

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development Element is an optional element in Port St. Lucie's Comprehensive Plan. This element will address the economic issues facing the City today, and potential economic issues the City may face in the future. Although not a required element, the subject is important enough to warrant careful consideration when planning the City's future. A plan that provides direction for the future helps provide for the economic well-being of the City's present and future population, and to maintain the City's quality of life.

This plan element recognizes that economic relationships exist between geographic areas. Coordination with various levels of government and with private enterprise can help achieve successful economic development. This element is a starting point and a tool, to promote economic development. Its value lies in documentation of statistics and conditions, and in providing ideas, opportunity, and policy. This element needs to be used with additional strategic actions for future economic development.

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL ECONOMY

The following provides a general description of the local Port St. Lucie economy. The data includes an analysis of industry diversity, major employers, educational attainment, cost of income, and cost of living.

Industry Diversity

In ~~2005-2009~~2014-2018, for the employed population 16 years and older, the leading industries in Port St. Lucie were educational services, health care, and social assistance, which accounted for ~~49~~23 percent of the workforce, while retail trade accounted for ~~17~~18 percent.

**Table 8-1
Employment by Industry**

| INDUSTRY | Port St. Lucie | | State of Florida | |
|--|---------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | Number of Employees | Percent | Number of Employees | Percent |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining | 210 | 0.3% | 89,648 | 1.1% |
| Construction | 9,054 | 13.8% | 768,839 | 9.3% |
| Manufacturing | 2,939 | 4.5% | 483,318 | 5.9% |
| Wholesale trade | 1,552 | 2.4% | 274,937 | 3.3% |
| Retail trade | 11,683 | 17.9% | 1,057,718 | 12.9% |
| Transportation and warehousing, and utilities | 3,578 | 5.5% | 422,829 | 5.1% |
| Information | 1,112 | 1.7% | 193,452 | 2.4% |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing | 4,411 | 6.7% | 687,639 | 8.4% |
| Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services | 6,065 | 9.2% | 967,745 | 11.8% |
| Educational services, and health care and social assistance | 12,268 | 16.8% | 1,577,999 | 19.2% |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services | 5,752 | 8.8% | 883,033 | 10.7% |
| Other services, except public administration | 3,319 | 5.1% | 424,650 | 5.2% |
| Public administration | 3,491 | 5.3% | 392,613 | 4.9% |

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009

| INDUSTRY | Port St. Lucie | | State of Florida | |
|--|---------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | Number of Employees | Percent | Number of Employees | Percent |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining | 242 | 0.3% | 94,058 | 1.0% |
| Construction | 6841 | 8.4% | 677,886 | 7.3% |
| Manufacturing | 3,687 | 4.5% | 470,883 | 5.1% |
| Wholesale trade | 2,215 | 2.7% | 248,949 | 2.7% |
| Retail trade | 14,452 | 17.7% | 1,194,414 | 12.9% |
| Transportation and warehousing, and utilities | 3,682 | 4.5% | 502,921 | 5.4% |
| Information | 1,533 | 1.9% | 171,201 | 1.9% |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing | 3,638 | 4.5% | 715,483 | 7.7% |
| Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services | 8,722 | 10.7% | 1,211,027 | 13.1% |
| Educational services, and health care and social assistance | 19,282 | 23.6% | 1,945,214 | 21.0% |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services | 9,772 | 12.0% | 1,132,844 | 12.2% |
| Other services, except public administration | 4,415 | 5.4% | 491,801 | 5.3% |
| Public administration | 3,133 | 3.8% | 397,251 | 4.3% |

Source: American Community Survey, 2014-2018

Major Employers

Major employers located in Port St. Lucie include the following:

| Employer | Average Number of Employees |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Liberty Medical Supply | 1,670 |
| City of Port St. Lucie | 964 |
| QVC | 1,200 |
| St. Lucie Medical Center | 800 |
| Aegis Communications Group | 630 |

Source: St. Lucie County BOCC, 2011

| Employer | Average Number of Employees |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Teleperformance | 1,600 |
| City of Port St. Lucie | 1,164 |
| St. Lucie Medical Center | 850 |
| Florida Power & Light | 772 |
| Change Healthcare | 549 |

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| City Electric Supply / TAMCO | 225 |
| Treasure Coast Newspapers | 215 |
| Club Med Sandpiper Bay | 180 |
| PGA Golf Club | 177 |
| Keiser University | 139 |
| Remetronix | 132 |
| ABC Medical | 121 |
| Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies | 117 |
| Atlantic Precision | 93 |
| Riteway Linens | 86 |
| Expert Shutter Service | 68 |
| Liberty Medical Supply | 50 |

Education

In 2005-2009 [2014-2018](#), 87 percent of people 25 years and over had at least graduated from high school and [20](#)18 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. ~~Although a higher percentage of Port St. Lucie residents graduated from high school than the State of Florida, Port St. Lucie's college graduation rate is lower.~~ [Port St. Lucie has a lower percentage of residents graduated from high school than the State of Florida, and also a lower college graduation than the State of Florida.](#)

Table 8-2
Educational Attainment of People in Port St. Lucie City in ([2014-2018](#)~~2005-2009~~)

| EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT | Port St. Lucie | | Florida | |
|---|----------------|---------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| Population 25 years and over | 99,755 | 99,755 | 12,532,280 | |
| Less than 9th grade | 3,995 | 4.0% | 718,124 | 5.7% |
| 9th to 12th grade, no diploma | 9,045 | 9.1% | 1,177,678 | 9.4% |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency) | 35,911 | 36.0% | 3,820,275 | 30.5% |
| Some college, no degree | 24,047 | 24.1% | 2,551,102 | 20.4% |
| Associate's degree | 9,015 | 9.0% | 1,058,919 | 8.4% |
| Bachelor's degree | 11,916 | 11.9% | 2,082,349 | 16.6% |
| Graduate or professional degree | 5,826 | 5.8% | 1,123,833 | 9.0% |
| | | | | |
| Percent high school graduate or higher | | 86.9% | | 84.9% |
| Percent bachelor's degree or higher | | 17.8% | | 25.6% |

Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2009 (2011)

| <u>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</u> | <u>Port St. Lucie</u> | | <u>State of Florida</u> | |
|--|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Number</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
| <u>Population 25 years and over</u> | <u>129,416</u> | <u>129,416</u> | <u>14,686,727</u> | <u>14,686,727</u> |
| <u>Less than 9th grade</u> | <u>6,583</u> | <u>5.1%</u> | <u>723,824</u> | <u>4.9%</u> |
| <u>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</u> | <u>9,506</u> | <u>7.3%</u> | <u>1,045,665</u> | <u>7.1%</u> |
| <u>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</u> | <u>42,428</u> | <u>32.8%</u> | <u>4,231,678</u> | <u>28.8%</u> |
| <u>Some college, no degree</u> | <u>29,913</u> | <u>23.1%</u> | <u>2,963,473</u> | <u>20.2%</u> |
| <u>Associate's degree</u> | <u>14,205</u> | <u>11.0%</u> | <u>1,438,630</u> | <u>9.8%</u> |
| <u>Bachelor's degree</u> | <u>17,690</u> | <u>13.7%</u> | <u>2,721,635</u> | <u>18.5%</u> |
| <u>Graduate or professional degree</u> | <u>9,091</u> | <u>7.0%</u> | <u>1,561,822</u> | <u>10.6%</u> |
| | | | | |
| <u>High school graduate or higher</u> | <u>113,327</u> | <u>87.6%</u> | <u>12,917,238</u> | <u>88.0%</u> |
| <u>Bachelor's degree or higher</u> | <u>26,781</u> | <u>20.7%</u> | <u>4,283,457</u> | <u>29.2%</u> |

Source: American Community Survey, 2014-2018

College programs within the City have expanded extensively in the past ten years with more four year programs. Higher educational resources within the City ~~include:~~include Indian River State College (IRSC), Keiser University, and extension campuses of Florida Atlantic University, and Barry University. Each of these institutions offers four-year degree programs.

Income

The ~~2018~~ 2009–median income (adjusted for inflation) for the Port St. Lucie Metro Area is ~~\$57,113~~ \$51,361–per the ~~2018~~ 2005-2009–American Community Survey and the median income for the State of Florida is ~~\$52,267~~ \$47,459.

Financial Health and Cost of Living

The following table compares Port St. Lucie's cost of living to other Florida cities and the nation. Based upon the overall cost of housing, transportation, utilities, and food, everyday costs are lower in Port St. Lucie compared to Fort Lauderdale, Miami and the US as a whole. A lower cost of living makes Port St. Lucie an attractive location for new residents as well as attractive to businesses interested in relocating.

**Table 8-3
Cost of Living**

| | Port St. Lucie | Fort Pierce | W. Palm Beach | Ft. Lauderdale | Miami | U.S. Avg. |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cost of Living | | | | | | |
| Overall | <u>100.85</u> | <u>87.675</u> | <u>108.185</u> | <u>117.9114</u> | <u>123.197</u> | <u>100.0</u> 100.0 |
| Housing | <u>96.954</u> | <u>66.727</u> | <u>104.456</u> | <u>135.9134</u> | <u>142.784</u> | <u>100.0</u> 100.0 |
| Transportation | <u>102.7104</u> | <u>88.1104</u> | <u>127.4111</u> | <u>130.8107</u> | <u>144.5108</u> | <u>100.0</u> 100.0 |
| Utilities | <u>93.998</u> | <u>95.498</u> | <u>97.188</u> | <u>96.494</u> | <u>95.594</u> | <u>100.0</u> 100.0 |
| Food | <u>104.7101</u> | <u>101.6101</u> | <u>104.8101</u> | <u>107.6108</u> | <u>107.3109</u> | <u>100.0</u> 100.0 |
| Housing | | | | | | |
| Median Home Cost | <u>\$224,100\$41,200</u> | <u>\$154,100\$48,810</u> | <u>\$241,400\$403,550</u> | <u>\$314,300\$184,700</u> | <u>\$329,900\$159,200</u> | <u>\$231,200\$183,450</u> |
| Environment | | | | | | |
| Comfort Index (Higher=better) | <u>6.827</u> | <u>726</u> | <u>6.628</u> | <u>6.428</u> | <u>6.430</u> | <u>--44</u> |
| Precipitation Days | <u>131.8134</u> | <u>127129</u> | <u>140132</u> | <u>134128</u> | <u>129131</u> | <u>100100</u> |
| Air Quality (100=best) | <u>7192.6</u> | <u>7692.6</u> | <u>6992</u> | <u>7278.5</u> | <u>5350</u> | <u>5882.8</u> |
| Water Quality (100=best) | <u>5455</u> | <u>5455</u> | <u>3030</u> | <u>5050</u> | <u>5050</u> | <u>5555</u> |
| <i>(Source: Sperling's City Profile 08/27/201005/20/2020)</i> | | | | | | |

Unemployment

The Economic Development Element was revised during a national economic recession. The unemployment rate for the Port St. Lucie Metropolitan Area (including St. Lucie and Martin County in April 2011 March 2020 was 5.311.6 percent compared to a statewide unemployment rate of 10.4%4.3 percent (not seasonally adjusted) per the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation.

In Early 2020, Coronavirus (Covid-19), an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, caused nationwide unemployment due to the temporary closing of businesses in efforts to stop the spread of this disease. In May 2020, City Council approved the Covid-19 Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance Grant Program which provides assistance to eligible residents who experienced loss of income, reduction in work hours or unemployment as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic has produced a short-term spike in the local unemployment rate which will skew the unemployment numbers for the City for 2020. ~~ADD MENTION OF COVID CRISIS UNEMPLOYMENT.~~

Future Land Uses

Lands with a Commercial or Industrial future land use designation made up 43% and 1% of the land area of the City respectively. This compares to 10.0% commercial, and 8.0% industrial land uses based on a national average of other similar size communities. Prior to the mid-2000s, residential development has been considered a better investment in the Port St. Lucie area. However, the City has developed commercial centers including sites located near major interchanges and the technology cluster at Tradition. The required mix of uses in the DRIs reflects this policy.

Port St. Lucie DRIs in the southwest area utilize the New Community District future land use designation. The New Community District future land use designation (NCD) accounts for approximately 19.20 percent of the total land area in the City. The NCD District was created as a land use for Developments of Regional Impact to reflect the mixed use nature of these projects and allows commercial and industrial uses in addition to residential uses.

Port St. Lucie has several areas designated as light industrial areas that provide somewhat higher paying jobs (than the County average) in light manufacturing and assembly. The City is also encouraging light clean industry, life sciences, and technology as a means to increase the number and quality of the available jobs within the City and lower the proportion of retail and construction jobs.

IMPORTANT ECONOMIC ISSUES

Tourism

~~In addition to beaches located outside the City within St. Lucie County, sports and recreational facilities act as an additional tourist attraction to the area. The relocation of the Professional Golfer's Association (PGA) to the City offers the opportunity to expand on the area's attractiveness to golfing tourists. St. Lucie West is the spring training home of the New York Mets. Major league spring training games and regular season minor league games held at Digital Domain Park attract many avid fans.~~

Eco-tourism is an emerging tourism trend that focuses on marketing of the environment. Eco-tourism involves experiencing the natural environment and educating about natural resources without threatening the environment. The North Fork of the St. Lucie River and other pristine natural habitats such as the Savannas Preserve State Park, and the County's Oxbow Eco-Center provide ideal settings for establishing eco-tourism. St. Lucie County is currently in the process of acquiring several thousand acres of pristine natural areas through grants and a \$20 million bond approved by county voters. Developing this market with activities such as backpacking, bird watching, horseback riding, canoeing, camping, and fishing will help expand the tourism season and reduce the unemployment gap.

Public Infrastructure

The ability of a community to attract and sustain economic development depends on the quality of the community's infrastructure. Infrastructure includes roadways and bridges; airports; drainage and stormwater facilities; water and wastewater systems; electric generation and

transmission systems; solid waste collection, recycling and disposal facilities; schools; parks; and any other facility that is basic in daily life. These facilities are the skeletal structure that support community life and economic development. Other elements of this plan provide details on City activities in these areas.

The City annually updates the Capital Improvements Element to ensure level of service standards are met for existing and future development.

Transportation

The ability to move people, goods, and services efficiently is an important part of economic development. The county has good inter-modal transportation access to larger markets through the Port of Ft. Pierce, a deep water seaport and a major regional airport. The [Treasure Coast St. Lucie County International Airport](#) and the Port of Fort Pierce offer important commercial opportunities to further increase transportation linkages. The [2025-2035 Florida Aviation System Plan](#) indicates that the [Treasure Coast St. Lucie International Airport's economic development potential was recently bolstered by a \\$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Commerce Division of the Economic Development Administration. Combined with state and county dollars, this federal grant will help fund a 30,000-square-foot hangar with sufficient space for two Boeing 737 aircraft. Treasure Coast International Airport has also recently made significant investments to expand its customs processing capacity and improve its taxiway system. Airport may attract future commercial airline services associated with tourism, business, and international passengers.](#) In addition, the Florida Turnpike and Interstate 95, as well as the FEC railroad traverse the county. There are also proposals for extending Tri-Rail north through St. Lucie County.

Quality of Life

The Treasure Coast Region enjoys an excellent quality of life. The indicators of quality of life include the natural environment, recreation, culture, safety, education, housing and health services. The perception of an area having a good quality of life is critical for many businesses when determining whether or not to invest in an area. A community must call attention to its diversity, identity, and individuality to attract capital and investment. In addition, a community must continue efforts to maintain and expand the infrastructure and other amenities (museums, theater, sports, entertainment, recreation) to sustain a quality of life enjoyed by residents and found attractive to outside businesses.

Port St. Lucie has invested in quality of life through the development of the Civic Center, the Botanical Gardens, and ample park facilities. The City also supports public art projects and community and cultural events such as City Fest, jazz concerts, and holiday events.

The Public Art Advisory Board established in 2009 was formed to prepare a Public Art Master Plan and recommends specific public art projects, including the selection of works of art, special landscape treatments and architectural enhancements. The Public Art Program requires all new development requiring a site plan or site plan amendment to provide public art. [In November 2019, PSL the City selected Designing Local Ltd. firm to prepare an updated Public Art Master Plan expected to be completed sometime this year in 2020.](#)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Business Navigator Program

In 2017 the City of Port St Lucie established the Business Navigator position to assist applicants understand the land development and permitting process and work with the land development Departments to resolve issues and streamline the development process. The Business Navigator provides the following value-added services to the development and business community in Port St Lucie.

Development Services

- Consultation to determine a company's business needs and provide an orientation to the land development and permitting process.
- Guidance throughout the approval process and clarifying requirements for obtaining a business license, zoning approvals and building permitting.
- Serve as the company's business facilitator with all City Departments.
- Act as a liaison to resolve concerns in the development process to keep the project on schedule.

Business Assistance

- Assist companies with identifying available sites including retail, office and industrial properties.
- Provide information on available City, County and State incentive programs and assist with the submission of applications and approvals.
- Coordinate peer-to-peer meetings with local business leaders, the St Lucie County Economic Development Council, St Lucie County Chamber of Commerce, Treasure Coast Manufactures Association and the Treasure Coast Builders Association.
- Coordinate with CareerSource Research Coast to provide access to labor market information and employee training programs and incentives.

Economic Development Activity

Southern Grove is one of Florida's most unique job opportunity areas for large-scale manufacturing, logistics and retail development. It has the largest swath of development-ready vacant land in all South Florida that fronts over four miles of Interstate 95, with interchanges at both Tradition Parkway and Becker Road. Port St. Lucie has a talent-ready labor market with a central location between several major metro areas, including international airports located in Orlando and West Palm Beach. Village Parkway runs from Tradition Parkway at the north down to Becker Road at the south, offering four miles of completed water, wastewater, electric, gas and fiber infrastructure.

Southern Grove includes both the Tradition Center for Commerce and the Tradition Center for Innovation, home to Cleveland Clinic Martin Health. Tradition Center for Commerce is a 1,175-acre part of the 8,200 acre community better known as 'Tradition'. It is an opportunity for development with the City of Port St. Lucie with over 10 million square feet of office, industrial, warehouse and retail space. Parcel sizes are flexible to allow for opportunity for large-footprint users. Potential development include manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, corporate office, medical office, research & development, retail, multi-family residential, hospitality and educational uses.

The City has also experienced growth in the manufacturing and healthcare sectors in St Lucie West, the Midway Business Center as well as the Tradition Center for Commerce. The following table summarizes the recent expansions, job creation and capital expenditures of companies expanding or relocating to the City of Port St Lucie.

| PROJECT/COMPANY NAME | INDUSTRY | BASELINE JOBS | PROJECTED NEW JOBS | 2019 EXISTING JOBS | BLDG SQ FT | CAP EX |
|---|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|
| A&G Pools | Construction Services | 60 | 10 | 89 | 19,000 | |
| Expert Shutters | Manufacturing | 31 | 10 | 69 | 24,800 | \$ 2,000,000 |
| TAMCO/City Electric Supply | Manufacturing | 210 | 50 | 211 | 411,000 | \$ 38,000,000 |
| Oculus Surgical | Manufacturing | 27 | 50 | 46 | 53,000 | \$ 8,000,000 |
| Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Inst/Vaxine (FRIC) | Life Sciences Research | 0 | 100 | - | 107,000 | \$ 50,000,000 |
| Accel Florida | Manufacturing | 0 | 125 | - | 150,000 | \$ 25,500,000 |
| Convey Health Solutions | Professional Services | 200 | 150 | 420 | 65,000 | \$ 250,000 |
| Ross Mixing | Manufacturing | 40 | 16 | 40 | 55,000 | \$ 5,000,000 |
| Teleperformance | Business Support Services | | 300 | | | \$ 7,100,000 |
| Drexel Metals | Manufacturing | 0 | 25 | 13 | 25,000 | |
| McKesson | Business Support Services | | 150 | | | |
| iVox Solutions | Business Support Services | | 300 | | | |
| | | | 941 | 473 | 145,000 | \$ 12,350,000 |

Targeted Industries

Per the St. Lucie EDC, St. Lucie County's The City of Port St. Lucie's Targeted Industry list provides direction in its economic development programming. The City intends to focus on industries that have the potential for long-term employment for Port St. Lucie residents and that will contribute to the City's overall quality of life. The targeted industry list is as follows:

- AgTech/Nutraceuticals
- Manufacturing
- Aviation/ Marine/Composite Materials
- Information Technology/Educational Services
- Distribution/Logistics
- Life Sciences

- Aerospace/Engineering
- Agriculture/Aquaculture/Food Processing
- Boats and Marine Related Manufacturing
- Business/Financial Services
- Electronic Related Industries
- Fabricated Metal Products
- Film Industry
- Golf and Recreation
- International Trade
- Manufacturing
- Medical Industries
- Pharmaceutical
- Plastics Manufacturing
- Professional Sports
- Research and Development
- Tourism/Entertainment
- Transportation Hub Development
- (Multi-modal Distribution)

Economic Development Accomplishments

The City continues to diversify the local economy and create jobs. Port St. Lucie is the spring training home of the New York Mets, a major league baseball team and home of its minor league team, the St. Lucie Mets. The Professional Golf Association has a home at PGA Village and along with their outstanding golf courses has built a state of the art PGA learning center. Indian River State College, Keiser University, Florida Atlantic University and Barry University have facilities located within Port St. Lucie providing excellent higher education opportunities.

In recent years, the City in partnership with St. Lucie County and the Economic Development Council (EDC) of St. Lucie County recruited three major life science institutions. The EDC is also a partner in Florida's Research Coast. Florida's Research Coast was established in 1998

as a regional economic development initiative. It includes Indian River County, Martin County, St. Lucie County, and Okeechobee County.

FIU at Torrey Pines

The biotech industry took root in the City with the relocation of the Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies from its location in Southern California. The City built a 100,000 square foot laboratory and office space, and Torrey Pines moved into the new facility in January 2009. Torrey Pines employs 95 scientists and is expected to employ 190 employees at their final build out phase.

The Mann Research Center has also made a commitment to locate in Port St. Lucie. Eventually, other companies will emerge to provide supplies and services for these prestigious institutions

The Florida Board of Governors approved the merger of Florida International University (FIU) with Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies in 2020. FIU plans to conduct research in the fields of brain cancer, Alzheimer's disease, ALS, Parkinson's disease and other memory disorders. FIU estimates it will spend \$5 million over the next decade to address deferred maintenance of Torrey Pines building including a ventilation system, roofing, doors, and exterior paint. FIU plans to increase the number of research teams at Torrey Pines from four to eighteen within three years and intends to increase grant funding from \$2.2 million annually to \$18 million.

~~The biotech industry is taking root in the City with the relocation of the Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies from its location in Southern California. The City built a 100,000 square foot laboratory and office space and Torrey Pines moved into the new facility in January 2009. Torrey Pines employs 95 scientists and is expected to employ 190 employees at their final build out phase.~~

~~The Oregon Health and Science University's Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute (VGTI) began construction on their new facility in October 2010 and is expected to occupy their laboratories and offices in 2012. They expect to employ 220 scientists and support staff. The Mann Research Center has also made a commitment to locate in Port St. Lucie. Eventually, other companies will emerge to provide supplies and services for these prestigious institutions.~~

~~Digital Domain has also opened in Port St. Lucie in the Tradition area expecting to employ 500 people by 2014. It is expected that complementary research centers and businesses will open in Port St. Lucie.~~

The Tradition Area in Port St. Lucie has become a technology cluster with three prestigious biotechnology institutions: Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies, Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute, and the Mann Research Center, LLC having located operations in this area. Other technology companies such as the digital animation studio, Digital Domain may complement the technology cluster in Tradition.

Cleveland Clinic Florida Research and Innovation Center

The former Oregon Health and Science University's Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute (VGTI) has become Cleveland Clinic's Florida Innovation and Research Center. The Center is managed by Cleveland Clinic's Lerner Institute and will create a translational vaccine and immunotherapy institute that will become the focal point for development of therapies across the areas of cancer, neuroscience, infectious disease and allergies. The aim will be to connect the new institute with local clinical and science research groups, and to seed new opportunities

to enable teams of clinical scientists, physicians, and basic science teams to develop strategies to improve patient care nationwide. Vaxine is an international biotechnology that will relocate its corporate headquarters to the Florida Innovation and Research Center. Vaxine is developing clinical stage immunotherapies and vaccines across infectious disease, cancer, allergy and drug addiction. The Center will also house researchers from Florida International University and the recently announced Cleveland Clinic Center for Global and Emerging Pathogens Research which will broaden the understanding of emerging pathogens. The projected number of jobs created from this research collaborative is 100 jobs paying an average wage \$47,652 which represents 125% of the average wage in St Lucie County as of 2019.

Business Retention and Expansion

One of the EDC's key programs is the development of a Business Retention and Expansion program (BRE) for businesses located in Port St. Lucie through a collaborative effort between St. Lucie County's Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast, St. Lucie County's Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County.

The BRE Program tries to identify the following:

- Companies at risk.
- Companies ready for expansion.
- Company business needs - Uncover business needs, local factors, or trends that might lead a company to shutdown, relocate or expand.
- Communication - Establish an on-going communication between the public and private sector, and **sector and** build a pro-business attitude for local businesses.
- Knowledge - Build a knowledge base of how the local economy works.

Economic Development Incentives

The City of Port St. Lucie and St. Lucie County have a number of incentives for business to relocate to St. Lucie County. They include:

- Job Growth Investment Grant
- Ad Valorem Tax Abatement
- Industrial Development Revenue Bonds
- Economic Development Impact Fee Mitigation
- Foreign Trade Zone
- Brownfield Site
- Franchise Fee Rebate

The City of Port St. Lucie supports creation of new business by holding new business training classes with sessions in English, Spanish and Creole. These programs complement the following State of Florida economic development incentives:

- Sales and Use Tax Exemptions

- Qualified Target Industry Grant
- Capital Investment Tax Credit
- High Impact Performance Grant
- Infrastructure Incentive Road Fund

[According to the 2018 St. Lucie County Economic Development Data and Analysis](#), in April 2009, the Economic Development Council and the St. Lucie Chamber of Commerce hosted the St. Lucie Economic Roundtable to discuss the County's transition to a knowledge-based economy and to create a vision for the future, [which resulted in a series of](#) ~~The group authored draft mandates for actions to be taken in the next three to five years:~~

- ~~1) Development of an academy in the public school system that is aligned with the economic sector's needs.~~
- ~~2) A trans-disciplinary approach in building a public school academy that creates a seamless transition to higher learning.~~
- ~~3) The development of programs that spark interest in science and math at an early age.~~
- ~~4) The creation of an advisory committee of business leaders from the EDC to assist the school superintendent.~~

[As a result of this action plan, in 2009 St. Lucie County in partnership with the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County was able to create a 3,000 new, high wage jobs; a thousand of which are also high wage, high skill positions. By 2010, St. Lucie County became the new home of prestigious biotechnology institutions such as the Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies, and the Mann Research Center, LLC.](#)

[The Economic Strategy Center of the National Community Development Services presented to the St. Lucie Economic Development Council in January 2018 their report titled Economic Impact Analysis Return on Investment, 2015-2017 summarizing the more recent successes of the EDC's partnerships with local governments. During the period the EDC worked on 29 projects that retained and created 2,867 jobs, the largest of which are represented by Maverick Boat Group's current expansion and Tradition Medical Center phase I and phase II expansions.](#)

Additionally, the group determined to work collaboratively between City management and County administration to publish an official vision statement for the County and create a list of potential financing opportunities.

Economic Development History

In 1993 the U.S. Economic Development Administration awarded St. Lucie County a grant to fund a county-wide economic plan. The development of the county's draft Economic Plan involved the creation of two requisite work products, a base study document entitled Economic Activities in St. Lucie County (1995), and a second document called Vision St. Lucie (1995).

As part of Vision St. Lucie, the City completed the following to support economic development:

- Internet homepage providing information about the City.
- City beautification projects (i.e. landscaping, signage, entry features).
- Development of a new City motto.
- Support of design improvements for Port St. Lucie and Gatlin Boulevards.
- Riverwalk along the North Fork of the St. Lucie River.

The City is continuing the following activities to attract new businesses:

- Increase quality jobs and attract investment in the community.
- Promote quality development for cultural, arts, and entertainment facilities.
- Promote existing attributes (i.e. PGA headquarters, NY Mets spring training camp).
- Pursue feasibility to develop a downtown or town center as a community focus and meeting place.
- Explore potential.

Past Trends

The economic emphasis at the time General Development Corporation (GDC) designed the community, was the platting of residential lots for sale. The population at the time was less than several hundred residents in the 78 square miles that made up the City limits.

As time passed GDC succeeded in selling most of the 80,000 residential lots they had platted. Low cost of living, sub-tropical climate and a centralized location influenced population growth. The population grew rapidly during the late 1970's and 1980's to more than 55,000 people in 1990 and exceeded 76,000 at the beginning of 1997. However, the percentage of persons in the available labor force grew at a disproportionately higher rate than the number of available local jobs. This trend continues today and has created two situations; a higher than average unemployment rate and a higher than average rate of people working outside the community.

The lack of planned areas for economic development was not a major problem in the early days of the City's growth as there were adequate areas appointed for commercial, office, and industrial use to support the early population. As time progressed and the City population grew at a rapid pace the lack of areas for economic development became apparent. The City created land use conversion zones that allow conversion from residential land use to commercial, office, institutional, and multi-family uses along designated major corridors. This has helped relieve some of the shortage of land available for economic development. The Future Land Use Element of this plan expands on land use changes needed to create new commercial centers in the City.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The City Council's strategic goal for economic development activities is the creation of a diverse economy and employment opportunities for Port St Lucie residents. Two major objectives identified in the 2019-2020 Strategic Plan includes the following:

- The build-out of Southern Grove in Tradition as an employment center for bio-science, health care, manufacturing and other job-creating commercial enterprises, the sale of City-owned land in the Tradition Center for Commerce.

- Making City Center the mixed-use cornerstone of eastern Port St Lucie through the creation of a convention/entertainment district.

The City wishes to diversify the local economy and improve economic and employment opportunities for Port St. Lucie residents. As such, the City's role is to create the best possible environment for economic development opportunities that will benefit the City's residents. The City's business climate should encourage the creation, expansion, retention and relocation of businesses. This goal can be achieved if the City pursues the following objectives: 1) endeavor to insure that adequate areas of commercial and industrial parcels exist to meet current and future needs; 2) provide the proper regulatory and financial incentives to encourage beneficial development of those areas; and 3) continue to provide recreational and cultural activities and support educational training and opportunities to enhance the quality of life. Cooperation with other government agencies, the private sector, and the public to insure that the directions taken by the City in regard to economic development meet common needs and goals is essential.

The City also has a variety of means at its disposal to accomplish these objectives that include but are not limited to:

- Provide infrastructure that will support expansion of industry.
- Consider future Comprehensive Plan Amendments to change land uses to encourage a hierarchy of business centers and growth centers.
- Prohibit the development of single family residences in commercial conversion areas.
- Advocate Economic Development Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for new and expanding businesses offering new jobs, as recently approved by referendum.
- Discourage any reduction of commercial and industrial land through zoning or land use change.
- Continue to provide lively community events and facilities for community events.

The Goals, Objectives, and Policies that follow this section are a means to help realize orderly economic growth. Land use planning, zoning, and fiscal policy should encourage patterns of development that will foster redevelopment and infill of existing commercial areas, and areas and cause new areas to form in a way that will increase viable locations for economic development. The Future Land Use Element of this plan also furthers this concept by designating compact centralized locations including commercial nodes and mixed use within the City suitable for expanded commercial activity.

Economic Development Element

Economic Development Activity

Southern Grove is one of Florida's most unique job opportunity areas for large scale manufacturing, logistics and retail development. It has the largest swath of development ready vacant land in all South Florida that fronts over four miles of Interstate 95, with interchanges at both Tradition Parkway and Becker Road. Port St. Lucie has a talent ready labor market with a central location between several major metro areas, including international airports located in Orlando and West Palm Beach. Village Parkway runs from Tradition Parkway at the north down to Becker Road at the south, offering four miles of completed water, wastewater, electric,

~~gas and fiber infrastructure.~~

~~Southern Grove includes both the Tradition Center for Commerce and the Tradition Center for Innovation, home to Cleveland Clinic Martin Health. Tradition Center for Commerce is a 1,175-acre part of the 8,200-acre community better known as 'Tradition'. It is an opportunity for development with the city of Port St. Lucie with over 10 million square feet of office, industrial, warehouse and retail space. Parcel sizes are flexible to allow for opportunity for large footprint users. Potential development include manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, corporate office, medical office, research & development, retail, multi-family residential, hospitality and educational uses.~~

~~The City has also experienced growth in the manufacturing and healthcare sectors in St Lucie West, the Midway Business Center as well as the Tradition Center for Commerce. The following table summarizes the recent expansions, job creation and capital expenditures of companies expanding or relocating to the City of Port St Lucie.~~

| PROJECT/COMPANY NAME | INDUSTRY | BASELINE JOBS | PROJECTED NEW JOBS | 2019 EXISTING JOBS | BLDG SQ FT | CAP EX |
|---|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|
| A&G Pools | Construction Services | 60 | 10 | 89 | 19,000 | |
| Expert Shutters | Manufacturing | 31 | 10 | 69 | 24,800 | \$ 2,000,000 |
| TAMCO/City Electric Supply | Manufacturing | 210 | 50 | 211 | 411,000 | \$ 38,000,000 |
| Oculus Surgical | Manufacturing | 27 | 50 | 46 | 53,000 | \$ 8,000,000 |
| Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Inst/Vaxine (FRIC) | Life Sciences Research | 0 | 100 | - | 107,000 | \$ 50,000,000 |
| Accel Florida | Manufacturing | 0 | 125 | - | 150,000 | \$ 25,500,000 |
| Convey Health Solutions | Professional Services | 200 | 150 | 420 | 65,000 | \$ 250,000 |
| Ross Mixing | Manufacturing | 40 | 16 | 40 | 55,000 | \$ 5,000,000 |
| Teleperformance | Business Support Services | | 300 | | | \$ 7,100,000 |
| Drexel Metals | Manufacturing | 0 | 25 | 13 | 25,000 | |
| McKesson | Business Support Services | | 150 | | | |
| iVox Solutions | Business Support Services | | 300 | | | |
| | | | 941 | 473 | 145,000 | \$ 12,350,000 |

Business Navigator Program

~~In 2017 the City of Port St Lucie established the Business Navigator position to assist applicants understand the land development and permitting process and work with the land development Departments to resolve issues and streamline the development process. The Business Navigator provides the following value added services to the development and business community in Port St Lucie.~~

Development Services

- ~~• Consultation to determine a company's business needs and provide an orientation to the land development and permitting process.~~
- ~~• Guidance throughout the approval process and clarifying requirements for obtaining a business license, zoning approvals and building permitting.~~
- ~~• Serve as the company's business facilitator with all City Departments.~~
- ~~• Act as a liaison to resolve concerns in the development process to keep the project on schedule.~~

Business Assistance

- Assist companies with identifying available sites including retail, office and industrial properties.
- Provide information on available City, County and State incentive programs and assist with the submission of applications and approvals.
- Coordinate peer to peer meetings with local business leaders, the St Lucie County Economic Development Council, St Lucie County Chamber of Commerce, Treasure Coast Manufactures Association and the Treasure Coast Builders Association.
- Coordinate with CareerSource Research Coast to provide access to labor market information and employee training programs and incentives.

FIU at Torrey Pines

The Florida Board of Governors approved the merger of Florida International University (FIU) with Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies in 2020. FIU plans to conduct research in the fields of brain cancer, Alzheimer's disease, ALS, Parkinson's disease and other memory disorders. FIU estimates it will spend \$5 million over the next decade to address deferred maintenance of Torrey Pines building including a ventilation system, roofing, doors, and exterior paint. FIU plans to increase the number of research teams at Torrey Pines from four to eighteen within three years and intends to increase grant funding from \$2.2 million annually to \$18 million.

Cleveland Clinic Florida Research and Innovation Center

The former Oregon Health and Science University's Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute (VGTI) has become Cleveland Clinic's Florida Innovation and Research Center. The Center is managed by Cleveland Clinic's Lerner Institute and will create a translational vaccine and immunotherapy institute that will become the focal point for development of therapies across the areas of cancer, neuroscience, infectious disease and allergies. The aim will be to connect the new institute with local clinical and science research groups, and to seed new opportunities to enable teams of clinical scientists, physicians, and basic science teams to develop strategies to improve patient care nationwide. Vaxine is an international biotechnology that will relocate its corporate headquarters to the Florida Innovation and Research Center. Vaxine is developing clinical stage immunotherapies and vaccines across infectious disease, cancer, allergy and drug addiction. The Center will also house researchers from Florida International University and the recently announced Cleveland Clinic Center for Global and Emerging Pathogens Research which will broaden the understanding of emerging pathogens. The projected number of jobs created from this research collaborative is 100 jobs paying an average wage \$47,652 which represents 125% of the average wage in St Lucie County as of 2019.

Conclusion

The City Council's strategic goal for economic development activities is the creation of a diverse economy and employment opportunities for Port St Lucie residents. Two major objectives identified in the 2019-2020 Strategic Plan includes the following:

- The build out of Southern Grove in Tradition as an employment center for bio science, health care, manufacturing and other job creating commercial enterprises, the sale of City owned land in the Tradition Center for Commerce.

- ~~Making City Center the mixed use cornerstone of eastern Port St Lucie through the creation of a convention/entertainment district.~~

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

GOAL 8.1: THE CITY WILL SUPPORT AND PROMOTE BALANCED AND ORDERLY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSISTENT WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND PRIVATE SECTOR PLANNING EFFORTS.

Objective 8.1.1: The City will designate staff to work with other agencies and businesses in the development of Economic Development strategies. Such strategies will be consistent with the economic goals of Federal agencies and Regional and State Comprehensive Plans.

Policy 8.1.1.1: The City will provide an inventory of commercial and industrially zoned lands. This information shall be used to produce a county-wide inventory.

Policy 8.1.1.2: The City should coordinate with St. Lucie County, the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County and the Chamber of Commerce to develop strategies designed to meet the economic diversification needs of the community with emphasis on job creation.

Policy 8.1.1.3: The City should work with the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County, which will act as the liaison to coordinate all state and federal incentive programs on behalf of companies locating or expanding in the City.

Policy 8.1.1.4: The City should initiate efforts and support the efforts of other agencies to obtain grant monies and other funds designed to assist local economic development initiatives to increase employment opportunities.

Policy 8.1.1.5: The City should continue regional economic development activities such as those of the Florida Research Coast.

Policy 8.1.1.6: The City should seek to coordinate, where appropriate, City investment in utilities, transportation, and other public facilities with business, employment, and other economic development opportunities.

GOAL 8.2: SUPPORT THE RETENTION AND GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, RETAINING EXISTING BUSINESSES AND SMALL FIRMS, AND ACTIVELY SEEK TO ATTRACT NEW INDUSTRIAL BUSINESSES.

Objective 8.2.1: Provide supporting services for the retention of existing and attraction of new businesses.

Policy 8.2.1.1: The City should ensure the allocation of an appropriate quantity of lands that are desirable for commercial and industrial purposes to serve future growth needs of the City.

Policy 8.2.1.2: The City should prioritize the development of sites with high visibility and direct access to major transportation corridors for targeted industries and uses that encourage job creation.

Policy 8.2.1.3: The City should consider the high priority of retaining employment-generating land uses in appropriate locations during the review of comprehensive plan amendments and rezoning requests.

Policy 8.2.1.4: The City should encourage designation and preservation of industrial land for industrial uses.

Policy 8.2.1.5: The City should encourage new commercial and industrial development.

GOAL 8.3: THE CITY WILL DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN AN ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL ENCOURAGE THE CREATION, EXPANSION, AND RETENTION, OF BUSINESS WITHIN CITY LIMITS WHILE MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ITS RESIDENTS.

Objective 8.3.1: The City will provide and maintain appropriate data bases to assist in the analysis of trends and needs for economic development.

Policy 8.3.1.1: The City Planning & Zoning Department will evaluate and update land use demand data as part of the Evaluation and Appraisal Reports of the Comprehensive Plan every seven years to evaluate the effectiveness of the adopted Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies regarding land use and economic development.

Policy 8.3.1.2: The City should foster a positive business climate by ensuring adequate public services, infrastructure, and high quality customer service.

Policy 8.3.1.3: The City will target the following industries:

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Aerospace/Engineering | Manufacturing |
| Agriculture/Aquaculture/Food Processing | Medical Industries |
| Boats and Marine Related Manufacturing | Pharmaceutical |
| Business/Financial Services | Plastics Manufacturing |
| Electronic Related Industries | Professional Sports |
| Fabricated Metal Products | Research and Development |
| Film Industry | Tourism/Entertainment |
| Golf and Recreation | Transportation Hub Development |
| International Trade | (Multi-modal Distribution) |

Policy 8.3.1.4: The City will support and promote the “Jobs Corridor” area along the west side of I-95 from the Crosstown Parkway Interchange to the county line on the south end in the vicinity of the Becker Road Interchange. The area will be recognized as an employment center.

Policy 8.3.1.5: The City should encourage the development of targeted industries that provide opportunities for long term growth. Criteria for identifying sectors to support include the following:

- Pay higher than average wage levels;
- Bring new capital into the economy, reflecting multiplier effects;
- Have reasonably good future job prospects;
- Involve a cluster of businesses engaged in similar activities;
- Use quality environmental practices; or
- Diversify the regional economic base.

Policy 8.3.1.6: The City should encourage the expansion of existing business and industry and/or development of new business and industry in appropriate locations, as feasible and applicable, in order to maximize the use of existing public services and infrastructure.

Policy 8.3.1.7: The City may consider potential changes to its Land Development Regulations to provide for a wide range of uses in commercial areas that contribute to the City’s total

employment base, provide the goods and services needed by the City's residents and promote the retention and expansion of businesses and attractions in the City's commercial areas.

Policy 8.3.1.8: In order to enhance current investments in the City and to maintain and improve existing structures, the City may consider allowing modifications to standards for required off-street parking, based on the anticipated use of the facility, size of meeting or assembly areas, hours of use, anticipated effects of parking on adjacent businesses and surrounding community, access to public transportation and carpools, and other considerations of need and impact.

Policy 8.3.1.9: The City may review and amend the Land Development Regulations to ensure it allows suitable home-based businesses that generate limited traffic.

Policy 8.3.1.10: Continue to support local business by giving preference to Port St. Lucie businesses in the City's bid process.

Policy 8.3.1.11: Continue to support New Business Training and other public outreach programs to support local business creation.

Policy 8.3.1.12: The City should continue to work with educational partners to ensure there are appropriate educational opportunities, job skills programs, and facilities to meet business and industry needs.

Objective 8.3.2: The City should continue to enhance local attractions and recreational facilities to promote tourism and quality of life.

Policy 8.3.2.1: The City should continue to promote tourism and recreation based upon the City's natural resources.

Policy 8.3.2.2: The City should continue to promote passive recreational activities by continuing to protect natural preserves and the North Fork of the St. Lucie River.

Policy 8.3.2.3: The City should continue to coordinate with the St. Lucie County Tourism office to promote tourism in the City.

Policy 8.3.2.4: The City should continue to support arts and culture as a core component to the economic health of the City.

Policy 8.3.2.5: All new development shall continue to provide public art, or pay fees in lieu of for the Port St. Lucie community.