



City of
PORT ST. LUCIE
HEART OF THE TREASURE COAST



2023 City Manager's
Annual Report



The City of Port St. Lucie has completed a research-driven, community-wide identity initiative. This effort will help Port St. Lucie stand out as we evolve toward our preferred future. Feature story page 10.

To learn more about the research, process and final identity, visit

www.HeartoftheTreasureCoast.com

MISSION:

To provide exceptional services that enhance our community's safety, beauty and quality of life through innovation, engagement and fiscal responsibility.

VISION:

To be a leader in finding innovative solutions that put residents first and support opportunities for all people to thrive.

VALUES:

Accountability | Diversity | Customer Service
Teamwork | Ethics | Stewardship

Safe, Clean and Beautiful

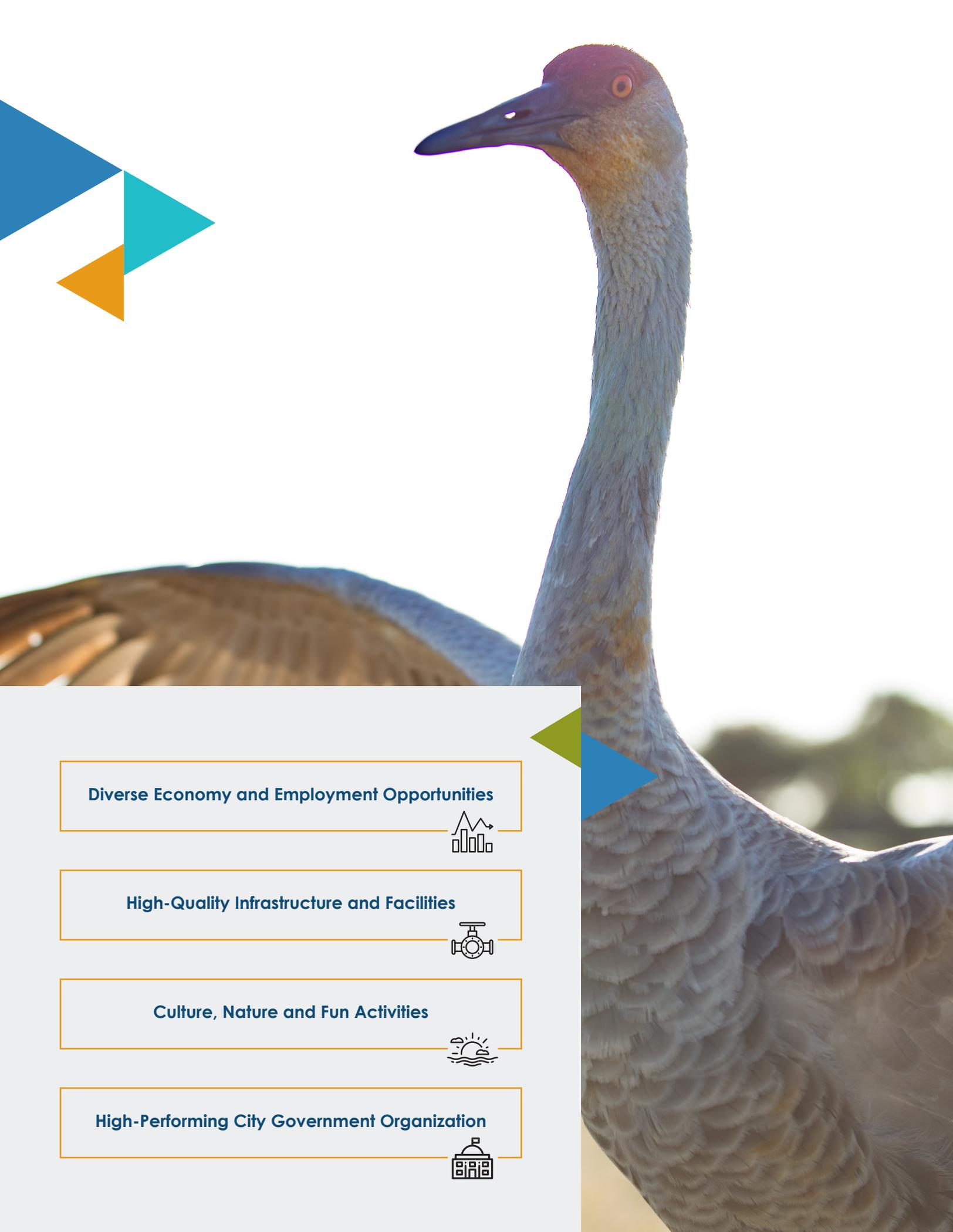


Vibrant Neighborhoods



Smart and Connected City





Diverse Economy and Employment Opportunities



High-Quality Infrastructure and Facilities



Culture, Nature and Fun Activities



High-Performing City Government Organization



Dear residents,



As we delve into the 2023 edition of the City Manager's Annual Report, it brings me immense pleasure to extend this forward on behalf of the City Council. Port St. Lucie's journey, as illustrated within these pages, reflects our ongoing commitment to evolution, adaptation and thoughtful planning for the future.

Aligned with our shared vision for Port St. Lucie, articulated through the City's Strategic Plan, your City Council and I stand united in carrying out this collective goal. This strategic roadmap, encapsulated in seven key goals, is not merely the Council's vision but a testament to the shared dreams of our entire community – residents, businesses and organizations alike. In Port St. Lucie, our promises are not just words; they are a commitment to the realization of a vibrant and thriving city – the heart of the Treasure Coast.

This report highlights the significance we place on public engagement and community involvement in shaping the future of our City. The annual Citizen Summit and community survey serve as crucial touchpoints, offering invaluable insights from you, our residents, to gauge our direction and ensure alignment with your expectations. This collaborative, data-driven approach continues to fortify our community, making it stronger with each passing year.

At this unique juncture in our history, with an extensive land area spanning 121 square miles, we've proudly secured our status as the sixth-largest city in Florida. Experiencing rapid growth, our community has welcomed approximately 20,000 new residents in the past two years alone.

Reflecting on my service – more than a decade on the City Council – the achievements this past year have been substantial, from the construction of Pioneer Park at The Port, to the development of most of the Southern Grove Jobs Corridor years ahead of schedule, to the successful pursuit of \$50 million in grant funding. This momentum is a testament to our commitment to progress and we aim to build upon it, remaining a welcoming, safe, beautiful and prosperous city for all people.

In the pages to follow, you'll discover the strides we've taken, the challenges we've overcome and the promising future that lies ahead. I invite you to take pride in your City's progress and encourage your active participation in shaping the chapters that unfold.

If the City Council or I can be of assistance, please contact us at 772-871-5159.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon M. Martin".

Shannon M. Martin, Mayor



Jolien Caraballo
Vice Mayor,
District 4 Councilwoman



Stephanie Morgan
District 1 Councilwoman



David Pickett
District 2 Councilman



Anthony Bonna, Sr.
District 3 Councilman



Dear residents,

As a City of Port St. Lucie employee for nearly 30 years, I have seen our community evolve into a thriving hub where people from across the globe choose to live, work and play. Serving as the City Manager since January 2023, I am grateful for the opportunity to build on our past successes while setting the foundations for our future.

Our City's economic vitality, cultural diversity, recreational activities and public safety are all factors behind the tremendous growth Port St. Lucie has experienced over the past few years. With approximately 36,000 new residents moving here over a three-year period, it is critical we focus on managing growth intelligently and with fiscal responsibility.

Balancing progress and preserving the unique character of our City requires a strategic, thoughtful approach to planning for and implementing systems that allow for sustainable development. Using innovation and data-informed processes are foundational to finding that balance.

Our Strategic Plan highlights seven goal areas that touch every corner of the City, from infrastructure to recreation, parks to safety and much more. The plan was developed using data and insights from residents that guide what we need to do and how we're going to get there.

We continued to build on our culture of innovation by pursuing certification from What Works Cities, a first-of-its kind international standard of excellence for data-informed, well-managed local governments. Port St. Lucie is very close to becoming only the second city in Florida to achieve this certification, right behind Miami.

These and other opportunities allow us to learn best practices from national and international experts, providing resources that will help move our City forward and make us stronger today, tomorrow and for years to come.

We are pleased to share the 2023 Annual Report, highlighting what we have achieved and how those accomplishments will help us forge a bright future. Thank you for your continued partnership!

Sincerely,

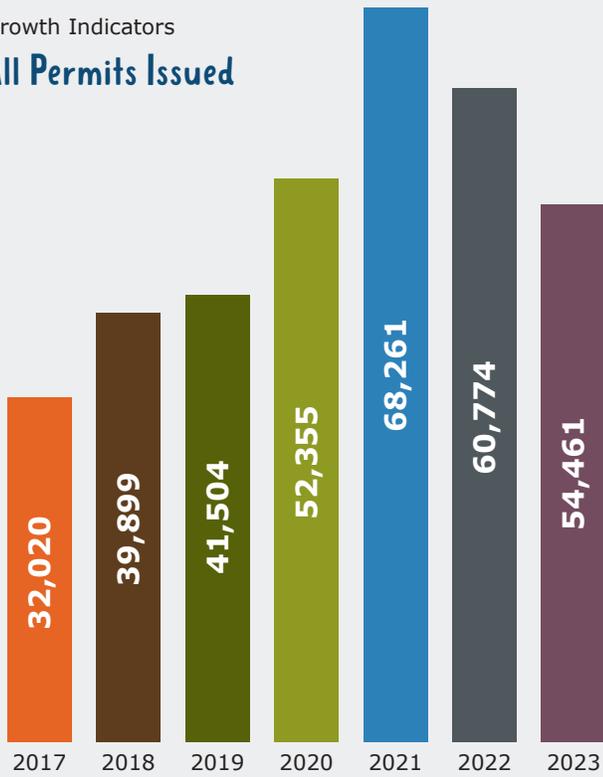
Jesus Merejo, ICMA-CM, City Manager



By the Numbers

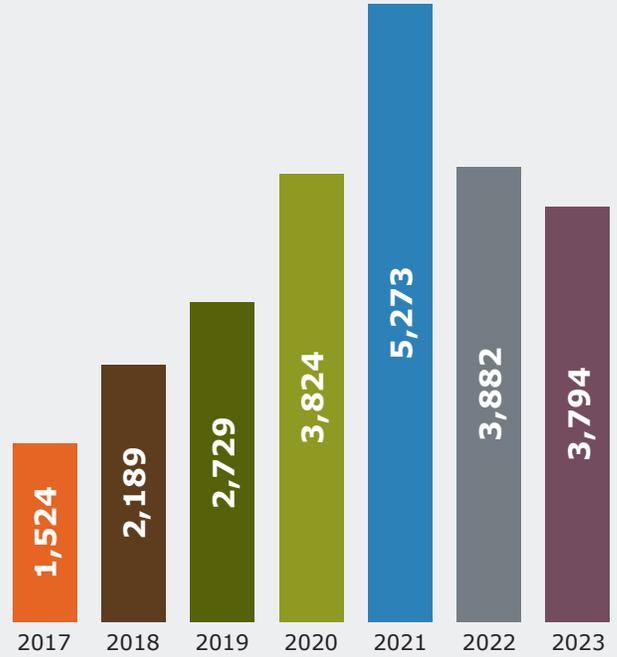
Growth Indicators

All Permits Issued



Growth Indicators

Single-Family Permits Issued



Taxable Value Trends



Approved vs. Built Residential Units



140,315 Approved units

84,921 Built single-family units

11,041 Built multi-family units

44,532 Remaining units to be built

City Statistics



The latest Census figures from April 2023 determined Port St. Lucie's population is 239,653. By the end of the year, we were well on our way to 250,000. Within the past five years, we have gone from a mid-sized city to the sixth largest in Florida.

239,653

Over the past few years, we have developed comprehensive blueprints to ensure we are planning smartly for future growth. Mobility and Strategic Plans have been developed with input from residents, subject matter experts and community stakeholders to provide a roadmap that will help Port St. Lucie continue to make progress. It is important to know that these plans don't sit idle on the shelf; they are implemented every day at the direction of the City Council and our 1,412 hardworking employees who serve our City every day.



WalletHub:

- #71 Safest city in U.S.
- #9 Best local real estate market
- #4 Best place for first-time home buyers
- #6 Best city for Hispanic entrepreneurs



Smart Asset:

- #9 in top 10 cities where it makes more sense to buy than rent



Patch.com:

- #4 Most ethnically diverse city in Florida



Quicken Loans:

- #5 Fastest-growing city in the U.S.



Opendoor:

- #19 Hottest ZIP code in the nation (34953)

**2023
BEST PLACES**

PORT ST. LUCIE

#2 SAFEST
#5 FASTEST GROWING
#10 MOST DESIRABLE
#18 FOR WEATHER
#19 FOR SINGLES
#22 TO RETIRE
#25 FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
#63 BEST PLACE TO LIVE

IN THE UNITED STATES

The City Manager's ADOPTED BUDGET IN BRIEF

FY 2023/24



The Fiscal Year 23/24 Adopted Budget allocates resources to support Port St. Lucie's Strategic Plan goals.

BUDGET

FISCAL YEAR

23/24

GENERAL FUND

-3%

DECREASE FROM FY 22/23 DUE TO DEBT REDUCTION

11%

\$17.5M INCREASE OVER FY 22/23

TOTAL BUDGET

\$709,326,449

TOTAL BUDGET

\$176,703,903

Crosstown Voter Debt Reduced

The voter-approved debt service millage for Crosstown Parkway is reducing to 0.4943 in FY 23/24 from 0.5693 for FY 22/23.

Operating Millage Reduced

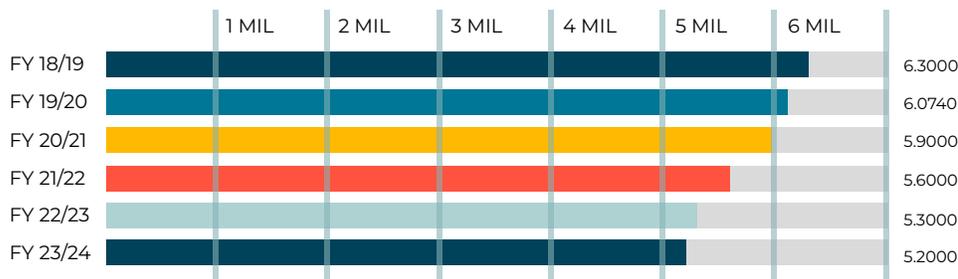
Operating Millage is reducing from 4.7307 to 4.7057.

Tax Base Increase

The tax base increased by 22.91% over the estimated adjusted value, because of increased growth and property appreciation, from **\$16.2 billion (FY 22/23)** to **\$20 billion (FY 23/24)** as of July 2023 estimate.

MILLAGE RATE

Millage rate is the tax rate per \$1,000 of taxable property value. The City's Operating Millage rate is **4.7057** per thousand for **FY 23/24**. The adopted total millage rate is **5.2000**. This is the eighth year the millage rate is reduced.



Assessed impact of millage reduction on City taxes for a median home with a homestead exemption increased by the save our homes limit of 3%

	FY 22/23 Tax Year City Taxes	FY 23/24 Tax Year City Taxes
Assessed Value	\$215,205	\$221,661
Exemption Amount	\$50,000	\$50,000
Taxable Amount	\$165,205	\$171,661
City Total Millage Rate (Per \$1,000 of value)	5.3000	5.2000
Total City Taxes per Year	\$875.59	\$892.64
Difference with Proposed Millage Reduction		\$17.05

STORMWATER

Stormwater Fee is adopted to increase by \$10 for a total of \$178 for residential and \$133.50 for vacant property.

SOUTHERN GROVE

Southern Grove debt and tax payment remains **\$3.6 million**, which is supported by the Governmental Finance Fund.

SOLID WASTE

The Solid Waste Assessment Fee is adopted to increase by 4% to \$432.67 per contractual obligations with the City's solid waste vendor. Residential homeowners will no longer receive the one-time credit of \$36.76.

Median market value for a single-family home in

Port St. Lucie

\$307,684

Although the median market value of an average single-family home in PSL is \$307,684, the median assessed value by the County Property Appraiser is \$221,661. The assessed value is used to determine the annual property tax.

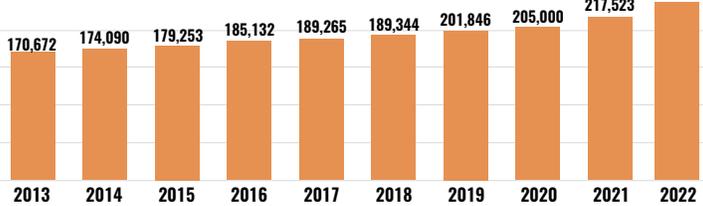
STAFFING

FY 23/24 adopted budget includes a net change of **82.74** positions for a total of **1,412.08 FTEs** which is **14.1%** more than the number in FY 08/09. In FY 08/09 the population was estimated at **154,844** residents compared to a current population of over 231,790 residents, a nearly **49.7%** increase.

HISTORY OF AUTHORIZED POSITIONS



Population Growth Data from U.S. Census Bureau



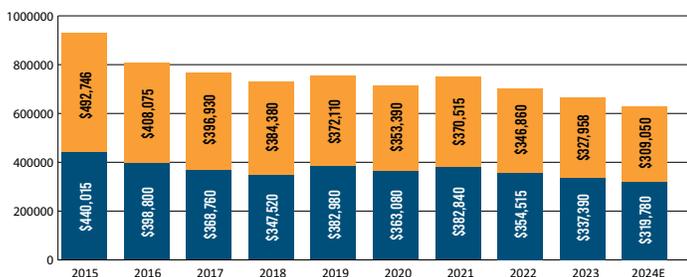
Employees per 1,000 residents Units in thousands



DEBT REDUCTION

The City's long-term debt has been reduced as a result of principal payments and refinancing, when appropriate, from a high of more than \$1.042 billion in debt in FY 09/10 to a **projected \$629 million for FY 23/24** based upon the budgeted principal payments. This will represent a **40% reduction in debt** over the past 14 years.

Total City Debt ■ Governmental Activities ■ Business-type Activities



GENERAL FUND:

Police:

- 6 Police Officers - District 5
- 6 Police Officers - Neighborhood Policing Bureau
- 6 Police Sergeants - District 5
- 2 Traffic Officers
- 2 Special Investigation Detectives
- 2 Detectives - Criminal Investigation Division
- 1 Training Coordinator
- 1 Police Assistant Operations & Administrative Manager
- 1 Asset & Inventory Specialist
- 1 Detective Sergeant (CID)
- 1.84 School Crossing Guards
- 1 Police Administrative Assistant

Information Technology:

- 1 IT Security Technician I-III
- 1 Technology Purchasing Agent
- 1 IT Business Intelligence Analyst
- 2 IT Utility Locators

Parks & Recreation:

- 1 Parks Coordinator - Tradition Regional Park
- 1 Turf/Landscape Specialist - Tradition Regional Park
- 1 Turf Crew Supervisor - Tradition Regional Park
- 2.175 P/T Maintenance Worker I - Tradition Regional Park
- 2 Park Leaders - Tradition Regional Park
- 5 Parks Maintenance Workers I - Tradition Regional Park
- 1 Financial Specialist

UTILITY SYSTEMS FUND:

- 1 Water Meter Technician
- 1 Project Manager
- 1 Utility Locator
- 1 WTP Operator Trainee
- 1 Cross Connection Trainee
- 2 Warehouse Technicians
- 7 Field Technician Trainees
- 1 Scada Technician

BUILDING FUND:

Building:

- 2 Building Inspectors I

Emergency Management:

- 1 Emergency Management Specialist II

Communications:

- 1 Content Strategist

Keep PSL Beautiful:

- 1 Project Coordinator
- 2 Maintenance Worker

Facilities:

- 0.725 Administrative Assistant P/T

Finance:

- 1 Accountant II
- 1 Lien Specialist III

Human Resources:

- 1 HR Generalist III

Management and Budget:

- 1 Procurement Contract Specialist

Planning:

- 1 Planning Technician

MIDFLORIDA Event Center:

- 1 Event Specialist

Neighborhood Services:

- 1 Code Compliance Specialist (Administrative)
- 1 Code Compliance Officer (Residential)

ROAD & BRIDGE FUND:

- 1 Special Projects Coordinator, CIP & Sales Tax Project Group

Community Development Block Grant

- 2 Code Compliance Officers, for commercial properties

STAFFING INCREASES FOR FY 23/24:

Employee increases are directly related to rapid growth in the City, including funding for District 5 of the Police Department.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The City is prudently planning projects while slightly decreasing the current debt load. Projects planned over the five-year period are projected to cost **\$328.6 million**.



Feature Story

Creating a Shared Identity for Our Community

Understanding a community's identity is vital to its success, prosperity and the quality of life for its residents.

That identity – our brand – is the story of our City. It's the combined experiences individuals have when they interact with us. It includes the things that make us unique, the amenities we offer, the goals we collectively hope to achieve.

Because the City of Port St. Lucie is continuing to rapidly evolve and grow, City Council saw an opportunity to create a unified brand identity to ensure the City's strategic planning aligned with the community's collective values. The project was added to the Strategic Plan by Council to maintain that alignment across departments.

Engaging the Community for Insights

North Star Ideas, a highly regarded branding company based in Jacksonville Florida, was selected to conduct research on Port St. Lucie's identity. Its experienced team led the extensive research portion of the project.

A survey was distributed to City residents, which returned 1,300 responses and provided a wealth of statistically valid data and insights about what matters in the community. Surveys were sent in two other communities – Orange County and Miami – to get a sense of what people outside the Treasure Coast region knew or thought about Port St. Lucie. And a wide variety of community partners were selected to share their thoughts on the City's strengths, challenges and opportunities.

Research-Based Design Concepts

Based on insights from the research, the team developed a "DNA statement" which serves as a guide to frame the brand. It provides direction for the creative process and is the essence of who we are as a city.

Once the DNA statement was in place, the City's communications team, began to develop concepts for a tagline, logos, color palettes, typography and other elements that visually represent the brand. It went through an approval process that culminated in unanimous consent from City Council in November.

The Heart of the Treasure Coast

Based on the research, we heard some common themes about what makes Port St. Lucie special. From that the brand statement emerged that Port St. Lucie is the “Heart of the Treasure Coast.”

- A family-and friend-oriented community
- Safe, clean and beautiful
- A place with natural beauty
- The largest city between Orlando and Miami

The logo, color palette and typography are visual representations for the organization’s brand. With the research as a foundation, the team developed a logo of a sandhill crane. It features the shape of a heart discretely embedded in the crane’s feathers to represent Port St. Lucie’s place as the Heart of the Treasure Coast.

The sandhill crane, a bird found prominently across the region, was selected because of its connection to traits such as natural beauty and a family-friendly environment that are associated with Port St. Lucie. The crane in the City’s logo is boldly looking forward to the future as PSL grows and evolves.

Our new brand identity helps tell the story of what makes the City of Port St. Lucie special and why it’s a great place to live, to do business and to visit. It helps people understand what the City represents and what they can expect from our community.

Perhaps most importantly, it was created from the voices of people who know Port St. Lucie best, allowing us to create a shared vision of the City we call home.



North Star Ideas visits Tradition Preparatory High School to include students in a focus group to gain insight on the identity of Port St. Lucie.



PORT ST. LUCIE
HEART OF THE TREASURE COAST

An aerial photograph of a lush green mangrove forest. A long, light-colored wooden boardwalk with railings runs along the edge of a body of water, extending from the bottom left towards the right. The water is dark and reflects the sky. In the background, a residential area with houses and trees is visible under a clear blue sky. The text 'DATA-INFORMED DEPARTMENTS' is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

DATA-INFORMED DEPARTMENTS



Informed by data and fueled by innovation, the City has created positive improvements and enhanced efficiencies organization wide.

Innovative Strategies to Maintain Community Safety

Police Department

Data plays an integral role in the Police Department's ongoing efforts to maintain Port St. Lucie's standing as one of the safest cities in the state and the country.

The Police Department uses a stratified policing model, an approach that focuses on problem solving, analysis and accountability processes at every level of the organization. This model is applied to immediate, short- and long-term issues, all of which can benefit from utilizing appropriate data to help in their resolution.

The results have been substantial through the years for Port St. Lucie: over the last decade, the City has seen a reduction in crime of nearly 50%.

A similar strategic approach has been used in the recruitment of new police officers to the City. Law enforcement agencies across the country have been struggling to recruit and retain personnel over the past few years, which has placed a premium on ensuring organizations are doing everything in their power to attract potential candidates.

In 2023, Acting Chief Richard Del Toro implemented five strategic initiatives to help recruit and retain the most qualified applicants. As a result, the Police Department improved overall employee benefits and the hiring process was streamlined to reduce the amount of time for new applicants to be processed from an average of six months to two months.

City Council also has approved funding for 26 additional sworn police officer positions. Most of those positions will be for District 5, our most recent policing district located in the western part of Port St. Lucie.

Additionally, at the end of 2023, the City was in the design-build phase for the construction of a new police training facility, which is scheduled to begin construction in 2024. This facility will play a crucial role in providing officers with state-of-the-art training, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to uphold the safety and well-being of our citizens. This investment underscores our ongoing commitment to the professional development and preparedness of our law enforcement officers.

By using data and innovative thinking, the Police Department is continuing to provide a safe, secure community.



46% The percentage reduction in crime over the last 10 years in Port St. Lucie.

13 The number of consecutive years Port St. Lucie has had the lowest crime rate for a city in Florida with a population over 100,000.

Using Data to Improve Roads

Planning and Zoning

As the City manages an influx of new residents and businesses, increasing capacity on our roads and ensuring that infrastructure improvements take place along with development projects is one of the considerations of the project review process.

One of the main tools the City has to help fund capital projects and infrastructure expansions is the collection of impact fees. The City collects impact fees for four categories: roads and mobility, public buildings, parks and law enforcement. Impact fees are paid for by those building a project.

The City can only raise impact fees every four years. In 2023, the Planning and Zoning Department, in collaboration with the wider City team, worked with consultants to prepare an impact fee study and land use analysis, and ultimately proposed increases to the parks, public buildings and law enforcement fees. Those revenues, paid by new development, will be spent directly on the expansion of services and the purchase of equipment to provide services to the City.

Another way infrastructure can be expanded without utilizing City dollars is to negotiate with developers to secure improvements. That can include projects

that take place outside the City but are projected to create infrastructure needs in Port St. Lucie, such as road expansions.

In those situations, the City intervenes in the development approval processes to ensure it does not have to pay for road expansions. As part of the approval process for one large development recently approved in St. Lucie County, the City was able to negotiate several improvements to roadways that will be funded completely by developers, rather than taxpayer dollars. Those include expansions to larger thoroughfares such as Crosstown Parkway and Becker Road.

The Planning and Zoning Department prioritizes communication and public input and always is working to find innovative ways to get the word out to residents about new projects and developments coming to the City. So, working in collaboration with the Communications Department, staff created printed materials with a QR code that linked directly to the Planning and Zoning webpage, which makes it easier for residents to find out more about what the department was doing with one quick, easy step.



178

The number of site plans, subdivision plans and model home applications reviewed by Planning and Zoning. That represented a 16% increase from 2019/20 but it was significantly fewer than the 266 plans and applications reviewed in 2021/22.

517

The number of zoning compliances reviewed and approved in 2022/23. That represents a 68% increase since 2019/20.



\$50 Million in Grants Fuel City Projects

City Manager's Office



One tool the City has available to make improvements while maintaining fiscal responsibility is through financial grants. These allow us to meet the needs of residents with fewer taxpayer dollars. In 2023, the City received \$50 million in grants for projects that tie directly to different aspects of our Strategic Plan.

That included more than \$28 million for water quality projects and road improvements. A total of \$4.2 million was used for a playground, plus homeowner and rental assistance. \$3.4 million is available to boost small businesses and support vital infrastructure projects. And a \$1 million grant will allow the City to plant trees across Port St. Lucie, reducing carbon emissions, providing shade that can reduce temperatures and more.

In addition, the City received nearly \$25 million in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act. Together, these grants allow us to meet our goals of ensuring the City is safe, clean and beautiful.



Representatives from What Works Cities toured Port St. Lucie as the City seeks this prestigious certification.

Learning from Cities Across the World

City Manager's Office

One of the most effective ways of ensuring the City of Port St. Lucie can continue to grow as a high-performing government is to learn from peers across the country who have demonstrated success. Learning what others have done well – and what pitfalls they might have encountered – allows us to identify opportunities that can help enhance our community.

In 2023, the City participated in a global gathering of City Innovators at CityLab in Washington, D.C. The exclusive workshop brought together City leaders in the fields of data, innovation and infrastructure, providing them with a unique opportunity to be inspired by new approaches, collaborate and discuss innovative strategies and insights.

To demonstrate Port St. Lucie's commitment to utilize innovative, data-informed strategies, the City is participating in the What Works Cities Certification program. This first-of-its-kind program, launched by Bloomberg Philanthropies and led by Results for America, was developed as an international standard of excellence for data-informed, well-managed local governments. Port St. Lucie is close to completing the silver level certification requirements, which would make it one of only two cities in Florida to do so.



Mayor Shannon Martin and staff are participating in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative.

Mayor Shannon Martin, City Manager Jesus Merejo and Deputy City Manager for Strategic Initiatives and Innovation Kate Parmelee, were selected to participate in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, joining 40 mayors and 80 senior municipal leaders from cities across the world who will participate in the yearlong professional management training program.

The Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative equips mayors and senior city leaders with the tools and expertise to expand their problem-solving capacity, strengthen their city halls and improve outcomes for residents. Port St. Lucie was selected to take part in the program's innovation track, which will provide specialized coaching to find solutions to issues surrounding the expansion of green space in the City, an issue prioritized by residents at the 2022 Citizen Summit. As part of the training, a cross-departmental team will learn new skills that can be applied moving forward.

These collective experiences will help the City learn from some of the best leaders in the world, providing insights, strategies and tactics that can help Port St. Lucie reach its goals.

New Tools Help Build for the Future

Public Works

As the City has grown through the years, the Public Works Department has worked hard at creating new infrastructure while maintaining existing resources. Data and innovation play a vital role in ensuring the City has environmentally and economically sound infrastructure, while providing residents the services they need.

To help accomplish those objectives, Public Works began using two new digital tools in 2023.

- UrbanSDK is a software platform that shows traffic speeds and volumes citywide. The information supports the City's traffic operations team in identifying areas of congestion to support proper management, traffic-calming solutions and future road safety planning. The technology will allow staff to access data quickly, rather than having to manually obtain the data, increasing department efficiency. The information will be used as a quick check to determine if additional analysis is needed.
- TravelIQ is a software program that can notify the public of road closures or incidents that might require rerouting. The tool is available to a wide network of users, including the Florida Department of Transportation, and will be available on the City's website for the public to access in 2024.

The department also performed an asset collection survey in conjunction with its pavement condition monitoring program. Every roadway in the City was reviewed to identify the locations of signs, road markings, crosswalks and other features.

Photographs were taken and ground penetrating studies were performed, providing critical data that allows Public Works staff to better monitor the conditions of signs and markings, to assist in maintenance activity planning and scheduling. The asset collection reduces staff time that would be required for onsite inspections, helping improve efficiencies.





Driving Toward Improved Roads and Sidewalks

Public Works

Significant ongoing road projects along major corridors like the southern portion of Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Floresta Drive and the Torino Parkway roundabout and turn lane are designed to significantly enhance accessibility and convenience once completed.

Phase 1 of the Floresta Drive project, from Southbend Boulevard to the Elkcarn Bridge, has been successfully completed. The second phase, extending from the Elkcarn Bridge to Crosstown Parkway, is currently in progress and is expected to be complete by the end of 2024.

Another significant project currently in progress is the expansion of Port St. Lucie Boulevard South, with construction underway on two segments that will widen the roadway to four lanes. In the coming years, these improvements will extend down to Becker Road, offering relief from traffic congestion in the southern part of the City. The two segments are scheduled to finish by summer 2024.

Two other noteworthy projects are currently in progress: the extensions of Becker Road and Crosstown Parkway west to Range Line Road. These road projects, which are being paid for by developers, are creating two vital east-west connections in Port St. Lucie, addressing the city's growing infrastructure needs ahead of schedule.

In addition to the upcoming road expansion projects, our ongoing commitment includes the continuous expansion of sidewalks, with 5.81 miles added across the City in the past year alone. Responding to residents' feedback on the importance of well-maintained roads, Public Works also has made significant strides in repaving, covering 46.75 miles of roads this year.

The Public Works Department maintains:

916 centerline miles, which equals a trip from Key West to Dunn, North Carolina, on Interstate 95.

260 Total miles of sidewalk.



The Public Works Department engaged with local students to name the City's new mini street sweeper. The winner: Sweep Caroline!

Measuring Performance in Meeting Commitments

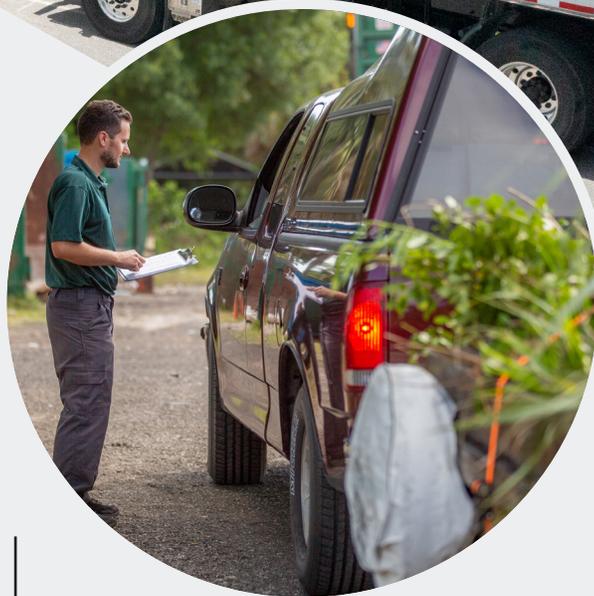
Office of Solid Waste

The City of Port St. Lucie is committed to providing efficient, effective and sustainable solid waste services. To ensure those commitments are being met, the City is constantly gathering information to monitor how things are going with our contracted waste hauler and how we can help ensure consistent and reliable service for 86,790 homeowners.

The department was created in conjunction with City Council, City staff and stakeholders to be reliable and efficient. As Port St. Lucie continues to grow, creating an additional need for solid waste resources, data and innovation will play an ongoing role in making sure the City provides the best and most sustainable possible services to our residents.

In 2023, that included implementation of an exclusive solid waste queue to handle calls from residents regarding any solid waste issues. This provides important data to review the performance of our franchised trash hauler and ensures residents are getting the proper service. It also allows us to proactively identify trends that can assist in improving our efforts or discover public education topics that can help residents better understand the services offered.

The Office of Solid Waste also added a handheld scanner at the Port St. Lucie Convenient Drop-Off Center, which gives staff insights about who's using the facility and what types of services they require.



Solid Waste Collection

FCC Environmental Services Florida became the City's solid waste provider in September 2022. The graph below shows the total amount of solid waste collected by FCC in Port St. Lucie from September 2022 through November 2023.



	Total (pounds)
Vegetation	66,456,000
Mixed Solid Waste (MSW)	225,288,000
Recycle	48,704,000
Commercial	94,718,000
Special Waste	3,216,000
Construction Debris (C/D)	1,026,000
Grand Total	439,408,000

Customer Feedback Leads to Improvements

Utility Systems

Utilizing data is vital to making decisions that can impact residents. However, as the Utility Systems Department demonstrated this year, it's also critical to listen to what those residents have to say and incorporate data and anecdotal evidence into the decision-making process.

Utility Systems routinely monitors for contaminants in our drinking water to ensure it meets federal and state requirements. And while the collected data showed all the requirements were being met, the City was receiving an increasing number of complaints about odors in the drinking water. Testing also showed decreased residuals of chlorine, which helps protect against germs and bacteria as water flows from the treatment plant to consumers' taps.

As a result, Utility Systems implemented a two-week "free chlorination conversion," an industry standard used to eliminate non-harmful but unpleasant germs and bacteria in the distribution system. By using data and input from residents, Utility Systems was able to resolve the existing issue while recognizing the need to make this an annual preventive maintenance practice.

That same commitment to utilize data for process improvement helped reduce wait times for septic-to-sewer conversions. By reviewing data and analyzing the process, department staff was able to find inefficiencies and streamline the system.

An electronic spreadsheet was developed that documents each step of the conversion process, from the initial application to completion, allowing Utility Systems to track the workflow. The new system has reduced residential septic-to-sewer conversion wait times from 40-44 weeks at the height of demand to approximately 8-10 weeks.



1,840

Projected new construction sewer installations for 2023/24.

500

Projected septic-to-sewer conversions for 2023/24.

Improving Efficiency Through Technology

Building Department

When the Building Department's PANDA software was launched 10 years ago, it was designed to reduce the number of permits that had to be filled out on paper. A decade later, paper permits are almost a thing of the past, allowing for more complete submittals, quicker review timelines and overall faster processing.

Since it first used PANDA in 2013, the Building Department has continued to work with internal and external stakeholders to implement technologic solutions that improve efficiency.

In 2023, the Building Department began to expand the use of virtual inspections. Now, when contractors complete a project, they can pre-schedule an inspection or opt for an inspection on-demand using a free cell phone app. The Building Department also is utilizing virtual roofing inspections, which reduces travel time by inspectors and has increased the number of inspections they can complete.

Because time is money in construction, the Building Department established a one-of-a-kind "permit journey tracking" tool to analyze each phase of every permit. This allows the department to see where a project is in its timeline and identify deficiencies along the way.

While these technological solutions have assisted the Building Department get more work done, stakeholders appreciate it. From making inspection scheduling easier to ensuring project timelines are met, the Building Department's efforts have been well received across the community.



Percentage of building permits that are paperless. That compares to 100% of permits on paper when PANDA was launched in 2013.

431,534 Number of building permits stored in PANDA.

99% Percentage of all researched permits that met or exceeded "stakeholder-initiated" timelines.



Making It Easier to Provide Input

City Clerk

The voices of Port St. Lucie residents help determine the City's priorities, resource allocation and opportunities. There are many ways we gather that input, including participation from the public in our eight active advisory boards and committees.

This year, the City had 50 openings on five different boards. To meet that quota, the City Clerk's office partnered with the Communications Department to get the message out. As a result, more than 100 applications were received.

Public opinion plays an important role in the City's operations. In 2023, we solicited feedback from the community to determine whether varying the schedule of regular City Council meetings would be beneficial for residents. As a result, Council meetings were changed to help accommodate residents.

Previously, Regular City Council meetings were held at 6:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday of each month. The new schedule will change the time of the second Monday of each month to 1 p.m. and the fourth Monday of the month to 6 p.m., providing residents with an earlier opportunity to participate.



Data Delivers Plans for Development

City Center

Community Redevelopment Agency



\$500-\$600 million

Anticipated taxable value added with development

Nearly 70 overall acres

The City controls 60 of the acres (including Event Center building, garage, etc.) 40 of which are primed for redevelopment

Up to 1,900 residential units

Up to 175,000 square feet of retail/restaurants

Up to 105,000 square feet of office space

2 hotels

As Port St. Lucie looked at opportunities to develop City Center into a multi-use, vibrant, walkable destination on the east side of the City, data played a critical role in helping shape those plans.

At the forefront of those efforts was soliciting public opinion, gathering insights into what the community was hoping to see located there. Over a 12-month period, the Community Redevelopment Agency held 54 stakeholder interviews and more than 140 participants took part in two public workshops to offer their feedback.

The City also utilized market and financial data to determine what opportunities might be available. Market data provided insights into what services and amenities could be brought to the location. Financial data and in-depth fiscal analysis offered City Council a thorough understanding of the potential costs not only to maintain the current property but also to develop the area.

As a result of these efforts, in November 2023 the Community Redevelopment Agency Board adopted the City Center Master Plan, allowing the project to move forward to its next phase.

Across Port St. Lucie, the City has been making similar progress. That includes ongoing expansion of Southern Grove in Tradition. Five years ago, the City had 1,200 acres of commercial and industrial property designed to be a jobs corridor. Today, all but 250 acres have been sold or are under contract and international companies such as Amazon and Fed Ex have built facilities there – creating jobs and sustained economic benefits for the City that will last for years to come.

In 2023, six of the major projects developed in Southern Grove were responsible for more than \$3 million in tax revenue for the City. They also will provide an estimated 1,400 jobs, with a combined payroll estimated at nearly \$53 million. And these are conservative estimates, representing a handful of the businesses at Southern Grove, some of which were still not fully complete by the end of 2023.



The Port District

Community Redevelopment Agency

The feedback we have received from residents showed they wanted more access to the St. Lucie River – a place where they could gather, recreate and enjoy the beauty that surrounded them.

As a result, The Port District was born. Located along the North Fork of the St. Lucie River, The Port District will feature spaces for events, a canoe and kayak launch, trails and preserves and more. The Port District is not just a space; it's an experience, a celebration and an example of our commitment to create a vibrant and unique community.

Construction on Pioneer Park, The Port's riverfront park and playground, was in full swing in 2023. The City also secured an official lease agreement with a restaurant developer for a riverfront dining experience in The Port District. The restaurant will offer patrons amazing views and a variety of dining options.

Public access to the river will remain unobstructed, allowing everyone the opportunity to continue enjoying the full beauty of the North Fork, now with the added bonus of an exceptional dining experience.

Anticipation for this wonderful new addition to our City is high among residents. Plans call for the park to open in late spring of 2024 and the first phase of the restaurant to open at the end of 2024. Repairs to the fire-damaged area of the boardwalk and the boardwalk connection under the Port St. Lucie Boulevard Bridge will be completed as well.

Focusing on Community Engagement

Communications Department

Port St. Lucie is a young city, having been incorporated just 62 years ago. It's also a city bustling with young people – an estimated 21.6% of its population is 18 years old or younger, according to U.S. Census data, which translates to more than 50,000 City residents.



Port St. Lucie's Communications Department saw in that data an opportunity for engagement with a vital segment of residents. To help connect with that younger crowd, the City launched its first-ever Youth Council in July 2023.

City Council appointed 10 members to the inaugural council, featuring high school students from across St. Lucie County who live in Port St. Lucie. The Youth Council will be led by its members, working under the guidance of the City's Community Engagement Manager.

They will research, give advice and propose solutions to issues they determine are important to the youth of Port St. Lucie or issues that have been assigned to them. They also serve as a resource for the City on topics affecting youth in the community.

Recognizing the City's efforts to engage its residents — especially its youth — in decision making and strategic initiatives, the National Civic League named the City of Port St. Lucie as a finalist for the 2023 All-America City Award.

The prestigious All-America City Awards honor communities that are working to improve the health and well-being of young people. The 2023 awards identified communities that are breaking down barriers to meaningful youth participation and enacting programs that will improve quality of life for younger residents and all members of the community.

The City was among only 20 finalist cities from across the country.

Even though the City of Port St. Lucie did not reign victorious, it was an absolute honor to have been recognized as one of 20 cities that empower its young people to engage in their local government!

The City did not go home empty-handed, however. The City took top honors for best use of social media before and during the competition! Sharing with our followers how we engage with our youth — our future — was so much fun.



Building a Stronger Workforce

Human Resources

The competition for recruiting and retaining a qualified, vibrant workforce has been challenging for organizations across the country in recent years. Talent is often scarce, which makes filling positions difficult and keeping existing employees satisfied in their workplace is critical.

The City of Port St. Lucie has used tools like the National Employee Survey™ for the past five years to understand the overall satisfaction, needs and general perceptions of our employees. Using data from those surveys provides valuable insights for the Human Resources Department, especially when it comes to determining what benefits are most important to staff.

In 2023, the survey showed that employees were looking for more options in the benefits plan. As a result, Human Resources enhanced benefit options that allowed more flexibility and added value. The City has seen increased participation in benefit offerings and programs because of these efforts.

Employees have maintained steady levels of satisfaction since the survey began and their trust in City leadership remains strong. In 2023, 89% of employees said they felt positive about working for the City of Port St. Lucie, higher than benchmark communities nationwide.

Using data to inform workforce decisions and to shape the culture of the organization is an important part of the work being done by our Human Resources Department.

Those efforts were recognized when the City received the 2023 Public Sector Human Resources Association Small Agency Award of Excellence. This national award recognizes the overall quality, accomplishments and contributions of an agency human resource program that exceeds the normal operation of a “good government human resource program.”

The awards nomination focused on several Human Resources initiatives and accomplishments that were tied to the City’s Strategic Plan involving leadership, culture, talent, technology and innovation.



42

The number of days on average it took to fill job openings in 2022/23. That was a 24% reduction from two years ago and 19% from the previous year.

10.5%

The overall employee turnover rate for the City. That was a 4.5% decrease from the previous year.

95%

The percentage of employees surveyed who planned to be working for the City a year from now.

Driving Project Management with Data

Facilities Maintenance



2,541

Work orders completed by the Facilities team in 2022/23. That's a 27% increase from the period three years prior.

96%

The percentage of scheduled preventive maintenance tasks completed, a 6% increase from three years prior.

Keeping the City of Port St. Lucie's facilities running smoothly is an ongoing effort that balances everything from project management to preventive maintenance to quickly handling immediate fixes.

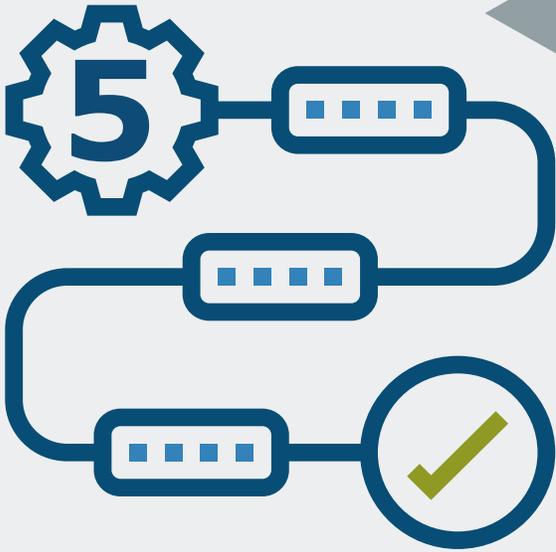
To ensure all of those projects across the City are managed as effectively and efficiently as possible, the Facilities Department uses key performance measures to determine how they're doing. The measures are based on the number of projects managed, work orders completed and the efficiency of completing preventive maintenance on equipment.

By tracking the maintenance and project requests, the Facilities team can see not just how many they're receiving but also how fast they're being completed. It also allows them to look for ways to increase efficiency.

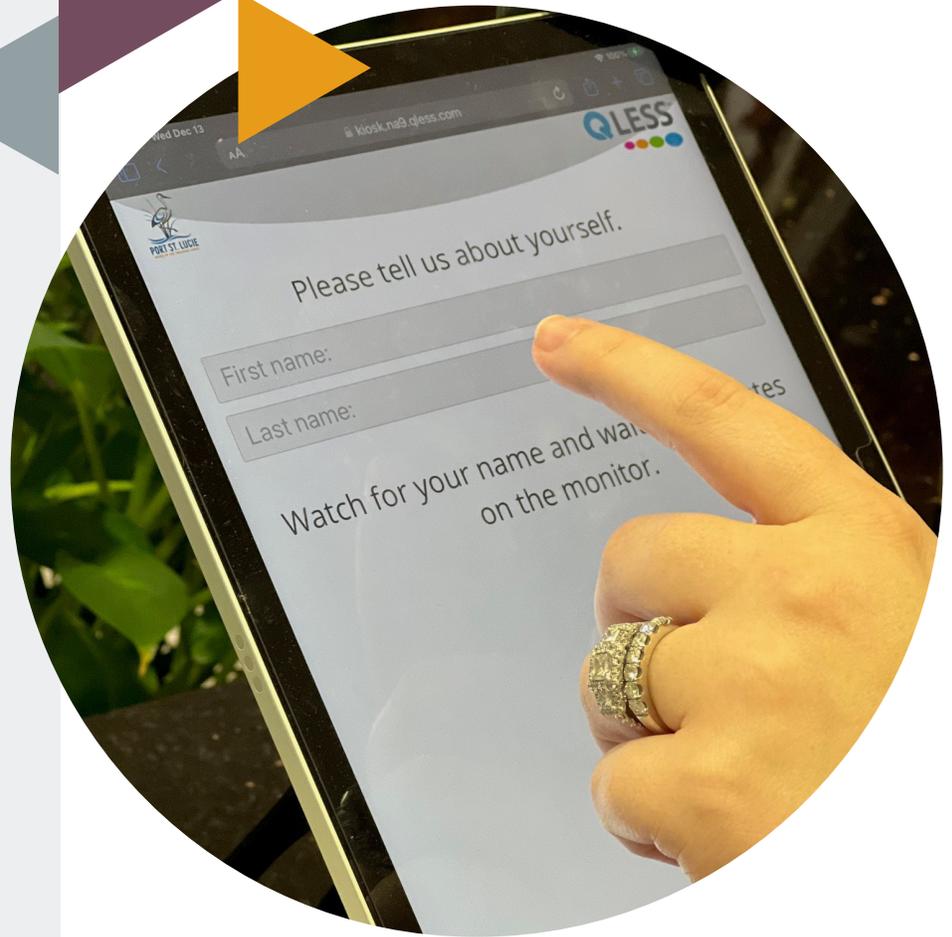
A software program was developed for tracking projects and department members were trained to use it for work orders and construction projects. The tool provides key information to effectively communicate and manage work.

It's paying dividends. Across the Facilities Department there are improved efficiencies, even as the number of work requests increases – demonstrating the value data provides in getting the job done.





The average number of business days for requests to be processed by Lien Services and Business Tax Division. This is a new measure in 2022/23 to reflect workflow improvements made by new technologies.



Making Transactions Easier with Technology

Finance Department

Making it easy to do business with the City of Port St. Lucie is among our most important priorities. This year, the Finance Department utilized innovative technologies designed to make routine tasks more efficient – benefiting customers and City staff.

Understanding those customers’ needs and finding solutions required listening to stakeholders and collaboration. The Finance team heard customers’ challenges, then worked with the City’s IT Department to identify ways that current or new technologies could make things easier for everyone involved.

Those efforts led the Business Tax Division to begin using a new tool known as QLess, virtual queuing software that reduces wait times by allowing users to schedule an appointment in advance or join a

queue online or once they arrive in person. The technology has the potential to serve as a model for other departments across the City based upon its performance.

In addition, Lien Services updated its website application to streamline processes. The digital tool allows users to check the status of a lien without having to call or email then wait for staff to be available or reply. It also allows them to add multiple requests and make one payment for all of them. Previously, each request had to be paid individually and customers could only make 10 requests per hour.

Using technology to improve workflows has improved the customer experience and staff efficiency – creating a win-win opportunity for our City and residents.



Preparing for Storms by Learning from Others

Emergency Management

One of the most effective ways to improve a community's response to emergency situations is to learn from the experiences of others.

In 2023, staff attended seminars held by emergency managers from communities that sustained hurricane damage in recent years. Their lessons learned illustrated where things went well, but also highlighted areas for improvement.

Among the opportunities discussed at the seminars were communications that should be performed well in advance of a tropical storm to increase residents' preparation. Following the seminars, the City's Emergency Management team developed storm preparation messages and launched an outreach campaign to provide information that can help Port St. Lucie be better prepared the next time a storm approaches.

Reducing Flood Insurance Premiums

Emergency Management

Port St. Lucie residents who carry flood insurance received a 10-25% discount on their policies after the City improved our Community Ratings System (CRS) by three classes.

CRS is a voluntary program coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that local governments can opt into to improve their jurisdiction's flood mitigation practices. The better the rating, the larger the flood insurance discount residents receive.

Departments across the City collaborated on several actions that ultimately improved the CRS rating, including:

- Education, training and information distribution for residents and staff.
- Actively monitoring elevation certificates of structures built or substantially improved within the Special Flood Hazard Area.
- Maintaining open spaces and water catchment areas, which decreases flooding in residential areas.



2,600

The number of people who attended the 2023 Hurricane Expo.

20

The number of named storms in the Atlantic basin this year, the fourth most in a season since 1950.

14

The average number of named storms per season.

Providing Innovation Tools

IT Department

While the City of Port St. Lucie's IT Department does not typically engage directly with the public, it plays a critical role in supporting the City's efforts for data usage and innovation through technology.

Throughout 2023, IT worked with departments to develop customized dashboards that can provide nearly real-time data. This helps departments in planning and developing initiatives, while optimizing their operational efficiencies.

As an example of how these tools can be used, this year the IT Department introduced a paperless purchase request system that improves the City's technology procurement. The system has streamlined the entire process, ensuring requested items are inputted promptly. The journey from initial requisition to deployment is meticulously tracked with an audit trail of approvals every step of the way to ensure accountability.

Working collaboratively with departments across the City, IT is helping to provide the tools that make innovation and data-informed decisions possible.



33%

The percentage increase in how many systems IT supports from 2019/2020 to 2022/23.



10,687

The number of support requests IT received in 2022/23.





Finding New Ways to Share Budget Insights

Office of Management and Budget

Throughout the year, City Council and staff pay close attention to the priorities, needs and feedback residents provide. That input plays a significant role in how the City's budget is put together every year.

The Office of Management and Budget is committed to helping residents understand how their taxes are used to provide vital services to the community. In 2023, OMB added a new tool that provides residents with an unofficial, itemized receipt showcasing how the City of Port St. Lucie spends tax dollars.

The Balancing Act's Tax Receipt Tool offers a transparent breakdown of programs and services supported by residents' municipal tax contributions, ensuring transparency and accountability in public spending. By simply entering a property's taxable value, the tool will show what the owner spends on the City's portion of their tax bill and where the money is spent. Residents can access this tool at www.CityofPSL.com/taxes

OMB takes the same collaborative information-sharing approach within City Hall as well. This year OMB instituted a quarterly forum with City departments to offer guidance on procurement policies and industry best practices. By sharing data and decision-making strategies, OMB is helping departments implement the best possible purchasing practices.

Want a receipt for your City of Port St. Lucie Fiscal 2023-24 taxes?

Answer a few questions to estimate how much you paid. PSL accounts for only 22% of total tax bill.

Enter your property's taxable value. If unknown, click on the turquoise info icon (i) to determine using the Property Appraiser's website. 

Own More Than One?

[Add Another](#)

[View Your Tax Receipt for the City of PSL property taxes only.](#)



The number of formal procurements submitted to City Council for approval.



The consecutive number of years the millage rate has been reduced.



Percentage of the City's long-term debt has been reduced the past 14 years.

Using Data to Engage the Community

Neighborhood Services Department

The Neighborhood Improvement and Community Engagement (NICE) program used data from the annual community survey to pilot new and innovative ways to increase engagement with residents across Port St. Lucie. Though respondents rated the quality of life in the City's neighborhoods very high, the survey also revealed an opportunity to improve residents' sense of connection and engagement with their community.

So, NICE changed the traditional format of its bi-annual neighborhood meetings to engaging networking events called Neighborhood Socials, which featured food, activities and games for everyone. This was combined with stations set up by City staff, who provided information about the City while surveying attendees on issues and frequently asked questions they may have.

As a result of these changes, the NICE Neighborhood Socials held in the spring and fall of 2023 had a record number of participants. This expanded engagement will help Neighborhood Services continue to understand the needs of residents across the City and build on opportunities that can improve quality of life in our community.



The percentage of residents who rate quality of life in their neighborhood positively, according to the National Community Survey™ for Port St. Lucie. That percentage is similar to other communities in the national benchmark.



The number of residents who attended the 2023 spring and fall NICE Neighborhood Socials. That was more than attended the previous four years combined.

Technology Drives Efficiency Across Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Services Department

Combining technology with data has helped the Neighborhood Services Department be strategic and efficient in looking for code violations across the City.

Neighborhood Services uses geographic information systems (GIS) technology that can create, manage, analyze and map different types of data. This allows Code Compliance staff to map for current and historical code violations, study the spatial data and strategically plan and perform sweeps.

Field supervisors now better able to orchestrate these operations, ensuring comprehensive coverage and continuous monitoring of all designated zones, improving efficiency and effectiveness in preserving the City's vibrant neighborhoods.





Research and Data Drive Entertainment Choices

MIDFLORIDA Event Center

A large new digital sign on U.S. 1 highlights the latest entertainment acts coming to the MIDFLORIDA Event Center. People might not realize how much research went into bringing entertainment options to the City of Port St. Lucie.

Every year, the City seeks input from residents through the annual survey and Citizen Summit to determine what kinds of concerts or entertainment they would like to see at the Event Center. Utilizing that information allows Event Center staff to look for acts that will resonate with local audiences.

Industry data also is used to provide insights into the box office data from shows performed over the past two decades for more than 319,000 artists. The data helps predict potential ticket sales and which artists might be worth bringing to the venue. That information gets blended with other data such as past ticket sales, social media statistics and any other insights that can indicate whether an event could result in strong attendance.

Data gathering doesn't stop once the events are over. Event Center staff collect survey information that allows them to improve customer service for clients and guests – all with a goal of providing the best possible experience for visitors.

2023 Concerts

Scotty McCreery with Special Guest Callista Clark

Everclear with Special Guest David Cook

Sister Hazel & Soul Asylum with Special Guest Kevn Kinney

Ambassadors of Swing

Forever Motown

130,494 The number of visitors at the MIDFLORIDA Event Center in FY 2022/23



400 Event days in FY 2022/23



Scotty McCreery



Everclear



Sister Hazel

Public input also has been integral in the design of two new regional parks being planned in Port St. Lucie.



The expansive Torino Regional Park, spanning almost 200 acres, is currently in the design stages. When completed, the park will bring their ideas to life and create a space that truly reflects the desires and needs of the community.



Tradition Regional Park, a highly versatile 110-acre, City-owned gem nestled in the heart of Tradition, will break ground in 2024. One of the highlights of this collaboration is a partnership to introduce the distinctive USA BMX Adaptive All-Wheel Park. The facility will offer BMX biking, skateboarding, scootering and inline skating.

Using AI to Increase Efficiency

Parks & Recreation Department

Artificial intelligence is changing the way work is done across many industries.

That includes the City of Port St. Lucie Parks and Recreation Department, which is using an innovative AI-assisted device to make field preparation more efficient. The automated robot known as “Turf Tank” uses GPS technology and proprietary software to line different types of sports fields, with little to no staff interaction.



This reduces the amount of staff time that is required to perform the task, while also saving on the amount of paint used. As an example, when the Turf Tank is used to paint soccer fields it saves an estimated 8-10 hours of staff time. That allows the parks staff to complete other necessary projects while the technology gets the job done.

Though AI can reduce the need for some human participation, engagement with the community is vital for Parks and Recreation when it comes to planning. As an example, in 2019 residents noted that having access to walking, hiking and paved bike trails was the No. 1 recreational need as part of the City’s 10-year master plan for Parks and Recreation.

As a result of that engagement, the department began planning a multi-phased Wilderness Trail located in the heart of central Port St. Lucie. Throughout the process, City staff sought public opinion to help shape what the plan would look like. Construction on the project is expected to begin in late 2023/early 2024 and soon will be available for public use.



Recreation center users across all facilities in 2022/23. That’s a 45% increase from 2019/20.



Number of acres maintained by Parks and Recreation.



City of
PORT ST. LUCIE
HEART OF THE TREASURE COAST

The City of Port St. Lucie

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