



Lessons Learned from L.A. County's Most Business Friendly Cities

1. Business friendly cities **are enthusiastic about their communities**, committed to providing desired services, helping businesses and the community. They collaborate regionally to attract new regional retail and have a positive, can-do approach to encourage new business investment.
2. L.A. County's most business friendly cities **have established economic development and quality jobs as a top priority**. The Mayor, City Council, City Manager and staff articulate its importance and demonstrate a high sense of urgency for related programs, services and projects. They are readily available to meet with businesses, hear their concerns and assign staff or economic development partners to assist (LAEDC, etc.). The city's Economic Development department and programs are funded annually to perform their services and provide training opportunities city staff are engaged in.
3. Business friendly cities use **a variety of traditional and social media to communicate with their business community** through regular business visits with city officials, CEO/business forums, webinars, e-blasts, surveys to gauge public sentiment, newsletters, workshops and events. They also outreach to constituents about the importance of quality jobs and viable businesses which limits Nimbysism.
4. Business friendly cities are passionate about **providing excellent customer service**, and committed to being responsive to business concerns, which is exhibited throughout the organization. Cities encourage businesses and residents to complete customer satisfaction surveys and systems are in place to continually improve upon services to enable desired results based on feedback.
5. Business friendly cities **provide high quality services at reasonable costs and deliver services beyond expectation**. L.A. County's most business friendly cities are usually among the lower cost locations for business, with fees that are below the average in the County. They offer creative solution options, fee payment schedules encourage investment, and business license waivers assist struggling small businesses.
6. Business friendly cities **utilize development agreements, special zones, film-friendly ordinances, streamline permitting, among others to induce desired economic development results**. Since time saved is money to a business's bottom-line, business friendly cities provide ombudsman services, one-stop service, over-the-counter approvals,

MBFC WINNING CITIES

2006: El Segundo

2007: Lancaster

*2008: Vernon
Santa Clarita*

*2009: Santa Fe
Springs
Long Beach*

*2010: Cerritos
Alhambra*

*2011: Monrovia
West Covina*

*2012: Duarte
Whittier*

*2013: La Mirada
Lancaster*

*2014: Glendora
Glendale*

2015:

parallel processing of permits, and quick online business license approval. Timely and consistent permit approval processing, development flow charts with timelines and costs, online permit applications and approvals, and excellent customer service are important incentives that business friendly cities provide.

7. Business friendly cities recognize **testimonials from successful and satisfied existing businesses encourage new business development** and have created open channels for problem identification and solution options to address issues. Cities provide programs and services to retain and expand current employers and recognize business excellence.
8. Business friendly cities **provide an overall business climate conducive to business success and job creation**. Business friendly cities **recognize the quality, quantity and price of their services will impact the desirability of their city** for investment and business development. Business friendly cities have programs to promote their city as a destination for specialty industry and/or retail.
9. Business friendly cities **provide a high quality of life for residents and businesses**, including employment opportunities for residents, low crime rate (FBI Modified Crime Index), Business Watch, affordable and comprehensive housing options, quality infrastructure, distinguished schools, Community College, 4-year University, trade schools, shopping, cultural and entertainment amenities, parks, golf courses, aquatics center, bike and horse trails, performing arts center, etc.
10. Business friendly cities have **a current economic development strategy, ideally as part of their General Plan** with performance measures, regular reviews, revisions when necessary, flexibility and accountability. The strategy is understood by the elected officials, city leaders and staff and is communicated to the business community and residents.

Recommendations from LAEDC's Most Business Friendly City Award Blue Ribbon Panel of Judges

1. Encourage city leadership to review the MBFC award application before submittal for the opportunity to highlight all business friendly efforts being made and amenities city-wide, focus on city priorities, and to ensure all of the required information is included.
2. Some MBFC applicants have lowered their own MBFC award scores by failing to provide additional narrative (where applicable), information on available financing, complete descriptions of the city's efforts, and taking credit for amenities (i.e. Community Colleges and 4-year Universities) not located within the applicant city.
3. Better describe programs, their benefits and successes, and how the efforts made by the city are positively impacting businesses and residents.
4. Use spell check for spelling errors, tracking word count and formatting (bullets, etc.).
5. Too many attachments to the MBFC application make it difficult to understand the city's priorities.
6. Encourage annual review of city departments and Development Review Committees/Development Advisory Boards to make business friendly improvements.
7. Describe implementation progress or adjustments made to the city's Economic Development Element.
8. Communication to businesses, LAEDC, site selectors, etc., about the city's commitment to its business friendly policies, unique assets and why it's the ideal place in which to do business.