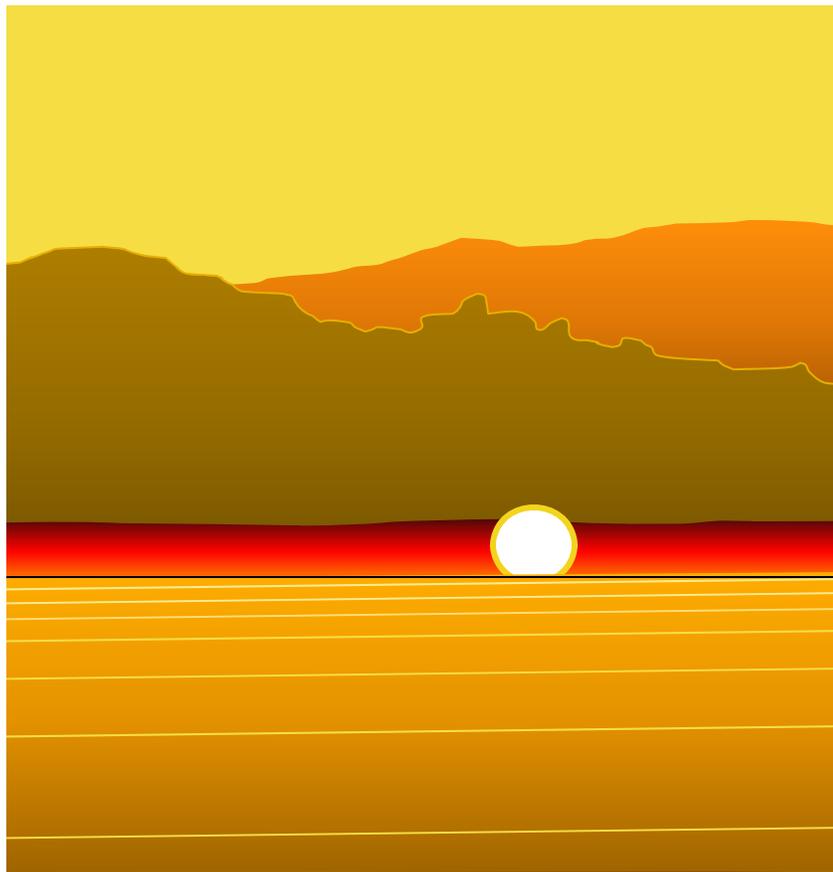


Economic Development

Prepared for:
Charlotte County, Florida
Economic Development Strategic Plan

August 2011



MS&B

Moran, Stahl & Boyer
Connecting Companies With Communities SM



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the early 1950's, the Charlotte County economy has been underpinned by three primary sectors:

- **Agriculture** that includes cattle, citrus that ramped up in the 1980's, and some field crops.
- **Tourism** (vacations and extended stay residents) for those that come to take advantage of the favorable weather, boating and fishing, golf, baseball and the beach that has facilitated the hospitality industry.
- **Residential and Commercial Development** primarily for the 55+ age group that was driven by the substantial development efforts and marketing campaigns by General Development Corporation from 1950 to 1990 that offered up the community as a "retirement paradise."

With development came a substantial construction, real estate and related services cluster. As the critical mass of the community grew, it stimulated the demand for medical services, retail and restaurants, recreational options and a host of services focused on the 55+ age group. What has resulted from the large-scale development activity is the formation of a community with a disproportionately large "retired" population supported by a smaller and younger working population engaged in health care and other services, retail and recreation. The working population has stimulated the development of the education sector at the K-12 and college levels.

Looking toward the future, the County seeks to diversify its economy with selected manufacturing, warehousing, professional/technical/creative services as well as expand tourism and support organic growth in health care, education and retail as it tracks population dynamics. In addition, major development projects such as Babcock Ranch, Murdock Village and significant residential/commercial infill and redevelopment projects will be key drivers as the economy recovers. There is also a focus on facilitating the growth of new and emerging businesses throughout the community. The expansion of opportunities will help to balance the demographics and expand the size of the working age population.

In order to support economic growth there is a continuing need to develop and package resources that are of the type and level of readiness required by prospective businesses. Resources include sites and buildings located in business parks and in more urban settings as well as expanding education and training programs to match specific industry needs. In addition, several types of incentives (both local and state supported) need to be considered.

There is also a need to enhance the economic development team of government agencies and private stakeholders that support businesses as they enter the community and progress through their life cycles. All facets of the effort – from building initial relationships to permitting facilities to providing access to financial resources – need to be seamless and timely.

The strategic plan outlined in this report provides an overview on the Charlotte County economy and seeks to answer the following four questions:

1. How has the Charlotte County economy evolved over its history?
2. What is the current state of the local economy?
3. What options are available for growth and define the resources required to support them?
4. What actions are required to successfully support the growth of the local economy?

General Observations

- Having the community positioned as a “retirement paradise” for over 60 years (since the days of the General Development Corporation), it’s going to take some time to effect a change in culture that embraces new economic development options (by the large retirement population).
- The demographics of the community reflect a high retirement population with an average age of 54.6 years and a workforce participation rate of 46.4% versus a national average of 36.5 years and 65% respectively. This makes it a challenge for medium and larger operations (100+ employees) to consider relocating here.
- Being located between two metro areas (Lee County with 600,000+ population and Sarasota/Manatee Counties with 700,000+ population) that have far more major employers and resources, places Charlotte County at a distinct competitive disadvantage.
- Charlotte County has virtually no identity like “Fort Myers” or “Sarasota” commands in the marketplace. Even the name Charlotte has been overshadowed by Charlotte, NC.
- Being located far down a peninsula in the southeast corner of the United States is not a typically strategic location for general manufacturing and distribution. In addition, there is currently a very limited presence of manufacturing and warehouse companies in the County from which to leverage. Target opportunities will need to focus on those activities that have a strong affinity to the geographic location (e.g., access to Southwest Florida for distribution; access to South and Central America as well as the Caribbean regions; access to markets for solar-related products; etc.).
- One of Charlotte County’s greatest economic development assets is the land around Punta Gorda Airport. The complex needs a single identity and to have a master plan that facilitates companies being attracted to the location and being able to get in and up and running that meets their schedule.
- From a business attraction perspective, Charlotte County has significant vacant land parcels available but very limited inventory of office and industrial buildings in comparison to Lee, Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

Summary of Action Items . . . Moving the County Forward

A summary of the strategy and action plan to support growth is provided in Sections 7 and 8 respectively. Specific actions for the County and selected stakeholders to implement are summarized below by category.

➤ Organizational Effectiveness

1. Establish a team to review the key processes that support economic development and seek ways to streamline them in order to position the community as highly responsive and “business friendly.”
2. Develop plan (longer term) to consolidate the County’s Department of Economic Development with the ECEC to form an integrated public/private partnership. The IDA would be maintained as a separate entity.

➤ Communications With Community

1. Establish a Citizen’s Advisory Group for Economic Develop to discuss issues and methods of pulling the community together to build consensus on economic growth.
2. Incorporate entrepreneurship into the local school/college curriculum.

➤ Resource Development

1. Develop a formal master plan for the Airport Commerce Park (and other parcels near the airport) that would include a uniform identify, overall layout plan, reasonable codes and design criteria, provide sites that are shovel/pad ready, and develop a marketing strategy. Note that code changes are ready to be implemented.
2. Make available technical training at a company’s site to support business retention and attraction of certain types of manufacturing and other businesses requiring specialized training.
3. Provide incentives (financial resources) to support new/emerging/expanding local businesses and attract additional businesses to the County.

➤ Business Attraction (External Market) and Small Business Development

1. Develop “brands” or tag lines for specific economic sectors (e.g., “Distribution Center for Southwest Florida”) in order to give some identity to the County for placing on web site and in literature.
2. Prepare an ***Economic Development Resource Profile*** for the County that defines its key assets that would be of interest to prospective companies.
3. Establish a **Small Business Accelerator Program** for new and emerging companies.

Final Comment . . . Charlotte County at the Crossroads

Charlotte County finds itself at an inevitable crossroads in its existence. Does it “stay the course” as a predominantly retirement community that caters to the needs of its older citizens or does it seek to broaden its base and become a strong live/work community?

To move forward will require the support of all stakeholders (including the retired residents) and achieving any level of success has no guarantees – there is plenty of competition.

This strategic plan outlines the situation and what efforts need to be addressed to move forward. The community will need to pull together – just as was done after Hurricane Charley – and get things done timely and effectively.



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Charlotte County is located in southwest Florida along the Gulf Coast between the cities of Sarasota to the north and Fort Myers to the south. The County was formed in 1921 when it was split off from DeSoto County and has expanded into a community with nearly 160,000 residents. Its only incorporated city is Punta Gorda located on the south side of the Peace River.

The County is currently seeking an economic strategy that broadens its economic base, encourages younger individuals and families to live and work in the area, and builds a service team of local stakeholders that is responsive and effective in delivering all aspects of supporting businesses. To this end, the County has retained the nationally known economic development firm of Moran, Stahl & Boyer of Lakewood Ranch, Florida to facilitate a process to develop their Economic Development Strategic Plan.



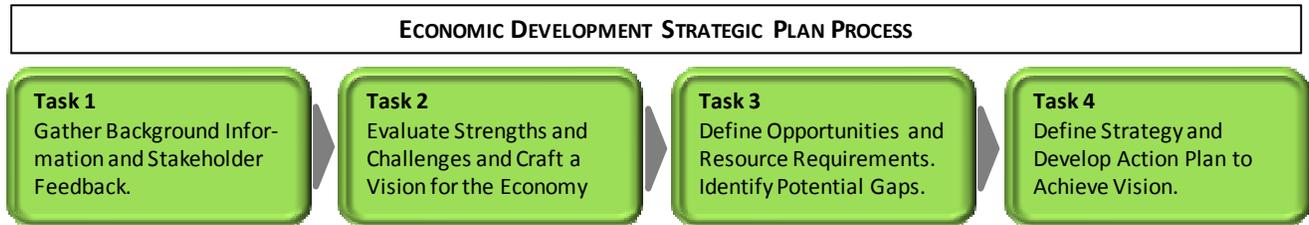
OVERVIEW MAP OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY



● = exit on I-75 within Charlotte County.

➤ Overall Process for Preparing an Economic Development Strategic Plan

Preparing an Economic Development Plan is a multi-step process that requires input from a cross-section of community stakeholders. The details of the process are noted below.



Prior to engaging in the process, MS&B (John Rhodes) presented an Economic Development 101 Seminar to a cross-section of community stakeholders to provide a common basis for understanding economic development and how companies select communities to locate their businesses.

Gathering Background Information and Stakeholder Feedback

Background information is gathered from many sources including a variety of web sites as well as books and materials available in the community from government agencies, the County's historic museum, educational institutions, tourism, chamber of commerce, and other sources. The process has also included discussions with many different community stakeholders including government staff members from planning and economic development, local educators at multiple levels, developers, brokers, engineering firms, health care professionals, Chamber of Commerce representatives, County Commissioners, representatives from the City of Punta Gorda, the airport director, and others.

Strengths/Challenges Analysis

Another important input is to define the key strengths of the local community that support economic growth along with the primary challenges for achieving success. As noted above, input was gathered from a variety of stakeholders from throughout the County.

Crafting a Vision

A vision for the County's economy has been outlined with a horizon of 10 years into the future. The vision may be refined as additional insights and perspectives are incorporated into the process. The visioning process began with an historical review of the local economy, the current situation and potential options for the future.

Identifying Primary Opportunities and Potential Resource Gaps

Primary opportunities were identified with community input along with required resource needs that were compared to currently available resource needs. Any significant resources gaps were noted.

Economic Development Strategic Plan

The strategic plan addresses the need for resource development along with the opportunity for new business growth from existing companies, emerging businesses and business attraction.

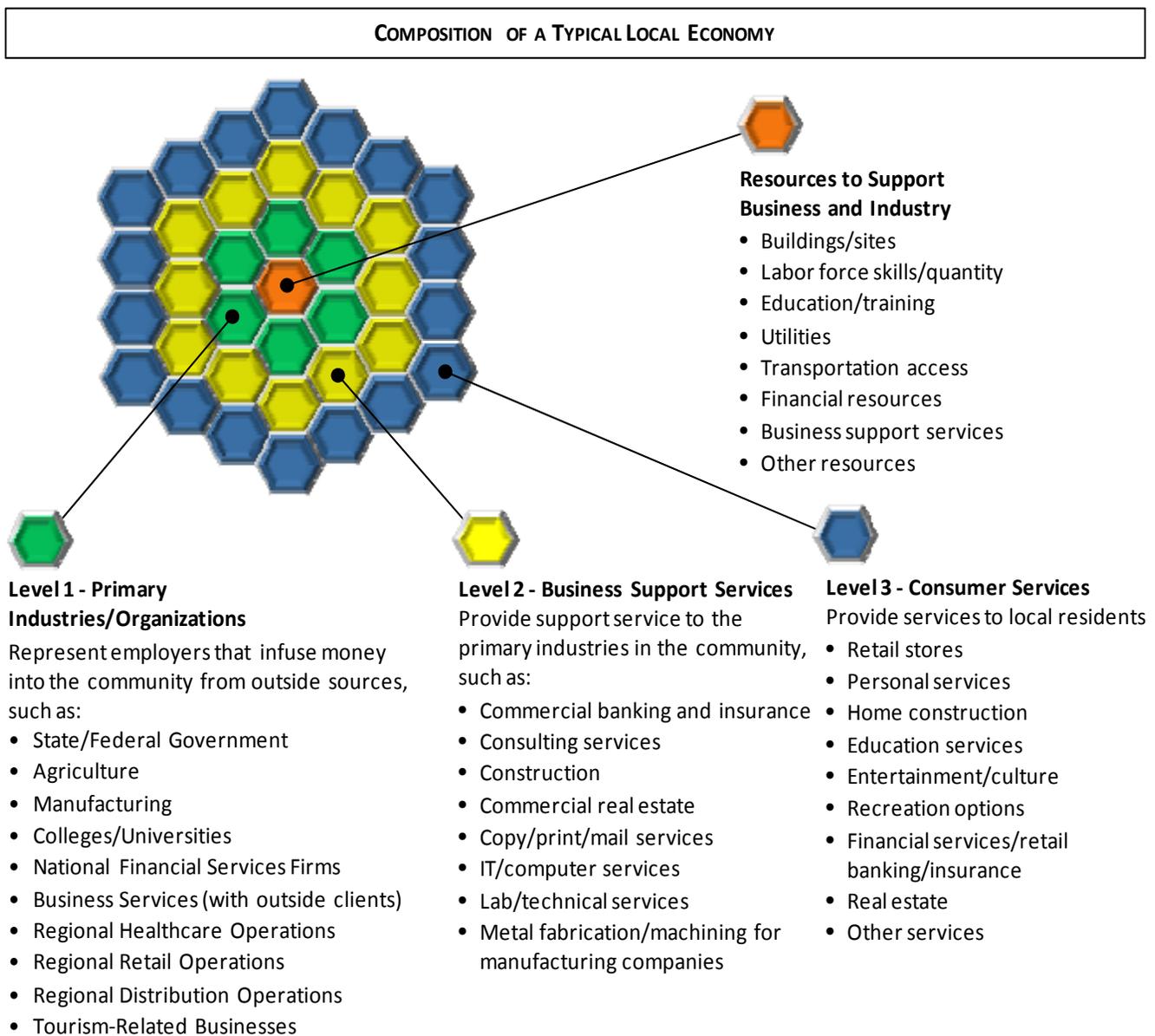
Action Plan

Details of the strategy and the overall vision are integrated into the action plan that is structured to optimize implementation. The plan incorporates any recommendations for organizational changes, policies, resource improvements, marketing efforts and other actions required to achieve the economic development strategy and vision.

➤ Composition of a Typical Local Economy (Background Perspective)

Before we delve into the details of the Charlotte County economy and future growth, it is important to understand the structure of a local economy and the interrelationships of sectors. The diagram below reflects the structure of a typical economy with resources at the center that support the three levels of economic activity. Resources include land/buildings, labor and educational institutions, financial resources, transportation access, etc. The type, capacity and level of readiness of each resource will change in scope depending of the type, size and life stage of each business.

The three levels of economic opportunities consist of Level 1 (**Primary Industries/Organizations** that bring cash into the community from outside sources), Level 2 (**Business Services** that support the Level 1 businesses), and Level 3 (**Consumer Services/Retailers** that support local residents). It is important to sustain and expand the Level 1 businesses because the other levels are derived from them.



➤ Perspective on Charlotte County's Economy

The primary sectors (Level 1) of Charlotte County's economy have evolved since the mid-19th century and have included:

- Agriculture, fishing and forestry. Fishing has become more aligned with tourism and forestry has a very limited future along with growth of agriculture.
- Tourism/seasonal residents that have been attracted to the area for the favorable weather along with boating, fishing, hunting, golf and access to the beach. More recently, nature/wildlife tours and other eco-related tourism have become popular.
- Development of homes and commercial buildings. At the on-set of this activity, it brings investment into the community and stimulates new buyers. Once the home or building is sold, the cash flow related to the real estate comes from the residents and not from outside the county (except for seasonal rental fees)

There has been an evolving business services sector (Level 2) that has supported both the Level 1 and the Level 3 businesses.

The Level 3 businesses have been driven by significant home and commercial development along with the services required to support the expanding population that includes a large 55+ year old age group. The major sectors in Level 3 include:

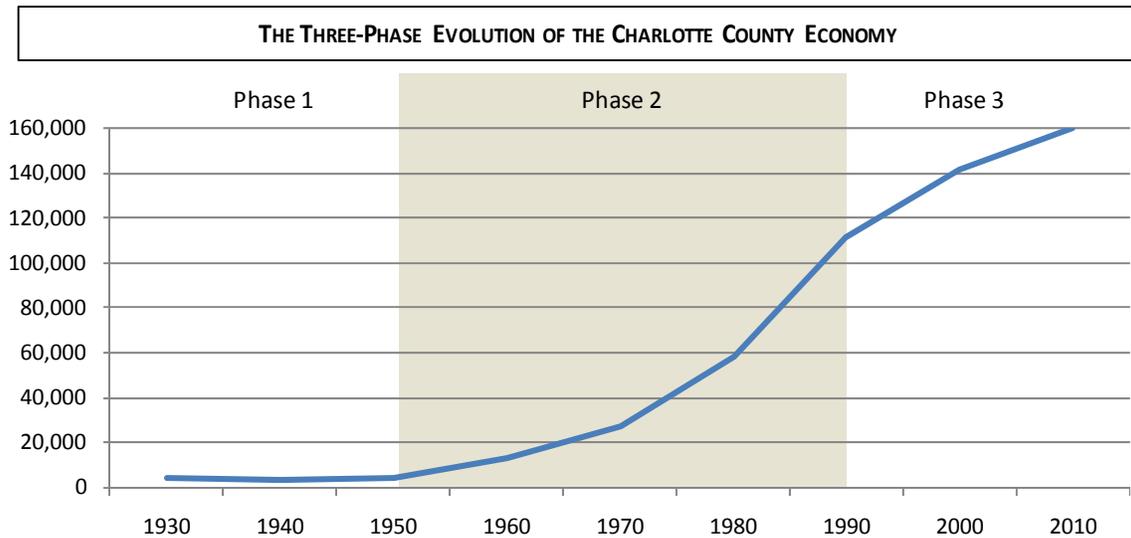
- Services that support retirees (health care supporting multiple care levels, home maintenance, retail, entertainment, personal services, restaurants financial services, etc.).
- Services that support the working families which are in the community to provide services to the retirees (K-12 education, retail, recreation venues, family restaurants, etc.).

This discussion on the structure of local economies leads to three points that relate to Charlotte County:

1. The core drivers of cash into the community are agriculture (which has flat growth); tourism that provides relatively low-paying seasonal jobs; and development/construction that can exist only as long as there is land available for development and a viable economy to support it. From experience, communities with a strong (disproportionately high) construction sector can have challenges filling manufacturing jobs (when construction is booming).
2. What's missing from this economy is a significant array of knowledge-based jobs that provide next-generation options for college graduates. There is also a very low level of manufacturing employment, particularly in comparison to Sarasota (5,000 jobs) and Lee (4,300 jobs) counties.
3. Supporting the 55+ age group has been the primary focus of the local economy since the 1950's when General Development Corporation stated they were developing a "paradise for retirees." That unto itself is not a bad objective **but after staying this course for 60 years it's going to take some time to effect a change in culture that embraces new economic development options.**

ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF COMMUNITY

Charlotte County had a population of 3,000 or less and very low growth prior to 1950 when major development was initiated by the General Development Corporation. The formation of the County’s economy and the resultant population growth can be described in three phases as noted on the graph and within the text below.



Phase 1: Early Years (prior to 1950) - The local economy during this period was dominated by forestry, agriculture, fishing, tourism, port activities and some land development. The substantial forests of old-growth southern pine was tapped for turpentine and later cut for lumber along with the large cypress. Once the land was cleared, the land owners took up cattle ranching.



Old Growth Bald or Swamp Cypress Forest

In the 1880’s, pineapples were grown and distributed throughout North America with some fruits weighing as much as 30-45 pounds. The occurrence of several hurricanes destroyed the pineapple crop in the early 1900’s.

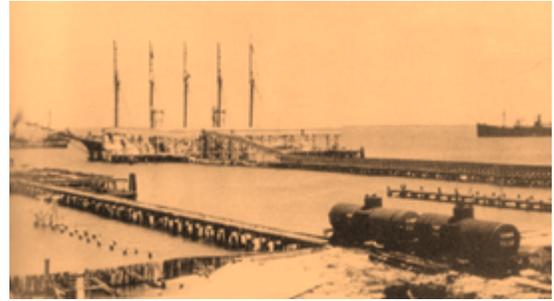
There was a viable commercial fishing industry in and around the Charlotte Harbor area but was diminished with the silting that occurred when the canals were built after 1950. Sport fishing for tarpon, manta ray and other species has been a draw to the area since the 1880’s.

In 1887, the majestic Hotel Punta Gorda (later known as the Charlotte Harbor Hotel) was built on Charlotte Harbor in Punta Gorda and catered to the rich and famous as a favorite winter retreat. Partly owned by Cornelius Vanderbilt, the hotel hosted well-known figures of the day such as Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, Andrew Mellon, President Teddy Roosevelt and John Wanamaker.



Majestic Hotel Punta Gorda (later became Hotel Charlotte Harbor)

Phosphorous rich deposits were discovered in the Peace River near Arcadia by the U.S. Corps of Engineers in the 1880's. This evolved into a major industry that removed material and transported it to Boca Grande by a newly installed rail line where it was transferred to ship for distribution throughout North America.



Phosphate Docks in Boca Grande

There were a number of land speculation and development attempts in the early part of the 20th century that were ultimately thwarted by hurricanes in 1921 and 1926 along with the Great Depression from 1929 to WWII. Joel Bean was a developer that invested in land and started the community still known as El Jobean in 1924 that became a popular winter destination for carnival and circus workers and actors.

Charlotte Harbor is the largest fresh water estuary in Florida and along with the nearby barrier islands provided an excellent habitat for a variety of birds and marine animals. The Bass family established the Bass Biological Laboratory and Zoological Research Supply Company in Englewood in 1931 and operated it until 1944. During this time they catalogued 470 marine and terrestrial species and attracted researchers from throughout North America and Europe. The Bass family later helped William and Alfred Vanderbilt develop the Cape Haze Marine Laboratory near Placida that was eventually relocated to Sarasota County and became Mote Marine Laboratory.

Phase 2: High Growth Years (1950 – 1990) - In the early 1950's, the Mackle Brothers merged with the Chemical Research Company of Delaware to form the General Development Company (GDC). The company developed a master plan for the area and installed roads, canals and golf courses and some water and sewer. GDC also heavily marketed through print media and directly to major cities such as Chicago and New York City; including the placement of a model house and display area in Grand Central Station. The community was positioned as an ideal destination for retirees to enjoy the sun and engage in fishing, boating and golf.



Early Picture of Port Charlotte Development

With the development came the first wave of population growth in the 1950's-60's from construction workers and construction support operations. The high growth in population from retirees came in the 1970's-80's. The overall growth in population also stimulated the need for health care, retail, and all types of services for the permanent and part-time population base. Service providers and their employees required schools and colleges to educate children and the work force.

In the 1980's there were several harsh winters that were devastating to the citrus crop near Orlando and many farmers moved their crops south to Highlands, Glades, DeSoto, Charlotte and Lee Counties. The beef cattle industry continued to thrive throughout the region.

Tourism underwent some significant changes over this period. The classic destination mega resorts phased out with the loss of the Charlotte Harbor Hotel to fire in 1959. The high-end destination is now Gasparilla Island. With the building of I-75 into the area in the 1980's, there are more tourists driving down and taking advantage of golfing, the beach and sport fishing, with many renting homes for weeks or months.

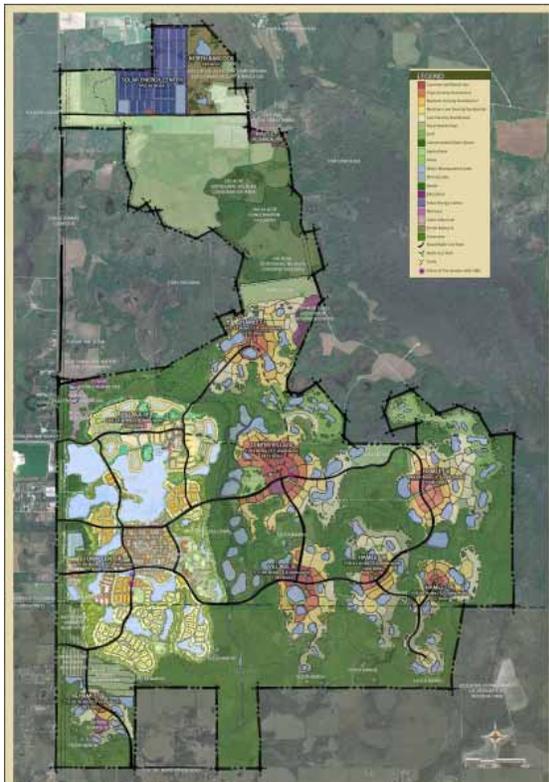
Phase 3: Post High Growth Years (1990 to Present) - The GDC ceased development in the area in the early 1990's and the community was left with a substantial concentration of open platted properties amongst lots with homes built on them. Additional neighborhoods have been constructed along with Port Charlotte Town Center Mall (anchored by Bealls, Dillard's, JC Penney, Macy's and Sears). There are other big box retailers located in the County.

The size and scope of healthcare operations have expanded to meet the population growth and demographic profile of the area. Educational resources have been enhanced with the expansion/upgrade of the Charlotte Tech Center and the establishment of a local branch of Edison State College that opened its campus in 1997.

In August of 2004, the County faced its first Category 4 hurricane since 1960 when **Hurricane Charley** made landfall at Punta Gorda and tore through the region. The community showed a high degree of resilience, pulled together, and rebuilt the homes and public structures into an even better place. The City of Punta Gorda has revitalized its "main street" shopping area and the County built a new Event Center that receives significant use. New schools have been built along with other government buildings, stand-alone retail shops and restaurants. Charlotte High School is LEED Gold certified with solar panels strategically located on the campus.



In 2005, Kitson & Partners announced their plans to build Babcock Ranch development on the east side of the County that includes portions of Lee County to the south.



Babcock Ranch Preliminary Master Plan



Charlotte High School with LEED gold certification



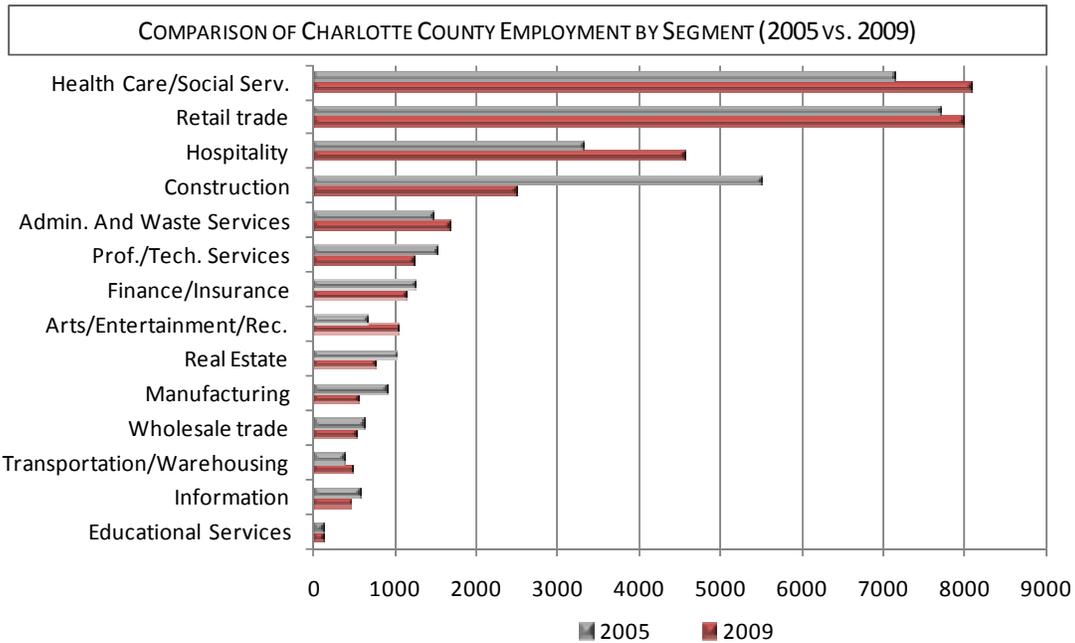
Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TIME-LINE FOR CHARLOTTE COUNTY: 1850 - PRESENT

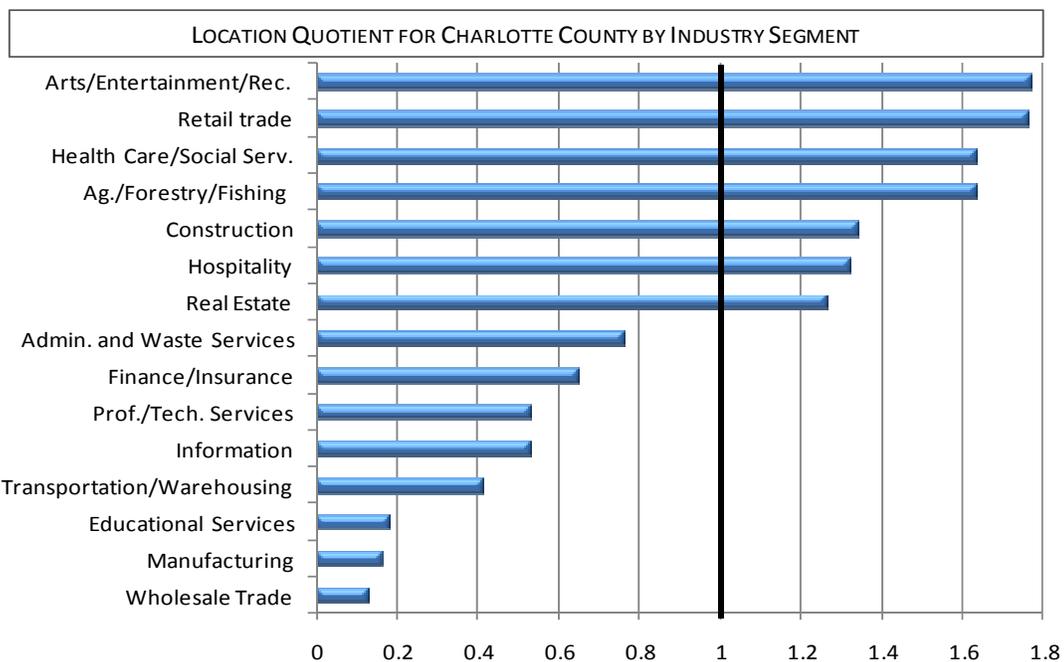
1850	
1860	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union veterans that were stationed on the Gulf Coast (Fort Myers area) during the Civil War return to the area to begin homesteading in the Charlotte Harbor area. Cattle and other crops were shipped from Charlotte Harbor.
1870	
1880	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail lines were installed from Arcadia to Punta Gorda (for tourism) and to Boca Grande (for transport of phosphate). • In the late 1880's phosphate was mined from the upper reaches of the Peace River above Arcadia and railed to Boca Grande's deep water for shipment by boat as fertilizer. Area begins growing pineapples and becomes major source for North America until major freeze and hurricanes in the 1920's.
1890	
1900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel Punta Gorda built in 1887 attracts major personalities of the day (Thomas Edison, John Wanamaker, W. K. Vanderbilt, the Samuel Colt family and others) to fish and hunt in the area while staying at a high-end resort. The hotel was acquired by another investor in 1924 and the name was changed to the Charlotte Harbor Hotel. The hotel burned down in 1959 after years of non-use.
1910	
1920	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 1921, Charlotte County was established as its own county, having formerly been part of DeSoto County. • The Bass Biological Laboratory and Zoological Research Supply Facility Company was established in 1931 by John and Else Bass. As the first full-time marine station on the Florida mainland, the laboratory's mission was to promote scientific marine exploration in southwest Florida. It eventually was relocated to Sarasota County to become Mote Marine.
1930	
1940	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During WWII, Punta Gorda Airport is utilized for Army Air Corps training and provides further exposure of the County to potential future residents. • In the early 1950's, the General Development Corporation (1951-1991) began platting major portions of Port Charlotte and North Port. They put in roads, canals and golf courses and some water and sewer. Population began to expand first from construction workers and eventually retirees. This eventually drove health care, retail, related services and part-time "snow bird" visitors.
1950	
1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major freezes in the 1980's in central Florida stimulated the growth of citrus groves being planted in Highlands, Glades, DeSoto, Charlotte and Lee Counties. • In the 1980's, I-75 is extended south of Tampa through Charlotte County to Naples and over to Miami.
1970	
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In August 2004, Hurricane Charley rips through Punta Gorda and central Charlotte County requiring substantial rebuilding and upgrading of certain sections of the County.
1990	
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17,000 acre Babcock Ranch (located in both Charlotte and Lee County) is acquired and plans for developing a major mixed use development east of I-75 are prepared.
2010	

Discussion on the Current Economy in Charlotte County

Employment by industry sector for Charlotte County is noted below along with a plot of the Location Quotient for each sector in the chart at the bottom of the page. The Location Quotient is the ratio of the percent of a given industry sector to the total employment of a community compared with the ratio at a national level. Ratios that are over a value of 1.0 demonstrate a higher than average presence of the sector in the local economy.



In comparing the employment by sector for 2005 vs. 2009, the largest losses were in construction and largest gains were in healthcare and hospitality. Manufacturing lost over 100 jobs during the period.



The current economy reflects the traditional economic base of the area that is derived from the following:

- **Agriculture** (citrus, cattle and other crops)

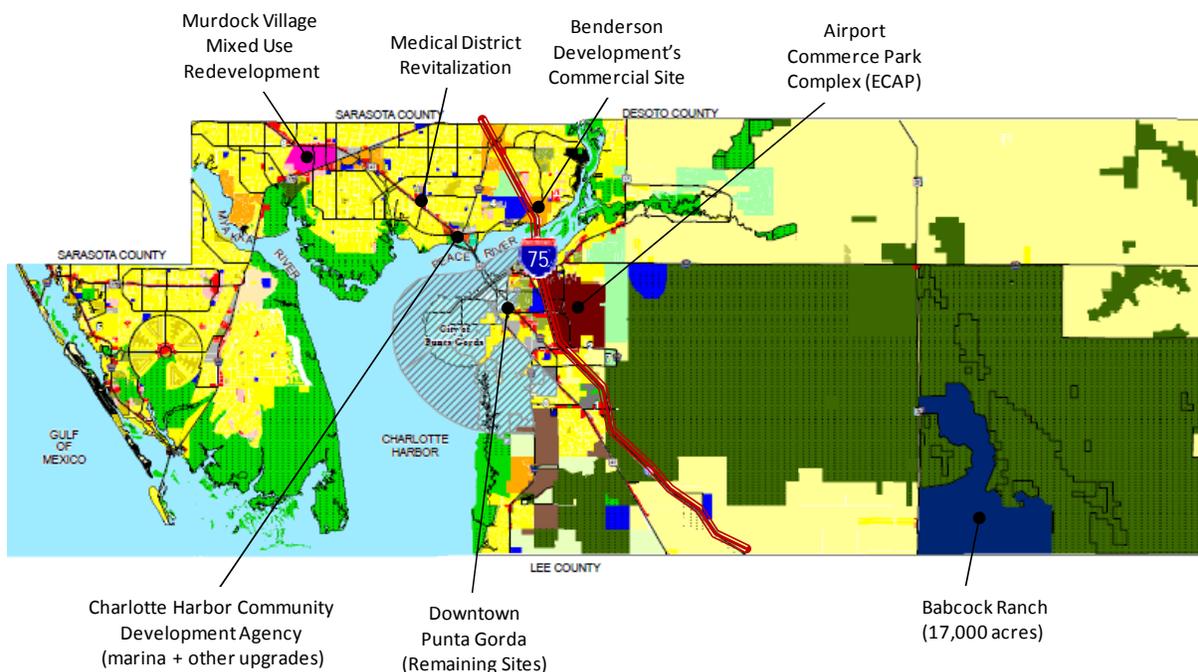
Total agriculture in the County provides revenues in excess of \$65 million with nearly 90% coming from citrus and other crops with the balance from beef cattle sales. The number of farms is diminishing with some being sold to development or acquired by other farms. There is also an emerging sector of niche farming for organic and other specialty crops.



	2002	2007	2007 (Lee Co.)	2007 (Sarasota Co.)
Number of Farms	284	242	944	305
Total Revenue (\$000)	\$48,300	\$65,600	\$116,000	\$31,000
• Revenue from citrus/other crops	\$42,600	\$58,700	\$112,700	Not Available
• Revenue from beef cattle	\$5,700	\$6,900	\$3,300	Not Available

- **Land Development** (construction, real estate and related services)

There are a number of significant planned development and redevelopment projects that will help the community to be positioned for commercial and industrial growth along with expanding the residential product base. Murdock Village represents an 800+ acre redevelopment area with a Spots and Entertainment District which may include a large water resort, a baseball complex and a music district along with office complexes and other mixed use. Development at the airport under the ECAP umbrella represents hundreds of acres for office and industrial use. Babcock Ranch is a mid and long term project that will provide an entirely new platform of mixed use development for the eastern section of the County and provide strong ties with the metro areas in Lee County. There are also some remaining sites in downtown Punta Gorda for potential mixed office/retail options. There are also a number of in-fill residential and commercial sites located at and west of the I-75 corridor as well as the Medal Arts District and Charlotte Harbor CRA Industrial Park.



- **Retirement** (health care, personal services, a portion of retail and entertainment with related services)

These sectors of the economy are aggregated together because they typically expand in proportion to the overall growth and demographic profile of the community. The older age groups obviously require more health care and certain specialties and housing that reflects levels of care required. Specific age groups also require certain types of retail, restaurants and recreation. This sector will change when the demographics of the community transitions (or blended with) a younger demographic.

- **Tourism** (hospitality, a portion of retail and entertainment, and related services)

The traditional destination activities of boating, fishing and golf are still strong, the Tampa Bay Rays Baseball Stadium, and other types of venues available that include nature/wildlife observation (a sector of eco-tourism) and trails for biking. Beach access is limited and has paid parking that makes it less competitive with Sarasota and Manatee Counties that have large beach access areas with free parking and toilet/shower facilities. There is interest in adding additional venues for baseball and a major water park to attract families to the community for vacation and as residents. There are plans by a firm in Manatee County to build several water parks in Manatee County that may impact the potential traffic coming to the proposed Charlotte County park (see below).

Project Overview

Jungle Falls Contact:

Garrick P. Newman Founder, President Jungle Falls Inc.
 4900 Manatee Avenue, Suite 101
 Bradenton, Florida 34209
 Telephone: 941.321.5457
 E-mail: garrick@junglefalls.com



LAND SIZE: 15-20 acres

LAND USE: High Intensity Recreational

ANNUAL GUESTS: 200k - 250k

OPERATIONAL MONTHS: March - October

PEAK MONTHS: June - August **CLOSED MONTHS:** November - February

EMPLOYMENT: 100-125

SITE SELECTION: Richardson Kleiber Walter THE RICHARDSON GROUP, LLC has been contracted for prelim site selection analysis and land brokerage. Site selection is based roughly on optimizing several criteria including:

- Proximity to resident population centers;
- Demographics: pre-teens and teens
- Utilities including sewer, power, and water
- Good regional access with proximity to a major thoroughfare and visibility

FEASIBILITY & MARKET STUDIES: William Haralson & Associates, Inc. has conducted the feasibility study. Haralson & Associates have a strong planning background including planning for Six Flags Corporation, Walt Disney World, Wet 'N Wild, Worlds of Fun, Raging Waters, Lion Country Safari, Silver Dollar City, Emerald Pointe Water Park, Heritage USA, Hershey Entertainment & Resorts, Opryland USA, Splashdown USA, Warner Brothers, Whitewater West Industries, and others. All economic indicators suggest that a waterpark in **Manatee County** will enjoy sustained financial success.

DESIGN, ENGINEERING & DEVELOPMENT: Jungle Falls has relationships with Wet Engineering and Whitewater Industries, LTD, which will serve as the engineer, general contractor for the design, construction, and assist in the initial operation of the Park. Whitewater Industries Ltd., is the largest builder and service provider of water parks and aquatic attractions in the world. Their work includes water attractions at Busch Gardens, Sea World, Six Flags, Hershey Park, Universal Studios, Walt Disney, and other well received parks.

Demographics of Charlotte County and Adjacent Counties

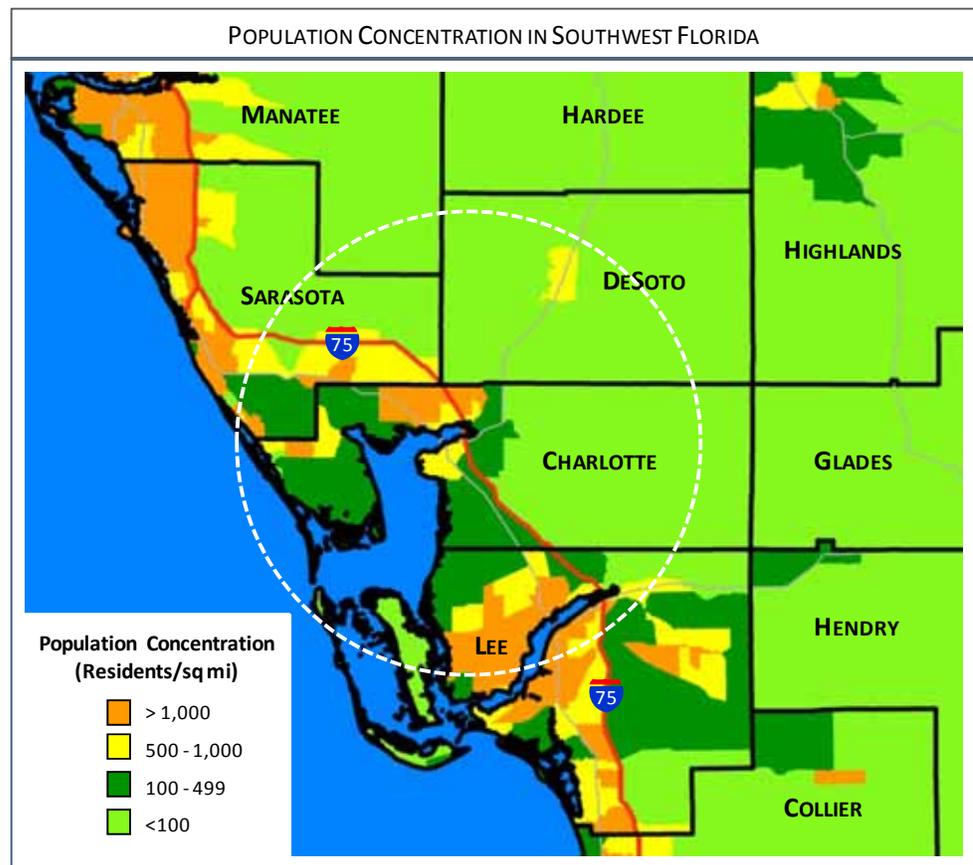
Charlotte County's demographics represent a challenge with the low workforce participation rate and low percent of the population in the 20-34 age group. Education attainment is an issue in the outlying counties.

County	Population (2010)	Growth 2000 to 2010	Workforce as % of Population	Median Age	Median Household Income*	% Population 20-34 Yr. Olds	% w/HS Diploma	% Adults w/4-Yr.+ Education Attainment
Charlotte	159,980	13.0%	46.4%	54.6	\$44,540	10.8%	87.9%	20.8%
Collier	321,520	27.9%	55.4%	45.2	\$58,133	17.2%	84.7%	30.7%
DeSoto	34,860	8.2%	52.3%	35.6	\$37,226	24.7%	62.5%	9.5%
Glades	12,880	21.8%	48.1%	42.2	\$39,260	18.8%	73.4%	10.8%
Hardee	27,730	2.9%	55.9%	32.8	\$38,865	23.0%	59.5%	7.9%
Hendry	39,140	8.1%	61.1%	30.6	\$37,354	23.2%	61.0%	7.8%
Highlands	98,790	13.1%	45.9%	49.7	\$33,902	13.9%	77.2%	13.8%
Lee	618,750	40.3%	57.7%	44.0	\$50,362	16.3%	86.7%	24.9%
Manatee	322,830	22.3%	58.0%	44.3	\$47,935	15.7%	86.5%	25.9%
Sarasota	379,450	16.4%	52.7%	50.7	\$49,013	12.9%	89.9%	28.9%
U.S. Average	-	9.7%	65.0%	36.5	\$51,525	20.4%	84.6%	27.5%

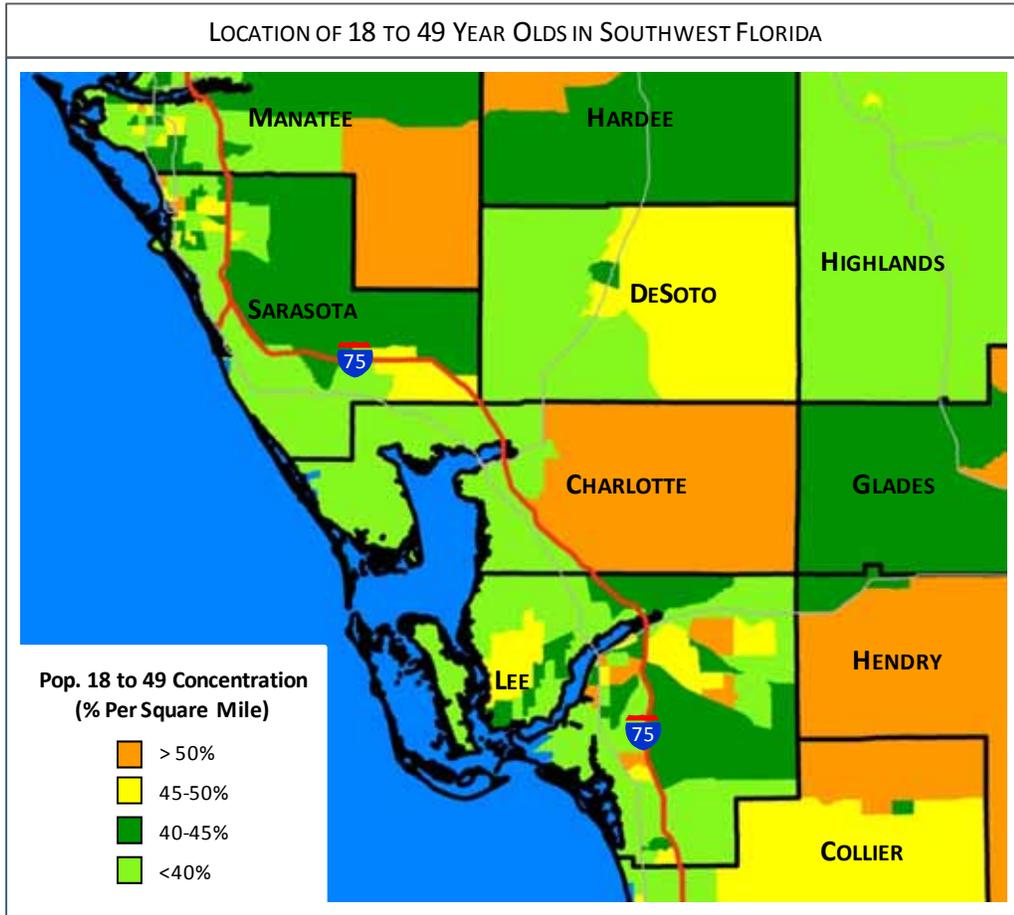
Note: Tan areas indicate significant variations from national averages that may be an issue for prospective companies.

The population concentration for southwest Florida is presented to the right along with a 25-mile commute zone from the airport area.

Communities included in the commute zone are Englewood and North Port to the north and Cape Coral and parts of Fort Myers to the south.



The location of 18 to 49 year olds is plotted below by their percent of the total population. It demonstrates that the higher concentrations of these residents are in North Port in Sarasota County and Cape Coral in Lee County.

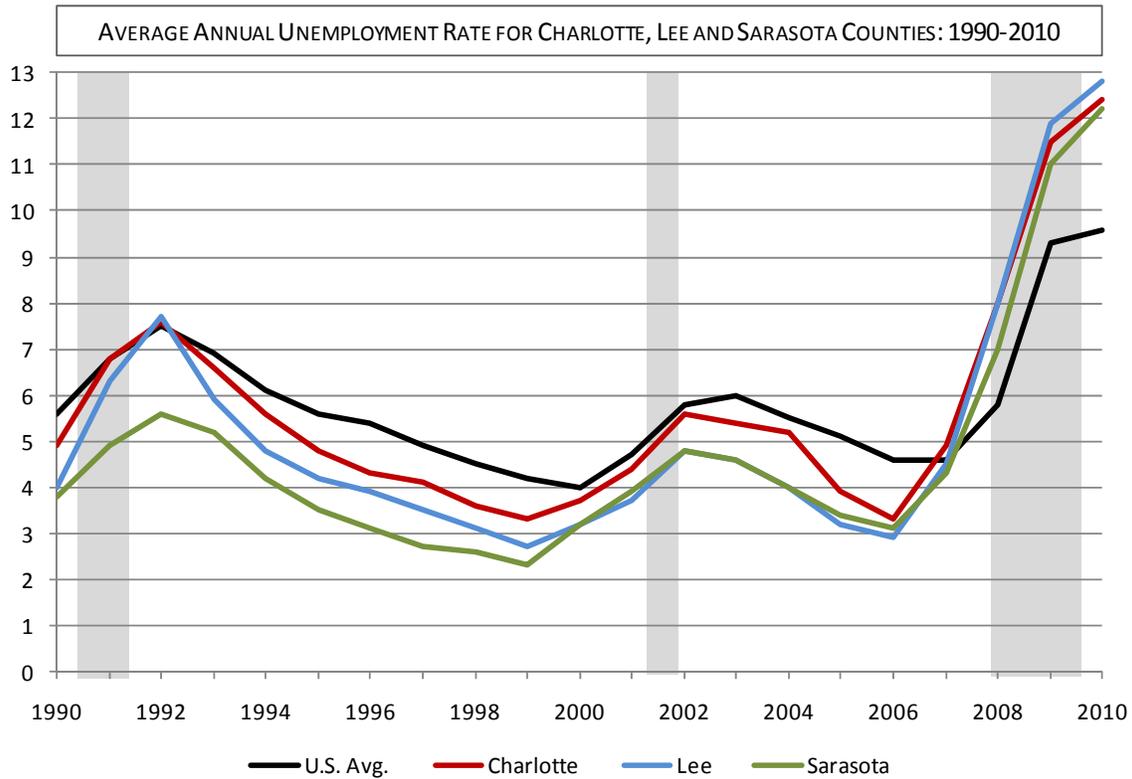


Population Dynamics

The population of Charlotte County has risen nearly 45% since 1990 along with a shift in age mix. The 20-34 age group has stayed about the same in absolute numbers (about 17,000) while the overall population has risen. There has also been no growth in the 35-54 age group. Growth in absolute numbers has risen for the 55-64 age group that has resulted in their percentage of total population gaining by 1.5%. There has also been growth in the 65+ age group. Compared to the U.S. average, the demographics of the County are skewed heavily toward the 55+ age group and it has remained strong over the past 20 years.

Age (Years)	1990 Population = 111,000	2009 Estimate (Population = 159,500)	U.S. Average 2009
0-19	17.3%	16.7%	27.4%
20-34	14.9%	10.8%	20.4%
35-54	19%	22.9%	28.7%
55-64	15.0%	16.5%	10.8%
65+	33.8%	33.0%	12.6%

The plot of unemployment rates for Charlotte, Lee and Sarasota Counties demonstrates the volatility of the labor market in the Gulf Coast communities. Due to the strong presence of construction and real estate activity as well as tourism, this region can be both tighter than national average during good times (labor scarcity) and higher unemployment during bad times when tourism and construction are significantly affected.



Note: Gray areas are periods of economic recession.

Comparison of Wage Rates

Wages in the region are only about 5-10% less than national average based on May 2010 data. The past high cost of housing kept wages higher than that would normally be encountered in communities similar to these (based on size and location).

Job Description	Cape Coral/Fort Myers Area		Sarasota/Bradenton/Northport Area		US Average
	Number	Average Wage	Number	Average Wage	Average Wage
Accountant	1,620	\$65,760	2,210	\$63,120	\$68,690
Software Developer	250	\$82,990	240	\$83,310	\$90,410
Team Assembler	550	\$29,400	1,580	\$27,410	\$29,220
Warehouse Laborer	1,920	\$26,080	2,060	\$25,380	\$25,710

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION, STRENGTHS/CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section sets the framework for moving economic development forward in Charlotte County. The basis for this information is derived from the many interviews and discussion sessions that were engaged in with County Commissioners and stakeholder groups from throughout the community.

➔ Economic Development Vision for Charlotte County

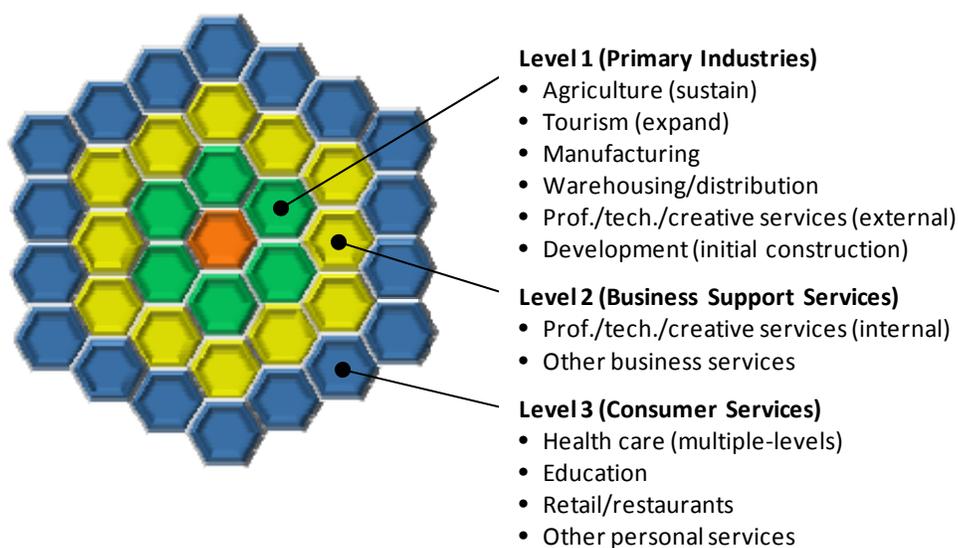
The essence of the vision is to expand and diversify the economy, provide the resources at the level of readiness required to support growth, and enhance the effectiveness and speed of the government/private stakeholder team that facilitates the growth. More details on the vision are provided below.

Charlotte County seeks to expand and diversify its economy with selected manufacturing, warehousing, professional/technical/creative services as well as through new tourism venues and support organic growth in health care, education and retail as it tracks population dynamics. In addition, major development projects such as Babcock Ranch, Murdock Village and significant residential/commercial infill and redevelopment projects will be key drivers as the economy recovers. There is also a focus on facilitating the growth of new and emerging businesses throughout the community.

In order to support economic growth there is the continuing need to develop and package resources that are of the type and level of readiness required by prospective businesses. Resources include sites and buildings located in business parks and in more urban settings, increasing the capacity of water resources where possible as well as expanding education and training programs to match specific industry needs. In addition, several types of incentives (both local and state supported) need to be considered.

There is also a need to enhance the team of government agencies and private stakeholders that support businesses as they enter the community and progress through their life cycles. All facets of the effort – from building initial relationships to permitting facilities to providing access to financial resources – need to be seamless and timely.

Major Sectors of the Local Economy



➤ Strengths/Assets

- Location – access to interstates, airports and ports
- Competitive wage rates
- Low utility rates (~6 cents/kWhr)
- Weather – long construction season and favorable for attracting tourists/new residents
- Numerous recreational opportunities (fishing, boating, golfing)
- Excellent healthcare – access to numerous competitive hospitals
- Education – good schools and post secondary universities and technical schools
- Retirees provide a significant volunteer base with broad perspective (diverse geographic backgrounds)
- Excellent solar industry potential
- Eco-tourism
- Affordable housing

➤ Weaknesses/Challenges

- Workforce – older population and misperception as being non-participatory.
- Negative perception of education quality (derived from “urban legend” that Florida public education must be bad because of low taxes).
- High cost of fresh water due to the need to upgrade the distribution system in some locations. There is a favorable volume of water available at the south end of the Airport Commerce Park (ECAP).
- Lack of large tracts of developable land (a large portion of the land was laid out as residential tracts and not conducive for office/industrial options).
- Logistical challenge - not in the logistics “sweet-spot” that states to the north (VA, NC, etc.) have.
- Low incentive money package compared to other competitor communities.
- Lack of name recognition or identity (other than Punta Gorda being mentioned during Hurricane Charley).
- Perception of being hurricane-prone.

➤ Overview on Opportunities

Based on extensive site selection activity for companies and having an understanding of the Gulf Coast area, there are three primary reasons companies would choose to locate in the County:

1. The business owner has a personal interest/familiarity with the area and wants to start/locate his/her business here and the business has a favorable chance of thriving in the area.
2. A service provider (medical, financial, etc.) seeks to locate in the County because there is a perceived local market.
3. The business conducted a location search and identified Charlotte County as being in a strategic location and it has the resources (available land) to construct the facility. This will be primarily related to warehousing and distribution operations.

Each aspect of the local economy was evaluated for potential growth and is summarized below. Details of major sectors begin on the next page.

Sector	Potential	Comments
Tourism	High	Packaging existing venues; corporate retreat center; water park/petting zoo/aquarium for small children; village square; Great US 17 Adventure.
Entrepreneurship	Moderate to High	Interest in establishing a small business accelerator for a variety of businesses.
Distribution/Warehousing	Moderate	Focused on opportunities for serving SW Florida region.
Development/Construction	Moderate to High	There are a number of development projects that will ramp-up in the next few years as the economy recovers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Murdock Village ▸ Commercial/ industry development near the Punta Gorda Airport ▸ Ramp-up of Babcock Ranch project ▸ Infill and redevelopment of residential/commercial tracts throughout the County
Health Care, Retail and Education	Moderate	Support existing organizations/businesses and any incremental growth that comes with future population growth.
Professional, Technical and Creative Services	Moderate	Depends on influx of talent based on quality of life needs vs. perceptions of the area. The existence of a small work force with related skills and the overall economic climate may impact significant growth of this sector.
Manufacturing	Low to Moderate	Niche products/owners making a quality of life decision. Costs favorable for a coastal area. Reflect FL QTI program.
Agriculture	Low to Moderate	Help to maintain what currently exists and support small niche farmers in marketing products.
Back Office Operations	Low	Low workforce participation rate and small 18-34 age group presence will make the County less attractive as a back office location.

Tourism

The current tourist offerings within the County include the following:

- › Boating and water recreation options
- › Fishing (shore and off-shore)
- › Beach activities
- › Nature adventures (viewing birds and wildlife; marine life via boat and kayak)
- › Watching baseball at the Charlotte Sports Park (Tampa Rays and the Charlotte Stone Crabs)
- › Participation in youth baseball
- › Art/culture/history venues
- › Shopping, restaurants and spas
- › Multiple golf courses
- › Frequent events (particularly in Punta Gorda)

Ideas for Additional Venues and Ways to Enhance Tourism

- › Provide unique packages of lodging, meals, destination venues and events that creatively focus on eco-tourism, unique shopping adventures, golf marathon, fishing fantasy, etc.



- › Promote the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center as a **corporate retreat center** packaged with the Four Points by Sheraton and the Wyvern Hotel and creative options for corporate team building activities. The events could be delivered within a building or engage in all the outdoor venues as well as community-wide activities such as scavenger hunts and GPS competitions with various scenarios.



- Develop a small-scale water park, petting zoo, aquarium, touch tank and fishing hole (similar to the *Imaginarium* in Fort Meyers) for visiting grand children (ages 2-10+) as well as tourists with young families. The aquarium and petting zoo could also be used as part of a science center for local school children.



The Imaginarium in Fort Myers

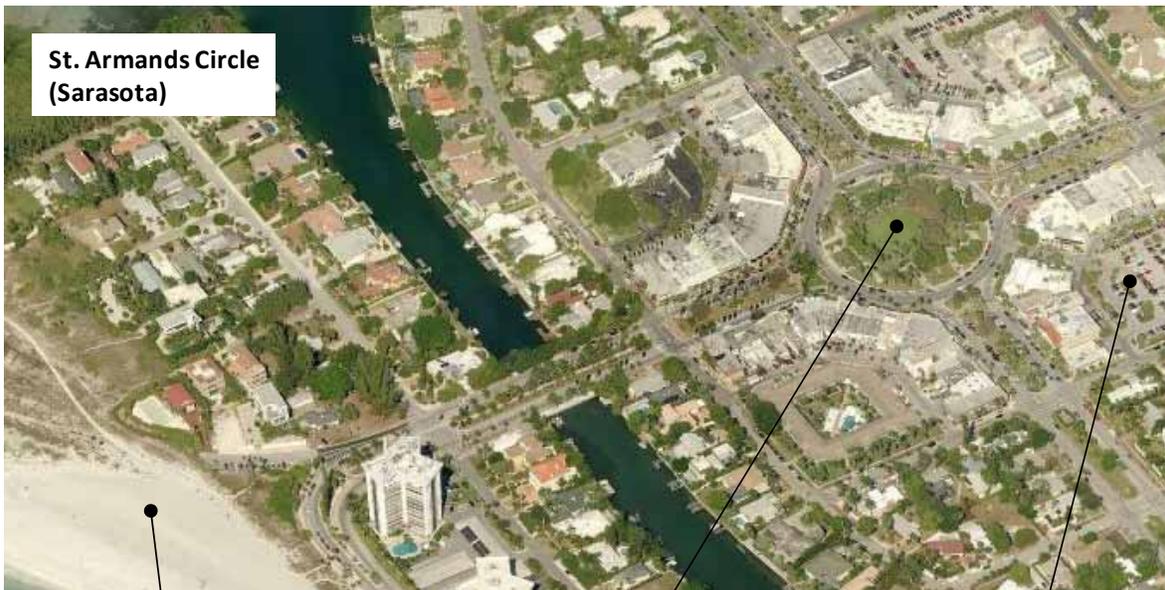
- Incorporate into the development of Murdock Village a town center with shops that becomes a focal point for local residents and tourist for concerts and shopping/restaurants.



The Villages

Village Square used frequently for concerts and art shows surrounded by shops and restaurants .

Extra parking is conveniently behind the stores.



St. Armands Circle (Sarasota)

Walking distance to the beach or drive and park nearby in free parking areas with public restroom facilities.

Public Square used frequently for concerts, art/car shows surrounded by upscale shops and restaurants.

Extra parking is conveniently behind the stores.

› The Great Route 17 Adventure

U.S. route 17 has been known for years as the **Coastal Highway** spanning from Winchester, VA to Punta Gorda, FL. The nearly 1,200 mile road was completed in 1926 and brings the traveler from the mountains of Virginia to the Carolina Coast and on down to the Florida sunshine.

The idea is to partner with the cities along the route and publish an information kit with map, DVD and support information that takes the traveler from Winchester to Punta Gorda noting along the way the following:

- ☑ Short description/history of each town
- ☑ Unique sites to see (nature, history, trails, museums or just something funky to look at that would be of interest)
- ☑ Local restaurants and drive-ins that have a local look and flavor
- ☑ Lodging (parks for camping, B&B's, inns)
- ☑ Schedule of special events during the year.

“The Spirit of the Open Road”



The Great Route 17 Adventure

Crusin’ from the mountains of Virginia to the Carolina coast to the Florida sunshine.



Entrepreneurship

Refer to details in Section 7.

Distribution

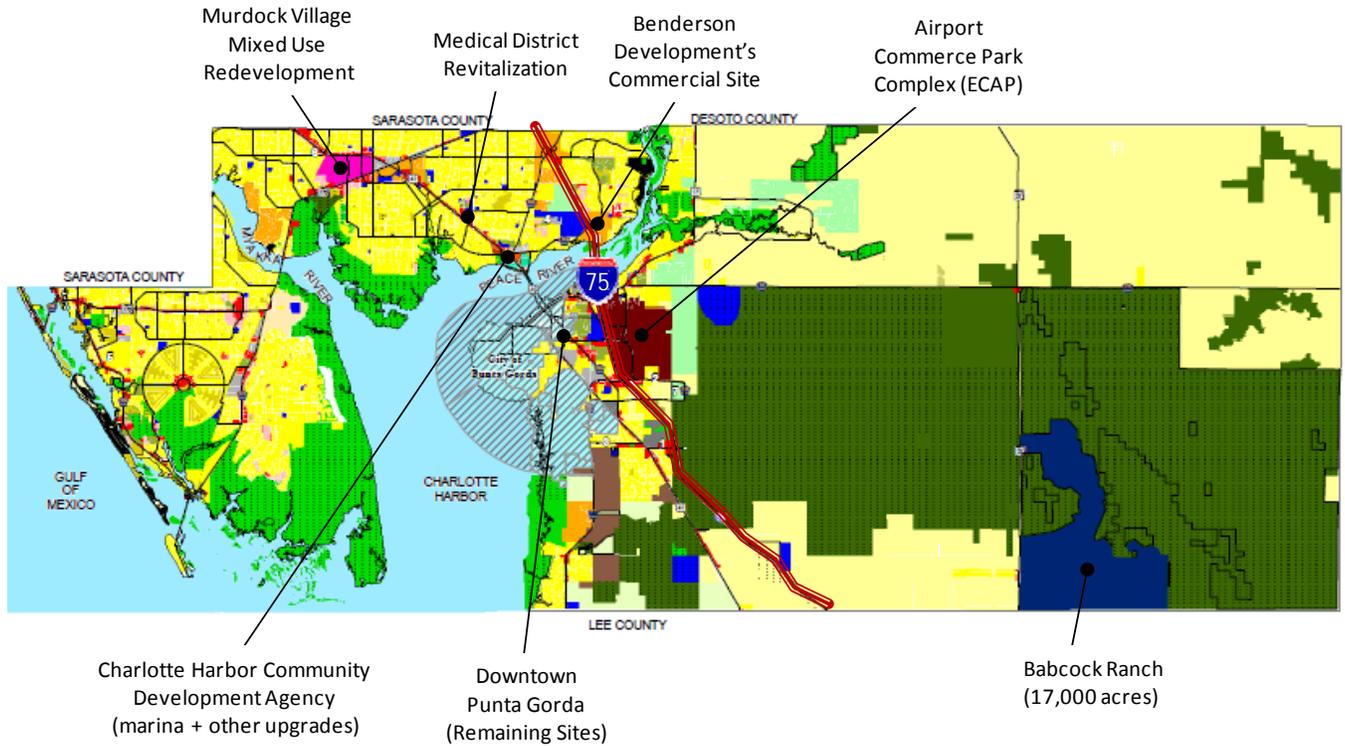
Summary of Warehousing and Transportation Employment			
Segment	Charlotte Co.	Lee Co.	Sarasota Co.
Warehousing/Transp.	430	2,535	1,250

<p>Potential Growth Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional distribution for retail, restaurants, medical supplies, and other segments.

Resource Assessment		
Resource	Requirements	Current Situation
Sites/Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Existing warehouse building (50,000 to 250,000 sq ft at \$3-5 per sq ft) is ideal, or ▸ Shovel Ready sites (10 to 50+ acres) at market rate for lower end industrial sites. 	Land available within ECAP but no available buildings
Labor/Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ General labor with good work ethic ▸ Tech labor for automation equipment 	General labor available and some technical labor (may come from Lee or Sarasota Counties)
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Low cost power and broad band for data transfer for order fulfillment 	Available
Transportation Access	Within 1-2 of interstate interchange is ideal with no major retail, schools, parks or hospitals between the warehouse and the interstate.	Good sites within ECAP
Business Amenities	Fueling areas, local diner for lunch, reasonable access to truck repair center for major repairs.	Amenities will expand over time
Incentives	Most companies will seek incentives for training and whatever is available but having access to the right location is the most critical issue.	E-Florida matching incentives are adequate

Development and Construction

This sector represents a substantial amount of potential activity in key areas throughout the County including Benderson’s development at Harbor View (off I-75, north of the Peace River), Babcock Ranch to the east, Airport Commerce Park Complex around the Punta Gorda Airport, and Murdock Village.



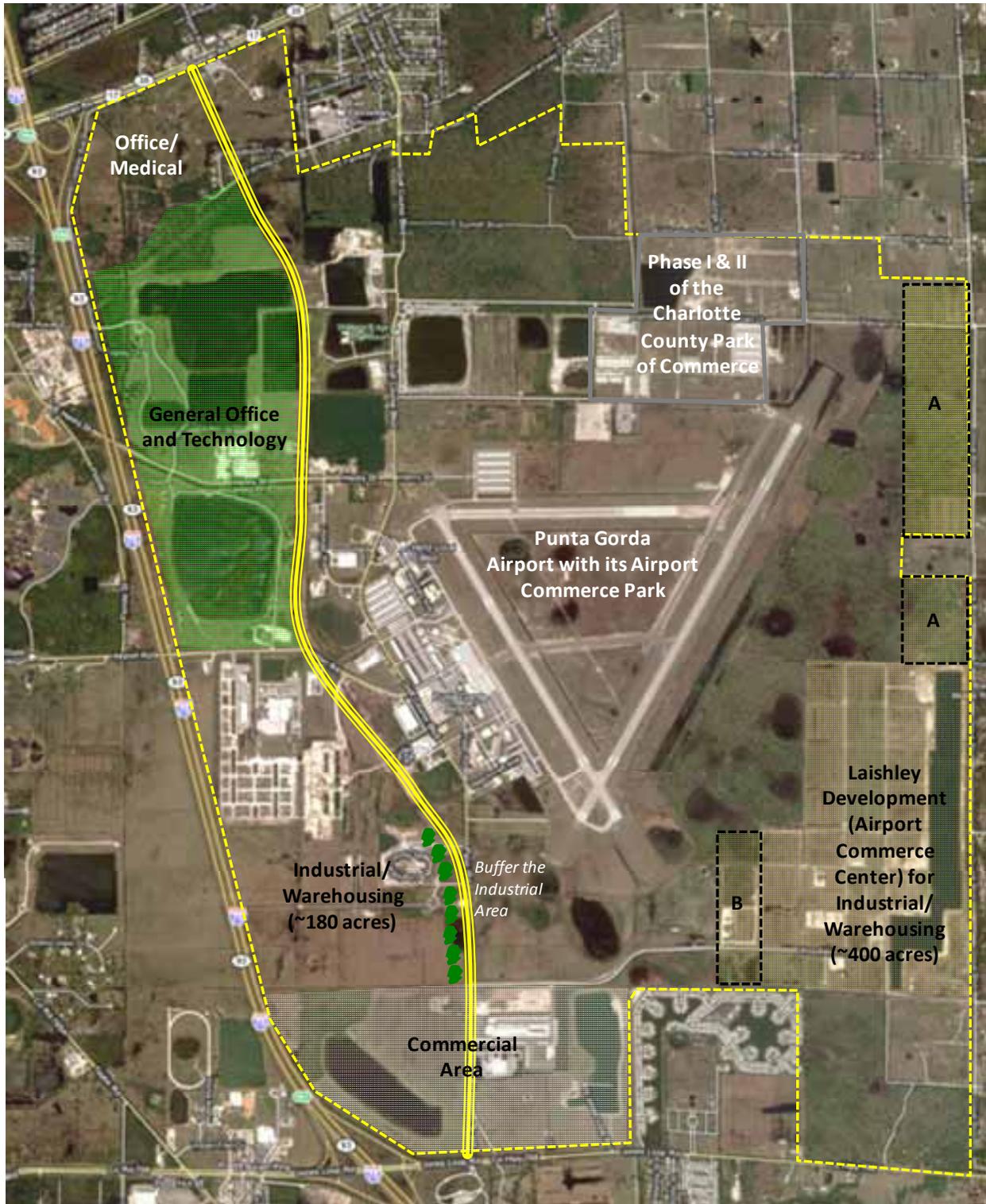
Benderson Development’s Plan at Harbor View

This 623 acre mixed use development has stand-alone and multiple-density housing along with commercial space, a nature center, elementary school and amenities.



Enterprise Charlotte Airport Park (ECAP) at Punta Gorda Airport

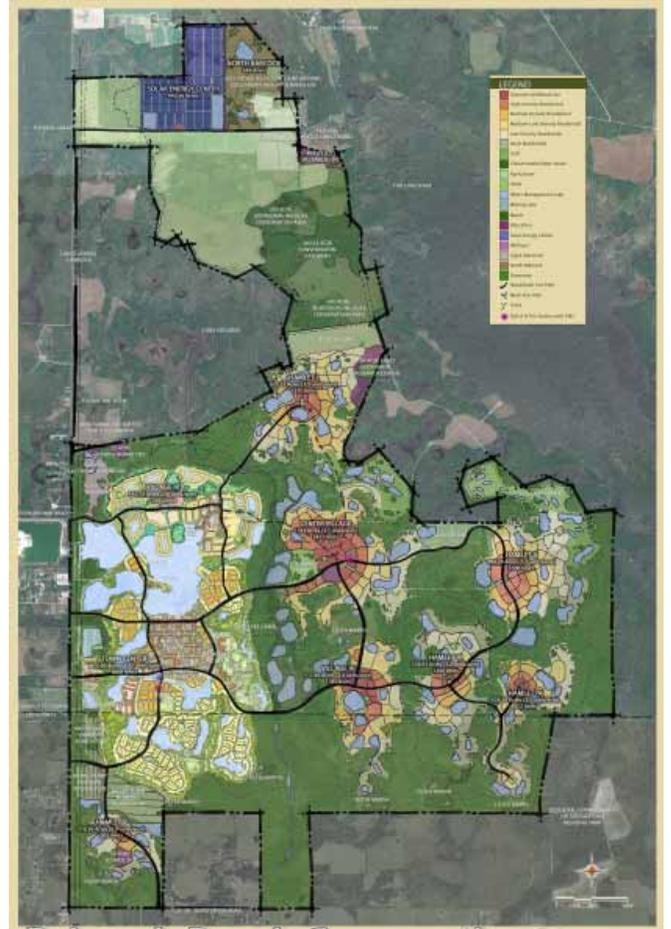
Conceptually, ECAP properties have an informal master plan that provides separate areas for industrial/warehousing, office/technical and medical offices.



A = 120 acres owned by Charlotte County IDA B = 34 acres owned by Charlotte County (Shovel Ready)

Babcock Ranch (eastern portion of County)

This 17,000 long-term master planned community located in both Charlotte and Lee Counties will be somewhat self-sufficient and with a transportation orientation toward Lee County/Fort Myers. The community, once fully developed, will have the potential of establishing a center with younger demographics that will be in contrast with the predominately 55+ age group orientation of the western portion of the community. It will also pull the commercial centroid of the County closer to I-75 and away from US 41 – similar to what is happening in Sarasota/Manatee Counties with Lakewood Ranch.



Charlotte Harbor Riverwalk/Harborwalk

The Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was established to improve this historic area of the County and is governed by land use standards found in both the Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan and the Charlotte County Land Development Code, which includes mandatory architectural standards. These specific standards will enhance the historic character of the area and encourage pedestrian-friendly development.

Murdock Village

Acquisition and amalgamation of the over 800 acres of parcels known as Murdock Village began in 2003 as a County project to redevelop land that had been platted 50+ years ago for residential but few homes had actually been constructed. The complex has been configured several times for different mixed use applications. Most recently, 137 acres has been proposed as a major water and baseball park with commercial development.



County Medical District

Upgrade of an older suburban area into a more urban area that is walker friendly and with an upgraded commercial area.



Health Care, Retail and Education

These sectors tend to track population growth and demographic profile. The County should support growth through planning facility locations and approvals.

Professional, Technical and Creative Services

This sector contains many of the knowledge-based jobs that are in demand and being pursued by next-generation college educated individuals in areas such a legal services, accounting, engineering, architecture, design services, computer systems, management consulting, scientific-related services, advertising, marketing, etc. Workers within this segment pursue not only a job but a life style that contains live/work/play components as noted below:

LIFE STYLE NEEDS FOR INDIVIDUALS SEEKING AN URBAN LIVE/WORK/PLAY/SHOP DESTINATION

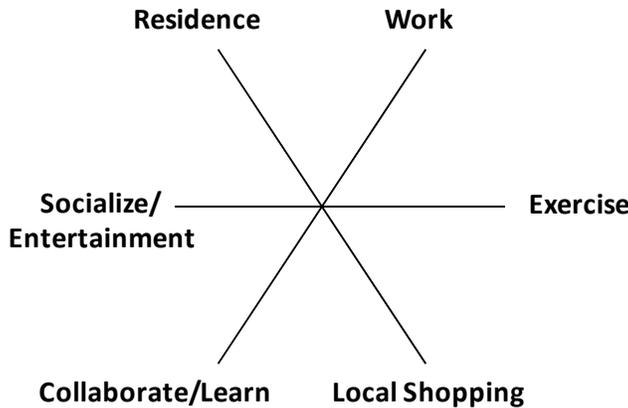
Interesting apartment like a loft . . . “cool space.”



From home, in a nearby office or at the coffee shop.



Good restaurants or small groups at an apartment, theater, movie, concert or musician at coffee house.



Trails and safe areas for walking, biking, skating and jogging.



Places to meet and discuss business or ideas (e.g., coffee shop and bookstore with WIFI access is a popular destination). Also, places to take classes and gain new skills.



- Food/beverage (natural food store)
- Books, office supplies
- Specialty clothing/shoes
- Hardware store
- Bike/recreation equipment
- Electronics
- Other

Summary of Professional, Technical and Creative Employment			
	Charlotte Co.	Lee Co.	Sarasota Co.
Total Employment	1,280	8,650	8,380

Potential Growth Opportunities
 Small and medium size offices as well as home based businesses representing broad areas of expertise. Individuals and small firms would locate in the County because there are potential clients in the region and/or they seek the Gulf Coast life style. There will be substantial competition from Sarasota, Lee and Manatee Counties for these individuals or small firms.

Resource Assessment		
Resource	Requirements	Current Situation
Sites/Buildings	Typically leased space (2,000 to 20,000 sq ft) in a “downtown” area (like Punta Gorda).	Very little office space for this segment currently available in the County.
Labor/Training	Highly educated staff with different levels of experience.	Very limited talent in the County.
Utilities	High speed internet access is a must.	High speed internet access is available.
Transportation Access	Access to regional airport with reasonable non-stop access.	Three airports available.
Business Amenities	Access to restaurants for lunch, office supplies, computer stores, computer support services, accounting/legal services, etc. (see previous page)	Downtown Punta Gorda is currently the most viable location for these types of businesses.
Incentives	This segment usually is not offered any incentives unless it has over 10-20 employees.	Not many incentives available for these small businesses.

Manufacturing

Summary of Manufacturing Employment by Industry			
Industry	Charlotte Co.	Lee Co.	Sarasota Co.
Total Mfg. Employment	575	4,270	5,030
Food	0-19	250-499	20-99
Beverage	0-19	20-99	0-19
Textile Products/Apparel	0-19	20-99	100-249
Wood	0-19	100-249	20-99
Printing	20-99	250-499	20-99
Chemicals/Polymers	-	20-99	100-249
Plastic/Rubber Products	0-19	20-99	250-499
Non-Metallic Minerals	20-99	500-999	100-249
Fabricated Metals	20-99	500-999	1,000-1499
Machinery	20-99	500-999	250-499
Computer/Electronics	0-19	100-249	500-999
Electrical Equipment	0-19	100-249	0-19
Transportation Equip.	0-19	100-249	100-249
Furniture/Fixtures	20-99	100-249	250-499
Medical Supplies/Equip.	0-19	100-249	100-249

Potential Growth Opportunities

Due to the challenging logistics and lack of available labor, manufacturing is not one of the County's strongest opportunities, however, if a company wants to be here they will seek a viable basis for being in the County. Key industries include:

- Light manufacturing (assembly) including assembly and modifications to solar panel systems for regional use
- Machining and plastics molding (parts and components that may be air-lifted their destination)
- Boats/yachts (when the economy becomes more robust)

Resource Assessment

Resource	Requirements	Current Situation
Sites/Buildings	Preferably lease existing buildings (10,000 to 50,000 sq ft expandable)	No significant inventory of buildings for this segment
Labor/Training	General labor and those with industry sector-specific skills (machine operator/maintenance)	Some training at the high school level but not at the community college
Utilities	Low cost power, low/moderate water/sewer demand, internet access. Some will need gas for heating or drying in their processes.	Adequate
Transportation Access	Reasonable (1-3 miles from interstate, air cargo services, and rail for bulk polymer shipments for plastics manufacturing.	Interstate and air good, limited rail access sites and not buildings with rail access
Business Amenities	Restaurants for lunch, industrial supply house, equipment repair services (regional)	Reasonable access to amenities
Incentives	Training support and help cover start-up costs	Moderate level of incentives

Agriculture

Emerging small niche farms in County focused on organic produce and other high value crops. Robust Farmer’s Market exists in Punta Gorda. Some farmers may need support in marketing through the internet with tourists and seasonal customers that want to buy once they are home.



Back Office Operations

Back office or shared service operations include accounting, HR, IT, sales support, customer services and relates services. They are typically operations with 50+ employees in cost effective but attractive office complexes.



Potential Growth Opportunities
 Back office operations will be a challenge for the County until the labor force expands or the use of semi-retired residents becomes the norm.

Resource Assessment		
Resource	Requirements	Current Situation
Sites/Buildings	Preferably lease existing buildings (10,000 + sq ft) 50,000 sq ft expandable)	No significant inventory of buildings for this segment
Labor/Training	Varies by type of operation	Some training at the high school level but not at the community college
Utilities	Internet access is critical	Adequate
Transportation Access	Reasonable access to labor force (within 20 minute commute) and regional airport access.	Interstate access is favorable while presence of higher end back office-related skills is limited
Business Amenities	Access to restaurants for lunch, office supplies, computer stores, computer support services, accounting/legal services, etc. (see previous page)	Downtown Punta Gorda or the Airport Commerce Park are currently the most viable locations for these types of businesses
Incentives	This segment usually is not offered any incentives unless it has over 50 employees	Not many incentives available for these businesses

ASSESSMENT OF RESOURCES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Provided below is an evaluation of key resources in the region that support economic development that include sites and buildings, educational resources, utilities and transportation (air) access. Incidence of hurricanes is also noted at the end of the section.

The chart below identifies the typical levels of site/building readiness that is encountered in a typical community. Companies typically seek first an existing building and then sites that are shovel/pad ready. The Level 6 & 7 sites typically have too much potential risk associated with them to pursue unless the company is local and has lots of time to develop the property.

Based on the information provided, Charlotte County has very few buildings on the market which puts it at a disadvantage with its neighbors to the north and south. However, the Airport Commerce Park represents a situation of relatively large lots adjacent to an airport and I-75 that is a significant plus. Education resources are limited locally, particularly for technical skills, but the County does have access to labor from Lee and Sarasota County that has technical training.

Site/Building Readiness (Critical Aspect of Competitiveness)

- Level 1** - Building in place (good condition)
- Level 2** – Shell building in place
- Level 3** - Virtual designed/permitted building
- Level 4** – Pad ready site
 - Lots defined and graded
 - Roads in place and utilities in stubbed to lot
 - Some permits secured/covenants defined
- Level 5** - Shovel Ready (minimum)
 - Ownership/title cleared and ready for sale
 - Proper zoning in place
 - Surveys/studies completed
 - Permitting agencies poised for approvals
 - Infrastructure within reasonable access
 - Compatible adjacent land use
 - Conceptual site plan and general covenants
- Level 6** - Zoned land in hands of original owner
- Level 7** - Land zoned agriculture but is to be zoned industrial in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

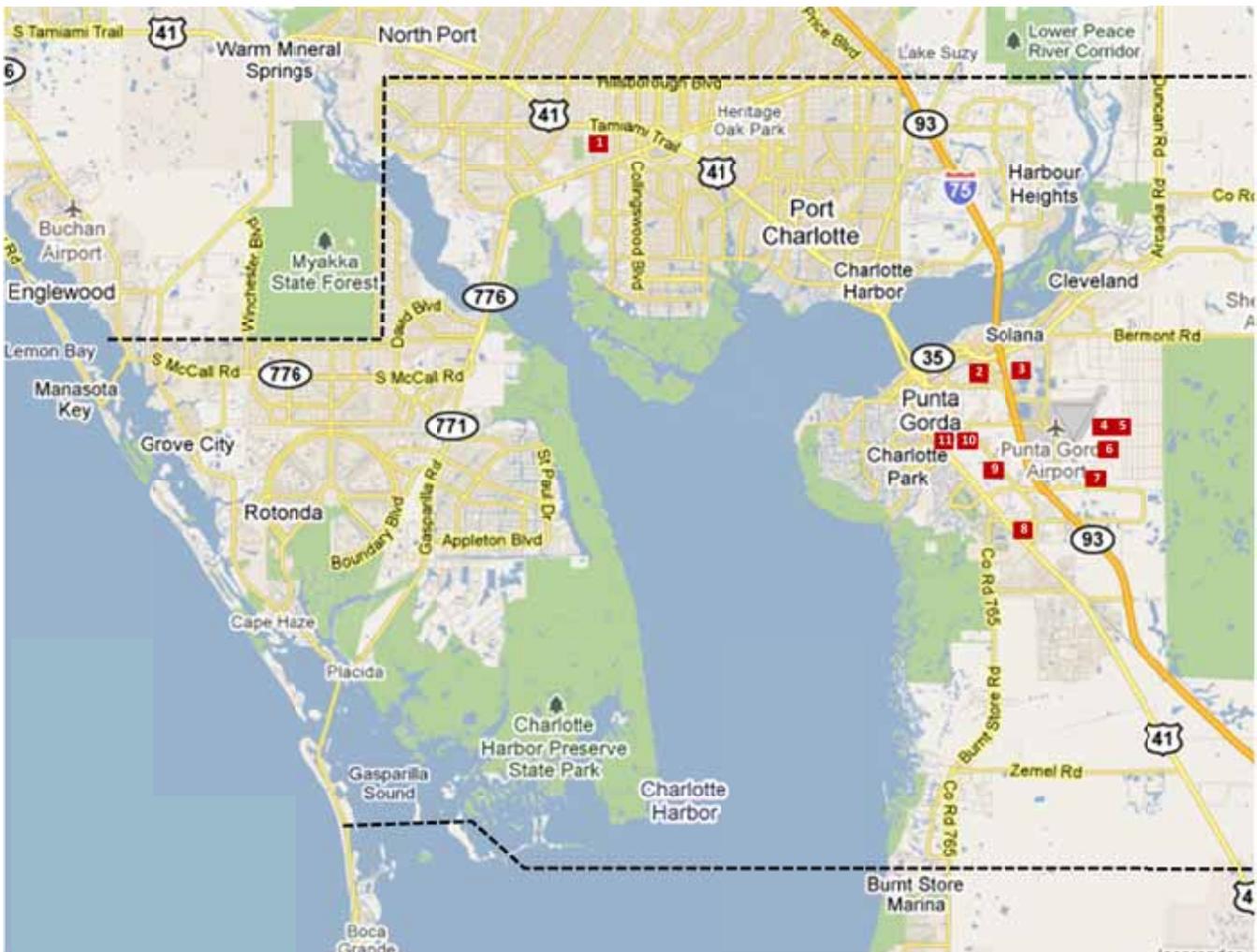


➤ Real Estate (Vacant Land and Buildings)

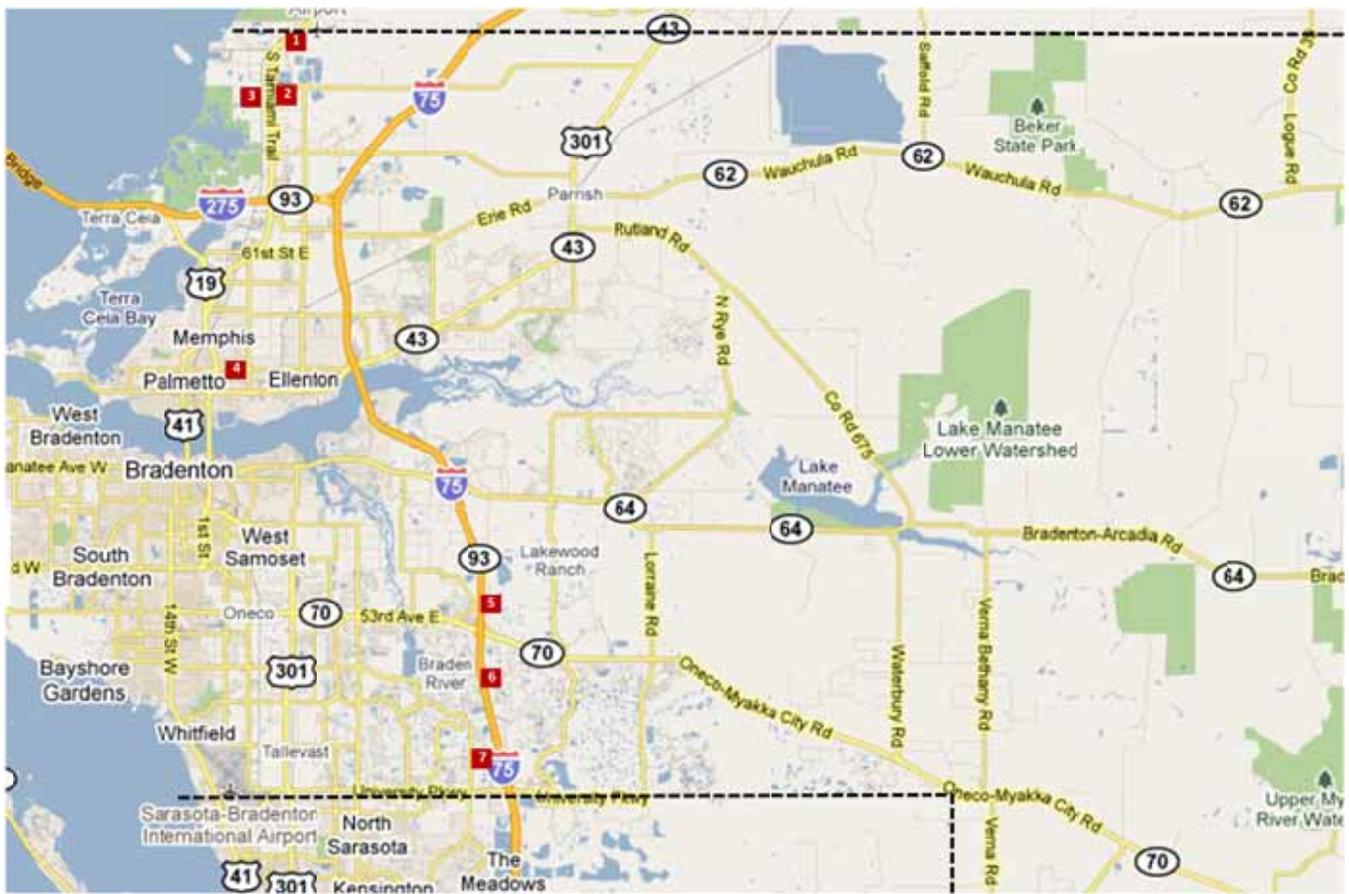
In general, Lee and Sarasota Counties have significantly more buildings available on the market while Charlotte County has some desirable land options (size and cost) at the Punta Gorda Airport area and at Murdock Village. Examples of available land and buildings are listed below for each county.

➤ **Examples of Available Vacant Land Parcels for Industrial/Office Development in Charlotte, Manatee, Sarasota and Lee Counties**

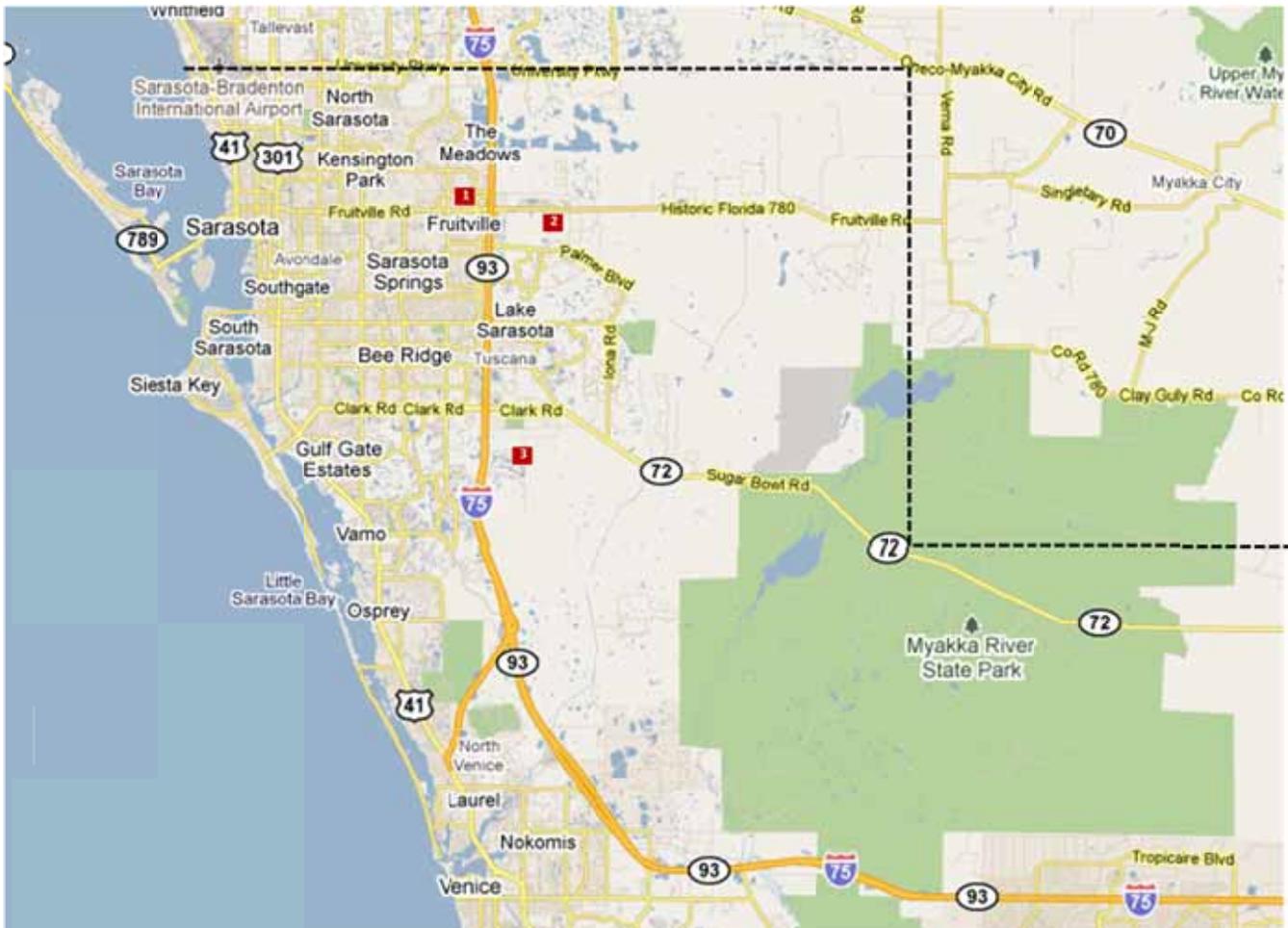
Charlotte County				
No.	Description	Location	Size (acres)	Price (\$/acre)
1	Murdock Village (mixed use)	El Jobean and S. Tamiami Trail	50-871	\$114,819
2	Commercial land	Duncan Road / I-75 (west side)	28+	\$80,017
3	Commercial land	Duncan Road / I-75 (east side)	48	\$150,000
4	Industrial land at airport	East of runway	10	\$217,000
5	Industrial land at airport	East of runway	10	\$163,350
6	Airport Commerce Park	East of runway	18.8	\$173,804
7	Industrial land at airport	Jones Loop Road	40+	\$53,711
8	Industrial land just west of I-75	Acline Road	5.2	\$210,577
9	Industrial land west of airport	Taylor Road	5+	\$132,638
10	Industrial land west of airport	Taylor Road	6+	\$66,211
11	Industrial land with rail access	Cooper Street / S. Tamiami Trail	8+	\$127,533



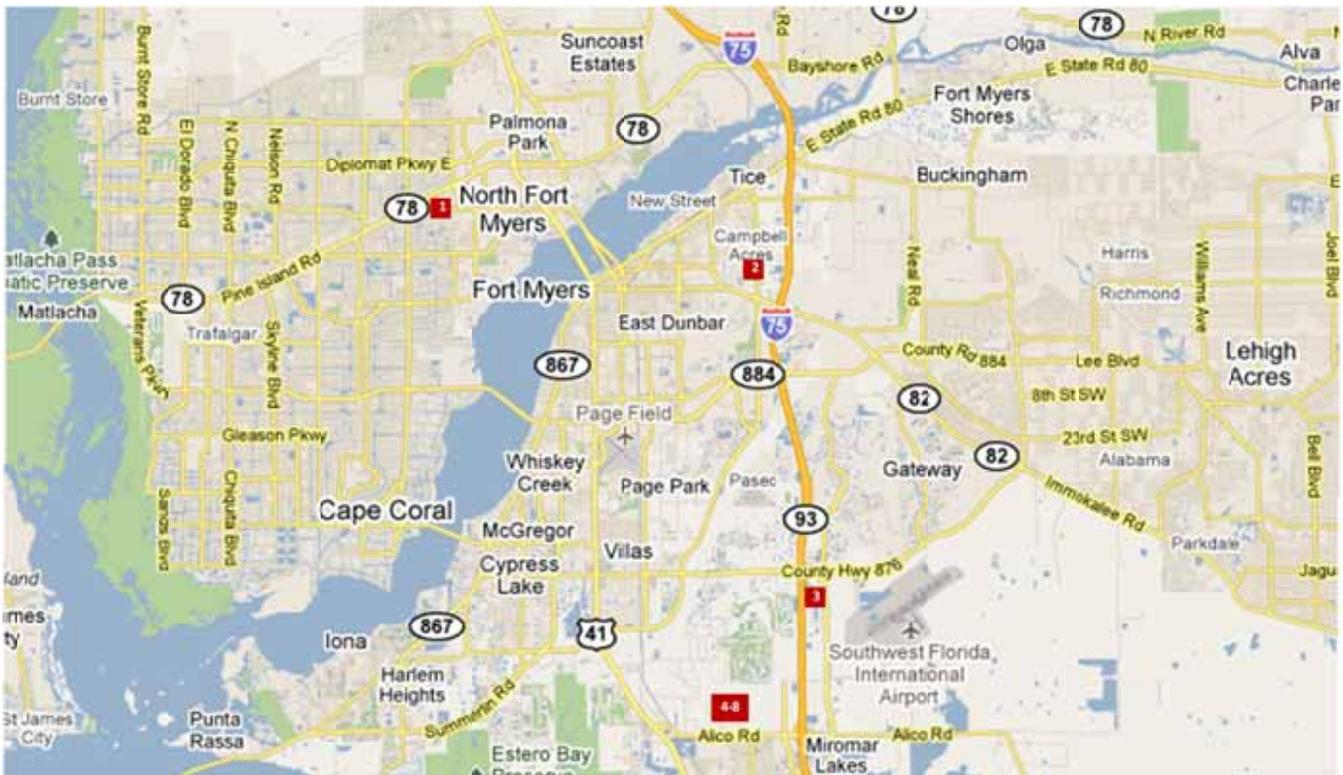
Manatee County				
No.	Description	Location	Size (acres)	Price (\$/acre)
1	Industrial land	Adjacent to Port of Manatee	347	N/A
2	Industrial land	SE of Port of Manatee, east of US 41	65	\$87-130,000
3	Industrial land with rail access	SE of Port of Manatee, West of US 41	52	\$86,346
4	Industrial land near rail	17 th St in Palmetto	28+	\$100,000
5	Creekwood East Corp Park (Ind/Off)	I-75 / SR 70 (NE quad)	15	\$90-150,000
6	River Club Park of Com (high end office)	I-75 / SR 70 (SE quad)	9+	\$359,070
7	Creekwood office space	I-75 / University Pkwy (NE quad)	20+	\$118,072
8	Pearce Business Ctr (Industrial)	Off 301 between SR 70 and Univ. Pkwy	30 usable	\$55,700



Sarasota County				
No.	Description	Location	Size (acres)	Price (\$/acre)
1	Industrial land	Fruitville (east of I-75)	20	\$315,000
2	Industrial land	Fruitville (west of I-75)	35	\$173,000
3	Industrial land	Jacaranda / I-75 (NE quad)	7	\$98,000
4	Morris Industrial Park	So. River Road	6	\$56,628



Lee County				
No.	Description	Location	Size (acres)	Price (\$/acre)
1	Commercial and industrial land	Cape Coral	10+	\$80,000
2	Industrial land	Off SR 82 west of I-75	8+	\$152,423
3	Office land	So. Of Daniels Pkwy	80+	\$210,918
4	Industrial land	Alico Rd at Domestic (west of I-75)	88	\$110,000
5	Industrial land	Alico Rd at Domestic (west of I-75)	23+	\$111,949
6	Industrial land	Alico Rd at Domestic (west of I-75)	237	\$60,984
7	Industrial land	Alico Rd at Domestic (west of I-75)	11+	261,360
8	Industrial land	Alico Rd at Domestic (west of I-75)	10	\$89,500



Available Office Space for Lease and Industrial Space for Sale by County (as of June 2011)

Available Office Space for Lease (Number of Properties Listed)			
County	5,000 to 9,999 Sq Ft	10,000 to 49,999 Sq Ft	50,000+ Sq Ft
Charlotte	9	4	1
Manatee	23	19	0
Sarasota	50	36	1
Lee	70	62	8



Available Industrial/Flex/Warehouse Space for Sale (Number of Properties Listed)				
County	10,000 to 24,999 Sq Ft	25,000 to 49,999 Sq Ft	50,000 to 99,999 Sq Ft	100,000 to 250,000 Sq Ft
Charlotte	6	3	0	0
Manatee	30	10	4	2
Sarasota	36	15	6	1
Lee	94	27	13	5



➤ Educational Resources

Charlotte County has access to education and training resources at the High School, college and university level. The **Charlotte Technical Center** has a broad range of programs that are technical and career oriented, including an aerospace program that is sanctioned by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Edison State College has its main campus in Fort Myers with a satellite campus in Charlotte County. Local programs include a nursing, emergency services, accounting, business administration and small business management.

Florida Gulf Coast University has its main campus in Fort Myers with a local presence in Charlotte County offering programs in education, health care, business and public administration as well as a broad offering of continuing education courses.



Programs at Charlotte Tech Center	Selected Programs and Annual Graduates at the College and University Level				
		Edison State College		Florida Gulf Coast University	
• Aerospace Institute		Fort Myers/Charlotte County		Fort Myers/Charlotte County	
• Architectural Drafting	Location >>	Fort Myers/Charlotte County		Fort Myers/Charlotte County	
• Computers Systems Technician	Enrollment >>	16,100		11,100	
• Digital Design	Graduates	Associates	Bachelors	Bachelors	Masters
• Mechanical Drafting	• Accounting	8		52	36
• Structural Drafting	• Finance	-		54	
• Carpentry	• Business Admin.	39	9	145	57
• Automotive	• Marketing	-		73	
• Culinary Arts	• Resort Management	-		83	
• Early Childhood Education	• Biology/Biotech	-		53	
• Fire Fighter	• Mgmt. Info. Sys.	5		16	3
• Dental Assisting	• Computer/IT	26		9	
• Emergency Medical Responder	• Engineering	-		34	
• Medical Administrative Specialist	• Drafting/Design	37		-	
• Practical Nursing	• Nursing	273		73	30
• Medical Assisting	• Clinical Lab Tech			2	
• Nursing Assistant	• Occup./Phy. Therapy			36	

➤ Utilities

Power: cost of power is ~6.5 cents per kWh which is a competitive rate.

Water: The County has good water resources from the Peace River and different parts of the County are served by County, City of Punta Gorda and other providers. There are certain areas of the County that have undersized distribution lines, however, the southern portion of the Airport Commerce Park has adequate water supply.

There are some challenges in the Murdock Village that will need to be addressed as specific options are considered.

🔄 Transportation access

The County has excellent air access through three airports within the region that provide non-stop flights to major cities as noted in the table below.

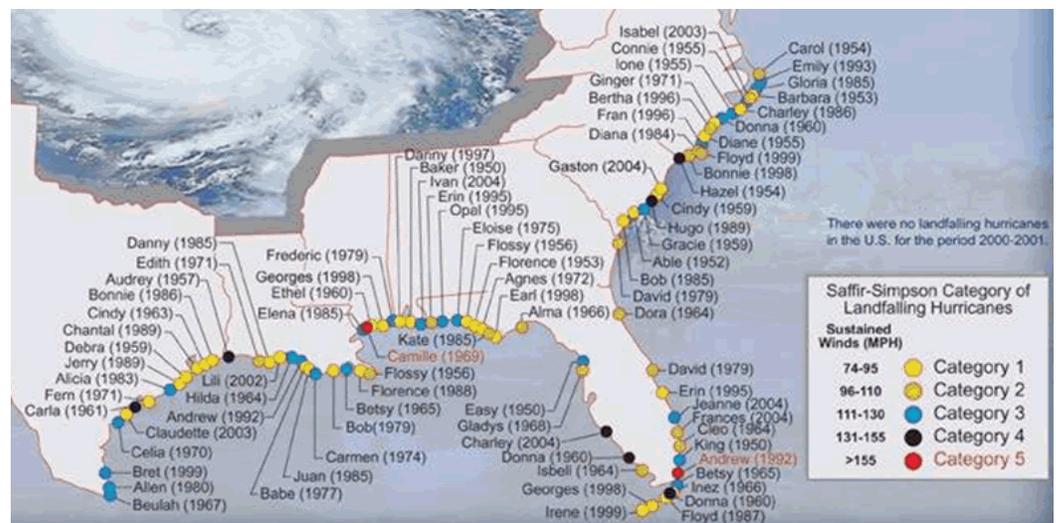


Destination	Sarasota/Bradenton	Punta Gorda	Southwest Florida Int'l
Aalborg, Denmark			
Allentown/Bethlehem		■	
Atlanta	■		■
Atlantic City			■
Baltimore	■		■
Bloomington/Normal			■
Boston/Worcester	■	■	■
Buffalo/Niagara Falls		■	Seasonal
Canton/Akron			Seasonal
Charlotte	■		■
Chicago/Rockford	■	■	■
Cincinnati	■		■
Cleveland			■
Columbus			■
Dallas/Fort Worth			■
Denver			■
Detroit	■		■
Dusseldorf, Germany			■
Flint			Seasonal
Grand Rapids		■	■
Greensboro, NC		■	
Greenville, SC		■	
Hartford			Seasonal

Houston			■
Indianapolis	■		■
Destination	Sarasota/Bradenton	Punta Gorda	Southwest Florida Int'l
Kalamazoo, MI		■	
Kansas City			■
Knoxville, TN		■	
Lansing, MI			■
Lexington, KY		■	
Long Island			Seasonal
Memphis			■
Miami			■
Milwaukee	■		■
Minneapolis/St. Paul			■
Moline/Quad Cities			■
Montreal, Canada			Seasonal
Nashville			■
New York City	■		■
Orlando			■
Philadelphia			■
Pittsburgh			■
Plattsburg, NY		■	
Raleigh/Durham			■
Rochester			■
St. Louis			Seasonal
Springfield, IL		■	
Toledo, OH		■	
Toronto, Canada	Seasonal		■
Washington, DC	■		■

➤ Natural Disasters (Hurricanes)

The region has received a lot of attention concerning hurricanes but the records over the past 60 years demonstrate that there is a very low incident rate of hurricanes in Southwest Florida. **Note:** chart does not include hurricanes Rita and Katrina that made landfall on the Texas and Louisiana coasts respectively in 2005.



BENCHMARKING SELECTED COMMUNITIES AND IDENTIFICATION OF BEST PRACTICES

Sarasota, Lee and Manatee Counties were selected since they share the same region as Charlotte County and each has been successful while taking different organizational approaches. A summary of each organization is provided below followed by an analysis of best practices. Each organization has effectively brought together local government and the private sector to focus on economic growth and have developed ways to raise funds, maintain project confidentiality and build the infrastructure required to support growth within specific industries and economic sectors.

Location:	Lee County (population 623,000)
Economic Development Organization:	Lee County Economic Development and the Fort Myers Regional Partnership (Bonita Springs, Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Fort Myers Beach, and Sanibel) New Slogan: TOGETHER WE MEAN BUSINESS Also have the (1) Horizon Council (public-private advisory board with 80 members); (2) Horizon Foundation (charitable organization that is a funding vehicle for businesses to invest in the long term economic vitality); (3) Industrial Development Authority (fosters and encourages industrial and business development by using revenue bonds to finance projects- there are 7 members on this board); and (4) Media Center (rapid response system to all media inquiries).
Type of Organization:	Lee County Government in partnership with the region
Number of Staff Members:	The County has a staff of about 10 and the Horizon Council has a staff of about 5 with a combined focus on business retention, attraction and media interaction.
Annual Budget:	~\$1.5 million
Target Industries:	Only businesses serving multi-state and/or international markets are targeted in the following sectors: Aviation, shared services, corporate headquarters, information technology, life sciences and diverse manufacturing.
Recent Successes and Development Activities	In 2009- 6 companies were added creating a total of 2,549 direct and indirect jobs for a total of \$211.7 total economic impact Gartner Inc , an information technology company, received \$160,000 from FIRST to expand their company in Fort Myers(additional 200 jobs added)
Incentives Offered	Participates in Florida Incentive program. Local incentives are as follows: established the \$25 million dollar FIRST Initiative (Financial Incentives for Recruiting Strategic Targets), Cape Coral Impact Fee Deferral Program ,and Lee County Private Capital Resources (Gulf Coast venture forum- sharing of ideas and experience with emerging businesses and companies)
Major Events to Attract Business or Tourists:	FIRST initiative for business attraction Tourist Development Council- advisory to the Lee County Visitors & Convention Bureau (21 fulltime and 3 part time employees and 100 volunteers) Minnesota Twins Spring training facility New Boston Red Sox spring training facility (2012) Monthly Festivals and several annual events Fort Myers-Sanibel has an excellent interactive website for tourism information- great planning tool for visitors- lists all attractions and calendars for events for the year
List of Major Business Parks:	Bonita Business Park Cypress preserve, Pinnacle Center, Carissa Commons

Location:	Sarasota County (Population 370,000)
Economic Development Organization:	Sarasota County Economic Development Corporation
Type of Organization:	Public-private partnership
Number of Staff Members:	10 staff members: President, operations manager, executive vice president, vice president of business development, market research and project manager, director of film and entertainment, corporate relations director, executive assistant/events coordinator, executive assistants
Annual Budget:	~\$1.5 million
Target Industries:	Film and television industries production, high tech, health/life/environmental sciences, information technology, and specialty manufacturing.
Recent Successes and Development Activities	Sanborn studios, Benderson Rowing Regatta Park- 600 acre park for professional and amateur events, Lakewood Ranch Sports Complex- 22 mixed use sports fields for amateur and professional tournaments, events, camps and clinics, US Masters Swimming headquarters, PGT Industries consolidation to Venice with 300 jobs added, LECOM selects Lakewood Ranch campus to add a 4 year dental school. SCFEO (Sarasota County Film and Entertainment Office), a division of the SCEDC, refer to: www.filmsarasota.com , new workforce housing development being constructed in Lakewood Ranch
Incentives Offered	Participate in Florida Incentives Program. Local incentives include: Ad Valorem Tax Exemption, SMART (rapid permitting program), COSMOS (fast tracking the development review process), Employed Worked Training, On the Job Training, Road Impact Fee Mitigation, Enterprise Zone, and the Florida Film Industry Incentive.
Major Events/Services to Attract Business and Tourists:	For Tourism: Opera, Orchestra, Ballet, Concerts, Museums, Annual festivals celebrating Jazz, Film and Comedy, annual Chalk Art Festival, Annual offshore powerboat Grand Prix, Polo Matches, US Soccer tournaments, US Rowing competitions, US Beach Volleyball competitions For Business: Rapid response permitting (approval in 25 days) for companies expanding or relocating to Sarasota County-also works with the state on expedited permitting on projects of significant economic impact.
List of Major Business Parks:	6.93 million square feet of business space is currently available. Numerous campus style business parks – most with a combination of office, warehouse, distribution, light manufacturing space and flex space. Several technology capable commerce parks and Verizon Smart Parks

Location:	Manatee County (Population 318,000)
Economic Development Organization:	Economic Development Council (associated with the Manatee County Chamber of Commerce)
Type of Organization:	Funded by the Manatee County Chamber of Commerce with public partners (Manatee County and cities of Bradenton and Palmetto) and private investor firms
Number of Staff Members:	3 staff members: Executive director, associate director, and business development manager
Annual Budget:	~ \$1 million
Target Industries:	Corporate headquarters, medical device manufacturing, financial services and information technology
Recent Successes and Development Activities	Expansions: Creonix LLC (electronics manufacturing, Tropicana Products, Dynamic Innovations – a defense-based engineering and manufacturing co., Natural Prosthetic Dental labs Inc New: LECOM school of Dental Medicine, Pierce Manufacturing and Frontline Communications , a division of Oshkosh- consolidation and relocation It Works Global Inc. is relocating its headquarters to the area and will add a call center and shipping operations within 3 years
Incentives Offered	Participate in Florida incentive program. Local incentives include: Customized Rapid Response Team Incentive(expedited review process), Economic Development Incentive Grant , Industrial Revenue Bonds, Port Manatee Encouragement Zone and Improvement District,
Major Events to Attract Tourists:	Pittsburgh Pirates Spring Training, county wide festivals, Manatee County Fair, Cortez Seafood Festival, Desoto Historical Parade, Village of the Arts
List of Major Business Parks:	13 large (over 100 acre) office, business and industrial parks

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROLES AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY

Economic development essentially has a role related to all facets of supporting the economic vitality of an area. As a function, it will assume different roles, from lead to support, that requires a substantial amount of skill in meeting objectives through the mobilization of many different stakeholders. A summary of the many roles played by economic development functions are summarized below.

Roles of Economic Development Organizations

Leadership and On-Going Relationships	
1. Provide the overall leadership for economic development and facilitate defining and achieving the vision, strategy and key objectives within a given time frame.	
Current Situation County has lead role with ECEC in an advisory role.	Opportunities for Improvement Develop one organization as a public/private partnership.
2. Maintain working relationships between government agencies, educational institutions, workforce development agencies, service providers, real estate professionals, developers, and other stakeholders who support economic development within the community.	
Current Situation The “team” is learning how to work together to build the need for economic development and the strategies required to achieve success (growth) but there is significant room for improvement for the community at large.	Opportunities for Improvement Continue the outreach and communications efforts currently provided by the ECEC. Also recommended a Community Economic Development Panel for other stakeholders in the community (see Section 8).
3. Monitor the processes that support business activity, such as the planning and approval process for new buildings or expansions, and work with government agencies to streamline the process while assuring its effectiveness.	
Current Situation The processes can be very slow and unpredictable that may position the community in a “Not Business Friendly” status.	Opportunities for Improvement Recommendations in Section 8 include efforts to review and streamline economic development-related processes.
Internal/External Communications	
1. Provide on-going communications with the local community on economic development issues.	
Current Situation The community has been focused on being a retirement destination for 60 years and it’s going to take some time to effect a change in culture that embraces new economic development options.	Opportunities for Improvement An on-going communications on economic development in the media and the establishment of a Community Economic Development Panel for other stakeholders in the community in recommended in Section 8 of this report.
2. Maintain awareness of market shifts and changes in resource needs for specific economic sectors.	
Current Situation Typically rely on state and region to maintain awareness of market shifts and changes in resource needs.	Opportunities for Improvement Maintain interface with current employers to help anticipate needs and attendance to state conferences and selected industry conferences as well as monitor related web sites.

<p>3. Promote the community as a business location in coordination with regional/state organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Compile and periodically update information on community resources (demographic data, listings of available industrial/office parks, labor force, etc.) ▸ Disseminate marketing materials and respond to information requests from companies and influencers. ▸ Maintain website 	
<p>Current Situation The County Office of Economic Development maintains a good/on-going relationship with Sarasota and Lee Counties and their respective regions. The County needs to tighten up how it presents the ECAP properties and on developing industry-specific profiles for prospective companies.</p>	<p>Opportunities for Improvement Recommendations in Section 8 are given to formalize the master plan for the ECAP properties and develop a Resource Profile for the County.</p>

Resource Development	
<p>1. Continuously evaluate existing resources that support economic development and facilitate/support their improvement through securing grants and other sources for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Sites and buildings along with infrastructure/utilities ▸ Labor force availability supported by education and training resources ▸ Access to transportation (interstate, air, rail and ports) ▸ Business resources (loans, grants and other incentives, technical resources) ▸ Business environment: taxes, fees, regulations, and other factors that impact business growth and attraction ▸ Overall quality of life in the community 	
<p>Current Situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Sites and buildings: tighten up ECAP master plan ▸ Labor force availability supported by education and training resources: gain further access to on-site technical training options ▸ Business resources: further develop local incentives and capital for existing/emerging/relocating companies 	<p>Opportunities for Improvement Recommendations to address these issues are provided in Section 8.</p>
<p>2. Develop, manage, and market business and industrial parks or other real estate. (This activity may also be in the hands of developers and other third-party)</p>	
<p>Current Situation The ownership and management of land for business and industrial parks is owned by multiple sources: Charlotte County, Punta Gorda Airport Authority, private land owners and developers, etc.</p>	<p>Opportunities for Improvement Continue to bring all the owners together and develop seamless products for the marketplace as has begun with some of the ECAP-related initiatives. The market wants one contact when possible.</p>
<p>3. Industrial Development Authority has power to issue bonds on behalf of local industry.</p>	
<p>Current Situation Local IDA in place.</p>	<p>Opportunities for Improvement Keep the IDA informed of short and long-term needs for land acquisitions and in supporting existing business expansion needs.</p>

Business Retention/Start-Up/Attraction	
<p>1. Facilitate the retention and expansion of existing employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Engage in business visitation program (and periodic surveys) to gather feedback on needs, issues, and opportunities. ▸ Serve as clearinghouse for information on local, state, federal, and other resources that support business. <p>Develop financing packages and other services as needed in coordination with local/regional/state agencies.</p>	
<p>Current Situation Some ongoing interface with selected companies.</p>	<p>Opportunities for Improvement Develop formal visitation/survey program that gathers input from every company within selected industries.</p>
<p>2. Attract new businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Develop incentive packages and other services as needed in coordination with local/regional/state agencies. ▸ Manage relationships with prospective companies as they evaluate local opportunities, set up operations, and assimilate into the community. 	
<p>Current Situation Need to expand incentive options and more effectively respond to company inquiries and needs.</p>	<p>Opportunities for Improvement Refer to recommendations in Section 8.</p>
<p>3. Support the formation of new businesses and accelerate emerging businesses.</p>	
<p>Current Situation There is the beginning of a business incubation program leveraging the resources of the FL SBDC, SCORE< Goodwill Industries, Small Business Development Services, LLC and Gulf Coast University.</p>	<p>Opportunities for Improvement Structure the initiative through the three aspects noted in Section 7: (1) Awareness of entrepreneurship throughout the community; (2) Screening of business teams and their product/service offerings; and (3) Building the resources required to support emerging/start-up businesses.</p>
<p>4. Support tourism and agricultural economic development as needed.</p>	
<p>Current Situation Minimal connection between economic development and agriculture/tourism.</p>	<p>Opportunities for Improvement Support each sector via the Business Accelerator initiative and help agricultural businesses with web marketing.</p>

The local organizational structure for supporting each of the roles noted above varies by community and is typically accomplished through one of the following methods:

Option 1

The function is provided as a county department with marketing support from a region. There may also be an advisory group established from local stakeholders to provide input to policy issues.

Option 2

An independent 501(3)c or other designated non-profit organization assumes the entire role. The organization typically has a director and staff focused on different aspects of business retention and attraction along with a board of directors with a rotating chairman.

The independent organization can raise funds from the private sector that is not possible for government agencies. The organization may engage in some marketing activities but normally supports regional efforts.

Option 3

The local/regional Chamber of Commerce assumes the role of economic development as one of their services to the community and their members.

STRATEGY TO SUPPORT START-UP/EXISTING BUSINESS AND ATTRACT NEW BUSINESS

☛ Establishing a Small Business Accelerator

Our approach to business acceleration is to develop the infrastructure that will support the growth of existing small business while infusing the concept of entrepreneurship into the general public and the local schools. There are four different situations that would gain value from this effort:

1. An existing small business (<100 employees) that seeks to expand its operations and requires support in a specific area, such as, investment capital to expand capacity, marketing support to reach a new market, or technical support to improve a product/service and/or business process.
2. An individual with an idea for a product or service that has an inclination to engage in entrepreneurial activity but needs some guidance.
3. The use of entrepreneurship as a work/career option. This may include a wide range of individuals that may include students, laid-off workers, farmers considering a new niche cash crop, or homemaker wanting to make some additional income.
4. There is also the potential of infusing entrepreneurship into the local school curriculum and offering local college courses as well as position as a minor for other academic programs.

The infrastructure that can be built consists of three modules:

Building Awareness
of Entrepreneurship

Screening
Opportunities

Enabling Access to
Resources

MODULE 1 (Building Awareness of Entrepreneurship): The awareness campaign can be accomplished through multiple channels that will be effective in reaching different groups and include the following:

- Utilize the local Chambers of Commerce, manufacturers associations and other multi-member organizations to directly reach out with a series of e-mails and newsletter postings. Articles about the program can be posted in the local papers and electronic news media.
- Reaching the general public is a secondary initiative that will come once the existing businesses have “tested” the system and there are the first signs of success demonstrated. The thrust behind the whole initiative is to grow businesses to build job opportunities ASAP. Methods of reaching out will include media articles, a community-wide business plan contest, participation in job fairs, etc.
- Working with the schools and colleges will be the tertiary initiative that will seek ways to infuse entrepreneurship into certain classes that will ultimately lead to teams of students putting together business plans that are reviewed and having a contest to select projects to fund.

The program should have its own web site that will be a clearing house of information about the concept of entrepreneurship, an overview on how the program works and links to many different information sources that can support an emerging business to expand.

MODULE 2 (Screening Business Teams and Their Products/Services): Once an individual or team has an idea for a business or there is an existing business that wants to grow, there needs to be a review/advisory team that the entrepreneurs can present their business plan to and get feedback on how to move forward. The advisory team would consist of local experts in different fields along with virtual advisors located anywhere in the world. The team would review the business plan along with the capabilities of the team and the potential for the product or service and determine how to proceed – either there is more work needed to refine the plan, there are issues with the product or the skills of the individual need to be enhanced – or it’s a “go” and what needs to be in place to move forward.

MODULE 3 (Enabling Access to Resources): The accelerator makes sure that the resources are available to support the business going forward and include:

- Low cost space that meets the needs of the company;
- Access to business services (telecom, web site development, legal, technical, etc.)
- If it is a tangible product, there may be a need for third party manufacturing services to get started as well as distribution/fulfillment services;
- Marketing support particularly to specialty markets such as to state or federal governments, global markets, internet-based markets, etc.;
- Access to a variety of financial resources (loans, grants, equity investors, etc.);
- Access to mentors or business partners;
- Access to patents available for licensing;
- Other resources unique to a specific industry or type of operation.

➤ **How the Small Business Accelerator Would Work**

Case Study: Local farm wants to expand its organic specialty herb business and get it launched through the internet. The farmer has built a small but expanding customer base from seasonal visitors attending the local Farmers’ Market and wants to connect with the customers throughout the year.

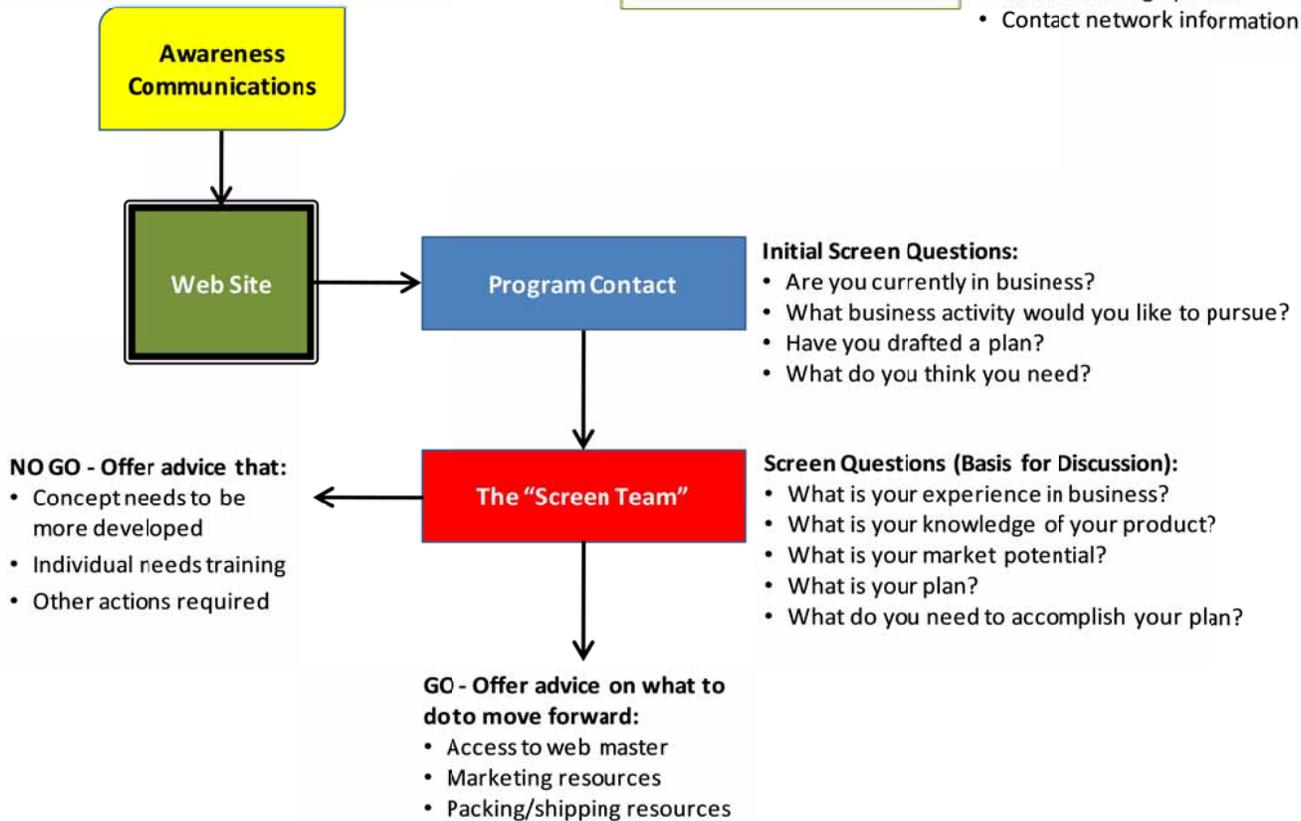
The farmer hears about the program through a mailing/e-mail sent by the Agriculture Extension Agency that tells of this Business Accelerator Program and they should go to a specific web site. The process will be engaged as follows:

Peace River Herbs



What’s on the web site:

- Program-related information
- How to write a business plan
- How to start a business
- Training opportunities
- Technology resources
- Marketing options
- Manufacturing options
- Contact network information



➤ Attracting Businesses to the Charlotte County Area

The marketing strategy to promote Charlotte County varies by economic sector and is outlined below.

Target Sector	Key Attributes of Interest	Marketing Strategy
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of venues and events • Packages with discounts • Unique situations/packages for business meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing packages for general tourists • Package convention and tourism center and Sheraton hotel along with activities throughout the County for business meetings.
Regional Distribution	<p>Available sites that are at least shovel ready and are within 2 miles of interstate interchange.</p> <p>Demonstrate labor force is available with warehouse experience.</p>	Contact brokers, site consultants and firms that specialize in distribution and warehousing operations.
Manufacturing	<p>Available sites that are at least shovel ready and are within 2 miles of interstate interchange.</p> <p>Demonstrate labor force is available with related industry experience.</p>	Contact brokers, site consultants and firms that specialize in distribution and warehousing operations.
Professional/Technical/ Creative Services	<p>Availability of office product for sale/lease and lease to buy, particularly in the downtown area.</p> <p>Availability of labor force.</p>	<p>Market specific opportunities to firms in the greater region that may want to have a local presence.</p> <p>Current tourists/seasonal residents may have potential interest in relocating to the County.</p>
Back Office/Shared Services Center	<p>Availability of office product for sale/lease and lease with option to buy.</p> <p>Business park sites conducive for offices.</p> <p>Availability of labor force.</p>	Participate in shared services conferences, national and regional.

Marketing Tools for Promoting Communities and Real Estate

Building Awareness → Screening for Prospects → Building and Sustaining Relationships

- Regional branding based on attributes.
- Region **Resource Profile** in pdf format.
- Site/building profiles in pdf format.
- E-media (web site, e-mails, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.)
- Group/individual familiarization tours for consultants, commercial real estate professionals and key companies.
- Host conferences that attract specific companies, industries and influencers.
- Media releases.
- Articles/advertising in targeted trade journals and other publications.
- Word of mouth referrals.
- Direct contact with target industry firms.
- One-on-one interface at conferences and trade shows.
- On-going interface with state and regional economic development organizations.
- Mailing of material packets (phasing out).

Key Information on a Web Site That is Valuable to the Site Selection Process

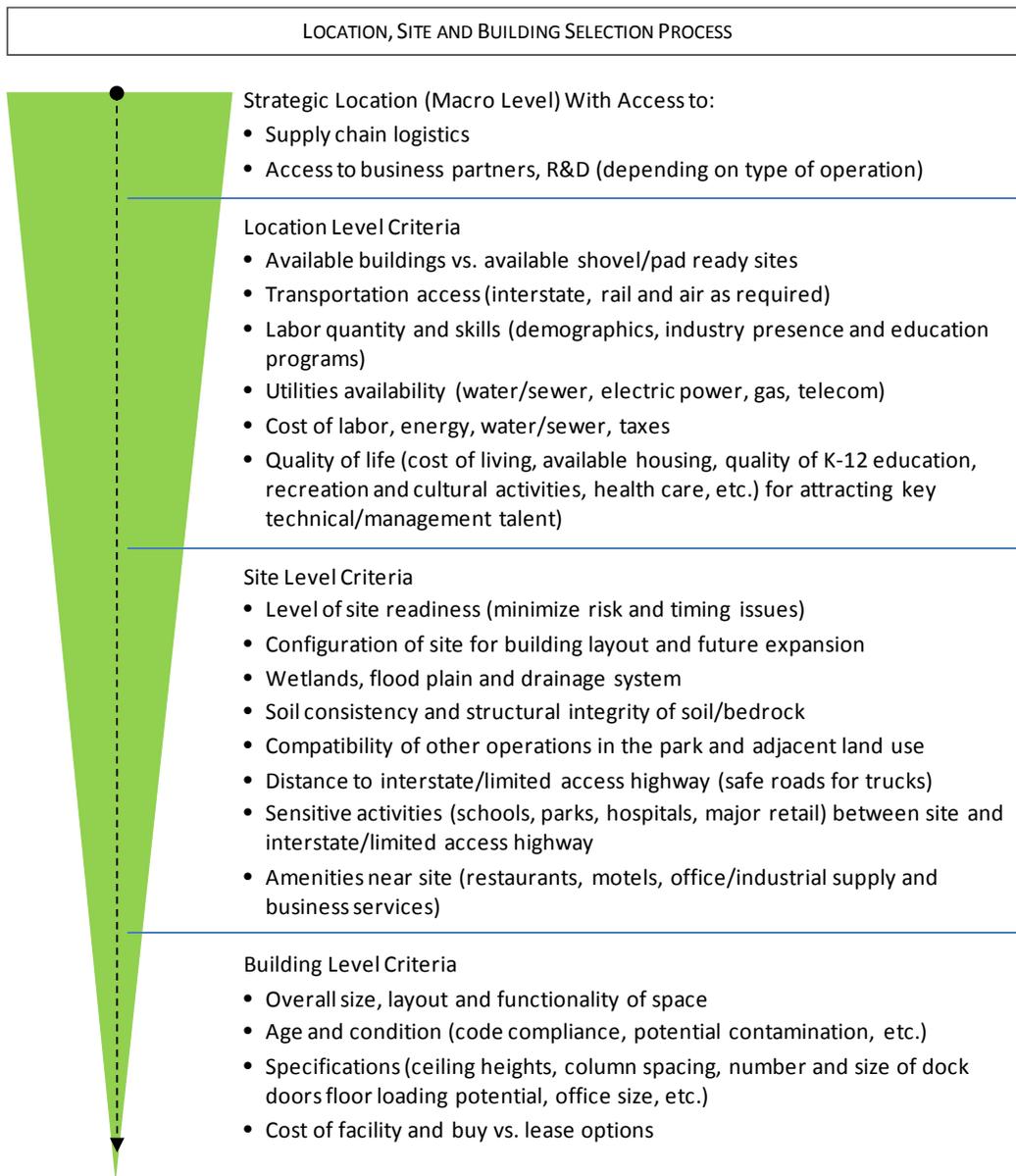
- Easily visible contact information for staff members with designation of roles.
- Identification of target industries and a general description of resources that are available to support each industry.
- Updates on recent activities.
- Listing of major properties and buildings with access to LoopNet or network with updated information.
- Resource Profile** in pdf format that includes:
 - Maps of the area and in context with the primary cities in the Southeast.
 - Listing of employers by industry down to 25 employees.
 - Availability of labor (demographics, specific skills and cost of labor).
 - Education resources with statistics and programs related to target industries.
 - Utility resources with unit cost.
 - Transportation access (highway, rail and airports).
 - Summary of major sites in the area and statistics on lot sizes, amenities, etc.
 - Taxes and incentives.



The Site Selection Process

Outlined below is the general process utilized to identify locations, sites and buildings for a particular industry and type of operation. Two of the most critical resources that are considered are having access to the right labor supply and having real estate options that meet the technical and timing needs of the business. Labor supply is evaluated both a number of factors, including overall demographics (population by age group, education levels of adult population, etc.), current industry and skills presence, and the education and training resources that are available to initially train and periodically upgrade skills.

Real estate options relate to functionality and cost (cash flow) of a specific option vs. risk of being up and ready on time. To this end, companies will initially seek out existing buildings and then consider a build-to-suit option. With the economy as it is, there are typically lots of buildings available at prices far lower than new construction so having just land available and not any buildings as an option places a community at a disadvantage.



ACTION PLAN FOR ACHIEVING THE VISION AND METRICS TO TRACK PROGRESS

The overall action items required to move the economic development efforts for Charlotte County forward are outlined below. More detailed checklists for selected segments of the economy are included after the Action Items.

Organizational Effectiveness		
Action #1	Establish a team to review the key processes that support economic development and seek ways to streamline them to position the community as highly responsive to inquiries from outside prospects and business friendly to companies seeking approvals on business activity and construction of buildings.	
Discussion:	There have been instances when the approval process has been too slow on different approvals to meet the needs of business. If Charlotte County wants a reputation for being "Business Friendly" there is some process improvements that need to be implemented that integrate all the participating stakeholders. The best way to engage in this process is to have one organization/individual facilitate the efforts and prioritize the processes that need improvement.	
Responsible:	Charlotte County Dept. of Econ. Develop. (CCDED)	Timing to Address Action: 9-12 months
Action #2	In the next few years, develop plan to consolidate the County's Department of Economic Development with the ECEC to form an integrated public/private partnership that is funded partially by the County and by private sources (ramped up over time). The prime functions of the organization would focus on leadership, relationships, promotion and supporting resource development. The IDA would remain a separate entity.	
Discussion:	The public/private partnership provides an efficient organization that can raise private funding (a function not available to a government-based entity) and allows the organization to maintain confidentiality when required during project negotiations. The County would maintain its funding levels until other sources could be identified; it would have a seat on the Board; and it would be involved in basic policy decisions in a proactive manner. Essentially, the organization and the County would agree as to what could happen where and let the organization bring it to a reality with the County monitoring their progress.	
Responsible:	Charlotte County and ECEC	Timing to Address Action: Within 2 years

Communications With Community		
Action #1	Establish a Citizen's Advisory Group for Economic Develop comprised of nine seats representing a cross section of the community geographically and from different stakeholder groups. Meet monthly to discuss issues and methods of pulling the community together to build consensus on economic growth.	
Discussion:	The community has been focused primarily on the development of a retirement community for 60 years. There needs to be a process of consensus-building if the community is to venture in other aspects of economic growth.	
Responsible:	ECEC, Chamber of Commerce, others	Timing to Address Action: 6 months
Action #2	Incorporate entrepreneurship into the local school/college curriculum to build awareness among the student population of the opportunities of working with and starting up small business.	
Discussion:	Small business is the largest and fastest growing segment of the U.S. economy and represents great opportunities for students to experience business and the need for discipline and specific skills to be successful. It is also a tremendous teaching tool to build an understanding of many life skills related to money management, career options, personal discipline, etc. There are already well established programs around the country that support this effort.	
Responsible:	ECEC, Chamber of Commerce and local schools	Timing to Address Action: 12 months

Resource Development		
Action #1	Develop a formal master plan for the Airport Commerce Park (and other parcels near the airport) that would include a uniform identity (one name), overall layout plan, reasonable codes and design criteria, provide sites that are shovel/pad ready, and develop a marketing strategy (see Appendix for details). Note that code revisions are ready to be implemented.	
Discussion:	The land around the Punta Gorda Airport, also being adjacent to an I-75 interchange, is one of the most valuable assets that the County has. It is important to prepare/ promote the site to maximize its potential.	
Responsible:	All land owners within the ECAP	Timing to Address Action: 6-9 months
Action #2	Make available technical training at a company's site to support business retention and attraction of certain types of manufacturing and other businesses requiring specialized training. The first step is to identify the potential need and develop a contingency plan for delivery.	
Discussion:	Companies frequently will need non-degree technical training or support for lean manufacturing techniques that is delivered on-site rather than in a classroom. There needs to be a source for this training that is offered to local business as part of the County's overall resource package.	
Responsible:	Gulf Coast University (develop plan)	Timing to Address Action: 12 months
Action #3	Provide financial resources to support new/emerging/expanding local businesses and attract additional businesses to the County. This includes low cost land for purchase, grants/loans and other support (cash and in kind). Charlotte County needs to identify the types of incentives it needs for economic growth.	
Discussion:	Other Southwest Florida counties support not only Enterprise Florida's incentives but also provide local incentives for certain types of opportunities.	
Responsible:	CCDED/ECAP	Timing to Address Action: 6 months

Business Attraction (External Marketing) and Small Business Development		
Action #1	Develop "brands" or tag lines for specific economic sectors (e.g., "Distribution Center for Southwest Florida") in order to give some identity to the County for placing on web site and in literature.	
Discussion:	The County has little or no brand identification (the name Charlotte has already been taken by North Carolina) and it is critical to utilize some branding or tag lines to promote the County in the marketplace.	
Responsible:	CCDED/ ECEC	Timing to Address Action: 6 months
Action #2	Prepare an Economic Development Resource Profile for the County that defines its key assets that would be of interest to prospective companies.	
Discussion:	The profile is an effective tool that provides a tightly written overview on the resources the County has to offer different industries/economic sectors. It can be placed on a web site in pdf format and/or sent to a prospective company or its consultant as an attachment to an e-mail. MS&B has written these types of profiles for many different communities.	
Responsible:	CCDED/ECEC	Timing to Address Action: 6 months
Action #3	Establish a small business accelerator program that includes three key components: (1) Awareness of entrepreneurship throughout the community; (2) Screening of business teams and their product/service offerings; and (3) Building the resources required to support emerging/start-up businesses.	
Discussion:	Details on a business accelerator program are provided in Section 7 of this report.	
Responsible:	CCDED	Timing to Address Action: On-going

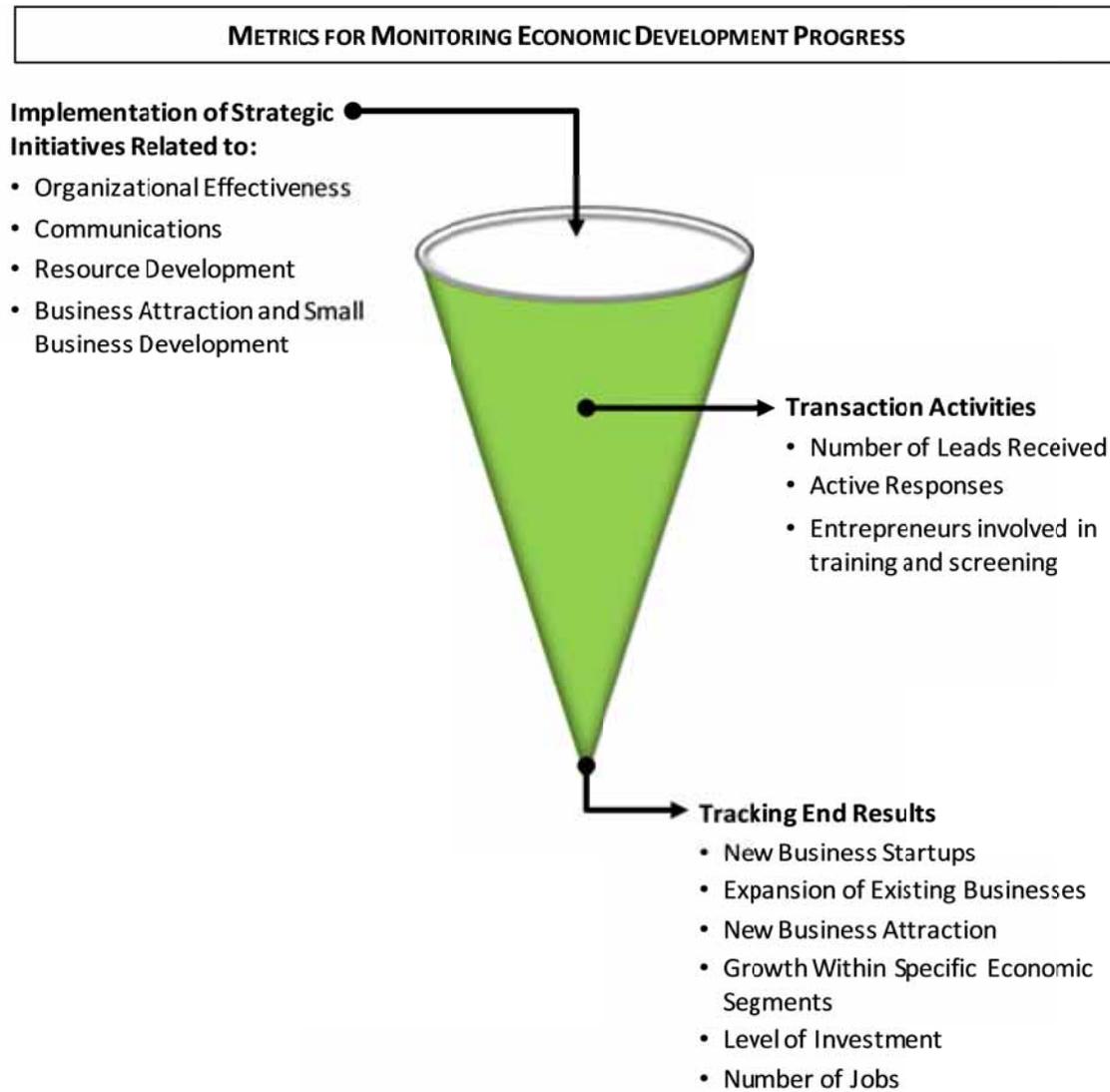
Action Plan Time Line

Action Item	Months From Initiating Plan																							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Organizational Effectiveness																								
1. Process Review																								
2. Consolidate Econ. Dev. Organization																								
Communications																								
1. Citizen’s Advisory Group Startup																								
2. Entrepreneurship in Schools																								
Resource Development																								
1. Master Plan for Airport Park																								
2. On-Site Technical Training																								
3. Enhance Local Incentives Package																								
Business Attraction																								
1. Develop Brand/Tag																								
2. Develop Resource Profile																								
3. Small Business Accelerator																								

Checklists for Implementing Selected Industry Segments

Checklist for Attracting Manufacturing Operations	Check List for Attracting Regional Distribution Operations
<p>Discussion: The types of manufacturing operations that have a higher probability of coming to the County area smaller operations (<50 employees and < 50,000 sq ft of space). Many of these companies want to lease existing space or have a building within up and ready within six (6) months. This requires having a building available or having a pad ready site with a virtual building pre-approved. The companies frequently want access to on-site technical training and access to some capital to make the relocation investment.</p>	<p>Discussion: Distribution/warehousing operations are more likely to build their own facility assuming there is a shovel and pad ready site in an industrial park with 1-2 miles of an interstate interchange. They may also request onsite training.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Define the Airport Commerce Park with one name (this will greatly help the marketing effort) <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Layout specific sites for manufacturing operations <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Design virtual for the size at 50,000 sq ft that can be expandable as needed in the future. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Have Gulf Coast University commit to offering on-site technical training on an as needed basis. <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Market the site with national broker, LoopNet and other real estate postings. Promote on web site and communicate site to the region and state organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Define the Airport Commerce Park with one name (this will greatly help the marketing effort) <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Layout specific sites for warehousing operations <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Design virtual for the size range of 100,000 to 250,000 sq ft that can be expandable as needed in the future. <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Have Gulf Coast University commit to offering on-site training on an as needed basis. <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Market the site with national broker, LoopNet and other real estate postings. Promote on web site and communicate site to the region and state organizations.

Metrics for Monitoring Progress



Metrics Measure Overall Progress, Not Just End Results.

APPENDIX

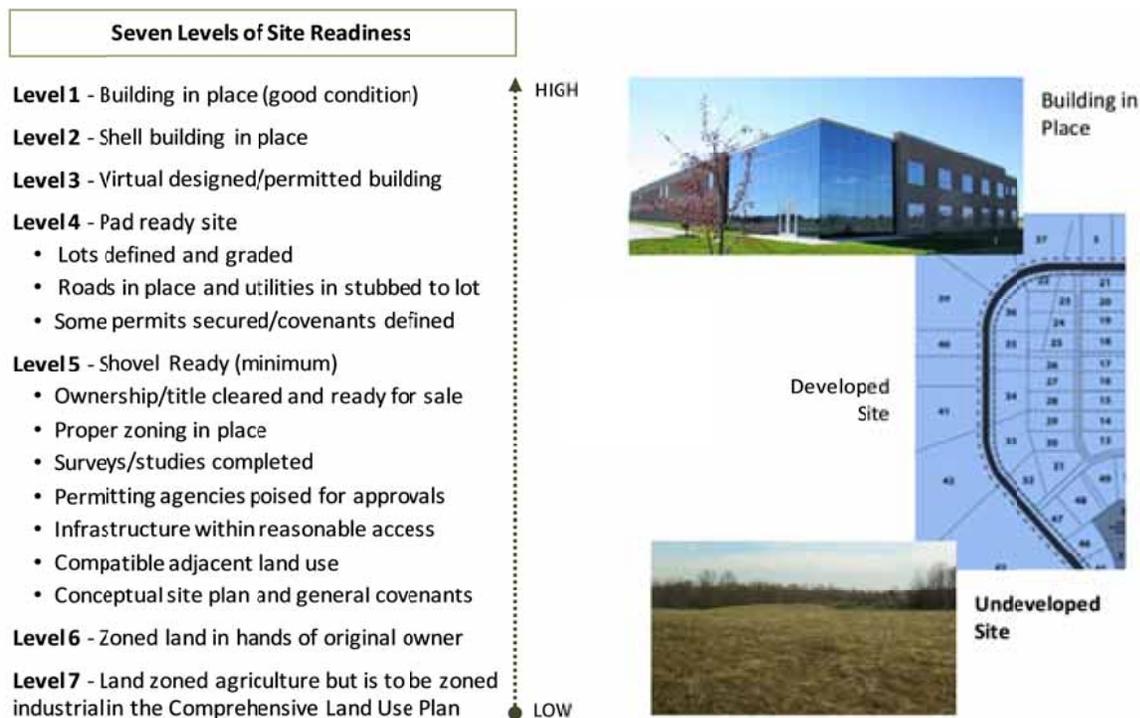
OVERVIEW ON BUSINESS PARK DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

➤ General Requirements

- Provide single designation for business park regardless of how many land owners exist in the park (e.g., Stone Creek Park)
- Ownership is in the hands of organizations that are willing to set a price, invest in developing the site to a specific level of readiness (see next page for discussion on
- Limit the number of requirements to provide enough details to minimize need for interpretation. Businesses do not mind complying with reasonable/easy to understand requirements.

➤ Discussion on Site Readiness

The availability of sites and buildings and their respective level of readiness is critical to the expanding company within a community or the prospective company considering placement of an operation in a community. The level of readiness directly impacts the overall speed-to-market for getting a business up and running and is also a key indicator of risk related to a location decision. A property with a low level of readiness means more approvals and opportunities to slip schedules. The seven levels of site readiness are outlined below as a reference.



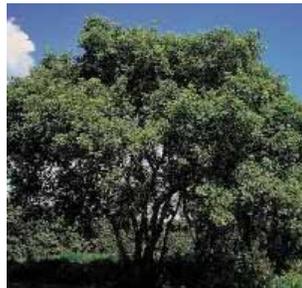
➤ Key Elements of a Site Master Plan

- Lot designations and maximum build-out for each lot, including parking capacity. Small lots can be combined to make larger lots as needed.
- Designated use areas (office vs. industrial and warehousing).
- Provide layout of access road and timing for completion.
- Define water drainage/management areas.
- Identify utility access points (power, water, sewer, telecom and gas) along with size of lines, capacity and providers.
- If park development is in phases, note which sections will be covered in a given phase.
- Provide landscape details for common areas and develop a list of grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees that acceptable for the park and utilize Florida native species that require less maintenance and water.
- Provide signage and entrance landscaping that reflects the quality of the overall business park.



➤ Building Design Guidelines/Covenants

- Identify building construction materials and front façade requirements.
- Define landscaping requirements for each area of the park. Require landscape buffers **only at the interface** of industrial and office, industrial or residential areas.
- Define what can be stored outside and how it needs to be screened.
- Specify any lighting and signage requirements/limitations to help develop a uniform park design.
- Seek to have buildings constructed that can be easily reused for multiple functions and have areas that are highly specialized in locations of the building that can be easily removed.
- Make sure chemical storage areas are well protected from ground and surface water contamination and stored/utilized in contained areas.
- Develop several virtual drawings of buildings and sites (see next page) that meet the park requirements that can be utilized as guidelines for prospective companies and their design teams.



➤ Design Details for Virtual Buildings

The use of a virtually designed building along with a Shovel Ready or Pad Ready site has become common practice in many parts of the country. There are a number of benefits including:

- An improved readiness level for the site and less risk perceived by the prospective company.
- A prospective company can visualize the final product and the expectations for the quality of construction can be easily communicated.

The key aspects of a virtual building design package include the following:

- Basis plan view of building and lot showing building outline and column placements, parking, etc.
- Architectural rendering of building to note design style, wall surfaces/finishing, landscaping, etc.
- Master plan of lot that includes water management system (ponds), road access, building orientation and access ways to major highway.
- Details on overall size of building and each type of space (manufacturing/warehouse, office, etc.).
- Utility details including size and capacity of water, sewer, electric power, gas and telecom lines.



Architectural rendering of building noted above and a master plan of the site (including water management) is noted to the right.



➤ Certified Shovel Ready Site Program

- Many states and communities have established a Certified Site Program because of the following benefits to a prospective company and the community:
- Reduces the construction time and potential risks for prospective companies seeking to build a facility in a community.
- Provides a community with a competitive advantage over those communities that do not have certified sites.
- Increases market exposure because prospective companies frequently will focus on certified sites.



Key Elements of a Certified Site

Different states and regions have varied requirements for a certified “shovel ready” with the most common attributes being:

- Ownership of the site is well defined and in the hands of a third party such as a local government agency, developer, private company, etc.
- Detailed information on the site is readily available and packaged in a profile that includes:
 - › Site boundaries and identification of adjacent owners,
 - › Layout of the site with lot lines, roads, utilities and surface water containment structures,
 - › Access to rail lines (as appropriate) and interstate access,
 - › Offering price per acre or for specific lots.
- Identification of whether the site or adjacent sites are in any type of economic development zone that would qualify the occupant for certain incentives.
- Completion of formal title search as well as geotechnical soils testing, Environmental Assessment(s), archeological studies, wetlands and flood plain determination, and other studies.
- Define transportation access to site and timing required for road and/or rail installation.
- Confirm utility access to site and timing required to run service to a specific lot/site.



➤ Overview on Pad Ready Sites

A pad ready site is a step beyond a shovel ready site and includes site grading and seeding (for erosion control), road access has been completed and the utilities are installed and stubbed to the curb of the site. This reduces any real or perceived risk in getting the site prepared and utilities in place.

