

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	ii
TRENDS & CONDITIONS.....	8-1
Introduction .....	8-1
The Role of Local Government and Growth Management Policy in Expanding Economic Development.....	8-2
Past Trends.....	8-2
Description of Local Economy .....	8-3
IMPORTANT ECONOMIC ISSUES .....	8-7
Tourism.....	8-7
Public Infrastructure .....	8-7
City Center.....	8-8
Linkages - Transportation & Education .....	8-8
Developing Economic Clusters .....	8-9
Quality of Life .....	8-9
Incentives Programs.....	8-9
Establishing and Increasing Better Locations for Economic Development.....	8-9
Targeted Industries .....	8-10
Film Office .....	8-10
ECONOMIC BENCHMARKS.....	8-10
Economic Growth Team .....	8-12
NON-RESIDENTIAL LAND USE STUDY - FUTURE DEMAND.....	8-14
Eastern Sub-Market Area .....	8-14
Central Sub-Market Area.....	8-14
Western Sub-Market Area .....	8-15
Commercial Office .....	8-16
Light Industry .....	8-16
CONCLUSION .....	8-17
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES .....	8-19

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1	Private Sector Employment Characteristics, by Industry.....	8-4
2	Major Employers .....	8-4
3	Wage and Salary Employment .....	8-5
4	County Income.....	8-5
5	July 1 County Population.....	8-6
6	Countywide Housing Construction (five-year average) .....	8-6
7	Projected Development and Demand, by Land Use Type .....	8-16

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
1	Commercial and Light Industrial Areas.....	8-18

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

### TRENDS & CONDITIONS

#### Introduction

##### Purpose of the Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element is an optional element in Port St. Lucie's Comprehensive Plan. This element will try to 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.

##### Economic Development Data

In 1993 the U.S. Economic Development Administration awarded St. Lucie County a grant to fund a county-wide economic plan. The result of this effort is a draft plan called the St. Lucie County Economic Plan (1995). The draft plan is an effort to provide direction for future development within the County. It specifies the actions necessary to achieve the County's desired economic future, including economic elements in the Comprehensive Plans of unincorporated St. Lucie County, Fort Pierce, and Port St. Lucie.

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). The base study document quantifies local economic conditions to more effectively set a course of action through the economic plan. The second document involves developing community consensus on how the community wants to develop for the future. These two documents with a study entitled Pt. St. Lucie Non-Residential Land Use Demand Assessment (1996), prepared by Thompson Consulting, Inc. for the City, and the Florida Long-term Economic Forecast 1996: Counties, prepared by the University of Florida, provide much of the data included in this element.

The City's Economic Growth Team and the St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce cooperated in the preparation of this element to establish a coherent, effective, and implementable series of goals, objectives and policies for economic development. Accordingly, the Economic Development Element describes the current conditions in the City, selects a preferred course of economic development, and advances economic goals with a set of objectives and policies designed to achieve preferred economic development.

## **The Role of Local Government and Growth Management Policy in Expanding Economic Development**

Many forces affect the local economy. These forces include factors beyond the control or influence of the local government, including the health of the world, national and state economies, interest and inflation rates, national economic and environmental policies, labor supply, and wage rates. Nonetheless, there are factors the local government can affect through the implementation of sound growth management policy.

Basic to public and private sector efforts to bring sustainable economic development and well being to the local community is the recognition that growth management policy influences the ability to achieve economic development goals and objectives. Sound growth management has the potential to increase development efficiencies and expand economic development opportunities. Sound growth management results in the protection of real estate investments, targeting areas for economic development, protection against shortsighted loss of resources, open space and natural systems, and stimulating increased retail and service efficiencies.

### **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 make 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.

## **Description of Local Economy**

### **Population and Employment**

The City's population is currently 76,000± residents, as of early 1997. This accounts for about 42% of the population within St. Lucie County. Over the next 10 year period, population projections indicate that 59% of the future population growth in the County will occur within Port St. Lucie.

The increase in population results in an increase in employment. The Florida Department of Labor reported the combined area of Martin and St. Lucie Counties showed a net gain of 1,100 jobs over the period of November 1995 to November 1996 - a 1.3% annual rate of growth (Palm Beach Post, December 27, 1996). However, lack of higher paying employment opportunities has lead St. Lucie County to have a lower per capita income rate than the Fort Pierce-Port St. Lucie Metropolitan Statistical Area (\$22,668), which includes Martin and St. Lucie Counties, and the State (\$21,767) (Florida Statistical Abstract, 1996). This is partly due to the disproportionately high rate of low paying retail and service sector jobs. Tables 1 and 2 of this element reflect the major employment industries and major employers in the City.

**TABLE 1: Private Sector Employment Characteristics, by Industry  
City of Port St. Lucie, 1994**

Industry	Employees	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	268	2.4
Mining	16	0.2
Construction	1,023	9.3
Manufacturing	366	3.3
Transportation/Utilities	332	3.0
Wholesale Trade	252	2.3
Retail Trade	3,215	29.1
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	939	8.5
Services	4,625	41.9
Totals	11,036	100.0

Source: Pt. St. Lucie Non-Residential Land Use Demand Assessment, Thompson Consulting, Inc. 1995.

**TABLE 2: Major Employers, City of Port St. Lucie, 1994**

Employer	Number of Employees
School Board of St. Lucie County	1,623
Columbia/HCA Medical Center	750
Publix	724
City of Port St. Lucie	560
Club Med/Hotels of Sandpiper	425
Wal-Mart	230
Savannah Hospital	225
Albertsons	125
Palm Gardens Nursing Home	118

Sources: Pt. St. Lucie Non-Residential Land Use Demand Assessment, Thompson Consulting, Inc. 1995.  
 Administrative Services Department, City of Port St. Lucie, December 1996. Personnel Department, School Board of St. Lucie County, January 1997.

The following tables reflect projections of expected jobs, per capita income, population ages, and housing starts in the County through the year 2010. The projections are the most current information available, at the beginning of 1997, as provided by the Bureau for Economic and Business Research, University of Florida and a reflection of general economic trends.

**LONG TERM ECONOMIC FORECAST FOR ST. LUCIE COUNTY**

**TABLE 3: Wage and Salary Employment**

	1995	2000	2005	2010
Non-agricultural/non-mining wage & salary jobs	43,400	51,700	59,400	67,100
Goods-producing industries <sup>1</sup>	5,000	5,800	6,300	6,800
Services-producing industries <sup>2</sup>	38,400	45,900	53,100	60,300

<sup>1</sup> includes construction and manufacturing

<sup>2</sup> includes transportation/public utilities, wholesale trade, retail trade, finance/insurance/real estate, services, and government

SOURCE: Florida Long-term Economic Forecast 1996: Counties, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida.

**TABLE 4: County Income**

	1995	2000	2005	2010
Per capita income	\$17,629	\$21,488	\$26,574	\$32,492

SOURCE: Florida Long-term Economic Forecast 1996: Counties, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida.

**LONG TERM ECONOMIC FORECAST FOR ST. LUCIE COUNTY**  
(continued)

**TABLE 5: July 1 County-wide Population**

	1995	2000	2005	2010
Permanent residents	172,200	199,500	223,400	246,800
School-age (5-19)	31,800	36,200	38,500	39,800
Prime working age (20-54)	74,500	85,700	93,600	99,000
Senior (65+)	38,300	44,400	49,500	56,200

SOURCE: Florida Long-term Economic Forecast 1996: Counties, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida.

**TABLE 6: Population and Housing Projections (1995-2010), City of Port St. Lucie**

	1995	2000	2005	2010
Permanent Population	71,055	86,803	100,672	112,644
Housing Units	31,061	38,157	44,966	50,922

SOURCES: 1990 Census; Port St. Lucie Planning & Zoning Department.

**Existing Land Use**

Currently the City has 2.10% (1,050± acres) of total lands designated as commercial land use, and 1.33% (667± acres) designated as Industrial. This compares to 10.0% commercial, and 8.0% industrial based on a national average of other similar size communities. This indicates that other cities have significantly more areas available to develop economic opportunities. However, the City is planning new commercial centers and does have some key sites located near major interchanges that could function as regional distribution centers and high visibility sites for light industrial development. In addition, as the population grows new interchanges and associated development may occur.

Port St. Lucie has several areas designated as light industrial areas that when used provide somewhat higher paying jobs (than the County average) in light manufacturing and assembly. The City should encourage light clean industry as a means to increase the number and quality of the available jobs within the City and lower the proportion of service and retail jobs.

## **IMPORTANT ECONOMIC ISSUES**

### **Tourism**

Tourism has traditionally provided strong economic support to the local economy. St. Lucie County's 21 miles of beach front shoreline on the Atlantic Ocean has traditionally been a strong attraction, and continues to lure thousands of tourists to the area. As a limited natural resource the county's beaches must be protected to remain a viable economic asset.

Sports and recreational facilities act as an additional tourist attraction to the area. The Treasure Coast area offers many top quality golf courses. The relocation of the Professional Golfer's Association (PGA) to the county 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 the St. Lucie County Sports Complex attract many avid fans.

The seasonal pattern of tourism activity however, creates gaps of low economic activity during the summer months. To close this gap, there is a need to expand the tourist season and capture a larger share of the international market.

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 county contains large areas of pristine natural habitats that could provide ideal settings for establishing eco-tourism outposts. 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 construction and maintenance of new public facilities will need to occur as the local population increases. Ideally, existing infrastructure will be used to its fullest capacity. The City is currently expanding its utility infrastructure to provide additional opportunities for economic development.

## **City Center**

A strong, healthy town center or downtown can be a City's centerpiece. It is a place where business, commerce, cultural opportunities come together. It is also typically the center for entertainment and a variety of leisure and special retail activities that influence the attractiveness of a community.

Port St. Lucie lacks a central business and entertainment district but relies on separate commercial centers. The City should explore and develop opportunities for creating a feasible town center. Potential vacant and developed properties along the U.S. #1 corridor may provide such an opportunity if a master development plan can be designed. Such a plan can be used as a marketing tool to build public and private partnerships for new development or redevelopment to achieve this goal. Other opportunities may exist to create a development project along the North Fork of the St. Lucie River waterfront which would serve as a community focal point and center of pedestrian activity including waterfront boardwalks. Also, recent efforts to develop a pedestrian oriented commercial center in the River Trace area may come to fruition (See Figure 17, Future Land Use Element).

## **Linkages - Transportation & Education**

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 a major regional airport and a deep water seaport. The St. Lucie County International Airport and the Port of Fort Pierce offer important commercial opportunities to further increase transportation linkages. The existing master plan for the airport includes the provision for regularly scheduled jet and commuter passenger service, cargo traffic, airport related industrial facilities and improved airport access. Efforts are underway to develop the seaport with mixed uses such as, cargo, tourism, recreation, resort hotel, convention center, luxury yachting, cruise ship terminal and aquarium components. In addition, the Florida Turnpike and Interstate 95, as well as the FEC railroad traverse the county. There are also proposals for creating a Florida High Speed Rail stop in St. Lucie County and extending Tri-Rail north through St. Lucie County to Brevard County.

The development of education and business linkages is another critical aspect of enhancing the community's future economic base. There should be more emphasis placed on developing education-business partnerships that would provide the education to service high quality jobs needed to retain and support a productive workforce. Florida Atlantic University, Barry University, Indian River Community College, and several technical and job training schools are in the local area. Indian River Community College has recognized the need to make itself more valuable to businesses by offering job training courses that improve the skills of employees and retain high school graduates for the workplace. Enhancing the area's attractiveness and competitive edge for economic development requires the continual improvement of the linkages of transportation and education facilities to outside markets.

## **Developing Economic Clusters**

Clusters of industries form when similar companies locate near other industries that have similar characteristics and require similar types of employees, products and services. Marine-related and aquaculture industries are in the early stages of development at St. Lucie County International Airport and represent a potential cluster opportunity. Universities and other higher education facilities nearby create the potential for providing an education-marine linkage that could establish a sound marketing foundation to attract related industries to the City. The Foreign-Trade Zone status recently bestowed on the airport and its adjacent business park enhances the opportunity. The St. Lucie West Park of Commerce also enjoys a Foreign-Trade Zone designation. The City should emphasize such industry clusters and link them to the educational systems of the area in marketing the area's attributes.

## **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.

## **Incentives Programs**

Incentive programs have become a popular method used around the country to attract companies to relocate. There are extensive incentive programs offered by the State and available to local governments for the attraction of new businesses. Tax exemptions, abatement programs, business and employee relocation cost assistance, up-front cash investment, job creation investment vouchers, tax credits, local bond financing, utility deposit waivers and tax avoidance programs are examples of such programs. When the incentives used to attract economic development make fiscal sense, such incentives should be encouraged.

Two recently approved incentives for attracting businesses to the community are the ad valorem economic development tax exemption and the Foreign-Trade Zone designation of the St. Lucie West Park of Commerce. Additional incentives are available through public/private partnerships with Enterprise Florida, Inc. and should be explored for their feasibility.

## **Establishing and Increasing Better Locations for Economic Development**

The highest priority should be given to renovating and creating new locations for economic development and businesses. Land use planning, zoning, and fiscal policy should encourage patterns of development that will foster redevelopment and infill of existing commercial areas, and cause new areas to form in a way that will increase good locations for economic development. The Future Land Use Element of this plan furthers this concept by designating compact centralized locations within the City suitable for expanded commercial activity.

## Targeted Industries

According to previous focus and vision groups, and the Regional Strategic Policy Plan, St. Lucie County has targeted the industries listed below as those they would like to foster, retain, expand or relocate to the area.

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)

## Film Office

The City has a film office that works with the St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce's film office. The purpose of the City's film office is to encourage the growth and retention of the film and television industry in the City and its surrounding communities.

Film production offers significant benefits to the communities that manage to attract these productions. The City's Film Office estimates that 40% of a production's budget stays in the community where it is filmed. Film production also offers the benefits of community pride and acts as an attractant for business and real estate development. Citizens feel a sense of pride that their community was chosen for an advertising, movie or television project and often get caught up in the excitement of film making. The community's exposure through film and television production can lead to business, real estate and tourism development.

## ECONOMIC BENCHMARKS

In 1995 a "Visioning Summit" was held by Luke Planning, Inc., Jacksonville, Fl. as a part of the formulation of Vision St. Lucie to more clearly define the wants and needs of the community in regard to education, quality of life, economic development, infrastructure, and government. From this visioning process the following specific benchmarks emerged to measure the progress of economic development throughout the county to 2010.

- 1) Increase manufacturing jobs to 10 percent of total jobs.
- 2) Increase the growth rate of average earnings per job to the highest level of any county in Florida or at least 1 percent per year.
- 3) Increase the St. Lucie County per capita income to above the U.S. per capita income.

The achievement of these benchmarks involved the development of several strategies. For this element we will confine our discussion to the areas concerning Port St. Lucie directly relating to economic development. These strategies include:

**Strategy:** Retrofit the City to develop a hierarchy of business districts from central business districts to neighborhoods.

**Action:** The 1997 plan update includes City initiated land use changes to define new commercial centers. Also, new private sector land use changes will add three new commercial centers to the northern part of the City.

**Strategy:** Revise land use, zoning and development regulations in Port St. Lucie to increase the tax base.

**Action:** Residential zoning districts were consolidated in 1996 and a complete update of all land development codes is scheduled in 1998 and 1999 to implement the new Comprehensive Plan. The City also requires the use of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district to encourage a creative mixed development approach to large projects.

**Strategy:** Develop industrial/commercial areas in Port St. Lucie along I-95 and throughout the City with all infrastructure in place.

**Action:** Commercial/Industrial areas have been designated on land use maps, also, possible annexation sites have been targeted in the Comprehensive Plan.

**Strategy:** Develop West Virginia Avenue as a major East-West corridor with a bridge over the St. Lucie River providing access to U.S. 1.

**Action:** Designated in Transportation Element of this Comprehensive Plan as a future need. The City is beginning to acquire right-of-way with impact fees.

**Strategy:** Build additional turnpike interchanges including one in St. Lucie West

**Action:** Possible at some time in the future. The completion of Becker Road should help to promote this idea at Becker Road and Florida's Turnpike or Interstate 95.

**Strategy:** Improve Becker Road East of the Turnpike.

**Action:** Becker Road improvements are currently under construction.

**Strategy:** Widen Gatlin Blvd. and Bayshore Blvd.

**Action:** Gatlin Blvd. expansion is projected to occur within 5 years.

- Strategy: Build the Walton Road Bridge.
- Action: Considered in long range transportation plans. Environmental studies are underway.
- Strategy: Extend Lennard Road to the north to Prima Vista Blvd., and Green River Parkway, south to Jensen Beach Blvd.
- Action: Lennard Road extension required by the Savanna Club DRI; Green River Pkwy. extension funded by Martin County.
- Strategy: Support the Port St. Lucie water and sewer expansion program
- Action: Phases 1 and 2 of the water and sewer program will be completed by 1998 and Phases 3 and 4 will occur over the next several years. Phase 4 will target new commercial centers along Gatlin Blvd. and light industry near I-95. The City is also pursuing an economic development grant to expand water and sewer services into the Village Green industrial area to encourage expanding businesses and associated jobs.

Most of these efforts are underway to implement the recommendations. This updated Comprehensive Plan designates and expands commercial nodes in the City. Land development regulations are scheduled to be updated to implement the new Plan.

### **Economic Growth Team**

The Economic Growth Team is a volunteer citizen board consisting of a variety of community and business leaders. The growth team is essentially a "think tank" charged with the task of exploring and promoting economic opportunities that would benefit the City's residents. The growth team is pursuing the development of the following short term and long term projects and goals.

#### Short-term Projects

- 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.

### Long-term Projects

- 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 for a riverwalk development along the North Fork of the St. Lucie River.

### **NON-RESIDENTIAL LAND USE STUDY - FUTURE DEMAND**

In 1996, the City funded a study entitled Pt. St. Lucie Non-Residential Land Use Assessment by Thompson and Associates, West Palm Beach, Florida. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a surplus or shortfall of non-residential land exists, and future demand for commercial development over the time frame of the study (through the year 2015).

The study determined that the City should be broken down into three economic or "sub-market" areas to analyze long term needs. These three areas have different physical barriers such as the North Fork of the St. Lucie River and the Florida Turnpike. The study addressed these "sub-market" areas independently to ascertain a true picture of conditions, since the physical barriers are penetrated in only a few places by east-west corridors. Following is a brief description of the characteristics of each "sub-market" area.

#### **The Eastern Sub-Market Area**

The Eastern Sub-Market Area, (Planning Areas 6 and 7), is east of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River. This area accounts for approximately 23% of the current population. Projections indicate that population growth in this area will proceed at a slower rate through the year 2015 and will actually show the slowest growth of the three areas. The number of new residents expected between now and 2015 is approximately 4,900 people, which accounts for 9.5% of the expected future growth.

The majority of existing commercial retail parcels are in this area as the major north-south arterial (U.S. Hwy 1) runs through the City within this area's borders. There is approximately 1,075,113 square feet of commercial retail space currently available in this sub-market area. This represents 60% of the existing space available within the City or about 176 ± developed acres. The supply versus demand ratio based on current population indicates a current need for 119 acres, which indicates a current surplus of 57 ± acres. The projected 2015 need based on population projections will be an additional 39 ± acres or 239,000 additional square feet.

This area contains the only regional commercial center (Towne Center) within the City limits. It also has two community centers and two neighborhood centers. Phase 2 expansion of the Marketplace commercial center is anticipated in 1997. This will include the improvement of Jennings Road to provide better access from residential areas to commercial development. This area also includes the Village Green industrial area with considerable opportunities for new light industrial development. Opportunities may also exist in this area to redevelop older projects and link new projects together for a greater town center project.

### **Central Sub-Market Area**

The Central Sub-Market Area is bordered by the North Fork of the St. Lucie River to the east and the Florida Turnpike to the west (Planning Areas 2, 3, and 5). This area accounts for approximately 47% of the current population. Population projections indicate this area to increase by approximately 16,800 residents by the year 2015 which will account for approximately 32.5% of the population growth.

This area currently has the highest population and the lowest percentage of existing commercial retail space within the City (18%). There is approximately 319,054 square feet of existing commercial retail space which equates to 49± acres. Currently a shortage of 196± developed acres exists and projections for 2015 indicate an additional 185 acres will be required to meet the needs of this area.

Small convenience type stores dominate this area with only one neighborhood type center. These facts indicate that several large scale facilities would be justified in this area. Two new land use amendments along St. James Drive are anticipated to provide large mixed use community commercial center development opportunities in this market area. The River Place development will include a combined 41 acre commercial and office center as well as possible parks and residential development. The combined St. James Country Club/St. Andrews Park project is also expected to have a commercial village center focus when this area develops.

### **Western Sub-Market**

The Western sub-market area (Planning Areas 1, 4S, 4N, and 8) is west of the Florida Turnpike. This area accounts for approximately 30% of the current population. Projections indicate that population growth in this area will proceed at a high rate through the year 2015 and will actually show the greatest growth of the three areas. The number of new residents expected between now and 2015 is approximately 30,000 people, this accounts for 58% of the expected future growth.

There is approximately 380,369 square feet of commercial retail space currently available in this sub-market area. This represents 22% of the available space within the City or about 62± acres. The supply vs demand ratio based on current population indicates a current need for 91 additional acres. The projected 2015 need based on population projections will be an additional demand for 208± acres or 1,275,000 additional square feet.

There is currently one community commercial center and two neighborhood commercial centers in this area. Demand projections indicate that at least one additional community commercial center two neighborhood commercial centers and a regional commercial center could be justified within the 2015 time frame. Additional growth in St. Lucie West and the proposed expansion of commercial nodes in this area of the City are anticipated to provide additional commercial centers.

A vacant 48 acre site adjacent to Darwin Square also offers the potential to have a large commercial center in this location. Other city-initiated land use changes for additional office/institutional uses along Port St. Lucie Boulevard will help focus diversification of land uses at this location (see Future Land Use Element). Expansion of water and sewer service along Gatlin Boulevard is anticipated to create new commercial growth and opportunities for light industrial development near the I-95 interchange. New urban design standards are also anticipated for this area to improve the overall appearance of development and provide design features, such as entry points to the City.

The Winter Lakes development currently planned for Section 47 will have a large commercial center. St. Lucie West's light industrial development is expected to continue as well as two hotels, a conference center, restaurants and office development near St. Lucie West Boulevard and I-95.

### **Commercial Office**

There are currently 601,178 square feet of office space located in the City. This equates to approximately 63 developed acres. This figure is in addition to whatever portion of the commercial retail space is occupied by office type businesses (ie. doctors, real estate offices etc). Projected demand would dictate that 54 additional acres would need to be developed Citywide to house office type uses by the year 2015.

### **Light Industry**

There is currently 1,403,322 square feet of industrial space in the City at this time which equates to 115± acres. The Non-Residential Land Use Demand Assessment projects a total demand of 237 acres and the development of 118 additional acres by the year 2015. There is currently 667 acres of land designated industrial on the future land use map which means the City has approximately 429 excess acres of industrial land to meet the demand anticipated throughout the year 2015. Although there is ample vacant industrial land available to meet future demand, there is a need for developed industrial buildings to serve as incubator space for new small business startups and to attract larger industries.

The locational advantages near interchanges need to be emphasized. To compete with other markets, the City needs to emphasize advantages to attract industry; such as available labor market, educational/job training facilities and programs, clean environment and beaches, recreational opportunities, low cost of living, and low crime rates. The Future Land Use Element of this Plan also produces ideas for new mixed land use centers.

**TABLE 7: Projected Development and Demand, by Land Use Type**

Land Use Type	Developed Acres 1995	Projected New Development <sup>1</sup> 1995-2015	Total Acres Developed 2015	Projected Demand <sup>2</sup> 2015
Commercial <sup>3</sup>	350	486	836	964
Light Industrial <sup>3</sup>	115	118	233	237

<sup>1</sup> based on current development trends

<sup>2</sup> based on current population growth

<sup>3</sup> includes retail, service and office uses

<sup>4</sup> includes manufacturing, transportation, communications, utilities and wholesale uses

Source: Pt. St. Lucie Non-Residential Land Use Demand Assessment, Thompson Consulting, Inc.

1995.

## CONCLUSION

The City must work closely 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.

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; and 2) provide the proper regulatory and financial incentives to encourage beneficial development of those areas.

The City 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.
- Consider formation of a master development plan, redevelopment agency, or other actions to design and develop new commercial or city center.
- 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.
- Develop a competitive incentives program to attract higher income industries.
- Explore sources of seed capital and venture capital, such as CDBG grants to provide low interest loans for economic development.

The Goals, Objectives, and Policies that follow this section are a means to help realize orderly economic growth.

# Commercial & Light Industrial Areas

City of Port St. Lucie

Riv/Ken

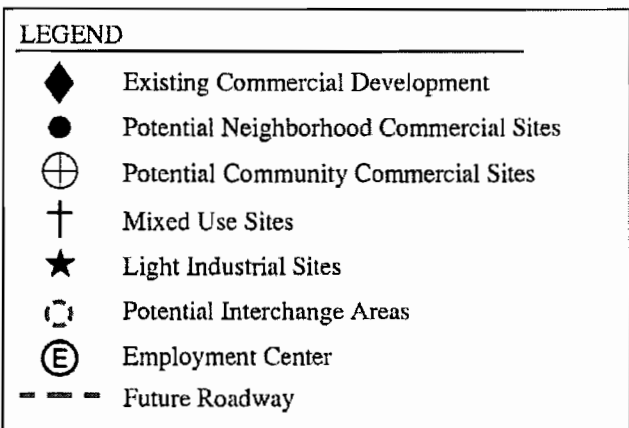
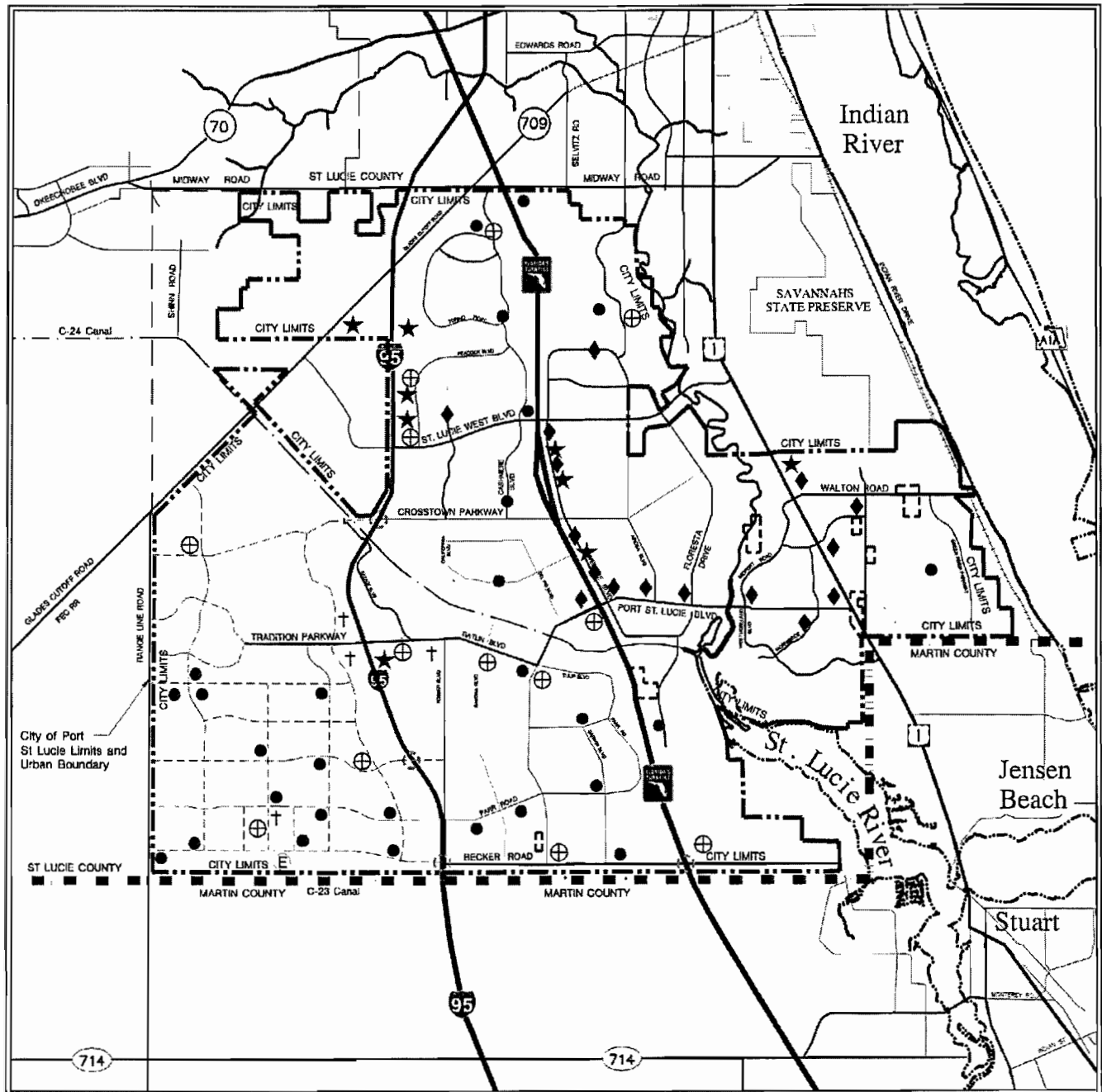


Figure 1  
 Scale: 1" = 2.5 Miles  
 0 2.5 5  
 Date: March 6, 2006



Prepared by:  
**Lucido & Associates**  
 Land Planning/Landscape Architecture

## 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 will examine the possibilities for the development and implementation of strategies for redevelopment, including a master development plan and the applicability of a redevelopment agency.

Policy 8.1.1.3: The City will coordinate with the St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce to develop strategies that provide attractive employment opportunities for citizens who currently live within the City and work outside the City.

Policy 8.1.1.4: The City will support the strategies of St. Lucie County, the Region and the State wherever feasible, providing such action complies with the adopted Comprehensive Plan and City Council policy.

### **GOAL 8.2: THE CITY WILL PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED TO SUPPORT FUTURE BUSINESS AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION.**

Objective 8.2.1: The City will establish utility service areas and continue to upgrade its potable water and sanitary sewer facilities, allowing for adequate capacity for future economic growth.

Policy 8.2.1.1: Continue to expand the water and sewer system to encompass all Industrial land use areas located within the City and utilize grant funds when available to provide for such.

Policy 8.2.1.2: The City will continue to provide for sanitary sewer and water hook up, special assessment, and usage fees to insure adequate capital for continuation of expansion. Consideration of exemption to such fees will be in accordance with other City policies.

Policy 8.2.1.3: The City will continue to maintain the established Level Of Service standards as stated in the Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer Sub Elements of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 8.2.2: The City will provide an adequate transportation system and capital improvements to meet the current needs and allow for future economic growth.

Policy 8.2.2.1: The City will continue to explore additional east/west roadway corridors to prepare for future growth in the western economic area.

Policy 8.2.2.2: The City will continue to maintain the established Level Of Service standards for roadways as stated in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 8.2.2.3: The City will schedule and fund capital improvements and coordinate funding with the MPO and the State for future road improvements.

**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 five 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 will consider creating additional conversion areas such as those existing along Bayshore Drive and Port St. Lucie Blvd. to meet supply deficits and create new economic centers.

**GOAL 8.4: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIES AND DIRECTION OF THIS ELEMENT WILL OCCUR WITHIN A FIVE YEAR TIME FRAME (1997-2001).**

Objective 8.4.1: The City will implement and fund appropriate actions as outlined in this element to coordinate economic development activities.

Policy 8.4.1.1: The City's Economic Growth Team shall continue to work with private enterprise and City staff in the promotion and implementation of economic development priorities established in this element.

Policy 8.4.1.2: Consider the use of economic development specialists , or studies, to provide specific actions for economic development.

Policy 8.4.1.3: Implement the Economic Development Ad Valorem Tax Exemption and explore the development of other incentives to attract new businesses and encourage the expansion of existing businesses.

Policy 8.4.1.4: Establish an economic development coordinator to carry forward implementation efforts for economic development.

Policy 8.4.1.5: Study the feasibility for the formulation of a redevelopment agency and master development plan to create new or redesigned commercial areas, or a town center.