

## City of Fort Bragg Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program

**Purpose:** To implement the *City of Fort Bragg 2014 Economic Development Strategy* priorities that are focused on business retention and expansion, in order to support local businesses, encourage job creation, and increase investment in Fort Bragg.

- I. Major Components of the BRE Program are as follows:
  - A. The BRE Program is to be adopted by City Council Resolution and published on the City website
  - B. Customer service focus
  - C. Outreach to businesses
  - D. Business recognition
  
- II. City Staff will embrace a **Customer Service** Focus:
  - A. Customer Service goals:
    1. To continue excellent and productive interactions with City customers;
    2. To meet customer needs in a friendly, efficient, fair and expedient fashion;
    3. To expeditiously solve problems, as feasible, to support Fort Bragg businesses.
  - B. The City will embrace a *business friendly culture* at City Hall including assignment of two key Business Liaisons in the Community Development Department.
    1. The Housing & Economic Development Coordinator will be the Business Liaison for new business startup questions and non-development business issues.
    2. The Community Development Director will be the Business Liaison for new businesses that require planning or building permits.
    3. The Business Liaisons will assist business issues by clarifying issues, providing resources, expediting reviews and responses, and by working with other departments as appropriate.
    4. The Liaisons will educate and inform relevant City staff about the BRE and will encourage timely interoffice communication and collaboration to meet the goals of this Business Retention and Expansion Program.
  - C. Staff will instill and strengthen the *customer service culture* at City Hall:
    1. City Human Resources staff will facilitate staff training about:
      - The linkage between sales tax, jobs, transient occupancy tax, and City revenue.
      - Examples of excellent customer service specific to each City department.
      - Excellent customer service practices and implementation of a customer satisfaction survey for each department on the City's website.
  
- III. The City will engage in ongoing active **Outreach** to businesses:
  - A. Outreach goals:
    1. To promote Fort Bragg as a great place to do business;
    2. To gather information about specific opportunities and challenges to help the City better support businesses;
    3. To generate short-term and long-range Economic Development actions and planning.
  - B. The City will maximize effectiveness of the City **Website** to support Fort Bragg businesses.

1. The City website's "Doing Business" section will highlight the adopted BRE Plan.
  2. The City's "Doing Business" webpages will exhibit the "Your business is welcome here" theme, listing the benefits of doing business in Fort Bragg.
  3. The City's "Doing Business" webpages will demonstrate the benefits of Fort Bragg through provision of cost comparisons for services and fees and permit processing timeline comparisons.
  4. The City's "Doing Business" webpages will provide business resources, relevant data, and linkages to resources.
  5. The City will ensure that documents, data, and information are timely, useful and up to date.
- C. The Business Liaisons will develop **printed materials** to promote and highlight the Economic Development Services that are available for businesses.
1. The Business Liaisons will design and print brochures promoting benefits and resources for doing business in Fort Bragg.
  2. The Liaisons will utilize the print brochures to actively recruit new businesses to Fort Bragg.
  2. City staff will continue to publish and update "How to" handouts on individual topics such as the "Signs" and "Permits" brochures that are relevant to City businesses.
- D. The Business Liaisons will schedule **formal appointments with existing businesses**:
1. Invitations to meet will be sent to existing businesses for meetings either at the business site or at City Hall.
  2. Individual appointments would be scheduled by focusing on existing businesses by category (by industry, geography, or business size).
  3. The purpose of the formal meetings is:
    - a. to ask each business owner's perspective of how Fort Bragg business is going in general and individually;
    - b. to ask what the City can do to assist the individual business and Fort Bragg businesses in general;
    - c. to inquire as to problems and successes experienced with City processes;
    - d. to inquire as to immediate business concerns and hopes;
    - e. to assess health and needs of individual businesses through observation.
  4. Interviewers will use a set of questions to encourage open discussion.
  5. Interviews will include City Council member(s) when possible and desired.
  6. Business Liaisons will ensure that visit information is recorded and tracked and that follow up occurs as appropriate.
- E. The Business Liaisons will encourage **regular business drop in and walk-about**s by Community Development Department staff, other staff, and City Council:
1. The purpose of the casual visits is:
    - a. to improve and strengthen relationships between the City and local businesses; and
    - b. to provide opportunities to obtain quick business status checks and two-way feedback.
  2. The Business Liaisons will remind and encourage all City staff and Councilmembers to report back to the Business Liaisons.
- F. The Business Liaisons will continue to utilize **Surveys** to generate business information:

1. Surveys may be inserted into business license mailings for new and renewing businesses.
  2. Periodically, surveys may be used to gather input about specific City departments or processes.
- G. The Business Liaisons will regularly **communicate with regional economic development agencies** (Chamber of Commerce, VisitMendocino/MCLA, EDFC, etc.) to request and ensure that business feedback reaches the City Business Liaisons.
- IV. The City will engage in active **Business Recognition** to show appreciation and to provide exposure for City businesses, which may include:
- A. Business roundtables/workshops with City Council, including industry-specific meetings.
  - B. Development of Mayor’s Business Awards, to include categories such as “New Business of the Year,” “Fastest Growing Retailer,” “Pioneer Business,” “Most New Employees,” “Community-Minded Business,” “Sustainable Business Award,” and other categories.
  - C. Business Appreciation Month – to highlight the benefits provided by a strong local economy.
  - D. Receptions for honorees.