



2024

# Economic Development Strategic Master Plan

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# Executive Summary

## Key Findings and Themes

St. Johns County, Florida (SJC), boasts a rich history dating back to Spanish colonization and continues to thrive with a diverse economy driven by tourism, healthcare, education, agriculture, and retail. Its blend of historical charm and economic opportunities make it an attractive place to live and visit. After a thorough review of historical planning documents, plans, and strategic initiatives, paired with a thorough analysis of publicly available data, the following are presented as key findings and themes:

- St. Johns County has grown in population historically and is forecasted to continue to experience significant growth. This growth has been driven largely by retirement and prime-working aged individuals. It is surmised this growth can be attributed to the favorable climate, abundance of natural assets, and world-class cultural, tourism, and recreational amenities.
- The data analysis conducted in this plan indicates there are very real economic disparities across the county, inhibiting clarity on the real economic realities of the region. Population centers like Ponte Vedra and St. Augustine boast high median incomes and high educational attainment rates while communities like Hastings and other southern communities lag far behind.
- The data and stakeholder engagement findings indicate that if rising housing costs, particularly for essential workers across the county, are not addressed, it could pose a significant challenge for local employers. Data supporting this finding include median sales prices, gross rents, and commuting patterns. The proliferation of short-term rental units is exasperating the problem.
- Further analysis of commuting patterns show that

many individuals are traveling outside St. Johns County for work, most notably traveling to Duval County and the Jacksonville metro area.

- Tourism has historically been the backbone of the local economy. Continued growth in this sector is paramount, but St. Johns County should take intentional steps to diversify its economic base, creating a more sustainable and resilient local economy. A diversified base will provide current and new residents with more opportunities to find employment that provides family sustaining wages and career advancement opportunities.
- Climate change is a very real challenge facing SJC. Extreme weather events have had an outsized financial impact on both the public sector and private businesses, including rising insurance costs and real risks for certain high growth industries.
- The southern portion of the county, notably Hastings, plays an important role in the regional economy and quality of life. Known for its agricultural heritage, opportunities exist to provide intentional support to farmers and other small business owners in the area. Growth opportunities could include agribusiness expansion, value-added processing, and agritourism.

See Appendix A for a comprehensive overview of current economic conditions.

# SWOC Analysis



## STRENGTHS

- Educated Population
- Favorable Tax and Regulatory Environment
- Abundance of Natural Resources
- Historically Strong Tourism Industry
- Strategic Location



## OPPORTUNITIES

- Modern Economic Development Organization
- Enhanced Entrepreneurial Support System
- Competitive Business and Development Incentives
- Additional Resources and Capacity for Economic Development
- Northeast Florida Regional Airport
- Innovative Career Training and Education
- Increased Support and Resources for Agriculture



## WEAKNESSES

- Housing Availability and Accessibility
- Aging Workforce
- Transportation Infrastructure and Traffic Congestion
- Limited Inventory of Modern Industrial Space
- Economic Disparities by Industry and Location



## CHALLENGES

- Managing Residential Growth
- Climate Vulnerability
- State Political Climate
- Insurance Costs
- Retention of Local Essential Workers
- Short-Term Rental Units

# Target Industry Clusters

## TOP INDUSTRY TARGET

### Corporate Headquarters (551)

- 551111 Offices of Bank Holding Companies
- 551112 Offices of Other Holding Companies
- 551114 Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices

## TARGET INDUSTRIES FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY

### Aerospace, Transportation, and Logistics (332, 334, 336, 423, 481, 484, 488)

- 332722 Bolt, Nut, Screw, Rivet, and Washer Manufacturing
- 334511 Search, Detection, Navigation, Guidance, Aeronautical, and Nautical System and Instrument Manufacturing
- 336411 Aircraft Manufacturing
- 336412 Aircraft Engine and Engine Parts Manufacturing
- 336413 Other Aircraft Parts and Auxiliary Equipment Manufacturing
- 423610 Electrical Apparatus and Equipment, Wiring Supplies, and Related Equipment Merchant
- 481111 Scheduled Passenger Air Transportation
- 484121 General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload
- 481111 Air Traffic Control
- 488510 Freight Transportation Arrangement
- 488190 Other Support Activities for Air Transportation

### Biosciences (325, 339, 541)

- 325412 Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing
- 325413 In-Vitro Diagnostic Substance Manufacturing
- 339113 Surgical Appliance and Supplies Manufacturing
- 541714 Research and Development in Biotechnology (except Nanobiotechnology)
- 541715 Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology)

### Business Services (541)

- 541330 Engineering Services
- 541614 Process, Physical Distribution, and Logistics Consulting Services
- 541690 Other Scientific and Technical Consulting Services

### Defense and Homeland Security (325, 332, 336, 541, 928)

- 325920 Explosives Manufacturing
- 332312 Fabricated Structural Metal Manufacturing
- 332922 Small Arms Ammunition Manufacturing
- 332993 Ammunition (except Small Arms) Manufacturing
- 332994 Small Arms, Ordnance, and Ordnance Accessories Manufacturing
- 336414 Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Manufacturing
- 336415 Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Propulsion Unit and Propulsion Unit Parts Manufacturing
- 336419 Other Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Parts and Auxiliary Equipment Manufacturing
- 336611 Ship Building and Repairing
- 336992 Military Armored Vehicle, Tank, and Tank Component Manufacturing
- 541715 Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology)
- 928110 National Security (Federal)
- 928120 International Affairs (Federal)

### **Financial and Insurance Services (522, 523, 524)**

- 522180 Savings Institutions and Other Depository Credit Intermediation
- 522220 Sales Financing
- 522291 Consumer Lending
- 522292 Real Estate Credit
- 522299 International, Secondary Market, and All Other Nondepository Credit Intermediation
- 522310 Mortgage and Nonmortgage Loan Brokers
- 523150 Investment Banking and Securities Intermediation
- 523210 Securities and Commodity Exchanges
- 523910 Miscellaneous Intermediation
- 523940 Portfolio Management and Investment Advice
- 523991 Trust, Fiduciary, and Custody Activities
- 523999 Miscellaneous Financial Investment Activities
- 524114 Direct Health and Medical Insurance Carriers
- 524126 Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Carriers
- 524127 Direct Title Insurance Carriers
- 524128 Other Direct Insurance (except Life, Health, and Medical) Carriers
- 524291 Claims Adjusting

### **Information Technology and Analytical Instruments (334, 513, 518, 541)**

- 333242 Semiconductor Machinery Manufacturing
- 334118 Computer Terminal and Other Computer Peripheral Equipment Manufacturing
- 334413 Semiconductor and Related Device Manufacturing
- 334510 Electromedical and Electrotherapeutic Apparatus Manufacturing
- 513210 Software Publishers
- 518210 Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services
- 541511 Custom Computer Programming Services
- 541512 Computer Systems Design Services
- 541519 Other Computer Related Services

### **Marketing, Design, and Publishing (513, 541)**

- 513130 Book Publishers
- 513199 All Other Publishers
- 519290 Web Search Portals and All Other Information Services
- 541420 Industrial Design Services
- 541490 Other Specialized Design Services
- 541613 Marketing Consulting Services
- 541810 Advertising Agencies
- 541820 Public Relations Agencies
- 541850 Outdoor Advertising
- 541890 Other Services Related to Advertising
- 541910 Marketing Research and Public Opinion Polling

# Strategic Recommendations

## TOP PRIORITY STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION

Create a Dedicated Public-Private Partnership Economic Development Organizations

### Strategic Focus Area 1: Business Retention and Expansion

- Invest resources to support a robust Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) outreach program
- Collaborate with local partners to celebrate existing businesses in St. Johns County
- Adopt technology solutions to better support small business
- Support private businesses with climate mitigation and resiliency planning
- Develop an advocacy strategy to address rising insurance challenges

### Strategic Focus Area 2: Business Attraction

- Create a network of St. Johns County Ambassadors
- Develop a comprehensive marketing and public relations toolkit
- Activate development ready land and available office and industrial space across St. Johns County
- Align infrastructure investments with economic development priorities
- Build relationships with national site-selection firms

### Strategic Focus Area 3: Entrepreneurship and Innovation

- Formalize an entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem across St. Johns County
- Develop an angel investment and venture capital network across the region
- Consider developing a technology and startup incubator or accelerator program
- Collaborate with regional universities to develop technology transfer and commercialization programs and resources connected to St. Johns County

### Strategic Focus Area 4: Workforce, Training, and Education

- Create a more coordinated workforce, education, and training ecosystem in St. Johns County
- Collaborate with appropriate public and private partners to create work-based learning programs
- Collaborate with local school districts to implement youth employment and career exploration programs
- Conduct a feasibility study to understand the potential for a new university in St. Johns County

### Strategic Focus Area 5: Quality of Life

- Address housing challenges across St. Johns County
- Provide resources to support planning for municipalities across St. Johns County



# Introduction

Economic Development Strategic Master Plans provide a community with an opportunity to envision their economic future and formulate the appropriate steps to achieve that desired future. A solid plan is critical to a prosperous future, long-term economic viability, and a high-quality of life for residents. When done correctly, the economic development strategic planning process facilitates conversations between public and private leaders, residents, students, faith leaders, optimists, skeptics, and other key community stakeholders.

## Methodology and Scope of Work

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners released a public request for proposal soliciting the services of a professional consulting firm to develop an Economic Development Strategic Master Plan (EDSMP) in early 2023. Following standard procurement process, St. Johns County selected Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TPMA) in the spring of 2023. TPMA provided professional consulting services to develop the following EDSMP. The scope of service included:

- **Project Launch Meeting:** including scope of work, project timeline, and deliverable overview; communication and meeting planning; a discussion of roles and responsibilities; and a discussion on desired outcomes.
- **Discovery:** including quantitative data analysis, desktop research, historical document review and analysis, and a site visit to St. Johns County. Relevant findings were used to inform subsequent analysis in the strategic plan.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** including one-on-one interviews with SJC staff members, SJC County Commissioners, virtual focus groups, and in-person stakeholder engagement sessions. Findings were used to inform subsequent analysis in the strategic plan.
- **SWOC Analysis:** based on the discovery phase, a thorough assessment of the local economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. The SWOC analysis was used to inform subsequent strategies and tactics for consideration.
- **Target Industry Analysis:** a quantitative and qualitative analysis designed to develop a list of target industry clusters poised for growth, expansion, and attraction to the St. Johns County. The project team relied upon publicly available and proprietary data access to develop a comprehensive list presented in this strategic plan.

- **Ordinance Review:** a thorough analysis of existing ordinances relevant to economic development, including a review of the Business Incentive Ordinance and Land Development Code. Recommendations are presented to improve upon the stated ordinances.
- **Corporate Outreach Strategy:** a thorough presentation of relevant strategies and tactics for St. Johns County to consider when looking to attract target industries to the county. Recommendations were provided based on best practices in economic development business attraction.
- **Strategic Framework;** the development of relevant economic development strategies to support business retention, expansion, attraction, and entrepreneurial startup activity. Further strategies were developed to address the local workforce and quality of life in SJC.





# Stakeholder Engagement

## In-Person Workshop

### METHODOLOGY

TPMA utilized a thoughtful and methodical approach for planning the interactive workshops. The process began after preliminary discovery research and calls with the client. Steps of the process included audience exploration, format exploration, format details, a logistical action plan, message development, determining communication channels, and a communication action plan.

The client promoted registration for the workshops via email to stakeholders. A save the date, registration, and reminder email were each sent to potential registrants.

The main objective of the workshops was to identify and prioritize strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for economic development in the county. Specific targeted questions at the forefront of planning included better understanding the perceived economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges in St. Johns County; seeing what could be added to cultivate a strong local economy and actualize the full potential of SJC; brainstorming strategies that can be implemented to foster a robust, diversified, and vibrant local economy.

Two workshops were held on June 27, from 1-3 p.m., and June 28, from 9:30-11:30 a.m. with twenty participants on the 27<sup>th</sup> and twelve participants on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

The workshops were intentionally interactive and included multiple rounds of discussion within the group setting to work on facilitating group consensus. The final goal of the workshop was to create a table consensus for the SWOC analysis chart, presented and analyzed in the Results section for a final assessment of the top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for St. Johns County.

The workshop findings from the SWOC analysis chart were then quantified by both average and frequency. When looking at both avenues, TPMA found it best to look at the frequency first of the listing for true clarity on where the ranking of the strengths is at. Then ties could be analyzed based on the averages of those individual items. Ties in frequencies may be analyzed by looking at the averages for those specific items to see which was the top-ranking priority.



## RESULTS

TPMA utilized the worksheets that participants actively completed as groups to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the county by looking at the average score and frequency of appearance. A full tabulation of the results can be found in [Appendix B](#).

### Strengths

The top listed strengths are shown in the table below. Natural assets were a clear strength of the county and had a frequency of eight listings.

STRENGTHS	FREQUENCY
NATURAL ASSETS	8
TOURISM	5
EDUCATION	5
PUBLIC SCHOOLS	5

### Weaknesses

The top listed weaknesses are shown in the table below.

WEAKNESSES	FREQUENCY
HOUSING	9
TRANSPORTATION	5
ECONOMIC DISPARITY	4
INFRASTRUCTURE	3

### Opportunities

The top listed opportunities are shown in the table below.

OPPORTUNITIES	FREQUENCY
PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, SCIENTIFIC SERVICES	4
ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM	4
BUSINESS INCENTIVE PROGRAMS	3
REGIONAL COLLABORATION	3

### Challenges

The top listed challenges are shown in the table below.

CHALLENGES	FREQUENCY
POLITICAL CLIMATE	6
INSURANCE COSTS	5
GROWTH	4
CLIMATE CHANGE	4

# SWOC Analysis

The SWOC analysis is intended to provide a realistic, fact-based, and data-driven analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the current economic development landscape in SJC. This SWOC analysis presented was informed by the Summary of Economic Conditions, presented in Appendix A. This summary includes quantitative data presentation and analysis of population and socioeconomic datasets, as well as business and workforce datasets. The SWOC analysis is also informed by a thorough analysis of past planning documents, current relevant plans, key websites, and additional relevant information shared by SJC. The data analysis was supported by in-person stakeholder focus groups, where participants were asked to consider key findings, and identify and rank findings based on relevancy to economic development in SJC. The project team also conducted one-on-one interviews with county commissioners.

## Strengths

Strengths are current assets and competitive advantages in St. Johns County. This list of strengths can be leveraged to facilitate economic development for SJC.

### TOP PRIORITY STRENGTH

#### Educated Population

In recent years, St. Johns County has received a variety of accolades for its high-performing public education system, including being one of the top ranked districts in the state of Florida for nine consecutive years. Academic excellence across the county is highlighted by public schools that consistently perform at or near the top of the state in standardized tests. Additionally, the district has received recognition for student achievement, graduation rates, and college readiness, with 35% of graduates who take the ACT being scored as “college ready,” compared to 18% nationwide. When looking at the population ages 25 years and over, almost half of the residents have at least a bachelor’s degree, compared to 34% nationwide. The vast majority (95%) of the population have graduated high school, compared to 89% nationwide.

### MAJOR STRENGTHS

#### Favorable Tax and Regulatory Environment

St. Johns County provides a business-friendly environment with competitive tax rates at both the local and state levels. The county has the lowest property tax rates in the region, and a sales tax rate of only 0.5%. At the state level, Florida has no individual income tax and one of the lower corporate income tax rates, 5.5%, in the country. Additionally, the state of Florida offers several additional tax exemptions, including but not limited to no corporate income tax on limited partnerships or S-corporations, no state-level property tax, and no sales tax on manufacturing machinery and equipment. In addition to competitive tax rates, SJC boasts several policies, incentives, and programs that support economic development. Notably, SJC offers a competitive grant program for existing businesses, new businesses entering the market, and speculative office and industrial development.

#### Abundance of Natural Assets

Beautiful beaches and coastlines highlight the splendor of SJC, including beaches along the Atlantic Ocean where residents and visitors can enjoy swimming, surfing, sunbathing, and beach combing. Additionally, the county is home to intracoastal waterways along the eastern boundary, providing visitors opportunities for boating, fishing, watersports, and unique scenic views. Beyond the coastlines and waterways, the county boasts a diverse range of wildlife, including various bird species, marine life, and land animals. The local wildlife’s natural habitat includes a diverse ecosystem, with majestic, ancient live oak trees, that provides residents and visitors with awe-inspiring natural beauty. Notably, the county is home to additional unique natural assets including Anastasia State Park, Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, Matanzas Inlet, Fort Mose Historic State Park, and Alpine Groves Park, as well as two national monuments – Castillo de San Marcos and Fort Matanzas.

#### Historically Strong Tourism Industry

Unsurprising given the abundance of natural assets and beauty, the tourism industry in St. Johns County is thriving. This industry plays a crucial role in the local economy, generating substantial economic impact. The local tourism industry drives employment, revenue, stimulates small business growth, drives infrastructure improvement and development, and has a significant multiplier effect across the county. In fiscal year 2022, an estimated 3,025,500 tourists visited SJC. These visitors spent \$2.5 billion across the county, generating a total economic impact of \$3.8 billion and supporting 32,400 jobs.

## **ADDITIONAL STRENGTH**

### **Strategic Location**

According to the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce, businesses operating in the county can reach 45 million US customers within a day's drive. Along with its convenient location, this is in large part due to a robust multi-modal transportation network, including north-south corridor I-95 and east-west corridor I-10. Additionally, the region has connections to rail networks CSX and Norfolk Southern, and Atlantic port access. It's location in the northeast corner of Florida also positions it adjacent to major metropolitan areas, including Jacksonville in Duval County, the largest city by area in the contiguous United States with a population of 954,614.

## **Weaknesses**

Weaknesses are factors St. Johns County can improve upon, making it a more competitive environment for economic growth.

### **TOP PRIORITY WEAKNESS**

#### **Housing Availability and Accessibility**

Since 2000, St. Johns County has seen rapid population growth increasing the demand for housing, leading to rising home prices and rental rates. From 2000 to 2020, the population increased by 122%, or approximately 6% per year. The county is projected to see continued growth through 2050, putting increasing pressure on the housing market in the county. This has impacted the median home value in St. Johns County. At \$348,100, median sale prices are about \$100,000 higher than the state median value of \$248,700. Additionally, since 2016, median gross rents have increased by 27% from \$1,150 to \$1,462. Availability of multi-family or apartment rentals is another contributing factor to housing affordability. Only 12% of housing units are considered multi-family, putting pressure on individuals and families not prepared to purchase a home. Notable to SJC, the tourism industry drives a prevalence of seasonal, recreational, and occasional use housing units, taking many potential housing options off the market. Lastly, from a workforce development perspective, data indicates a high number of workers commuting into SJC for work, specifically in the tourism and entertainment industries. If the housing challenges are not addressed, these workers may continue to look for employment closer to home, having a detrimental impact on one of SJC's most important industry sectors.

## **MAJOR WEAKNESSES**

### **Aging Workforce**

Of the population change between 2010 and 2021, 43% can be attributed to growth in the 55+ population. Between 2021 and 2025, the 55+ community will see continued population growth. Some of this growth can be attributed to factors such as the attractiveness of the county as a retirement destination and the longer life expectancy of the general population. While an increase in the older population can stimulate the economy in many ways, it can also create issues if not appropriately addressed. Because of this growth, there's been an increase in demand for senior services, like assisted living centers and recreational programs tailored to the interests of older adults. In addition, this population is likely to need greater access to healthcare services, especially those designed to meet their unique needs. Lastly, it is important to consider that much of the 55+ population has aged out of the workforce, which could contribute to lower-than-normal labor force participation rates. These rates will naturally fluctuate with time, but they should be considered for their impact on local employment trends and business growth.

### **Transportation Infrastructure and Traffic Congestion**

In 2022, the annual average daily traffic counts on I-95 range from 70,000 in the southern portion of the county, to 101,500 in the northern portion of the county. Traffic congestion throughout the SJC can be problematic, especially during peak hours and along major highways, with people traveling into or through the County for work and some residents commuting out for work. This problem intensifies with the influx of tourists in busy seasons, as popular tourist destinations often lack adequate parking, and spillover parking can inhibit surrounding traffic flow.

Moreover, the current transportation infrastructure in SJC makes residents heavily dependent upon personal vehicles, and as such, even workers who live close to their place of employment often find it difficult to utilize alternative means of transportation, since biking lanes and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure is lacking in some areas. This lack of comprehensive and convenient public transportation options makes it challenging for residents without personal vehicles to commute to work, access essential services, and participate in community activities.



To address these challenges, St. Johns County has undertaken several major road improvement projects and has been exploring various transportation improvement projects, such as road expansions, infrastructure upgrades, and studies on potential public transit options. However, the process of addressing transportation challenges can be complex and require a coordinated effort between local authorities, regional agencies, and community stakeholders and may be outside the scope of a traditional economic development strategic plan.

### **Limited Inventory of Modern Industrial Space**

Stakeholders indicated a lack of modern industrial space, inhibiting the county's ability to attract new industry to the area. This assertion is backed by data provided by CoStar, where the most recent data available indicates an industrial occupancy rate of 97%. These challenges, however, are not unique to SJC. The 2022 State of Site Selection report, produced by the Site Selector's Guild indicated there is a nationwide shortage of 'move-in ready' industrial sites. Additionally, site selectors and the clients they represent are less interested in new construction builds, due to the high-cost environment, including rising interest rates and construction costs. If SJC wants to be competitive in the business attraction game, they must address the lack of industrial sites across the county. If SJC is able to build out a sufficient inventory of 'move-in ready' sites, it can put itself in a competitive position to attract and facilitate expansion of high-growth companies.

### **ADDITIONAL WEAKNESS**

#### **Economic Disparities by Industry and Location**

Overall, St. Johns County is prosperous and well-educated. However, there are stark differences between different areas of the county. The two northern Census County divisions, Fruit Cove and Ponte Vedra, have higher median incomes and rates of educational attainment, and lower poverty rates than other areas of the county. The two southern Census County divisions, Hastings, and Matanzas, have lower educational attainment rates and median incomes than the other areas of the county. Hastings, the southeastern county division, has the highest unemployment rate and the largest percentage of the population living below the poverty line. Additionally, by looking at various datasets presented in Appendix A, including data related to industries by employment, largest occupations, and earnings, it's clear that residents living in specific county subdivisions are not afforded enough high-wage employment opportunities. This inference is supported by the county's current reliance on accommodation, food services, and retail trade industries, which typically pay lower wages than industries such as manufacturing and healthcare.

## **Opportunities**

Opportunities are factors that SJC can capitalize on or take advantage of to facilitate future economic growth.

### **TOP PRIORITY OPPORTUNITY**

#### **Modern Economic Development Organization**

St. Johns County has an opportunity to design an economic development organization and ecosystem to meet the increasingly complex needs of activating innovation-based economic development in the 21st century. With various disparate economic development assets in place, SJC could consider consolidating these key functional assets to develop an innovative stand-alone economic development organization. Research from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) suggests that public-private partnership models are best suited to meet the demands of the competitive economic development landscape, facilitating the needed flexibility and mix of revenue streams required to activate ambitious economic development goals. Further, the IEDC suggests that high-performing economic development organizations are characterized as entities that are focused on economic resiliency, have a clear purpose and plan, embody transformational leadership, are 'future-ready,' and are guided by results.

### **MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **Enhanced Entrepreneurial Support System**

Access to capital, entrepreneurial resources, and programming tailored specifically for aspiring innovators and entrepreneurs must serve as the cornerstone of a vibrant local startup ecosystem. Successful ecosystems ensure full access to capital for businesses at various stages of the business lifecycle, including seed capital, angel investment, venture investment, and various debt instruments. Throughout the state, there are numerous venture capital firms and angel investors who could provide critical startup funding to businesses in St. Johns County. Notably, in 2022, Florida had \$7.2 billion in venture capital investment, the seventh highest in the country. Further, SJC should consider continuing to collaborate with appropriate partners, including regional universities to provide appropriate programming, seminars, networking events, and specialized entrepreneurial training. SJC could consider launching incubator and accelerator programs, to cultivate scalable and high-potential businesses of the future. To ensure clarity, SJC should consider enforcing professional service agreements in place.

## **Competitive Business and Development Incentives**

St. Johns County's current business retention, attraction, and speculative development incentive program is a competitive advantage. With some modification and modernization, the incentive could elevate the county as one of the premier destinations for businesses looking to expand and grow. To do this, it's important for SJC to understand best practices related to economic development incentives. The county should clearly outline and state the goals and objectives of the incentive program. Those goals should include job creation, more specifically, 'high paying' job creation. Further, the incentive should consider how potential businesses add to the resiliency of the local economy, and whether it improves the local industry mix. Lastly, economic development policies need to be specific enough to establish clear boundaries, but not overly restrictive to allow for flexibility and discretion to ensure the policy serves the economic interests of the community. A more detailed review of the current economic development incentive program is presented later in this report.

## **Additional Resources and Capacity for Economic Development**

Economic development is a cost intensive endeavor. There exists an opportunity in SJC to dedicate more financial resources to economic development, building a more comprehensive and competitive economic development apparatus to achieve the county's economic development goals. With increased funding, the county can add capacity and talent to meet the needs of modern economic development, including staff members to focus on business retention and expansion outreach and small business support. Further, increased resources will allow the county to execute a more competitive and sophisticated business attraction campaign, including funding for planning, marketing, travel, and hiring dedicated economic development professionals to work directly with site selection consultants in the county's targeted industries. It should be noted, SJC currently has a professional services agreement in place with JAXUSA Partnership, the premier regional economic development organization in Northeast Florida. Opportunities exist to strengthen that partnership, including a review of the current professional services agreement.

## **Northeast Florida Regional Airport**

Operated by the St. Johns County Airport Authority, the Northeast Florida Regional Airport is a public airport located a few miles north of the City of St. Augustine. Served mostly by charter and regional carriers, the airport could be in a position to attract more low-cost carriers, increasing flights and access to and from the region. This increase in access is desirable to both businesses and residents, potentially having a significant positive impact on the economic prospects of the county. Additionally, according to the website, the public airport owns more than 750 acres of vacant land. The acreage owned by the airport is currently zoned Airport Development, which allows for a wide range of uses, including industrial. SJC is poised to work with the airport authority to develop a master plan for the site, ensuring it is optimized for commerce and appropriate economic development suited for the county.

## **ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Innovative Career Training and Education**

According to the 2022 State of Site Selection report, 'access to talent remains the most important global factor in location decisions.' The weight site selection consultants place on talent in the location decision varies across industries, however. If SJC wants to facilitate the expansion of and attract technology-based, and the innovative industries of the future, cultivating a talent pipeline should be a significant consideration for economic development leaders. SJC could consider innovate career training and education initiatives, including developing sector-partnership for key industries, developing career-pathways in partnership with public schools, and working with major employers to design innovative and cost-effective on-the-job training programs.

### **Increased Support and Resources for Agriculture**

The southern portion of the county is rich with agricultural assets, serving as a cultural and industrial cornerstone of SJC for many years. To continue to support this critical industry, SJC stakeholders can develop programs and resources to support the industry, including succession planning support, technology adoption, farm to table programs, and more. Further, economic leaders in SJC should continue to foster intentional relationships with the Putnam/St. Johns County Farm Bureau. This federation, with 3,400 members, could serve as a key conduit to understand the challenges facing farmers in a modernized economy, and inform stakeholders on how to best support the industry into the next generation.



# Challenges

Challenges are external threats and macro trends that could jeopardize SJC's success, inhibiting its ability to facilitate future economic development.

## TOP PRIORITY CHALLENGE

### Managing Residential Growth

Since 2000, St. Johns County has seen rapid population growth. Between 2000 and 2020, the population increased by 122%. This growth is projected to continue through 2030 and beyond. A growing population, while desirable in many aspects, can place a greater strain on public service delivery. Additionally, unmanaged growth can significantly further impact transportation infrastructure and the housing market. Education systems, too, can be burdened by this growth. In the last ten years, the St. Johns County School District saw a 55% increase in enrollment, which means the student population grew by almost 17,000. If this growth continues, more resources will be needed to ensure the county maintains its ability to provide a high-quality education for its younger population. To properly capitalize on the economic opportunities that will come with an expanded talent pool, the county must develop a strategy which explicitly accounts for the needs of a larger population.

## MAJOR CHALLENGES

### Climate Vulnerability

SJC's climate is changing. The average annual air temperature is rising, extreme weather events are more frequent and more intense, and flooding is becoming more common. SJC is already feeling the economic impacts, with Hurricane Ian costing the County approximately \$60 million in repairs. Tropical Storm Nicole, that same year, was estimated to cause \$34 million in damage. While the physical impacts of climate vulnerabilities (damage to people and property) can be harmful to businesses, they also face transitional and liability risks, all of which are factored into location choices. This could make it more challenging for SJC to attract new businesses. The 2022 State of Site Selection Report, from the Site Selectors Guild, indicated that states with risks of utility disruptions are at a disadvantage when competing for projects. Further, the Guild members agreed that climate change is impacting how clients evaluate location risk. SJC can help mitigate this through climate adaptation planning, which, as discussed in the Florida Adaptation Planning Guidebook, can strengthen the local economy, and make the county more attractive for new business investment.

### State Political Climate

Florida is well-known for its conservative politics. While this may attract some to the state, it has the potential to drive away others. According to the 2022 State of Site Selection, "Companies that are dependent on highly-skilled, highly-educated talent – a segment of the population that tend to be passionate about social issues – will be looking closely at state laws and legislations that could negatively impact their ability to recruit and retain this segment of the workforce." A 2021 PerryUndem survey on the impact of social issues on work and job choices for top talent found that 63% of respondents (adults ages 18-64 with a college degree) said that they would not apply for a job in a state that passed an abortion ban. Using a wider lens, a 2021 survey of US residents who moved to a new home in the past 18 months found that 49% of respondents want to live in a place with anti-discrimination laws for gender and sexual orientation.

### Insurance Costs

Homeowners' insurance in the state of Florida costs about four times as much as the national average, costing residents an average of \$6,000 per year, compared to the national average of \$1,700. Even Citizens Property Insurance Corp, the insurer of last resort in Florida, has an average cost of \$3,700 per year. As of June 1, 2023, acknowledging that the premiums charged are not high enough to cover its assumed risk, Citizens was seeking a 14% rate increase from the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation. These insurance-related challenges are not limited to homeowners, but extend to businesses, as well. Most businesses must carry general liability insurance, business interruption insurance, workers' compensation insurance, and property insurance at higher rates. As the political and environmental climates alike become more volatile, insurance prices will continue to increase. As a result, the cost of doing business will be elevated, which can hinder efforts to attract and retain business.

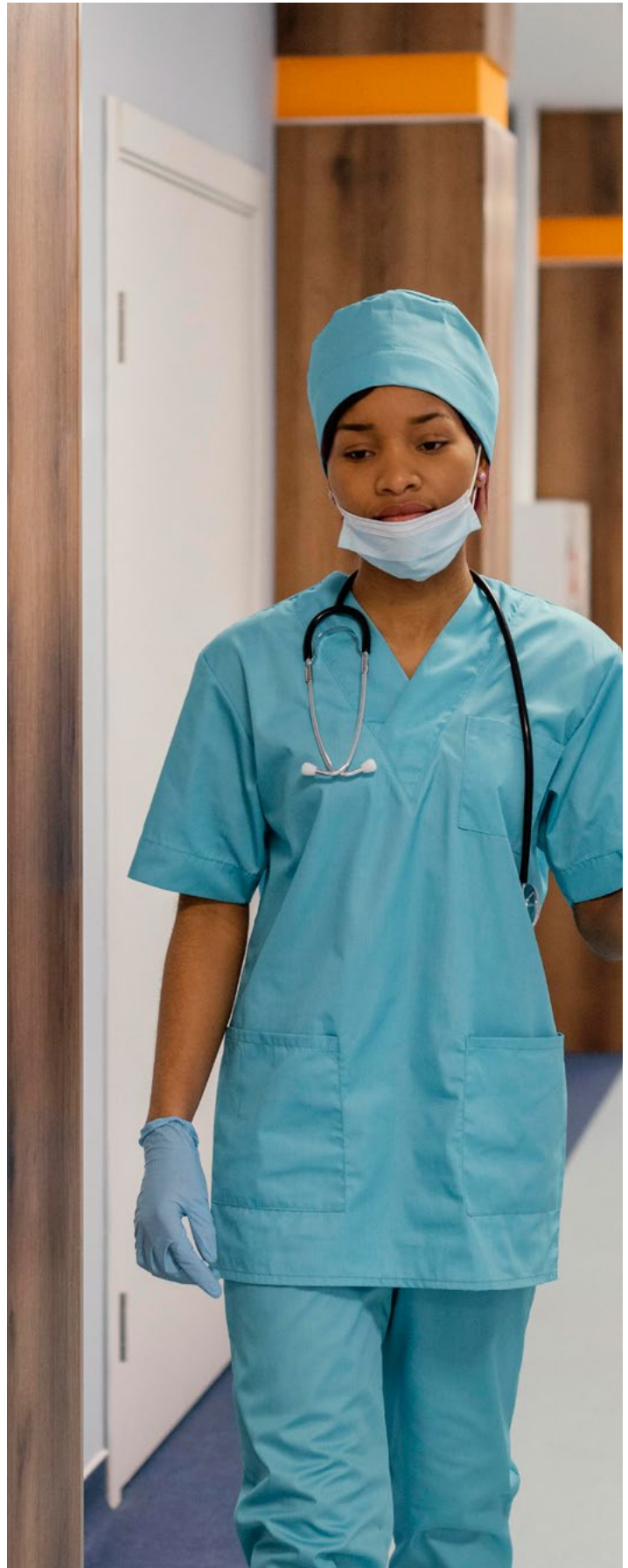
## Retention of Local Essential Workers

Several findings in this report, both quantitative and qualitative, should inform SJC of the potential challenge retaining its local essential workforce. As presented earlier in the SWOC analysis, housing availability, access, and affordability poses a significant challenge in the region, particularly for those essential workers earning wages near or below the median wage in the county. Essential workers in the healthcare, retail, hospitality, and accommodation industries – a large segment of SJC’s current industry mix – are at risk of being priced out of the housing market, inhibiting key industries’ ability to continue to prosper and grow. Additionally, the prevalence of short-term rental units across the county further exacerbates the problem, reducing the supply of attainable housing options for individuals and families. Commuting patterns can provide some insight into this emerging trend as nearly 65% of the current workforce lives outside of the county. SJC faces a future where these essential workers will slowly start to look for work closer to home, reducing the workforce pipeline for businesses in the county.

### ADDITIONAL CHALLENGE

#### Short Term Rental Units

Across various stages of stakeholder engagement with key community leaders, short-term rental units (STU) were cited as an area of concern. The saturation of STUs in the St. Johns County housing market are a value add to an already prosperous tourism industry. However, the significant number of rental units is having a detrimental impact on the housing supply, specifically those individuals and families looking for first-time and attainable access to homeownership. Estimates of the number of short-term rentals varies by source, ranging from 2,742<sup>1</sup> to 5,852,<sup>2</sup> or 2-4% of the total housing stock.



1 “Short Term Rental Registration Status.” St. Johns County Government. <https://www.sjcfl.us/codeenforcement/shortrental.aspx>

2 “Market Overview.” AirDNA. <https://app.airdna.co/data/us/60327?tab=performance>

# Analysis of Current Policies and Programs

## Business Incentive Program Review and Recommendations

### INTRODUCTION

Through the St. Johns County Business Incentive Ordinance (Ordinance 2014-30), the leadership of St. Johns County has a local incentive tool with the purpose to provide “economic development grants to private enterprises in order to expand businesses that exist within St. Johns County, attract new businesses to the County, and encourage the development of Speculative Space in the County as means to attract new businesses to the County in a timely manner.”

Key features of the Business Incentive Ordinance include:

- Targeted industries
- Point-based scoring system that includes the following factors:
  - New construction
  - Job creation
  - Average wages
  - Industry
- A company in one of the accepted targeted industries can receive up to 100% of the project’s impact fees and water/sewer connection fees, four years of ad valorem tax incentives and tangible personal property tax on the increase in valuation, and expedited permit review.

No single incentive program exists that creates the largest impact in location decisions across every industry in every community, and this is largely because of the diverse list of variables that contribute to location decisions. This list includes but is not limited to:

- Project costs (real estate, machinery and equipment, infrastructure improvements),
- Ongoing costs (utilities, workforce, transportation of supply and product), and
- The unique tax portfolio of the location, affected by both state and local tax laws.

This section reviews advantages and disadvantages of the

Business Incentive Ordinance through the lens of economic development best practices and references varied approaches used in other communities in Florida. It also includes how a comprehensive understanding of Florida incentive tools can begin to build a comprehensive package to affect both initial and ongoing costs that factor into location decisions. Lastly, recommendations related to increased use and improvement of the efficacy of the Business Incentive Ordinance are shared.

### OVERVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Site selection is a highly competitive process, resulting in states keeping close tabs on each others’ incentive programs. This trickles down to local economic development entities monitoring the competitiveness of their programs and tools, as both local and state incentives factor heavily into the site selection process. There are also many organizations based on evaluating the effectiveness of tax policy and “watchgroups” that monitor incentive programs (mostly at the state level). Watchgroups often have the mission of ensuring transparency of incentive programs and shining a light on any misuse of taxpayer dollars. All of this contributes to a robust catalog of research that highlights common features of economic development incentives and approaches generally accepted as best practices.

According to the International Economic Development Council, common themes found in economic development incentives include the following principles:

- Job creation is paramount, but consideration should be given to “high-paying” jobs.
- Job creation in recession resilient industries.
- Improving community amenities and industry mix.
- Incentives should have a clear goal with a transparent policy to measure outcomes.
- An economic development incentive policy needs to be specific enough to establish clear boundaries but not overly restrictive in order to allow for flexibility and discretion to ensure that the policy serves the best interest of a jurisdiction.



The [Government Finance Officers Association](#) offers that an economic development incentive policy should contain the following elements:

- Clear goals and measurable objectives to provide framework and accountability.
- Specific parameters for eligibility and award distribution, including project types, minimum requirements for capital investment, job creation and job quality, maximum awards, time limits, and clawback provisions.
- A clearly defined evaluation process to promote consistency and transparency with the distribution of public resources. Evaluation activities and factors typically include: scoring a proposal against defined criteria, impact analysis (tax base and community benefits), and a “but for” determination.

#### ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES

Most importantly, the St. Johns County leadership took careful thought to create the Business Incentive Ordinance. While an exact number is not readily available, there are countless counties across the country that do not have an incentive policy or program. Because of the various tax revenue streams a county can oversee, coupled with varied additional tools that may or may not include utilities and transportation infrastructure, a county has significant ability to affect the net present value (NPV) of an attraction or expansion project, which is the single largest factor in most location decisions. St. Johns County has placed itself in an advantageous position by adoption of this ordinance. It also has over 15 years of project activity to assess use and economic impact.

Additional strengths of the Business Incentive Ordinance include:

- The option to submit speculative development for the incentive is less common, and a much-needed feature, as most communities do not have a robust offering of speculative options across use cases and size in their real estate program.
- An award is calculated in such a way that an applicant can calculate NPV of the tool into its cost analysis of the real estate location and the community overall.
- Targeted industries are identified as a requirement, which aids in public support for the program and, if properly deployed, can advance investment in those targeted industries through attraction and expansion projects.
- There is a clear scoring matrix that places weight on important factors, including capital investment, job creation (number of jobs), and job quality (wages). Larger awards go to projects that have a larger impact on the community, and projects that do not meet minimum standards will eliminate themselves from receiving an award.



In its current format, there are some disadvantages to the Business Incentive Ordinance.

- Tying the award amount to new construction may result in quality projects being scored lower. It can also discourage companies from repurposing and upgrading existing buildings, which can lead to a degeneration of quality and increase in blight over time.
- The expedited permitting process is not specified. Expedited permitting processes are quickly catching on across the country, and the communities that have the most success with these tools are able to commit to an expedited process with a timeline that the business can calculate into the project costs. For example, if a community can commit to completing the permitting process in six months instead of nine months, the company can place a value on the three months saved, resulting in quicker occupancy of the building and production of the good/service.
- There is unclear language related to how new machinery and equipment purchases are calculated into the scoring system for both attraction and expansion projects.
- Marketing of the program is insufficient. Site selectors and companies are seeking easy-to-find resources about any and all incentives. The site selector profession is very familiar with the state-level tax climate and incentives in Florida, and they know well that many counties in Florida offer a grant related to ad valorem tax. The current area on the County's website for economic development has a page for "Incentive Programs" and references the ordinance, but the ordinance itself is not available, and no details of the program are available on the website. It is common for an economic development entity's website to have the goal of converting visitors into making contact with staff, and a void of any information is likely to have the opposite effect, especially for companies that are highly mindful of confidentiality. This consideration is especially important when the economic development entity is a public office and susceptible to information requests from the public. Additionally, the company or consultant may be in early stages of the project and only doing "desktop research," and communities with less information available about their programs are at risk of being eliminated when compared to other communities with incentives that have more information available.

## OTHER COUNTY-LEVEL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS IN FLORIDA

Several challenges exist when finding comparable programs in other counties in Florida, as each county will have slightly-to-dramatically different program goals, industry mix, and political climate. What follows are a few counties with programs with features that are worth considering as St. Johns County continues its evaluation of the Business Incentive Ordinance.

- St. Lucie County offers 100% exemption on the assessed value on tangible and personal property (including added value) and impact fees through the Ad Valorem Tax Exemption Program and the Impact Fee Mitigation Program. They also have a Job Growth Investment Grant which appears to have an impact of up to \$1,500,000 on a single project, based on fund availability.
- Collier County offers two distinct incentives, the Basic Industry Growth Promotion Incentive and the Advanced Long-Term Productivity Strategy, giving the community two different ways to seek out and incentivize projects based on short-term and long-term impact to the community. Applications are available directly from the website.
- Sarasota County Economic Development offers a rapid permitting program, ad valorem tax exemption, a mobility fee mitigation program, and a special meeting incentive to attract conferences.
- Putnam County has a very detailed incentives page with multiple featured tools, including Opportunity Zone, Industrial Development Revenue Bonds (IDBs), a Foreign Trade Zone, and a discretionary economic development fund designed to provide a cash incentive to high-value projects.

## Recommendations

It is important to emphasize that the existing Business Incentive Ordinance is an asset to the region and in its current format, has many strengths. Its existence alone is a positive, as many other counties in Florida and the rest of the country do not have a defined incentive program that affects the NPV of an attraction or expansion project. The following recommendations are structured to increase visibility, review and clarify parameters, and improve transparency for businesses and taxpayers.

### INCREASE VISIBILITY

The Business Incentive Ordinance is currently difficult to find on the website, and very few details are available. Most economic development organizations strive to find a balance between providing information and encouraging a company to reach out to make a deeper connection and pull in additional resources to support the project. [Putnam County](#) is a strong example of providing meaningful, accessible information related to incentive programs while encouraging contact with the economic development team.

- Revamp the economic development page on the County website to better highlight the availability of the Business Development Ordinance. The revamp should include additional details, like eligible industries, award terms, and steps in the approval process.
- Include a one-page marketing brochure that highlights details of the program with contact information for individuals to download. This brochure may also be helpful when responding to RFPs.
- Create additional marketing materials to facilitate ease of application and encourage applications. A nicely designed document that provides deeper, more specific details about the program and process can be provided to a company or site selector after having an appointment with County staff.
- Work with regional and state partners to make sure they are aware of the program and its components and can promote the tool appropriately on their websites and in their communications.
- Develop a communications and outreach strategy that helps existing business, attraction prospects, and site selectors know about the program.





## REVIEW & CLARIFY PARAMETERS

The Business Incentive Ordinance includes explicit scoring parameters, which is helpful to ensure important factors are considered and impact in the community is considered. It also can be limiting if the parameters need to be adjusted based on how well the program is attracting desired applicants and how meaningful the assistance is for desired projects and community impact.

- Review current scoring parameters and award tiers and determine how explicit they need to be in any upcoming changes to the ordinance. Consider leaving some ambiguity to allow for real-time changes to increase competitiveness or correct an unintended consequence. A possible solution would be to have ambiguity in the ordinance that includes defined award tiers and a scoring matrix (and future changes) to be presented to the County Board for review and approval. This would retain transparency and oversight while allowing for flexibility. This would also prevent companies from reviewing the scoring matrix too early in the process and getting discouraged from advancing interests in the community.
- Consider adding additional award amounts and weighing different projects with a research and development (R&D) component. These are very meaningful projects with quality job creation and the ability to assist with deepening the presence of desired clusters. R&D projects do not always have significant needs for new construction or immediate job creation numbers that are considered significant, and they would score lower in the current scoring matrix, which is likely an unintended consequence.
- Eliminate or downplay the significance of new construction when determining the award amount. This has the unintended consequence of communicating that projects without new construction are not desired, and great projects using existing space or a vacant building would receive a reward of lower impact to the project, which can hurt competitiveness and inadvertently encourage the project to pick a different location outside of the county.
- Develop more clarity and structure around the “expedited review process.” Consider creating and adopting a structured program to show a company how the process would be handled by the staff. This would make it easier for companies to calculate value and cost savings, and it would increase confidence in the County’s ability to deliver on this valuable offer. An example of this in action is the [City of Colorado Springs’ Rapid Response Team](#).



## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO SCORING PROJECTS

- Determine the importance of a project's targeted industry status when receiving an incentive. This research and strategic planning exercise has identified a large, robust list of targeted industries for St. Johns County. There are countless other industries that are not on the targeted industries list that still could be a great fit for St. Johns County based on job creation, job quality, and impact to the tax base. Does leadership want to potentially exclude those projects from receiving a higher-value award from this program? A quality project will have strong job creation and job quality factors capture in other areas of scoring, regardless of targeted industry status.
- Reassess the scoring categories for square footage of new construction. The highest category is for projects of 20,000 SF or greater, which is a very low threshold and not reflective of many of the larger projects selecting locations across the country. Consider the following tiers for a starting point, to be further reviewed and refined after completing the real estate inventory review recommended in the strategic framework.
  - Tier 1: 20,000 SF or less
  - Tier 2: 20,001 SF to 100,000
  - Tier 3: 100,001 SF to 250,000
  - Tier 4: 250,001 SF or greater
- Require applicants to clearly show total capital investment with further breakdown that includes real estate investment, what is real estate lease, and what is machinery and equipment. Total capital investment, less real estate lease, can then be added to scoring matrix.
- Consider adding the following additional categories to the matrix:
  - Impact on property valuation
  - Years in business
  - Time required to reach job creation or construction milestones
  - Length of commitment to retain jobs in the area (number of years)
  - Research and development (R&D) component of a project

## IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY

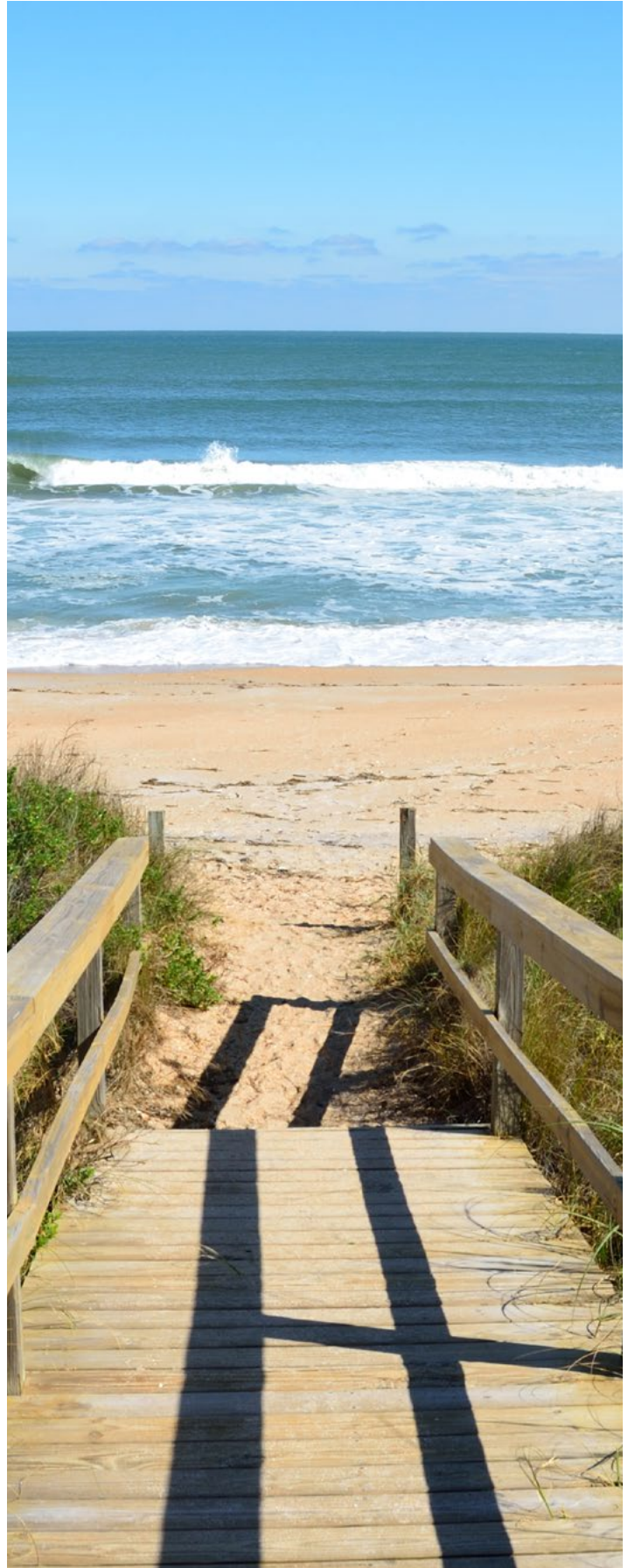
Many communities have some sort of “watchdog” group that is skeptical about how public dollars are used. Economic development incentive programs are often some of the most criticized uses, as many people do not understand the competitive nature of location decisions for businesses and the importance of leveraging public resources to encourage needed, beneficial investment in the community to create quality jobs and enhance the tax base.

- The recommendations about improving the provision of information on the website would also aid in helping additional groups understand the tool, its goals, and its importance.
- Leverage an impact analysis during the application process. Staff can run scenarios through a program like IMPLAN or a customized model with a consultant or educational institution to quantify impact on the tax base through various direct and indirect components of the project (construction, incremental tax increase, paychecks being spent in the community, etc.). This creates a compelling impact narrative to accompany each application and to share with the public.
- Require staff to provide an annual report of the program, including updated impact analysis. This helps with ongoing education of the program and its impact for residents, business, and elected officials. This annual report could be made available on the website. Exercise caution to protect any confidential details or a company or its project, as this would discourage applicants.
- Include press releases or announcements when a company successfully receives approval for an award from the program. These will likely be great companies that anyone would be proud to have in their community. Leverage language that talks about the impact in the community.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic development best practices and TPMA's research revealed additional recommendations related to community competitiveness and incentive programs that are not tied to the structure and impact of the Business Incentive Ordinance.

- Develop a site readiness program in St. Johns County. Site readiness programs exist across the country, and some states have adopted state-level programs. Florida is at a disadvantage for not having a state-level program, but some counties in Florida have created their own site readiness programs, such as [Pasco County](#).
- Promote the [PACE program](#) for commercial and industrial development. Most of St. John County is eligible for the PACE program, but it isn't currently being marketed or positioned as a tool or resource.
- Promote the availability of Opportunity Zones in the county.
- Review recent competitive projects that did not select St. Johns County, including visiting with the state and JAXUSA about the projects they have participated in recently. This exercise would help the county better understand disadvantages or barriers contributing to projects not selecting St. Johns County.
- Consider hosting one or more site selectors for a familiarization experience, or partner with JAXUSA to better showcase elements of St. Johns County when they are hosting a regional familiarization experience. This would build relationships with key influencers in attraction projects and provide specific insights into the competitive situation of St. Johns County. Consider sharing a "mock RFP" response to the site selector(s) and take staff and partners through a critique of what is and is not working from a competitiveness perspective.





# Land Development Code Review and Recommendations

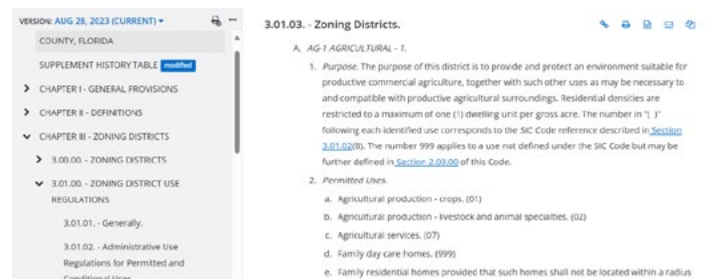
The County's Board of Commissioners, pursuant to the Florida Constitution and the State's enabling legislation, is granted the authority to establish the standards, regulations and procedures for review and approval of all proposed development of property in unincorporated St. Johns County. The County's Land Development Code (LDC) serves this purpose and provides a Development Review Process intended to implement the goals, objectives, and policies of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The St. Johns County Land Development Code is available to review in PDF format online on the County's website, and the County provides online mapping applications that allows property owners and prospective businesses the ability to track ongoing development activity and review the existing zoning and future land use map. The County also has a Planning and Zoning Division that is tasked with reviewing all land use applications for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, and Ponte Vedra Zoning District Regulations. The Planning and Zoning Division is also responsible for preparing and maintaining the County's Comprehensive Plan.

The County's Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan role in shaping the development of land in unincorporated St. Johns County necessitates a review to provide recommendations intended to attract and retain new businesses and employers as a part of the overall strategy for this Economic Development Strategic Master Plan. Upon review of the County's online resources related to land development regulations, there are certain recommendations that follow:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Digitize Land Development Code

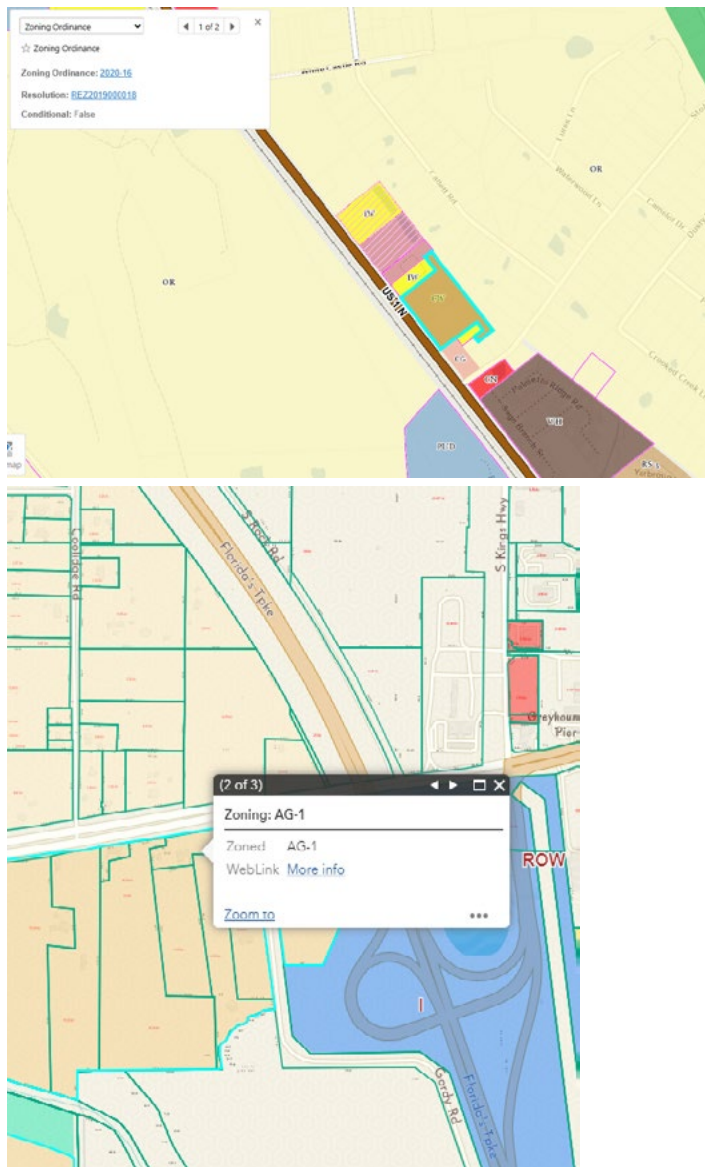
The current Land Development Code is available online on the St. Johns County website in PDF format. The document consists of twelve articles and seven appendices and is 789 pages long. While a user can search within the document, this format can feel daunting to an individual property owner or prospective business to understand how they can develop their property or what their business is allowed to do on the property. Most jurisdictions today utilize online websites such as *Municode* or *eCode* to provide a digitized version of the land development code. This online format is much more user friendly and allows users to be able to instantly search for the sections of the code relevant to what they would like to do with their property. Additionally, links can be provided for instances when the LDC cross references other sections of the code. The digital format also provides jurisdictions the ability to easily link sections of the code with their online mapping applications, further enhancing the user experience. In this online format, it may be helpful to property owners and potential business owners to have bulk/area standards and the table of allowable and special uses included as attachments that can be viewed more easily rather than having online embedded in the LDC.



## Improve the Usability of Online Mapping Applications

Related to the prior recommendation, the County can take steps to improve its online mapping applications that can improve the overall readability and usability in conjunction with the Land Development Code. Recommended changes include:

- Providing links to sections of the Land Development Code that regulate specific parcels. Currently, the County's online mapping application allows users to see the adopted ordinance that amended the zoning, but a more usable link would be to the current standards regulating a specific parcel – preferably in a digitized, online version of the code. Below are examples showing what the current map application shows versus a best practice by a different jurisdiction.



- Additionally, the map application should provide general property information about parcels. A user should be able to click on the parcel in question and be able to get information such as lot size, ownership, and be provided a link to access the property tax card. Currently, the user of the County's online map can only obtain the property's address when clicking on it.



The intention of these recommendations is to have the County's online mapping application as a one-stop-shop for users to be able to gather information about a property such as lot size, ownership, currently value, and how the property is allowed to be used based on the LDC.



### **Develop an Updated Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Plan**

The County's current comprehensive plan, the 2025 Comprehensive Plan and Future Plan Use Plan, was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2010. Florida statute requires jurisdictions to evaluate their comprehensive plan every seven years to determine if an update is necessary. While the 2025 Comprehensive Plan has been amended since its adoption, the County has not performed a full update to its comprehensive plan. Given the County's growth since the current comprehensive plan was adopted, it is recommended that the County update its comprehensive plan and future land use map. St. John's County is already taking actions on this front as the Board of County Commissioners approved a motion on March 21, 2023, to hire a consultant to update the plan. A consultant has since been selected through the RFP process, and the update is projected to be completed in 2025.

### **Amend Land Development Code to Attract In-Demand Uses and Industries**

The LDC regulates the several types of allowable and special uses in St. Johns County. While the County frequently amends and updates the code to address new and distinct types of uses, there are additional changes that can be made to attract and clarify the types of uses that the County would like to see located in the area. The intention of the recommendation is to provide clarity to prospective businesses and to signal to those industries that areas of St. Johns County are appropriate for siting. Focus should be paid to Article XII Definitions which is intended to define the uses and other important parameters of the code. Updating this article of the code to define newer types of uses will provide clarity and avoid any grey area of interpretation for new industries. In concurrence with the updates to Article XII, Article II Zoning Districts & Special Uses will need to be updated to reflect which zones in the County these new uses are appropriate. Together, these changes will signal to potential industries that St. Johns County is looking to attract their business and is an appropriate area for new locations.





# Target Industry Analysis

Identifying target industries is an important part of effective and impactful economic development. By identifying the key competitive strengths in SJC and focusing their economic development on the industries that best match those strengths, SJC can most effectively grow the economic base of their county.

This analysis focuses on industry clusters, industries that are related by knowledge, skills, inputs, and demand.<sup>3</sup> These targeted industry clusters were identified through an iterative process, utilizing quantitative data, as well as stakeholder feedback to ensure that the opportunities aligned with SJC's existing assets and desired community character. Notably, the Agriculture cluster, an important heritage industry in SJC, is missing from this list, due to low wages.

The ensuing industry list will be used to form the Corporate Outreach Strategy and maximize the effectiveness of the Business Incentive program, relative to the capacity of the Department of Economic Development. This strategic approach aims to foster sustainable economic growth while maintaining the county's desired community character.

## Methodology

For the identification of the target industries, the project team analyzed industries in St. Johns County and the State of Florida using 6-digit NAICS codes. Throughout this process, the following four considerations were used:

1. Is the industry growing in SJC and projected to grow, either in SJC or at the state-level?
2. Does the industry have some presence in SJC?
3. Is this a high-wage industry, providing residents with good paying jobs?
4. Does the industry qualify based on the guidelines established by the Florida Legislature in Florida House Bill 5 (2023)?

After the initial screening of industries, based on the above characteristics, they were then agglomerated into industry clusters. These industry clusters were then ranked and SJC's target clusters were selected through a combination of:

1. Cluster ranking
2. Alignment with SJC's vision and community character
3. Opportunities for reshoring

For each selected cluster, information on the six-digit industries that support the growth of the cluster is provided. For the purposes of the Business Incentive Program, the two-digit NAICS codes are also provided. Because the clusters are formed at the six-digit level, there may be overlap at the two-digit level.

<sup>3</sup> Defining Clusters of Related Industries. Delgado, M., Porter, M. and Stern, S. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 20375.



# Top Industry Target

## CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS (551)

Relying on the extensive stakeholder engagement conducted as part of the strategic planning process, it's apparent that attracting corporate headquarters to St. Johns County is a high priority for community leaders. As such, the top recommendation for the county is to focus its efforts on attracting corporate headquarters within the targeted industries presented below. As an industry classification, the 551 NAICS code is defined as the Management of Companies and Enterprises. Defined further by the U.S. Census Bureau, the industry at the 3-digit NAICS level of 551 "comprises establishments that hold the securities of companies and enterprises for the purpose of owning a controlling interest of influencing management decisions or establishments that administer, oversee, and manage establishments of the company or enterprise that normally undertake the strategic or organizational planning and decision-making role of the company or enterprise."

Looking at a more granular level, the 5-digit NAICS code 551114 identifies Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices. Similar to the description at the 3-digit level, this industry classification is defined as "establishments primarily engaged in administering, overseeing, and managing other establishments of the company or enterprise." Some illustrative examples provided by the NAICS Association include centralized administrative offices, head offices, corporate offices, and subsidiary management offices.

Table 1: Employment in the Corporate Headquarters cluster, 2017 to 2027.<sup>4</sup>

NAICS	Description	2017 Jobs, SJC	2022 Jobs, SJC	2027 Jobs, SJC	2017 Jobs, FL	2022 Jobs, FL	2027 Jobs, FL
551111	Offices of Bank Holding Companies	<10	<10	<10	339	430	453
551112	Offices of Other Holding Companies	41	39	36	4,794	6,604	7,951
551114	Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	396	268	237	98,485	119,231	134,240
<b>Total</b>		<b>446</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>103,619</b>	<b>126,265</b>	<b>142,644</b>
			🟡 -29%	🟡 -11%		🟢 22%	🟢 13%

Source: Lightcast 2023.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Job counts less than 10 have been assumed to be equal to 9, for the purposes of calculating total employment and percent change.

**Table 2: Average earnings per job in the Corporate Headquarters cluster, 2022.**

NAICS	Description	Avg. Earnings Per Job, SJC	Avg. Earnings Per Job, FL
551111	Offices of Bank Holding Companies	Insf. Data	\$176,169
551112	Offices of Other Holding Companies	\$648,299	\$206,048
551114	Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	\$174,871	\$152,536
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>\$228,363</b>	<b>\$155,415</b>

Source: Lightcast 2023.4

St. Johns County has many assets and strengths that could make it a desirable location for corporate decision makers. The regulatory environment, friendly tax rates, educated population, and strategic location are just a few of those strengths. Proximity to the Jacksonville MSA, which already boasts a concentration of headquarters and business support businesses, is also attractive. These assets and strengths are presented in more detail in the Corporate Outreach Strategy section of this plan.





## Target Industries

### AEROSPACE, TRANSPORTATION, & LOGISTICS (332, 334, 336, 423, 481, 484, 488)

NAICS	Description
332722	Bolt, Nut, Screw, Rivet, and Washer Manufacturing
334511	Search, Detection, Navigation, Guidance, Aeronautical, and Nautical System and Instrument Manufacturing
336411	Aircraft Manufacturing
336412	Aircraft Engine and Engine Parts Manufacturing
336413	Other Aircraft Parts and Auxiliary Equipment Manufacturing
423610	Electrical Apparatus and Equipment, Wiring Supplies, and Related Equipment Merchant
481111	Scheduled Passenger Air Transportation
484121	General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload
488111	Air Traffic Control
488510	Freight Transportation Arrangement
488190	Other Support Activities for Air Transportation (includes Aircraft Maintenance)

The Aerospace, Transportation, & Logistics cluster consists of aircraft manufacturing industries and their support industries, as well as industries focused on the movement of goods and people. While these support industries may not currently be substantial employers in the county, growing these industries can help secure the supply chain of this cluster and further bolster the growth of the cluster.

SJC has a longstanding tradition in this cluster, being home to Northrop Grumman since the 1980s. Despite its long history in the region, the cluster continues to grow, with an estimated 151% gain in employment in the last five years. While projected growth is unavailable locally due to data suppression, with the renewed focus on reshoring in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, this cluster is likely to continue growing. With its easy access to air, ground, and maritime transit, SJC provides a well-connected network to meet the demands of the global marketplace.





Table 3: Employment in the Aerospace, Transportation, & Logistics cluster, 2017 to 2027.

NAICS	Description	2017 Jobs, SJC	2022 Jobs, SJC	2027 Jobs, SJC	2017 Jobs, FL	2022 Jobs, FL	2027 Jobs, FL
332722	Bolt, Nut, Screw, Rivet, and Washer Manufacturing	<10	<10	11	78	96	133
334511	Search, Detection, Navigation, Guidance, Aeronautical, and Nautical System and Instrument Manufacturing	0	<10	<10	9,848	11,694	12,093
336411	Aircraft Manufacturing <sup>5</sup>	559	1,459	-	5,221	5,913	6,825
336412	Aircraft Engine and Engine Parts Manufacturing	0	0	0	4,655	5,410	5,980
336413	Other Aircraft Parts and Auxiliary Equipment Manufacturing	<10	0	0	4,018	4,421	4,970
423610	Electrical Apparatus and Equipment, Wiring Supplies, and Related Equipment Merchant	27	49	58	10,067	12,904	13,505
481111	Scheduled Passenger Air Transportation	0	49	78	34,930	44,119	50,014
484121	General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload	52	212	269	20,521	26,796	30,076
488111	Air Traffic Control	0	19	26	288	198	233
488510	Freight Transportation Arrangement	84	129	154	18,984	24,904	27,697
488190	Other Support Activities for Air Transportation	42	28	16	13,487	16,652	17,886
<b>Total</b>		<b>783</b>	<b>1,963</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>122,095</b>	<b>153,107</b>	<b>169,412</b>
			📈 151%			📈 25%	📈 11%

Source: Lightcast 2023.4

5 Due to data suppression, aircraft manufacturing projections have been excluded.

Earnings vary across the industries within the cluster, ranging locally from \$53,000 to \$159,000, with an average earnings per job of \$125,000. Educational requirements for occupations within this cluster vary, from a high school diploma to a four-year college degree, providing valuable employment opportunities for all SJC residents.

**Table 4: Average earnings per job in the Aerospace, Transportation, & Logistics, 2022.**

NAICS	Description	Avg. Earnings Per Job, SJC	Avg. Earnings Per Job, FL
332722	Bolt, Nut, Screw, Rivet, and Washer Manufacturing	Insf. Data	\$86,157
334511	Search, Detection, Navigation, Guidance, Aeronautical, and Nautical System and Instrument Manufacturing	Insf. Data	\$133,273
336411	Aircraft Manufacturing	\$133,950	\$117,585
336412	Aircraft Engine and Engine Parts Manufacturing	-	\$122,218
336413	Other Aircraft Parts and Auxiliary Equipment Manufacturing	-	\$100,551
423610	Electrical Apparatus and Equipment, Wiring Supplies, and Related Equipment Merchant	\$135,812	\$110,675
481111	Scheduled Passenger Air Transportation	\$145,984	\$115,662
484121	General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload	\$53,316	\$66,589
488111	Air Traffic Control	\$79,304	\$108,142
488510	Freight Transportation Arrangement	\$159,551	\$85,438
488190	Other Support Activities for Air Transportation	\$98,146	\$85,208
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>\$125,010</b>	<b>\$99,612</b>

Source: Lightcast 2023.4



## BIOSCIENCES (325, 339, 541)

NAICS	Description
325412	Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing
325413	In-Vitro Diagnostic Substance Manufacturing
339113	Surgical Appliance and Supplies Manufacturing
541714	Research and Development in Biotechnology (except Nanobiotechnology)
541715	Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology)

The Biosciences cluster includes a diverse array of scientific disciplines, which range from pharmaceuticals to life sciences, excluding healthcare. This cluster plays a pivotal role in advancing cutting-edge scientific inquiry.

Currently, 72% of active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) manufacturers are located overseas.<sup>6</sup> Highlighted by global disruptions, geopolitical conflicts, and weather events, this cluster presents opportunities for reshoring, with the Department of Health and Human services investing \$40 million to expand the role of biomanufacturing for APIs and antibiotics.<sup>7</sup>

Over the past five years, this cluster has seen rapid growth in SJC, growing from less than 50 jobs to over 400 jobs. As an innovative and rapidly changing field, it's unsurprising that this cluster is projected to continue growing locally. Further, this cluster had a 42% growth statewide. While the statewide gains are expected to be more modest in the future, a substantial amount of growth is still expected (more than 10%).



<sup>6</sup> "Safeguarding Pharmaceutical Supply Chains in a Global Economy." Dr. Janet Woodcock. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/congressional-testimony/safeguarding-pharmaceutical-supply-chains-global-economy-10302019>

<sup>7</sup> "Fact Sheet: HHS Takes Action on Executive Order Launching

Table 5: Employment in the Biosciences cluster, 2017 to 2027.

NAICS	Description	2017 Jobs, SJC	2022 Jobs, SJC	2027 Jobs, SJC	2017 Jobs, FL	2022 Jobs, FL	2027 Jobs, FL
325412	Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing	<10	17	20	4,974	8,685	10,017
325413	In-Vitro Diagnostic Substance Manufacturing	0	<10	12	75	619	789
339113	Surgical Appliance and Supplies Manufacturing	<10	147	219	4,918	5,550	5,811
541714	Research and Development in Biotechnology (except Nanobiotechnology)	<10	198	297	3,053	4,784	5,812
541715	Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology)	17	41	55	13,401	17,955	19,678
<b>Total</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>26,421</b>	<b>37,593</b>	<b>42,106</b>
			▲ 828%	▲ 46%		▲ 42%	▲ 12%

Source: Lightcast 2023.4

With its highly educated population and established foothold in the industry, SJC is well-positioned to take advantage of the growth of this high-wage cluster.

Table 6: Average earnings per job in the Biosciences cluster, 2022.

NAICS	Description	Avg. Earnings Per Job, SJC	Avg. Earnings Per Job, FL
325412	Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing	\$250,451	\$109,936
325413	In-Vitro Diagnostic Substance Manufacturing	Insf. Data	\$125,334
339113	Surgical Appliance and Supplies Manufacturing	\$253,271	\$98,675
541714	Research and Development in Biotechnology (except Nanobiotechnology)	\$156,561	\$175,808
541715	Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology)	\$204,717	\$145,536
<b>WEIGHTED AVERAGE</b>		<b>\$196,210</b>	<b>\$133,913</b>

Source: Lightcast 2023.4

a National Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative." U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2022/09/14/fact-sheet-hhs-takes-action-executive-order-launching-national-biotechnology-biomanufacturing-initiative.html>



## BUSINESS SERVICES (541)

NAICS	Description
541330	Engineering Services
541614	Process, Physical Distribution, and Logistics Consulting Services
541690	Other Scientific and Technical Consulting Services

The Business Services cluster provides consulting and engineering services to support other businesses within the County.

This is a fast-growing cluster, with employment projected to grow by 25% between 2022 and 2027.

Table 7: Employment in the Business Services cluster, 2017 to 2027.

NAICS	Description	2017 Jobs, SJC	2022 Jobs, SJC	2027 Jobs, SJC	2017 Jobs, FL	2022 Jobs, FL	2027 Jobs, FL
541330	Engineering Services	130	360	479	58,921	70,266	76,036
541614	Process, Physical Distribution, and Logistics Consulting Services	94	254	317	8,131	10,254	11,404
541690	Other Scientific and Technical Consulting Services	163	189	209	14,074	15,991	18,190
<b>Total</b>		<b>387</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>81,125</b>	<b>96,511</b>	<b>105,630</b>
			▲ 107%	▲ 25%		▲ 19%	▲ 9%

Source: Lightcast 2023.4

Table 8: Average earnings per job in the Business Services cluster, 2022.

NAICS	Description	Avg. Earnings Per Job, SJC	Avg. Earnings Per Job, FL
541330	Engineering Services	\$92,465	\$113,022
541614	Process, Physical Distribution, and Logistics Consulting Services	\$69,524	\$88,448
541690	Other Scientific and Technical Consulting Services	\$102,454	\$101,182
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>\$87,554</b>	<b>\$108,449</b>

Source: Lightcast 2023.4

These are high-quality job opportunities, providing SJC residents with competitive wages. Further, investing in the expansion and retention of a flourishing business services cluster will support the growth of other clusters within SJC. To qualify for incentives, businesses within this cluster must be a corporate or regional headquarters and employ at least 50 employees. This ensures that they have sufficient capacity to support the other target clusters in the region.

**DEFENSE AND HOMELAND SECURITY (325, 332, 336, 541, 928)**

NAICS	Description
325920	Explosives Manufacturing
332312	Fabricated Structural Metal Manufacturing
332922	Small Arms Ammunition Manufacturing
332993	Ammunition (except Small Arms) Manufacturing
332994	Small Arms, Ordnance, and Ordnance Accessories Manufacturing
336414	Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Manufacturing
336415	Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Propulsion Unit and Propulsion Unit Parts Manufacturing
336419	Other Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Parts and Auxiliary Equipment Manufacturing
336611	Ship Building and Repairing
336992	Military Armored Vehicle, Tank, and Tank Component Manufacturing
541715	Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology)
928110	National Security (Federal)
928120	International Affairs (Federal)

Through discussions with stakeholders, the Defense and Homeland Security cluster was identified as a priority for SJC. This cluster is a natural complement to the County's strengths, given its veteran population, proximity to Jacksonville, and relationship with Northrop Grumman.

This cluster contains a variety of industries, providing essential equipment, supplies, and technical services to support defense operations and homeland security. While this is currently a relatively small cluster, SJC can leverage its advantages, discussed above, to further grow employment opportunities.

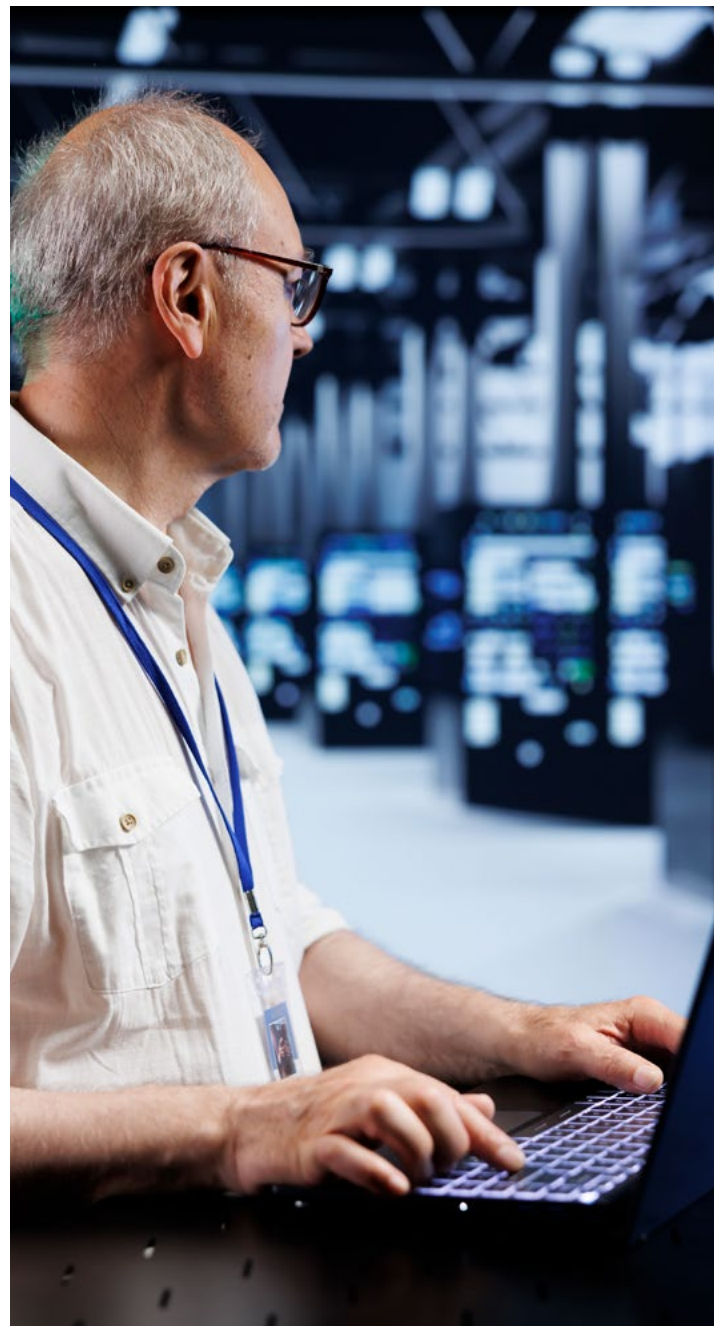


Table 9: Employment in the Defense and Homeland Security cluster, 2017 to 2027.

NAICS	Description	2017 Jobs, SJC	2022 Jobs, SJC	2027 Jobs, SJC	2017 Jobs, FL	2022 Jobs, FL	2027 Jobs, FL
325920	Explosives Manufacturing	0	0	0	751	786	799
332312	Fabricated Structural Metal Manufacturing	0	0	0	2,931	3,447	3,716
332922	Small Arms Ammunition Manufacturing	0	0	0	86	245	306
332993	Ammunition (except Small Arms) Manufacturing	0	0	0	115	27	34
332994	Small Arms, Ordnance, and Ordnance Accessories Manufacturing	<10	<10	<10	843	844	960
336414	Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Manufacturing	0	0	0	6,663	11,806	13,868
336415	Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Propulsion Unit and Propulsion Unit Parts Manufacturing	0	0	0	1,040	888	755
336419	Other Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Parts and Auxiliary Equipment Manufacturing	0	0	0	<10	1,067	1,632
336611	Ship Building and Repairing	32	83	99	4,164	4,524	4,829
336992	Military Armored Vehicle, Tank, and Tank Component Manufacturing	<10	48	56	176	345	318
541715	Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology)	17	41	55	13,401	17,955	19,678
928110	National Security (Federal) <sup>8</sup>	252	242	-	26,566	28,528	-
928120	International Affairs (Federal) <sup>9</sup>	0	2	-	1,684	1,966	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>319</b>	<b>426</b>		<b>58,430</b>	<b>72,429</b>	
			33%			24%	

Source: Lightcast 2023.4; Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages Lightcast 2023.4.

<sup>8</sup> Limited to federal ownership. From BLS; due to differences in data collection and methodology, may not be directly comparable to Lightcast estimates. Projections not available.

<sup>9</sup> Limited to federal ownership. From BLS; due to differences in data collection and methodology, may not be directly comparable to Lightcast estimates. Projections not available.

The majority of the industries in this cluster have average earnings exceeding \$75,000 per year, providing quality employment opportunities to SJC residents.

Table 10: Average earnings per job in the Business Services cluster, 2022.

NAICS	Description	Avg. Earnings Per Job, SJC	Avg. Earnings Per Job, FL
325920	Explosives Manufacturing	-	\$145,735
332312	Fabricated Structural Metal Manufacturing	-	\$77,966
332922	Small Arms Ammunition Manufacturing	-	\$54,109
332993	Ammunition (except Small Arms) Manufacturing	-	\$62,839
332994	Small Arms, Ordnance, and Ordnance Accessories Manufacturing	Insf. Data	\$75,117
336414	Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Manufacturing	-	\$163,192
336415	Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Propulsion Unit and Propulsion Unit Parts Manufacturing	-	\$164,061
336419	Other Guided Missile and Space Vehicle Parts and Auxiliary Equipment Manufacturing	-	\$149,646
336611	Ship Building and Repairing	\$80,847	\$86,474
336992	Military Armored Vehicle, Tank, and Tank Component Manufacturing	\$154,516	\$89,001
541715	Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology)	\$204,717	\$145,536
928110	National Security (Federal)	\$81,879	\$90,680
928120	International Affairs (Federal)	\$134,961	\$119,207
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>\$102,523</b>	<b>\$118,049</b>

Source: Lightcast 2023.4; Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages Lightcast 2023.4.



## FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE SERVICES (522, 523, 524)

NAICS	Description
522180	Savings Institutions and Other Depository Credit Intermediation
522220	Sales Financing
522291	Consumer Lending
522292	Real Estate Credit
522299	International, Secondary Market, and All Other Nondepository Credit Intermediation
522310	Mortgage and Nonmortgage Loan Brokers
523150	Investment Banking and Securities Intermediation
523210	Securities and Commodity Exchanges
523910	Miscellaneous Intermediation
523940	Portfolio Management and Investment Advice
523991	Trust, Fiduciary, and Custody Activities
523999	Miscellaneous Financial Investment Activities
524114	Direct Health and Medical Insurance Carriers
524126	Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Carriers
524127	Direct Title Insurance Carriers
524128	Other Direct Insurance (except Life, Health, and Medical) Carriers
524291	Claims Adjusting

This cluster contains businesses involved in the growth and management of assets. These establishments include banks, lending institutions, investment companies, and financial intermediaries, creating an interconnected financial ecosystem.

With over 250 establishments already located in SJC, the industry can only benefit from continued agglomeration and growth. To maximize the return on investment by the County, as a well-established cluster, businesses within this cluster seeking incentives must be either a corporate or regional headquarters and have at least 30 employees.

Florida, with their favorable tax climate and business-friendly legislation, is primed for the attraction of businesses in this cluster. Further, the state is already home to the U.S. headquarters for 15 global banks, making others more apt to choose the state as their headquarters.

The cluster has had significant growth in the last five years, growing by 76% locally. Growth is expected to remain strong in the future, with employment projected to grow by more than 25% locally, and 10% statewide (see Table 11). The continued growth of this cluster will contribute to the economic vitality and prosperity of SJC.

Table 11: Employment in the Financial and Insurance Services cluster, 2017 to 2027.

NAICS	Description	2017 Jobs, SJC	2022 Jobs, SJC	2027 Jobs, SJC	2017 Jobs, FL	2022 Jobs, FL	2027 Jobs, FL
522180	Savings Institutions and Other Depository Credit Intermediation	0	61	85	6,729	4,007	2,973
522220	Sales Financing	<10	12	14	4,972	5,397	5,505
522291	Consumer Lending	14	21	25	4,830	4,896	5,504
522292	Real Estate Credit	133	277	387	17,460	17,082	18,136
522299	International, Secondary Market, and All Other Nondepository Credit Intermediation	16	51	62	5,993	6,442	6,694
522310	Mortgage and Nonmortgage Loan Brokers	15	67	89	6,767	9,705	11,693
523150	Investment Banking and Securities Intermediation	281	355	404	27,813	28,069	28,702
523210	Securities and Commodity Exchanges	0	<10	<10	67	315	469
523910	Miscellaneous Intermediation	12	31	31	1,996	2,770	3,123
523940	Portfolio Management and Investment Advice	327	382	458	16,647	25,447	30,768
523991	Trust, Fiduciary, and Custody Activities	<10	23	35	962	1,035	1,113
523999	Miscellaneous Financial Investment Activities	19	30	42	3,306	4,219	5,060
524114	Direct Health and Medical Insurance Carriers	<10	26	40	32,385	43,937	50,073
524126	Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Carriers	61	195	288	33,148	37,187	39,002
524127	Direct Title Insurance Carriers	23	75	105	5,742	7,012	7,838
524128	Other Direct Insurance (except Life, Health, and Medical) Carriers	<10	25	35	3,090	2,609	2,937
524291	Claims Adjusting	14	38	42	6,529	8,655	10,112
<b>Total</b>		<b>951</b>	<b>1,678</b>	<b>2,151</b>	<b>178,437</b>	<b>208,783</b>	<b>229,701</b>
			⬆️ 76%	⬆️ 28%		⬆️ 17%	⬆️ 10%

Source: Lightcast 2023.4

Further, these are high wage jobs, with the average annual earnings per job being higher than the county average. Additionally, many of the occupations within this cluster do not require higher education, providing high-quality job opportunities for those without college degrees.

**Table 12: Average earnings per job in the Financial Services cluster, 2022.**

NAICS	Description	2022 Avg. Earnings Per Job, SJC	2022 Avg. Earnings Per Job, FL
522180	Savings Institutions and Other Depository Credit Intermediation	\$94,652	\$119,471
522220	Sales Financing	\$67,237	\$99,846
522291	Consumer Lending	\$58,578	\$107,736
522292	Real Estate Credit	\$132,092	\$148,789
522299	International, Secondary Market, and All Other Nondepository Credit Intermediation	\$75,905	\$111,856
522310	Mortgage and Nonmortgage Loan Brokers	\$124,377	\$126,454
523150	Investment Banking and Securities Intermediation	\$325,545	\$284,121
523210	Securities and Commodity Exchanges	Insf. Data	\$153,761
523910	Miscellaneous Intermediation	\$132,533	\$195,967
523940	Portfolio Management and Investment Advice	\$137,863	\$233,627
523991	Trust, Fiduciary, and Custody Activities	\$157,636	\$137,774
523999	Miscellaneous Financial Investment Activities	\$96,720	\$183,899
524114	Direct Health and Medical Insurance Carriers	\$288,039	\$104,190
524126	Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Carriers	\$117,182	\$104,943
524127	Direct Title Insurance Carriers	\$103,214	\$106,036
524128	Other Direct Insurance (except Life, Health, and Medical) Carriers	\$83,060	\$92,562
524291	Claims Adjusting	\$71,709	\$98,604
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>\$165,932</b>	<b>\$152,229</b>

Source: Lightcast 2023.4

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL INSTRUMENTS (334, 513, 518, 541)

Information Technology and Analytical Instruments includes businesses in software publishing, computer programming and systems design, and data processing and hosting, as well as those focused on electronics and computer equipment manufacturing.

NAICS	Description
333242	Semiconductor Machinery Manufacturing
334118	Computer Terminal and Other Computer Peripheral Equipment Manufacturing
334413	Semiconductor and Related Device Manufacturing
334510	Electromedical and Electrotherapeutic Apparatus Manufacturing
513210	Software Publishers
518210	Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services
541511	Custom Computer Programming Services
541512	Computer Systems Design Services
541519	Other Computer Related Services

In response to supply chain shortages during the Covid-19 pandemic, electrical equipment, appliances, and components industries are looking to reshore. The semiconductor industry is of particular focus for reshoring, supported by the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022. Further, the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund awarded over \$28 million for workforce development to expand semiconductor manufacturing and chip manufacturing, which will further strengthen the talent pool for businesses looking to move to SJC.<sup>10</sup>

SJC has already established a foothold in this fast-growing industry, which is projected to continue growing over the next five years. To further build upon this success, the County should consider exploring a regional approach, working collaboratively with nearby counties to attract new business in this cluster. Moreover, continuing to grow this industry will also support the development of the Aerospace cluster, which utilizes some of these goods and services in their manufacturing processes.

<sup>10</sup> “Governor Ron DeSantis Awards More than \$28 Million to Expand Florida Semiconductor and Chip Manufacturing Industries.” Press Release. <https://www.flgov.com/2023/11/21/governor-ron-desantis-awards-more-than-28-million-to-expand-florida-semiconductor-and-chip-manufacturing-industries/>





Table 13: Employment in the Information Technology and Analytical Instruments cluster, 2017 to 2027.

NAICS	Description	2017 Jobs, SJC	2022 Jobs, SJC	2027 Jobs, SJC	2017 Jobs, FL	2022 Jobs, FL	2027 Jobs, FL
333242	Semiconductor Machinery Manufacturing	0	0	0	188	267	279
334118	Computer Terminal and Other Computer Peripheral Equipment Manufacturing	<10	50	79	630	624	792
334413	Semiconductor and Related Device Manufacturing	0	33	53	7,606	9,132	9,885
334510	Electromedical and Electrotherapeutic Apparatus Manufacturing	0	11	17	3,052	2,113	2,286
513210	Software Publishers	20	152	223	14,807	28,207	34,405
518210	Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	34	224	319	18,447	28,985	33,231
541511	Custom Computer Programming Services	261	540	731	44,999	66,933	81,980
541512	Computer Systems Design Services	258	415	548	42,115	59,513	71,819
541519	Other Computer Related Services	25	131	193	7,280	11,926	14,624
<b>Total</b>		<b>607</b>	<b>1,554</b>	<b>2,162</b>	<b>139,126</b>	<b>207,702</b>	<b>249,302</b>
			▲ 156%	▲ 39%		▲ 49%	▲ 20%

Source: Lightcast 2023.4

Table 14: Average earnings per job, 2022.

NAICS	Description	Avg. Earnings Per Job, SJC	Avg. Earnings Per Job, FL
333242	Semiconductor Machinery Manufacturing	\$0	\$90,893
334118	Computer Terminal and Other Computer Peripheral Equipment Manufacturing	\$70,419	\$99,335
334413	Semiconductor and Related Device Manufacturing	\$105,064	\$149,784
334510	Electromedical and Electrotherapeutic Apparatus Manufacturing	\$131,751	\$132,422
513210	Software Publishers	\$158,278	\$177,616
518210	Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	\$219,579	\$161,881
541511	Custom Computer Programming Services	\$131,822	\$133,919
541512	Computer Systems Design Services	\$113,256	\$134,165
541519	Other Computer Related Services	\$193,851	\$142,540
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>\$144,729</b>	<b>\$144,844</b>

Source: Lightcast 2023.4

## MARKETING, DESIGN, AND PUBLISHING (513, 541)

Marketing, Design, and Publishing includes industries ranging from book publishing to marketing and public relations services.

NAICS	Description
513130	Book Publishers
513199	All Other Publishers
519290	Web Search Portals and All Other Information Services
541420	Industrial Design Services
541490	Other Specialized Design Services
541613	Marketing Consulting Services
541810	Advertising Agencies
541820	Public Relations Agencies
541850	Outdoor Advertising
541890	Other Services Related to Advertising
541910	Marketing Research and Public Opinion Polling

All industries within the cluster have grown locally within the past five years, contributing to 119% growth in employment. While growth in this industry has been strong, much of this employment is in small businesses, with less than 10 employees. Though these are a very important part of the local economy, to maximize the economic impact and return on investment, businesses must be a corporate or regional headquarters and have at least 30 employees to be eligible for County business incentives.



Table 15: Employment in the Marketing, Design, and Publishing cluster, 2017 to 2027.

NAICS	Description	2017 Jobs, SJC	2022 Jobs, SJC	2027 Jobs, SJC	2017 Jobs, FL	2022 Jobs, FL	2027 Jobs, FL
513130	Book Publishers	<10	16	20	2,603	2,270	2,414
513199	All Other Publishers	11	33	46	1,385	2,205	2,762
519290	Web Search Portals and All Other Information Services	21	42	51	3,382	5,645	6,949
541420	Industrial Design Services	19	26	33	702	704	677
541490	Other Specialized Design Services	<10	23	31	1,413	1,608	1,772
541613	Marketing Consulting Services	235	557	741	24,073	38,335	44,813
541810	Advertising Agencies	24	59	72	8,936	11,389	12,983
541820	Public Relations Agencies	20	29	38	3,430	3,811	4,231
541850	Outdoor Advertising	<10	25	34	1,596	1,443	1,355
541890	Other Services Related to Advertising	21	25	27	8,346	7,418	7,715
541910	Marketing Research and Public Opinion Polling	13	24	28	7,450	5,562	4,786
<b>Total</b>		<b>392</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>63,316</b>	<b>80,392</b>	<b>90,457</b>
			📈 119%	📈 30%		📈 27%	📈 13%

Source: Lightcast 2023.4





While this cluster may not employ thousands of workers in the county, these industries provide high wage job opportunities for skilled workers. Growing this cluster will provide more high-wage opportunities for SJC residents, as well as provide support to the business ecosystem.

**Table 16: Average earnings per job, 2022.**

NAICS	Description	Avg. Earnings Per Job, SJC	Avg. Earnings Per Job, FL
513130	Book Publishers	\$66,408	\$105,234
513199	All Other Publishers	\$83,552	\$104,282
519290	Web Search Portals and All Other Information Services	\$73,259	\$112,013
541420	Industrial Design Services	\$69,907	\$73,314
541490	Other Specialized Design Services	\$31,970	\$66,567
541613	Marketing Consulting Services	\$98,765	\$92,518
541810	Advertising Agencies	\$90,143	\$109,824
541820	Public Relations Agencies	\$94,073	\$123,177
541850	Outdoor Advertising	\$90,404	\$95,061
541890	Other Services Related to Advertising	\$64,242	\$72,232
541910	Marketing Research and Public Opinion Polling	\$91,260	\$103,912
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>\$91,481</b>	<b>\$96,748</b>

Source: Lightcast 2023.4





# Corporate Outreach and Business Attraction Marketing Strategy

## Corporate Outreach Strategy

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this corporate outreach strategy is to provide a guide for identifying and attracting target industry companies to SJC. This corporate outreach strategy will help SJC understand its existing assets and competitive advantages. It will also identify areas for improvement to increase competitiveness and explore a variety of ways for the county to deliberately attract business in targeted industries. This section will also provide an overview of the site selection process.

### OBJECTIVES

- Help county leaders understand the top location factors for site selection consultants and corporate decision makers
- Evaluate and identify marketable assets in St. Johns County
- Evaluate and identify areas for improvement for St. Johns County in the context of economic development marketing
- Identify key themes and competitive advantages in each of the identified Target Industries
- Outline strategies and tactics to be included in a St. Johns County economic development corporate outreach campaign
- Outline the site selection process
- Provide an overview of business attraction marketing

### THE PROCESS

There are five key action steps to consider when developing a corporate outreach and business attraction marketing campaign according to the IEDC. Those steps include:

- Know the Product
- Know the Market
- Know the Process
- Reach the Market
- Improve the Product

Sections in this strategic plan will inform several of these key steps, including the Summary of Economic Conditions (found in Appendix A), the SWOC Analysis, the Target Industry Analysis, and the Business Ordinance and Land Ordinance Review. For the purposes of this section, the focus will be on developing a better understanding of the corporate outreach process, and ways to reach the desired target market. Before that is presented, a brief summary of St. John's 'product' and competitive advantages in each target industry market is presented below. Opportunities to 'improve the product' are also summarized, based on the findings in this report.

### ST. JOHNS COUNTY UNIQUE DIFFERENTIATORS

- Quality of Life
- Tax and Regulatory Environment
- Competitive local incentives

### GENERAL MARKETABLE STRENGTHS

- Educated population
- Tax and regulatory environment
- Concentration of business services and related industries
- Quality of life
- Competitive local incentives
- Transportation infrastructure

### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Availability of suitable, affordable, and 'ready' land and facilities
- Insurance challenges

## TARGET INDUSTRY CLUSTERS – KEY ASSETS AND KEY MESSAGING THEMES

### Corporate Headquarters (551)

#### *Competitive Advantages*

- Regulatory environment
- Tax environment
- Strategic location
- Proximity to Jacksonville MSA
- Educated population
- Quality of life

### Aerospace, Transportation, and Logistics (332, 334, 336, 423, 481, 484, 488)

#### *Competitive Advantages*

- Northrup Grumman
- Strategic Location
- Florida National Guard Headquarters
- Proximity to universities

### Biosciences (325,339,541)

#### *Competitive Advantages*

- Rapid employment growth
- Statewide growth
- Highly educated population
- Proximity to research universities

### Business Services (541,561)

#### *Competitive Advantages*

- Significant existing cluster in SJC and across the region
- Favorable tax climate and regulatory environment
- Florida already home to US Headquarters for 15 global banks

### Defense and Homeland Security (325, 332, 336, 541, 928)

#### *Competitive Advantages*

- Florida National Guard Headquarters
- Veteran population
- Northrup Grumman

### Financial and Insurance Services (522,523, 524))

#### *Competitive Advantages*

- Existing industry presence
- Existing and employment growth
- Friendly tax climate and regulatory environment
- Strategic location, proximity to Jacksonville

### Information Technology and Analytical Instruments (334,513,518,541)

#### *Competitive Advantages*

- CHIPS Act
- Florida Job Growth Fund
- Synergy with Aerospace, Defense, and Homeland Security industries

### Marketing, Design, and Publishing

#### *Competitive Advantages*

- Significant employment growth
- Proximity to universities
- Synergy with other target industries

## SITE SELECTION CONSULTANTS

### The Process

Before beginning a corporate outreach and business attraction marketing campaign, it's important for St. Johns County to understand the process. A key component of this process involves site selection consultants. According to the IEDC, site selectors are hired by firms 'to find the most appropriate site for a business from an economic and operational perspective.' As site selection consultants are often the first, and arguably the most important player in the process, it's important to understand their role in some detail. The International Economic Development Council outlines several rules to consider when working with site selection consultants. They include:

- The client's time is precious
- The site selector is looking for a business partner
- The site selector will be fair
- A community should never make commitments that can't be delivered upon

After considering these rules, it's important for SJC to understand the general site selection process. This process can vary by site selector, and by industry, but generally speaking, the process progresses as follows:

- The business and site selection consultant will determine the need.
- Based on the business need, the business and site selection consultant will determine priority factors and criteria. Common factors and criteria are outlined below.
- The site selector will conduct desktop research and gather information on potential communities and sites. This process may involve initial outreach and inquiries to economic development representatives to communities under consideration.
- Based on the key criteria outlined earlier in the process, the site selection consultant will begin to eliminate communities. This elimination process may be informed by a business's desire to invest in a particular country, region, or specific community.
- Next, the site selector, on behalf of the business client, will make a formal request for information. The typical information required is outlined in more detail below.
- If the site selector (on behalf of the client) decides to move forward with a specific community, the consultant will request a site visit. The site visit is a prime opportunity for a community to highlight its strengths and competitive advantages.
- After a site visit, if the community is being considered, a site selection consultant will typically write a letter of intent, highlighting what was discussed during the visit.
- Last, the site selection consultant will begin negotiations on behalf of the selected community. These negotiations typically include timeline, staff, and community support, permitting, incentives, and other relevant discussions to solidify the investment decision.



## Top Site Selection Location Factors

Before St. Johns County can execute a successful corporate outreach strategy, it is important for economic development leaders to understand characteristics and attributes that site selection consultants and corporate decision makers evaluate when looking at potential new sites for expansion or relocation. These location factors can differ across industries and within sectors, but a general knowledge of site selectors' priorities can inform a basic understanding of the most important elements of a corporate outreach campaign. The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) outlines the following 'Top Location Factors' as follows (in alphabetical order):

- Access (proximity) to customer and supplier markets
- Access (proximity) to, and quality of, transportation, transportation systems
- Access to business and professional services
- Availability of suitable, affordable, and 'ready' land and facilities
- Environmental condition of the land
- Business climate
- Availability and cost of financial capital
- Image of the community
- Incentives
- Labor force quality, productivity, cost, and availability
- Level of unionization
- Quality of life
- Regulations – environmental, workers compensation, zoning
- State and local government attitude towards business
- Taxes – sales, property, corporate, and personal
- Telecommunications systems; broadband availability, access, and affordability
- Utility capabilities and rates

## Requests for Information

St. Johns County should understand the types of information a site selector is looking to procure through a formal request for information. While this varies by industry and business, this list developed by the IEDC provides a general outline:

- List of sites and facilities available
- Interactive maps, with information about land-use, zoning, and infrastructure
- Up-to-date demographic, socioeconomic, industry, and workforce information and data
- Formal presentation on the strengths and competitive advantages of a community
- Information on utilities, including availability, capacity, and costs
- Workforce, training, and education support services
- Proximity to relevant services, including transportation infrastructure (including air, rail, and port), and suppliers
- Other recent economic development projects
- Information about potential competitors operating in the region
- Quality of life information, including housing availability





# Business Attraction Marketing

## AN OVERVIEW

The International Economic Development Council defines marketing as ‘the selling of a service or product through pricing, distribution, and promotion.’ While commonly understood concepts of marketing can be applied specifically to economic development marketing, it’s important for SJC economic development leaders to have a basic understanding of the key components that comprise a business attraction marketing campaign. Once again, the IEDC outlines the seven main techniques economic development organizations can employ to reach their identified target audiences.

- Advertising
- Publicity
- Promotional materials
- Direct mail
- Personal selling
- Email
- Online platforms

Before determining which mix of marketing tactics is appropriate, SJC must develop clear and consistent messaging to incorporate. SJC can use information presented in this strategic plan to develop intentional messaging that is coherent, relevant, consistent, and original.

## BUSINESS ATTRACTION MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR CONSIDERATION

For budget purposes, St. Johns County should review the following tactical approaches to business attraction marketing. Approaches have been organized into three categories: low cost-effective, medium cost-effective, and high cost-effective. Each strategy outlines several integrated tactics the St. Johns team can take to proactively market the county to site selection consultants, trade associations, and business decision makers.

### Low-Cost Effective Strategies

#### *Create Social Media Campaigns*

Develop a social media toolkit with predefined messaging to push out informative content, updates, and general information on a regular basis through various communication channels. Tactics could include utilizing LinkedIn, collaborating with local and regional media outlets, and partnering with the Chamber of Commerce to increase reach.

#### *Develop Promotional Materials*

Partner with other county and regional agencies to craft SJC’s messaging on why the county is not only a great place to do business, but also a great place to live. Tactics can include producing economic development newsletters, developing slide and video presentations, creating brochures and factbooks, and making relevant updates to county websites.

#### *Generate Regional and National Publicity*

Collaborate with appropriate partners and take full advantage of traditional press and media outlets to generate earned media and tell St. Johns County’s unique and compelling story. Tactics could include developing press kits, collaborating with elected officials on public speeches, developing press releases, and creating a public relations strategy specific to economic development.



## Medium-Cost Effective Strategies

Incorporate all of the strategies and tactics outlined in the low-cost strategy and add the following additional strategies.

### *Meet the Industry Where They Are*

It is critical to have a designated team that is responsible for consistently networking and pitching St. Johns County to industry leaders, site selection consultants, and business decision makers. Tactics could include attending trade fairs, trade shows, conducting business envoys to visit businesses within the target industries, and networking at relevant industry and economic development conferences.

### *Bring Industry to St. Johns County*

It is equally important to facilitate opportunities for site selection consultants and key industry decision makers to visit and experience St. Johns County in person. Tactics could include hosting familiarization tours with site selectors and looking for creative ways to incentivize key business attraction stakeholders to host conferences and events in St. Johns County.

## High-Cost Effective Strategies

Incorporate all of the strategies and tactics outlined in the low-cost and medium-cost strategies and add the following additional strategies.

### *Utilize Traditional Advertising*

Advertisements are an important tool to increase St. Johns County's brand visibility as it relates to the identified targeted industries. There are a number of economic development and industry specific outlets for SJC to consider, including magazines, industry directories, billboards, television and radio broadcasts, commercials, and industry journals.

### *Employ Direct Mail and Email Campaigns*

There are a number of consultants and specialists that can help SJC develop sophisticated mailing and email campaigns. This will ensure that SJC's messaging and important updates land in the hands of targeted industry cluster representatives in a coordinated and strategic manner. Tactics could include electronic newsletters, economic development announcements, links to websites for prospects, access to lead generation databases, letters, postcards, and direct mail brochures.

## RESOURCES

There are a multitude of business attraction marketing resources for St. Johns County to consider.

### ResearchFDI Investment Attraction

ResearchFDI Investment Attraction is a firm that helps communities with lead generation, strategy, training, and business intelligence solutions.

<https://researchfdi.com/>

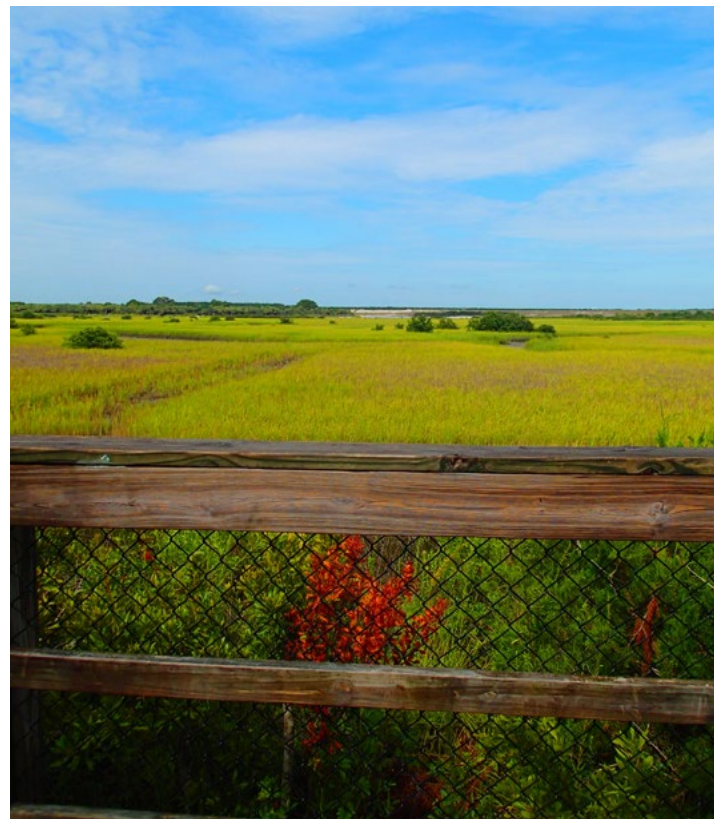
### Gazzelle

Gazzelle is a machine learning platform designed to inform economic development organizations by forecasting company growth across a multitude of industries.

<https://lightcast.io/solutions/economic-and-workforce-development/gazelle>

## NEXT STEPS

A more detailed approach to activating a business attraction marketing campaign is outlined in the Strategic Framework. Additionally, a sample of best practices and case studies are presented. A list of relevant trade associations in the presented target industries is presented in Appendix B.



# Strategic Framework

The International Economic Development Council defines economic development as a ‘program, group of policies, or set of activities that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and retaining jobs that facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base.’ For a community to be successful, best practices suggest community leaders must focus on four key strategic areas: business retention and expansion, business attraction, entrepreneurship and innovation, and quality of life. As such, the strategic framework has been organized around the key focus areas. To activate the strategies and tactics outlined in these key strategic areas, the project team recommends that St. Johns County considers creating a stand-alone, public-private economic development organization to lead economic development efforts on behalf of the county. The public-private partnership concept is outlined in more detail below.

## Top Priority Strategic Recommendation

### **CREATE A DEDICATED PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION**

#### **Rationale**

##### *SWOC Opportunities:*

- Modern Economic Development Organization
- Enhanced Entrepreneurial Support System
- Competitive Business and Development Incentives
- Additional Resources and Capacity for Economic Development

To compete in the increasingly sophisticated and globally competitive landscape of economic development, communities need modern and innovative approaches. To deliver high-quality and cutting-edge services, St. Johns County should consider creating a new, single-branded, stand-alone, public-private partnership (P3) economic development organization (EDO). Best practices suggest that this organizational structure provides numerous benefits, including the ability to procure the funding support and financial resources necessary to activate economic development at a high level. Structured as a 501c3 or 501c6, the new economic development organization will be able to generate investment from a vested and committed private sector, while also develop a professional services agreement with county and local governments that ensures performance commiserate with dedicated public funding.

A new P3 economic development organization will enable St. Johns County to provide ‘customers’ (current businesses, entrepreneurs, and prospective new businesses) with a ‘one-stop shop’ for key economic development needs. While not expected to replace or duplicate current efforts from existing economic development partners across the county and the region, this single point of entry will instill confidence that this new organization can help them solve their problems, or at least direct and connect them to the most appropriate resource providers. Additionally, this ‘one-stop shop’ will enable SJC to tell one compelling story about the economic development opportunities in the county, reducing friction and confusion for those individuals and businesses looking to learn more about the services, resources, and opportunities available in St. Johns County.

As St. Johns County considers this option, community leaders should be mindful of the characteristics that typically define ‘high-performing economic development organizations,’ as outlined by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). The IEDC, the premier trade association for economic development organizations and practitioners in the world, identifies key functionalities that every high-performing organization should focus on. Those include:

- Business Retention and Expansion: the ability to maintain and expand current business efforts within a community.
- Business Attraction and Marketing: the ability to attract businesses to relocate or conduct new business within a community.
- Entrepreneurial Development: the ability to encourage, sustain, and support local businesses entrepreneurs within a community.
- Workforce development: the ability to maintain and attract talent to meet the local workforce demands within a community.

While no two communities or economic development organizations are the same, research once again from the IEDC informs the characteristics displayed by high-performing economic development organizations. Those characteristics include:

- Customer Oriented
- Focused on Economic Resiliency
- Provide Effective Community Leadership
- Focused on Equity
- Future Ready
- Guided by Results
- Operate with a Clear Purpose and Plan
- Relationship Driven

### More About P3 Economic Development Organizations

According to the IEDC, ‘public-private partnerships are long-term shared commitments between the public and private sectors designed to pursue common goals related to social, political, and the business environment in a community.’ P3’s are commonly established as nonprofit corporations, with representation from both the public and private sectors. Board members typically include elected officials, economic development officials, executives from large employers, and small business owners. As mentioned previously, these nonprofit corporations rely on a variety of funding sources. Those sources include:

- **Public Funding:** P3 EDOs can receive funding from public sources such as federal, state, or local governments. This funding can come in the form of grants, contracts, or appropriations.
- **Private Sector Funding:** Private companies and organizations may contribute funds to support economic development initiatives that align with their business goals or community development priorities. This funding can take the form of direct contributions, in-kind contributions, or sponsorship of specific projects or programs.

- **Fundraising:** EDOs may also engage in fundraising activities to support their operations and initiatives. These efforts may include soliciting donations from private individuals or organizations, hosting fundraising events, or conducting crowdfunding campaigns.
- **Loan Programs:** Some EDOs offer loan programs to support small business growth and development. Interest and fees generated from these loans can support EDO operations.
- **Investments:** A more modern approach, some EDOs make equity investments in startup businesses. These investments help cultivate high-potential local businesses, and appreciation in these investments can be reinvested back into the EDO to support operations and strategic initiatives.

### Action Steps to Consider

#### *Form an Exploratory Committee*

St. Johns County should organize a formal (or informal) exploratory committee to explore the potential of creating a new public-private partnership economic development organization. The committee should include leaders from the private and public sectors, including representatives from large employers, small business owners, elected officials, education, and various economic development partners. The committee should analyze the feasibility of launching a new organization, focusing on the financial feasibility, capacity, personnel, leadership, and political environment required to launch a new organization at this scale. Of particular note, leaders in SJC should ensure the process is intentional, thoughtful, and transparent.



## Best Practices

### *OneRedmond*

OneRedmond is a consolidated economic development organization in Redmond, Washington. It is a Chamber of Commerce, Economic and Workforce Development organization, and Community Foundation all-in-one.

<https://oneredmond.org/>

### *Develop Abilene*

The Development Corporation of Abilene (DCOA) is a competitive, visionary, and award-winning organization committed to transforming its community by creating an environment that fosters economic growth and attracts businesses to Abilene, Texas.

<https://developabilene.com/>

### *Tampa Bay Economic Development Council*

The Tampa Bay Economic Development Council (Tampa Bay EDC) is a 501(c)6 private non-profit organization serving Hillsborough County and the cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City.

<https://tampabayedc.com/>

### *Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County*

Founded in 2000, the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting economic vitality in St. Lucie County through the attraction, retention and expansion of businesses in the community. The EDC works in partnership with local governments and the private sector to advance its goals of creating high-value, high-paying jobs for residents, broadening the tax base and improving St. Lucie County's economic quality of life.

<https://youredc.com/>

### *Wake Forest Business & Industry Partnership*

The Wake Forest Business and Industry Partnership (BIP) is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to advancing Wake Forest as a destination location for business and industries. The Wake Forest BIP, governed by a board of directors, is closely aligned with the Town of Wake Forest, with 2 of the 5 board members having direct ties to the town, one being a commissioner appointed by the town and the other being the Town Manager.

<https://www.discoverwakeforest.org/>



# Focus Area Strategic Framework

The following strategic framework was informed by a process and methodology presented earlier in this document. These strategies are intended for both a new P3 EDO or to be executed by the current St. Johns County Economic Development Department and associated partners.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1: BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Allocating resources to facilitate local business retention and expansion (BRE) opportunities should be at the core of any economic development strategy. From a cost-benefit standpoint, dedicating and deploying resources to existing businesses - those who have planted their proverbial flag in the ground - makes good financial sense. A comprehensive and sophisticated approach to BRE ensures your most committed economic development stakeholders, private businesses, are well positioned to retain and create more jobs across the county.

### Goal: Retain and Facilitate the Expansion of High Growth Businesses in St. Johns County

*Strategy 1.1: Invest resources to support a robust Business Retention and Expansion Outreach (BRE) program*

#### Rationale

- SWOC Strengths
  - Historically Strong Tourism Industry
- SWOC Weaknesses
  - Aging Workforce
  - Limited Inventory of Modern Industrial Space
  - Economic Disparities by Industry and Location
- SWOC Opportunities
  - Enhanced Entrepreneurial Support System
  - Increased Support and Resources for Agriculture
- SWOC Challenges
  - Retention of Local Essential Workers

Business Retention and Expansion Outreach (BRE) programs are critical to any economic development ecosystem for various reasons. First, successful BRE programs enable communities to maintain an up-to-date picture of the local economy. By visiting companies, and conducting business outreach surveys, economic development practitioners are in the unique position to not only assist the individual company, but derive anonymous, aggregated information to better understand market trends. This information can be used to inform policy, programs, and resources to better meet the needs of the business community.

#### Tactics

##### *Tactic 1.1.1:*

Commit funding to hire Business Outreach Specialists. Consider building a Business Outreach Team with industry knowledge well aligned with the industry mix of SJC and the targeted industry clusters in this report. Best practices indicate that for a county the size of St. Johns, three economic development team members would be appropriate. Consider hiring an Economic Development Director, a Business Outreach Specialist, and a Business Development and Attraction Specialist.

##### *Tactic 1.1.2:*

Commit funding to adopt an economic development specific Customer Relations Management (CRM) system. Use the CRM to coordinate service provision with appropriate partners and use the anonymous and aggregated information collected on business visits to inform future policies, resources, and program offerings. This investment will empower SJC to identify and track leads, enabling the county to evaluate performance and provide consistent and timely follow-up for enhanced economic development efforts.

##### *Tactic 1.1.3:*

Develop a methodology and strategy for business outreach prioritization. Consider the target industry clusters as a high priority list for business outreach visits.

##### *Tactic 1.1.4:*

Convene appropriate partners across the local and regional economic development ecosystem on a regular and consistent basis to increase communication, collaboration, and reduce potential duplication of efforts.



## Best Practices

*Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corporation, Business Survey*

The SVC EDC conducted a business survey with over 155 local companies in 2022 to assess the business climate and quality of life in the region.

<https://www.scvedc.org/blog/2022-santa-clarita-valley-business-survey>

*St. Louis Economic Development Partnership, BRE Initiative*

The BRE Initiative links St. Louis companies with government and economic development officials to ensure business owners, leaders, and entrepreneurs know who to contact regarding opportunities or challenges.

<https://stlpartnership.com/businessretentionandexpansion/>

*Arlington economic development, Arlington business appreciation month coordinated visits*

Following two years of virtual engagement with businesses during COVID, Arlington Economic Development (AED) aimed to connect companies with valuable resource partners via BRE visits during Business Appreciation Month.

<https://www.arlingtoneconomicdevelopment.com/News-Resources/Blog/Honoring-the-Business-Community-During-Business-Appreciation-Month>

## Resources

*Bluedot, Economic Development Platform*

Bluedot is a tailor-made business retention, attraction, and workforce development online platform and customer relations management tool.

<https://www.bludot.io/>

*ExecutivePulse, Economic Development Platform*

ExecutivePulse is the only Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution built by economic developers, for economic developers. The CRM's intuitive design allows users to easily create at-a-glance reports and presentations, optimize their internal and external communication, and track the progress of their initiatives.

<https://www.executivepulse.com/>



## STRATEGY 1.2: COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL PARTNERS TO CELEBRATE EXISTING BUSINESSES IN ST. JOHNS COUNTY

### Rationale

- SWOC Weaknesses
  - Economic Disparities by Industry and Location
- SWOC Opportunities
  - Enhanced Entrepreneurial Support System
  - Increased Support and Resources for Agriculture

Creating a vibrant culture is an often-overlooked component to successful economic development. Successful communities realize the importance of promoting and celebrating the entrepreneurs and innovators that make their local economy run. Economic development leaders are well-positioned to ensure that the job creators in their community feel valued, supported, and celebrated. This cultural mindset can facilitate increased commitment from the private sector, increase collaboration and coordination, and provide business owners more opportunities to flourish and thrive.

### Tactics

#### *Tactic 1.2.1:*

Partner with a local television network to feature businesses across SJC on a regular and consistent basis.

#### *Tactic 1.2.2:*

Include elected officials at business ribbon cuttings and business outreach visits, when appropriate.

#### *Tactic 1.2.3:*

Promote and publicize recent economic development projects and wins in statewide and national publications.

#### *Tactic 1.2.4:*

Consider creating a multi-channel marketing campaign to highlight local businesses, specifically those in the agriculture industry.

#### *Tactic 1.2.5:*

Consider creating a Small Business Committee to meet with County Commissioners on a monthly basis. The committee should include a diverse mix of businesses across industries, size, scale, and scope.

### Best Practices

*Tomball Economic Development Corporation, Multimedia Video Success Stories*

The Tomball Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) produced a pair of videos spotlighting local businesses as part of its “Success Stories” campaign.

<https://tomballtxedc.org/advantages/success-stories>

*Washington County Department of Business and Economic Development, Faces of Farming Video Campaign*

Faces of Farming is a video campaign aimed at educating the community on the local farms in operation and agriculture available within Washington County, Maryland.

[Washington, Maryland Faces of Farming, Beaver Creek Farm](#)





### STRATEGY 1.3: ADOPT TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS TO BETTER SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS

Economic development organizations are in a unique position to integrate technology into their service delivery to better meet the needs of the small businesses they support. There are a multitude of resources available to SJC, that will provide value added information and services to its business community, including increased access to market intelligence and information. Additionally, SJC is in a position to help small businesses learn more about technological solutions that will increase their firm's competitiveness, by creating awareness, and offering programs, resources, and training on technology solutions.

#### Tactics

##### *Tactic 1.3.1:*

Conduct a technology audit and assessment across the St. Johns County economic development ecosystem. Use this information to understand gaps in service.

##### *Tactic 1.3.2:*

Research, identify, and evaluate software programs and databases specific to small business and economic development.

##### *Tactic 1.3.3:*

Commit funding to acquiring applicable software programs and databases, ensuring no or low-cost access for businesses in the community.

##### *Tactic 1.3.4:*

Collaborate with the Small Business Development Center, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and regional universities to offer programs, resources, and training around technology adoption, integration, and utilization. SJC should take a specific focus on Industry 4.0 technologies, emergent learning technologies, and artificial intelligence.

##### *Tactic 1.3.5:*

Collaborate with the Florida Apex Accelerator to help small businesses research and bid on government contract opportunities.

#### Resources

*SizeUp, Economic Development Platform*

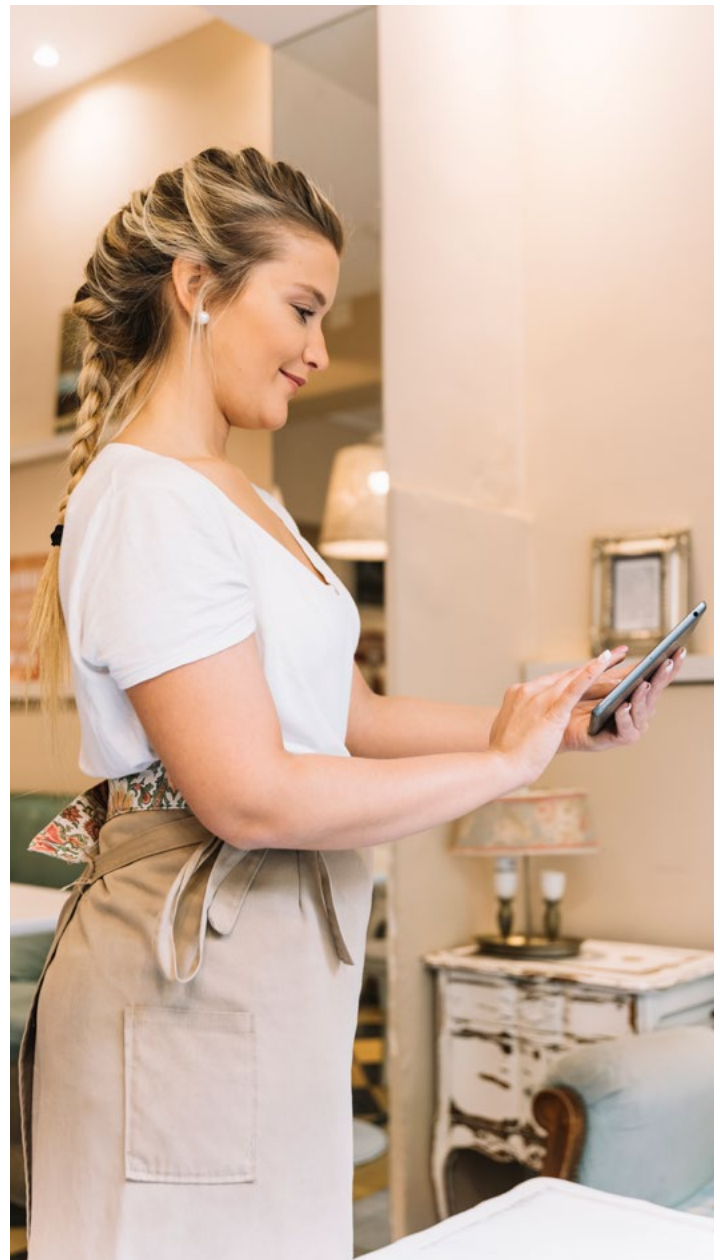
SizeUp helps private sector, government, and non-profit organizations better serve their small business customers with the market research and business intelligence they need to succeed.

<https://www.sizeup.com/>

*Florida Apex Accelerator*

The Florida APEX Accelerator (formerly the Procurement Technical Assistance Center) helps Florida-based businesses identify, compete for, and win government contracts.

<https://fptac.org/about/>



## STRATEGY 1.4: SUPPORT PRIVATE BUSINESSES WITH CLIMATE MITIGATION AND RESILIENCY PLANNING

### Rationale

- SWOC Strengths:
  - Strategic Location
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Enhanced Entrepreneurial Support System
- SWOC Challenges:
  - Climate Change

Given its geographic location, St. Johns County is susceptible to a variety of environmental risks and extreme weather events. Notably, recent hurricanes and tropical storms have cost the county millions of dollars and caused significant business disruptions. While existing businesses may be accustomed to these extreme weather events, SJC economic development leaders can provide additional support to mitigate and minimize the profound challenges facing private businesses in the midst of an extreme weather event. SJC should consider both macro level strategies and develop resources and technical assistance programs for local businesses.

### Tactics

#### *Tactic 1.4.1:*

Develop a County Crisis Communication Playbook. The playbook should inform county leaders (including economic development leaders) how to communicate effectively and efficiently with business leaders during an emergency.

#### *Tactic 1.4.2:*

Develop a Technical Assistance Ecosystem map. The ecosystem map should inform businesses of the variety of technical resources available to them during an emergency.

#### *Tactic 1.4.3:*

Collaborate with the regional Small Business Development Center and regional Manufacturing Extension Partnership on programs and resources to support businesses with contingency planning, emergency preparedness planning, risk assessment and mitigation, supply chain planning, and cybersecurity threat readiness. Consider small grant funding to support these initiatives.

### Best Practices

*Greater Memphis Chamber, Small Business Resiliency Playbook*

The Small Business Resiliency Playbook is a dynamic, multi-media platform that small businesses can access to utilize the various tools needed to survive during times of uncertainty and emergency.

<https://www.smallbusinessresiliency.com/>

*PriMEX Economic Resiliency and Business Continuity Initiative for Puerto Rico*

The Economic Resiliency and Business Continuity Initiative for Puerto Rico helps small and medium companies to enhance their capability to recover from major interruptions due to natural and man-made disasters. This project promotes the critical importance of a business continuity plan (BCP) to speed up their disaster recovery and resiliency.

<https://primexpr.org/>

### Resources

*Florida Makes, Part of the MEP National Network*

Florida Makes, as part of the MEP national network, is a unique public-private partnership that delivers comprehensive, proven solutions to manufacturing companies in the state of Florida.

<https://www.floridamakes.com/home>

## **STRATEGY 1.5: DEVELOP AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY TO ADDRESS RISING INSURANCE CHALLENGES.**

### **Rationale**

- SWOC Challenges
  - Insurance Costs

After conducting research and meeting with stakeholders, it's clear that if left unaddressed, rising insurance costs are poised to inhibit St. Johns County's ability to attract new business to the region. While typically a state and federal issue, there are things that SJC leaders can do to ensure that the insurance challenges are being appropriately addressed. By coalescing as a community and articulating the challenges in a clear and coherent manner to state elected officials, SJC will increase the likelihood that appropriate policy changes, regulations, and legislation are put forth to address the increasing insurance related challenges facing the state of Florida.

### **Tactics**

#### *Tactic 1.5.1:*

Develop specific questions on the BRE surveys to better understand the insurance challenges facing the private sector.

#### *Tactic 1.5.2:*

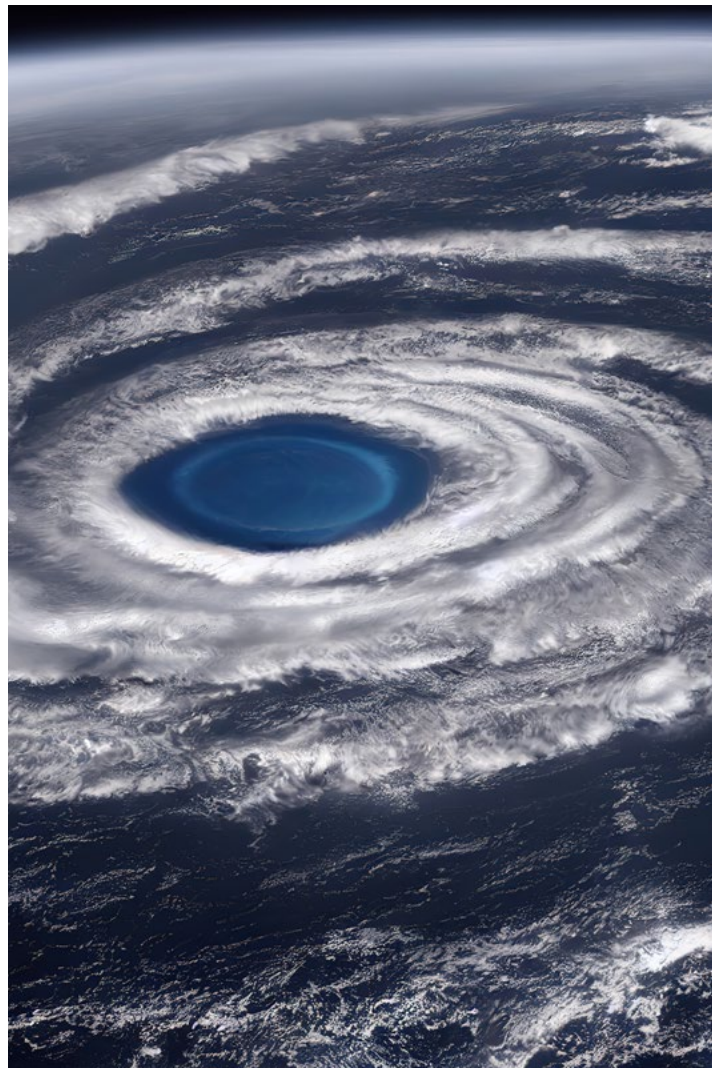
Develop a local task force to address options and opportunities to facilitate policy, legislative, and regulatory reform at the state level. Ensure coordinated and consistent communication with the local elected delegation, to ensure they are speaking with one voice when discussing the insurance cost impact on businesses in St. Johns County.

## **STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2: BUSINESS ATTRACTION**

While business retention and expansion efforts are crucial to the mission of any economic development organization, an intentional business attraction strategy should also be designed to attract businesses that can capitalize on local assets and complement the existing business environment. The attraction of new businesses to SJC will diversify the industry mix, add new jobs, and stimulate economic growth. An overreliance on any single industry can place a community in a precarious situation, an economic disruption like an extreme weather event or global pandemic, could cause a profound disruption to the local economy. With a sophisticated business attraction strategy, the county has the opportunity to attract new, growing industries to diversify the industry mix, create a more resilient economy, and ultimately a more prosperous St. Johns County.

### **Goal:**

Attract More High Growth Businesses to St. Johns County





## STRATEGY 2.1: CREATE A NETWORK OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY AMBASSADORS

### Rationale

- SWOC Strengths:
  - Educated Population
  - Favorable Tax and Regulatory Environment
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Additional Resources and Capacity for Economic Development

A community's greatest assets are its people. In particular, individuals that have invested in the community, created businesses in the community, and hold a deep belief in the potential of their community. In order to advocate for and promote St. Johns County as a desirable destination for businesses, economic development leaders should consider creating an SJC Ambassador network. These ambassadors should represent the community when negotiating with potential relocation or expansion prospects, serving as community champions who can share their experiences operating in the county, and as a connection point for new business leaders looking to utilize the tools and resources available to them.

### Tactics

#### *Tactic 2.1.1:*

Identify community and business leaders willing to serve in the role of SJC Ambassador.

#### *Tactic 2.1.2:*

Develop a curriculum and program to enable ambassadors to examine and explore the numerous economic and community assets across the county.

#### *Tactic 2.1.3:*

Identify private sponsors to fund the program.

#### *Tactic 2.1.4:*

Consider developing a strategy for ambassadors to visit other communities, conferences, and trade shows to represent SJC in its business attraction pursuits.

### Best Practices

#### *Frederick County Chamber of Commerce, Chamber Ambassadors*

The Frederick County Chamber of Commerce Ambassador program was designed to create a link between its members and the broader community. These professionals also assist by promoting Frederick County to existing businesses and potential new businesses.

<https://www.frederickchamber.org/ambassadors.html>





## STRATEGY 2.2: DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLKIT

### Rationale

- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Modern Economic Development Organization
  - Competitive Business and Development Incentives
  - Additional Resources and Capacity for Economic Development

Informed by the Corporate Outreach Strategy and Business Attraction Marketing overview, it is imperative for St. Johns County to develop a marketing toolkit that is well aligned with the various expectations of site selectors, and the variety of tactics that can be considered. Understanding the ‘Top Site Selection Location Factors’ and the commons datasets and information requested through the Request for Information process, SJC should work with the appropriate partners to ensure SJC is prepared to respond to inquiries with sophisticated, accurate, and well-organized information and messaging.

### Tactics

#### *Tactic 2.2.1:*

Commit financial resources for the development and maintenance of a stand-alone economic development website. This ensures that relevant information, such as incentives and labor market information, is readily accessible and prominently featured for companies and site selectors considering a move to SJC.

#### *Tactic 2.2.2:*

Develop an RFP to solicit vendors who specialize in the development of business attraction focused marketing campaigns.

#### *Tactic 2.2.3:*

Work with an approved vendor to integrate social media accounts and content, creating economic development specific profiles as needed, as complimentary tools to the stand-alone website. Work with an approved vendor to develop templates to use in response to official requests for information from site selection firms.

#### *Tactic 2.2.4:*

Identify appropriate industry trade shows and conferences to attend. Develop marketing materials and collateral to utilize at conferences. See Appendix B for a list of potential trade associations to consider.

#### *Tactic 2.2.5:*

Dedicate an individual, or outsource to an outside vendor, to the responsibility of maintaining the website and ensuring the information and content is up to date and relevant.

### Best Practices

#### *Chester County Economic Development, Choose Chester Website*

The Choose Chester website was created as the CCED’s go-to source for actionable insight on why and how to select a site in the area for industrial investment. The website provides an easy way to find key information about the community’s offerings – such as GIS-powered information about existing buildings and shovel-ready sites – and easy access to the stakeholders who can help make deals happen.

<https://choosechester.com/>

#### *Economic Development Corporation of Decatur and Macon County,*

#### *San Luis Obispo, California, REACH Website*

Though well-known as a tourist destination, the Central Coast had never really promoted the breadth of business assets and opportunities across its 15 cities and two counties. As a regional economic development coalition founded in 2019, REACH decided to put out the digital welcome mat in a fresh and engaging way.

<https://reachcentralcoast.org/>

#### *Tulsa, Oklahoma, Tulsa’s Future*

Tulsa’s Future is a regional economic development partnership led by the Tulsa Regional Chamber and supported by public and private investors. Now in its third five-year phase, Tulsa’s Future leverages diverse strategies to create jobs, attract capital investment and improve the quality of life for residents of northeast Oklahoma.

<https://tulsasfuture.com/>

## STRATEGY 2.3: ACTIVATE DEVELOPMENT READY LAND AND AVAILABLE OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL SPACE ACROSS ST. JOHNS COUNTY

### Rationale

- SWOC Strengths:
  - Favorable Tax and Regulatory Environment
  - Strategic Location
- SWOC Weaknesses:
  - Limited Inventory of Modern Industrial Space
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Competitive Business and Development Incentives
  - Northeast Florida Regional Airport

A common saying in economic development is ‘no product, no project.’ This refers to a community’s inventory of move-in-ready industrial and commercial space, or appropriately zoned ‘shovel-ready’ land. Key business decision makers, when considering a relocation or expansion, are looking for an efficient process that is cost effective. This means a community must have a robust inventory of sites suitable to those making site selection decisions. SJC needs to take inventory of current available land and space, and where possible, activate and market these opportunities in their business attraction efforts.

### Tactics

#### *Tactic 2.3.1:*

Work with a third-party real estate advisory firm to conduct a market and cost analysis on available, high-potential properties across the county.

#### *Tactic 2.3.2:*

Collaborate with the Northeast Florida Regional Airport Authority on updating a master plan for authority owned property. Consider collaborating with the authority to market the property to suitable businesses and industries.

#### *Tactic 2.3.3:*

Consider creating high-quality marketing templates to showcase and distribute information about available properties to local, regional, and national development firms and site selection consultants.

### Best Practices

#### *LEAP BLOCK600*

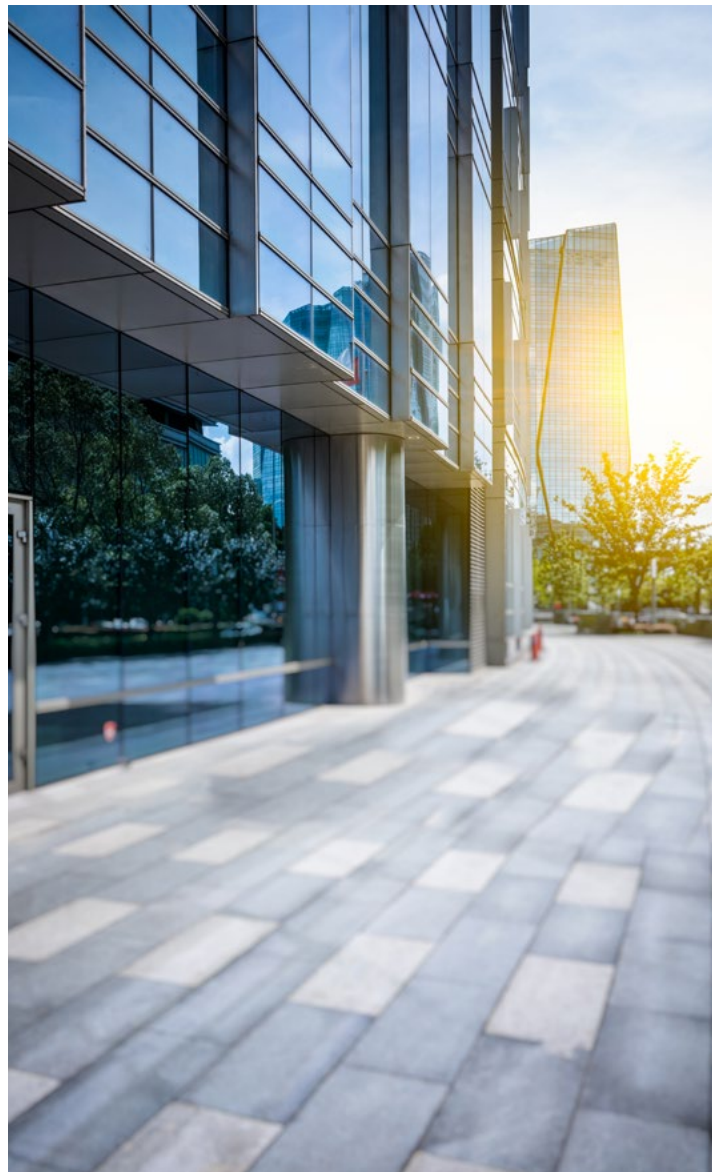
The BLOCK600 project highlights how creative redevelopment and reuse can transform blighted, contaminated properties into assets that meet community needs and spur additional transformation.

<http://www.block600lansing.com/>

#### *North Richland Hills Business Improvement & Growth (BIG) Program*

The City of North Richland Hills (NRH) Business “Improvement and Growth (BIG) Program was created in 2009 to revitalize mature commercial corridors in the city.

<https://www.nrhd.com/314/Business-Improvement-and-Growth-Program>



## STRATEGY 2.4: ALIGN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES.

### Rationale

- SWOC Strengths:
  - Strategic Location
- SWOC Weaknesses:
  - Housing Availability and Accessibility
  - Transportation Infrastructure and Traffic Congestion
  - Limited Inventory of Modern Industrial Space
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Northeast Florida Regional Airport
- SWOC Challenges:
  - Managing Residential Growth
  - Climate Change

Modern infrastructure increases the competitiveness of local firms, is key to attracting companies and talent, and creates a cycle of investment and economic growth. According to the JAXUSA Partnership, St. Johns County currently has 41 properties available for development and occupancy. This includes a mix of pad-ready sites, and existing commercial and industrial space. To increase the likelihood of attracting a tenant, specifically a tenant within one of the targeted industries outlined in this plan, SJC leaders should ensure that strategic investments are being made to improve infrastructure serving these available properties. The State of Florida and the federal government offer various funding opportunities to support infrastructure modernization.

### Tactics

#### *Tactic 2.4.1:*

Ensure SJC economic development leaders take an active role in the comprehensive planning process and capital improvement budget process.

#### *Tactic 2.4.2:*

Conduct an infrastructure readiness assessment on high-potential properties. A particular focus on resiliency and sustainability is paramount to supporting a local economy in a climate vulnerable region.

#### *Tactic 2.4.3:*

Actively promote the use of Commercial Property Clean Energy (C-PACE) financing to encourage investment and reinvestment into existing commercial and industrial properties.

#### *Tactic 2.4.4:*

Consider creating a countywide task force, consisting of economic and community development partners, responsible for identifying and applying for state and federal infrastructure grant funding opportunities.

#### *Tactic 2.4.5:*

Coordinate regular communication, engagement, and coordination with elected officials representing St. Johns at the state and federal level, ensuring they are aware of high-priority infrastructure needs and projects.

#### *Tactic 2.4.6:*

In collaboration with the Northeast Florida Regional Airport, explore opportunities to add additional low-cost air-carrier options for commercial services. Consider creating a public-private fund to incentivize additional service.

### Best Practices

#### *Longwood, Florida Commercial PACE Program*

The City of Longwood (FL) offers commercial and multifamily building owners' access to C-PACE program financing in order to encourage the installation of energy-efficient, renewable, and resilient building infrastructure elements.

<https://info.counterpointesre.com/longwood-pace>

#### *Erie, Pennsylvania, Fly Erie Fund*

The Fly Erie Fund, led by the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, is a plan to raise \$1 million from the public and private sectors to create a fund to subsidize and incentivize air carriers to retain and expand service to the Erie International Airport.

[Fly Erie Fund](#)

### Resources

#### *U.S Economic Development Administration, Economic Adjustment Assistance*

The Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) (PDF) program is EDA's most flexible program; it provides a wide range of technical, planning, and public works and infrastructure assistance in regions experiencing adverse economic changes that may occur suddenly or over time.

<https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/economic-adjustment-assistance>

## STRATEGY 2.5: BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATIONAL SITE-SELECTION FIRMS

### Rationale:

- SWOC Strengths:
  - Favorable Tax and Regulatory Environment
  - Strategic Location
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Competitive Business and Development Incentives

According to the IEDC, ‘site selection consultants are individuals who are professionals hired for their expertise in matching businesses to communities based on the businesses’ requirements.’ Large corporations, typically with over \$250 million in annual sales, will employ a site selection firm to help with relocation or expansion. If SJC is serious about attracting new business, economic development leaders must begin to build relationships with key site selection firms and individuals in the county’s target industries. To do this, SJC must identify the appropriate site selectors, gain a better understanding of their process, and nurture the relationships to ensure that St. Johns County is considered when an appropriate business is looking for a new community to plant its flag.

### Tactics

#### *Tactic 2.5.1:*

Dedicate time and resources to understand the site selection process and the key location factors that site selection consultants consider when identifying competitive communities.

#### *Tactic 2.5.2:*

Dedicate time and resources to identify leading site selection firms, especially those representing the target industries identified in this strategic plan. Develop an outreach strategy to connect with and build relationships with these individuals and corporations.

#### *Tactic 2.5.3:*

Create customizable, branded, and sophisticated templates to respond to RFPs from site selectors in a timely and professional manner.

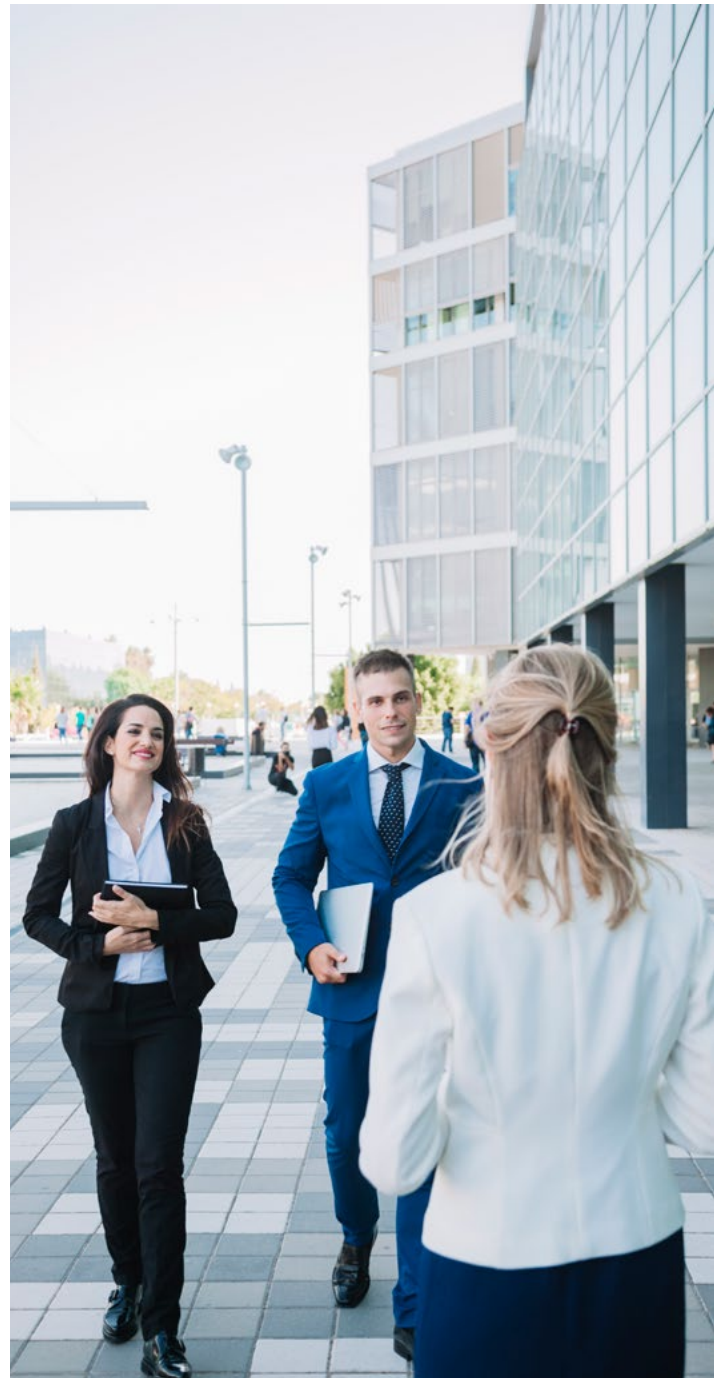
#### *Tactic 2.5.4:*

Organize an annual site selection tour in St. Johns County.

### Resources

#### *Site Selection Consultant Database*

The industry-exclusive Site Selection Consultant Database was designed by an economic developer for economic developers. It contains the names and addresses of over 3,700 people who influence corporate site selection decisions. The contacts include consultants, commercial real estate brokers, real estate services firms, architects, engineers and more. There currently is no other product like this in the market for economic development organization.





### **STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION**

Entrepreneurship and innovation drive local economies. Realizing that all big businesses were once small, it's important to recognize the importance of supporting and cultivating an environment where risk-takers, innovators, and investors are poised to flourish. A local economy focused on supporting entrepreneurial development is characterized by a multitude of technical service providers willing and able to assist aspiring and new businesses with whatever opportunities or challenges they are facing as they grow their nascent enterprise. Equally as important, successful communities recognize the importance of fostering a vibrant culture and supportive network, ensuring that these next generation business owners are surrounded by friends, colleagues, acquaintances, advocates, advisors, investors, and mentors.

#### **Goal:**

Facilitate and Support More Startup and Entrepreneurial Activity Across St. Johns County



### **STRATEGY 3.1: FORMALIZE AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM ACROSS ST. JOHNS COUNTY**

#### **Rationale**

- SWOC Strengths:
  - Educated Population
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Modern Economic Development Organization
  - Enhanced Entrepreneurial Support System

The Kauffman Foundation, a nonprofit think tank and foundation focused on cultivating entrepreneurial ecosystems across the world states, ‘the essence of an entrepreneurial ecosystem is its people and the culture of trust and collaboration that allows them to interact successfully.’ Given its highly educated population, concentration of wealth, educational assets, and high-quality of life, SJC is poised to develop a thriving ecosystem that supports those looking to create the next great business in St. Johns County. To accomplish this, SJC must recognize the key components of a thriving ecosystem, including talent, knowledge and resources, champions and conveners, onramps, and a vibrant and diverse startup culture.

#### **Tactics**

##### *Tactic 3.1.1:*

Develop a relationship with the Kauffman Foundation, and begin taking advantage of the various resources, programs, and grant funding opportunities to build out a modern entrepreneurial ecosystem.

##### *Tactic 3.1.2:*

Work with appropriate partners across the county and region to develop an entrepreneurial ecosystem asset map. Ensure the asset map is visible in the community.

##### *Tactic 3.1.3:*

Develop a coalition of partners serving and supporting entrepreneurs across the county, regularly convening these partners to ensure coordination, collaboration, and improved collaboration.

##### *Tactic 3.1.4:*

Review and revise, as appropriate, current professional agreements in place with regional economic development partners. Ensure the professional agreements meet the unique economic development needs of SJC.

##### *Tactic 3.1.5:*

Work with development partners to assess the viability of coworking spaces in strategic areas across the county.

##### *Tactic 3.1.6:*

Continue to invest in the Pitch Factory, organized by the St. Johns Chamber of Commerce, and consistently evaluate the performance of the program per the professional services agreement.

#### **Best Practices**

##### *Greater Rochester Enterprise, GRE Economic Gardening Program*

The GRE Economic Gardening program is designed to provide sophisticated, tailor-made technical assistance to local companies poised for growth in the Greater Rochester, NY region.

<https://rochesterbiz.com/economic-gardening/>

##### *Startup Virginia*

Startup Virginia is a nonprofit, high-growth business incubator and entrepreneurial hub that provides startups and innovators access to an engaged community, holistic programs, targeted resources, and dynamic workspace to help them reach their full potential and positively impact Virginia’s economic landscape.

<https://www.startupvirginia.org/>

##### *Wake Forest Innovation Infrastructure*

Wake Forest’s Innovation Infrastructure is providing businesses of all sizes with direct pathways to success by creating spaces and resources for growth, access, and more.

<https://www.discoverwakeforest.org/innovation-infrastructure>

## STRATEGY 3.2: DEVELOP AN ANGEL INVESTMENT AND VENTURE CAPITAL NETWORK ACROSS THE REGION

### Rationale

- SWOC Strengths:
  - Educated Population
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Modern Economic Development Organization
  - Enhanced Entrepreneurial Support System

Access to capital is one of the most critical elements to fostering a successful entrepreneurial ecosystem. Businesses at all stages of the business lifecycle need capital to prosper and grow. Whether it be startup capital, or venture capital (and everything in between) a network of capital providers and diverse financial instruments will increase the likelihood that startup businesses will be able to scale their enterprises, creating jobs, contributing to the tax base, and enhancing the quality of life in St. Johns County.

### Tactics

#### *Tactic 3.2.1:*

Survey the business community to better understand the capital needs across the county.

#### *Tactic 3.2.2:*

Create an inventory of financial instruments available in SJC and the State of Florida. Use this inventory to identify any critical capital access gaps.

#### *Tactic 3.2.3:*

Take inventory of the angel capital and venture capital networks across the state of Florida. Begin building relationships with these networks, including hosting them for familiarization tours and facilitating interactions with promising startup business in SJC.

#### *Tactic 3.2.4:*

Develop a relationship with the Angel Capital Association (ACA). Consider scholarship funds for local business leaders and community champions to participate in ACA training.

#### *Tactic 3.2.5:*

Consider creating a revolving loan fund, designed to provide gap funding for businesses procuring private financing. Consider using the interest and fees generated from the loan fund to capitalize a small business grant program.

#### *Tactic 3.2.6:*

Consider attracting or starting a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) dedicated to providing mission-based lending and investments in SJC startups.

### Best Practices

#### *Capital Gravity Arizona*

Capital Gravity Arizona is a statewide “capital accelerator” program that attracts and prepares high net-worth individuals to make (and startup founders to raise) their first ever seed-stage investment. Capital Gravity’s powerful model is designed to increase the number and diversity of investors and improve the quality of deal flow in Arizona’s ecosystem.

<https://capitalgravity.org/>

#### *Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, ICE Angel Education*

In partnership with the Appalachian Investors Alliance, the Erie Regional Chamber is leading a group of community and business leaders through the process of starting Erie’s first angel fund – ICE Angel Fund. The goal of the fund is to support and attract entrepreneurs to the Erie region as a bookend to its accelerator program and other regional investment opportunities.

<https://eriepa.com/ice-angel-education/>

### Resources

#### *Angel Capital Association*

ACA is a professional society of accredited angel investors who make up the world’s most prolific early-stage investment class. The association is the largest professional development organization for angel investors in the world deploying more than \$650 million in early-stage capital each year.

<https://www.angelcapitalassociation.org/>

#### *U.S. Economic Development Administration, Build to **SCALE***

The Build to Scale Program strengthens regional economies by enabling startups to start and grow through the Venture Challenge and Capital Challenge. The funding program aims to facilitate access to knowledge, capital, and networks for entrepreneurial innovators to develop products and services using emerging technologies.

<https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/build-to-scale>

### **STRATEGY 3.3: CONSIDER DEVELOPING A TECHNOLOGY AND STARTUP INCUBATOR OR ACCELERATOR PROGRAM.**

#### **Rationale**

- SWOC Strengths:
  - Educated Population
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Modern Economic Development Organization
  - Enhanced Entrepreneurial Support System

According to the IEDC, an incubator is “a mechanism used to encourage and support young companies until they become viable.” Startup business incubators are characterized by affordable space, technical and managerial support, and assistance identifying and securing funding. While similar, technology accelerators are designed for more mature companies, typically those who have already generated sales, and are looking to scale their operations with second-stage or venture capital investment. SJC should consider working with appropriate partners to develop an incubator or accelerator program, specifically targeting technology-enabled companies well aligned with the target industries identified in this strategic plan.

#### **Tactics**

##### *Tactic 3.3.1:*

Identify funding to commission a technology incubation/accelerator program feasibility study.

##### *Tactic 3.3.2:*

Engage regional partners on technology incubation strategies.

##### *Tactic 3.3.3:*

Explore potential space for a technology incubator or accelerator. Consider collaborating with local and regional universities, to locate the program close to university staff and students.

#### **Best Practices**

##### *Norfolk, Virginia, 757 COLLAB*

757 Collab houses three regional entrepreneurial resources that form a unique continuum serving early-stage entrepreneurs at every stage of development with incubation programming, acceleration programming and capital.

<https://757collab.org/>

##### *36 Degrees North*

36 Degrees North, the largest entrepreneurial support organization in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, region, will launch and operate a new 50,000-square-foot high-tech business incubator and accelerator space in the One Technology Center building in downtown Tulsa. The new incubator will provide access to curated mentoring services, seed and early-stage investment sources, flexible office and meeting space, and an extensive network of local and national resources, all of which will help facilitate new business formation, job growth, increased tax revenue, and long-term economic diversification for the Tulsa region.

<https://www.36n.co/>

##### *Founders Factory*

Founders Factory backs visionary founders with capital, dedicated support from a team of 70+ operators, and unrivalled access to a coalition of industry leading corporate partners.

<https://foundersfactory.com/>



### STRATEGY 3.4: COLLABORATE WITH REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES TO DEVELOP TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND COMMERCIALIZATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES CONNECTED TO ST. JOHNS COUNTY

#### Rationale

- SWOC Strengths:
  - Educated Population
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Modern Economic Development Organization
  - Enhanced Entrepreneurial Support System

The state of Florida has an abundance of universities, both public and private, poised to support economic growth in SJC. Princeton University defines technology transfer ‘as the process by which universities patent discoveries uncovered in university laboratories and classrooms and license them to businesses and entrepreneurs who turn them into important commercial products and technologies.’ SJC would benefit from creating strategic relationships with regional and state universities, specifically to develop partnerships that facilitate more intentional connections between faculty, staff, students, and business owners across the county.

#### Tactics

##### *Tactic 3.4.1:*

Identify regional and state university partners to engage in an innovation ecosystem focused on spurring entrepreneurial growth in St. Johns County.

##### *Tactic 3.4.2:*

Make connections between private businesses and university research representatives, fostering more opportunities to engage students and faculty in ‘innovation teams’ and participate in ‘capstone projects.’

##### *Tactic 3.4.3:*

Engage representatives from University of Florida’s UF Innovate Program, specifically looking for opportunities to better connect existing businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs with the resources and programs offered through the innovation ecosystem.

#### Best Practices

##### *University of South Florida, Office of Technology Transfer*

The Technology Transfer Office is responsible for the development, protection, and utilization of intellectual property rights, as well as a liaison of cooperative ventures the University of South Florida undertakes with business and industry in the promotion of technology transfer and the commercial expansion of intellectual property.

<https://www.usf.edu/research-innovation/pl/for-industry.aspx>

##### *University of Florida, STRIDE Center*

Technology transfer activities at the STRIDE Center aim to provide research results to the broader transportation community such as federal and state agencies, private industries, academia, and the general public. Such activities involve both the transfer of knowledge as well as the development of products through technology licensing, software development and creation of new businesses.

<https://stride.ce.ufl.edu/technology-transfer/>

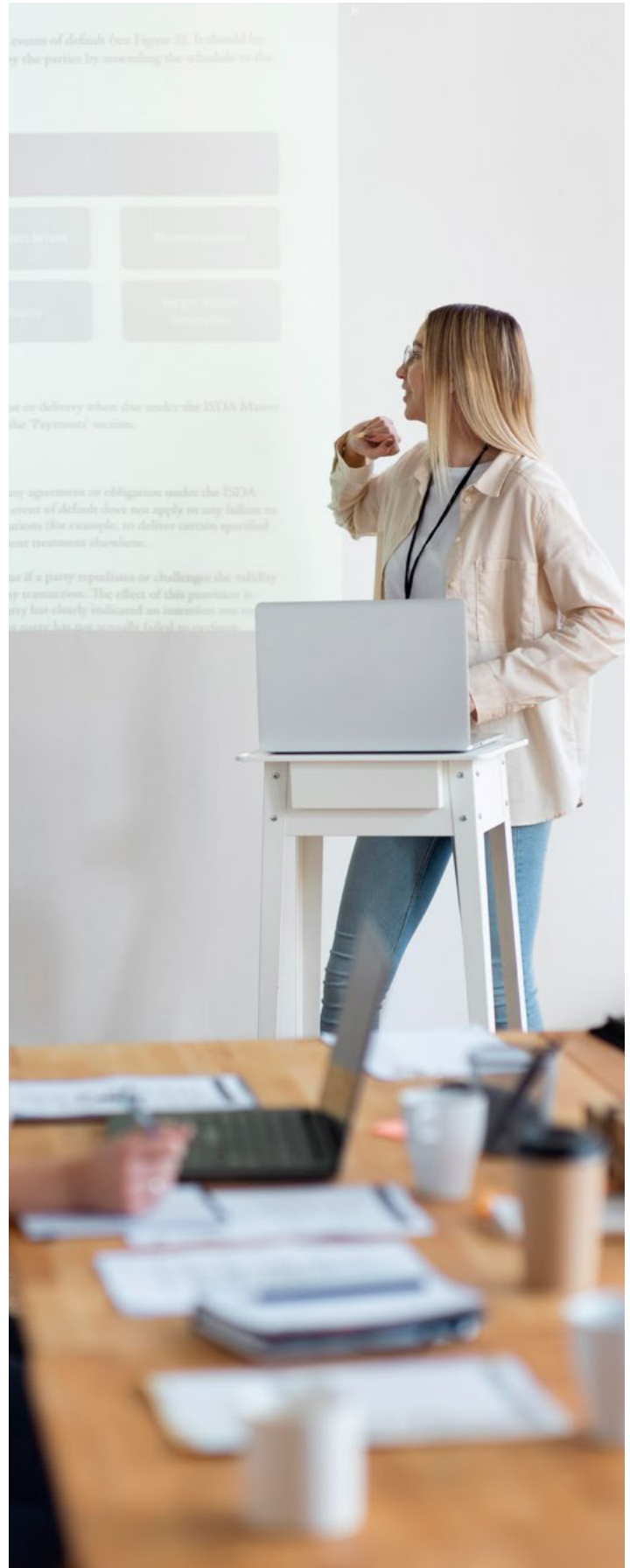


#### STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 4: WORKFORCE, TRAINING, AND EDUCATION

The 2022 State of Site Selection report, produced by the Site Selectors Guild, indicated that workforce and labor availability are the greatest factors impacting location decisions. In fact, 100% of site selection guild members agreed that the availability of quality talent is the ‘single most important consideration during office location engagements.’ With a tight labor market, lower overall participation in the workforce, the retirements of baby-boomers, and increasing polarized politics around immigration policy, site selectors are looking for communities that are taking innovative approaches to cultivating a robust talent pipeline in the face of increasingly complex global factors. St. Johns County can differentiate itself by enhancing collaboration across the economic development, workforce development, education, and training sectors to ensure it is well-positioned to meet the talent and workforce needs of existing and future businesses in the region.

##### Goal:

Cultivate a healthy workforce pipeline to meet the needs of current and future employers in St. Johns County



## **STRATEGY 4.1: CREATE A MORE COORDINATED WORKFORCE, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING ECOSYSTEM IN ST. JOHNS COUNTY**

### **Rationale**

- SWOC Weaknesses:
  - Aging Workforce
  - Economic Disparities by Industry and Location
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Modern Economic Development Organization
  - Innovative Career Training and Education
- SWOC Challenges:
  - Retention of Local Essential Workers

The data presented in this report show an aging workforce and the potential for essential workers to continue fleeing St. Johns County for employment opportunities and a more robust and affordable housing inventory. In order to slow this trend, SJC must integrate systems-level change that address both technical training and wrap around supportive services such as those offered by the public workforce system. In order to accomplish, local economic development, workforce development, education, and training providers need to take intentional steps to become a more coordinated system, serving the needs of both employers and job seekers.

### **Tactics**

#### *Tactic 4.1.1:*

Engage and identify key stakeholders from the local one-stop operator and workforce development board, as well as other trade associations or community-based organizations with significant workforce development strategies and investments.

#### *Tactic 4.1.2:*

Leverage existing community-based organizations, non-for profits, and social service providers such as Goodwill, Urban League, and faith-based organizations to attract or engage residents and non-residents from underrepresented populations. This could include people with disabilities, the underemployed, and formerly incarcerated.

#### *Tactic 4.1.3:*

Convene workforce development stakeholders to establish strategic priorities and to increase alignment, and to decrease redundancies in programs and services provided. SJC should be mindful of competing interests and efforts that could potentially take workers from one industry and place them in another without appropriate backfill mechanisms.

#### *Tactic 4.1.4:*

Develop an asset map and complete a gap analysis of training programs related to target industries.

### **Best Practices**

#### *Norfolk Works*

Norfolk Works has been an integral part of the City of Norfolk's Economic Development portfolio since December of 2016. It has become the bellwether of workforce development programs for the region and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The primary components of Norfolk Works are its Community Career Center, Business Services, and the Norfolk Workforce Investment Network (WIN). Ultimately, Norfolk Works is designed to align economic and workforce development efforts, champion the recruitment of diverse Norfolk talent to support business attraction, retention and expansion, and collaborate with its regional workforce partners to help Norfolk citizens prepare for and connect to in-demand employment opportunities.

<https://norfolkdevelopment.com/norfolkworks/>

#### *Louisiana Economic Development & LED FastStart*

LED FastStart is a comprehensive, custom workforce solution to help companies attract and train their workforce. Every aspect of LED FastStart is fully customized with the partner company, their culture, and their processes. LED FastStart finds its success in a foundation built on three core components: recruit, train, and sustain.

<https://www.opportunitylouisiana.gov/incentive/led-faststart>

### **Resources**

#### *Envoy US Fair Chance Employment*

The Fair Chance employment practice is designed to support employers and industry associations to implement inclusive hiring strategies that expand candidate pools and provide career opportunities for people impacted by the justice system. Through this work, we partner with employers to launch comprehensive Fair Chance hiring initiatives and collaborate with local and national associations, chambers, and sector partnerships to build multi-employer coalitions and member guidance.

<https://www.envoy.us/fair-chance>

#### *National Center for Urban Solutions*

NCUS is a diversified social enterprise with an interdisciplinary approach to solving the needs of urban and underrepresented communities in workforce, health, and education. For more than 25 years, we've been a conduit in helping African Americans achieve self-sufficiency. Through our core competencies, we are a catalyst for positive change, dedicated to creating a brighter and more equitable future for the people we serve.

<https://www.ncusolutions.org/>



## **STRATEGY 4.2: COLLABORATE WITH APPROPRIATE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERS TO CREATE WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS**

### **Rationale**

- SWOC Weaknesses:
  - Aging Workforce
  - Economic Disparities by Industry and Location
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Modern Economic Development Organization
  - Innovative Career Training and Education
- SWOC Challenges:
  - Retention of Local Essential Workers

Work-based learning programs can range from short to long-term engagements, designed to take low skill individuals into entry-level technical roles across a variety of industries and sectors. These programs can be bootcamp style programs (six weeks or less), or more intensive like internships, co-ops, earn and learn programs, and registered apprenticeships. SJC would benefit from coordinating leaders from the private sector, public sector, and various education and training programs to integrate work-based learning opportunities to ensure local employers have a healthy pipeline of talent, and job seekers in SJC have the skills required to acquire jobs that pay family sustaining wages and advancement opportunities.

### **Tactics**

#### *Tactic 4.2.1:*

Engage state of Florida's office of apprenticeship to identify federal and state funding sources available. Many of these programs are underspent nationally and there is likely technical assistance available for St. Johns County.

#### *Tactic 4.2.2:*

Engage local community colleges (academic and workforce development staff) to identify existing work-based learning programs.

#### *Tactic 4.2.3:*

Conduct extensive employer engagement to better understand the needs of employers. Additionally, take steps to educate the private sector on work-based learning concepts, including hosting workshops and focus groups. This engagement and programming will increase interest in buy-in.

#### *Tactic 4.2.4:*

Consider identifying and engaging existing SJC employers with robust work-based learning programs in place to service as industry champions, and partners to conduct peer-to-peer outreach and coaching.

### **Best Practices**

*readySC Volvo Cars US Operations Pre-Hire Training Program*  
readySC, a division of the South Carolina Technical College System, assisted with developing specific screening and training processes to fill over 1,100 production and maintenance technician jobs. The goal is to provide Volvo Cars with screened and qualified candidates for employment opportunities while strengthening the skills of the local workforce. We have been able to do that by creating a Pre-Hire training program whose target audience is entry level candidates that upon completion are able to go into a manufacturing environment with enhanced skills and greater confidence in their abilities. The Pre-Hire program is created through continuous collaboration.

<https://www.readysc.org/>

#### *Lorain Community College Earn & Learn*

In LCCC's Earn and Learn programs, you can earn an income and get valuable on-the-job training while you're going to college, setting you up with real-world experience and a strong resume when you graduate. In these programs, you'll split your time between classroom learning and paid jobs and internships in your field. We now offer Earn and Learn formats in these programs, but the list is growing.

<https://www.lorainccc.edu/programs-and-careers/earn-and-learn/>



### **STRATEGY 4.3: COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO IMPLEMENT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAMS**

#### **Rationale**

- SWOC Weaknesses:
  - Aging Workforce
  - Economic Disparities by Industry and Location
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Modern Economic Development Organization
  - Innovative Career Training and Education
- SWOC Challenges:
  - Retention of Local Essential Workers

Youth employment programs, including career exploration programs are a critical ingredient to cultivating a healthy and robust local and regional talent pipeline. These programs offer opportunities to help young people gain the skills, knowledge, and access to resources to begin thinking about their careers beyond graduation. These programs also provide access to local employers and industries, further clarifying for young people what is needed to succeed in a variety of occupations and careers.

#### **Tactics**

##### *Tactic 4.3.1:*

Evaluate and assess current youth employment programs and career exploration programs across school districts in St. Johns County.

##### *Tactic 4.3.2:*

Engage private businesses open to hosting and sponsoring career exploration programs.

##### *Tactic 4.3.3:*

Educate local employers on youth employment laws in Florida, and help private businesses identify funding support internship opportunities.

##### *Tactic 4.3.4:*

Consider adopting national models of youth employment and career exploration programs.

#### **Best Practices**

##### *Ohio High School Tech Internship Program*

The High School Tech Internship program reimburses Ohio employers for hosting high school interns in technology-focused roles. The goal of the High School Tech Internship program is to provide businesses with the tech talent they need while also providing students with valuable work experience at an early age.

<https://workforce.ohio.gov/initiatives/initiatives/hstechinternshipprogram>

#### **Resources**

##### *FlexFactor*

FlexFactor is an outreach, recruitment, and STEM education program designed to familiarize K-12 students with advanced manufacturing technology, entrepreneurship, and the education and career pathways that can lead to a STEM career. The program was designed to showcase the promise of these careers and help students to develop the critical thinking, creative reasoning, and problem-solving skills needed for future success.

<https://www.nextflex.us/learning-portfolio/flexfactor/>

#### **STRATEGY 4.4: CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO UNDERSTAND THE POTENTIAL FOR A NEW UNIVERSITY IN ST. JOHNS COUNTY**

##### **Rationale**

- SWOC Weaknesses:
  - Aging Workforce
  - Economic Disparities by Industry and Location
- SWOC Opportunities:
  - Modern Economic Development Organization
  - Innovative Career Training and Education
- SWOC Challenges:
  - Retention of Local Essential Workers

A variety of stakeholders engaged throughout the process expressed a need and desire for a Tier 1 Research Institution of Higher Learning in St. Johns County. While there may be limitations to this opportunity, SJC would be prudent to conduct its due diligence. A university at that scale could transform the economy, and serve as an anchor institution producing talent, innovations, ideas, and jobs for residents in the community.

##### **Tactics**

###### *Tactic 4.4.1:*

Develop an asset map of 4-year institutions in a 50-mile radius of St. Johns County.

###### *Tactic 4.4.2:*

Based upon results of the asset map, SJC should conduct a gap analysis related to programs aligned with healthcare and target industries.

###### *Tactic 4.4.3:*

If appropriate, conduct an analysis of suitable sites and buildings for potential university.

###### *Tactic 4.4.4:*

Conduct focus groups and/or surveys of current high school students and families with K-12 kids to understand the desire to stay in St. Johns County after graduation.

###### *Tactic 4.4.5:*

Conduct an occupational analysis to understand the required competencies and/or education for target industries' most in-demand jobs.





## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life, including access to accessible and attainable housing options, can have a significant impact on St. Johns County's local economy. With a more diverse supply of attainable housing options, current and future employers are more likely to attract and retain a qualified workforce. Additionally, intentional planning, led by the county, can ensure that municipalities and sub-regions across the county can plan accordingly in the face of a growing population, diversifying economy, and rise in housing prices.

### Goal:

Maintain and Improve St. Johns County's High Quality of Life





## STRATEGY 5.1: ADDRESS HOUSING CHALLENGES ACROSS ST. JOHNS COUNTY

### Rationale

- SWOC Weaknesses:
  - Housing Availability and Accessibility
- SWOC Challenges:
  - Managing Residential Growth
  - Retention of Local Essential Workers
  - Short Term Rental Units

According to a recent report highlighted by News4Jax, there are more than 7,400 essential workers in St. Johns County who are unable to afford a home. An additional report from the Northeast Florida Association of Realtors, St. Johns County is ‘the least affordable in the region and has been for years.’ The Summary of Economic Conditions presented in this plan highlights these challenges. St. Johns County can have the best economic development strategic plan in the country, but if it does not face the profound housing challenges facing residents, including essential workers in cornerstone industries, the plan will prove to be ineffective.

### Tactics

#### *Tactic 5.1.1:*

Commission an up-to-date Housing Analysis and Strategic Plan.

#### *Tactic 5.1.2:*

Consider establishing incentives for attainable housing development, including density bonuses, and expedited permitting for qualified projects.

#### *Tactic 5.1.3:*

Explore options for publicly owned available land to address the housing supply and affordability gaps in SJC.

#### *Tactic 5.1.4:*

Consider creating Land Trusts on publicly owned land, to control costs for new housing developments.

#### *Tactic 5.1.5:*

Consider amending the land development code and zoning ordinances to facilitate more Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and medium density developments to include duplexes and fourplex housing units.

#### *Tactic 5.1.6:*

Consider advocating for legislation to control the oversupply of short-term rental units in SJC. Consider passing laws that require short-term rental unit owners to live within 25 miles of the property. Consider increasing fees on vacation rentals, using the additional revenue to support attainable housing development.





## **STRATEGY 5.2: PROVIDE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT PLANNING FOR MUNICIPALITIES ACROSS ST. JOHNS COUNTY**

St. Johns County is an expansive and geographically diverse region. The economic diversity of the county is profound, with each municipality and locality demonstrating a variety of opportunities and challenges unique to its specific locale. To best serve the needs of these localities, SJC should bring resources and capacity forward to help these local communities begin strategic planning efforts, so they can prepare for their economic futures, in alignment with the greater goals of St. Johns County as a whole.

### **Tactics**

#### *Tactic 5.1.1:*

Consider forming a countywide taskforce, charged with tracking, and applying for appropriate federal and state grant opportunities, specifically those designed to fund local planning efforts.

#### *Tactic 5.1.2:*

Consider creating a small grant fund through St. Johns County government, used offer matching grant funds for localities looking to develop strategic plans.

#### *Tactic 5.1.3:*

Work with local, regional, and state philanthropic organizations to develop funding opportunities to support local planning efforts.



# Appendix A:

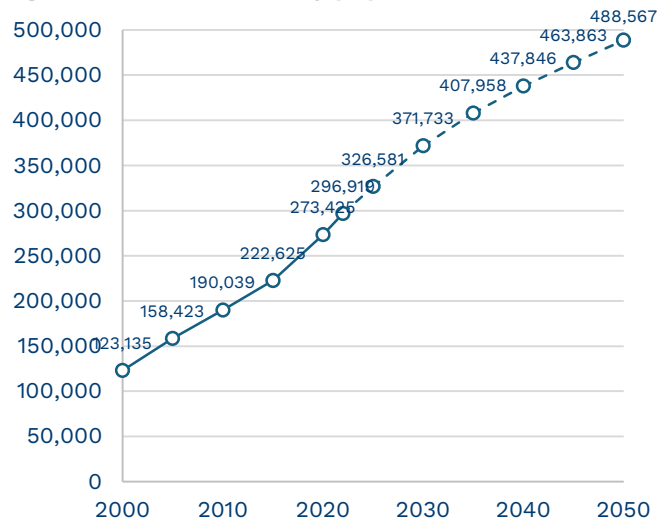
## Current Economic Conditions

### Population and Socioeconomic Analysis

#### POPULATION

Since 2000, St. Johns County (SJC) has had rapid population growth. Between 2000 and 2020, the population increased by 122%, or approximately 6% per year. SJC is projected to experience growth through 2050, though at a slightly tempered rate. Between 2020 and 2030, SJC is estimated to see a 36% increase in population, slightly lower than the 44% increase from 2010 to 2020. Growth is projected to temper further, to 18% between 2030 and 2040, and then to 12% increase from 2040 to 2050.

Figure 1: St. Johns County population, 2010 – 2050

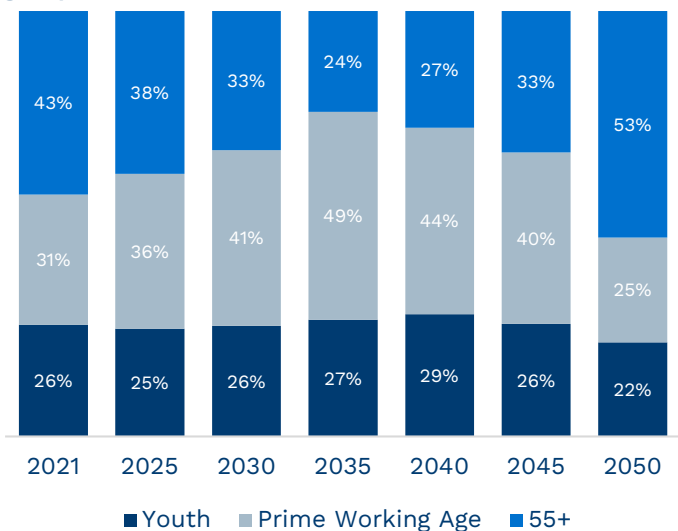


Source: Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research.

#### POPULATION BY AGE

Of the population growth between 2010 and 2021, 43% can be attributed to an increase in the 55+ community in SJC. Prime working age individuals (ages 25-54) account for 31%, while youth (ages 0-24) represent the remaining 26%. Individuals aged 55+ are projected to represent the largest component of population change through 2025. After that time, prime working age individuals are projected to drive the increase in population.

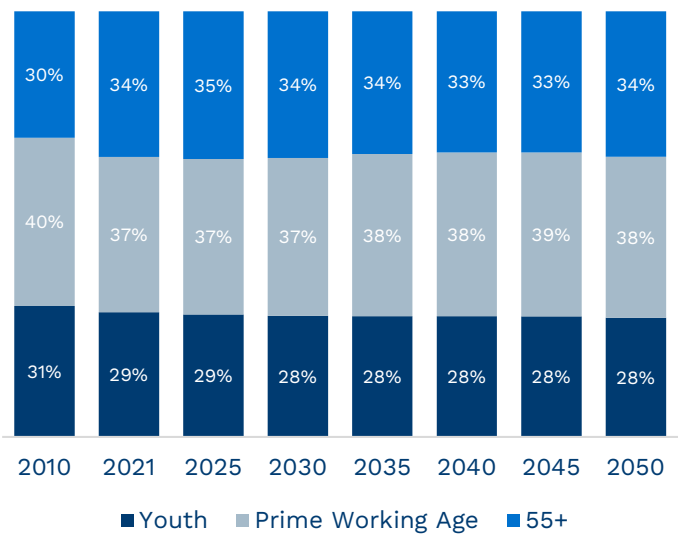
Figure 2: Components of population change by age group, 2021 – 2050



Source: Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research and University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research.

This can be seen in the composition of the population by age group, as seen in Figure 3. Between 2010 and 2025, prime working age individuals represent a decreasing part of the population, which then starts to increase in 2030.

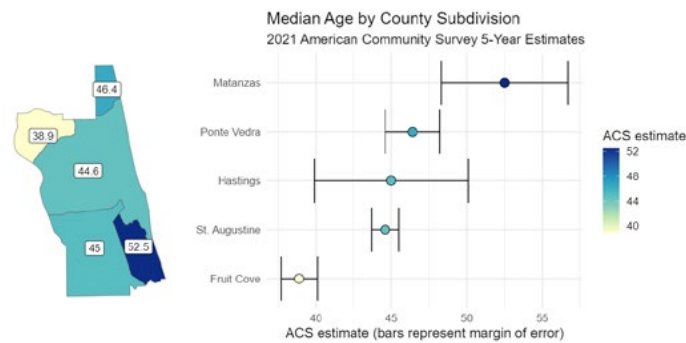
Figure 3: Population composition by age group, 2010 – 2050.



Source: Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research and University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research.

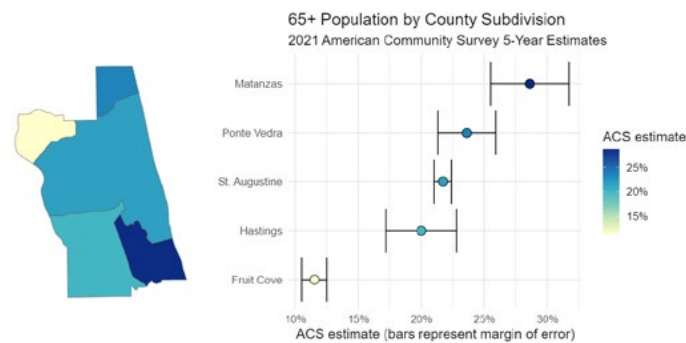
If a more granular approach is taken, differences in age emerge between county subdivisions. The median age in Fruit Cove, 38.9 years, is more than 10 years younger than in Matanzas, where the median age is 52.5. Similarly, the percentage of the population that's 65+ is lowest in Fruit Cove and highest in Matanzas.

Figure 4: Median age by county subdivision, 2021



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Figure 5: Percentage of the population that is 65+ by county subdivision, 2021

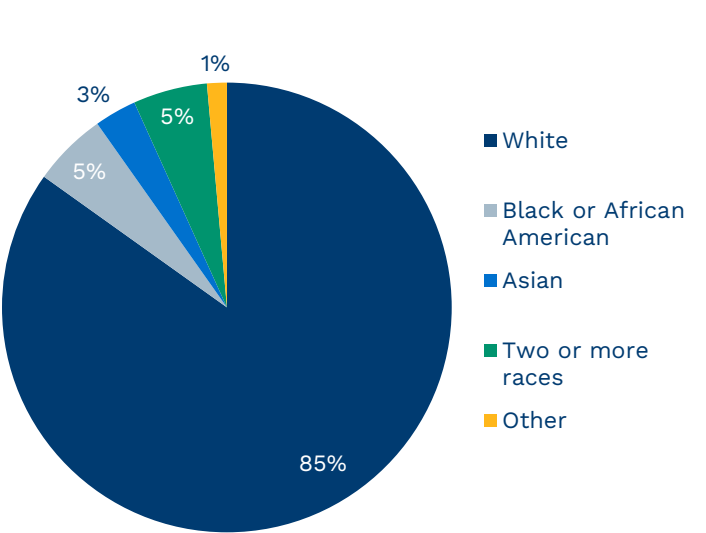


Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

POPULATION BY RACE

St. Johns County is 85% white, with 5% identifying as Black or African American, 3% as Asian, and 5% as more than one race, and 1% as some other race. Additionally, 92% of the population is not Hispanic or Latino. Compared to Florida as a whole (67% white and 26% Hispanic or Latino), St. Johns County is more homogeneous.

Figure 6: St. Johns County by race, 2021



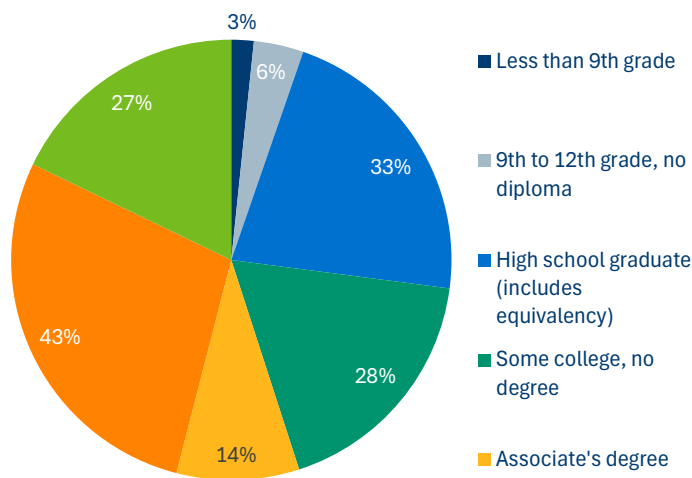
Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.



## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

St. Johns County has a well-educated population. When looking at the population ages 25 years and over, almost half of the residents have at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 34% nationwide. The vast majority (95%) of the population have graduated high school, compared to 89% nationwide.

Figure 7: Educational attainment in St. Johns County, 2021

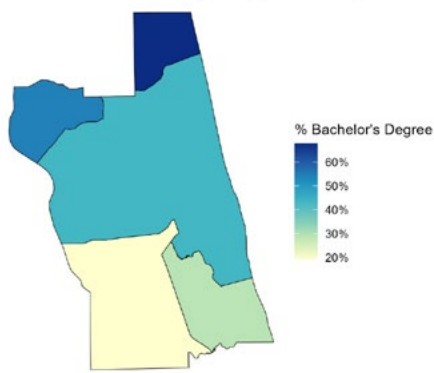


Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

As before, there are differences in educational attainment between the county subdivisions. Hastings has the lowest percentage of residents ages 25+ with a bachelor's degree or higher, less than 20%. Conversely, in Ponte Vedra, over 60% of residents have a bachelor's degree (or higher).

Figure 8: Percentage of residents ages 25+ with a bachelor's degree or higher, 2021

Educational Attainment by County Subdivision, 2021

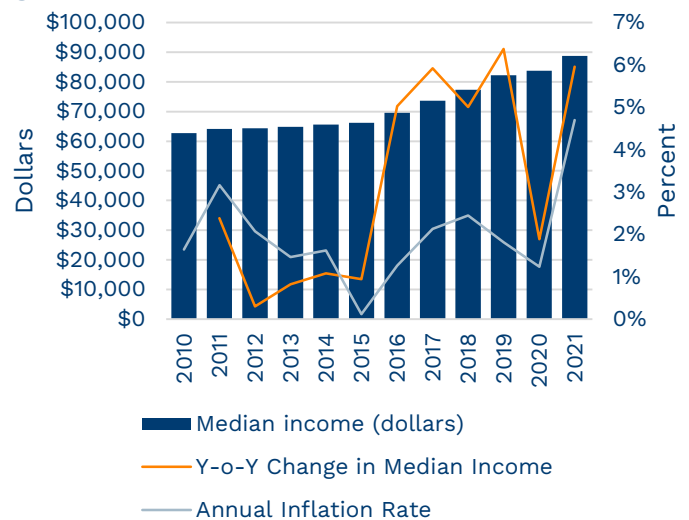


Data source: 2021 5-Year ACS, US Census Bureau

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income has been rising steadily in SJC. Since 2015, the year-over-year growth in median income has been larger than the annual inflation rate, indicating real changes in median household income. In St. Johns County, the average income is higher than the median household income, which indicates a concentration of wealth in the highest income households.

Figure 9: Median household income, 2010 - 2021

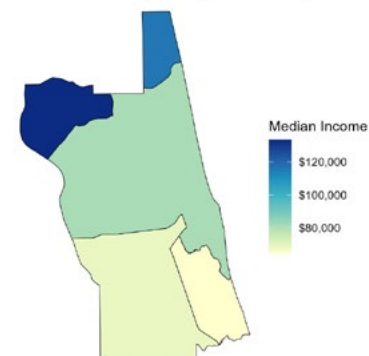


Source: Income from ACS 5-Year Estimates. Annual inflation rate from the World Bank, [sourced from the FRED](#).

There is a large variation in the median household income by county subdivision, from \$64,754 in Matanzas, to \$133,491 in Fruit Cove. Geographically, the northern county subdivisions have higher household incomes, compared to the southern subdivisions.

Figure 10: Median household income in St. Johns County

Median Income by County Subdivision, 2021



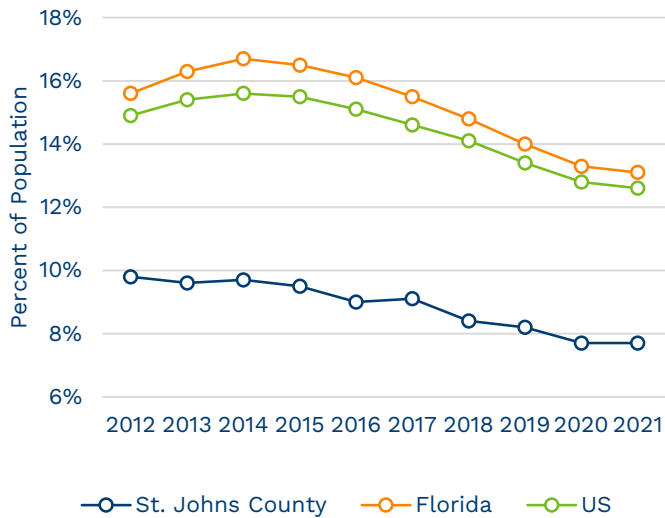
Data source: 2021 5-Year ACS, US Census Bureau

POVERTY RATES

The percentage of the population living below the poverty line has been steadily declining in St. Johns County, decreasing from 9.8% in 2012 to 7.7% in 2021. Compared to the nation and the state, there is a lower percentage of the population in St. Johns living in poverty, with a national rate of 12.6% and a state rate of 13.1%.

While poverty is low throughout the county, disparities exist depending on age, race, and geography. Of the 18,493 people living in poverty in St. Johns, over one-quarter are under 18 years of age and 12.5% are over the age of 65.

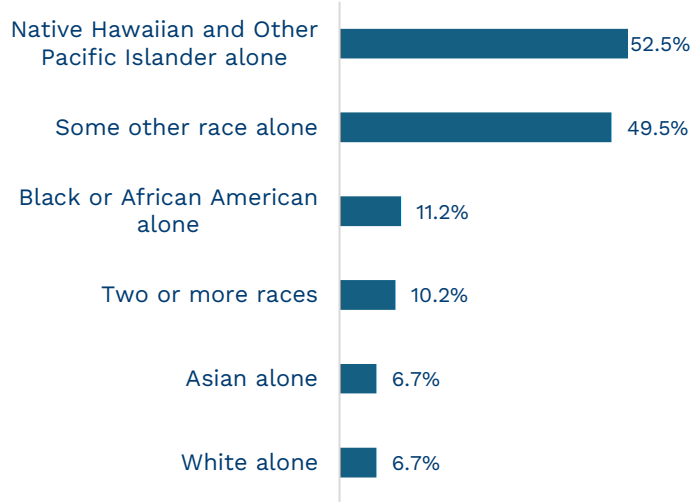
Figure 11: Percentage of the population below the poverty level, 2012 - 2021



Source: 2012-2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Approximately half of the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders or those who are some other races not listed by the Census Bureau are living below the poverty level in SJC. Conversely, just 6.7% of white and Asian individuals are living in poverty.

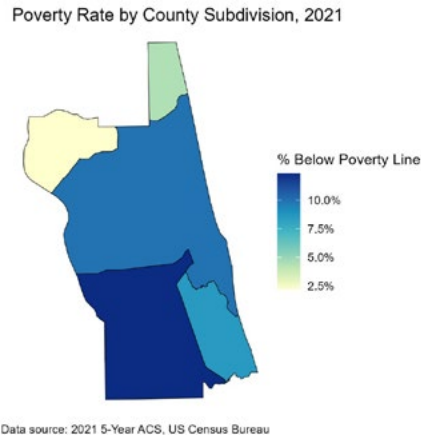
Figure 12: Percent of the population below the poverty level by race, 2021



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Geographically, Hastings, which has the lowest educational attainment and one of the lowest median household incomes, has the highest poverty rate. Fruit Cove, which has the highest median income and the lowest median age, has the lowest poverty rate.

Figure 13: Poverty rate by county subdivision



## LIVING WAGE

The living wage in St. Johns County for an adult with no children is about \$34,500 per year. This is about \$9,500 higher than the annual income for an adult earning the state minimum wage of \$12 per hour.<sup>11</sup> For two adult households, with no children, the living wage is about \$13.50 per adult, or \$28,000 per year, still above the annual income earned by minimum wage earners. The charts below display estimates of cost of living in different household types in SJC.

**Table 1: Comparison of living wage, poverty wage, and minimum wage for a 1 adult and 2 adult household in St. Johns County**

	1 Adult	2 Adults <sup>12</sup>
LIVING WAGE	\$16.55	\$13.48
POVERTY WAGE	\$6.53	\$4.40
MINIMUM WAGE <sup>13</sup>	\$12.00	\$12.00

Source: MIT Living Wage Calculator, 2023.

**Table 2: Comparison of annual living wage and annual minimum wage income by household type**

		Living Wage (Annual)	Minimum Wage (Annual)
1 ADULT	0 Children	\$34,424	\$24,960
	1 Child	\$74,859	\$24,960
	2 Children	\$98,155	\$24,960
	3 Children	\$129,938	\$24,960
	0 Children	\$56,056	\$24,960
2 ADULTS (1 WORKING)	1 Child	\$68,931	\$24,960
	2 Children	\$78,853	\$24,960
	3 Children	\$87,589	\$24,960
	0 Children	\$28,038	\$24,960
2 ADULTS (BOTH WORKING)	1 Child	\$41,413	\$24,960
	2 Children	\$53,331	\$24,960
	3 Children	\$64,730	\$24,960
	0 Children	\$28,038	\$24,960

Source: MIT Living Wage Calculator, 2023.

<sup>11</sup> As of September 30, 2023.

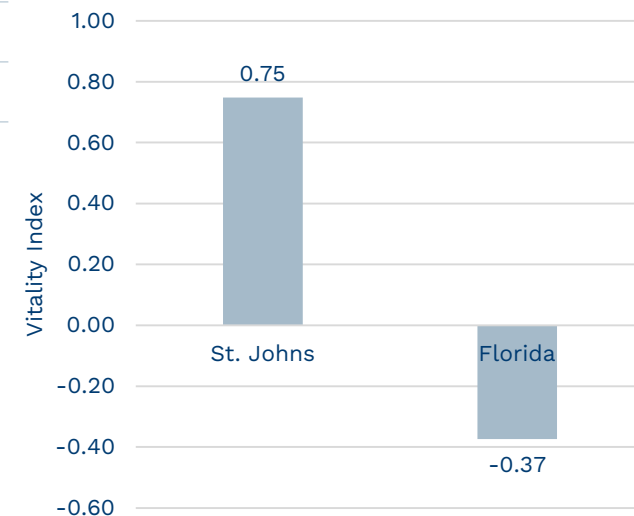
<sup>12</sup> The living wage is the wage required per working adult to support themselves.

<sup>13</sup> Minimum wage as of June 2023.

## VITALITY INDEX

The Hamilton Project uses a county's median income, poverty rate, life expectancy, employment rate, housing vacancy rate, and unemployment rate to compute a Vitality Index, a measure of a place's economic and social well-being. The baseline value is zero, which represents the nation as a whole. If a location has more economic vitality than the national average, the Vitality Index rate is greater than zero. If the opposite is true, then the rating is less than zero. In St. Johns County, the vitality index is 0.75. This indicates that SJC is doing well, relative to the nation as a whole. However, this value should be interpreted with caution, as the Vitality Index is using data from the 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates and has not been updated since the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Figure 14: Vitality Index, St. Johns County and Florida**

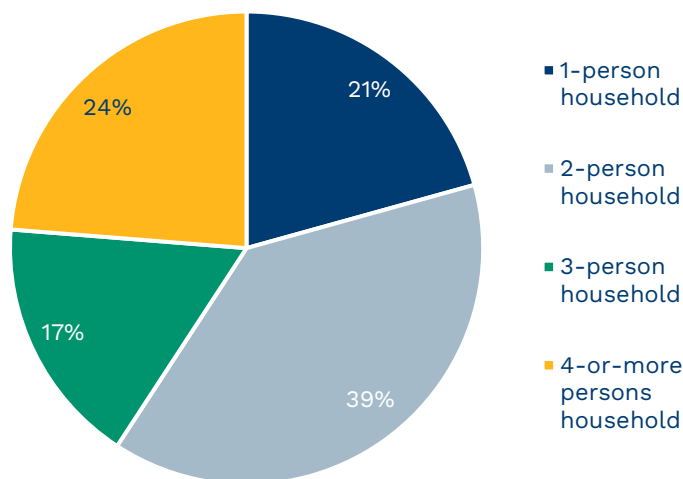


Source: Hamilton Project Vitality Index.

## HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

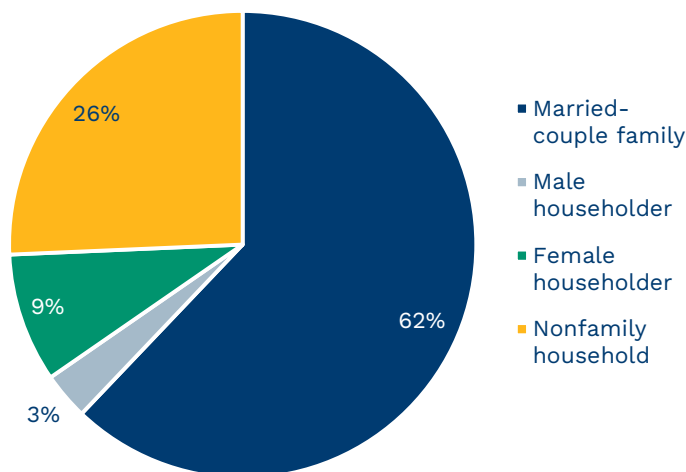
There are almost over 95,000 households in St. Johns County. Married couples represent the largest percentage of households, followed by nonfamily households. Further exploration of household size can be seen in the figures below.

Figure 15: Household size, 2021



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

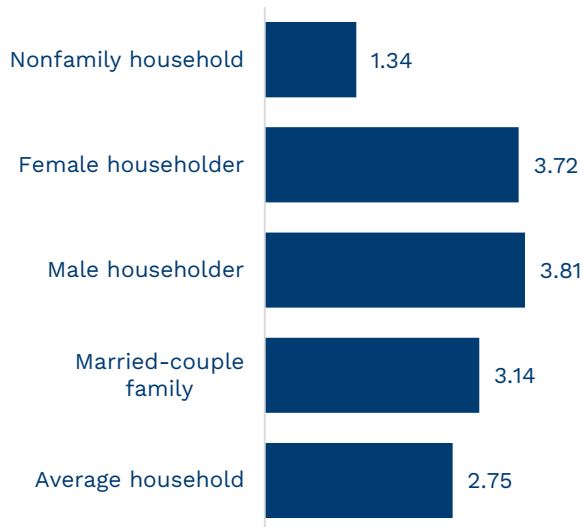
Figure 16: Household type in St. Johns County, 2021



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Male and female householders with no spouses have the highest average household size, 3.81 and 3.71 people per household, respectively. Married-couple families also tend to have larger households, averaging 3.14 people per household. Nonfamily households have the smallest average household size, 1.34.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the county, the average household size is 2.75 people per household.

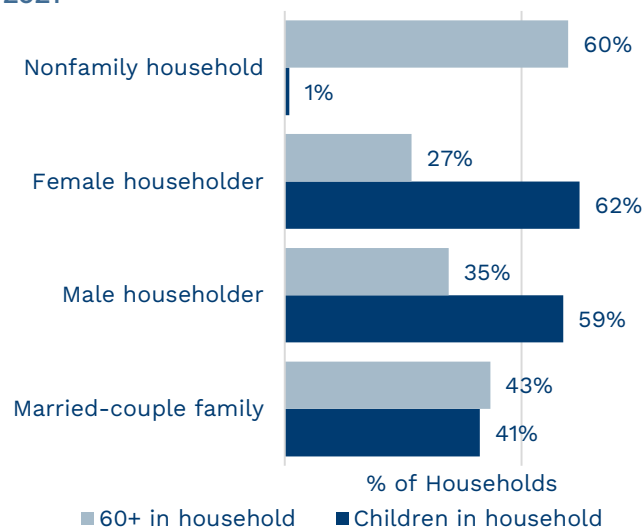
Figure 17: Average household size by household type, 2021



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

One-third of all households have children present, while 46% have a household member over the age of 60. The percentages vary by household type, as seen in the figure below.

Figure 18: Household characteristics by household type, 2021



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



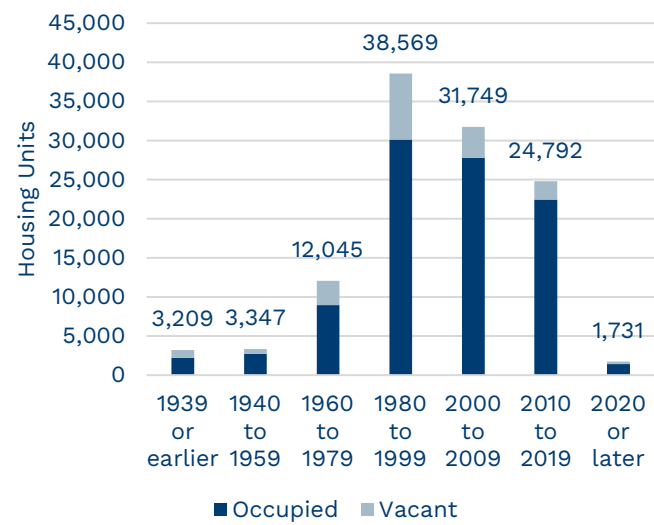
# Housing Market Analysis

## HOUSING BY YEAR BUILT

St. Johns County has approximately 115,000 housing units, of which about 50% have been built since 2000. Just 16% of the current housing stock was built prior to 1980.

Of the 115,000 housing units in the county, 17% are vacant. Forty-three percent of the vacant units were built between 1980 and 1999, which may indicate the opportunity for rehabilitation and reinvestment in older homes, to return them to the occupied housing stock.

Figure 19: Housing stock by year built and occupancy status, 2021

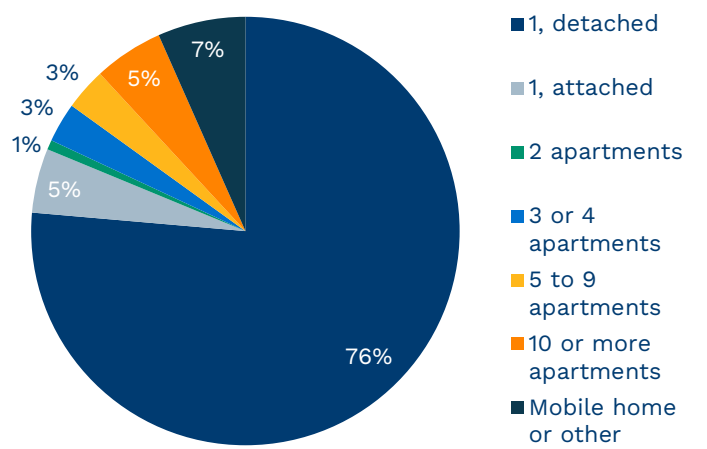


Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

## HOUSING TYPE

Single-family homes are the most common housing type in St. Johns County, representing 81% of the occupied housing units. Of this housing type, detached homes are the most common, representing 94% of single-family homes. Multifamily homes or apartment buildings comprise 12% of the housing stock in the county.

Figure 20: Housing type, 2021

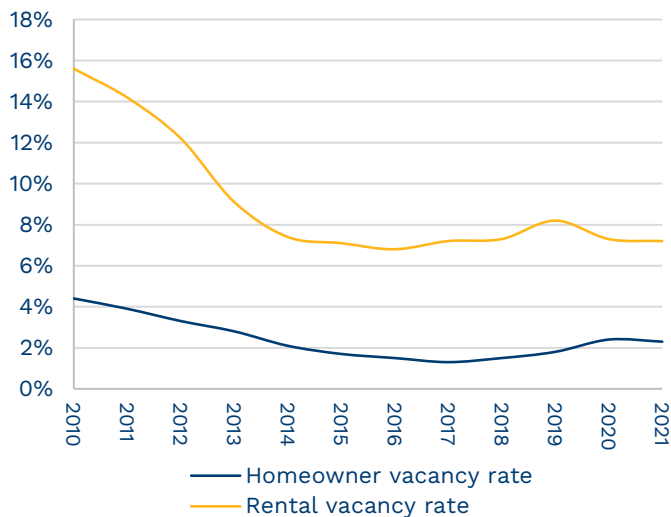


Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

## VACANCY STATUS AND VACANCY RATE

In 2021, the homeowner vacancy rate was 2.3%, while the rental vacancy rate was 7.2%. The rental vacancy rate has decreased significantly in the past ten years and now falls within the “natural” vacancy rate, signifying a healthy rental market.

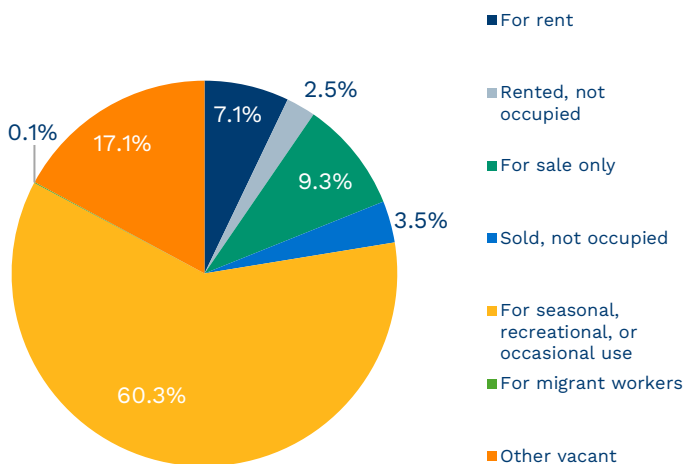
Figure 21: Homeowner and rental vacancy rate, 2010 to 2021



Source: 2010 - 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Given St Johns County’s location and significant tourism industry, it follows that the majority of vacant homes are being used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Figure 22: Reason for vacancy, 2021

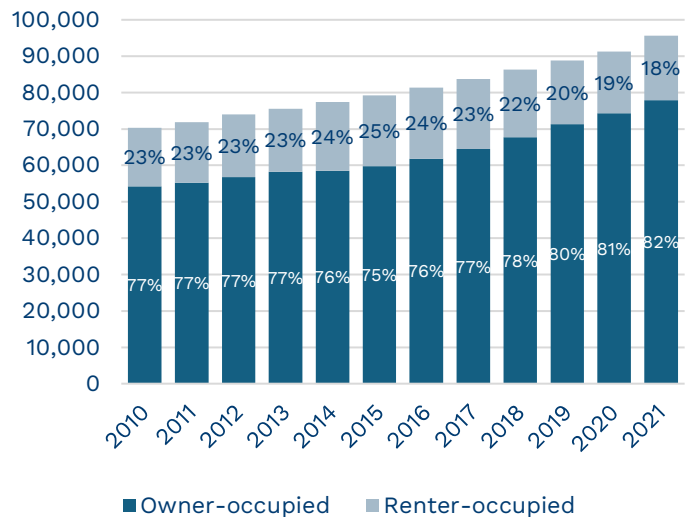


Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

## HOUSING TENURE

The percentage of housing units occupied by homeowners has increased since 2010. In 2021, owner-occupied units represented 82% of the occupied housing stock, a 5-percentage point increase since 2010.

Figure 23: Occupied housing units by tenure, 2010 to 2021



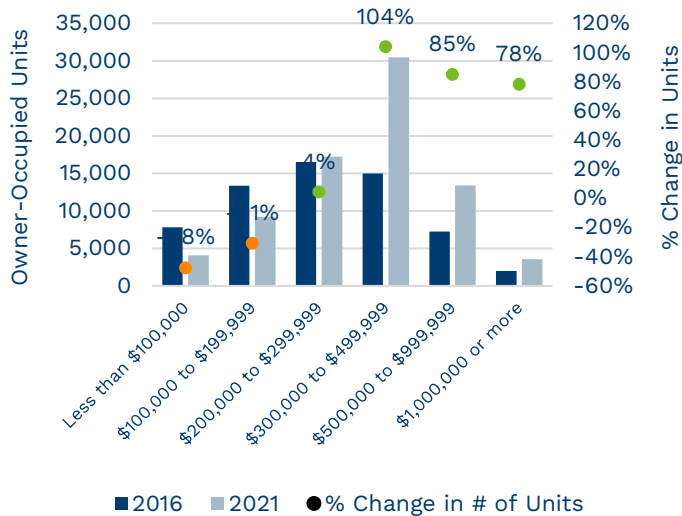
Source: 2010 - 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

## OWNER-OCCUPIED HOME VALUE

The median home value in St. Johns is \$348,100, about \$100,000 higher than the state median value of \$248,700. The majority of homes are in the \$200,000 to \$499,999 range.

In the past five years, home values have increased. The number of housing units with a value less than \$200,000 has decreased by 37%. Simultaneously, the number of homes with values greater or equal to \$200,000 has increased by 59%. The most significant increase has been in the number of homes valued between \$300,000 and \$499,999, which grew by 104% between 2016 and 2021.

Figure 24: Owner-occupied units by value, 2016 and 2021

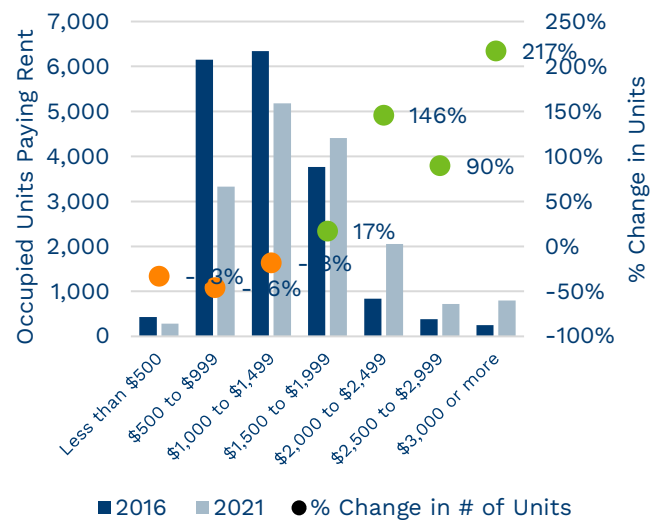


Source: 2016 and 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

## GROSS RENT

Since 2016, the median gross rent has increased by 27%, from \$1,150 to \$1,462. Further, the number of units with rents less than \$1,500 decreased from 71% of the occupied rental stock in 2016 to 52% in 2021.

Figure 25: Gross rent, 2016 and 2021

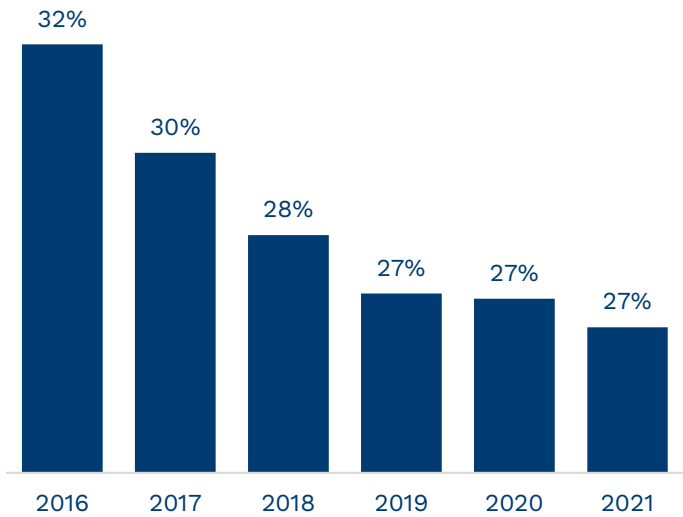


Source: 2016 and 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

COST BURDEN

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a household is cost-burdened if their monthly housing costs, including utilities, are greater than 30% of their monthly income. In SJC, the percentage of households that are cost-burdened has been decreasing since 2016, from 32% to 27%.

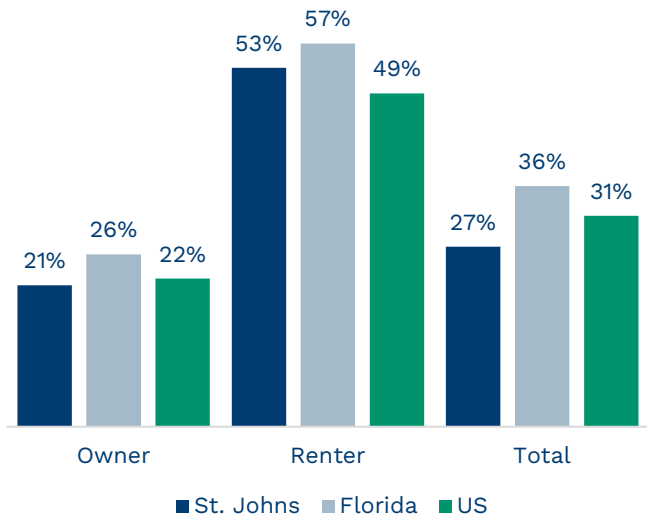
Figure 26: Cost burden in SJC, 2016 to 2021



Source: 2016 - 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Renters are more likely to be cost-burdened than homeowners, with over 50% of renter households being cost-burdened compared to 21% of homeowners.

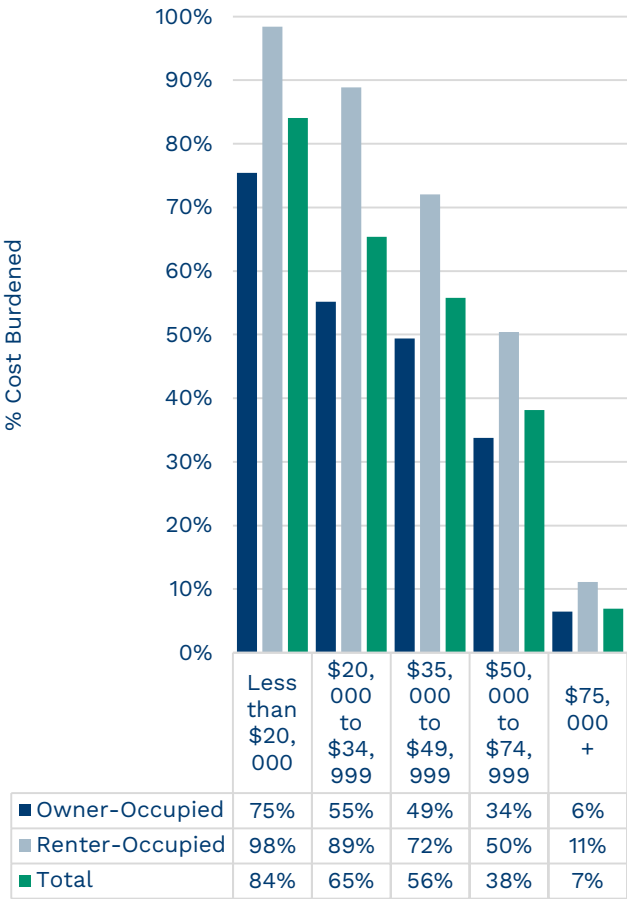
Figure 27: Cost burden by tenure, 2021



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Lower-income households are more likely to be cost-burdened than middle- or high-income households. Over 80% of households with incomes less than \$20,000 are cost burdened. The high incidence of cost burden persists until household incomes rise above \$50,000. About 38% of households with annual incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999 are cost burdened. When household incomes increase to \$75,000 or more, the percentage of cost-burdened households drops sharply, to about 7%. The persistence of cost burden in low- and middle-income households may suggest that there is an unmet need for affordable housing, particularly for renter households.

Figure 28: Cost burden by income level and tenure



Source: 2016 - 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.



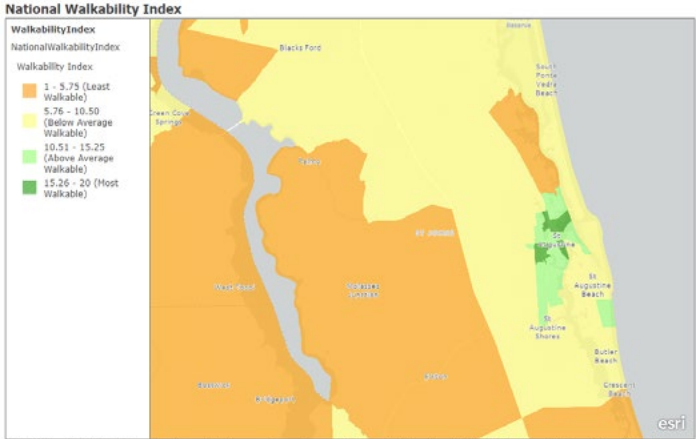
WALKABILITY ANALYSIS

The US Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) National Walkability Index ranks block groups from 1 to 20 (1 = least walkable) based on their intersection density, proximity to transit stops, and diversity of land uses.<sup>15</sup> The St. Augustine area has above average walkability scores, while the rest of the county has below average walkability. SJC continues to invest in walkability, with about \$2.9 million allocated to sidewalk projects<sup>16</sup> and \$100,000 for traffic calming measures in FY 2024.

15 “National Walkability Index Methodology and User Guide.” US EPA. [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/documents/national\\_walkability\\_index\\_methodology\\_and\\_user\\_guide\\_june2021.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/documents/national_walkability_index_methodology_and_user_guide_june2021.pdf)

16 This includes \$1.2 million for general countywide sidewalk improvements and \$1.7 million for the Palm Valley Road Sidewalk project, phases I and II.

Figure 29: Walkability scores for St. Johns County



EPA’s National Walkability Index provides walkability scores based on a simple formula that ranks selected indicators from the Smart Location Database that have been demonstrated to affect the propensity of walk trips. The dataset covers every block group in the nation, providing a basis for comparing walkability from community to community. This dataset’s universal coverage at the block group level makes it easy to use as input into scenario planning, modeling, and other community analysis. The National Walkability Index dataset ranks each block group relative to all other block groups in the United States, but individuals can use downloadable data to construct an index for a smaller universe of block groups, like a state, metropolitan area, or city.

FDEP, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA | FDEP, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA | EPA Office of Community Revitalization with Urban Design 4 Health and EPA National Geospatial Support Team

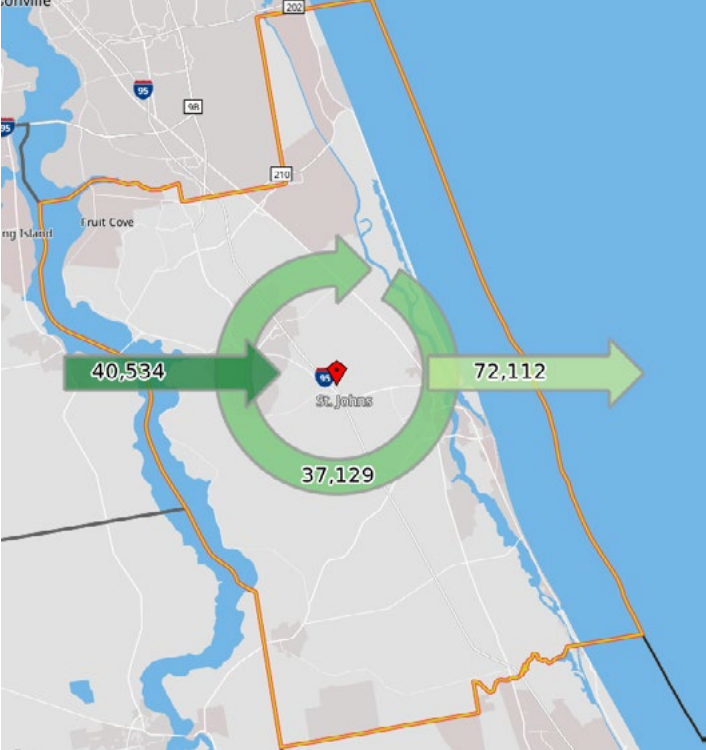
Source: US EPA National Walkability Index



COMMUTER INFLOW/OUTFLOW ANALYSIS

Looking at commuting patterns can provide further insight into employment flows in and around the county. In 2021, 40,534 workers commuted from their home counties to St. Johns for work. Conversely, 72,112 workers left St. Johns County to work in other counties. Of the 109,241 workers who live in St. Johns, 66.0% work outside of the county.

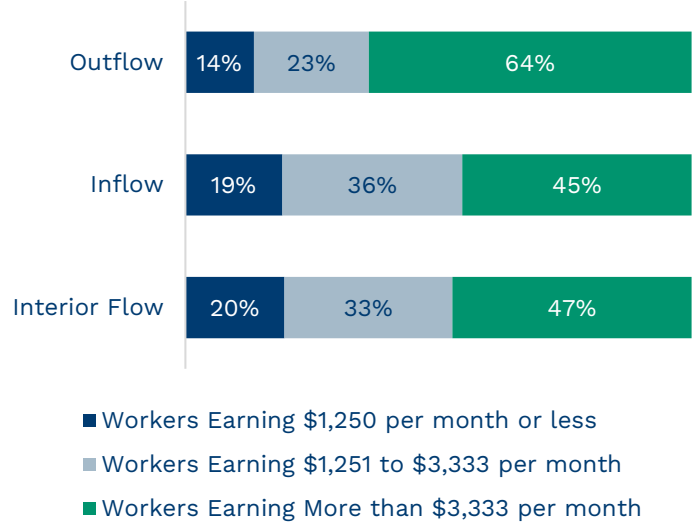
Figure 30: Commuting patterns for primary jobs, 2021



Source: US Census OnTheMap.

Of the workers who are leaving the county, over 60% are earning more than \$3,333 per month. Inflow and interior flow (those who live and work in St. Johns) workers tend to have lower wage jobs.

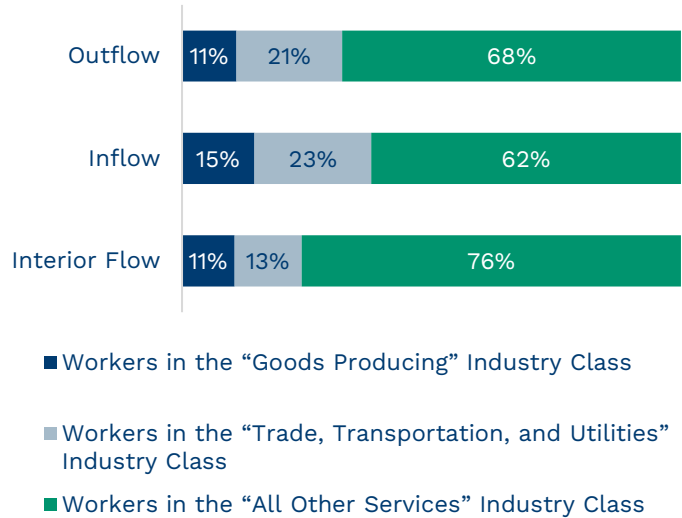
Figure 31: Commuter flows by monthly income, 2021



Source: US Census OnTheMap

The majority of workers, regardless of commuter status, are employed in “all other services” industries. Interior flow workers are less likely to be employed in the trade, transportation, and utilities industries than outflow and inflow workers.

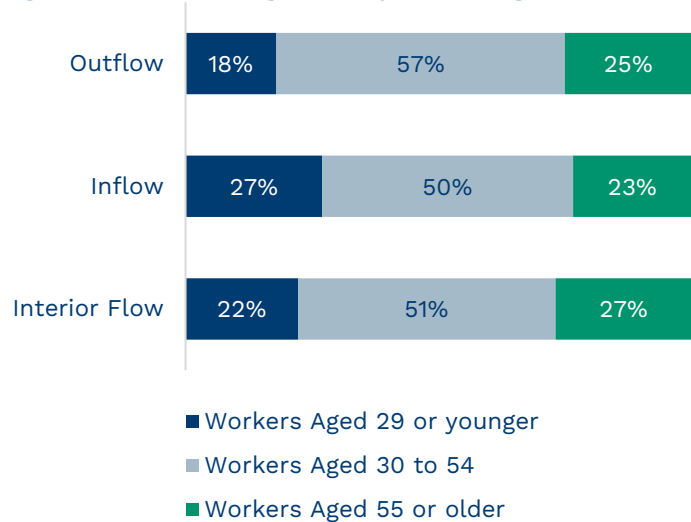
Figure 32: Commuter flows by industry



Source: US Census OnTheMap

Workers commuting into the county tend to be younger than those leaving for work or those living and working in the county. A slightly higher percentage of interior flow workers are 55 years of age or older.

Figure 33: Commuting flows by worker age



Source: US Census OnTheMap





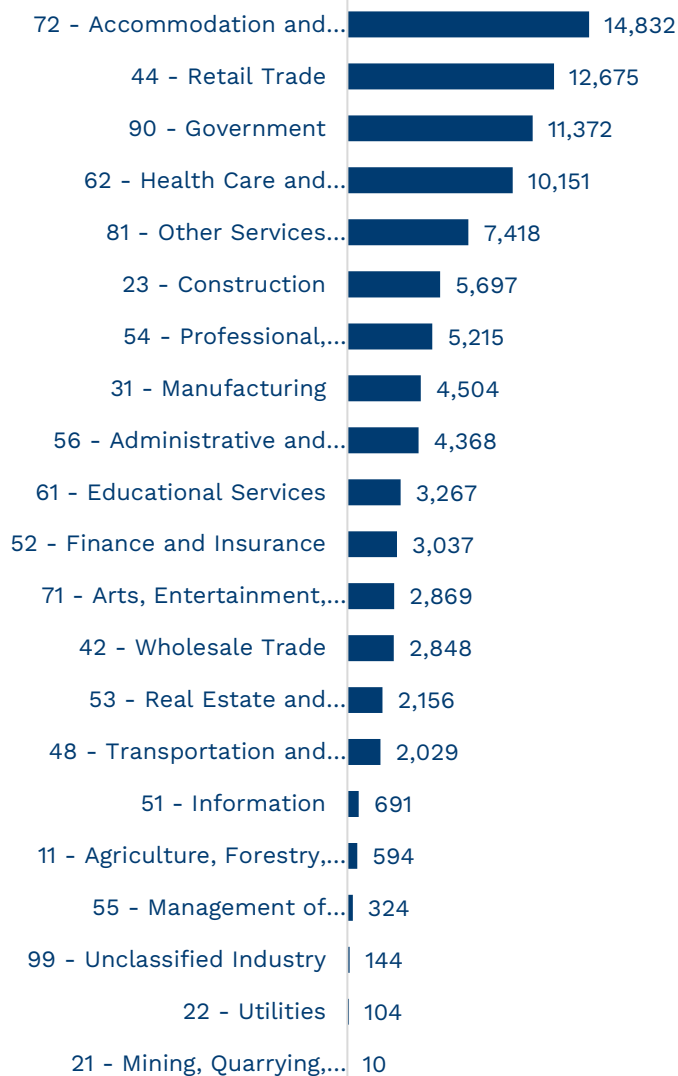
# Business and Workforce Characteristics

## INDUSTRY CHARACTERISTICS

### Top Industries by Number of Jobs

Accommodation & Food Services, Retail Trade, and Government are the largest industries in the region. All three have seen an increase in employment over the past five years.

Figure 34: Employment by industry, 2022

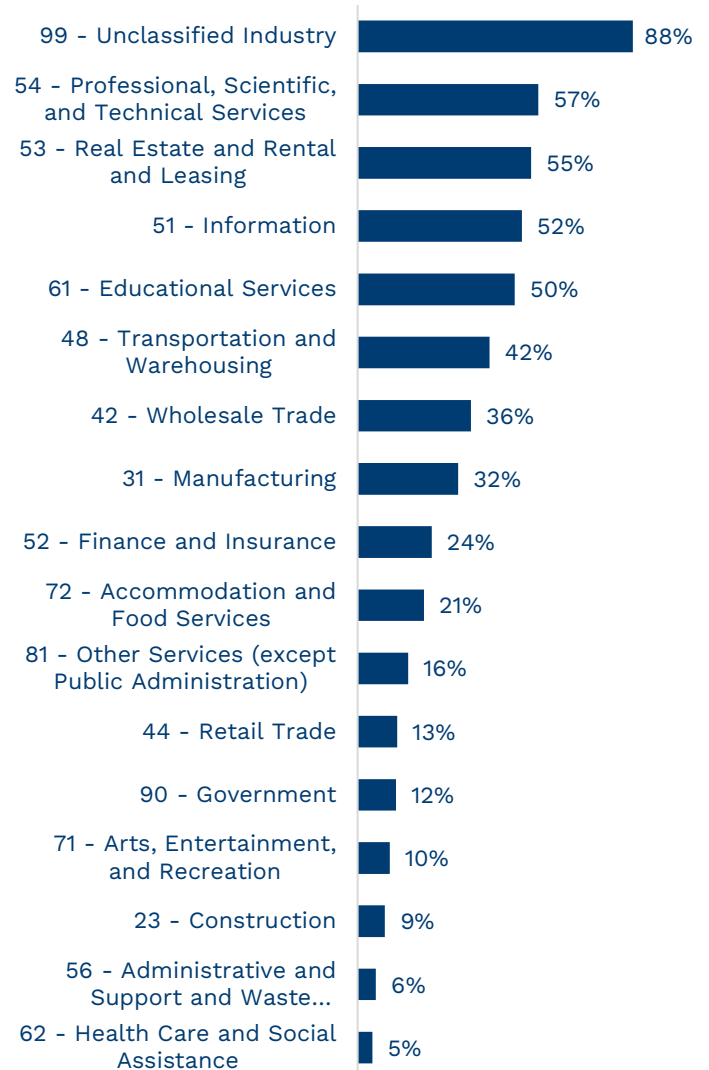


Source: Lightcast 2023.1

### Top Growing Industries

The top growing industry from 2017 to 2022 by percent growth is NAICS 99, Unclassified Industry. This industry is comprised of establishments that cannot be classified in any other industry. However, this is a bit misleading; in 2017, this industry employed just 77 workers, which grew to 144 workers in 2022. The Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services industry, Real Estate & Rental & Leasing industry, and Information industry all experienced over 50% growth during that time span and employ larger numbers of workers.

Figure 35: Top growing industries by percent change in employment, 2017 to 2022

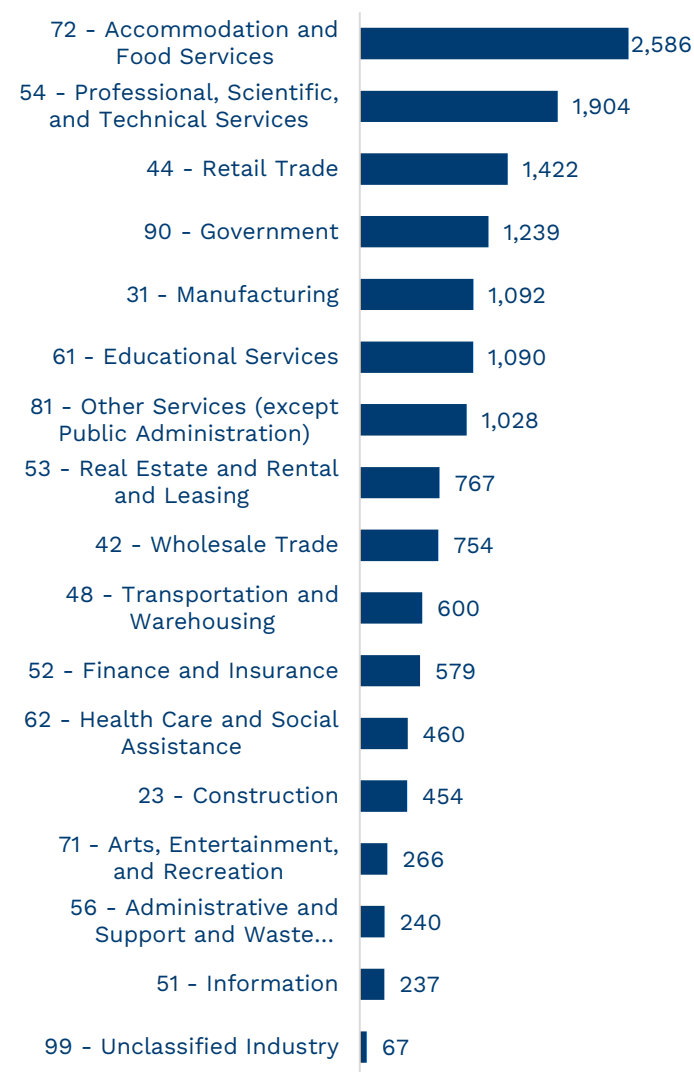


Source: Lightcast 2023.1



Because measuring percent growth does not account for the size of the industry in the region, top growing industries by number of jobs are provided below. The top four industries have been previously highlighted, either as major employers or industries experiencing large amounts of growth. The growth in professional, scientific, & technical services and manufacturing could signal that the region is well-positioned to grow their local aerospace industry.

**Figure 36: Top growing industries by number of jobs, 2017 to 2022**



Source: Lightcast 2023.1

## Industry Location Quotient

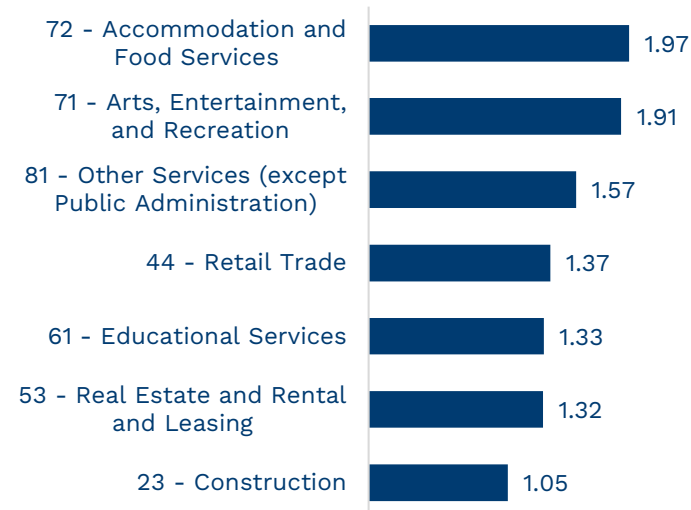
Location quotient (LQ) provides a measure of an industry's concentration in a region. An LQ greater than one indicates that the industry has a greater share of the local employment than nationally, while an LQ less than one indicates that the converse is true. An LQ greater than one is considered to represent significant specialization or concentration.

The county is specialized in six industries. These are:

1. Accommodation & Food Services
2. Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation
3. Other Services (except Public Administration)
4. Retail Trade
5. Real Estate and Rental & Leasing
6. Construction

However, an industry specialization cannot be interpreted as having a high level of impact; a region can be specialized in an industry but have low earnings from that industry.

**Figure 37: Location quotient, 2022**

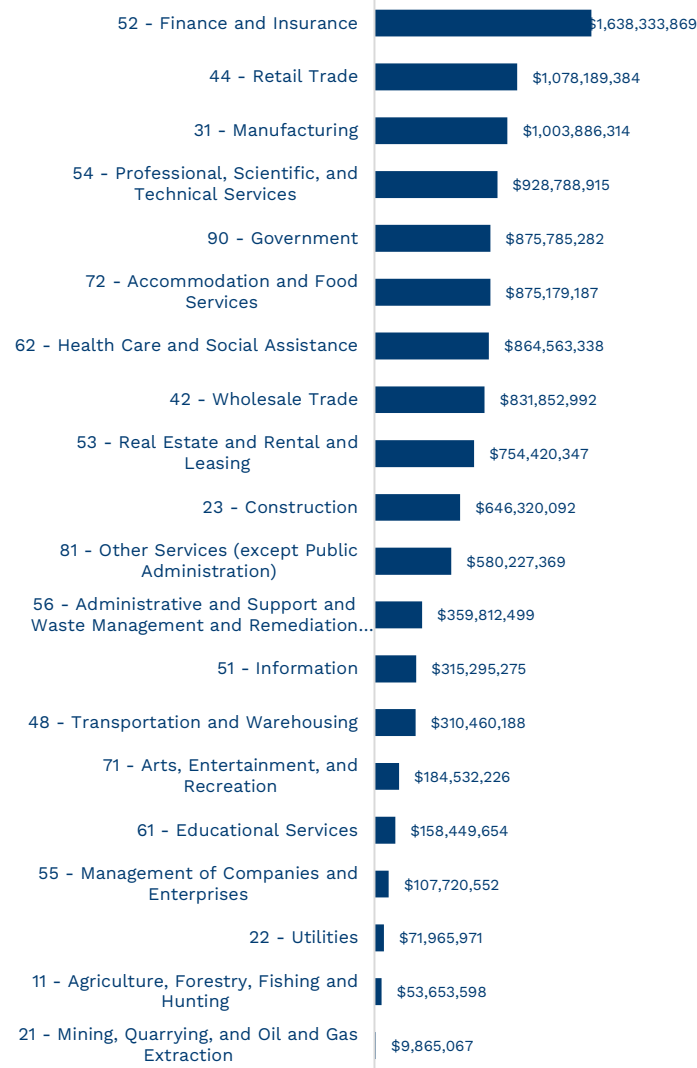


Source: Lightcast 2023.1

## Industry Gross Regional Product

The gross regional product (GRP) represents the final market value of all goods and services produced by an industry in St. Johns County. It is the sum of industry earnings, taxes on production and imports, profits, minus subsidies. The Finance & Insurance industry has the largest GRP in the county, over \$1.6 billion. Two other industries, Retail Trade and Manufacturing, have GRPs larger than \$1 billion.

Figure 38: Industry GRP, 2022



Source: Lightcast 2023.1

## Industry Earnings

Industry earnings represent all wages, salaries, supplements, and proprietor income for an industry in the region. The finance and insurance industry, which had the largest GRP, also has the largest industry earnings.

Figure 39: Industry earnings, 2022



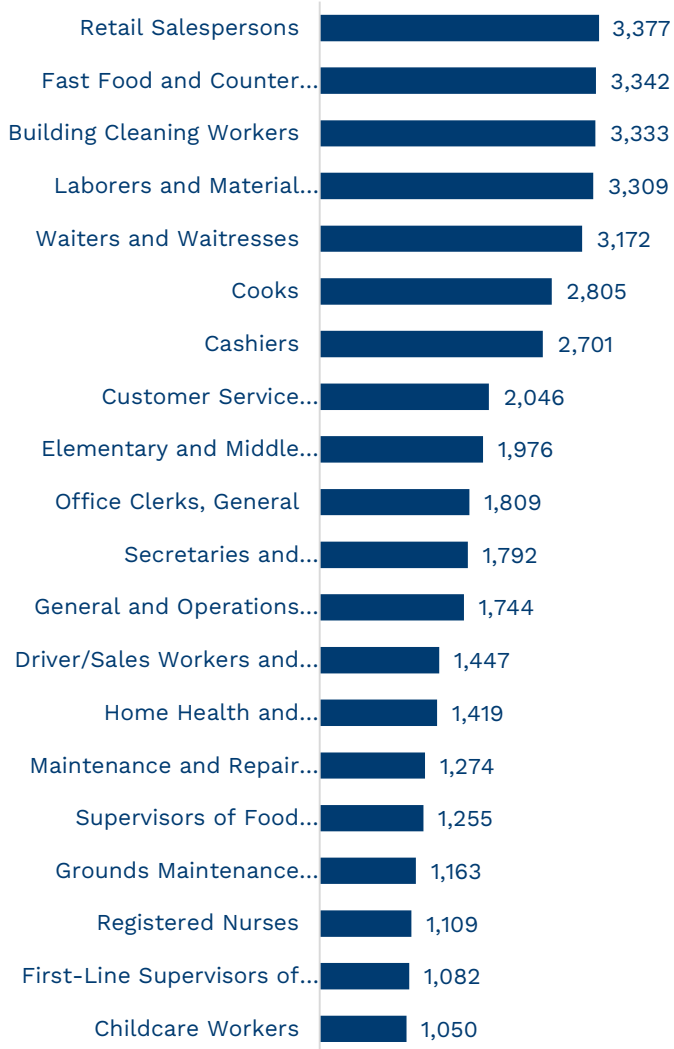
Source: Lightcast 2023.1

## WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS

### Largest Occupations

Many of the largest occupations are jobs commonly associated with the tourism industry. Healthcare workers, including home health aides and nurses, also feature prominently in the top occupations, as well as teachers and childcare workers.

Figure 40: Top 20 largest occupations by number of jobs, 2022

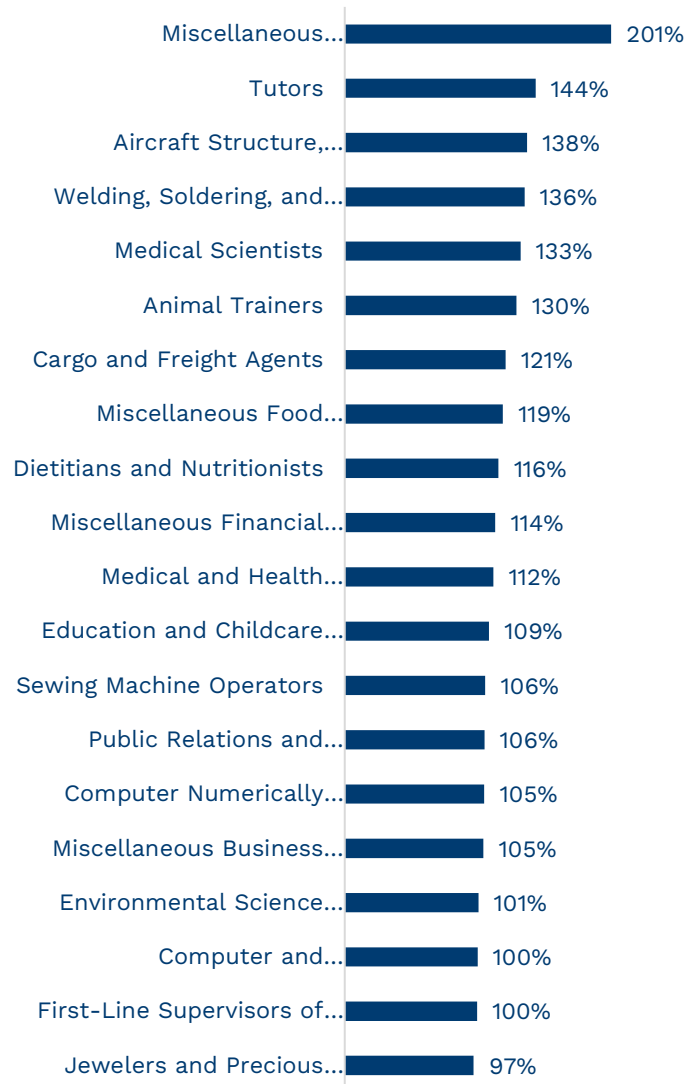


Source: Lightcast 2023.1

### Top Growing Occupations

Numerous industries in St. Johns County have seen over 100% growth over the past five years. Many of these jobs could be associated with the aerospace industry, providing further proof of growth in that sector. Taken alone, these numbers should be interpreted with caution; while these occupations saw large growth, almost all of these occupations have less than 500 jobs in the county.

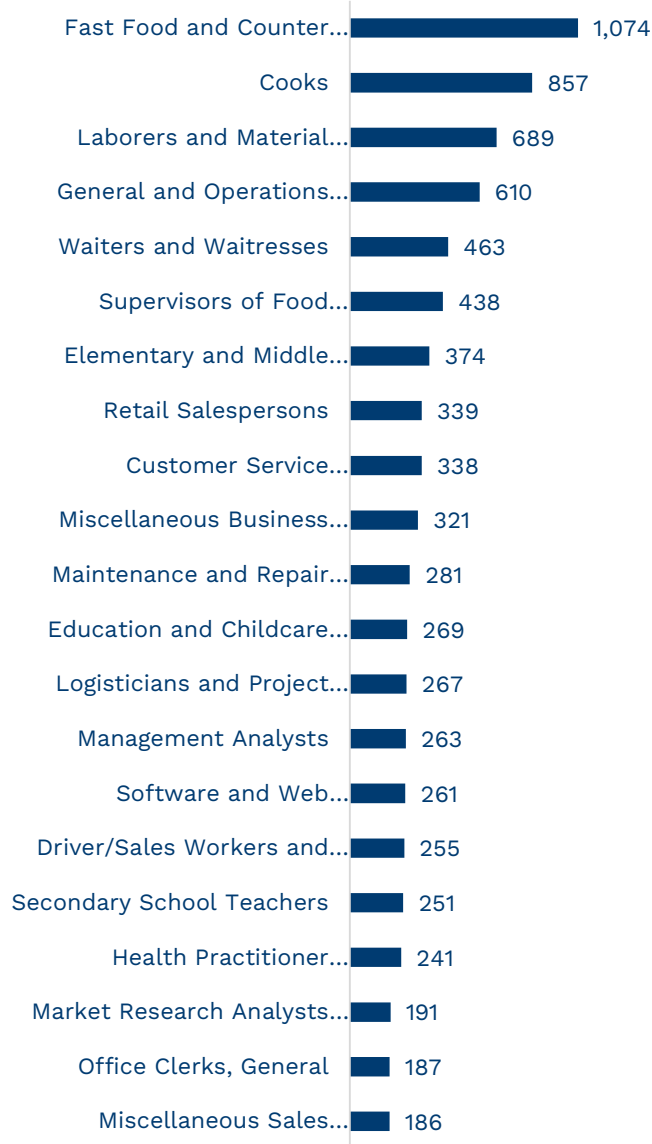
Figure 41: Top growing occupations by percent change in number of jobs, 2017 to 2022



Source: Lightcast 2023.1

Because measuring percent growth does not account for the size of the occupation in the region, top growing occupations by number of jobs are provided below. There is significant overlap between the largest occupations and the top growing occupation, by number of jobs. Over the past five years, the number of fast food & counter workers, the second largest occupation in St. Johns, increased by over 1,000 jobs. Cooks, laborers & material movers, and general & operations managers also saw strong growth.

**Figure 42: Top growing occupations by change in number of jobs, 2017 to 2022**

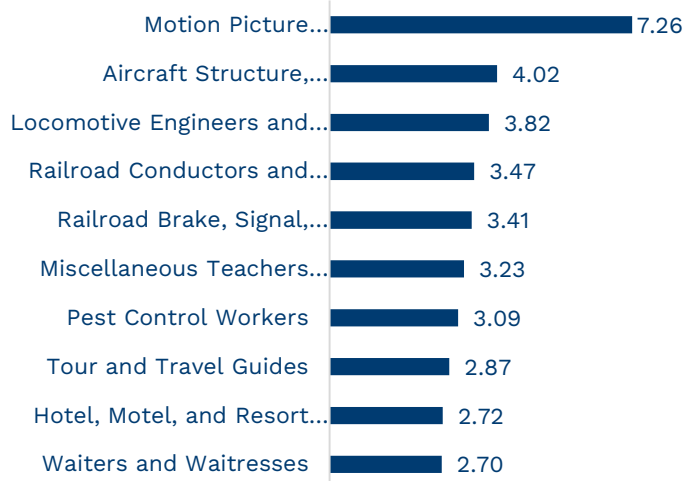


Source: Lightcast 2023.1

## Occupation Location Quotient

Of the 448 potential occupations, SJC is specialized in 28% of them. The 10 occupations with the largest LQ (indicating the highest degree of specialization) can be found below.

**Figure 43: Occupation location quotient, 2022**



Source: Lightcast 2023.1



## Occupations by Median Annual Earnings

There are 21 occupations in St. Johns County with median annual earnings over \$100,000, indicating high-earning potential within the county. However, the top five largest occupations (discussed above) have median annual earnings of less than \$30,000. Considering the needs of both high- and low-wage workers is crucial for continued growth in the county.

Figure 44: Occupations earning over \$100,000, 2022



Source: Lightcast 2023.1

## Automation Risk

Lightcast's Automation Index measures the potential risk of automation for occupations based on the tasks associated with those jobs, using information from O\*Net. Occupations with a score above 100 have an above average risk of automation, while occupations with a score below 100 have a below average risk of automation. There are 184 occupations in St. Johns that are at risk of automation. A graph showing the 20 most at-risk occupations can be seen below.

Figure 45: Occupations most at-risk for automation, 2022



Source: Lightcast 2023.1

## In-Demand Occupations

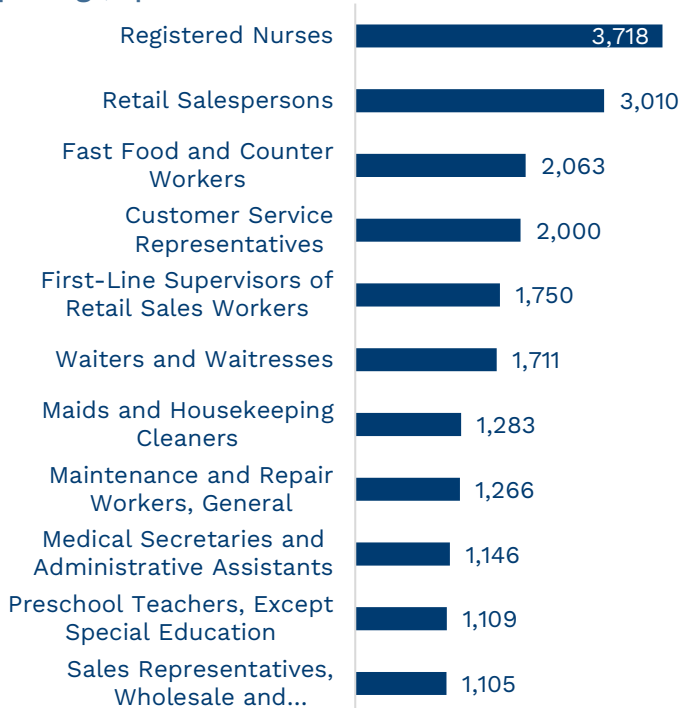
Multiple measures can be used to identify in-demand occupations within St. Johns County. This report will examine three different measures of job postings, provided by Lightcast.

The first is total job postings. Total job postings provide the total number of job postings by occupation that Lightcast has gathered from over 45,000 websites, including duplicates. Based on this measure, registered nurses, retail workers, food service workers, and customer service workers are the most in-demand.

The second measure is unique job postings. This is the count of job postings by occupation after the total job postings have been deduplicated. As with before, registered nurses, retail workers, food service workers, and customer service workers are the most in-demand.

The final measure is job posting intensity. This is the ratio of total postings to unique postings. A higher posting intensity can indicate that more effort is required to fill open positions, another way to view in-demand occupations. This gives a slightly different picture than the previous two measures. While nurses and food service workers are still highly ranked, they aren't the most in-demand. Using this measure, dental assistants, preschool teachers, and customer service representatives are the most in-demand occupations.

**Figure 46: Most in-demand occupations by total postings, April 2022 to March 2023**



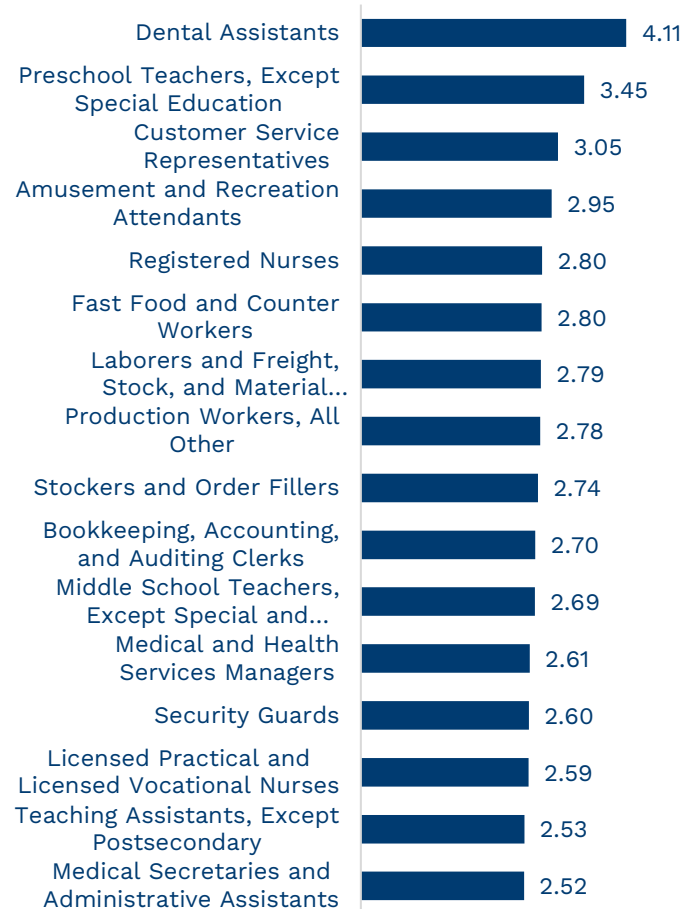
Source: Lightcast 2023.1

**Figure 47: Top occupations by unique job postings, April 2022 to March 2023**



Source: Lightcast 2023.1

**Figure 48: Top occupations by posting intensity, April 2022 - March 2023**

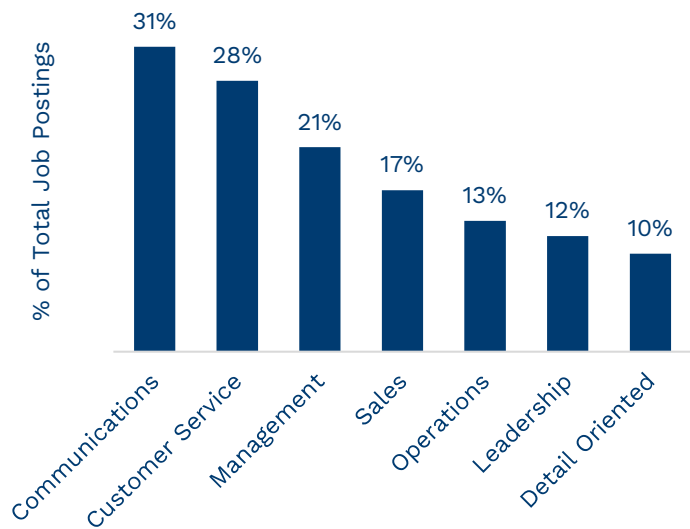


Source: Lightcast 2023.1

In-Demand Skills

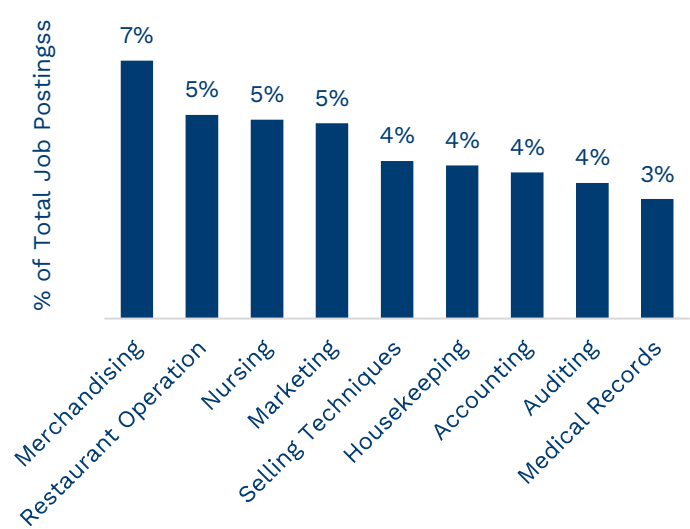
Lightcast “reads” job postings, to provide insight into the most in-demand skills. For jobs in St. Johns County, communication, customer service, management, sales, and operations skills are the most in-demand employability skills (also known as soft skills or foundational skills), all appearing in over 10% of postings. Most of the top specialized skills (or hard skills) revolve around healthcare, retail, and food service, which is expected based on the most in-demand occupations. The top software found in job postings are different components of Microsoft Office, followed by SQL, a database programming language.

Figure 49: Top employability skills, April 2022 - March 2023



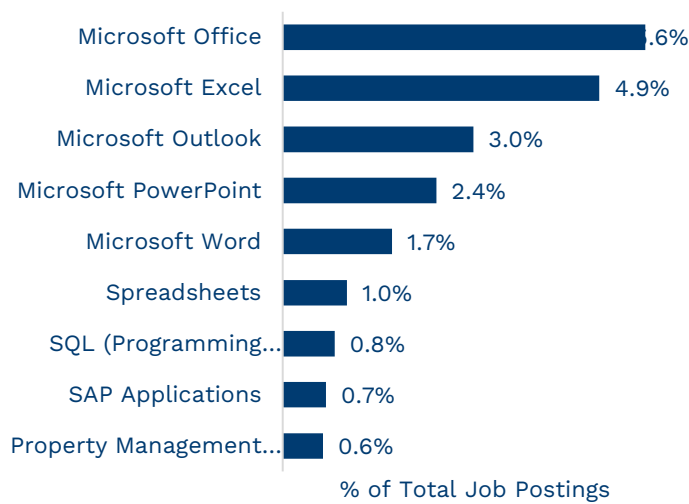
Source: Lightcast 2023.1

Figure 50: Top specialized skills, April 2022 - March 2023



Source: Lightcast 2023.1

Figure 51: Top software skills, April 2022 - March 2023



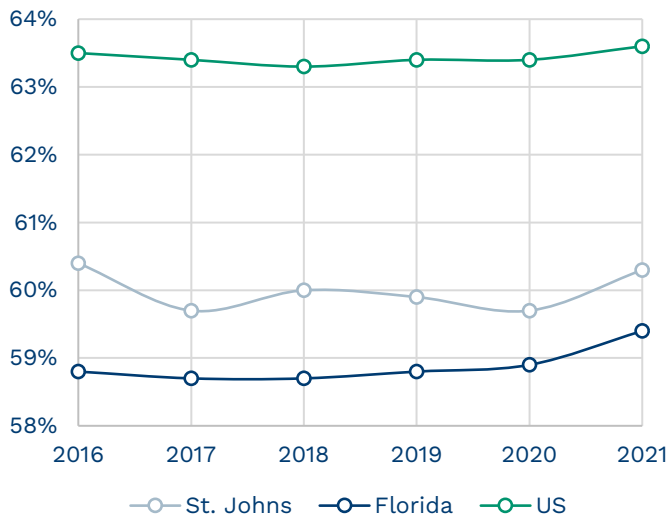
Source: Lightcast 2023.1



## Labor Force Participation Rate

In 2021, St. Johns County had a labor force participation rate (LFPR) of 60.3%. This was about one percentage point higher than the state level, but about three percentage points lower than the national rate.

Figure 52: Labor force participation rate, 2016 to 2021

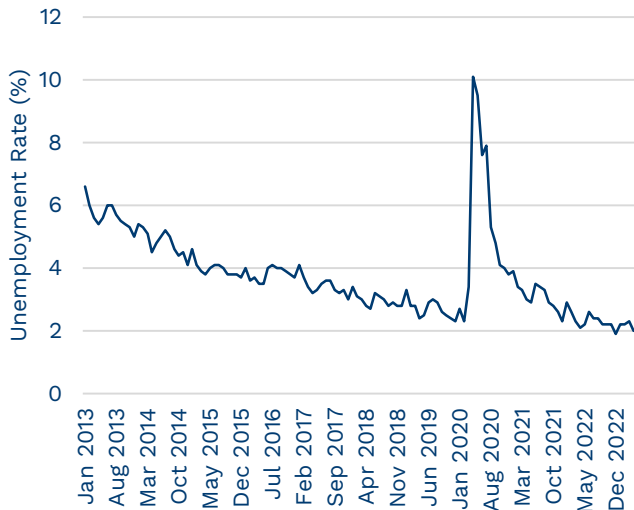


Source: 2016 – 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

## Unemployment Rate

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the unemployment rate in St. Johns County was steadily trending downward. During the pandemic, the unemployment rate increased significantly, reaching 10.1% at its peak. Since then, the unemployment rate has recovered and is hovering around 2%.

Figure 53: Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted), January 2013 to April 2023

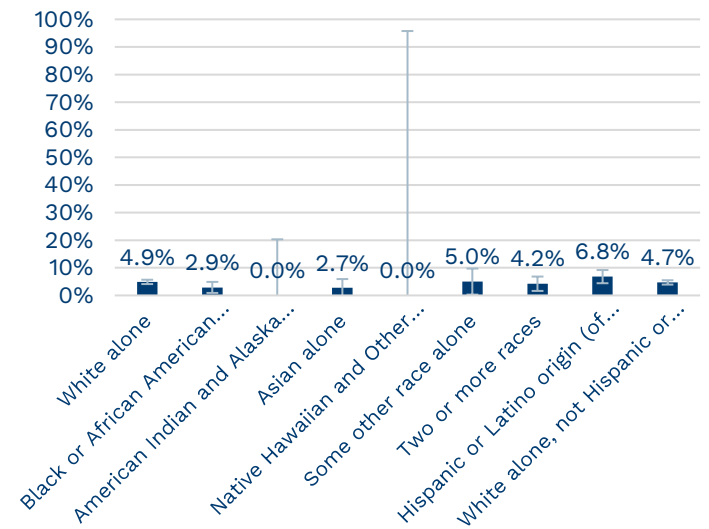


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

## Unemployment by Race and Ethnicity

Hispanic or Latino individuals have the highest unemployment rate, 6.8%. This is followed by Whites and individuals of some other race, 4.9% and 5.0% respectively.

Figure 54: Unemployment rate by race and ethnicity, 2021



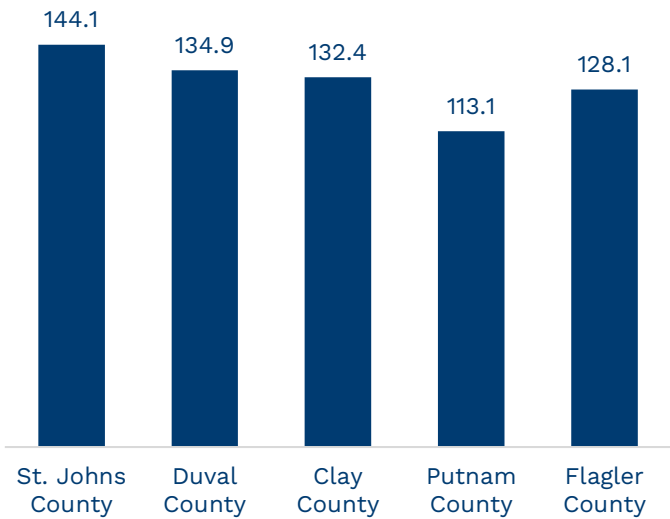
Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.



Innovation Intelligence Index

The Innovation Intelligence Index (I3) by Stats America uses measures of human capital and knowledge creation, business dynamics, business profiles, employment and productivity, and economic well-being to create an overall index to help users understand the potential innovation capacity of an area. Overall, innovation capacity is high in St. Johns; it is ranked 25<sup>th</sup> out of all counties in the US and has a higher score than nearby communities.

Figure 55: Innovation Intelligence Index overall score by county



Source: StatsAmerica Innovation Intelligence Index.

Subindexes are generated from the measures used in the I3. These subindexes can provide more information about which areas SJC excels at and where it needs improvement. The Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Index measures the capacity of an area’s population and labor force to engage in innovation activities. Some measures included are population growth rate for individuals ages 35 to 44, educational attainment, and patent activity. Overall, SJC has a high level of competitiveness, though compared to its neighbors, the score is middle-of-the-road.

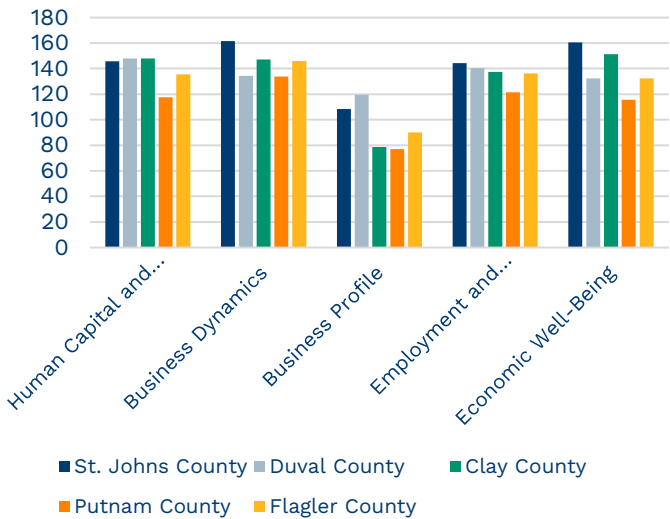
The Business Dynamics Index measures the competitiveness of a region through the entry and exit of individual firms, as well as venture capital activity in the area. SJC excels in this area, scoring higher than any of the nearby counties.

The Business Profile Index measures local business conditions and resources, such as foreign direct investment and broadband access. Of the five counties, SJC scores the second highest.

The Employment and Productivity Index economic growth, regional desirability through industry clusters, and the outcomes of innovative activities, such as GDP and patent activity. As with the Business Dynamics Index, SJC scored the highest.

The Economic Well-Being Index uses information such as broadband connectivity, per capita income growth, poverty rate, and net migration to measure standard of living. SJC scores higher than its neighbors, indicating the presence of a higher standard of living.

Figure 56: Innovation Intelligence sub-indexes for St. Johns and four neighboring counties

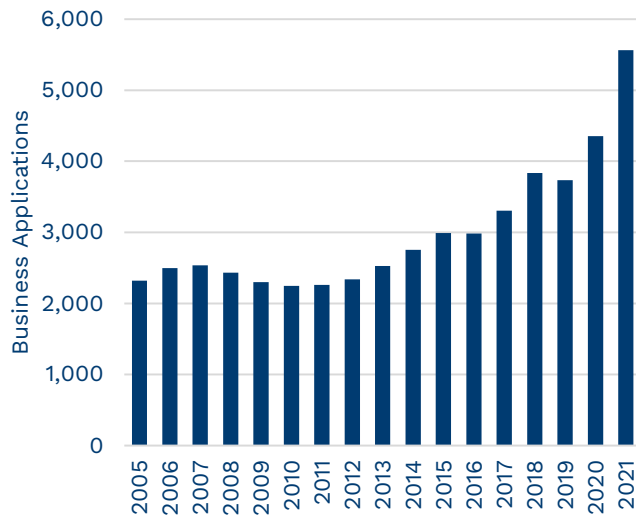


Source: StatsAmerica Innovation Intelligence.

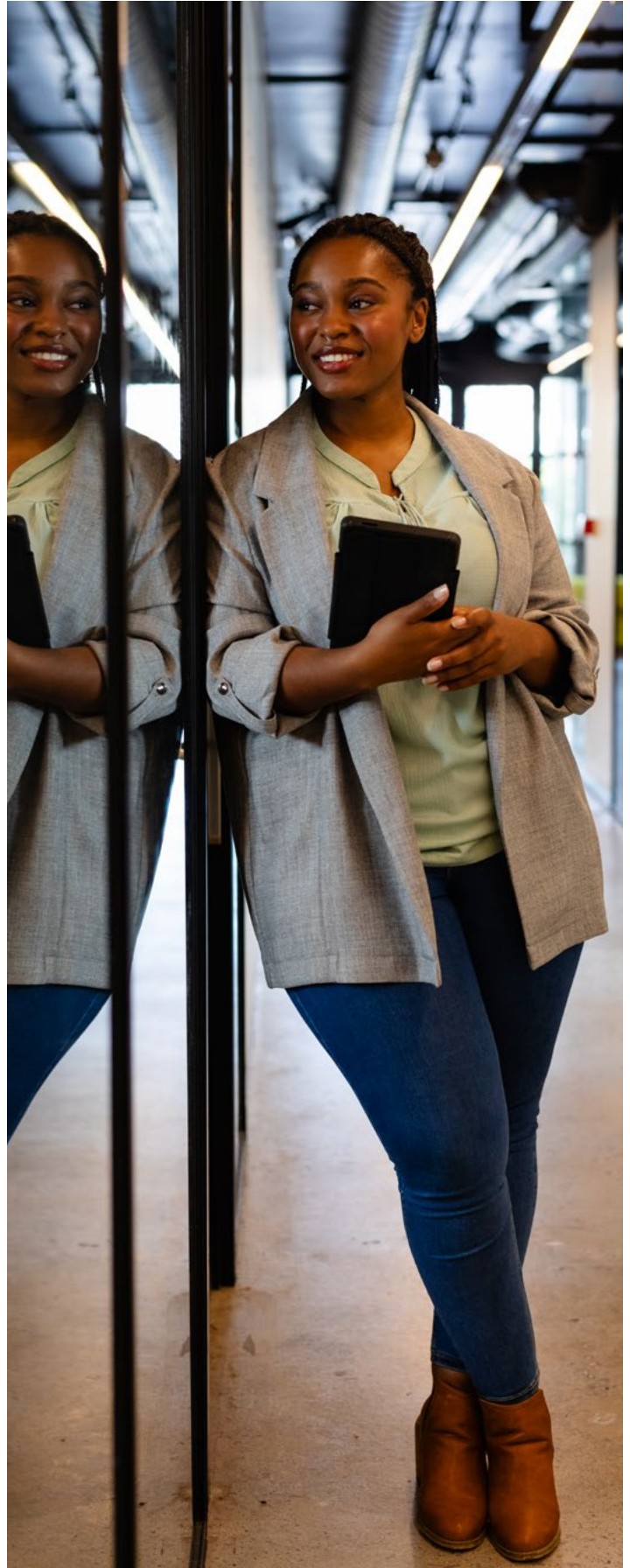
## Business Applications

Since 2005, business applications in St. Johns County have trended upward. There have been slight dips, such as during the Great Recession, but overall, applications have been up. In 2021, there were 5,565 business applications, 86.6% higher than in 2016, and 139.9% higher than in 2005.

Figure 57: Business applications in St. Johns County, 2005 to 2021



Source: US Census Bureau Business Formation Statistics.



# Infrastructure

St. Johns County is making significant investments in infrastructure. As of September 5, 2023, SJC has 195 capital projects under design or construction, totaling over \$503 million in infrastructure investments. Of those 195 projects, 120 are currently under construction, with a total budget of approximately \$401 million. The remaining 75 are in the design phase, with a total cost of about \$103 million.<sup>17</sup>

To support these projects, SJC formed the Infrastructure Delivery Team in 2023, which focuses on delivering innovative solutions to infrastructure issues. The team includes the Office of Management and Budget, Land Management, Procurement, Growth Management, and Public Works.

## HIGHWAYS AND INTERSTATES

Eight highways and interstates run through the county, providing convenient access throughout Florida and all up the Eastern Seaboard. I-10, located just 33 miles outside of the county, covers the southern United States, from Florida to California.

Table 3: Interstates and highways in St. Johns County

FEDERAL INTERSTATES	I-95
FEDERAL HIGHWAYS	US-1
STATE HIGHWAYS	SR-13
	SR-16
	SR-206
	SR-207
	SR-210
	SR-A1A

Source: Economic Development, St. Johns County Government.

## RAILROADS

<sup>17</sup> A dashboard of St. Johns County Capital Improvement Projects can be seen [here](#).

The Florida East Coast Railway, a Class II regional railroad running from Miami to Jacksonville, operates within SJC. Once in Jacksonville, there are connections with other railroads, providing nationwide shipping access, from New York City to the West Coast.

Figure 58: Florida East Coast Railway network



Source: Florida East Coast Railway.

## AIRPORTS

There are two airports in or near St. Johns: the Northeast Florida Regional Airport and Jacksonville Airport.

### Northeast Florida Regional Airport

The Northeast Florida Regional airport is a public airport located about four miles outside of downtown St. Augustine. It has two 8,000-foot runways. For those traveling by private planes, this airport is the easiest way to travel to St. Johns.<sup>18</sup>

### Jacksonville International Airport

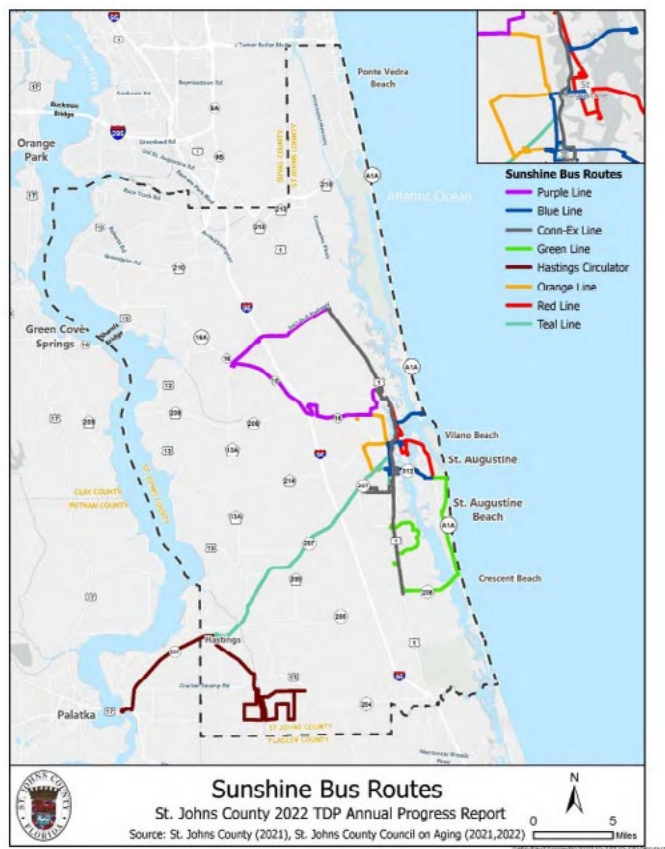
The Jacksonville International Airport is located 49 miles from St. Johns County. Nine airlines operate from Jacksonville International Airport, flying to 40 different airports.

<sup>18</sup> "Getting Here. St. Augustine Ponte Vedra. [https://www.floridashistoriccoast.com/visitor-info/transportation/#:~:text=Northeast%20Florida%20Regional%20Airport%20\(UST,30%20minutes%20from%20Ponte%20Vedra](https://www.floridashistoriccoast.com/visitor-info/transportation/#:~:text=Northeast%20Florida%20Regional%20Airport%20(UST,30%20minutes%20from%20Ponte%20Vedra)

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The St. Johns County Sunshine Bus Company operates a fixed-route service, for the general public, and a demand-response (paratransit) service by reservation. The fixed-route service only operates within the St. Augustine Urbanized Area, providing limited coverage in the county.<sup>19</sup>

Figure 59: Public bus routes in St. Johns County

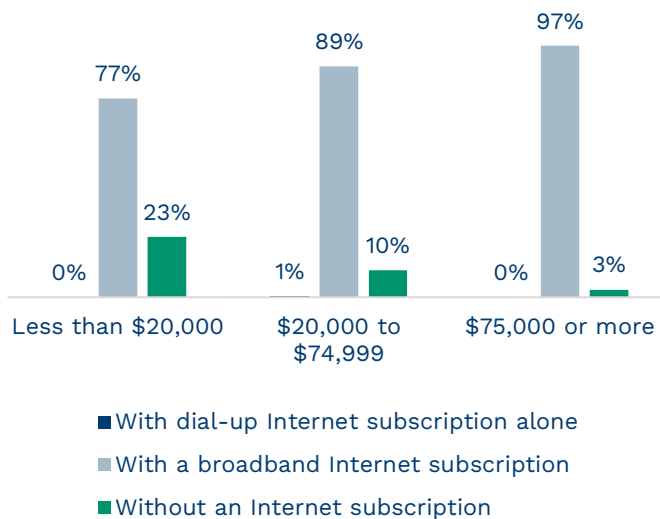


Source: St. Johns County Transit Development Plan, 2022 Annual Progress Report.

## BROADBAND ACCESS

The majority of households in St. Johns County have internet access. Of the 91.1% of households with internet access, 99.6% have access to some sort of broadband, whether that is a cellular data plan, broadband, or satellite. While most households have internet access, the distribution by income is unequal. Over 20% of households with annual incomes less than \$20,000 have no internet subscription, compared to just 3% of households with incomes of \$75,000 or more per year.

Figure 60: Internet access by income level, 2021



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

<sup>19</sup> "Public Transit." Transportation Development, St. Johns County Government. <https://www.sjcfl.us/Transportation/Transit.aspx>



# Environmental Impacts

## WATER SUPPLY

St. Johns County operates 894 miles of water mains and 731 miles of sewer mains, providing water to 53,250 customers annually.<sup>20</sup> Water for this region comes from the Floridan aquifer, which covers about 100,000 square miles, including the entire state of Florida, as well as parts of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. Water in SJC is treated at eight different treatment plants, as well as purchased from the Jacksonville Electric Authority and the City of St. Augustine. The available water supply in SJC is of concern, and new water supply sources are being explored to meet future demand.<sup>21</sup>

## CLIMATE CHANGE

The climate in St. Johns County is changing. The average temperature has increased by 1.4°F over the past century.<sup>22</sup> Extreme weather events, such as tropical storms and hurricanes, are becoming more intense and more frequent. The rise in sea level will make flooding more frequent. At present, sea levels have only rise by 3 inches, but tidal flooding has increased by 352% across all of Florida since 2000.<sup>23</sup>

St. Johns is already feeling the effects of extreme weather, with Hurricane Ian costing the county approximately \$60 million in repairs.<sup>24</sup> Tropical Storm Nicole, that same year, was estimated to cause \$34 million in damages.<sup>25</sup>

While climate change will have numerous, damaging effects, there may be some opportunities. Freezing temperatures will become rare, which could benefit agriculture during the winter. However, this could be negated by hotter temperatures during the summer. Climate change resiliency projects could bring investment and jobs to St. Johns.

20 "Annual Report 2022." St. Johns County Utility Department. <http://www.sjcfll.us/Utilities/media/2022-SJCUD-Annual-Report.pdf>  
 21 "Protect Our Water." St. Johns County Government. <http://www.co.st-johns.fl.us/protectourwater/index.aspx>  
 22 "Climate at a Glance County Time Series." National Centers for Environmental Information. <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/monitoring/climate-at-a-glance/county/time-series>  
 23 "Florida's Sea Level is Rising." SeaLevelRise.org. <https://sealevelrise.org/states/florida/>  
 24 "After Ian, St. Johns County estimates almost \$60 million for repairs to home, roads, infrastructure." The Florida Times-Union. <https://www.jacksonville.com/story/weather/hurricane/2022/10/07/st-johns-county-st-augustine-left-60-million-damages-after-tropical-storm-ian/8175353001/>  
 25 "Tropical Storm Nicole caused an estimated \$34 million dollars in damages to St. Johns County." News4 JAX. <https://www.news4jax.com/news/local/2022/11/15/tropical-storm-nicole-caused-an-estimated-34-million-dollars-in-damage-to-st-johns-county/>

## AIR QUALITY

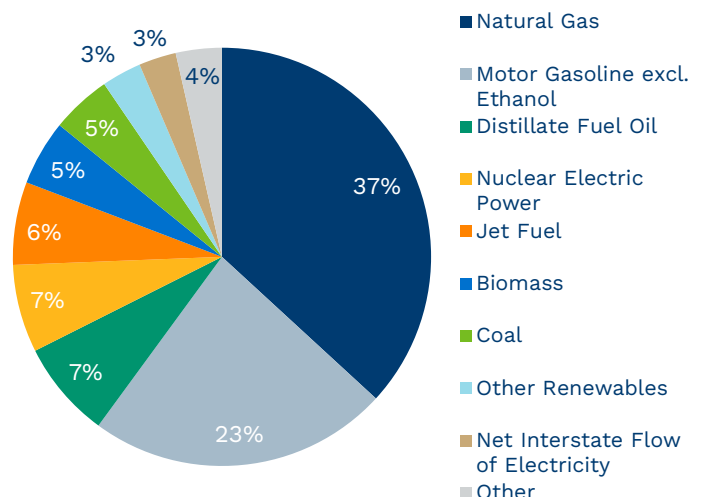
In 2022, Duval County (the closest county with available data) had 182 days of measured air quality data. Seventy percent had "good" ratings, while the rest had "moderate" ratings. No days received "unhealthy" ratings.<sup>26</sup>

## ENERGY PRODUCTION AND USAGE

In 2020, Florida was the fourth highest energy-consuming state, despite consuming less energy per capita than all but six other states. Florida is the nation's second largest producer of electricity, of which about 74% is produced by natural gas. Florida is third in the nation for solar power generation capacity.

On the usage side, in 2021, natural gas was the most consumed type of energy, followed by gasoline (excluding ethanol). As a state with a strong tourism industry, it is the nation's third highest gasoline consumer and second-highest jet-fuel user.

Figure 61: Florida energy consumption estimates, 2021

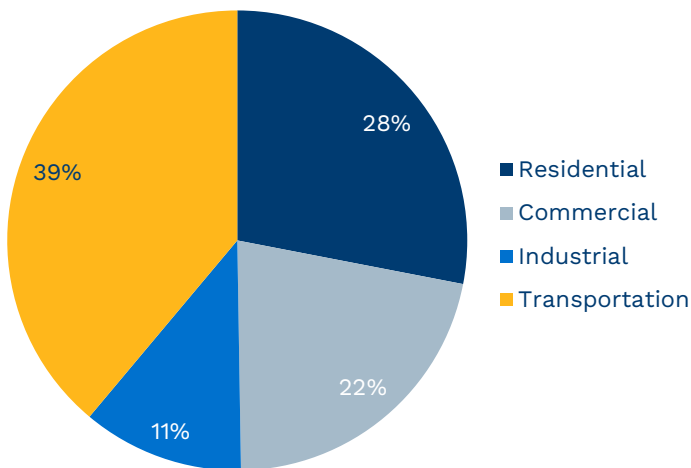


Source: US Energy Information Administration Florida Profile.

The transportation sector uses the most energy of all end-use sectors, 39%. The residential sector consumes the next highest percentage, 28%.

26 "Annual Summary Data." US EPA. [https://aqs.epa.gov/aqswb/airdata/download\\_files.html#Meta](https://aqs.epa.gov/aqswb/airdata/download_files.html#Meta)

Figure 62: Energy consumption by end-use sector



Source: US Energy Information Administration Florida Profile.

Residential and commercial electricity prices in Florida are lower than the United States average.<sup>27</sup> Given that 9 out of 10 households use electricity for home heating and air conditioning, which consumes 54% of electricity used in Florida, the lower prices are a boon for families. Further, this is beneficial for some businesses. However, industrial electricity prices are higher than the national average, which could negatively impact the businesses involved in the production, processing, or assembling of goods.<sup>28</sup>

## Quality of Life and Community Assets

### EDUCATION

Not only is educational attainment high in the county, but the K-12 education system is excellent. The St. Johns County School District has been ranked first in the state for nine consecutive years.<sup>29</sup> Further, 35% of St. Johns County graduates who take the ACT score as being “ready” for college, compared to 18% statewide, and a higher percentage of students are receiving college credit for AP courses, compared to the nation (74% versus 60%).<sup>30</sup>

For those wishing to stay in the county and pursue higher education, there are opportunities for that. Located in SJC are Flagler College, St. Johns River State College’s St. Augustine Campus, and First Coast Technical College. Between these three options, students can earn a four-year degree, a two-year degree, or pursue career and technical education.

### NATURAL ASSETS

With the ocean on one side and a river on the other, there’s no shortage of natural amenities in SJC. There are numerous beaches along the county’s 40+ miles of coastline. Along with the beaches, the county is home to dozens of parks, giving choices to those looking for activities off the water. SJC continues to invest in its natural assets, with 30 parks projects in FY 2024 to create new facilities and improve and expand existing outdoor spaces.

### TOURISM

St. John’s County is home to Florida’s Historic Coast (St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra). With 42 miles of beaches and the oldest European-founded city in the United States, the area attracts tourists from all over to enjoy the coastline and the history, as well as the many other attractions, such as golfing, fine dining, and live music.

Tourism provides a boon to St. Johns County. In fiscal year (FY) 2022, an estimated 3,025,500 tourists visited SJC. The majority of these were overnight visitors, with just over a quarter being day visitors.

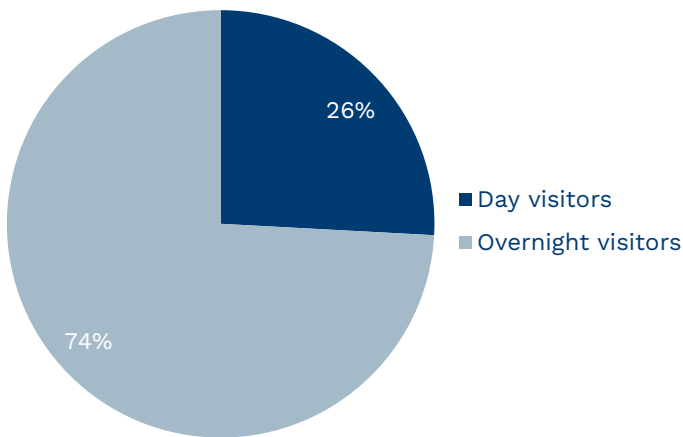
<sup>27</sup> “Florida Profile Data.” US Energy Information Administration. <https://www.eia.gov/state/data.php?sid=FL#Prices>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> “St. Johns County Education.” *St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce*. <https://www.sjcchamber.com/education>.

<sup>30</sup> “District Facts.” *St. Johns County School District*. <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/about/>

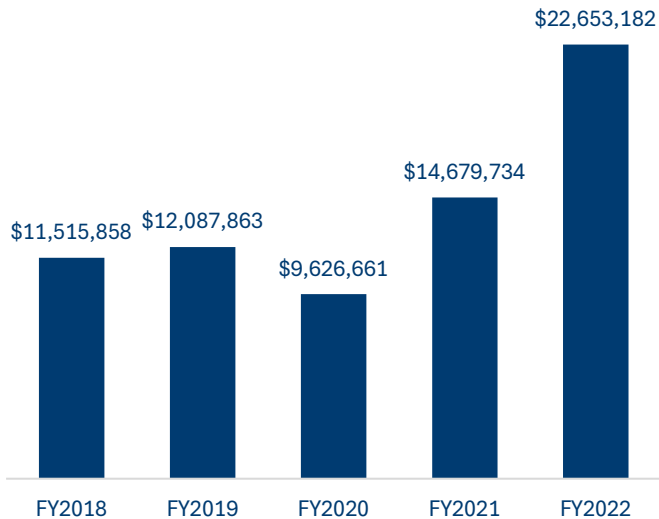
Figure 63: Visitor breakdown, FY2022



Source: Florida’s Historic Coast Economic Impact Report, July 2021 – June 2022.

They spent \$2.5 billion in the county, generating a total economic impact of \$3.8 billion and supporting 32,400 jobs. In total, through taxes and user fees, visitors contributed a net benefit of \$53.6 million to the St. John’s County government, including over \$22 million in tax revenue from the Tourist Development Tax.

Figure 64: Annual tourism development tax collections



Source: FY2017 – FY2022 Annual Reports, St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & the Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau.

CULTURAL AMENITIES

Residents and travelers alike have a multitude of options for activities. Individuals can travel back in time, by visiting the forts, including, Fort Mose, home to the first free African settlement in the US, walking St. Augustine Historic District, or visiting the Colonial Quarter. For those interested in learning more, they can visit the Lightner Museum, the St. Augustine Surf Culture & History Museum, or the Accord Civil Rights Museum, among others. Golf fans can attend the PLAYERS Championship and play at one of the many golf courses in the county. There’s no shortage of things to do in the county.



# Appendix B:

## In-Person Focus Group Results

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGE
1	Public schools	Economic disparity	Higher ed	Additional strategic growth mindset and leadership
2	Natural assets	Housing disparity	Innovation Hubs	Climate change
3	Brand recognition	High wage economic opportunities	Professional, technical, scientific services	Growth/no-growth
4	Educated population	No-growth mindset	Support and resources for farmers to get products to market	Natural resource elimination due to growth
1	Schools/education	Housing costs/affordable housing	Business incentives program	Insurance costs
2	Natural assets	Labor participation	Youth-developing program	Managing growth
3	Community pride	County identity	Professional, technical, scientific companies	Political climate (national and state)
4	Development opportunities in the right areas/right reasons	Aging population	Enhanced entrepreneurial growth	Climate change
1	Tourism	Housing	Tech corridor diversity	Population growth
2	Quality of life/livability	Diversification industry	Airport opportunities	Economic competition (county/state)
3	Natural assets	Economic disparities	Regional collaboration	Housing and insurance
4	Schools	Aging population	Vocational training	Political climate
1	History	Public transportation traffic	Climate adaptation	Climate change/flooding
2	Natural assets	Housing	Prof, tech, scientific training/services	Insurance costs
3	Public school district	Lack of growth mindset	Strategic marketing	Political climate
4		Economic disparity	Vocational education	Population growth
1	Natural assets	Transportation infrastructure	Medical/healthcare	Climate change/flooding
2	Public school	Workforce housing	Financial sector	Cost of insurance
3	Location	Lack of existing commercial tax property or zoning to build	Friendly area for startups and businesses to move	Protecting natural assets
4	Highly educated workforce	History makes it difficult to grow around	Organized plan for future	Political climate



	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGE
1	Tourism	Economic disparity	Professional, tech, scientific services	Population growth
2	Schools	Multi-modal transportation	Enhance entrepreneurship	Political climate
3	Tax & regulatory environment	High wage economic opportunities	Business incentive program	Automation in key industries
4	Natural assets	Affordable housing	Environmental protection	Low wage
1	Natural assets	Lack of diversity in economy	Business incentive programs	Exponential growth and overdevelopment
2	Public schools	Affordable housing	Healthcare & tech opportunities	Overpopulated schools
3	Tourism	Backlog of supporting infrastructure	Expand tourism	Loss of green space and farmland
4	Tax environment and low crime	High wage opportunities	Protect green space and farmland	Lack of St. Johns identity
1	Educated population	Affordable housing for essential workers	New tax revenue opportunities	Retention of local essential workers
2	K-12 and post-secondary education quality	Infrastructure/traffic congestion	Automation/training and developing to support automated industry	Short-term rentals
3	Health environment/ community pride	Lack of industrial space	Regional collaboration	Insurance costs
4	Tourism	Lack of focus and coordination of econ. Dev. Efforts	Growing population	Political climate
1	Natural assets	Housing costs	Entrepreneurial support system	
2	Tourism	Public transportation	Strategic economic development	
3	Public schools	Aging population	Regional collaboration	
4	Educated population		Diversified tourism	

# Appendix C:

## Target Industry Trade Associations

### AEROSPACE

- [Aeronautical Repair Station Association](#)
- [Aerospace Industries Association](#)
- [Air Traffic Control Association \(ATCA\)](#)
- [Aircraft Electronics Association \(AEA\)](#)
- [Aviation Suppliers Association \(ASA\)](#)
- [General Aviation Manufacturers Association \(GAMA\)](#)
- [Helicopter Association International \(HAI\)](#)
- [Satellite Industry Association \(SIA\)](#)
- [Space Foundation \(SF\)](#)
- [American Astronautical Society](#)
- [American Gear Manufacturers Association](#)
- [American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics](#)
- [Armed Forces Communication Electronics Association](#)
- [Army Aviation Association of America](#)
- [Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International](#)
- [Aviation Distributors and Manufacturers Association](#)
- [Aviation Suppliers Association](#)
- [National Aeronautic Association](#)
- [Satellite Industry Association](#)

### TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

- [Airlines for America](#)
- [American Trucking Association](#)
- [American Waterways Operators](#)
- [Association for Supply Chain Management](#)
- [Association of American Railroads](#)
- [Customized Logistics and Delivery Association](#)
- [Florida Trucking Association](#)
- [Intermodal Association of North America](#)
- [International Air Transport Association](#)
- [International Warehouse Logistics Association](#)
- [National Freight Transportation Association](#)
- [National Motor Freight Traffic Association](#)
- [Transportation Intermediaries Association](#)

### BIOSCIENCES

- [Advanced Medical Technology Association](#)
- [Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation](#)
- [Association of Medical Diagnostics Manufacturers](#)
- [BioCentury](#)
- [BioFlorida](#)
- [Biotechnology Innovation Organization](#)
- [Florida Medical Manufacturers Consortium](#)
- [Institute of Clinical Research](#)
- [Medical Device Manufacturers Association](#)
- [National Organization of Research Development Professionals](#)
- [Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America](#)
- [Society for Clinical Trials](#)
- [The Association of Clinical Research Professionals](#)

## **BUSINESS SERVICES**

- [American Council of Engineering Companies](#)
- [American Council of Engineering Companies of Florida](#)
- [American Institute of Chemical Engineers](#)
- [American Society of Civil Engineers](#)
- [American Society of Professional Estimators](#)
- [Engineering and Construction Contracting Association](#)
- [Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers](#)
- [Institute of Management Consultants](#)
- [National Institute of Building Sciences](#)
- [National Society of Professional Engineers](#)
- [Society of Automotive Engineers](#)
- [Society of Professional Consultants](#)

## **DEFENSE AND HOMELAND SECURITY**

- [Florida Defense Contractors Association](#)
- [Homeland Security & Defense Business Council](#)
- [Institute of Makers of Explosives](#)
- [International Association of Professional Security Consultants](#)
- [National Armaments Consortium](#)
- [National Defense Industrial Association](#)
- [Professional Services Council](#)
- [Security Industry Association](#)
- [The National Defense Transportation Association](#)
- [The National Homeland Security Association](#)

## **FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE SERVICES**

- [AHIP](#)
- [American Bankers Association](#)
- [American Council of Life Insurers](#)
- [American Credit Union Mortgage Association](#)
- [American Financial Services Association](#)
- [American Investment Council](#)
- [America's Credit Unions](#)
- [Bank Policy Institute](#)
- [Bond Dealers of America](#)
- [Consumer Bankers Association](#)

- [Futures Industry Association](#)
- [Global Business Alliance](#)
- [Independent Community Bankers of America](#)
- [Institute of International Finance](#)
- [Managed Funds Association](#)
- [Mortgage Bankers Association](#)
- [Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association](#)

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL INSTRUMENTS**

- [American Council for Technology – Industry Advisory Council](#)
- [Association for Information Science and Technology](#)
- [Business Software Alliance](#)
- [Chamber of Progress](#)
- [Computer & Communications Industry Association](#)
- [Computer Technology Industry Association](#)
- [Consumer Technology Association](#)
- [CTIA – the Wireless Association](#)
- [Federation of Internet Solution Providers of the Americas](#)
- [Fiber Optic Sensing Association](#)
- [Global Semiconductor Alliance](#)
- [Information Technology Industry Council](#)
- [JEDEC Solid State Technology Association](#)
- [Satellite Broadcasting & Communications Association](#)
- [Semiconductor Industry Association](#)
- [SEMI](#)
- [Service Industry Association](#)
- [Society for Information Management](#)
- [Software and Information Industry Association](#)
- [Storage Networking Industry Association](#)
- [Technology and Services Industry Association](#)
- [The App Association](#)
- [US Telecom Association](#)

## MARKETING, DESIGN, AND PUBLISHING

- [American Advertising Federation](#)
- [American Association of Advertising Agencies](#)
- [American Association for Public Opinion Research](#)
- [American Marketing Association](#)
- [Association of American Publishers](#)
- [Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers](#)
- [Association for National Advertisers](#)
- [Insights Association](#)
- [Out of Home Advertising Association](#)
- [Public Relations Society of America](#)
- [World Association for Public Opinion Research](#)





# Appendix D:

## Sample Incentive Scoring Matrix

Sample Scoring Matrix for New & Expanding Business Projects		
Category	Possible Points	Sample Scoring
<b>Community Impact &amp; Investment</b>	<b>40</b>	
Total capital investment*	10	
Duration of commitment to retain jobs in the community	10	
Impact on property valuation	10	
Square footage of new construction	10	
Time required to reach full increased property valuation	10	
<b>Wages &amp; Job Creation</b>	<b>30</b>	
Number of new jobs	10	
Average wage of new jobs	10	
Time required to reach full job creation	10	
<b>Business Factors</b>	<b>20</b>	
Years in business	10	
Length of commitment to retain jobs in the community	10	
<b>Additional Factors**</b>	<b>45</b>	
Targeted industry status	25	
Special zone status	5	
Unincorporated/school capacity	5	
Research and development component	5	
Executive is resident of SJC in relocation project	5	
<b>Total Points Awarded</b>		
<b>Award Tiers</b>		
Tier 1 (highest award)	90 points or more	
Tier 2	70-89 points	
Tier 3	55-69 points	
<i>*less cost of lease if property has received this incentive under speculative development</i>		
<i>**bonus category</i>		

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