

# Port St. Lucie Florida

October 28–November 2, 2018



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Increasing Municipal Financial Flexibility in Southern Grove

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# About the Urban Land Institute

**THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE** is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 42,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 80 countries.

The extraordinary impact that ULI makes on land use decision making is based on its members' sharing expertise on

a variety of factors affecting the built environment, including urbanization, demographic and population changes, new economic drivers, technology advancements, and environmental concerns.

Peer-to-peer learning is achieved through the knowledge shared by members at thousands of convenings each year that reinforce ULI's position as a global authority on land use and real estate. In 2018 alone, more than 2,200 events were held in about 330 cities around the world. Drawing on the work of its members, the Institute recognizes and shares best practices in urban design and development for the benefit of communities around the globe.

More information is available at [uli.org](http://uli.org). Follow ULI on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Cover photos, left to right: Ashley Robertson/ULI, Paul Angelone/ULI, and Ashley Robertson/ULI.

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# About ULI Advisory Services

**THE GOAL OF THE ULI ADVISORY SERVICES** program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies.

Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 700 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and are screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives, a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 100 key community representatives, and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make

accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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# Acknowledgments

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A special thank you goes to Wesley McCurry and Teresa Lamar-Sarno for their support and putting together the panel's briefing materials. Finally, the panel would like to thank the more than 70 residents, business and community leaders, and representatives from across Port St. Lucie who shared their perspectives, experiences, and insights with the panel over the week.

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# Background and the Panel's Assignment

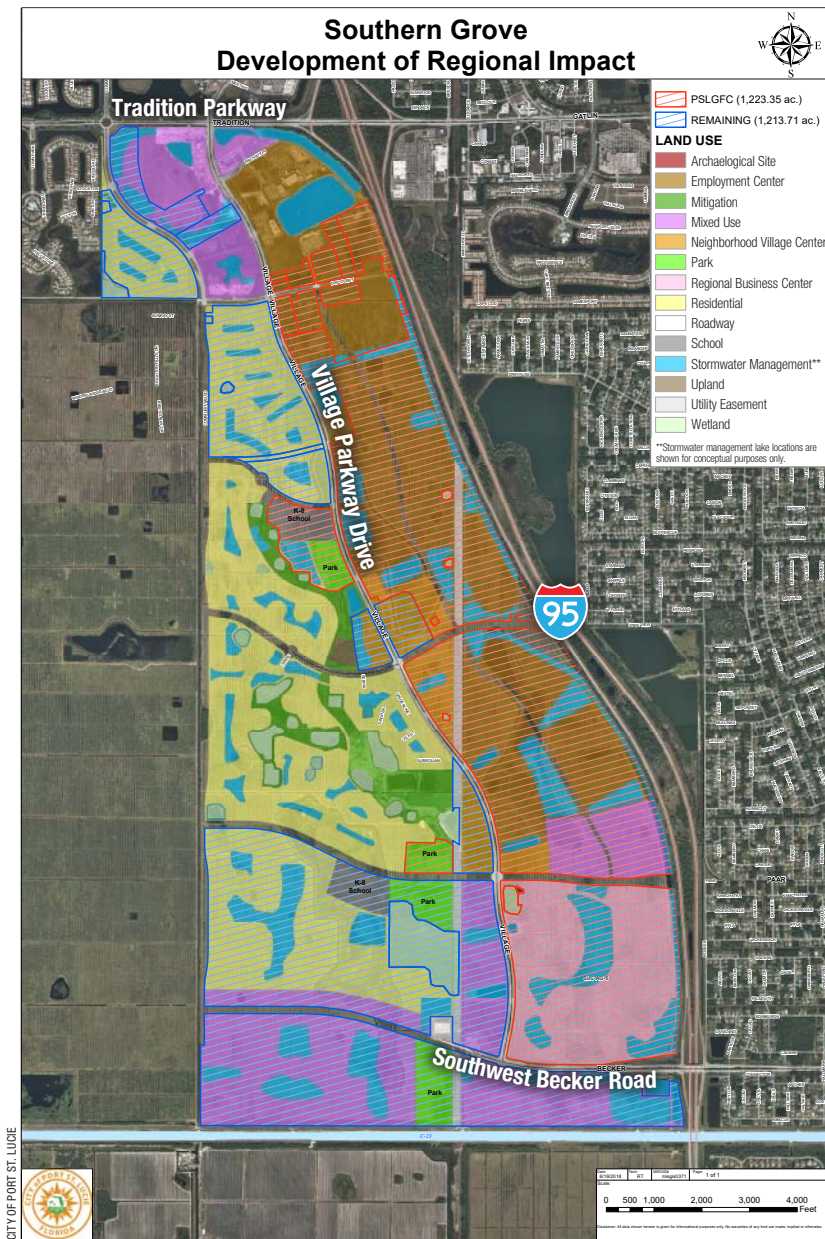
**THE CITY OF PORT ST. LUCIE** is a large, suburban community with a diverse population and an average age of 41. Located along two major north–south corridors that connect south Florida with central Florida, Port St. Lucie lies within Florida's Treasure Coast along the Atlantic Ocean about 50 miles north of West Palm Beach and half-way between Miami and Orlando. The city is the state's eighth largest with a 2017 population of 189,344. The metropolitan statistical area of about 465,000 residents not only includes St. Lucie and Martin counties but is also within the Miami–Fort Lauderdale–Port St. Lucie Combined Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The city is growing with people attracted to its small-town feel, welcoming residents, and affordable housing. The study area is well positioned to enhance and support the visibility of the city in the region, as a place that is vibrant, active, and attractive—a city for all ages. Southern Grove is a 3,605-acre Development of Regional Impact (DRI) south of Tradition Parkway, part of an 8,200-acre region known to the public and marketed as Tradition. The Southern Grove section is the land to the east and west of Village Parkway, south of Tradition Parkway, and north of the Martin County line by Becker Road. This land is approved for a mix of uses, including research and development (R&D), industrial, commercial, and residential units.

*Port St. Lucie is located on Florida's Treasure Coast.*







### Terminology for the Report

Throughout the panel week the study area was referred to by multiple names, including Southern Grove, Tradition, and Tradition South. Southern Grove was the former citrus orchard that occupied the site, but when asked, few interviewees recognized that as the location's name. Instead, Tradition or Tradition South was more favorably received, but this positive branding departs from the historical development patterns of eastern Port St. Lucie. The panel felt strongly that a new name should be established that differentiates this site from other Port St. Lucie neighborhoods but also unites the western and eastern portions of the city. The panel did not identify a name but refers to the site throughout the report as the study area.

in the Southern Grove section, acquired from Tradition Land following that company's exit from the market.

The land, now owned by the GFC and deemed the "jobs corridor," is part of the overall Southern Grove Southwest Annexation Special Assessment District (SAD) and one or more Community Development Districts (CDDs), each of which assesses payments on property for capital improvements or for the debt service on the bonds issued by Port St. Lucie for the overall project infrastructure. Currently, the GFC is obligated to pay about \$5 million annually for its share of the debt service, plus about \$1 million annually in property taxes for the land it now owns. These mandatory assessments burden the property.

### The Panel's Assignment

Port St. Lucie asked the panel to develop a master plan for the Southern Grove city-owned parcels, the panel's study area. The intention was for the panel to provide the city with a vision, goals, and a strategy for the successful development of the study area as an employment center. The panel was asked the following questions related to planning and design as well as implementation strategies.

*The original Master Plan for Southern Grove with proposed land uses.*

Initially, the Southern Grove DRI was to be developed by the Tradition Land Company, but the company did not meet its obligations to the city and abandoned the property. In 2018, Mattamy Homes acquired the right to develop the primarily single-family residential units. Port St. Lucie, acting through its Government Finance Corporation (GFC), is now the owner of about 1,200 acres of land

## Planning and Design to Meet Market Potential

- What are the appropriate and best land uses for Southern Grove, including recommended density and intensity?
- Do these land uses support the South Florida–region market: for example, site location, access, labor availability, and local or regional competing sites?
- What can the market absorb of residential, commercial, industrial, and other types of uses proposed in the master plan?
- Where do industrial land uses work best in the master plan? How does the city facilitate those uses to be developed appropriately (i.e., integration with other uses, limiting impact on low-density residential areas, etc.)?
- What types of businesses does the proposed master plan support? Where? Why?
- Should the development plan include one or more large industrial sites (50 to 300 acres)?
- How does the city support a workable road network that accommodates the proposed master plan?
- Should the city phase the growth of the Tradition Center for commerce by location or other means, or let the market guide its development and phasing?

## Implementation Strategies

- The city considers this area the employment hub. Through the uses proposed in the master plan, how can the city maximize the potential of this area for a diverse economy and creation of industry or jobs?
- What strategies should the city use for marketing, sales, and development for each land use type (industrial, office, R&D, retail, multifamily, mixed use), given the city's objectives and the SAD burden?
- Under what circumstances should the city consider a public/private partnership for development of Southern Grove?



Map of the study area.

## Summary of Panel's Recommendations

Based on briefing materials provided by the sponsor and interviews with key stakeholders, the panel developed a conceptual master plan and development strategies for the study area. Port St. Lucie has a healthy economy and should continue to develop its potential as a thriving jobs center for its residents.

The panel's plan focuses on creating jobs—which should be the number-one goal of the city—increasing the quality of life for Port St. Lucie, and last, mitigating the debt through the development of a mix of uses. These uses include medical and auxiliary uses, office, education, a cultural arts and entertainment area surrounded by diverse housing types (approximately 9,700 townhouses, 975 single-family homes, and student housing), and flexible industrial space with retail spread throughout the study area. The industrial space is intended to be flexible to quickly respond to changing market conditions and designed to build out to between 4.3 million and 9 million square feet.

The panel strongly recommends that an entity (likely the GFC) that reports directly to the City Council act as the master development coordinator to ensure a disciplined approach to developing the remaining areas of Port St. Lucie to achieve the stated goal of job creation and debt mitigation. Additional planning will be required before action is taken to ensure a result that continues to reap the values of Port St. Lucie's residents, location, and property. A more piecemeal approach would result in a less positive longer-term outlook and diminish the ability for the Master Development Coordinator to market the site.

Ultimately, there is not a quick solution, but the panel is confident that with deliberate and holistic actions the study area's long-term value will contribute to the city both economically and in improving quality of life regardless of market cycles.

# Visioning for the Site

**THE CITY OF PORT ST. LUCIE MUST REFOCUS** its vision for the whole community, emphasizing what is positive, unique, and welcoming about the community without compromising Port St. Lucie's budget, to remain a healthy and vibrant community. Implementing this vision requires viewing the city through the lens of a new perspective, highlighting the positive attributes, building on its successes by addressing changes and opportunities within the city as a whole, meeting the evolving needs of residents, and encouraging new businesses that want to locate within the city.

The city manager is tasked with evaluating the skill sets necessary to implement this broader vision, and, if necessary, adding staff or providing existing staff with additional

training or professional development resources to ensure success.

Getting the vision right for the city will directly benefit the study area.

## Approve a Master Plan

Master planning of the study area will provide a thoughtful process for realizing the potential of the study area and will allow the opportunity for staff to execute a market-driven and sustainable development strategy. The successful, cohesive, and sensible development of the study area will take time. The city should expect that this effort will take up to 30 years.

## Guiding Principles

The panel developed the following five guiding principles to move successfully into the next phase as Port St. Lucie moves to successfully implement development within the study area:

- **Quality of life:** Through interviews and discussions, the panel learned that the quality of life and small-town feel are strong attributes of Port St. Lucie. Decisions should reflect these values and ensure that open space, health and wellness, and family-friendly spaces are incorporated into development.
- **Fiscal sustainability:** Limited resources are available to Port St. Lucie, and these should be better prioritized. Capital investment from the private market should be leveraged and help build on existing infrastructure instead of the city shouldering this responsibility or offering too many incentives.
- **Economic prosperity:** Despite Port St. Lucie's geographic size, limited sites are available for future job creation. These locations should be preserved for job

growth. Business attraction should focus on those locations that have a well-thought-out plan, goals, and objectives.

- **Responsible growth:** Smart growth and resilient principles should be incorporated and followed when making development decisions. The prioritization of plan development and the following of that plan—through consistent action—should occur. Diversity in housing, industrial, and commercial space as well as better-focused development patterns that reflect the design heritage of Port St. Lucie's GDC lots are important. Strategic and measured growth will help differentiate Port St. Lucie and better manage the cyclical nature of real estate development.
- **Consistency of action:** Businesses thrive on certainty, which should be provided for the community and development industry. Programs and investment decisions should be aligned and linked to programs, land use, and development standards. This includes updating the construction permitting and licensing process.

## Case Study: Establishing an Organizational Framework

Seeking to bring development to the region and to reestablish the vibrancy of the city in a modest market environment, public leaders of Fort Wayne, Indiana—the second-largest city in the state, with close to a quarter-million residents—have created a planning process to support, coordinate, and institutionalize revitalization efforts in the city's downtown. The process aims at addressing the current deconcentration of growth from the city's historically compact and once-thriving central city to the metropolitan area's outskirts.

In 2001, to incrementally and comprehensively effect downtown revitalization, the Fort Wayne Downtown Improvement District, city and county officials, and private consultants Development Concepts initiated a planning and implementation process that was formalized a year later with the adoption of the *Downtown Fort Wayne Blueprint for the Future*. The blueprint sets a five-year action plan with mechanisms that promote the sharing of information, decisions, and resources between public and private redevelopment activities.

Redevelopment projects are monitored by a Blueprint Implementation Team, which meets once a month with

project leaders to discuss the status of activities. This communication mechanism creates the synergy needed to coordinate multiple projects with common goals and provides incentives for partners to stay involved. The blueprint also outlines priority projects, many of which have been already completed, to catalyze redevelopment, such as adoption of urban design guidelines, execution of market feasibility studies, and appropriation of public investments for infrastructure projects and wayfinding systems. Priorities have also been established through community workshops that allow public input into, and the communication of information about, downtown development alternatives.

The Downtown Coordinating Council, which was formed through a memorandum of understanding in 2003 and includes local civic, governmental, and business leaders, provides overarching leadership for implementing the blueprint. The council's responsibility is maintaining support for redevelopment efforts, for example, by identifying and advocating for financial resources to support revitalization projects and by ensuring that the blueprint's goals are achieved. The role of the council is to ensure that the work gets done and does not sit on the shelf.



*Fort Wayne, Indiana's Downtown Improvement District logo.*

Efforts to quickly dispose of the property with no thought of future planning patterns or negative impacts to the community and the city will result in unintended, potentially long-term consequences. To implement this plan effectively and provide the best opportunity for success,

all current efforts to market or develop new projects within the study area should be halted until such time as a master plan for the property can be adopted. This plan will assist staff in successfully guiding the growth of the study area in a manner that will meet the city's goals and the

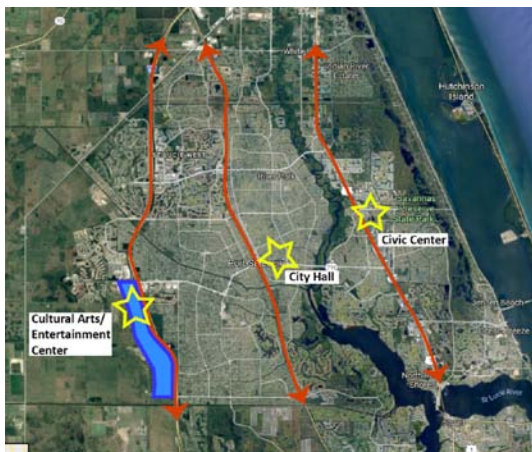
needs of the businesses the city hopes to attract and assist Port St. Lucie in paying down its debt in a reasonable and responsible manner.

To be successful, Port St. Lucie must agree on the plan and program for implementation. The council and city manager must speak with one voice to both staff and the community, providing a unified story and vision.

## Unify and Connect Port St. Lucie

Port St. Lucie is a city physically disconnected, bisected by Interstate 95, the Florida Turnpike, and the St. Lucie River, creating east–west disconnection that many residents find hard to overcome. The panel heard that many residents, both with children and without, did not feel that good connectivity exists between the east and west sides of town. Many younger residents want a multiuse trail system, connecting the amenities planned for the study area with those already offered on the east side of town, such as the Civic Center. This connection will foster a more family-friendly environment. Providing pockets of active space with safe connectivity between, this trail system will enhance the “small town” feel many said was so important.

*Port St. Lucie is a large, sprawling community. With the annexation of land west of I-95, an opportunity exists to recenter and connect the community. The map includes the location of the study area, City Hall, and the Civic Center.*



## Complete Development of the Civic Center

East of the Florida Turnpike, the city participated in the development of an area known as the Civic Center. Located within this development is the 100,000-square-foot Civic Center building, which houses meeting space, catering services, and a city recreation center. The space outside the Civic Center supported city-sponsored community events several times each year.

This property, however, went into receivership and was being marketed for sale to a private developer. With its sale to a private entity, the vacant ground upon which the city has been hosting public festivals will no longer be available. However, the proposed development of the site, with a mix of uses including a hotel, office space, retail, and housing may provide opportunities to reinforce the vision of the Civic Center building as a conference and event center, complementing this surrounding development potential. Taking advantage of the existing parking garage and already built streets, development could happen quickly when markets show interest.

Longer term, Port St. Lucie should consider relocating city government offices to the area to reinforce the civic aspect of the center. This would also enable the existing government center to be redeveloped for new uses.



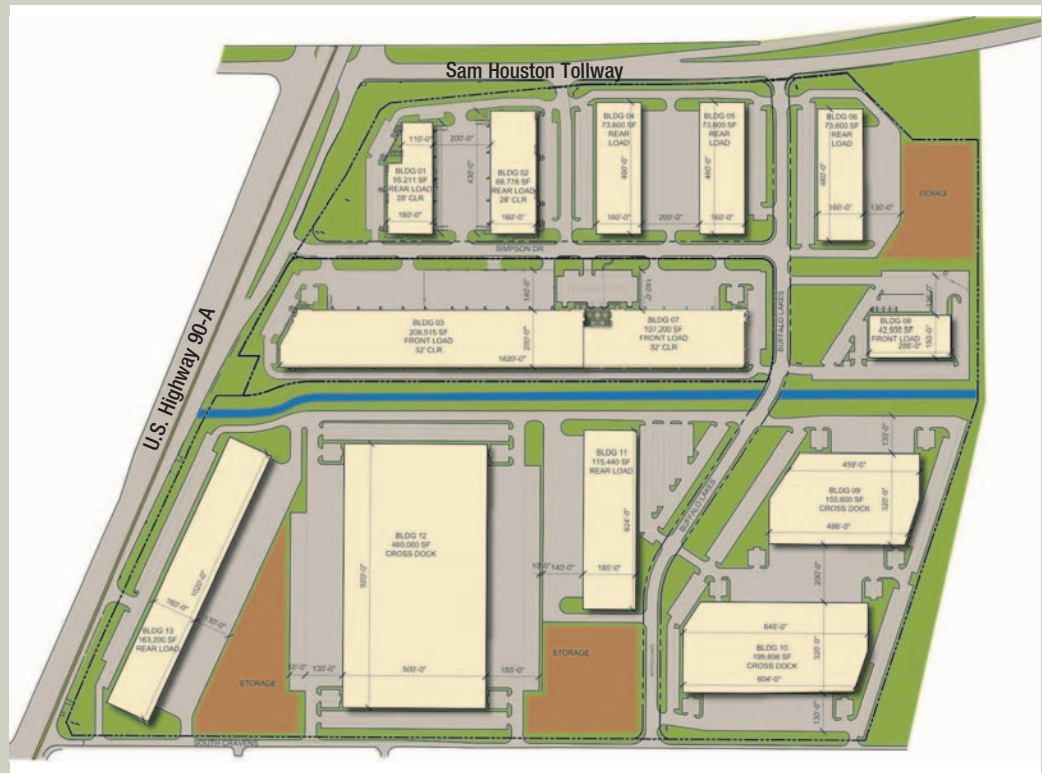
*The Civic Center was intended to be a large, mixed-use development, but because of the Great Recession and financial fraud by the private-sector developer, only the city's portion of the development took place. This development is centrally located to be a community node for the eastern portion of Port St. Lucie.*

## Case Study: Planning for Regional Stormwater Management

Park 8Ninety is a 127-acre business park in Missouri City, Texas, just southwest of Houston. Ultimately, 1.8 million square feet of warehouse and flex space is planned, beginning with a speculatively built first phase of 439,704 square feet in three buildings with high ceilings and wide column spacing. Existing tenants include distributors and manufacturers, many serving nearby hospitals or the building trades. The infill site has excellent highway access but had been overlooked because it was entangled by multiple utility easements that made drainage difficult. Missouri City worked with developer Trammell Crow to implement an off-site stormwater management strategy that raised the site's elevation and created a new recreational lake at an adjacent city park.

A lesson learned from the project is that by working across boundaries—the parcel spans two cities and two counties and drains into public land—a competitive edge can be created for the developer along with more tax dollars for the community. By being creative, reducing costs, and creating a community amenity—Buffalo Run Lake—dollars only have to be spent once for multiple benefits, including increased returns on investment. Moreover, during Hurricane Harvey, because of the Park 8Ninety regional stormwater management plan, nearby Sims Bayou was the only bayou in Harris County, Texas, that stayed in its banks.

*The master plan for Trammell Crow's Park 8Ninety industrial development.*



## Build Resilience

ULI defines resilience as “the ability to prepare, and plan for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events.” This definition was approved by ULI and organizations representing 750,000 industry professional

in the land use, planning, and development fields. This definition is part of a statement that also affirms that “the promotion of resilience will improve the economic competitiveness of the United States.” Building for resilience involves following emerging best practices and lessons



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*Solar array in Fort Pierce, Florida, at Indian River State College, which serves St. Lucie County.*

learned in land use, design, and construction to protect buildings and sites from increasing climate change risks. Climate-related threats can cause catastrophic property damage and costly and time-consuming efforts to restore land and property use and value.

Port St. Lucie should implement a resilience plan to enhance the value and attractiveness of the community. Implementation may require revisions or additions to the city's Land Use Zoning Code to allow innovative applications within the study area.

The panel recommends the implementation of several resiliency strategies to help support the area in the event of a disaster or disruption. Planning for renewable energy development in a portion of the study area, to back up the power needs of the hospital and other large power users located in the area, is a strategy that could enhance marketing efforts as well as support the uninterrupted provision of emergency services to the community. This tool could include a stand-alone solar facility, solar panels on building rooftops, electric car-charging stations, or solar panel canopies over parking areas.

The use of shared parking areas should be encouraged to reduce impervious surface and the runoff associated with it. In addition, creating a regional stormwater drainage system that can double as an active recreational amenity and active buffer between uses will eliminate the need for isolated, individual retention ponds on developed property. All of these strategies reduce fractured development of the landscape, reduce the carbon footprint of the community, and save businesses money, making the study area an even more attractive development opportunity.

## Increase Housing Diversity

Port St. Lucie is a community that was founded on the development of 80,000 quarter-acre single-family lots. This pattern of development makes up the majority of the city's housing stock. New developments are beginning to incorporate new housing types, but overall housing in the city is owned by private individuals.

Based on feedback provided during the study period, the panel believes that a gap in the community's housing diversity has left certain groups in the workforce and students struggling to find affordable housing. A commitment should be made to identify opportunities for rental housing in the study area and the city in general. Having a mix of housing available at rates that all segments of the workforce and students can afford will allow these populations to successfully remain in the community.



# Development Potential

**THE STUDY AREA CONSISTS OF 1,223 ACRES** located west of I-95 and east of Village Parkway. The northern portion of the property has begun to develop with a mix of uses, including the Martin Health System hospital, two research facilities, Keiser University, a Homewood Suites hotel, and various retail outlets. Apartments are being developed on two parcels, and other uses are underway or under consideration. The remainder of the property is vacant except for the major spine infrastructure that was installed previously.

## Summary of SAD and CDD Assessments

Understanding how the SAD and CDD assessments affect the study area's development potential is important. The mandatory SAD assessments on the study area property allocate the annual debt service based on use and building area (or unit). For example, residential units are assessed at \$282 per unit, retail and office uses at \$0.45 per square foot (of building area), and warehouse use at \$0.30 per square foot (of building area). These are payable by the landowner. Currently, the city's fiscal year 2018 share of the SAD assessment is \$5 million. When the city transfers property, the new owner becomes responsible for paying the assessment. Under a tax increment financing program developed for the Community Redevelopment Authority, property taxes collected by the city and the county of St. Lucie in excess of the current levels (tax increment) on new improvements are rebated to the property owner up to the level of the SAD assessment, thus lessening and potentially nullifying the impact for new property owners.

These assessment levels add to the carrying costs of the land, which affects the value and long-term cash outflow requirement on prospective owners. On the basis

of information reviewed by the panel, over time this cash flow burden has negatively affected investor and developer interest in acquiring land to improve and develop. The end user faces the negative impact of higher rent per square foot; however, the TIF rebate can make the area work for an investor or developer by mitigating some of the assessed tax. As discussed in the following market section, the level of demand for commercial and industrial uses in the region and in the jobs corridor itself will require several years for a reasonable amount of land to be taken down. Therefore, the city will be responsible for continuing to pay these assessments for the debt service.

In addition, the development of the study area included the creation of six Community Development Districts. These CDDs also assess property owners for internal capital improvements that benefit residents and owners. These assessments, based on future infrastructure obligations, do not affect owners until improvements are made to the property, thus do not have a large impact on the city.

## Market Conditions

The panel interviewed several prominent commercial and industrial real estate brokers and developers active in the Port St. Lucie market. In addition, current market indicators and statistics were reviewed to understand the dynamics of the various real estate sectors and the potential for the study area.

In general, the Port St. Lucie market is driven largely by spillover from the South Florida urban market. Rapid growth leading to strong demand in the Miami–Palm Beach corridor has driven up prices across all sectors, resulting in a transfer of demand to lower-cost areas such as Port St. Lucie. To a lesser extent, but increasingly,

## Impact of Assessments

As an example of the complexities of the site because of the land carrying costs, using the prototypical industrial layout discussed in the “Study Area Design” section, the effective cost on a building is a 38 percent premium on price or on just the land is a 120 percent premium over market. This is caused by the city’s stated goal to fully pass on debt accrued and requires that a developer either build

a larger building or have an end user that can afford to pay the premium (e.g., a graphic design and print shop rather than a warehouse).

To address this issue, the panel recommends focusing on debt mitigation instead of debt elimination, which is further discussed in the “Development Strategies” section.

### Prototypical Industrial Layout

Building size	40,000 to 60,000 square feet
Coverage	24% 10,500 square feet per acre
SAD	\$0.45 per square foot
CDD	\$0.30 per square foot
Annual payment	\$10,875
Cap rate	8.5%–\$128,000
Effective cost on building	\$12.17 per square foot
Premium on price	38%
Effective cost on land	\$3 per square foot
Premium over market	120%

Source: ULI.

### Land Use Premium Absorption Analysis—Industrial Building

Area (sq ft)	FAR (sq ft)	Cost per sq ft	Triple-net rent per sq ft	Assessed premium
50,000	10,517	\$105	\$8	1.38
80,000	11,500	\$90	\$7	1.26
150,000	12,500	\$75	\$6	1.16
400,000	19,000	\$65	\$5	0.76

Source: ULI.

the local market gets occasional interest from outside the region and state, from firms and individuals seeking lower-cost space and available labor force. Port St. Lucie’s location between two major urban markets (Orlando to the north and Miami to the south) allows excellent regional access to markets. As those markets grow, demand for reasonably priced land and facilities in Port St. Lucie can only increase.

### Industrial

The demand for warehouse, distribution, and traditional manufacturing is relatively strong in South Florida (Miami to West Palm Beach). Rents are rising across all sectors as available supply shrinks in response to high land costs, driven in part by conversion of former industrial land to residential use. Brokers told the panel that this situation has resulted in many firms looking north for more afford-

able facilities. Because a significant share of the workforce lives to the north (based on U.S. census commuting patterns), this trend is expected to continue.

Current pricing for industrial-type uses varies widely based on location, condition, and function, but a range of \$8 to \$20 per square foot is evident from the market data available to the panel. These lease rates, along with supporting sales data, point to residual land values of \$2 to \$5 per square foot, or \$80,000 to \$200,000 per acre for serviced, ready-to-build sites. These values appear to be rising as demand continues to outpace supply. These market trends support the panel's belief that the study area will continue to be targeted for growing industrial demand from both end users and developers.

### **Office/Research and Development**

The market for office and technology uses (which typically include office space and some level of lab, manufacturing, or distribution space) depends on more population and labor force factors than traditional industrial use. These sectors are growing strongly in South Florida, particularly where concentrations of wealth and higher education exist. In the Port St. Lucie market, demand is primarily coming from the medical sector, with much of the activity occurring in the study area as a result of the growth of Tradition Medical Center.

This growth is expected to continue, particularly in light of the transition of Martin Health System to the Cleveland Clinic brand.

### **Residential**

With housing costs rising rapidly in the Palm Beach market to the south, demand for all housing types is strong in Port St. Lucie. The study area, and Southern Grove more broadly, represents the mid to upper end of the pricing tier, as seen from sales of new homes at Tradition and resales at PGA and other communities. As numerous brokers noted to the panel, some of this demand is coming from

## **Case Study: Destination Medical Center, Rochester, Minnesota**

Destination Medical Center (DMC) is a unique 20-year economic development initiative. The \$5.6 billion plan is the largest in Minnesota's history. With the expansion of the Mayo Clinic and DMC growth, Rochester is a global destination for health and wellness and so much more. The DMC Initiative is a public/private partnership, combining private development by the Mayo Clinic and other developers and public funding from Rochester, Olmsted County, and Minnesota to facilitate and support public infrastructure. DMC promotes Rochester, and more broadly, the county, and the state as a world-destination medical center, to assist the patients, caregivers, residents, employees, and visitors in fully experiencing Rochester as a premier destination medical center, while providing extended economic development and opportunities for the city, the region, and the state.



*The Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.*

existing homeowners in the Palm Beach area, who are cashing in on house prices of \$400,000 or more and are coming to Port St. Lucie and buying the same or better unit for half that much. An increasing share of the demand is for rental housing as purchase prices rise and middle-income households, younger people, and empty nesters prefer to rent for financial or lifestyle reasons.

# Planning and Design

## THIS SECTION OUTLINES RECOMMENDATIONS

and strategies to improve the planning and design for the region and city of Port St. Lucie. This includes creating place, revising design standards, increasing design efficiencies, and improving connectivity and mobility.

## Creating Place

Streets, landscaping, and water can be used to reinforce a distinctive physical identity for Port St. Lucie. Together, these features can dramatically influence the look and feel of the study area and city. Streets frame the neighborhoods and provide the first impression of the area. Street design strongly influences the area's identity. Elements of street design include the width of the right-of-way; the cross section, which involves the number and width of lanes, planting areas, sidewalks, and bike paths; landscaping; lighting; and other roadside features, such as transit stops, seating, trash cans, and the like.

Landscaping along streets adds color, provides shade, and helps manage stormwater. Canals, ponds, and lakes not only manage stormwater but also create places of interest, habitat, and recreation.

Building on Port St. Lucie's historic patterns will further enhance local identity. The GDC lots provide a good pattern for circulation and, with proper streets and sidewalks, offer a model for continued residential and small commercial development distinctive to Port St. Lucie.

## Revising Design Standards

The panel recommends that Port St. Lucie revise its street and parking design standards to provide more appropriately sized rights-of-way, street cross sections, and parking areas.

## Case Study: Differentiating from the Marketplace

Encore! is a mixed-use, mixed-income development including multifamily housing, senior housing, retail, and office space on the site of a previously isolated public housing project in Tampa, Florida. Developed through a public/private partnership between Bank of America Community Development Corporation and the Tampa Housing Authority, Encore! incorporates regional stormwater management, district-scale sustainable utilities—including solar on roofs, and placemaking activities that include art and educational kiosks. These efforts enabled the development to achieve the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development, or LEED ND, certification.

The investment in resilient infrastructure allowed the developer to maximize the developable land on the site. These efforts also helped marketing efforts for the site by differentiating it from the broader market. These features helped ensure the market-rate units at Encore! were leased up before the affordable units, which showed that residents and businesses want to locate in sustainable communities. Because of the success of this project, the Tampa Housing Authority is investigating district-scale infrastructure opportunities for another public/private redevelopment—the \$2 billion Tampa Live project.



*A central utility plant provides stormwater and cooling services for the entire Tampa Housing Authority's Encore! development. At right is the underground stormwater vault, capped by a park and solar panels. At left is the central chiller plant, which can efficiently cool up to 2.5 million square feet of space. These utility decisions enable a more resilient community.*

NACTO's Urban Street Design Guide provides guidance to cities on how streets can be reimagined to prioritize safety, increase quality of life, and increase mobility. More information can be found at <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/>.



### Street Standards

Current standards require very wide rights-of-way, ranging from 80 feet for a two-lane road to 200 feet for a four- to six-lane road. These standards exceed those of many cities around the country, which typically require 60 feet for a two-lane road and 80 to 100 feet for a four-lane road. Reserving right-of-way for future needs is wise; the challenge is to reserve adequate but not excessive amounts because too much right-of-way reduces buildable, taxable land and places a greater maintenance burden on local government.

Lane widths should follow standards published by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) to create cross sections more appropriate to developed urban areas than to highways.

### Parking Standards

Revisit parking requirements to seek potential reductions to avoid excessive amounts of pavement where not fully

justified. This could reduce construction costs, reduce heat buildup, and reduce stormwater runoff. The quantity of parking required for individual land uses should be revisited to provide amounts more in line with actual demand. The design of parking should also be revised because current code requires both wide stalls and wide driving aisles, resulting in parking areas about 5 percent larger than typically required elsewhere.

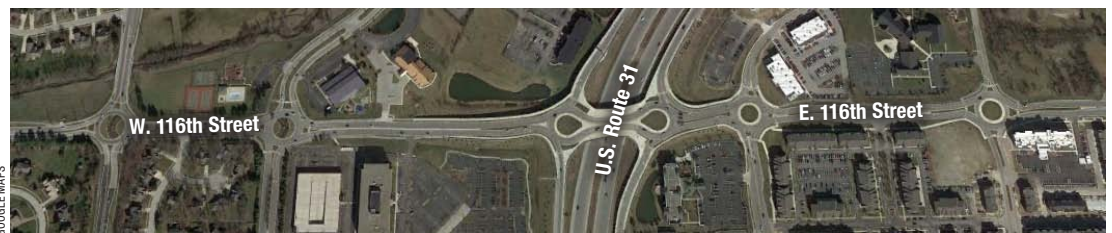
## Designing Efficiencies

Design could be made more efficient to better manage the existing land and improve the city's quality of life. A notable advantage of the efficiencies achieved through revised standards would be to reduce distance between buildings and uses. Mixed-use areas in particular benefit from strong proximity that promotes walking. Current standards tend to force them apart, making for longer walks and sapping the potential synergy among adjacent uses.

Efficiencies should include the following:

- Use more efficient intersections, such as roundabouts, to minimize the need for wide streets. Port St. Lucie has constructed a number of roundabouts with good results. The goal is for most collector and minor arterials to be two or three lanes wide and for arterials to be no more than four lanes. Only rarely would a wider street be needed. This approach reinforces the shift to narrower

The two images show 116th Street in Carmel, Indiana, between 2005 and 2018. Carmel has prioritized building roundabouts to increase traffic efficiency and reduce congestion. More information about the benefits of roundabouts can be found in the National Academies of Sciences' Roundabouts: An Informational Guide—Second Edition: <https://www.nap.edu/download/22914#>.



rights-of-way, reduces construction costs, shortens pedestrian crossing distances, and reduces stormwater runoff.

- *Create more shared-use pedestrian/bike paths along arterial corridors.* Separated paths create a safer and more appealing path for pedestrians and cyclists and can easily be accommodated within revised rights-of-way.
- *Connect canals and lakes where possible to create a network of water paths that can be used for recreation.* About 14 percent of land area needs to serve stormwater management needs. Connecting and consolidating canals and ponds offers opportunities for fishing, paddling, and walking along the water even though the primary purpose of the canals and lakes is managing stormwater. In the study area, water can also serve as a buffer between uses.
- *Create an area-wide stormwater strategy to consolidate stormwater detention for surrounding land.* In the study area, this plan could result in a lake of about 75 acres plus interconnected canals. Advantages would include cost efficiencies from more efficient development of adjacent parcels, public benefits from more flexible recreation opportunities, and a valuable amenity for adjacent mixed uses. Even small gains in buildable land over this large land area yield significant acreage, thereby boosting value. This stormwater plan should be designed in its entirety and developed as needed in phases to manage costs.
- *Provide more shade along streets, sidewalks, and paths.* Use native plantings that offer greater canopies and shade over less shady varieties.

By implementing these recommendations, the city could increase the amount of buildable land within the study area. For every 1 percent reduction in required right-of-way, parking area, and detention boundaries, buildable property increases by 12 acres. That increases value by \$480,000 at current land prices. Potential buildable gains could be in the range of 3 to 4 percent of the land area, which enables additional potential for job creation and debt mitigation.

## Land Use Efficiencies: Estimated Additions to Buildable Land

	Acreage	Value
Right-of-way reductions (60 feet vs. 80 feet)	9–10	\$347,000–\$397,000
Parking area reductions	14–16	\$560,000–\$640,000
Stormwater detention consolidation (1.5% to 2% reduction)	17–23	\$697,000–\$929,500
Estimated total	41–49	\$1,604,000–\$1,966,500

Source: ULI.

## Addressing Connectivity and Mobility

The Port St. Lucie area faces connectivity and mobility challenges. Addressing some of these challenges is necessary to grow Port St. Lucie.

### Road Network

Port St. Lucie has long lived with limited connections across I-95, the turnpike, and the river and has made major improvements with construction of the Crosstown Parkway. The city now has four crossings of I-95 and of the turnpike. As the city expands west, I-95 becomes a more central corridor. Accordingly, the Comprehensive Plan proposes an additional crossing at Parr Road and a possible interchange at E/W 3. Such crossings and interchanges would be very expensive projects, would entail significant residential property acquisition east of I-95, and are presently unfunded. The need for these projects should be reevaluated, considering their expense and the need to manage development costs in the study area, such as CDD rates. That reevaluation would begin by revisiting long-term traffic projections to verify infrastructure needs. Enough changes have occurred in recent years through the initial development of Tradition as well as the regional economy to warrant updating traffic forecasts.

Ideally, local data would be collected on trip-generation patterns, including from Tradition, to include in an updated traffic model. Modeling should incorporate all major street types, including streets internal to the DRI developments, to answer the appropriate arterial cross sections, whether the potential crossing of I-95 at Parr Road is justified, and

whether a new interchange at E/W 3 justified. With the information currently available to the panel through briefing materials and interviews, the panel does not recommend adding a new interchange or adding a crossing of I-95 at Parr Road.

Within the study area, a network of streets, shared paths, and waterways should connect the 1,200 acres east of Village Parkway. This network should include the following:

- A central spine street that runs north–south. Expected to be a two-lane street, its design would respond to its adjacent land uses. The right-of-way would vary from 50 feet in residential areas to 75 feet in mixed-use commercial areas to accommodate bike lanes and parking.
- East–west streets spaced about a quarter-mile apart.
- Local access streets.
- A peripheral road serving the industrial areas that keeps trucks away from other uses.
- Shared-use paths running north–south.

### Transit and Transit Partnerships

As the city grows, new destinations would benefit from new mobility options. Transit services should be evaluated for major destinations, including employment centers, major shopping areas, medical facilities, and schools. Regularly scheduled bus service may be practical in certain corridors but not in others because of the city's vast area, which makes such service expensive to offer. However, the advent of ride-hailing services makes possible new levels of service for people who do not drive or choose not to drive. Private operators can become partners with public transit agencies to supplement transit service.

Even though the cost per rider will likely be higher than the system's average, the total expense may be less than that of operating regularly scheduled service or even county-provided on-demand service. This approach is being deployed successfully in outlying portions of the Dallas, Texas, metro area by Dallas Area Regional Transit.



PAUL ANGELONE/ULI

*The Port St. Lucie Intermodal Facility near City Hall and the city's Community Center.*

### Bike Share

St. Lucie County recently implemented a station-based bike-share system in Port St. Lucie. Initially a two-year program, residents 18 years of age and older now have another means of mobility for a modest fee. As the city grows, bike-sharing potential should be examined for potential expansion. Capital Bikeshare, located in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area, has found that its new e-assist bikes are being more actively used in jurisdictions outside Washington that are more suburban and similar in design to Port St. Lucie.

### Passenger Rail Service

The Virgin Train rail service currently operates from West Palm Beach to Miami and is being extended to Orlando and Tampa. A station in Fort Pierce will be the closest to Port St. Lucie. Trains will operate hourly during commuting

*A bike-share station at the Port St. Lucie Intermodal Facility.*



PAUL ANGELONE/ULI

## Case Study: Chattanooga's Comprehensive Approach to Redevelopment

The comprehensive approach to revitalization undertaken by the city and region of Chattanooga, Tennessee, demonstrates how the public/private partnership process can support a long-term strategy for livability and sustainability. With significant air pollution problems and deindustrialization and decentralization patterns hollowing out the city and inner core of the region, the Chattanooga community implemented a master-planning process in the 1980s in an attempt to harness public and private-sector resources to promote the redevelopment of the city and to improve regional growth patterns.

*The Tennessee Riverpark Master Plan*, published in 1985, emerged from the Vision 2000 community planning process, which aimed at determining how to attract and maintain high-quality growth in the region. The plan calls for a comprehensive strategy for redevelopment efforts, focused on spurring development downtown, particularly along a 22-mile corridor of the Tennessee River. Using the public and private sectors in creating, funding, and implementing the redevelopment strategy, the plan established a 20-year time frame and specific steps for implementation.

Chattanooga public authorities have supported redevelopment with new regulations, financing mechanisms, and public/private institutions. Land use regulations, such as the redesignation of land to spur reinvestment and the inclusion of community members in the planning process, have catalyzed new development. Furthermore, the creation of new revenue sources, including a hotel/motel tax and the establishment of the 21st Century Waterfront Trust, which has received more than \$120 million from public and

private-sector funding, has resulted in the construction or enhancement of projects along the waterfront. Finally, new organizations have been established to assist in coordinating redevelopment efforts, particularly the River City Company, a private nonprofit organization managing redevelopment projects; the Chattanooga Downtown Partnership, supporting local city businesses; and the Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, which has created affordable housing opportunities in the city.

Many indicators confirm Chattanooga's successful approach to redevelopment, including its current designation as one of the most livable communities in the country, downtown investment exceeding \$1 billion within the decade, and the fulfillment of a majority of the original Vision 2000 goals just 10 years after the original visioning process. Thus, by comprehensively coordinating revitalization efforts, Chattanooga has set in motion a cycle promoting reinvestment in the community.

*The 21st Century Waterfront Plan.*



periods. The extent to which this service will enhance commuting options for local residents depends on the connections they have to stations at the start and end of their trips. Park-and-ride ability, local transit access, and ride-hailing options will be important elements in residents' ability to use the train. The regional commuter rail line—Tri Rail—is also a viable potential extension. This service could include a station in Stuart, Port St. Lucie, and Fort Pierce.

### Airport

Population growth in the Treasure Coast region will increase the need for commercial airline service to a regional airport as West Palm Beach and Orlando reach capacity. In turn, a regional airport would greatly enhance the attractiveness of the area to business. Although a long-term effort, the panel recommends that the city advocate for eventual addition of commercial passenger service at the Treasure Coast International Airport.



# Study Area Design

**THE 1,200-ACRE STUDY AREA** provides an opportunity for Port St. Lucie to imagine a future that incorporates the ideas and recommendations discussed throughout this report. The panel created a master plan that allows for flexibility and efficiency that is intended to organize the site to permit a variety of housing, office, industrial, entertainment, and retail uses throughout the study site and Port St. Lucie. Efficient and interesting connections are envisioned to ensure a more pedestrian-, bike-, and golf cart-friendly development.

Finally, the panel's master plan allows the “missing middle”—student and affordable housing—to be addressed, using water as a unique transitional buffer from the single-family detached neighborhood to the employment corridor that will serve as a regional destination and entertainment hub for residents, employees, and visitors alike.

## Medical and Education Area

In 2013, the Tradition Medical Center opened with 180 beds serving the regional area. The hospital's parent company recently announced its acquisition by the Cleveland Clinic, a nonprofit academic medical center providing clinical and hospital care as well as a leader in research, education, and health information. This facility, and other development activity, is drawing interest from other large employers looking to relocate to this region.

With some design efficiencies, opportunities exist for this area to provide medical offices to support the hospital as well as expand some of the education opportunities. Potential also exists for additional beds or a new tower to be built within this section of the proposed master plan. The design also calls for better pedestrian connection to the existing Tradition Town Center and to the new Market Street.

### Case Study: It's Not Urban or Suburban—It's “Surban”!

The town of Lexington, Massachusetts, updated its zoning codes to enable transformational change along its Hartwell Avenue Corridor. The original zoning bylaws that prioritized suburban development patterns were established in the 1960s and 1970s. The town updated its zoning to create

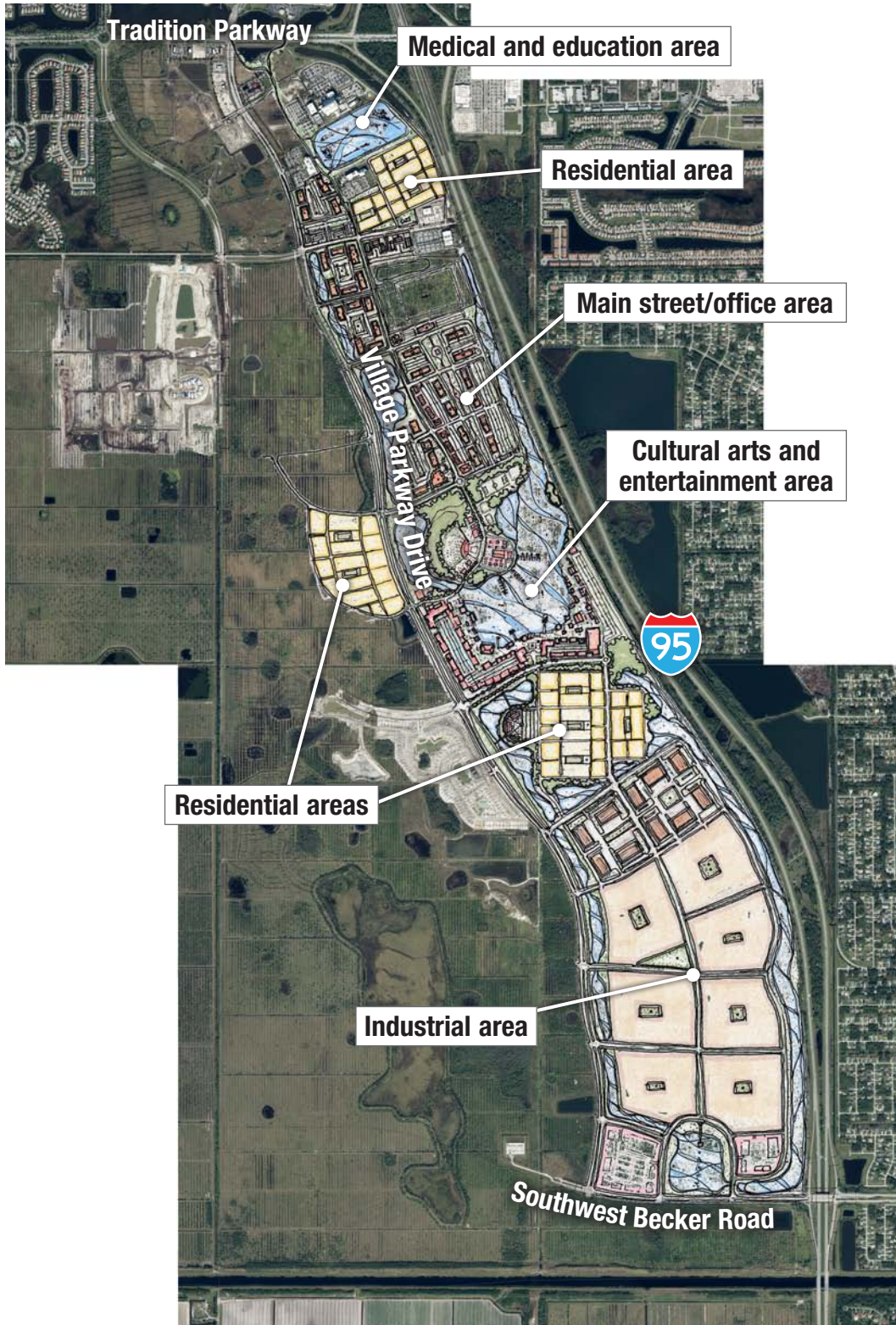
real estate value and encourage development that better matches what residents and workers desire, including bike racks; restaurants; mixed residential, commercial, and industrial uses; and other retail services.



Aerial view of the Hartwell Avenue Corridor existing conditions.



Envisioned, an aerial view of more “surban” Hartwell Avenue Corridor.



DAN ANDERTON/ULLI

The panel's conceptual master plan for the study area.

The Tradition Hospital Tower within the medical and education area.



PAUL ANGELO/ULI

Housing should be added within this area, as appropriate, for both students and medical staff. Some of this housing could use innovative approaches to housing design, such as shipping containers or modular construction, to decrease costs while maintaining high-quality design that is still built in a pleasing way.

## Main Street/Office Area

A new Market Street would be the anchor for this area that would be a place to grow mixed commercial, office, and retail uses. Market Street would allow for the following uses:

- 75-foot right-of-way;
- Two travel ways;
- Two parallel parking lanes;
- Tree pits;
- Bike lanes;
- Pedestrian travel; and
- Outdoor seating areas.

Elevation within the main street and office area.



DAN ANDERTON/ULI

The area would offer improved view sheds, shared parking, and office jobs. The office section would include outdoor, green gathering spaces, parking areas at the rear of the buildings, activated streets, and solar on the roof.

## Cultural Arts and Entertainment Area

The study area provides an outstanding opportunity for Port St. Lucie to capitalize on and expand the Tradition Town Center concept, with the creation of a unique, vibrant, active space that will draw residents citywide to celebrate the Port St. Lucie community.

The cultural arts and entertainment center will be an inviting open space, nestled into the corridor and surrounded by green space and water features. The space will be anchored by a 75-acre multifunctional lake that will enhance and emphasize the “port” in Port St. Lucie, be a major visual feature from the I-95 corridor, and help connect the east side of I-95 with the west.

The lake’s functional role will be as a regional stormwater facility for the entire study area. As a community feature it will be fully accessible and usable by the community for recreation enjoyment. It will be deep enough to support watercraft, water taxis, and other water-based recreation that could include a beach area (protected from alligators). The community space is sized to accommodate a market square, intended for farmers markets, car shows, craft shows, festivals, and other civic and community events.

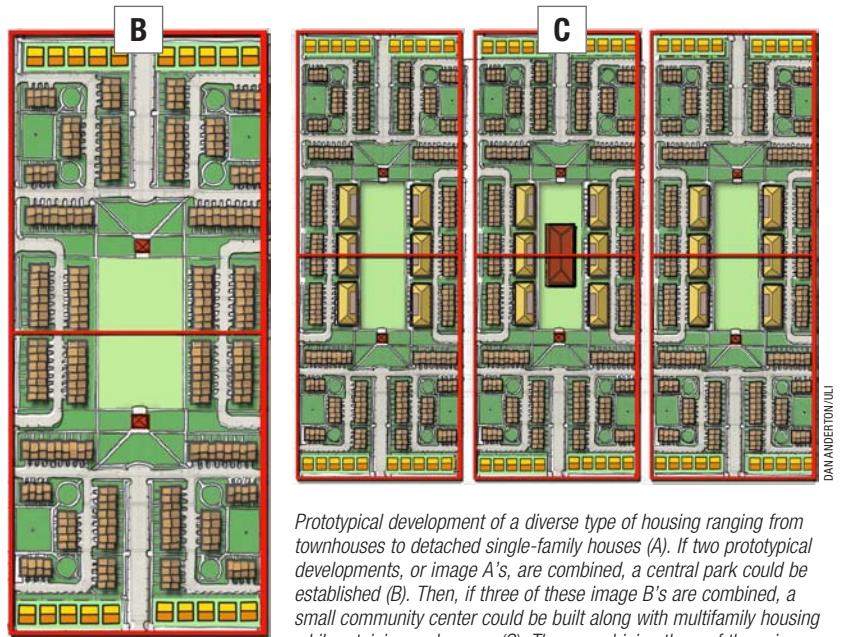
The site will be bordered on the south by a retail and entertainment district that would provide a walkable shopping and entertainment space that could include a movie theater, comedy club, restaurants, and shops. It will be designed

to encourage play and activation with passive and active recreational opportunities through large open fields, programmed sports fields, a dog park, and a playground, all centered on the large lake feature. One of the main draws for this destination will be space for public theater and music performances and art space that will be a regional draw.

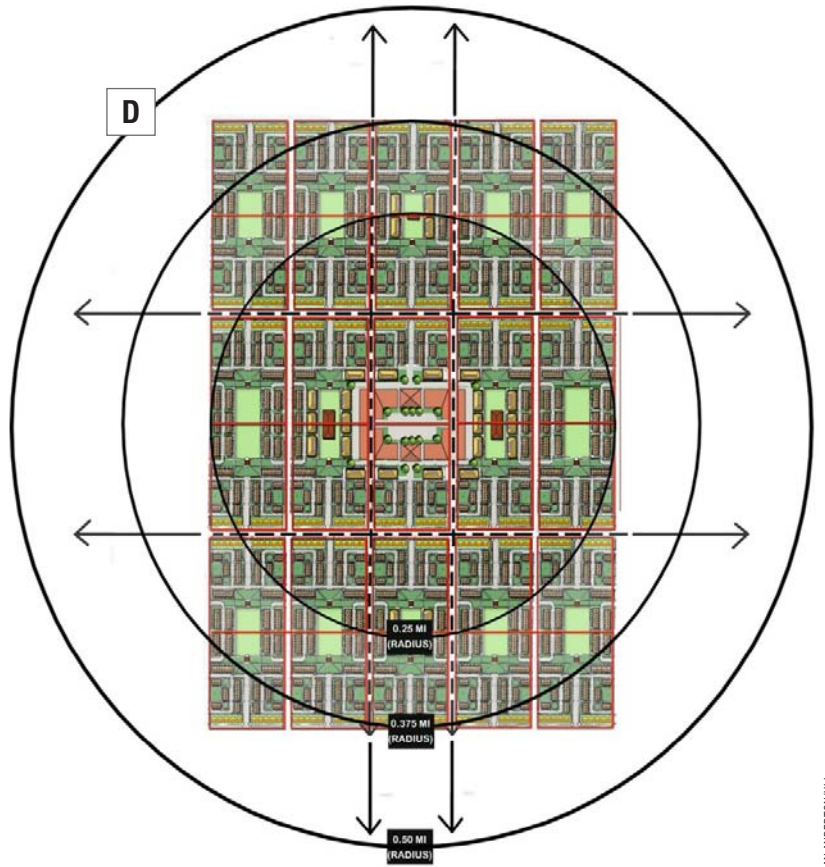
As the city continues to grow, the city may find its facilities in the center of the city somewhat constrained; this area could be expanded to accommodate a government annex to provide increased customer services to residents on the west side of town.

## Residential Areas

Residential areas are scattered throughout the study area, drawing on the heritage of Port St. Lucie's design while incorporating forward-looking design principles that foster vibrant, scalable residential communities. They are intended to create a sense of place and enable gathering, increase neighborhood walkability and serviceability, and allow for multiple housing types in flexible modules. This design module could be expanded to other areas west of I-95 to build more connected, cohesive communities.



Prototypical development of a diverse type of housing ranging from townhouses to detached single-family houses (A). If two prototypical developments, or image A's, are combined, a central park could be established (B). Then, if three of these image B's are combined, a small community center could be built along with multifamily housing while retaining park space (C). Then, combining three of these image C's, a full neighborhood retail center could be established along with retaining community centers and open space (D).

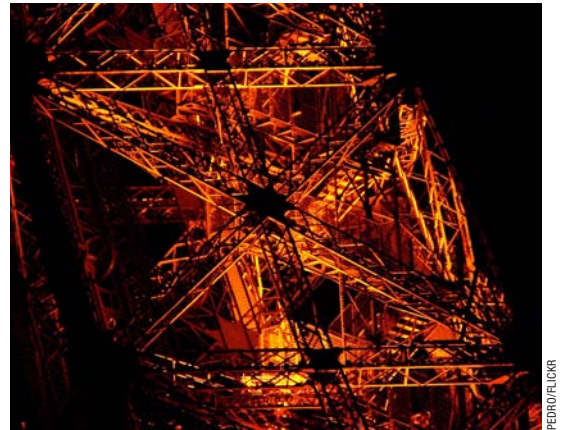


This design type is supported by community buyer preferences. A recent RCLCO housing and community preference survey showed that new buyers are interested in returning to more traditional housing styles that follow smart growth principles. They have less interest in housing surrounding golf courses but prefer instead to be in an area with a mix of houses, shops, and businesses. The survey did say, however, that buyers interested in purchasing new are willing to buy slightly larger, newer homes.

## Industrial Area

The industrial area is designed to allow a flexible program for a variety of differing industrial uses. The floor plates could easily accommodate six 200-by-400-foot buildings (80,000 square feet) or two 400-by-1,100-foot buildings (440,000 square feet). In the event of a larger user, a building could be built that is more than 1 million square feet. The loading is designed in the interior of the block to allow for a better street experience.

The industrial area of the site includes on-site water retention and a recreation area in the center of the block to allow employees to have a lunch break or recreation on the site. Using water as an aesthetic transitional buffer, the area's



PEDRO/FELICKR

*High-tension power lines run through the site, including the cultural arts and entertainment area. Putting these lines underground would be expensive, though utilities in regions such as Washington, D.C., have determined that the cost of burying these lines is lower than the costs of power outages and replacement of lines caused by the increase in extreme weather. These towers can be adapted to be more beautiful and festive, as illustrated by how light is used to enhance the Eiffel Tower's appearance in Paris.*

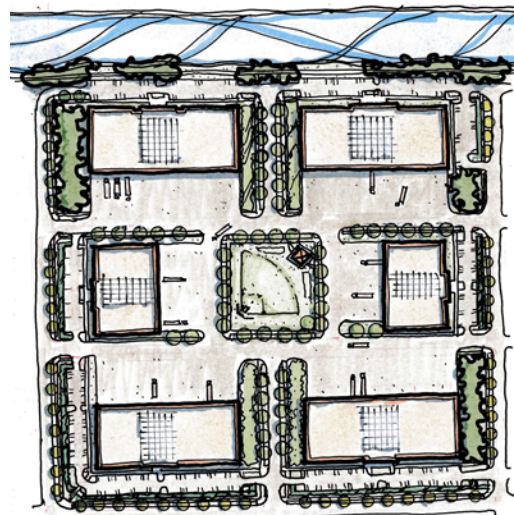
use shifts from Becker Road. If a tenant requires a larger building on site, different water management techniques could be used to serve the additional stormwater demand.

The potential also exists for a solar panel system on the roof of industrial structures in this area.



DAN ANDERTON/ULI

*Right: The conceptual industrial area. Far right: A prototypical industrial development.*



## Top-Ranked Community Amenity Preferences

<b>Amenity</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Not important</b>
Trails	34.4%	47.1%	18.6%
Fitness centers	34.9%	42.1%	21.0%
Pocket parks	24.7%	52.8%	22.5%
Arts and culture	31.2%	42.9%	24.9%
Package receiving	33.2%	39.7%	27.2%
Resort pool (lounge)	31.7%	40.8%	27.5%
Farmers market	27.7%	42.9%	29.4%
Sports courts	26.1%	43.2%	30.7%
Virtual services	23.9%	42.9%	33.2%
Lap pool	23.2%	42.0%	34.8%
Dog park	26.8%	33.6%	39.7%
Maker spaces	18.4%	34.5%	47.2%
Community garden	18.1%	33.2%	48.8%
Children's pool	20.3%	30.5%	49.3%
Golf	16.1%	26.8%	57.1%

Source: RCLCO, <https://www.rclco.com/advisory-2018-housing-community-preference-survey>.

# Development Strategies

**PORT ST. LUCIE STARTED THE PROCESS** of developing the study area before the financial crisis of 2007. The predictions indicated an influx of new residents relocating to the area as housing prices in southern Florida continued to increase and the search for affordability pushed consumers northward. Unfortunately, because of the economic downturn, the developer went out of business and the city was left to absorb most of the debt of the outstanding bonds. Despite the unpleasant circumstances and the position in which the city was placed, it has done an outstanding job of maintaining a AA– rating from bond rating firm Standard and Poors.

The Great Recession is now more than 10 years behind Port St. Lucie, and the city is at a significant inflection point with the opportunity to frame how development occurs in the study area and the quality of life it brings. Port St. Lucie leadership has made a strong commitment to these development efforts. In 2004, a ULI Advisory Services panel was done for the Western Annexation. The city realizes it is time to take advantage of a progressive market and has procured the services of ULI for a 2018 Advisory Services panel. The city is shouldering most of the debt of the outstanding bonds and strongly desires to eliminate that responsibility.

## Setting Clear Development Goals

The panel recommends setting clear and precise economic development goals for the city and following through on them once set. All individuals should work to achieve the stated goals. These redevelopment efforts can be complex and have several moving parts. Municipalities typically have several individuals to provide assistance with these projects. The panel recommends staff taking the necessary steps to prepare themselves to be involved in these

projects and conduct proper oversight (further discussed in “Implementation” section).

One solution to assist in the mitigation of debt requires procuring the services of a well-respected and seasoned

### Mitigating Debt versus Eliminating Debt

Port St. Lucie must understand the difference between “mitigating debt” and “eliminating debt” and how each benefits the city long term.

*Mitigation of debt* is the recruitment of the “right” business that satisfies more than one goal or objective of the city. For example, the city might recruit a manufacturing company that will employ 25–50 individuals but be unable to pay the entire property tax on the assessed value of the property. The city can decide to mitigate the debt by a few percentage points by negotiating with the manufacturer about the tax payment. The city should never eliminate the full debt obligation; a reduction of 40 to 50 percent in the assessment amount should be the city’s maximum incentive.

The “win-win” in this strategy includes the important goal of new job creation and the fiscal benefits to the city of the partial reduction of the balance in its bond obligation.

*Elimination of debt* is the recruitment of businesses that enables the city to quickly erase the debt from the outstanding bond. For example, a self-storage company can easily pay the property tax on the property, but the company only employs one or two individuals. Recruitment of this business would not be the “right” business because it does not provide significant job opportunities.

The “win” in this option is that the city can quickly erase or pay off the bond balance. However, it would come at the cost of what the panel believes should be the city’s primary goal, which is new job creation.

## Case Study: Constructing a Framework for Effective Decision-Making

Cleveland, Ohio's riverfront and lakefront resources have long been considered integral catalysts for new development in the region, and a partnership is working to target financial and political resources to these areas. The public, nonprofit, and business communities have collaborated to establish a comprehensive redevelopment framework for Cleveland's waterfront district to coordinate investment efforts and community development objectives.

The Waterfront Initiative, which is part of the larger planning process "Connecting Cleveland 2020," integrates transportation and land use objectives in the area and establishes steps to implement the goals. The initiative established districtwide planning objectives, including enhancing the lakefront neighborhoods, the area's natural resources, and the built environment and attracting people and jobs to the city. The plan set out a road map delineating the timeline for project implementation and structuring redevelopment into phases to build in flexibility for shifting needs and demands. The framework created provides a baseline for evaluating projects according to their fulfillment of the plan's objectives and strategies.

The five partners of the waterfront redevelopment include the city; the Port Authority; the Ohio Department of Transportation; the business community, represented

by the regional chamber of commerce—the Greater Cleveland Partnership; and the neighborhoods, represented by the nonprofit association Cleveland Neighborhood Development Corporation. Their relationship was formalized through a memorandum of understanding that identified each partner's roles and established consensus on the redevelopment framework principles and strategies. The partners have provided support for the framework's implementation, hiring consultants to create land use plans for the district and initiating the extensive public process to obtain input on visioning goals and final projects. The mutuality of the partners' objectives for the area and the comprehensive approach of the planning framework for the eight miles of city waterfront property have led to significant improvements, and more will continue to emerge in the area. Projects resulting from the partnership include additional housing, development over former brownfields, parks, and roadway improvements to increase the accessibility of the waterfront to nearby neighbors and the city's downtown.

*The Greater Cleveland Partnership logo.*



FILICKR/CURTIS GREGORY PERRY

real estate developer for each asset class (industrial, multifamily, office, retail) to assist with marketing, developing, and selling the benefits of Port St. Lucie and effectively recruit growing companies to relocate in Port St. Lucie. The product developer will present various structures that would satisfy the individual asset class in development.

As it relates to business recruitment, it is important to remember that growing companies (manufacturing, R&D) will pay higher wages and have more employees than the typical distribution company that pays lower wages and hires fewer employees as it transitions to automation.

It is vital the city minimize the chance of making any rash decision to satisfy its outstanding bond obligations. The panel is recommending decisions are made with head and not heart to achieve the shared goals of increasing jobs

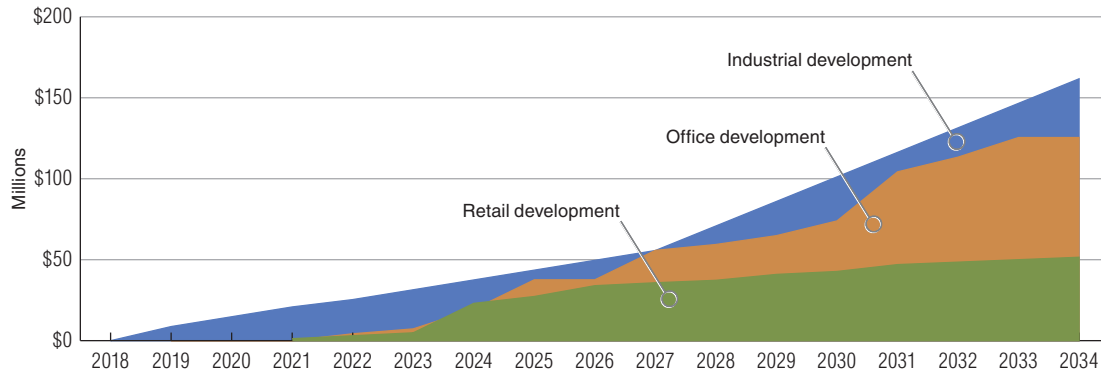
and decreasing the number of residents leaving Port St. Lucie on a daily basis for employment opportunities.

## Growing City Revenue

The panel conducted a back-of-the-envelope cash flow analysis to show how, even with an extremely conservative approach, the study area grows the city's revenue and increases the municipality's flexibility. The analysis assumes that by 2034, 4.5 million square feet of industrial (2.9 million square feet), office (1.1 million square feet), and retail (430,000 square feet) space would be built. In addition, about 600,000 square feet of residential at 15 to 18 units per acre would be constructed, and an additional 20.6 acres would still be available for future growth.



## Estimated Value Created by Study Area Development



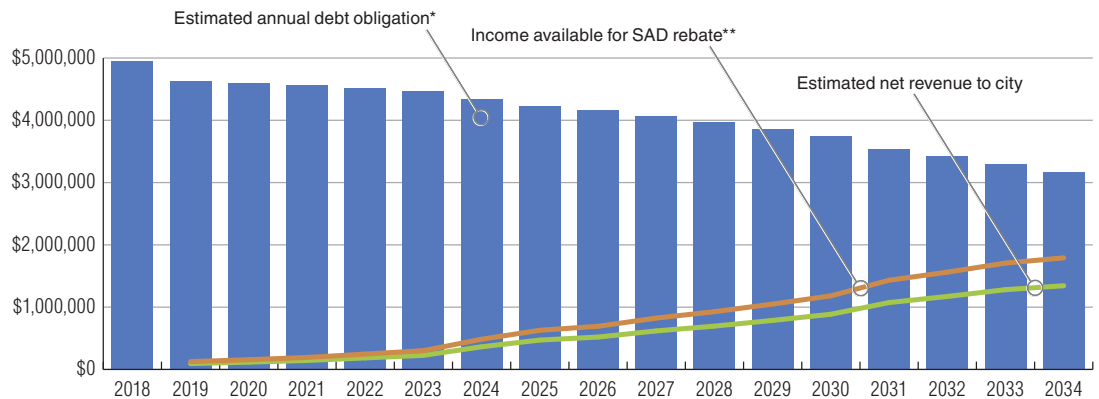
Source: ULI.

Excluding the residential because debt repayment obligations are included in the sale price, about \$350 million in value would be created, assuming only a 1 percent year-over-year increase in property value. This would be a phased development with new industrial space built in 2019, new retail built in 2021, and new office built in 2022. As property values increase, the taxable amount to pay to SAD assessments increases. As discussed in the “Development Potential” section, a rebate of the assessment is available. Additional revenue is raised through the city’s 5 percent millage rate increases, which can be used for general city purposes, thereby creating more flexibility

for city expenditures while still creating jobs and mitigating the annual \$5 million in debt obligations.

The conceptual master plan in the “Study Area Design” section would allow for, as the market dictates, additional taxable value (i.e., development), resulting in increased city revenue, further municipal flexibility, and debt mitigation. The panel’s cash flow analysis does not include currently existing facilities or residential uses within the study area nor any revenue generated through a sales price. These additional revenues were not included in the model because the panel was unclear how such revenue would

## Increased Municipal Financial Flexibility: Debt Mitigation



Source: ULI.

\*Assumes 4 percent discount.

\*\*Includes St. Lucie County and Port St. Lucie City TIF funds.

be used. It could be used to offset the debt payment or decrease the debt, depending on the terms of the bonds and the leadership of the City Council.

## Staying Focused

Port St. Lucie must remain steadfast in its desire to do the following:

- Create jobs; and
- Mitigate debt.

If the city becomes distracted and reprioritizes its goals, it runs the risk of missing the opportunity to expand its employment base and recapture those residents who currently commute to employment outside Port St. Lucie. To achieve its mission, Port St. Lucie must remain focused and not be side-tracked.

Port St. Lucie must remain committed to encouraging development in the study area; however, the city must not indulge in excessive project incentives. The equations should be balanced and defined, and each developer or builder must put “skin in the game” and not anticipate the local government will add incentives to the project. The city has done a lot more than the average city its size to leverage incentives to entice growth. It is time for the private market carry its own weight.

# Implementation

**A KEY FIRST STEP IN IMPLEMENTATION** is to embrace, celebrate, and sell the Port St. Lucie story. This is true not only for the study area but also for the whole city. This step will require the city take control of its destiny and not rely on others to do so. Create the story, then sell it! The panel's interviews revealed that people want to come to Port St. Lucie—and then stay here—for a variety of reasons that include the following:

- Small-town feel;
- Feels like a “hometown”;
- Great place for all ages—from birth to retirement;
- Far enough from Miami and Orlando—yet close enough; and
- Good services—hospitals, higher education, natural resources, affordability, and infrastructure.

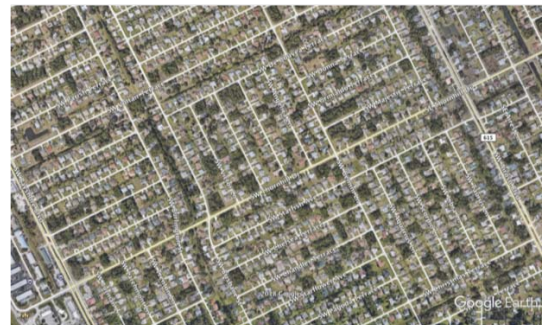
The Port St. Lucie story needs to be told in a big way. In addition to the interviews, the Citizen Survey revealed that residents generally view the overall safety, natural environment, and health and wellness opportunities in the community as good or excellent; the city should capitalize on this positive feedback. The survey should be used not only to see where improvement is needed but also to celebrate all that is positive. The panel's impression is that marketing of Port St. Lucie as a whole is minimal; this needs to change. Creating a community marketing campaign for the broader community will move the needle in a positive direction.

Regarding the study area specifically, the site is unique given its location, highway access and visibility, and development approvals already in place, as well as proximity to major growth markets. As the market evolves, it is well staged for development. As discussed previously, the

study area needs to be thought of as one development opportunity with many parts; it should not be thought of as individual development parcels. The only way the city is going to get what it wants is to proactively market the whole site—both in and beyond the region—to ensure the result is a holistic and creative community that meets the city's goals and objectives of job growth and high quality of life. The steps to ensure this happens are as follows:

- Create a site identity (as described in the “Study Area Design” section), and then create a sense of place through signage, street design, and landscape that pull in the historic characteristics of the community. The original lots laid out by GDC in a block-and-grid pattern had some character and should be celebrated in the new development, not dismissed (not only in the study area but west of it as well).
- Celebrate, leverage, and exploit the huge accomplishment of attracting the Cleveland Clinic.
- Play offense not defense—do not wait for opportunities to come to you, and do not limit the opportunities to local players only.

*The historic GDC lots provide a design heritage that should be incorporated into the study area and western portion of Port St. Lucie. Many interviewees mentioned their support for this historic development pattern without referencing the initial failure to build connecting infrastructure.*



## Relationship Building and Partnerships

The success of the study area in particular and the growth of the city in general depend on relationships. The city has a strong foundation, and as it enters its next phase, these relationships will be critical. The panel identified four key areas for cultivating and growing these relationships.

### Citizens

The panel heard over and over that the citizens are the city's greatest asset. The recently completed Citizen Survey provides a lot of positive feedback; build on this. For example, although the citizens feel that the overall safety of Port St. Lucie is good or excellent, the city lacks public transportation and bicycle access, a vibrant downtown and commercial area, and employment opportunities. Showing how these are being addressed both in the study area and throughout the city will demonstrate to citizens that the survey process and results were taken seriously. It will also help improve the confidence in city government, which was below 50 percent.

In most communities, the best way to connect and build relationships with the citizens is to provide more community-wide events. Port St. Lucie is lucky to have several areas in the city where people can gather (and development of the study area will provide another). People want to come together, share good times, learn new things, and explore new cultures. By hosting such opportunities, from music festivals to interpretive programs, the city will show the citizens it cares and wants to keep them engaged locally.

### Employers

As the city seeks to bring in more jobs, it will need to build relationships with current and potential employers to demonstrate that Port St. Lucie is a great place to be. When businesses consider locating—or relocating—to an area, they look for a place where they can feel confident in the capacity of the city government as well as for areas that can deliver the quality of life they want for their employees.

The city needs to make a conscious effort to create a community where people want to live, work, and play.

### The Workforce

This relationship has two facets. The first relates to potential employers, to whom the city must demonstrate that it (and the region) will be partners in providing a qualified workforce for the new jobs coming online. Port St. Lucie is well poised with its institutes of higher learning (Keiser University and Indian River State College) to be partners with both the employers and the future employees. They will be critical in providing a strong workforce. The second facet relates to students. Attracting them to Port St. Lucie will be helped by having businesses in the region that will be ready for a well-prepared workforce.

### Businesses—Including the Development Community

A perception exists—and perhaps a reality—that the city's regulations and fee structures are not business-friendly. Excessive landscape requirements, high impact fees, and extensive review processes were a few of the issues shared with the panel. For Port St. Lucie to attract and keep businesses and jobs, the regulatory environment needs to be evaluated to ensure that it is business-friendly while still delivering the end result needed for a successful and world-class community. If not, the end result could be people taking their business elsewhere.

## Educational Institutions

The educational institutions in the city and county are a huge asset for attracting and keeping businesses and their jobs in the study area and the city. These relationships need to be leveraged to everyone's benefit.

### Align the Goals of Educational Institutions to Meet Anticipated Job Growth

Currently both Keiser and Indian River State College have job placement programs for their students. They have done an excellent job of creating programs that match the skills needed in the community and then engaging with potential

## Redevelopment Corporation Models for Port St. Lucie

In Fort Wayne, Indiana, the Redevelopment Commission promotes and implements economic development projects, acting as a catalyst to redevelop blighted and other areas that have ceased growth and lack development, especially in the downtown area. This is done through techniques including real estate acquisition, site preparation, and infrastructure development. Financing resources generally used are tax incremental financing and redevelopment general obligation bonds. Formed in September 1959, the Redevelopment Commission consists of five voting members appointed by the mayor and the Common Council of Fort Wayne and a nonvoting member appointed by the Fort Wayne Community School Board of School Trustees. The commissioners serve on an annual basis and are supported by an executive director, whom they appoint, and a staff housed in the city's Community Development Division.

In Prince George's County, Maryland, the Redevelopment Authority develops, redevelops, revitalizes, and preserves targeted communities with an emphasis on communities within the I-495 Beltway in support of the county executive's priorities of community development,

transit-oriented development, and affordable housing. To accomplish these objectives, the Redevelopment Authority acquires vacant and underused commercial properties for development in targeted areas, ensures that financing is secured for all projects, obtains required approvals for all development plans, and partners with nonprofit and for-profit entities. The board of directors is composed of seven public and two ex officio members appointed by the county executive and approved by the County Council.

In Chattanooga, Tennessee, the River City Company nonprofit was launched in 1986 with the mission to implement the 20-year Tennessee Riverpark Master Plan. The nonprofit serves as a public purpose development company and has been integral in the development of the Tennessee Riverwalk and the Tennessee Aquarium, the redevelopment of the Kirkman High School site, fulfillment of the 21st Century Waterfront Plan, the Majestic Theater, and the Block. River City Company has also supported the private and public sectors in development and redevelopment of other properties as part of the original master plan. The nonprofit has a president/CEO who reports to a board of directors and supporting staff.

employers. Examples are the relationship that Keiser has with Martin Health and Indian River State College has with Florida Power and Light. As new businesses are attracted to the city, these relationships need to be proactively fostered, nurtured, and encouraged. The city needs to continue working with all parties to make and keep these connections.

### Explore Additional Higher Education Opportunities

During the interview process, the panel was told that Florida Atlantic University and Florida International University might consider locating a campus in St. Lucie County. This opportunity (and others as appropriate) should be actively explored and cultivated to bring jobs as well as job development. This will also help diversify the workforce.

### Vocational Charter School

The panel also learned that a vocational charter school is programmed for the study area. Before any land sale is completed, the city needs a commitment from the school that it will work not only for educational and job placement purposes, but also so the city can use the facilities (classrooms, recreational facilities, etc.) when the school is not using them.

### Structure for Delivery

A successful delivery of the ULI panel recommendations has two aspects: having the appropriate oversight entity for the study area and ensuring the proper staffing for the city overall.

### **Oversight Entity for the Study Area**

The panel believes that a separate oversight entity that reports to the City Council is needed to manage the future of the study area. This entity should be made up of five members appointed by the City Council with a staff that reports to it, not the city manager. The members of the entity will represent the expertise needed to oversee a project of this magnitude: development, engineering, finance, market analysis, and planning and design—similar to a ULI panel. Their first task will be to hire an executive director with the experience and expertise to oversee this project and realize the city's vision. The executive director will evaluate and recommend the best way to move the project forward after creating a business plan that focuses on job creation and debt mitigation. This plan should look at phased takedown by subparcels, share risk across all sectors, and allow for flexibility. Once the business plan is created, some options for development include the corporation serving as the master developer, entering into a joint venture with a developer, or issuing a request for proposals to attract a master developer.

Another key initial step for the executive director is to untangle the myriad entitlements on the property and determine what is needed to move the project forward. This project should be thought of as a startup and managed as such. This approach is used throughout the country to successfully achieve ambitious development goals.

The panel is unclear whether the GFC can and should fill this role. If it can (remembering that the focus should be solely on the study area), then it should. If not, a new entity needs to be formed.

### **Staffing**

The panel has recommended a robust program for bringing many of the services and needs it heard about from the interviews to the city, both to the study area and city-side. The key to successful delivery of the panel's recommendations is a strong staff that can work together to realize the city's vision. The City Council and the staff need to speak with one voice, and the City Council must trust and empower the staff to implement the vision. If skills gaps exist for delivering the plan, they need to be addressed through training or replacement.

As indicated earlier in this section, a dedicated staff is needed to deliver the programs to support the cultural and community events—cultural, arts, and environmental programs. This staff will be responsible for programming the city's public spaces, identifying needs for interpretive programs (cultural, environmental, etc.), and identifying how best to fill the programs' needs. This staff can start small, and as the programs become successful and more popular, it can grow accordingly.

# Conclusion

**THE CITY COUNCIL AND STAFF** are to be commended for their enthusiasm, desire to do what is best for the city, and their dedication to elevating Port St. Lucie to what it can be. However, to achieve all that has been set out in the panel's recommendations will require discipline and patience. This is not a two-year, five-year, or even 10-year project. The goal should be jobs first—and a high quality of life—then mitigating the debt as a secondary goal. Although important, reducing the debt is ancillary and will come with the realization of the primary goal, and as the debt is mitigated, the Port St. Lucie will increase its flexibility. If all decisions are made with this hierarchy of objectives as the premise, the city will be successful, and the success of the study area will reverberate for years to come.

# About the Panel

## John M. Walsh III

*Panel Chair  
Dallas, Texas*

Walsh is the chief executive officer and a founder of TIG, a real estate holding company established to advise, manage, operate, lease, and develop real estate investments for institutions, individuals, corporations, and companies. Since its founding, TIG has grown the managed portfolio and leased portfolio from 1.8 million square feet to 14.1 million square feet in Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin, Texas, and Memphis, Tennessee. In that time, TIG has developed over 2,000,000 square feet and has been instrumental in the acquisition of over 10 million square feet on behalf of its clients.

Before starting TIG, Walsh spent 17 years with Trammell Crow Company in various leasing, development, and senior management roles. During his tenure as development partner for the northwest Dallas area market at Trammell Crow, Walsh developed almost 5 million square feet of industrial, office, and service center space.

A Dallas native, he has served as chairman, director, and trustee of various business, civic, and charitable organizations including Trammell Crow Employees Profit Sharing Trust, Valwood Improvement Authority, Carrollton Zoning Ordinance Board, Texas Commerce Bank, Farmers Branch Business Chamber of Commerce, Valwood Park Federal Credit Union, the North Texas District Council of ULI, and Sky Ranch Youth Camp.

Walsh is a member of the Texas State Bar, with a law degree from Texas Tech University School of Law. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Texas, Arlington.

## Daniel Anderton

*Rockville, Maryland*

Anderton is currently employed by Dewberry, a national planning, engineering, and architectural firm, and is responsible for community planning and urban design within the company. He has worked for architects, engineers, landscape architects, and horticulturalists throughout his career, giving him a unique and holistic perspective on community planning, urban design, and landscape architecture.

During a design career of more than 30 years, Anderton has been directly involved in the creation of communities both nationally and internationally, covering all aspects of land use planning and physical design, including comprehensive and master planning, urban and mixed-use design, entitlement site planning, redevelopment planning, affordable housing, rezoning, subdivision planning, community revitalization, main street retail design, wayfinding and signage, placemaking, parks and recreation design, and landscape architecture. He has proven project design experience in the applicability of planning, zoning, and subdivision, and he also has extensive experience working with stakeholders as well as local and state government development review processes and in creating effective working relationships with jurisdictional agencies, boards, commissions, and the public.

Anderton has a goal to create community environments that are memorable, comfortable, sustainable, and inclusive to a wide demographic of visitors, residents, and business owners while also being marketable for both public and private developers. He takes care to ensure that a conceptual design's integrity, density, and sense of place is maintained through the planning process. By carefully planning FAR and densities, providing for a mix of diverse



building and product types and phasing, and incorporating traditional and neotraditional design styles, his community developments are poised to fulfill the needs of the market and a wide cross section of prospective renters, buyers, visitors, and shop owners.

He has been involved with, and completed, hundreds of projects involving direct interaction with citizens, developers, architects, planning boards, county councils, mayors, public utilities, transportation officials, and other involved parties. The juggling of everyone's interests throughout the completion of a plan or project is extremely important so the majority of stakeholders feel they have succeeded in having their personal vision incorporated.

Anderton graduated with a bachelor's of landscape architecture and environmental planning from Utah State University in 1983 and a master's of landscape architecture with an emphasis on behavioral design and placemaking from the University of Illinois in 1985.

## Page Bolin

*Arvada, Colorado*

Bolin is principal and owner of Sustainable Development Solutions, which provides project management expertise to renewable energy and real estate development projects. A renewable energy professional with over 30 years of experience, Bolin is versed in land planning, entitlement, and development of all classes of real estate. In addition to sustainable development, her expertise includes asset acquisition and disposition, land analysis, lease negotiation, and local permitting.

Before launching Sustainable Development Solutions, Bolin served as a real estate portfolio agent and renewable energy program manager at the Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners. In this capacity, she sourced, negotiated, and closed asset acquisitions for the commercial portfolio. Over her tenure she closed over \$50 million in commercial and agricultural assets, managed an agricultural portfolio of some 300,000 acres, and worked to maximize commercial revenue for the benefit of the

School Trust, which supports kindergarten through grade 12 education. Bolin also worked to identify and implement innovative revenue-generating opportunities.

## Mary Beth Corrigan

*Washington, D.C.*

Corrigan is ULI's executive vice president for its Global Leaders Program, ensuring that all of the Institute's top members are recognized, honored, and engaged in all facets of ULI. Before her current position, Corrigan managed ULI's signature events: the ULI Fall Meeting and the ULI Spring Meeting. She was also involved in the oversight and management of ULI's Product Council Program. Corrigan started at ULI as the director for the Advisory Services Program and over the course of eight years grew the program from break-even to netting more than \$500,000 for ULI, allowing for growth in several of ULI's education programs.

She started her career as an environmental planner for the South Florida Regional Planning Council. She was responsible for all environmental review of Developments of Regional Impact, drafting the environment sections of the Regional Plan for South Florida, and working on specific projects related to environmental planning and protection for Broward, Dade, and Monroe counties. After her tenure in South Florida, Corrigan served as a director for environmental programs at Tetra Tech, a global environmental consulting firm, with a focus on urban and agricultural non-point-source pollution control.

## Donny James

*Largo, Maryland*

James is chief real estate officer for the Revenue Authority of Prince George's County, Maryland. In this capacity, he works with the executive director to strategically identify real estate development opportunities that would spur economic growth, create "destination points," and produce positive impacts for Prince George's County. He also works with various sister agencies in addition to private develop-

ers to create public/private partnerships to assist with the execution of some of these projects. He works in tandem with the executive director to provide project status updates to the Revenue Authority's board of directors and county officials. James joined the Revenue Authority with more than 20 years of senior-level real estate development experience.

Most recently, he worked with a nonprofit in Washington, D.C., where he served as the director of real estate development and was responsible for all the organization's real estate transactions. In this role, he managed the design and construction of a new \$28 million, 50,000-square-foot health care facility in Southeast Washington, D.C. He also managed the expansion of the organization's birthing center in Northwest Washington. Previously, James served as the real estate director for the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation, where he led the planning efforts for the redevelopment of Poplar Point, a 110-acre development in Southeast Washington, D.C. As real estate director, he led the development efforts to relocate the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority to a new \$71 million headquarters.

James has been a guest lecturer at Columbia University and has served on multiple panels regarding redevelopment in urban areas. He received his bachelor's in mathematics and economics from Morehouse College in Atlanta and his MS with a concentration in real estate development and finance from Columbia University. He is also a graduate of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

## Craig Seymour

*Boston, Massachusetts*

Seymour is president and managing principal with RKG Associates Inc., a consulting firm specializing in economics, planning, and real estate with offices in Durham, New Hampshire; Boston, Massachusetts; Atlanta, Georgia; and Alexandria, Virginia. He has over 35 years of experience in economic development and real estate planning. He

graduated from Brown University with a degree in civil engineering and economics, followed by an MBA from the University of New Hampshire. He previously served as state director of an SBA-funded Small Business Development Center and managed an EDA-funded Technical Assistance Center providing outreach and economic development services to businesses and communities. While at the University of New Hampshire, he was instrumental in creating the first angel capital network.

Since joining RKG Associates in 1987, Seymour has focused on providing sound advice and in-depth analysis to both public- and private-sector clients to create value from real estate assets. Many of his assignments have involved communities seeking to increase jobs and tax base, ranging from site-specific redevelopment projects to regional economic development plans. Other assignments involve financial and economic analysis, business planning, strategic market studies, and target industry analyses. Seymour is a licensed commercial real estate broker and certified general appraiser with extensive valuation experience with business parks, development opportunities, and hospitality facilities.

Seymour has worked extensively throughout the country on a variety of economic development, market research, and financial analysis projects, including rural and suburban communities, to develop effective strategies for identifying and funding new development opportunities. By accurately identifying and quantifying the risks and benefits associated with new development, he has been able to assist organizations creatively finance new development using such tools as tax increment financing, special districts, incentive programs and direct investment. His work also includes residential market studies, focusing on the changing demographics of communities to understand the impacts on supply and demand, along with office and retail studies in light of today's market uncertainties. Other recent assignments include analyzing the economic impacts and contributions of aviation and other transportation facilities on a local and regional basis.

## Ross Tilghman

*Seattle, Washington*

Tilghman is a transportation planning consultant with his own practice, the Tilghman Group. Working nationally and internationally, he tailors transportation plans for a wide variety of land uses to fit their environmental, historical, and cultural settings. He brings 34 years of experience, including serving as executive director of a downtown business improvement district.

Tilghman creates circulation and parking solutions for parks, zoos, recreation areas, special event facilities, mixed-use projects, downtowns, and historic districts. His approach emphasizes careful observation of how people use transportation, abiding respect for the setting, and clear understanding of the client's objectives. Services include master plans, market studies, parking revenue projections, and development strategies for governmental, not-for-profit, and private-sector clients facing land use challenges.

Examples of significant projects include master plans for Albuquerque's BioPark; Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort, United Arab Emirates; Iowa's State Capitol Complex; Evergreen State College; Gallisteo Basin Preserve, New Mexico; and downtown St. Louis.

Tilghman is a full member of the Urban Land Institute and regularly participates on advisory panels for communities across the country. He serves on the Seattle Design Commission, reviewing public projects for design excellence. Tilghman just completed a year as chair of the Design Commission.

He received his MA in geography from the University of Washington and his BA in history from Washington University in St. Louis.





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