Inspire
PLACEMAKING COLLECTIVE

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Reference: Port St. Lucie Comprehensive Plan Update

Introduction

Every seven years, local governments must evaluate their Comprehensive Plans to determine if they reflect current conditions, meet the required planning horizon, and comply with the most current state legislation. The City of Port St. Lucie must formally notify the state land planning agency (the Florida Department of Commerce) of its evaluation. That letter is due to the state on September 1, 2026.

In preparation for that deadline, City staff have been working with Inspire Placemaking Collective and NUE Urban Concepts on assessing and updating the comprehensive plan to ensure consistency with current state requirements, community priorities, and the City's long-term vision for growth and development. The update extends the planning horizon to 2050 and incorporates recommendations from recent City planning efforts, including the Mobility Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and Planning and Infrastructure Study.

Planning Process

The Comprehensive Plan Update began in September 2024 and involved a multi-year planning effort consisting of:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Three public workshops
- Online community surveys
- Two Citizen Summits
- Coordination with City departments and partner agencies
- City Council Briefings

Stakeholder outreach included participation from City University attendees, developers, land use attorneys, Citizens Advisory Board members, realtors, and the Economic Development Council. Significant interdepartmental coordination occurred throughout the process to ensure consistency among City plans, infrastructure initiatives, and development objectives.

From these engagement efforts, similar themes emerged that aligned with the City's Strategic Plan and provided the framework for many of the proposed policy updates.

1. Promote responsible and strategic growth.
2. Establish a stronger sense of place and community identity.
3. Diversify the local economy and expand employment opportunities.
4. Preserve and conserve natural resources and open spaces.
5. Advance a connected and inclusive transportation system.
6. Foster housing diversity and improve affordability.

Population Growth

The Plan update must be based on population projections extended to meet the 10- and 20-year timeframe. Port St. Lucie continues to experience significant growth and remains one of Florida's fastest-growing communities. The City's population is projected to increase by approximately 139,428 residents between 2025 and 2050, resulting in a total population exceeding 400,000 by 2050. Much of this growth is expected to occur within major planned developments and growth areas such as Verano, Tradition, and Wilson Groves.

Table 1 Projected Population Estimate

	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
Total Population	267,793	308,346	338,960	364,885	387,106	407,221
Net Gain from 2025		40,553	71,167	97,091	119,313	139,428

Proposed Text Amendments

Overall, the updates to the goals, objectives, and policies extend the plan to 2050, incorporate new state requirements, align changes to ensure consistency with other City planning efforts, and highlight the City’s priorities of supporting economic development and preserving open space.

1. Future Land Use

The major element updates include amending and creating land use categories and revising voluntary annexation requirements.

The Planned Industrial PArk (PIP) category was amended to provide additional economic development opportunities outside of the Southern Groves Jobs Corridor. The update will allow for a mix of primary and accessory uses and permit a portion (15% maximum) to be multi-family housing to accommodate the area's workforce.

The Mixed Use category was amended to allow both horizontal and vertical mixed use, which is intended to reduce the current practice of assigning multiple land designations while still accommodating multiple uses.

To accommodate redevelopment, two new categories were created: Activity Center-1 and Activity Center-2. Activity Center-1 implements the Walton & One Plan Master Plan, which envisions a vibrant downtown filled with a mixture of services, public amenities, and housing, and allows for the uses, additional height, and density needed to execute the plan. Activity Center-2 would accommodate smaller redevelopment projects along major corridors and supports a mixture of uses.

Additionally, to ensure that voluntary annexations provide the City with public benefits and have a positive overall impact, the requirements for voluntary annexations have been modified. The changes require that a land use designation be specified, protect wildlife corridors and open space, require a fiscal impact assessment, ensure infrastructure and transportation impacts are analyzed, require land dedication that aligns with the Parks Master Plan, and evaluate the mixture of proposed uses.

2. Housing

The update introduces policies intended to address housing affordability and expand housing choice by providing opportunities to update the land development code to accommodate a wider range of housing types, consider adopting development bonuses and incentives to encourage affordable housing development, especially along key corridors, and continue support for Habitat for Humanity and other housing agencies that provide homeownership opportunities.

3. Transportation

The transportation element continues implementation of the City's Mobility Plan and Mobility Fee framework while shifting toward a more multimodal transportation system and pursuing improved connectivity and multimodal access throughout the City. Major changes include introducing a new Quality of Service (QOS) framework for streets and multimodal facilities. These QOS standards are intended as planning and performance measurement tools rather than concurrency or regulatory standards. They will evaluate roadway design based on desired operating speeds and multimodal accessibility. Additional changes include establishing policies to evaluate bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks and trails, low-speed and micromobility devices, and transit services, as well as enhancing transportation mapping and access to transportation-related data.

4. Infrastructure

The levels of service for potable water and sanitary sewer were both revised to 100 GPCD. Additionally, policies requiring development within utility service areas to connect to central sewer systems and encouraging interconnected open spaces within development design were added.

5. Conservation and Coastal Management

New policies strengthen the efforts that the City is already implementing through Naturally PSL and other environmental and conservation efforts. The update includes policies to protect marine habitats and sensitive natural resources, partner with the county to improve hazardous waste disposal, prioritize the conservation or low-impact development within flood-prone or environmentally sensitive areas, and advance strategies addressing sea-level rise, storm surge, and flooding.

6. Intergovernmental Coordination

The Intergovernmental Coordination Element incorporates the 2024 Planning and Infrastructure Study and maintains procedures to coordinate with local and regional agencies.

7. Recreation and Open Space

The Recreation and Open Space Element incorporates recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update and includes policies to pursue acquisition of conservation lands and improve wayfinding and educational signage.

8. Economic Development

The Economic Development Element has been amended to protect industrial and commercial land from conversion to residential use, support employment corridors and industry clusters, promote redevelopment and infill development, and support workforce development and small business growth. Additionally, the City's targeted industries list and strategy have been amended.

9. Capital Improvements

In the Capital Improvements element, the levels of service have been updated to be consistent with the infrastructure element, and policies addressing financial feasibility have been revised or removed per state statute.

10. Public Schools

The update incorporates the current interlocal agreement with the School Board. Additionally, changes were made to remove school concurrency requirements, as they are no longer required by state statute, and to add policies to document and map dedicated school sites, encourage public school locations within walking distance of residential areas, and prioritize pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements around existing and proposed school sites.