



## **MINUTES OF THE CITY OF MIRAMAR COMMISSION WORKSHOP**

**April 2, 2024**

**5:00 P.M.**

A workshop of the Miramar City Commission to discuss Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Strategies was called to order by Mayor Messam at 5:07 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2, 2024, in the City Commission Chambers, Town Center, 2300 Civic Center Place, Miramar, Florida.

### **ROLL CALL/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Upon call of the roll, the following members of the City Commission were present:

Mayor Wayne M. Messam  
Vice Mayor Alexandra P. Davis  
Commissioner Maxwell B. Chambers  
Commissioner Yvette Colbourne

Upon call of the roll, the following member of the City Commission was absent:

Commissioner Winston F. Barnes

Members of staff present in the Commission Chambers:

City Manager Dr. Roy Virgin  
Assistant Dir. Richard Hughes, Economic Dvmt. & Housing (EDH)  
City Attorney Norman Powell  
City Clerk Denise A. Gibbs

EDH Assistant Director Richard Hughes gave a PowerPoint presentation, reviewing the material on FDI strategies, as provided in the backup; he highlighted the following:

- The consultants researched Miramar and recommended a number of industry sectors with potential for FDI; they included: IT, aviation, space and related subsectors, and financial services

- Demand drivers of these sectors: for software and IT, there was artificial intelligence (AI), cyber security, med tech; in aviation there was drone technology; in finance, there were regulatory changes, and Miami becoming a financial hub
- The consultant compiled a top 20 list of countries, after shortlisting the list twice, based on their worldwide FDI in the U.S. in target industries and competitive sectors; further screening them to prioritize those for primary target, secondary target, and watching brief
- Primary target countries were: the United Kingdom (UK), Germany, and France
- Secondary target countries were: Switzerland, Canada, and Netherlands
- Market activities: focus on where in these countries the City should look to make FDI: in the UK, mainly the London area; in Germany, Munich and Berlin; in France, mainly Paris, and a number of other cities
- Approaching these countries: the consultant mentioned certain ways of approaching businesses in each country that worked: in the UK, face-to-face meetings, smaller scaled seminars, and trade shows; in Germany, face-to-face, trade shows, going through intermediaries, and virtual lead generation using email, LinkedIn, other social media forums; in France, face-to-face meetings, trade shows, seminars
- Value propositions included location drivers that were effective in marketing to each sector: in aviation, strategic location; noting skill base and talent pipeline; it was a growing market to key customers; track record for attracting high tech manufacturing; availability of suppliers and strategic partners; government and economic development organizations' support for the sector; availability of facilities, workforce, and training; quality of life; etc.
- IT sector: strategic location; growing industry cluster; knowledge and innovation, supported by education institutions in the area; good business environment; available space in office building and corporate parks; quality of life; marketing collateral; dynamic ecosystem in Miramar; available incentives from the State, County, and City
- Utilizing information gathered by consultants: City staff should reach out to companies already in Miramar to network and partner with them to grow their base; the City's activities should include email outreach, attending tradeshow and events, meet with companies both in the U.S., and, potentially, overseas; developing value propositions for other target sectors utilizing the method used for the major sectors identified earlier.

MAYOR MESSAM: Thank you for the presentation. Are there any questions, or comments from the dais regarding the presentation?

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: I have a few.

MAYOR MESSAM: Commissioner Colbourne, you're recognized.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Thank you for the presentation, first of all; very informative, and it is good to see that we are doing a study like this for a strategic plan, in

terms of targeting other countries doing business here. I saw that we are aligned with the Greater Fort Lauderdale, and, also, the State of Florida, so, on the surface it seems like: Oh, great, we're aligned. So I was just wondering, though, does that make it harder for us to reach our targets, since these other agencies, and the State are also going after the same target?

MR. HUGHES: I would say, no, it does not make it harder; I would actually say it makes it easier, because we're all messaging along the same lines. So those organizations, as the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, their reach is a little broader than ours, so their messaging target industries the same ones we are, so when we're doing our own marketing, it's consistent messaging. It's in a lot of ways a win, win, win, if you will, for the State, County, and City.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: So we will be able to work with them on their messaging?

MR. HUGHES: Yes. Yes. For example, say if there was an aviation trade show, we could piggyback on Enterprise Florida being there, if they had a pavilion, and/or with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance. In fact, we're planning on attending a show in June where Enterprise Florida will have a pavilion; I've already spoken to them about being there, participating as part of their booth. So there's some things we can do together.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Ok, It's more of a great partnership then?

MR. HUGHES: Yes.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: I assume that they're not yet aware that we're targeting these specifically? They're not yet aware of our studies, or are they?

MR. HUGHES: They wouldn't at this point, no.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: On the slide of the data on the aviation skilled workforce in South Florida, I was wondering whether or not these individuals are actually employed, or what percentage in unemployed? What percentage of these individuals are actually seeking work? Do we know, or what is the makeup of those numbers?

MR. HUGHES: I would have to look back at the actual data that they sent us. They summarized it here for purposes of the work, so I would have to look back on the actual data.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: That's fine. You can get that to me afterwards. And I guess the next slide talked about the universities, so that led me to, along the same line as the workforce. What courses are in line with that? Because maybe business or otherwise, how many more will be added over the next few years to add to the skilled workforce? That was some of the thoughts that I have, and that's information you can

always get to me afterwards. On the strategic location in market access, I know we've always said we're a gateway, we're central; we're right between North and South America, and I was trying to see how does that tie into the countries that we are targeting.

MR. HUGHES: It's to let them know that, with respect to those North American and South American markets, that we're in proximity to them, within easy reach for those, so that if they are doing business in North America, in South American, in Central America that this location will work very well for them. If they're coming from Europe, they already have that covered, so it would be really coming here to do their investment here, and their reach would be, obviously, fairly easy by plane. And, obviously, the markets, like I said, North America, Central and South America, so the purpose of this is just to highlight that.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: So it would not be that we're targeting North or South America, even though the proximity is there?

MR. HUGHES: No. They were identifying the countries that, from a data point of view over the recent years, and I should mention this up front, they look at data from 2020 to 2023, what the activity levels are in those sectors, in those countries. So for the point in time, if you will, that's where they're seeing most activity. That doesn't mean it'll stay that way; and it doesn't mean that if we have opportunities to talk to businesses that are from South or Central America in those sectors that we should not do that; we should do that; the key is to grow the sectors. It's just that they were pointing out that the data, currently, in the recent years was in those target countries of the UK, and France, and Germany.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: I would be curious as to those areas that are closest to us, as North America and South America, as to whether or not those countries have industries that are aligned to us, or where do they fall in terms of this list that you have here. Because these were the top; these countries, the ones that were highlighted, those are the countries in the first, and second tier. But I was wondering, in terms of the countries in North and South America, where do they fall in that. How far down the list are they?

MR. HUGHES: Yeah. I'll get that information.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: I don't have any more tough questions. That's it, and I don't think those were so bad. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

MR. HUGHES: Welcome.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Great presentation.

MAYOR MESSAM: Vice Mayor Davis, you're recognized.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you for the presentation. Just a question with regards to, you have a list of companies that you have here, ecosystem network, if you

could find that slide. It's third from the back. No, not that. Yeah, that one. So these companies that you list here, and colleges, they're all in Miramar?

MR. HUGHES: Yes.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: All right. And then could you break it down by sector. Like you said software, IT, aviation -- could you keep that up for me, please; financial services. So which ones are the financial services.

MR. HUGHES: This one is specific to IT.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: This is only IT?

MR. HUGHES: Yes. That's just the sector they worked with to develop what they call a value proposition for us. So they were not contracted to do all three; they were contracted to do this one specifically, and they gave us some recommendations on the aviation sector, where we already had some marketing materials on that. So it'll be for us to develop a similar thing for financial sector.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: This presentation is not giving us information on all three major sectors?

MR. HUGHES: Right.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: It's just IT. So do you have another workshop coming that's going to explain all the other two? Because I mean if we're going to -- when we go overseas, and we talk about trying to encourage companies to do foreign direct investment here, we'd like to have information on all three.

MR. HUGHES: We would have to develop it, with their assistance, for financial sector, so we would have to engage them again to get the numbers on that for us. We had worked, as I said, with aviation, and with IT for them for now.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: So you have the aviation one?

MR. HUGHES: We have a couple the slides in here showing highlighted, but the other things that we were doing, and have done is just pointing out some of the companies in the aviation sector that are already here, and have been here for some time.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Which ones are those?

MR. HUGHES: AllClear Defense, Propulsion Technologies, and Elite Aerospace; a lot of them are maintenance, repair, and overhaul shops; they repair engine parts.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Right. So that's the three main ones?

MR. HUGHES: Yeah, those three; there's actually 18 -- I'm sorry, I don't have the list with me, but they're mainly in the Park of Commerce, or out west of 75 in those warehouse buildings. So we have known that cluster for some time.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Right. But if we could know the cluster; I know you know the cluster. But so that we have the information, just as this is laid out, so when we go and speak in foreign countries, we have something. Because the last time I was in Africa, in fact, I brought this up, but I didn't have much knowledge about foreign direct investment, so this would help me; but this is only partial. And then when you talk about financial services, who are you talking about exactly; can you name a few companies?

MR. HUGHES: It really is a wide range of different possibilities there. The drivers are the Fintech, if I could go back to the slide here, and just take a quick look.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: So Fintech is here?

MR. HUGHES: It is in the region. I don't know if --

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: You have here: commercial banks, open-end investment funds, pension funds; so I know there's a whole bunch of banks around here, but the others I'm not familiar with.

MR. HUGHES: So one of the things that we will be doing is preparing collateral for what you just said, so that when you go to meetings and things, you'll have something that you can hand people, or speak to --

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: On these three sectors?

MR. HUGHES: -- on aviation, on IT, and we'll need to develop some for the financial sector as well, similar to that.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: All right, perfect. Thank you.

MAYOR MESSAM: Commissioner Chambers, you have any questions or comments. All right, just a couple of comments and observations. Thanks for the presentation. It's timely; we've been doing little buckets of these categories over the years, as we've been promoting the City of Miramar, so to drill down in a more intentional and specific way puts into spectrum who we would like to be here based off of our strengths. We all know that we are in a global economy, so, basically, a global marketplace; a very competitive one. And our region is in competition with other regions; not just here in South Florida; and South Florida competes with the bay area in Tampa, competing against Atlanta, we're competing against Austin, we're competing against the Midwest, the northeast, the Mid-Atlantic states. And by us knowing who we are, we can have a tailored message to those foreign companies that are looking to enter into the U.S. marketplace. Companies are

successful when they grow. So when they're successful domestically in their country, and they look at the United States, as well as some of the emerging markets, including the Caribbean and Latin America, they're looking expand their services, and their offerings to these marketplaces. And when they're looking at the U.S., we want them to look here. And the added benefit of looking here is also it gives access to the emerging markets down south, and the Caribbean, and in Latin America with the security of being within the United States if they're domiciled here in South Florida. So I think that has lent success to us here in Miramar; whether intentional or not, folks have figured out that if we're in South Florida, Miramar is a great place to be, because of our locale. They get access to a large market area between Miami and Fort Lauderdale, while being able to engage in commerce between their native country and here. So, as it relates to this report, or the presentation, we've identified aviation, financial services, and software and IT as the top three potential target markets where we stand strong, and we have a lot to sell. So, with that stated, how are we -- what are we doing internally, right? So, for example, if an opportunity comes where -- let's say Greater Fort Lauderdale contacts the City of Miramar; we have a company that's looking into South Florida, and let's say they're -- they could be from one of the targeted marketplaces that you mentioned. Are we positioning ourselves to be able to directly respond to a request, in terms of -- for example, if it's an IT company, how we stack in that marketplace, what resources that are available; where can they be located; what resources they can have. Because that's where the rubber hits the road, right. So if I'm a company, let's say I'm a British company, and I'm looking to come to South Florida, and I want to find a location, and I want to do my tenant improvement on a space, going to hire my programmers, IT professionals, and I'm going after clients. From the moment they hit, what are the resources? How are we situated internally to be able to respond to that sort of inquiry?

MR. HUGHES: That's what this gives us. It gives us the ability to do that. And on point with workforce numbers, the fact that we have space available, we have the ability to get them up and operational, and we want to make that clear in our messaging. So this kind of information, and who's already here, that's the other thing. So we're not starting from a point where we have a couple companies; we do have a base to work off of, and we can point the that. And it's a fairly broad base. Just real quickly, when I was looking at some of the listed IT companies, some of them are virtual, some of them have homebased, but others do have physical locations in the City, and they cover a wide range of services in the IT field. So being able to message that, and being able to point out the schools that are in the area, in the region that have programs for the IT sector answers some key questions for prospects. They're going to say: Well where are these people coming from? Where can I draw from? Who are some of the companies I can, perhaps, do business with that's already in the sector? I think it's very appealing. But we didn't really have that until this company helped us zero in on it, and actually got some data to back it up, and that's really where they came in most valuable, because they have access to data; it's a data-driven analysis for us that we did not have before. So it is for us now to use the information, and package it in a way that, to your question, if someone asks, we're prepared to just say: Here; here is what we have; this is why you should come here.

MAYOR MESSAM: And that's what I like about the presentation, because it puts us in a very intentional spot, in terms of knowing who we are, how to communicate what we have to offer, and then connecting that prospect with those opportunities. I think it's going to be very important for us to also share the word with, for example, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, letting them know how much more positioned we are to get them responses. In fact, if you find a company that checks these boxes, here's the information, we're ready, because I know we have a great relationship with Bob Swindell and his team. So this really makes me excited in terms of the prospects, and I would encourage staff to build a template or model that would allow us to microfocus, for example, on opportunities that may not necessarily be in that top ten global position. With our diversity in Miramar being the home to so many diasporas, like, for example, I think on one of your checklists, where it says, in terms of the process on how we -- the screening criteria, you have your long list of 20 global countries, then you shortlist them based on this prioritization, and primary markets. And it is very strict; it says: screening to include only countries that are in the top 20 countries for all foreign direct investments in the EDO region, right. That would wipe out a lot of opportunities. So, for example, if you have a company that's -- point in case -- the Juici Patties, Jamaican patty company, very successful in Jamaica; they're expanding abroad to the U.S. in Broward, putting franchises all over the place. A company like that would never -- Jamaica probably would not be in that top 20 just because of the size of their economy, and the size of the company wouldn't check the box, and, of course, food isn't part of the targeted industries, right. So what I'm getting at is that I think we have an opportunity to use this formal process, which is kind of structured, and proven to help us identify where these top targets are that we could customize a template to microfocus on some of these unique opportunities, like a Juici Patties that is expanding exponentially. That where our community that is connected to those opportunities, and creates a market within itself, so I'm interested to see how could this be customized or adjusted to provide the information that that investor, the owner of Juici Patties, to be able to provide them the information, the economic information that they need to be able to select a site, know what the demographics are, how they can access capital here in the U.S. All of the resources that any foreign direct investor would need to be able to be successful going into a foreign place to identify the best location, where can I find the best employees, or management, or talent, or technology, financing, all of those services. So I think that I don't want to forget those type of opportunities if we go to Africa, or if we go to whatever country that may not necessarily be in that top 20 country category, that we're just not ignoring those that could be very viable opportunities.

MR. HUGHES: Understood, yes.

MAYOR MESSAM: So those were my comments, and my observations. I really like this. I look forward to putting this to use, because selling the City all the time to a lot of folks, and this really helps us to be able to put the information at our fingertips in a very meaningful way, in a structured way. Vice Mayor Davis, followed by Commissioner Chambers.



VICE MAYOR DAVIS: And you may have explained it already. Exactly what FDI is, for the general public, what are the benefits of a company coming here; what are the incentives given to them.

MR. HUGHES: It's similar to attracting domestic investment. Let's say a company comes from the State of Texas to here; it's their capital expenditure of actually moving here, and spending money on the physical plant, or physical location they're going to be in; it's jobs, jobs they bring, jobs they hire once they get here. Those are two big things right there. And if it's a prominent enough company, it raises the profile of the community if it's a known company; and even if it isn't, it can contribute to, say, an IT sector that you have to grow that sector,, so it's a win on several fronts when you think of it. If I were to pick two things, it's the capital investment, and the jobs.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: And are there incentives, just like there are local incentives; are there incentives for them to come here? What are they?

MR. HUGHES: Those are some of the ones that you may be familiar with. The QTI doesn't exist anymore, but the County has a version of it; it's based on capital investment, jobs, and average salary. The State administers some that are involved: worker training, tax credits, things like that. We would direct people to get that information as needed, to the sources. But there's like a menu of ones that can be offered up to a company, potentially.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: And do we have them here in the City?

MR. HUGHES: Which ones?

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: FDIs.

MR. HUGHES: We do. I can name one company, Claro Enterprises, which is headquartered in Mexico. Claro does communications/IT services, and so they are a global company, and I visited with them recently, actually, so I can mention them as one of the ones I personally know of, having visited.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: And so how does that differ from, say, a Juici beef, because they're a franchise it's a little different?

MR. HUGHES: Which one?

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Like the company out of Jamaica, but it's franchised here.

MR. HUGHES: A Juici Patties? Yeah, they're a retail food operator.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: But they don't fall under the same category to get as an FDI?

MR. HUGHES: They would on a small scale. If they're bringing money in from outside, if they're investing money from the outside into Miramar, they would be. That relationship, I think, could be -- I think the parent company is from Jamaica, and they have a franchisee here, so it's a little bit indirect.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Yeah, it's a little different.

MR. HUGHES: It is in a different way. It is in a different way.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Because the owners end up being local.

MR. HUGHES: There's different iterations of foreign direct investment; you could have a subsidiary of a company that's already here in the United States that wants to be in the South Florida market, and access to South America. So, indirectly, you're getting that, so there's different ways that that can happen.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Okay. Thank you.

MAYOR MESSAM: Commissioner Chambers.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Hughes, for the presentation.

MR. HUGHES: Welcome.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: This is quite a bit, and Commissioner Colbourne says some of these things are aligned. I know there's a lot of overlapping here in this presentation. What are we not doing right now? Is there anything that we're not doing?

MR. HUGHES: We are not actively trying to do lead generation, or prospecting for companies outside the United States.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Let's say a company call, for example, Telefonica; they're a South American Company, they're in Doral. Let's say we want to lure them here, we want to bring them to Miramar, what do we need to do? Do we have the land, the space to bring them to Miramar?

MR. HUGHES: For land, not really. We have to approach it from the point of view the space that's already here, and office buildings, and then the industrial parks that we have.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: That we don't own, right? We don't own that space.

MR. HUGHES: We don't own that. We're not in a position where we can say the City owns this, and we can make it available to you.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Right.

MR. HUGHES: We're in a position where we can just market what's privately owned, and available in the commercial market for those spaces, which we do all the time. I mean we're working with people all the time with that.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Are you familiar with what they do, Telefonica?

MR. HUGHES: Yeah. I mean we field inquiries regularly for companies that may be interested in coming here who need space, but we do not, as a city, own space that's available.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: In terms of inventory, in terms of the commercial space, the industrial space, at any given time, do we know what's available, and what's not available?

MR. HUGHES: Yes. We have access to commercial real estate database that's in real time, so on any given day we can do a search on that database for what's available on the market.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: In terms of the Broward Alliances, I'm sure you're familiar with what they do, how do we work with them, and how do they affect us? What's the partnership like?

MR. HUGHES: Yeah. We have regular contact, and we have a membership with the Alliance, and we sit on some of their committees and boards, so we remain in contact with them, and know what they're doing, and where they're doing it, and vice versa, for the most part. I'm certainly going to share with them what this work is for us, so that they're aware of it, so it's a regular, ongoing relationship we have with them. They've been, actually, very good to the City, honestly, in bringing companies here over the years through the QTI program through the State, the incentive. It's not exclusively been them, but they have been very good partners for us, and that should continue.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: I know you're the messenger; I'm not trying to shoot the messenger. How should I put this. Workforce, from time to time, workforce gets kicked around, and it means a lot of things. Could be the space available; could be the human capital available, and I notice a few times back the City tend to convert commercial space, we change the land use to make it residential. And looking back now, I'm wondering if some of that was a mistake, or shortsighted, in terms of the City benefits more from the commercial revenue than the residential revenue. That's the way I look at it. I don't know if you agree with me. And the fact that now we don't have a lot of commercial, industrial space, I think this might come back to haunt us a little bit.

MR. HUGHES: I would just point out that, compared to some other communities, I think Miramar is in a very good position, relative to the commercial space that it has; it's pretty

well balanced. You have other communities that have a very limited amount of industrial, or even office space, and they have heavy residential, so their tax base is like this. Miramar's is closer to this, in my opinion.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: Yeah.

MR. HUGHES: So it is very appealing in that respect to businesses. It's a strong position to be in.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: But given the residential that's supposed to come online, which is mostly rental, and given the fact that the tax base, we getting one third of each dollar that a resident paying taxes, the majority of it goes to the County, and the School Board, and the Hospital District, and so on, so forth. And given what we have to put in, in terms of infrastructure, water, sewage, and so forth, I don't think the return is that great versus commercial that we could have still have. That's just the way I look at it. It's maybe another time for debate, but I want to thank you for the presentation.

MR. HUGHES: You're welcome.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: And I look forward to future discussion on the package. Thank you, sir.

MR. HUGHES: Thanks.

MAYOR MESSAM: All right. Hearing and seeing no other comments, I would like to thank staff for this presentation. I think that, staff, you are on the right direction, and on the right track. Even without this, the City of Miramar has always been a leader. I think we still stand proud as the only city that received the Economic Development Partner of the Year by the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, and I think we stand heads and shoulders above everyone. And with the successful implementation of this as the framework, we'll probably be feet and ankles, torso, heads and shoulders above everyone else. So we'll keep everyone chasing, so thanks so much for being proactive, and bringing this forward to us, and great presentation.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

MR. HUGHES: You're welcome, thank you.

MAYOR MESSAM: At this time, the meeting of this Miramar City Commission workshop is now adjourned. See everyone for tonight's Commission meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

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Denise A. Gibbs, MMC  
City Clerk  
DG/cp