanism outside of downtowns, citing its elementary school and





neighborhood integration as model elements. Ongoing phases continue to add housing (e.g., Phase 13 with 84 additional units announced in 2025), signaling sustained market demand.

The Village of Providence proves how a village PUD/TND that is well-designed can convert conventional suburban land patterns into high-performing, walkable traditional centers, balancing housing choices, jobs, and amenities while strengthening small-town identity with long-term economic resilience.

- ❖ **The Robertsdale Industrial Park** - The Robertsdale Industrial Park is one of the city's most important economic assets and a key Catalyst Node for future growth. Located with access to Highway 59 and in close proximity to both Highway 90 and the Baldwin Beach Express, the park is strategically positioned to serve regional markets and benefit from Baldwin County's rapid population and business expansion. Its location provides convenient access to Interstate 10, the Port of Mobile, and key industrial sites in Loxley and Bay Minette, further enhancing its role in logistics, distribution, and manufacturing.

Currently, the Industrial Park accommodates a mix of employers that provide critical jobs and services for the region. However, the site is nearing capacity and the need to expand the Industrial Park is significant in order to grow the local job market and provide local employment opportunities. The city should explore growth options, research suitable adjacent land, and targeted recruitment efforts to focus on industries such as manufacturing, logistics and warehousing, building trades, and technology-related businesses that align with regional workforce strengths. By expanding and diversifying tenant base, the park can become a hub for both traditional and emerging industries.

- ❖ **RV Park and Equestrian Campground Concept** - The RV Park and Equestrian Campground concept presents a unique Catalyst Node within Robertsdale's economic landscape that supports the city's heritage and the use of the Baldwin County Coliseum as a regional rodeo attraction. Leveraging local events, with the need for tourist RV accommodations, creates a unique opportunity to foster a Low Impact Development

that has great economic reward for the city. Much of the public feedback focused on capturing lost revenue from pass-through tourists, as well as preserving the city's history and culture. This concept marries the two goals into an economic opportunity that could keep the Coliseum busy with rodeo, equestrian, and argi-business activities year-round, while providing campers with easy access, just a short hour drive, to coastal beaches. This increased tourism would support downtown and corridor businesses and fulfill the residents' desire to expand the city's role as both a tourism and event destination. A suitable location for this development concept would be property off the Baldwin Beach Express, near Blackwater River or Rock Creek. Other suitable locations would include large tracts of land near the Coliseum with the potential for shaded equestrian trail construction.

With Baldwin County's rapid growth in tourism and Robertsdale's rodeo culture, demand for RV accommodations that can also accommodate horse trailers and stabling facilities would provide additional lodging amenities for travelers. RV and equestrian campground design standards include pull-through sites for large trailers, dedicated equestrian parking, private horse stalls, corrals, equestrian trails, an equestrian center/store, and facilities that support horse owners traveling for events. By accommodating both traditional RV travelers with specialized equestrian needs, this Catalyst Node concept could expand the city's role in the region built on an event-based economic development strategy that supports new businesses and captures new revenue streams.

Case Study: Camp McClellan Horse Trails Campground, Anniston, Alabama

Camp McClellan is a county owned 900-acre equestrian destination on former Fort McClellan lands featuring 30+ miles of horse trails, 50 RV/horse-trailer campsites with water/electric hookups, 15 primitive sites, a 31-stall barn, highlines/corrals, a 75 x 150 enclosed arena, covered pavilion with a fireplace, and day-use facilities. It was developed through a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) between the City of Anniston and Calhoun County, later carried forward by the McClellan Development Authority (MDA) to manage and redevelop. The MDA is jointly appointed by the City of Anniston, Calhoun County Commission, and the Governor.



Capital Investment/ Cost to Build:

A key phase of the campground, the trailhead campsite with water, sewer, and electric hookups, was funded by a \$300,000 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant to the Calhoun County Commission (80/20 match structure). County allocations publicized around the same time also highlighted ~\$300k toward the horse trails' development. Total project cost was phased over multiple years with significant in-kind volunteer trail work by the local Back Country Horsemen chapter.

Why It is Successful:

- Tailored to a clear market (regional equestrian users)
- Partnerships between city, county, state, and nonprofit volunteers
- Affordable to build and sustainable to maintain
- Creates a unique destination not found elsewhere in the region



Visitors, Local Revenue, and Economic Impact (2023)

- 6,000+ visitors annually (over 26% from outside the county)
- \$148-\$155 average daily visitor spending
- \$1.05 million in total economic output
- Supports ~10 local jobs
- Generates \$164,000 in local, state, and federal tax revenue



Transferable Lessons for Robertsdale:

- Governance & partnerships - Form a multi-party development partnership (modeled on the JPA/MDA) among City of Robertsdale and other partners such as Baldwin County, Central Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, and the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance (BCEDA) to coordinate land control, funding, branding, and operations. The McClellan example shows a city-county-state-aligned board (later housed in a single development authority) can move ideas into action.
- Phased capital strategy - Start with RTP-eligible trailhead and campground utilities (water/sewer/electric) and add stalls/arena/pavilion in phases. Use an 80/20 match to stretch local dollars, pair with county allocations and in-kind volunteer trail work agreements (e.g., with local equestrian groups).
- Operations & stewardship - Engage a local equestrian nonprofit chapter (BCHA model) for routine trail maintenance, events, and rider outreach, under city/county oversight. This approach kept Camp McClellan's operation and maintenance more affordable and locally ran.

- Measure and market the impact - Plan for annual visitation/economic-impact tracking to document return on investments for partners and to market to lodging/retail investors.

Camp McClellan demonstrates that a city–county–chamber/EDA partnership can convert underused land, or use-challenged lands, into a specialized outdoor recreation asset with measurable economic returns, that are heritage based and low impact development. With partners, Robertsdale, along with Baldwin County, Central Baldwin Chamber, and/or BCEDA, and phased RTP-supported investments, could replicate this equestrian campground/trails model to diversify recreation, attract more tourism, and grow the economy in Robertsdale and Baldwin County.



Community Destinations

Community Destinations are unique areas within the city that attract both residents and visitors for events, festivals, and gatherings, often accommodating large crowds or day-use activities. These destinations typically feature prominent public spaces and serve as expressions of community identity. They become places that people strongly associate with a city—its brand, character, and iconic image. Robertsdale has three unique community destinations including Honey Bee Park, Garrett Park, and the Baldwin County Coliseum. Investment and placemaking in these destinations can attract visitors, boost the local economy, and catalyze new development throughout the city.

❖ Honey Bee Park and Amphitheater –

Honey Bee Park and its planned amphitheater represent a signature Community Destination in Robertsdale, offering both a daily gathering place for residents and a regional attraction for events, concerts, and festivals. Located adjacent to downtown, the park is uniquely positioned to serve as a civic anchor that draws consistent local use while also bringing visitors into the heart of the city for special events.



Honey Bee Park provides residents with opportunities for recreation, leisure, and community connection. Enhanced walking paths, shaded seating areas, and flexible open lawns support a wide range of everyday activities—from family outings and fitness to casual

meetups and outdoor dining. The amphitheater adds another dimension, creating a venue for live music, theater, farmers markets, and seasonal programming that reflect Robertsdale’s culture and community spirit.



At the regional level, the park and amphitheater have the potential to host larger-scale events and festivals that attract visitors from across Baldwin County and beyond. Signature events could include the Honey Bee Festival, outdoor concerts, holiday celebrations, and cultural showcases that highlight Robertsdale’s identity as the “Hub of Baldwin County.” These

events will not only enrich community life but also generate economic activity by bringing attendees into downtown shops, restaurants, and nearby businesses.

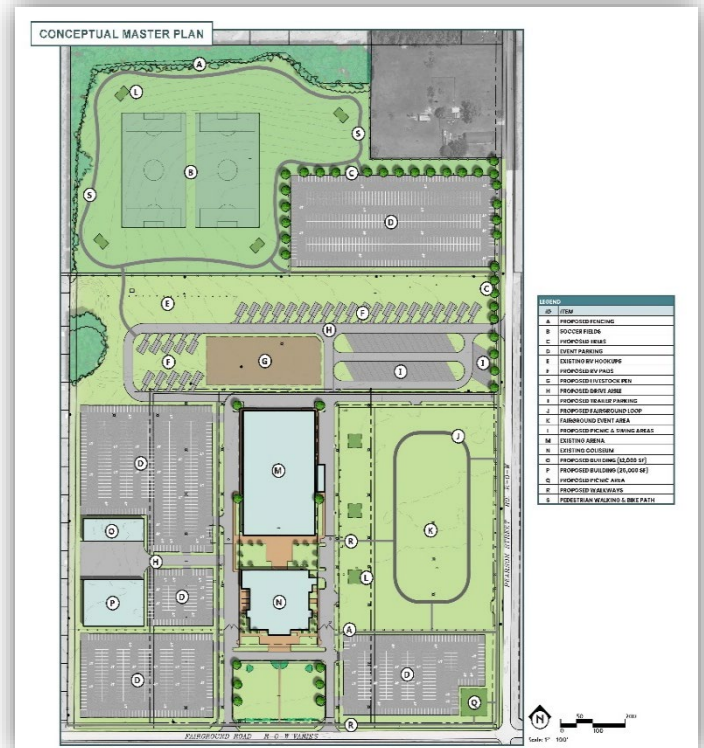
The close proximity of Honey Bee Park to the Downtown Catalyst Node creates a powerful combination for economic development. As downtown revitalization efforts improve the walkability, storefront appearance, and cultural identity of the area, the park and amphitheater provide a steady stream of activity and visitors to support local businesses. In turn, a vibrant downtown offers amenities, dining, and entertainment options that enhance the park experience. Together, these destinations form a mutually reinforcing pair of anchors that can transform Robertsdale’s downtown core into a true regional hub for culture, commerce, and community.

- ❖ ***Garret Park*** – Garrett Park is one of Robertsdale’s most important recreational assets and a key Community Destination with the potential to evolve into a regional draw for youth sports, tournaments, and outdoor recreation. Currently serving as a valued local park for families and community activities, Garrett Park’s strategic location within walking distance of downtown positions it to play a much larger role in Robertsdale’s economic and community development strategy. With targeted upgrades, Garrett Park could be transformed into a modern sports complex that attracts both daily resident use and regional athletic events. Improvements might include upgraded ballfields, multipurpose fields including soccer, basketball courts, expanded parking, and the addition of amenities to the playgrounds, pavilions, and walking trails. Tournament-ready facilities would position Robertsdale as a host for youth sporting events, drawing teams and families from across Baldwin County and neighboring regions. There is currently available land around the complex that could be considered for expansion. The impact of these enhancements would

extend beyond recreation. Sports tourism is a proven economic driver, as tournaments and events generate overnight stays, restaurant visits, and shopping activity. By linking Garrett Park to downtown Robertsdale with safe pedestrian connections, the park can help funnel visitors directly into local businesses. In turn, a vibrant downtown offers dining and entertainment options that enhance the tournament experience for athletes and families. Together, Garrett Park and the Downtown Catalyst Node create a powerful duo where recreation and commerce intersect.

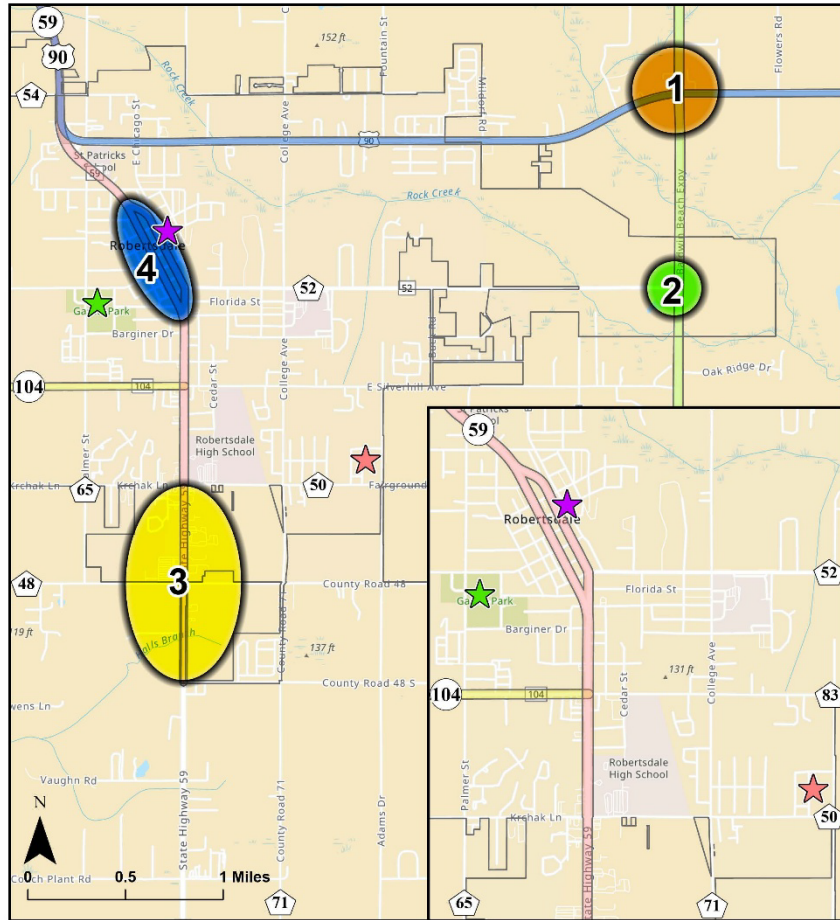
❖ ***Baldwin County Coliseum*** -

The Baldwin County Coliseum is a vital Community Destination and significant attraction for entertainment and events, drawing people from across the county. It is a key landmark, acting as a community anchor and a substantial tourist attraction for a wider region during many annual events. The coliseum is a cornerstone to large-scale community functions tied to local heritage, including the Baldwin County Fair, multiple rodeos, livestock shows, and agricultural exhibits. It also hosts conventions and other private events. The Coliseum contributes to the local economy by generating tourism, reinforcing the city's heritage and brand, and supporting local businesses. Its central location and established reputation give it the potential to become one of the county's most active year-round destinations for recreation, entertainment, and commerce.

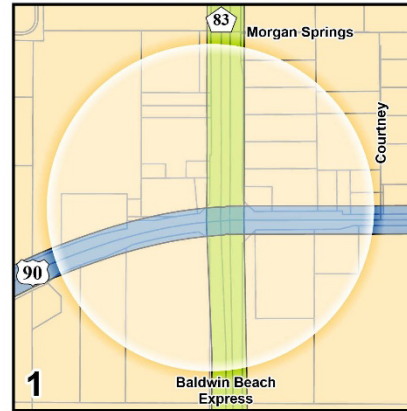


The city envisions expanding the Coliseum's capacity and amenities to strengthen its role as a regional venue. The city hopes to activate adjacent lands for complementary uses such as livestock holding areas, a fairground loop and event area, RV pads and hookups, horse trailer parking, additional buildings, picnic and swing area, soccer fields, additional parking, and walking and biking trails. These upgrades also support the RV Park and Equestrian Campground concept proposed in the Plan. With these upgrades, the facility can compete for higher-profile shows, generate additional revenue, and provide more consistent programming throughout the year.

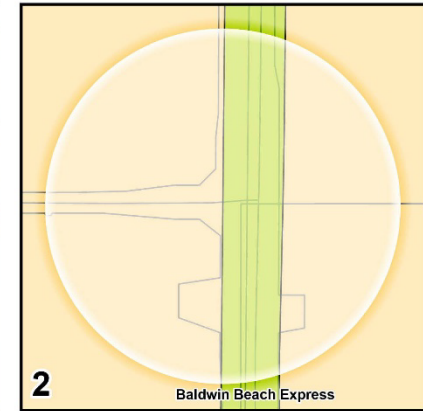
Economic Opportunity Areas in Robertsdale



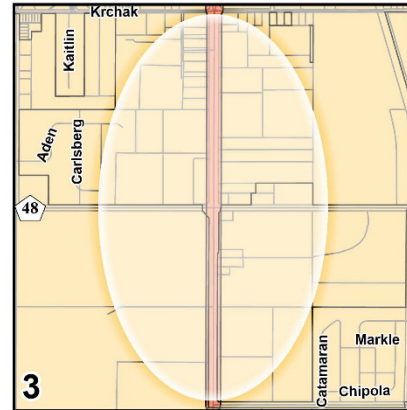
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|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Community Destinations | Catalytic Nodes | Commercial Overlay Corridors | City Limits — |
| ★ Baldwin County Coliseum | ① Blackwater Village Concept | Highway 90 | |
| ★ Garret Park | ② RV/Equestrian Campground | Baldwin Beach Express (BBE) | |
| ★ Honey Bee Park | ③ Intersection of HWY59 and CR48 | Highway 59 | |
| | | Highway 104 | |



1 Blackwater Village Concept. This location offers a unique opportunity to create a PUD or Village Design development that blends commercial, residential, and recreational uses into a cohesive community destination.



2 RV Park and Equestrian Campground. By accommodating traditional RV travelers and specialized equestrian needs, this node can expand the city's role in the regional visitor economy while supporting local businesses and capturing new revenue streams.



3 Intersection of Highway 59 and County Road 48. This node is a prime opportunity for retail, dining, and commercial development. Planning efforts should ensure the creation of a dynamic retail and service center, with businesses that meet regional demand and enhance convenience.



4 Downtown Robertsdale serves as a node for both community gathering and commerce. Efforts should focus on improving building facades, expanding pedestrian amenities, creating incentives for local businesses, and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

2. WHAT DID THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS TELL US?

Ongoing public engagement was a key component throughout the two-year comprehensive plan update. During the development of this plan, residents had opportunities throughout the planning process to voice their opinions and provide feedback on key issues important to them. Chapter 2 – *Comprehensive Plan Overview* – provides a detailed



explanation of the public engagement efforts and the various tools used to gather community input. It details a summary of the results of the Public Opinion Survey and provides analysis of citizens' current economic development goals and desires. For a complete inventory of the feedback received through the public opinion survey, community workshops, and steering committee work sessions, refer to Appendix 1: *Public Engagement – Visioning Survey Results*.

Some comments pertaining to Robertsdale's economy were recurring and repeated, resulting in these views to be more pronounced than others, shaping a pattern for analysis. These views and perceptions, along with their associated research, were used to formulate the economic goals and strategies outlined at the end of the chapter. The analysis of each viewpoint focused on why the perception exists, how extensive is the cause, and what we can do to remedy the concern and support the desired solution.

What We Heard from the Community...



Robertsdale needs more sit-down restaurants, especially well-known chain establishments. The city needs quality dining options and nightlife.

We need to revitalize our downtown area and restore it as a center of economic activity and commerce with local shops, boutiques, and restaurants.





Robertsdale needs more places to shop—more chain retailers, grocery options, and big box stores. The city lacks a variety of retail service businesses.

Robertsdale has too many vacant commercial buildings. Businesses and commercial gateways need improvements to their appearance.



There are not enough employment opportunities in Robertsdale. We need more jobs and places to work within the city.

Robertsdale should capture pass-through tourists' dollars. There are too many travelers bypassing our local economy. We need to establish ourselves as a tourist destination.



We need more doctors' offices and medical services in the Robertsdale. Most residents travel to adjacent cities to get medical treatment or see a physician.

Taking a Closer Look... Retail & Restaurant Market Analysis and Local Economic Leakage

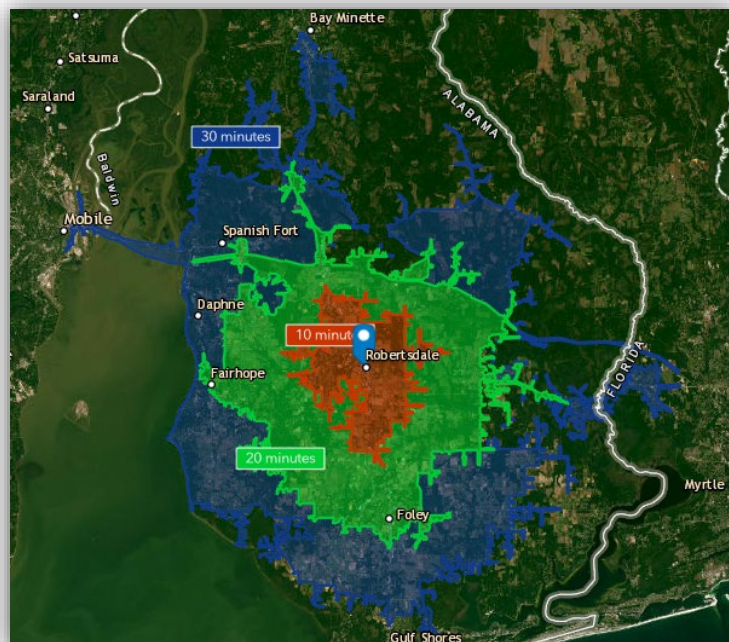
Community feedback gathered through surveys and work sessions consistently highlighted the need for more restaurants and shopping options in Robertsdale. Residents repeatedly noted that, because these amenities are limited locally, many people travel just minutes away to neighboring cities to dine and shop, resulting in a steady outflow of consumer spending.



Examining the retail and restaurant market for Robertsdale requires a look beyond the city limits. As part of the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Area, Robertsdale niches into a market that is far more dynamic than just within their municipal limits. Retail growth between Daphne, Foley,

Spanish Fort, and Fairhope, along with commuter patterns, fosters a complex regional retail market. Consumers seldom pay attention to political boundaries when shopping and dining and are willing to drive up to 30 minutes to shop or dine at a particular establishment.

To effectively evaluate the regional retail and restaurant market trends and measure economic leakage, the SARPC planning team conducted a market analysis using Esri Business Analyst software based on vehicle travel times, within a 10-minute, 20-minute, and 30-minute drive times from the center of Robertsdale. Market reports were conducted on the following categories: Restaurant Market Potential, Retail Demand by Industry, Retail Demand Outlook, Retail Goods and Services Expenditures, and Retail Market Potential. The full reports are contained in Appendix B of this Plan.



Robertsdale Area Map of Retail & Restaurant Market Analysis by Drive Times: 0-10 Minute, 10-20 Minute, and 20-30 Minute.

Restaurant Market Potential	0-10 Minute Radius	10-20 Minute Radius	20-30 Minute Radius
2025 Population	19,237	60,774	117,614
2030 Population	21,257	67,948	130,946
2025 Households	7,374	23,590	48,598
2025 Families	5,190	16,898	32,880
2025 Median Age	38.1	41.9	43.4
2025 Median Household Income	\$71,452	\$81,096	78,252
Went to Family Restaurant/Steakhouse in Last 6 Months	11,053 (76%)	36,134 (76%)	70,804 (76%)
Went to Family Restaurant/Steakhouse 4+ Times in Last 30 Days	3,930 (27%)	12,690 (27%)	24,412 (26%)

Source: 2025 Esri Business Analyst

The Restaurant Market Potential data measures the likelihood of households in the designated area to exhibit a specific consumer behavior or purchasing pattern. Retail Demand by Industry data represents the amount spent on each product or service by households within designated area.

Retail Demand by Industry Annual Spending (\$)	0-10 Minute Radius (\$)	10-20 Minute Radius (\$)	20-30 Minute Radius (\$)
Retail Trade, Food Services & Drinking Places (Total)	193,924,291	676,930,790	1,371,912,574
Retail (Alone)	165,421,260	577,748,856	1,169,204,983
Food Services & Drinking Places (Alone)	28,503,032	99,181,934	202,707,591
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	20,951,418	74,476,768	150,455,596
Furniture and Home Furnishings Store	6,368,939	22,416,987	45,516,721
Electronics and Appliance Stores	1,794,023	6,166,337	12,638,838
Building Material & Garden Equipment & Supplies Dealers	9,461,883	33,910,603	68,099,421
Food & Beverage Stores	35,500,419	123,796,129	251,822,701
Health and Personal Care Stores	5,349,580	18,966,660	38,665,307
Gas Stations	26,330,572	88,267,685	173,670,593
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Store	7,808,498	27,129,439	55,274,543
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Inst., & Book Stores	2,783,050	9,953,386	20,549,003
General Merchandise Stores	28,013,225	97,586,142	197,779,597
Miscellaneous Stores (Florists, Office, Gift)	3,964,012	14,177,698	29,081,914
Non-store Retailers (Online, Vending, Direct Sales)	17,095,639	60,901,022	125,650,748
Food Services and Eating Places	28,503,032	99,181,934	202,707,591

Source: 2025 Esri Business Analyst

Retail Demand Outlook Only within the 0-10 Minute Drive Radius	2025 Consumer Spending (\$)	2030 Forecasted Demand (\$)	2025 Average Annual Spent Per Household (\$)
Apparel and Services	14,796,213	18,450,677	2,006
Entertainment & Recreation	24,780,968	30,900,637	3,360
Food at Home	46,168,084	57,576,181	6,260
Food Away from Home	25,471,047	31,762,889	3,454
Household Furnishings & Equipment	19,421,558	24,217,715	1,574

Source: 2025 Esri Business Analyst

The Retail Demand Outlook data is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service within the 0-10 Minute Drive Radius. The Retail Market Potential data measures the likelihood of the households within the 0-10 Minute Drive Radius to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns associated with the specified goods and services.

Retail Market Potential	Number of Households	Percent of Households
Only within the 0-10 Minute Drive Radius		
Bought Men's Clothing Last 12 Months	9,394	64.2
Bought Women's Clothing Last 12 Months	7,815	53.4
Bought Shoes Last 12 Months	11,158	76.3
Owens/Leases 1+ Car	6,854	93.0
Bought or Leased New Vehicle Last 12 Months	620	8.4
Bought Cell Phone Last 12 Months	5,123	35.0
Own a Computer	6,056	82.1
Dined Out Last 12 Months	8,074	55.2
Visited a Doctor Last 12 Months	11,550	79.0
Did Home Improvement Last 12 Months	2,671	36.2
Purchased Home Furnishings Last 12 Months	3,207	43.5
Purchased Home Appliances Last 12 Months	3,080	41.7
Owens a Pet	4,499	61.0
Bought a Book (not digital) Last 12 Months	8,339	57.0
Went to Family Restaurant/Steak House Last 6 Months	11,053	75.6
Went to Family Restaurant/Steak House 4+ Times Last 30 Days	3,930	26.9
Ordered Take-out/Curbside Last 6 Months	7,989	54.6
Owens Internet Connectable TV	3,163	42.9
Owens Internet Video Device for TV	4,017	54.5
Took Domestic Trip in Continental U.S. Last 12 Months	8,877	60.7
Took Foreign Trip (Incl Alaska & Hawaii) Last 3 Years	3,715	25.4
Spent Night in Hotel Last 12 Months	7,871	53.8

Source: 2025 Esri Business Analyst

Robertsdale's retail and restaurant market analysis reveals a significant pattern of economic leakage, with residents routinely traveling to nearby cities such as Daphne, Fairhope, Foley, and Spanish Fort to shop at big box retailers or dine at chain restaurants. This outward flow of spending means that a substantial portion of local purchasing power, and associated tax revenue, is leaving Robertsdale and strengthening neighboring economies instead of supporting its own. The data also illustrates targeted consumers living outside of Robertsdale's municipal limits with spending power that are capable of driving 30 Minutes or under to shop or dine at a specific establishment if it were located within Robertsdale. To capture this market

and meet community demand, the city should actively recruit and lobby major retail brands and chain dining establishments to locate within Robertsdale. Attracting these businesses will not only provide residents with convenient local options but also help retain revenue, expand the tax base, and support long-term economic growth.

3. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Robertsdale has an abundance of economic possibility shaped by its twelve designated Economic Opportunity Areas: the major Commercial Corridors, Catalytic Nodes, and Community Destinations. Each area presents a different kind of opportunity—whether it’s redevelopment of aging commercial strips, strategic infill near high-traffic intersections, or enhancing parks and public venues that draw visitors and spending. With coordinated planning, targeted infrastructure improvements, and the right mix of policies and incentives, the city can attract investment, diversify its economy, and retain consumer dollars that currently leak into surrounding communities.



Downtown will continue to play an important role as a cultural, civic, and economic anchor, but long-term economic vitality also depends on improving the corridors that connect the city, reinvesting in destination areas like Honey Bee Park and the Baldwin County Coliseum, and activating key nodes near major gateways and transportation routes. Together, these areas can support new retail, hospitality, offices, entertainment, housing, and recreation while reinforcing Robertsdale’s identity as the Hub of Baldwin County.

Looking ahead, success will rely on vision, partnerships, branding, and readiness. The city must prioritize infrastructure and streetscape upgrades, streamline development processes, and leverage public and private capital to attract new businesses and strengthen existing ones. Strategic reuse of vacant or underutilized parcels, whether downtown, along Highway 59, near I-10 access points, or within neighborhood-serving corridors, can generate tax revenue, jobs, and amenities for residents.

During the development of this plan, SARPC planners worked closely with the Robertsdale community, steering committee, city leadership, and staff to identify economic strengths, challenges, and opportunities across the entire city. Drawing from public input and local priorities, this section establishes Robertsdale’s economic development goals and outlines strategies to guide growth in all twelve Economic Opportunity Areas. The recommended actions will require phased implementation over many years and will depend on strong coordination, investment, and partnerships between the public and private sectors.

GOAL 1
Establish a clear economic identity and brand for Robertsdale.



To compete regionally and attract residents, visitors, and investors, Robertsdale needs a cohesive brand that reflects its identity rooted in its heritage, central location, and growth potential. Positioning the city as the “Hub of Baldwin County” emphasizes its central geography, highway access, agricultural roots, emerging growth centers, and role as a connector between coastal destinations and inland markets. Branding should reinforce the city’s appeal and differentiate it from nearby cities. Emphasize that Robertsdale is not just as a place to live, but as a place to do business, shop, host events, and invest. This type of campaign not only improves appearance, it also helps attract private investment, support business recruitment, and build community pride around a shared identity.



Action E1: Develop a unified branding and marketing campaign that positions Robertsdale as the “Hub of Baldwin County” and a growing commercial and cultural destination.

Create a visual identity suite with a professional brand package complete with logos, taglines, color palettes, typography, and graphic elements that tie together signage, economic marketing materials, websites, and promotions. *Chapter 5 – Downtown Revitalization Vision* touched on this initiative and illustrated examples of branding logos and banner signs.

Revamp the city’s digital and social media presence. Consider launching an economic development webpage or portal showcasing commercial nodes, incentives, available properties, and investment opportunities. Esri software packages, typically owned by cities,

have applications such as *Story Maps* and *Experience Builder* that are great tools for these types of initiatives.



Action E2: Improve and install gateway and corridor signage including branded welcome signs and wayfinding along Highway 59, Highway 90, Highway 104, and the Baldwin Beach Express to reinforce a recognizable identity for travelers, commuters, and investors.



Action E3: Develop economic recruitment materials that function as marketing collateral for site selectors and developers.

In addition to establishing an economic development webpage, the city should develop targeted marketing and recruitment tools. These may include demographic dashboard visualizations, retail leakage and market gap analyses, site selection guides, logistics and access summaries, industry profiles, infrastructure and utility brochures, and workforce or labor market assessments. These resources should be prominently featured on the economic development webpage and incorporated into printed and digital outreach materials. The city should share these tools with the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance and the Central Baldwin Chamber of Commerce to align messaging and strengthen recruitment efforts. Using these

materials, Robertsdale can proactively identify and engage target industries, commercial users, chain retailers, and restaurants that are best suited for local market demand and location advantages.



Action E4: Create event and destination promotional materials.

The city should develop branded promotional materials for Honey Bee Park and Amphitheater, Garrett Park, downtown Robertsdale and the Baldwin County Coliseum. Materials should include brochures, digital graphics, social media content, wayfinding inserts, and event flyers. Materials should reflect each destination’s unique identity, showcase amenities and events, and be promoted online and in tourism networks to attract residents, visitors, and event organizers. This effort will help market these destinations as economic drivers, reinforce local branding, and increase attendance and visibility for festivals, sports events, and cultural gatherings.

GOAL 2

Strengthen and redevelop the appearance of key commercial corridors, aging commercial properties, and vacant commercial lots.



Improving the visual character of Robertsdale’s major commercial corridors— Highway 59, Highway 90, and Highway 104 — is essential to attracting investment and shaping public perception. Upgrading façades, signage, lighting, landscaping, and site design can transform commercial areas into more attractive, market-ready corridors that support local business growth and encourage redevelopment. Strategic reinvestment along these routes will enhance curb appeal and increase property values.



Action E5: Enhance streetscapes, intersections, pedestrian features, and access along the city’s primary commercial corridors, where appropriate, with improvements tailored to each corridor’s intended character and market role.

To improve appearance, safety, and redevelopment potential, the city should pursue coordinated streetscaping upgrades along each corridor, including landscaped medians where appropriate, mast-arm traffic signals, street trees, sidewalks, and access management to reduce driveway conflicts. Key intersections should be improved with high-visibility crosswalks, pedestrian walk timers, and ADA-compliant curb ramps to support walkability and safer crossings. Because all commercial corridors are maintained by ALDOT, project planning, funding, and implementation must be closely coordinated with the agency to ensure design compatibility, construction feasibility, and long-term maintenance support.



Example Commercial Corridor Improvements. Source: HMG Engineers



Action E6: Encourage infill development of vacant commercial lots to attract needed businesses and capture local spending.

Highway 59, Highway 90, and Highway 104 commercial corridors have retail, office, and dining potential for infill development. The city should actively recruit businesses that fill service gaps, such as sit-down restaurants, neighborhood retail, lodging, and daily-use commercial services. The city should prioritize and encourage infill redevelopment of vacant pads, underused strip centers, and aging commercial buildings through targeted incentives, streamlined permitting, site-readiness planning, and public-private partnerships.



Action E7: Adopt an Adaptive Reuse Ordinance to Revitalize Vacant and Underused Commercial Properties.

As discussed in previous chapters, implement an adaptive reuse ordinance that streamlines the process for converting vacant, outdated, or dilapidated commercial buildings into new, economically viable uses. This tool can reduce regulatory barriers, shorten permitting timelines, and provide flexibility for renovations, mixed-use conversions, and non-traditional business concepts. Along aging commercial corridors, adaptive reuse provisions support redevelopment of older strip centers, empty storefronts, and obsolete structures by allowing for creative reactivation into restaurants, boutique retail, co-working spaces, studios, or offices. By making reinvestment easier and more cost-effective, the ordinance can help fill vacancies, attract entrepreneurs, and catalyze corridor revitalization.



GOAL 3

Attract additional dining and retail options to better serve residents and capture local spending.



Robertsdale currently experiences retail, service, and restaurant leakage to nearby communities, resulting in lost revenue and unmet resident demand. By actively recruiting new dining, shopping, and service-based businesses, ranging from national chains to locally owned establishments, the city can strengthen its commercial base, enhance quality of life, and keep consumer dollars in the community. Strategic recruitment efforts should focus on high-visibility corridors, redevelopment sites, and areas with strong market potential.



Action E8: Engage desired commercial brokers, developers, and franchise representatives for potential location within the city.

The city should be proactive in commercial recruitment, building relationships with desired businesses and giving them incentives to choose Robertsdale over Foley, Daphne, or Fairhope. The city should consult with commercial real estate brokers who represent desired retailers,

chains, businesses, and developers choosing new store locations and share Robertsdale's available sites, market data, and development incentives. The city should invite brokers for site tours of Highway 59, Highway 90, Highway 104, Baldwin Beach Express, and downtown and attend regional retail recruitment events where brokers operate. The identified Highway 59/County Road 48 intersection Catalyst Node is a booming, prime location for growth and should be targeted and emphasized to brokers and developers.

Robertsdale should meet with private developers and site selectors that build shopping centers, outparcels, hotels and hospitality, and mixed-use projects. The city should seek out developers who specialize in grocery-anchored retail, restaurant pads, hotels, or open-air retail development and present redevelopment prospects such as aging strip centers or vacant frontage lots. The city should partner on public-private models where infrastructure or permitting can be streamlined, such as sharing the cost of infrastructure improvements.

The city should also lobby franchise decision-makers for brands like Chick-fil-A, Hilton, Starbucks, Texas Roadhouse, and Publix. Robertsdale should contact corporate real estate divisions and regional franchise owners and provide data on traffic counts, housing growth, income, daytime workforce, and retail market demands and showcase strategic locations in Robertsdale along commercial corridors.



Action D9: Offer incentives or public-private partnerships to desired developments.

The city should collaborate with developers, property owners, or franchise investors to reduce barriers and accelerate project development in priority areas. Rather than the city acting only as a regulator, it could take an active role in making projects feasible. This includes:

- **Streamlined Permitting & Fast-Track Review** - Creating an expedited approval process for desired projects such as restaurants, retail hubs, hotels, or village district PUDs, so developers spend less time in review and can open sooner.
- **Assistance with Infrastructure Needs** - Partnering with developers when improvements like utilities, drainage, sidewalks, or access roads are needed for a site to become viable. Examples include sharing the cost to extend water/sewer lines, running fiber/broadband to key parcels, or coordinating drainage or stormwater improvements.
- **Incentive-Based Cooperation** - Using economic development tools when appropriate to close financing gaps, such as tax abatements, fee waivers, grant matching, TIF districts, or cost-sharing agreements for site improvements.

- **Redevelopment of Blighted or Underused Sites** - Supporting adaptive reuse or redevelopment of aging strip centers or vacant lots by clearing hurdles, helping assemble land, or coordinating with ALDOT on access improvements.

GOAL 4

Expand and strengthen the Robertsdale Industrial Park to attract jobs and investment.



The Robertsdale Industrial Park is one of the city's most strategic economic assets, with direct access to major transportation corridors and proximity to workforce and logistics networks. Expanding its footprint, improving site readiness, and recruiting target industries can increase the city's employment base, diversify revenue, and capture industrial growth occurring throughout Baldwin County and the Gulf Coast region. By updating zoning and utilities, and coordinating with regional and state partners, Robertsdale can position the new industrial property as a competitive location for manufacturing, logistics, and technology.



Action E10: Explore land acquisition to expand the Industrial Park.

The city should evaluate and select potential expansion areas for the Industrial Park based on strategic site selection with priority given to land that is contiguous to the current park or located along key access corridors, with the ability to support industrial uses. Ideal sites should have water, sewer, power, broadband, and stormwater infrastructure; offer suitable topography and minimal environmental constraints; allow for truck access to Highway 59, Highway 90, or the Baldwin Beach Express; and fall within areas appropriate for annexation or industrial zoning.



Action E11: Recruit targeted industries for the Industrial Park.

Focus industrial recruitment on sectors that match Robertsdale's workforce strengths and regional economic trends. Priority industries should include logistics and distribution operations that benefit from proximity to the Baldwin Beach Express, I-10, and Highway 59; agri-processing and food production facilities that build on the region's agricultural base; and light manufacturing or fabrication businesses that require moderate acreage and access to skilled and semi-skilled labor. Clean technology, building materials production, and specialty manufacturing should also be considered, especially businesses seeking access to Gulf Coast markets. Recruitment efforts should align with workforce availability, including partnerships with

local technical programs, Baldwin County employers, and regional workforce development agencies to support long-term job placement and training pipelines.

GOAL 5
Explore the development of a Village Design PUD along the Baldwin Beach Express to stimulate growth and create a Traditional Neighborhood Development Model.



As one of Robertsdale’s proposed Catalyst Nodes, the Village Design PUD concept presents a prime opportunity to create a master-planned large-scale, mixed-use PUD that drives economic development while introducing a high-quality traditional neighborhood development (TND) concept outside the downtown core. Modeled similar to the Village of Providence in Huntsville, AL, this development would blend commercial uses, diverse housing types, public spaces, and pedestrian connectivity to create a self-sustaining village environment that supports the city’s need for additional housing of all types and reinforces long-term economic growth.



Action E12: Consider annexation of lands east of the municipal limits, to the Baldwin Beach Express.

The city should evaluate the annexation of land east of its current limits, extending to the Baldwin Beach Express, as growth in this area will directly influence Robertsdale’s future. Proactively guiding commercial development, housing, and infrastructure along this corridor will help ensure that new growth aligns with community goals and supports the city’s desired quality of life and identity.



Action E13: Identify and evaluate suitable sites along the Baldwin Beach Express for the Village Design PUD concept.

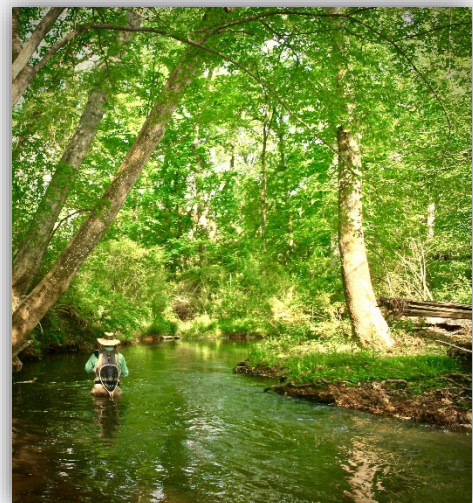
The city should focus on lots with an abundance of acreage, strong commercial visibility, access potential, and feasible utility extension. The city should coordinate with ALDOT and any necessary utility providers to plan possible roadway access points, turn lanes, stormwater systems, and water, sewer, and broadband extensions needed to support a phased, large-scale

mixed-use development. Locating near the Blackwater River or Rock Creek corridors provides opportunity for a nature trail component as part of the village development.



Action E14: Develop a Village Design PUD framework similar to the Village of Providence model, located in Huntsville, AL.

Develop a framework, or Master Plan, for the Village Design PUD that proposes a mix of residential types (single-family, townhomes, cottages, upper-story units), retail and dining, civic, office, park, and commercial uses. Design to require walkable blocks, human-scale architecture, and connected street and trail networks. Plan for public spaces, trails, and civic amenities and incorporate plazas, greens, pocket parks, and trail connections that support a traditional neighborhood layout. Consider the Blackwater River corridor, as well as the Rock Creek, as potential nature trail developments associated with the village development. Utilize public-private partnerships and incentive tools to support phased development through cost-sharing for infrastructure, streamlined permitting, or site-readiness investments that attract private capital and accelerate buildout.





Action E15: Recruit developers aligned with the mixed-use traditional neighborhood developments that have experience with the Village Design concept.

The city should engage residential and commercial developers experienced in village design and traditional neighborhood projects. Provide guidance on site planning, timelines, and available incentives. Market the Village PUD as a signature economic and lifestyle destination. Brand the project as a traditional neighborhood development that complements downtown and provides new retail, dining, and housing opportunities. Name the development for a signature feature associated with Robertsdale such as Blackwater Commons or Rock Creek Village. Promote the Village Design PUB Catalyst Node as a model of high-quality growth and that will support other identified Catalyst Nodes and Community Destinations within the city.

GOAL 6

Leverage Community Destinations as economic drivers to capture pass-through tourists' dollars.



As a gateway community along major travel corridors like Highway 59 and the Baldwin Beach Express, Robertsdale sees a high volume of visitors traveling to the Alabama Gulf Coast and regional attractions. By elevating its community destinations—such as Honey Bee Park and Amphitheater, the Baldwin County Coliseum, Garrett Park, and possible future Village PUD or equestrian campground developments—the city can convert pass-through traffic into local spending. Hosting events, enhancing amenities, improving signage and visibility, and adding nearby dining, retail, and lodging options will encourage travelers to stop, explore, and spend money in Robertsdale instead of bypassing it. These destinations become economic drivers by drawing visitors into the community and supporting local businesses, tourism revenue, and long-term investment.



Action E16: Promote Honey Bee Park and the Amphitheater as a regional event destination connected to downtown.

The city should position Honey Bee Park and the new amphitheater as a premier venue for festivals, concerts, cultural events, and public gatherings that draw residents and visitors from across Baldwin County. As a downtown park, the amphitheater, green space, and surrounding amenities should be actively marketed and programmed to support local businesses, increase tourism, and enhance year-round activity. The city should continue to expand and upgrade

park features, including seating, lighting, restrooms, vendor space, trails, playgrounds, and event infrastructure, to better accommodate large crowds and diverse activities. Coordinated promotion of Honey Bee Park, the amphitheater, and downtown will allow each asset to reinforce the others. Events and concerts can drive foot traffic to downtown shops and restaurants, while nearby dining and retail increase the appeal of the park as an event venue. By hosting seasonal festivals, music performances, farmers markets, holiday celebrations, and cultural programming, the city can create a shared destination that supports economic growth, strengthens community bonds, and elevates Robertsdale as a regional gathering place.



Action E17: Expand Garret Park as a regional sports and recreation complex.

Position Garrett Park as a destination for youth athletics and regional sports tourism by expanding and upgrading its recreational facilities. The city should pursue the addition of new amenities such as soccer fields, basketball courts, and multi-purpose play areas to support local teams and accommodate tournaments, leagues, and athletic events. Enhancing restrooms, parking, lighting, concessions, and spectator areas will further increase the park's usability and competitiveness for hosting larger events. Garrett Park is within walking distance of downtown therefore its growth as a sports hub will benefit nearby restaurants, shops, and services. Hosting regional tournaments and weekend events can draw visitors who contribute to the local economy. Aligning park improvements with tourism promotion, local youth recreation needs, and downtown revitalization efforts will ensure that Garrett Park functions as both a community asset, an economic generator, and regional recreation destination.



AI generated concept for Garret Park improvements.



Action E18: Expand the Baldwin County Coliseum property to accommodate additional amenities and upgrades that support the facility's establishment as a regional destination for large-scale events.

The Baldwin County Coliseum has the potential to serve as a premier venue for large-scale events, rodeos, equestrian activities, festivals, expos, and community gatherings. To realize this vision, the city should pursue the expansion of the property and add amenities that increase

capacity, functionality, and year-round usability. Strategic upgrades will position the facility not only as a community anchor, but also as a regional economic driver that supports tourism, hospitality, and local businesses. The city should identify adjacent or nearby land suitable for future growth and coordinate with property owners to secure development opportunities. Additional amenities such as expanded parking areas, covered arenas, stall barns, multipurpose event pavilions, RV hookups, vendor pads, and spectator seating should be considered. The city should also explore upgrading site infrastructure, such as lighting, restrooms, utilities, and access roads, to accommodate larger crowds and multi-day events. The Coliseum can generate increased visitation and spending, benefiting nearby restaurants, hotels, and retail establishments while reinforcing Robertsdale’s economic development strategy.

GOAL 7

Explore the development of a RV Park and Equestrian Campground as a Catalyst Node for tourism and event support.



Robertsdale has the opportunity to expand its role as a regional destination by exploring the development of a RV Park and Equestrian Campground near the Baldwin County Coliseum. Modeled similar to the successful Camp McClellan in Anniston, AL, this facility could serve as both a recreational amenity and an economic driver, attracting beach-bound tourists, equestrian travelers, and visitors attending rodeos, livestock shows, and large events at the Coliseum. By combining short-term lodging for RV users with equestrian camping and trail connections, Robertsdale can create a unique destination that complements its agricultural heritage, supports event tourism, and generates new revenue streams for the city.



Action E19: Identify suitable sites for development of an equestrian themed RV Park.

The city should target land adjacent to or near the Coliseum to complement existing event programming and support convenience. The Baldwin Beach Express corridor would serve as a prime location for a growth catalyst development such as this, with plenty of undeveloped land adjacent to natural features such as Blackwater River and Rock Creek. The city should consider annexation, land acquisition, and partnerships with property owners to create a viable development footprint that supports residents’ goals. The city should conduct a feasibility study to evaluate demand, site requirements, and potential locations near the Coliseum, or the Baldwin Beach Express and assess market opportunities from rodeo and livestock events, equestrian trail networks, and seasonal beach tourism traffic.



Action E20: Develop a Master Plan for the RV Park and Equestrian Campground.

The city should develop a Master Plan for the development of the RV Park and Equestrian Campground. The design should include RV hookups, horse stalls, wash racks, trails, practice rings, riding trails, day use areas, restrooms, and vendor or concession areas. The plan should incorporate flexible spaces that can host camping rallies, tournaments, or equestrian clinics. The plan should incorporate well-supported design concepts of existing equestrian campgrounds, such as Camp McClellan, as a guide for development. To foster regional support, the city should explore public-private partnerships, similar to what Camp McClellan established, to make the project more feasible.



Action E21: Market the facility as part of Robertsdale's tourism strategy.

Promote the park as a convenient stop for beach travelers, a hub for equestrian recreation, and a lodging option for large events. Highlight its location on or near the Baldwin Beach Express, as a gateway to both the Alabama beaches and Baldwin County attractions. Integrate with the Baldwin County Coliseum to coordinate event programming so that major rodeos, livestock shows, and festivals at the Coliseum can leverage the campground as lodging and staging space for participants and visitors.

GOAL 8

Revitalize downtown Robertsdale as the economic and cultural heart of the city.



Downtown Robertsdale is the city's most significant catalyst node and holds the greatest potential to generate long-term economic activity, small business growth, tourism spending, and community identity. As the historic core and symbolic heart of Robertsdale, downtown has the capacity to anchor redevelopment, attract private investment, and serve as a central gathering place for residents and visitors. Its revitalization is essential not only for economic return, but also for restoring civic pride, strengthening community bonds, and reinforcing Robertsdale's sense of place.

While the Downtown Revitalization Vision is explored in detail in Chapter 5, and therefore will not be repeated here, no economic development strategy for Robertsdale would be complete without reaffirming downtown's central role in the city's future success. Reinvestment in storefronts, public spaces, dining, housing, and event programming will reinvigorate the district as a walkable hub of activity and position it to compete with surrounding markets. Its revitalization will stimulate and support the success of all other Economic Opportunity Areas identified in this chapter.