



SUMTER COUNTY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2025



CONTENTS

VISION & MISSION	1
INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2-3
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW	4
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	5
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT	6-8
DEMOGRAPHICS	9-10
WORKFORCE ANALYSIS	11-15
ASSETS	16-23
QUALITY OF LIFE	24-27
TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS	28-29
INCENTIVES	30
SWOT	31-35
GOALS, STRATEGIES & ACTIONS	36-47

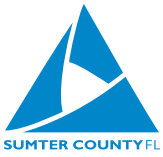
VISION

Sumter County Economic Development will be an innovative and strategic leader in providing support to existing businesses and a catalyst for new businesses locating in Sumter County.

This support will provide essential and effective customer service in a fiscally efficient manner.

MISSION

Develop, encourage, facilitate and participate in programs, plans, processes and activities which result in quality, compatible development and redevelopment. Sumter County Economic Development will focus on cooperative efforts with the private sector to achieve competitive returns on investment, maximize employment opportunities, generate necessary revenue for quality, efficient public services and preserve quality of life for its citizens.



INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023-2025 Sumter County Economic Development Strategic Plan Update (“EDSPU”) builds upon the robust vision, goals, objectives, and strategies of the 2020-2022 Economic Development Strategic Plan, as it considers the achievements and lessons learned from that Plan's implementation.

The EDSPU remains centered on the County's economic priorities and strong competitive position in the region. While maintaining the goals of the previous Plan, the EDSPU is presented with an emphasis on providing recommendations with objectives and strategies that either have been revised or are new, to fit the current economic environment, thereby expanding the scope and purview of the 2020-2022 Economic Development Strategic Plan.

This EDSPU will demonstrate the effectiveness of multipurpose objectives, as they can interplay with goals today. The State of Florida's Strategic Plan for Economic Development 2018-2023 identifies 3 goals and 27 strategies to address key challenges and opportunities. Alignment across governing bodies encourages consistent focus on public and private efforts in long-term partnerships. This EDSPU incorporates the State's economic goals; therefore, the County actively advances the initiatives of the region and the State.

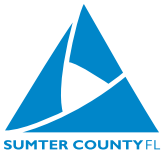
Sumter County Economic Development's mission is to utilize all available resources to provide timely and efficient support to Sumter County's existing businesses and to effectively recruit new industry to Sumter County. This EDSPU supports the mission in a sustainable manner with a focus on future economic resilience.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is fulfilling the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations, while ensuring a balance between economic growth, environmental care, and social well-being. In today's world of business relocation or expansion, careful attention is paid to sustainability, in addition to financial concerns, taxes, workforce, utilities, the supply chain, etc.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Economic resilience seeks to better prepare the community to anticipate, withstand, and bounce back from any type of shock, disruption, or stress experienced. Sumter County's Emergency Management Program is based on a whole community partnership to reduce the loss of life and property and to protect the people of Sumter County through prevention, mitigation preparedness, response, and recovery from all hazards. This is an integral part of a comprehensive strategic plan for economic development.



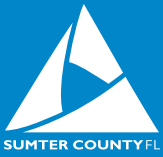
INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The future for Sumter County is brighter than ever. With tremendous assets including natural resources, art, culture and entertainment, a multitude of housing choices, excellent infrastructure and a strong workforce, the appeal to visitors, retirees, and businesses continues to grow. The economy will prosper with continued population growth, and smart planning for the future.

The most important factor in location decisions remains access to talent, especially in technology, research and development, service centers, headquarters, and data centers.

Industrial project considerations are also focused on the proper infrastructure and the supply chain to support a project. Increasingly, sustainability and energy concerns are major factors for all new project developments.





STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

This process included conducting a thorough research review and gathering stakeholder input through reviewing key market data, attending stakeholder meetings conducted by Sumter County Economic Development and reviewing the business survey.

REVIEW OF COMMUNITY PLANS AND DATA

During this phase, a review is done of existing plans, studies, reports, county assets, market data, demographics, property sales and listings from ESRI and CoStar. This provides an understanding of the County's market situation.

Plans and Reports Reviewed:

- ▶ Central Florida Hospitality Market
- ▶ Sumter County Land for Sale
- ▶ Sumter County Industrial for Lease
- ▶ Sumter County Medical for Lease
- ▶ Sumter County Office for Lease
- ▶ Sumter County Retail for Lease
- ▶ The Villages® Industrial Market
- ▶ The Villages® Multi-family Market
- ▶ The Villages® Office Market
- ▶ The Villages® Retail Market
- ▶ Sumter County Community Profile
- ▶ Sumter County Retail Market Potential
- ▶ Sumter County Strategic Plan 2023-2027
- ▶ Sumter County Economic Development Strategic Plan 2020-2022
- ▶ Lake-Sumter MPO





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

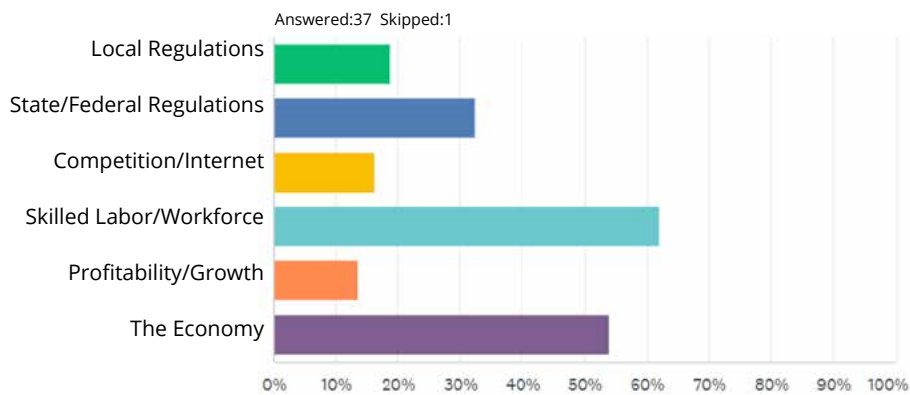
Sumter County Economic Development (SCED) took the lead on the community engagement process. Two sessions were held to gather input from the business community and a survey was distributed to garner additional insight.

The first session was held May 17, 2023, and the second session was held June 7, 2023, both via Zoom to give more business representatives a chance to attend. At both sessions a presentation was made to provide context about the Sumter County EDSPU, the community, its assets, the market, and to gather the business community's perspective on the County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Over 150 people were invited to attend. There were 37 people at the May 17th session and 30 people attended the June 7th session.

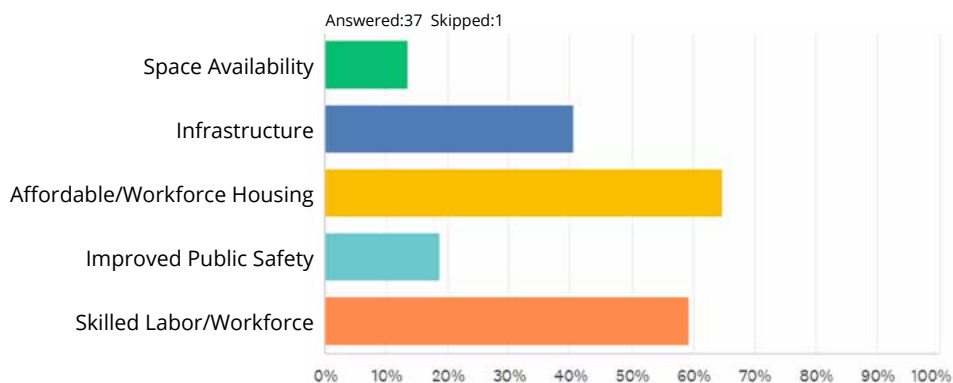
At the sessions, participants were invited to fill out the online survey conducted by SCED. This survey was opened and distributed to the business on May 12, 2023, and closed June 15, 2023. It asked 13 questions that touched on respondent's business information, their vision for the County, and what the County could do to support that vision. When the survey concluded, there were 38 respondents.

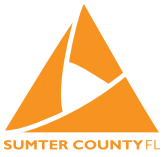
Key findings of the stakeholder meetings and the survey included the issue of skilled/labor workforce as the biggest challenge facing businesses. Affordable/workforce housing was another area in the County respondents said could be improved, however the development of more multi-family units has already provided significant relief to the shortage.

What Would You Say Are the Biggest Challenges Facing Your Business in the Next 12 Months?



What Are Other Areas that Could Be Improved to Better the business Climate for Your Company?

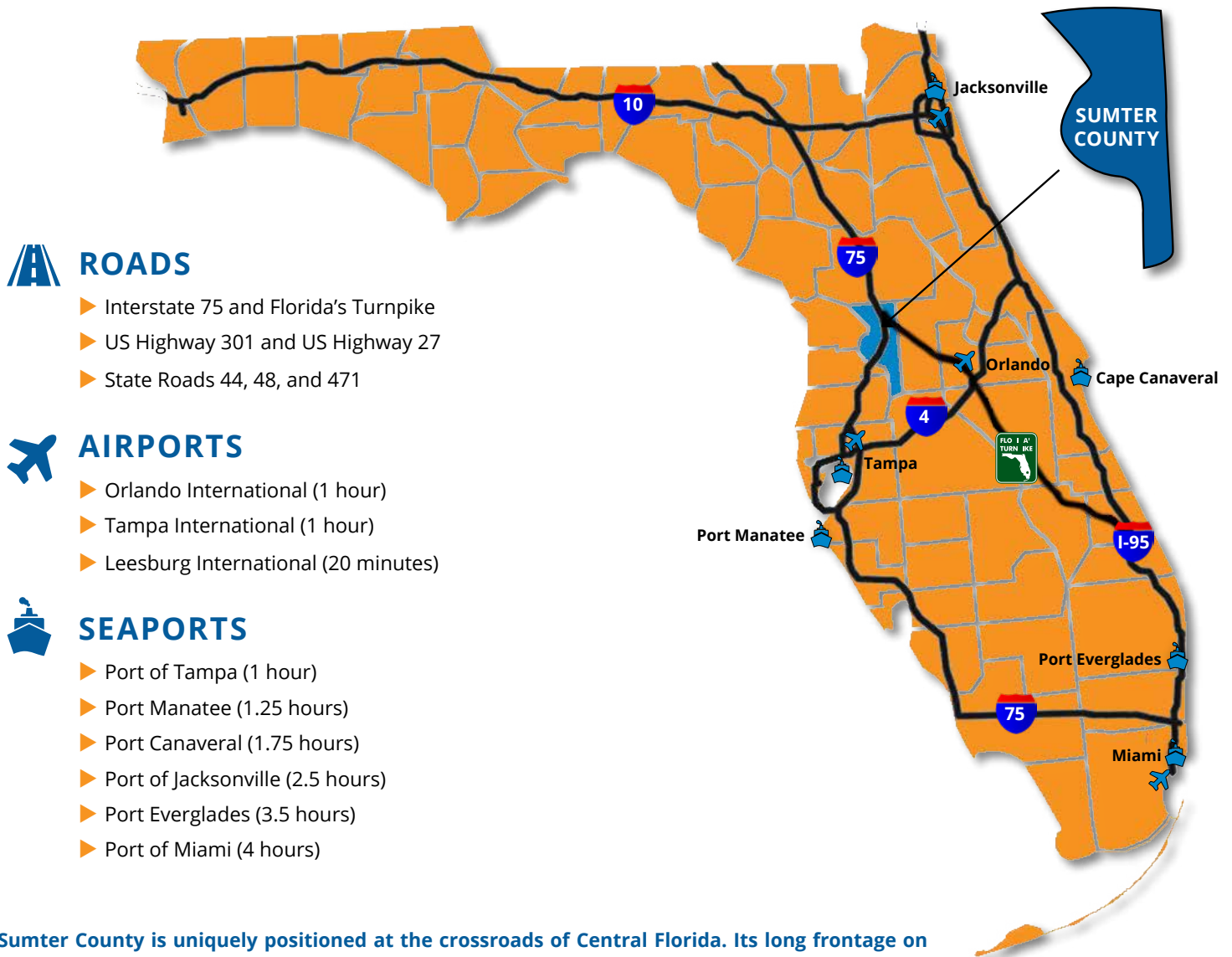




COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Sumter County is located in the Central Florida region and is primarily known as being home of The Villages®, a census designated retirement community with a population of more than 165,000. The County also includes the cities of Wildwood, Bushnell, Webster, Center Hill, and Coleman. The County has 547.7 square miles of land area and is the 53rd largest county in Florida by total area. The County is bordered by Polk County, Hernando County, Citrus County, Lake County, Pasco County, and Marion County. The County has many natural assets and an “Old Florida” character.

Located at the intersection of I-75, the Florida Turnpike and CSX Rail’s main eastern-seaboard freight line, the County is centrally located in the middle of the State of Florida. The agricultural and food industries are prominent in the County and continuing to grow, while The Villages® have contributed to average income increases and retail sales gains for the County.



Sumter County is uniquely positioned at the crossroads of Central Florida. Its long frontage on Interstate 75, U.S. Highway 301, and Florida’s Turnpike bring thousands of potential visitors through the county each day. Sumter County is equidistant from Orlando and Tampa, about one hour’s drive from each. Highway access within Sumter County is convenient and direct.



COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

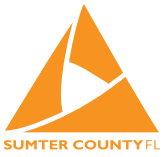
HISTORY

Sumter County's history is one of a strong agriculture basis coupled with cultural significance of its position during the Seminole Indian Wars. It was one of the first communities in the United States established by freed slaves following the Civil War. Today Sumter County is a strong vibrant community, with natural assets and a business climate that welcomes new industry and supports existing ones.

RECENT SUCCESSES

Sumter County has welcomed and celebrates new businesses that have been recruited and existing businesses that have expanded. Additionally, there are several infrastructure projects on the horizon and promising industrial park developments in progress. The following are highlights of some recent successes:

- ▶ Visit Florida reported visitor spending in Sumter County for 2021 was \$433.5 million, up from 2020 which was \$298.5 million and an increase from pre-pandemic levels which were \$390 million in 2019.
- ▶ The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocated \$25,721,033 in total funds received in two payments in 2021 and 2022. In addition to funding ambulance purchases with a portion of the discretionary allocation of the award, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approved the use of ARPA funds for water/sewer and broadband projects.
- ▶ Florida Tax Watch, an independent non-partisan, non-profit government watchdog and taxpayer research institute, reviewed Florida's 67 counties and found that:
 - Sumter County is listed as 4th lowest in total millage (tax) rate in the State of Florida once again
 - 10-year growth in total property tax revenues – 5th position at 110.4% (indicator of growth driving the lower millage rate)
 - 15-year growth: Sumter is #1 (159.2%)
 - Per capita Government Revenue: Sumter is 5th lowest based on FY20/21 (as a point of efficiency of the government)
 - 3rd lowest for per capita government expenditures (FY 20/21)
 - February 2023 – lowest unemployment rate in the State of Florida
- ▶ In 2022, Florida SBDC at UCF-Sumter County secured \$6.1 million in financing for local businesses. They also:
 - Assisted with the creation of 11 new businesses
 - Added 19 new jobs



COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

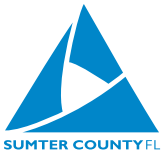
► Targeted Business Expansions/Recruitment Efforts

- Trademark Metals Recycling, \$78M+, manufacturing recruitment, currently in vertical construction phase
- MAPEI, manufacturing expansion, construction completion Q3 2023. MAPEI invested \$20M+ in the expansion and anticipates the need for 160 full-time employees, not counting truck drivers and other staff, to service the facility
- Great Southern Wood, additional manufacturing expansion recognized, first of three incentive payments start 10/1/2023
- Heartland Food Groups, agribusiness recruitment, construction completion Q2 2023 (no incentives)
- Greenlife Farms, agribusiness recruitment, in site plan phase process (no incentives)
- Old Dominion Freight and Werner Trucking, distribution recruitments, (no incentives)

BUSINESS CLIMATE

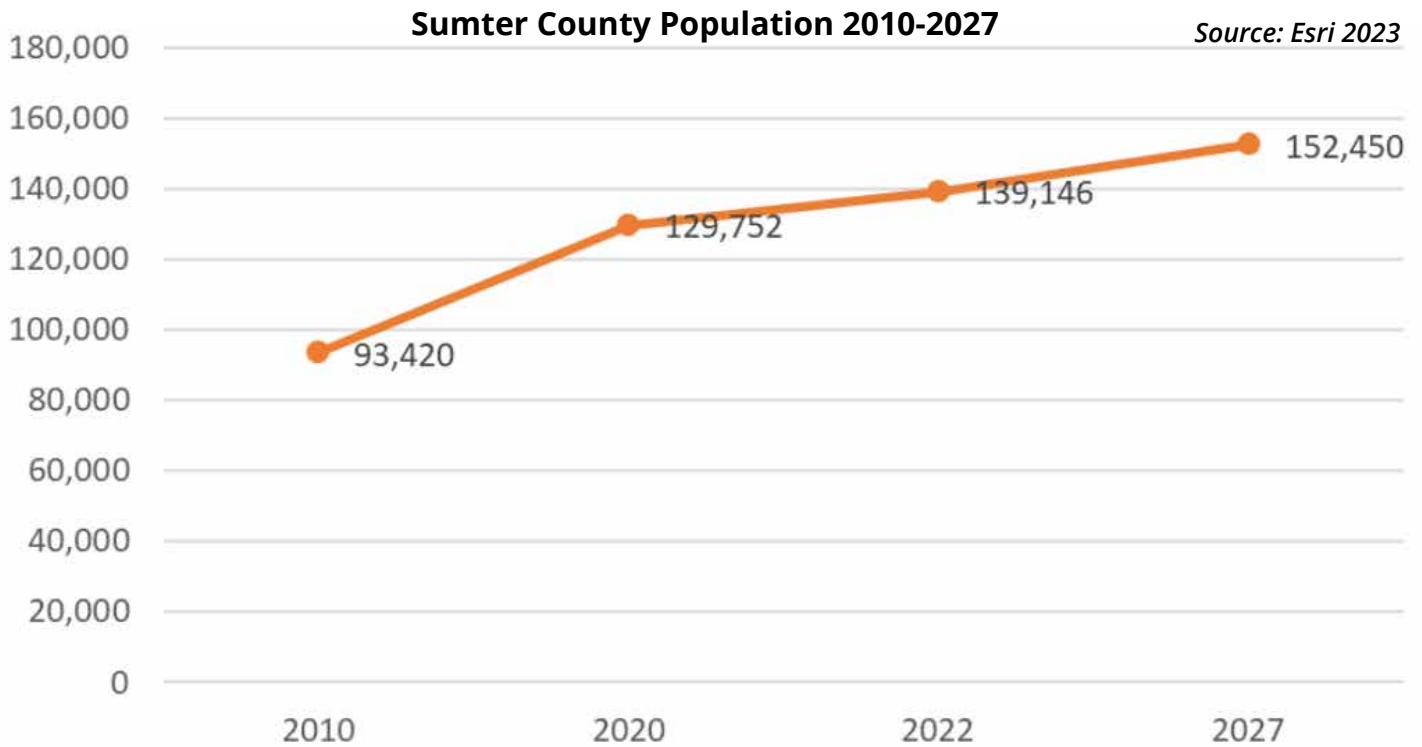
Sumter County's location puts it in a triangle of three top Florida universities: the University of Florida, the University of Central Florida and the University of South Florida. The County also prides itself on featuring some of the most affordable labor, land, water, and electricity in the state. There is easy access to 3 interstates, 2 US Highways, Florida's Turnpike, 2 international airports, a major rail line, and 5 deep water ports. In addition, the County has an Industrial Development Authority whose sole mission is to facilitate business growth and expedited processing of bond issues, with no county issuance fees. The County has expansive capabilities for agribusiness, manufacturing and distribution sectors and focuses on helping businesses expand or relocate to Sumter County.





POPULATION

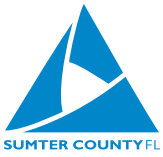
The population of Sumter County in 2022 was 139,146 per Esri data which is an 8% increase from the 2018 population of 128,754 and a nearly 49% increase from the population in 2010. In 2027, the projected population will be 152,450.



A majority of the County population is located in The Villages®, while 28,235 residents (approximately 20%) live in cities.



Source: Esri, Sumter County Economic Development



DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE

According to Esri, the median age in this area is 64.6, compared to U.S. median age of 38.9 (U.S. Census). In most part due to The Villages®, Sumter County has the highest median age of any county in the nation. In 2022, the population between the ages 15-64 is 41.9% which is down from 49.1% in 2010, while the population aged 65+ is 49.2% in 2022, which is up from 43.4% in 2010.

INCOME

The levels for median household income in Sumter County are close to state levels, while the average household income is higher in the state, and the per capita income for the County is higher than the state's.

	SUMTER COUNTY 2023	FLORIDA 2023
Median Household Income	\$65,275	\$65,081
Average Household Income	\$91,379	\$97,191
Per Capita Income	\$45,106	\$38,778

Sources: Esri 2023



WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

This section of the report utilizes statistics and national benchmarks to evaluate the Labor Market in Sumter County. The following are determined by this analysis:

- ▶ What are the workforce skills?
- ▶ Is there available, affordable labor?
- ▶ What are the housing and transportation conditions for the labor force?





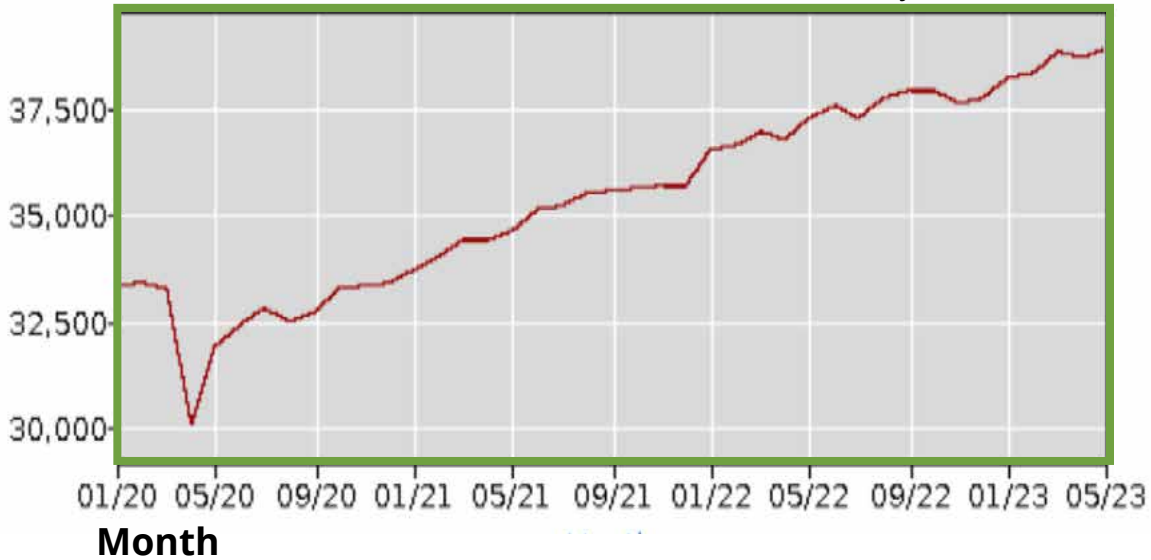
WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

LABOR FORCE

The labor force in Sumter County at the time of this report is 38,951, which has been increasing steadily since January 2020, as illustrated in the following chart. The average weekly wages in Sumter County are \$1013, among the highest in the State.

Labor Force

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Employment is strong in Sumter County, increasing with the labor force.

Employment

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics





WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

INDUSTRY TYPES

The Professional and Business Services sector is the leading industry in the County, employing 20.4% of the Sumter County workforce, followed by Trade, Transportation and Utilities, employing 18.4% of the labor force. Financial Activities follow at 14.4% with Education and Health Services at 12.5%.

Establishments

2021	Sumter County	Florida
All industries	2,300	820,313
Natural Resource & Mining	45	5,545
Construction	214	78,395
Manufacturing	64	22,795
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	424	151,294
Information	30	16,928
Financial Activities	331	89,810
Professional & Business Services	469	205,828
Education & Health Services	287	92,489
Leisure and Hospitality	226	63,682
Other Services	128	57,817
Government	48	5,893

Source: Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research

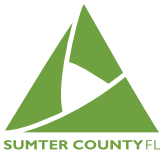
ANNUAL WAGES

The average annual wage for Sumter County is \$49,162 as of 2021, continuing upward. The state of Florida's average annual wage is \$60,299. Financial activities such as banking and wealth management have an average in Sumter County of \$99,181, reflective of the strong per capita personal income of \$64,282 in the County.

Average Annual Wage

2021	Sumter County	Florida
All industries	\$49,162	\$60,299
Natural Resource & Mining	\$48,344	\$42,128
Construction	\$58,957	\$59,088
Manufacturing	\$61,840	\$69,997
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	\$40,734	\$53,762
Information	\$47,766	\$104,461
Financial Activities	\$99,181	\$93,945
Professional & Business Services	\$60,846	\$74,787
Education & Health Services	\$50,339	\$59,043
Leisure and Hospitality	\$22,583	\$31,029
Other Services	\$33,909	\$44,107
Government	\$54,925	\$61,210

Source: Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research



WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

EDUCATION

Sumter County leads the state average in educational attainment with **92.2% persons aged 25 and older having a high school degree, and 32.8% with a bachelor's degree or higher.** Sumter County has a strong public education system with award winning programs. The excellent education system in Sumter County continues to expand with the new Middleton Campus including schools for K-12. Middleton is part of The Villages® Charter School System. The public school system includes career and adult education to prepare adults as well as children for the workforce.



Education Attainment (Population 25 Years and Older) in Sumter County, Florida

High School or equivalent degree - 30.2%

Some college, no degree - 20.2%

Associate's degree - 9.0%

Bachelor's degree - 19.4%

Graduate or professional degree - 13.5%





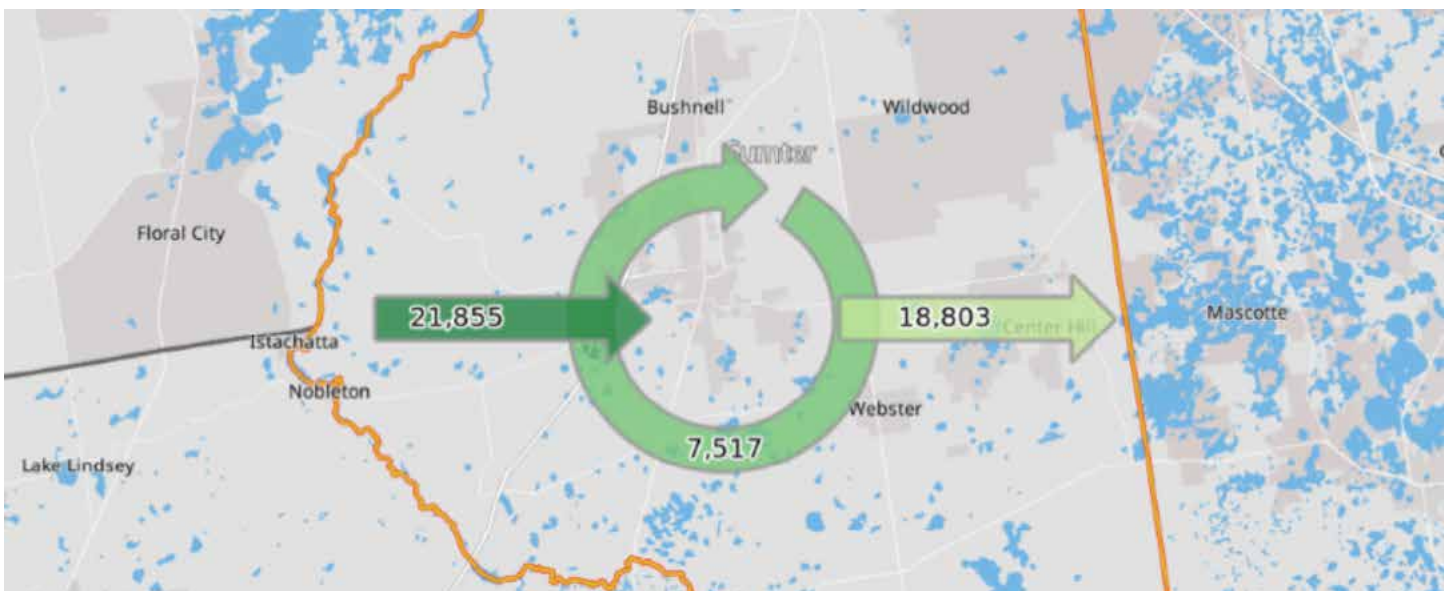
WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

COMMUTING PATTERNS

Sumter County relies on a regional workforce for companies to thrive. Commuting patterns were analyzed using Census Bureau data to determine the inflow and outflow of the county's workforce.

As shown, 29,372 workers are employed in Sumter, with 7,517 of the labor force living in the county.

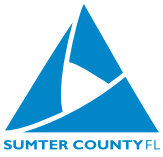
Labor Inflow/Outflow Map
 Inflow/Outflow Counts of All Jobs for Selection Area in 2020
 All Workers



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)

	2020	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	29,372	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	21,855	74.4%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	7,517	25.6%
Living in the Selection Area	26,320	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	18,803	71.4%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	7,517	28.6%



TRANSPORTATION

Sumter County is located at the intersection of several major transportation corridors in Central Florida. These include roadways like Interstate 75 and Florida's Turnpike, as well as a CSX rail line. Sumter County is approximately 1 hour from Orlando and Tampa. The confluence of the various transportation options can be ideal for manufacturing and distribution operations. In addition, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has a number of projects in the pipeline for Sumter County including:

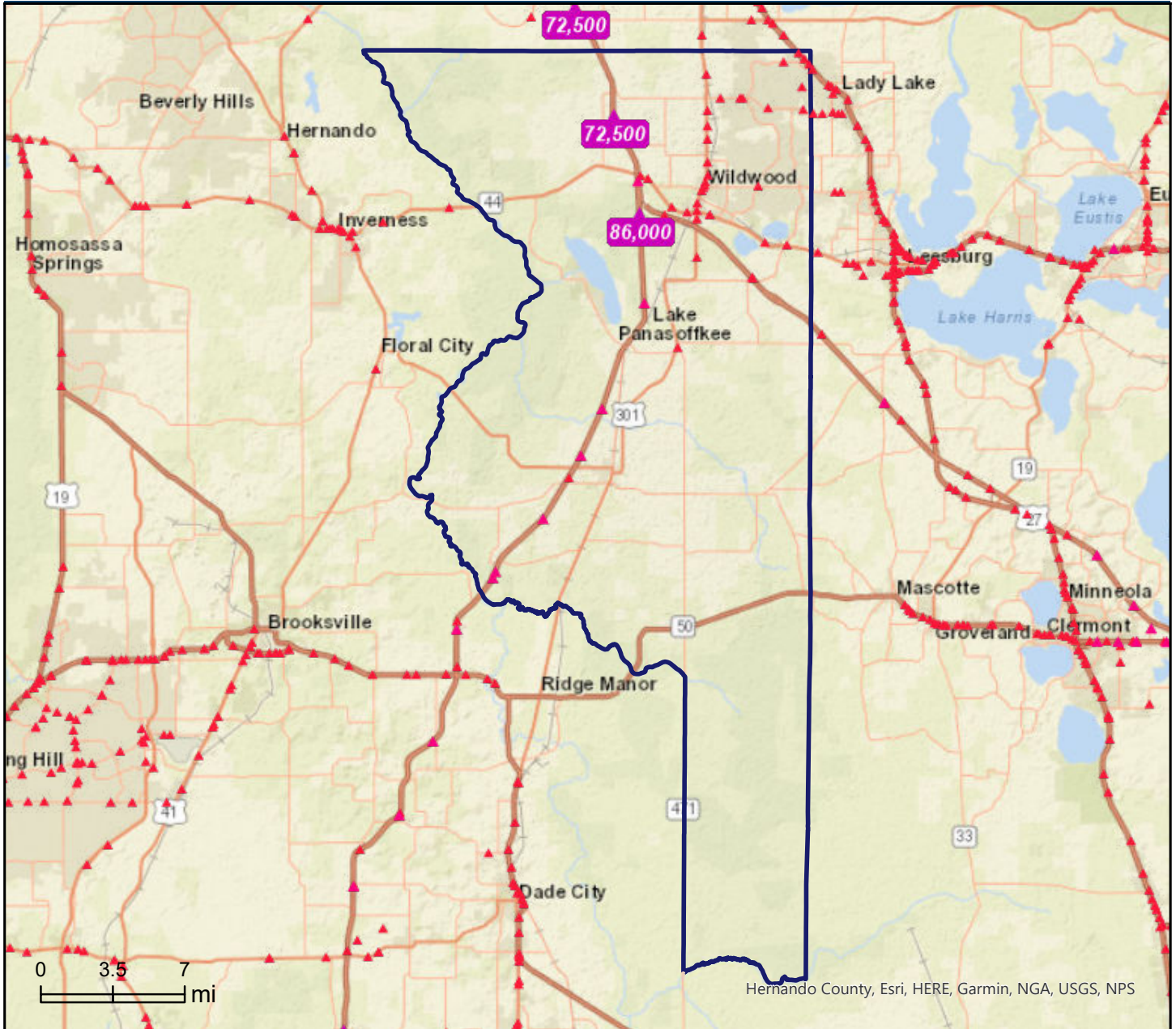
- ▶ SR 50 improvements from Hernando County Line to CR 478 (in construction phase)
- ▶ SR 50 improvement from CR 478 to the Lake County line (in right-of-way acquisition phase)
- ▶ US 301 widening from C470 to SR 44 including the realignment at Industrial Park Drive fka CR 525E to Warm Springs (design initiated)
- ▶ Interim resurfacing of US 301 and installation of signals at the Turnpike/US 301 interchange
- ▶ Preparation of a Master Plan for a section of Interstate 75 (I-75) through Sumter and Marion Counties. The purpose of the I-75 Master Plan is to evaluate short and long-term improvements or enhancements to the I-75 corridor and its interchanges to improve safety, reliability, and mobility.

Roads

Major transportation arteries include Interstate 75, the Florida Turnpike, US Highway 301, and State Roads 44, 48, 50, 470 and 471. The road projects highlighted above and in the Infrastructure section will make transportation on the County's roads even better for distribution and manufacturing businesses to move resources and products throughout the state and beyond. The average traffic counts are depicted on the next page.



TRAFFIC COUNT MAP



- Average Daily Traffic Volume**
- ▲ Up to 6,000 vehicles per day
 - ▲ 6,001 - 15,000
 - ▲ 15,001 - 30,000
 - ▲ 30,001 - 50,000
 - ▲ 50,001 - 100,000
 - ▲ More than 100,000 per day



Source: Esri 2023

Rail

CSX rail is an integral element of the Sumter County transportation hub. CSX rail runs the entire north-south length of the county, providing Sumter businesses major distribution advantages. CSX has undertaken an expansion of the rail yard in Wildwood, FL which will be a prime benefit to future rail business development in Sumter County.

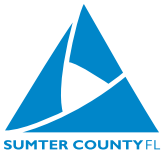
CSX, based in Jacksonville, Florida, is a premier transportation company. It provides rail, intermodal and rail-to-truck transload services and solutions to customers across a broad array of markets, including energy, industrial, construction, agricultural, and consumer products. For nearly 190 years, CSX has played a critical role in the nation’s economic expansion and industrial development. Its network connects every major metropolitan area in the eastern United States, where nearly two-thirds of the nation’s population resides. It also links more than 240 short-line railroads and more than 70 ocean, river and lake ports with major population centers and farming towns alike.

Airport & Seaports

Sumter County is located approximately one hour from both the Tampa and Orlando International Airports. Sumter is also served by a regional airport, capable of international jet traffic (with a US Customs office on site), at Leesburg Regional Airport. Sumter County also has the ports of Tampa, Manatee, Jacksonville, and Canaveral within a reasonable drive. Sumter County has the potential to become the location for an inland port and the many commercial benefits that come with that designation.



Source: Sumter County Economic Development



INFRASTRUCTURE

There are several infrastructure projects in progress throughout the County. Below is a listing of County Infrastructure projects.

County Projects

- ▶ Yellow caution signal at CR 231/SR 44 (design phase) benefits Old Dominion Freight Lines Infrastructure
- ▶ CR 229 from SR 44 to C462 (construction completed) and new signalization at SR 44/CR 229 (design phase) benefits Werner/Kottke Trucking, Agromillora, Good Life Farms, and Wildwood RV Park
- ▶ Industrial Park Drive fka CR525E from US 301 to CR 514 final phase to 4-lanes Notice to (NTP) by Q2 2023, benefits Governor Rick Scott Industrial Park, Representative Marlene O'Toole Industrial Park and the future Monarch Ranch Super Site
- ▶ New workforce housing development, Highland Homes

WATER & SEWER

There are also Water and Sewer projects going on in the County to better serve the community. They include:

- ▶ Water Interconnect along C-48 (Center Hill/Webster)
- ▶ Water line on C-475 (Bushnell)
- ▶ Lift stations and force main (VCCDD)
- ▶ Water/Sewer to intersection of C-470/US 301 - (90% design, Bushnell)
- ▶ Upgrade to the lift station and force main at CR 219/SR 44 (remaining portion of \$4.5M obligation) - (60% design, Wildwood)

SOLID WASTE

Sumter County does not provide any trash or recycling pickup services. If one lives within or near a municipality, they need to call that municipality regarding available pickup services for their area. If no service is provided for their area, they will need to contact a private trash pickup provider.

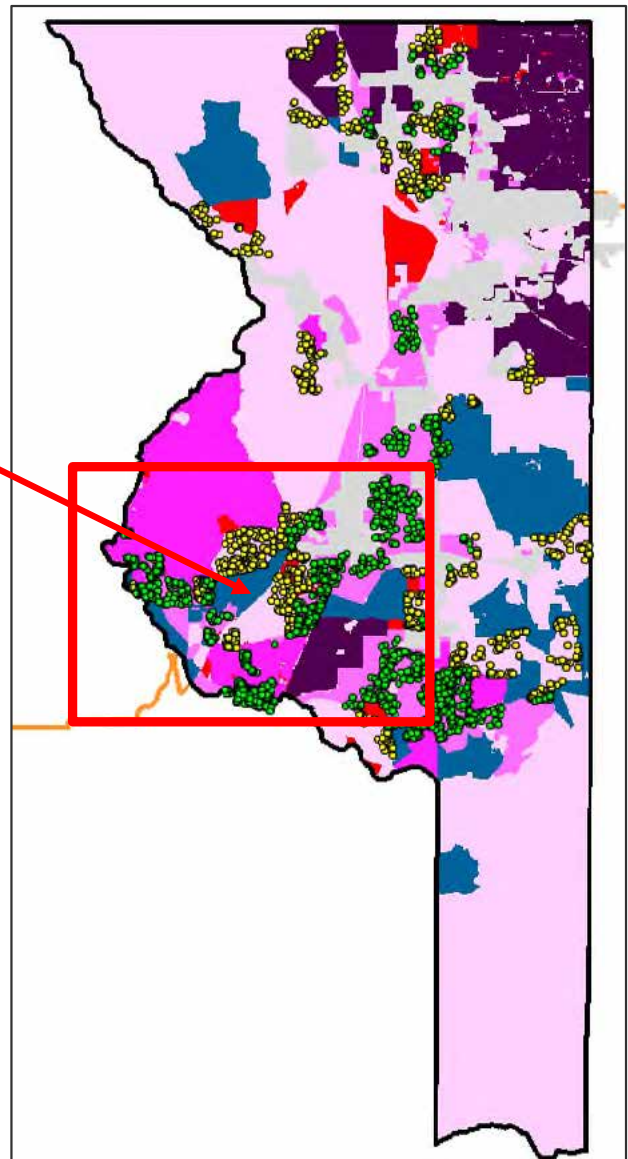
BROADBAND

A countywide broadband upgrade through a public-private partnership with Charter Communications has been approved (\$4.3M). There is also a pending award of 2,418 locations from the State's Broadband Opportunity Program. Additionally, a pending award of 813 locations from the State's Capital Projects Fund - Broadband Infrastructure Program. Please note there is no overlap of RDOF or ARPA funds for this grant project.

Sumter County Rural Build – RDOF & ARPA Grant Projects – September 2023

Addresses

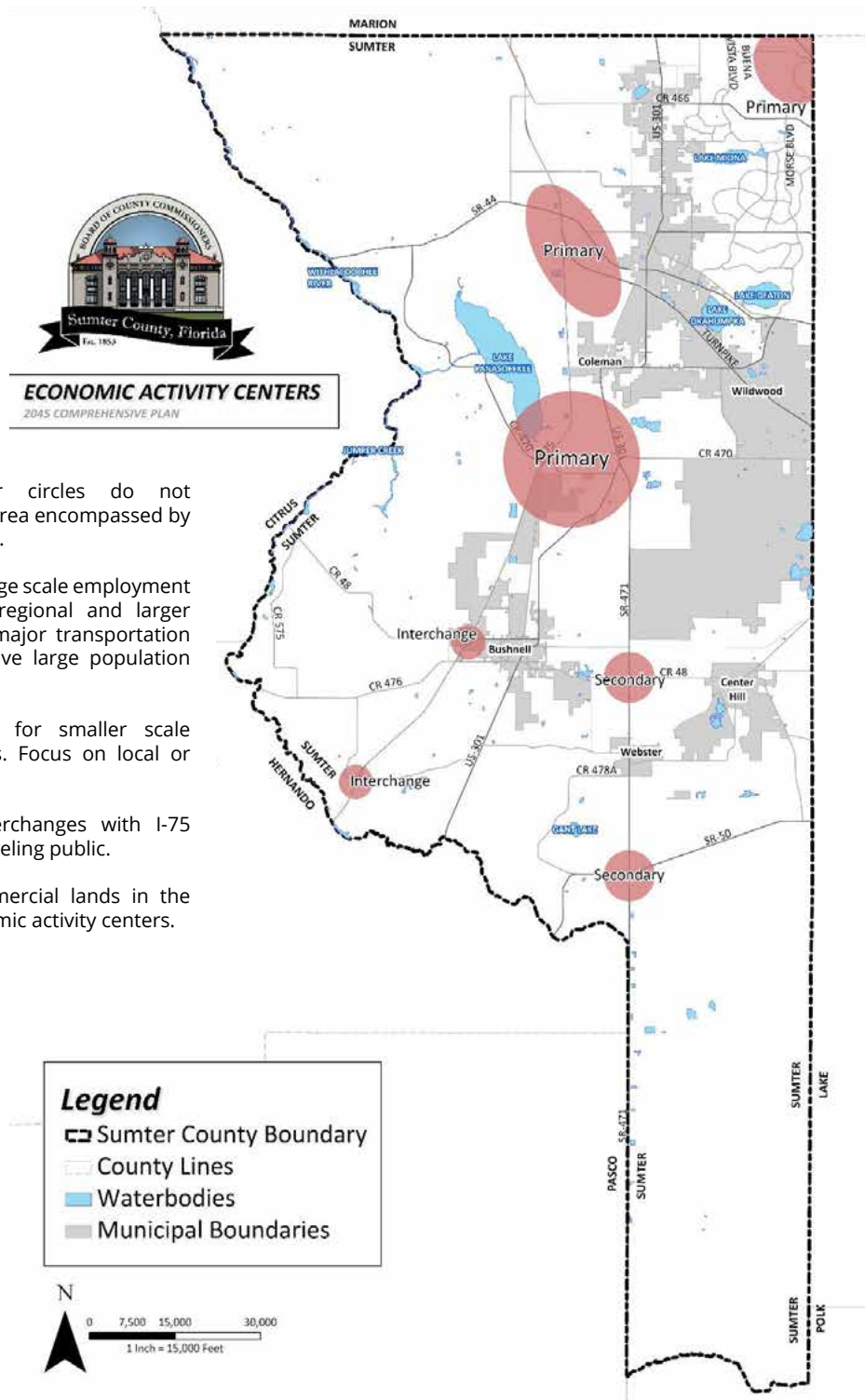
- Rural Digital Opportunity Fund build (in blue) Complete – 1,222
- ARPA – Sumter Contract Complete – 285
- Sept 2023 schedule – 899
- 2nd Quarter 2023, RDOF and ARPA – 484
- 3rd Quarter 2023, RDOF and ARPA – 1,084
- 4th Quarter 2023, RDOF and ARPA – 1,220
- Total Completions – Year End: 2023 – 3,725
- Remainder projected in 2024
- Construction is in general working from the south to the north of Sumter County



Source: Sumter County Economic Development

LAND

Primary Economic Activity Centers



Economic Activity Center circles do not necessarily cover the exact area encompassed by the Economic Activity Center.

Primary: Area focused for large scale employment concentrations. Focus on regional and larger area needs. Located near major transportation facilities and close to relative large population base.

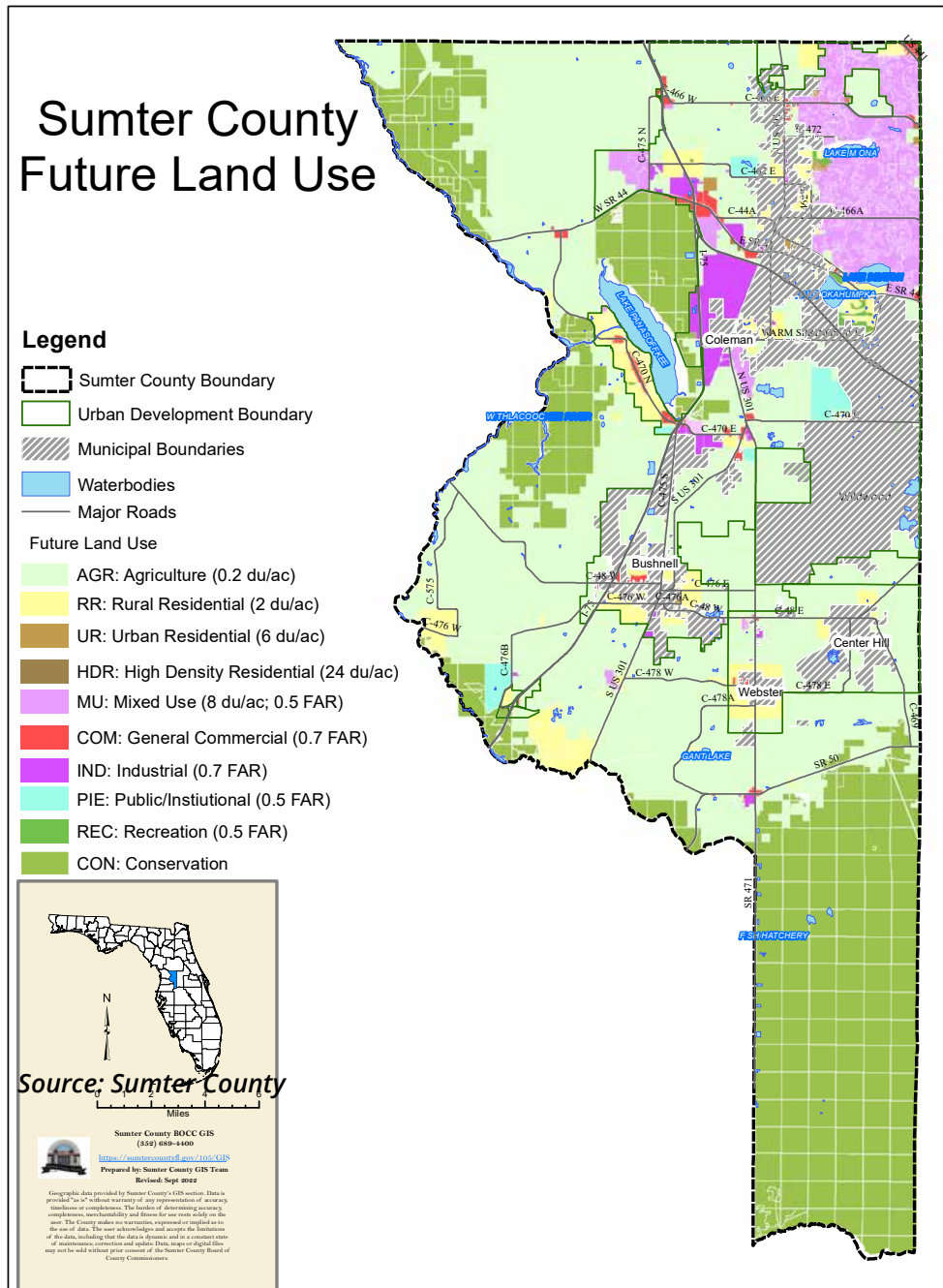
Secondary: Areas focused for smaller scale employment concentrations. Focus on local or regional needs.

Interchange: Areas of interchanges with I-75 focused on needs of the traveling public.

Cities: Industrial and Commercial lands in the Cities also a focus for economic activity centers.

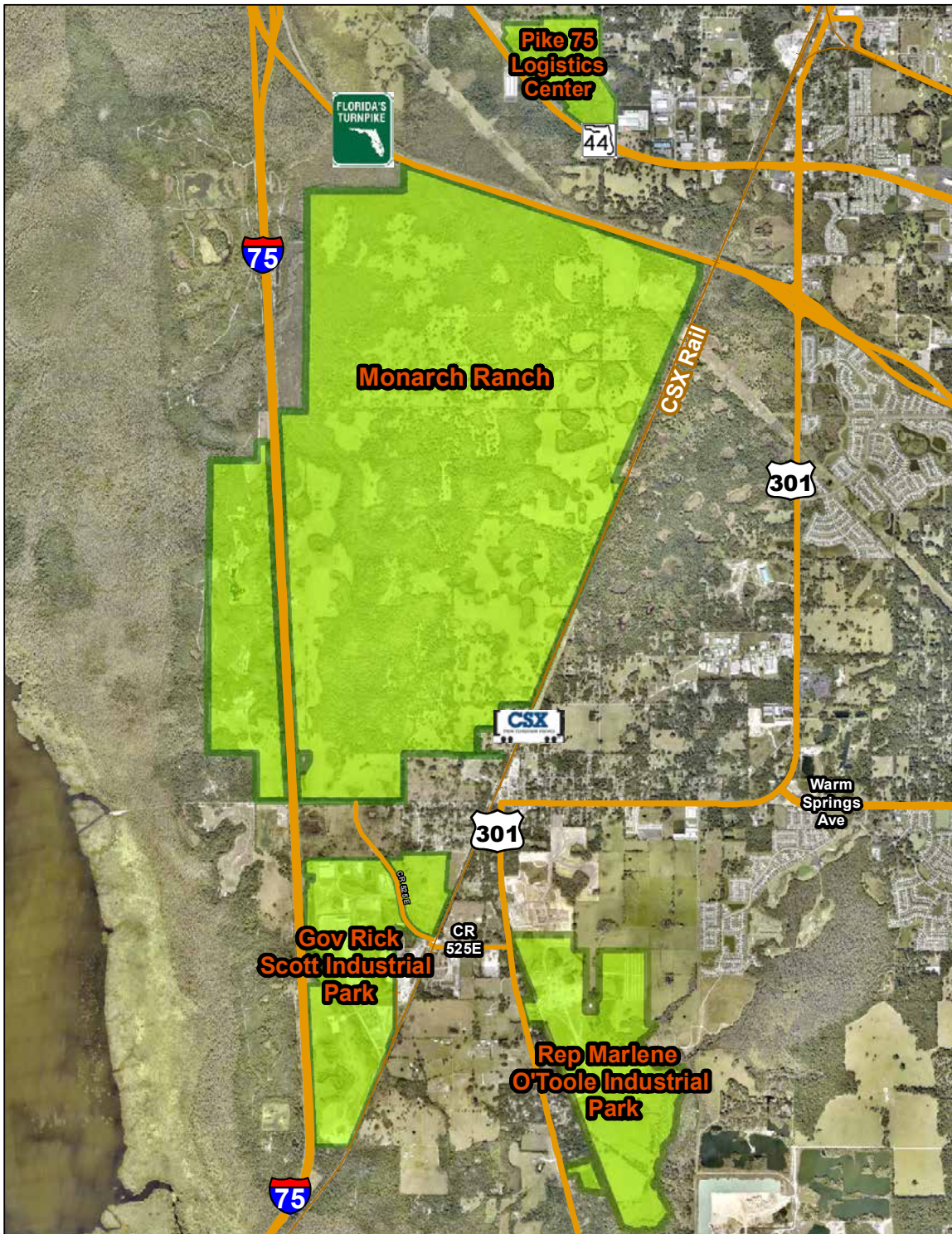
Land Use

According to the Sumter County website, the County and cities work in partnership to encourage compact growth with a variety of land uses within the Joint Planning Areas. The County periodically reviews and updates all land development policies to ensure a streamlined land development review and approval process. However, there are large areas of the County designated as Conservation areas.

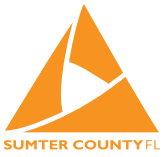


Industrial Sites

Below is a map of the prominent industrial sites in the County.



Source: Sumter County Economic Development



QUALITY OF LIFE

QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY PLACES

Placemaking is one of the buzz words we hear a lot these days. But what is it? And why is it important to Economic Development?

“The rules of placemaking haven’t changed since ancient times...What attracted wayfarers to the main boulevards of ancient cities were entertainment, comfort, variety, walkability, sustenance, convenience, people-watching, safety and security, commons areas, and natural elements, such as trees, gardens, and water features. A successful place was enhanced by evocative or triumphal entrances, signage, iconic wayfinders, memorable architecture, and beautiful landscapes.”

– Landscape architect Trent Noll



Creating the best places to live, learn, work, play and do business provides a quality of life desired by all. New residents and businesses are attracted to areas with a high quality of life and quality places. By developing, protecting, and promoting the County’s quality places, new workers, visitors and businesses will be drawn to Sumter County. At the same time, the County must protect and enhance its environment to continue being a community of choice. That means providing a range of safe and stable housing for each segment, with easy access to schools, shopping, health services, cultural amenities, parks, social services and other resources.

Placemaking in Sumter County continues with a vibrant variety of commercial, recreation, and institutional uses which offer mutually reinforcing benefits for the County. The inclusion of people in all socioeconomic statuses, as well as services provided for the young, seniors, families, and singles, continues to provide an ever-improving quality of life.

RECREATION

Clean air, clear water, lush landscapes, open pastoral areas, and abundant wildlife are the heritage and legacy of Sumter County. Compelling recreational assets include fishing, boating, hunting, motorsports, equestrian activities, wineries, sporting events, are all part of Sumter County and enhance the quality of life.

Sumter County offers abundant historic landmarks, authentic farming communities, and the area’s best shopping and entertainment. World class entertainment and venues provide performing and visual arts experiences for all.



QUALITY OF LIFE

From the relaxed old Florida sensations to the latest leisure lifestyle phenomenon that is The Villages® community, Sumter County has something for everyone.

ARTS AND CULTURE

The Savannah Center is well-known for hosting arts and crafts festivals, and the big-name shows and performances, while The Villages® Polo Club offers first-class facilities and the largest crowds in the U.S., with over 30,000 spectators each year. Their competitive, 6-12 goal polo spans over two full seasons: the spring, running March through May, and fall, running late September through November. In addition, the Sumter County Fairgrounds hosts an annual fair as well as a wide variety of events year-round including one of the largest auto swap meets in Florida, horse shows, concerts and other events you might expect in an outdoor setting. Throughout the County, opportunities exist throughout the year including story telling activities, book fairs, and arts and crafts festivals to enrich the lives of everyone. Sumter County also has several wineries that are a great attraction for the area, including Whsipering Oaks and Wildwood Vineyard.

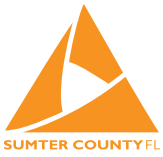
HEALTHCARE

The Villages® community and UF HEALTH The Villages® Hospital partner to deliver a high-level wellness system in Sumter County. With the additional healthcare operations like Florida Cancer Specialists and Research Institute, and The Center for Advanced Healthcare at Brownwood in The Villages® community, Sumter County represents a strong health-care services cluster.

CLIMATE

Florida is called the Sunshine State for a good reason, and Sumter County boasts an outstanding climate for business with daily maximum temperatures averaging 81° F.





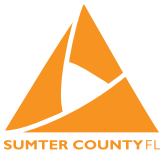
HOUSING

The Housing Market must be included in any discussion of quality of life. Sumter County is known for its beautiful, well-kept neighborhoods and its welcoming atmosphere. An increase in housing for newcomers benefits the workforce significantly. Sumter County encourages and promotes the availability of adequate and non-age restricted housing resources. A key component to future economic growth is the continued and expanded development of mid-priced housing targeted toward younger, working-age families. The County is actively involved in initiatives to encourage the private sector to invest in housing in the county.

There is an opportunity for additional multi-family development in the county to capture the demand for market-rate housing for workers in all industries, especially in manufacturing, distribution and agriculture.

Sumter County supports public and private partnerships to encourage the development of affordable housing. Building successful partnerships is important in establishing a commitment to public service and establishing a cost-effective economic environment. These partnerships can help achieve shared goals in creating and preserving long-term affordable housing, revitalizing substandard housing, and improving the quality of life for residents. The County obtains properties through various means, and these properties are offered to community housing partners with conditions for sole use in constructing a new single-family site-built home or renovation of the existing site-built home on the transferred property to the private partner.





QUALITY OF LIFE

Sumter's Affordable Housing Advisory Board has recommended specific actions and initiatives to encourage or facilitate affordable housing while protecting the ability of the property to appreciate in value. Incentives include:

- ▶ Expedited permitting including pre-application meeting to discuss schedule and requirements related to the proposed development.
- ▶ Affordable housing projects in which the County is the lead entity in the process receive waived building permit fees, site plan review, variance or special exception, and re-zoning fees.
- ▶ The allowance of flexibility in densities for affordable housing.
- ▶ The reservation of infrastructure capacity for housing for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.
- ▶ The allowance of affordable accessory residential units in residential zoning districts.
- ▶ The reduction of parking and setback requirements for affordable housing.
- ▶ The allowance of flexible lot configurations, including zero-lot-line configurations, for affordable housing.
- ▶ The establishment of a process by which a local government considers, before adoption, policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions that increase the cost of housing.
- ▶ The preparation of a printed inventory of locally owned public lands suitable for affordable housing.
- ▶ The support of development near transportation hubs and major employment centers and mixed-use developments

The Sumter County Board of County Commissioners continuously reviews and updates public policy that enhances the current business environment. As an example, the county enacted an ordinance in 2018 to provide higher residential densities to encourage affordable housing for citizens of all income levels and for the growing workforce. The new land use designation is specifically designed to facilitate the development of large-scale housing developments within the county. The five cities in the county followed the County's lead and adopted similar ordinances for high-density residential development



TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

Sumter County is well positioned to attract new businesses to the area.

Attracting new businesses requires a laser focus on smart growth. And smart growth happens with smart planning for the future to achieve economic resiliency and growth.

With assets such as business climate, quality of life, a skilled workforce, and a continuing commitment to keeping business taxes and regulatory requirements low, Sumter County is poised to take advantage of today's industry growth.

The state of Florida recorded private sector employment growth in 2022, that is double the national average. Other leading indicators for the state include:

#1 US State for Attracting and Developing Skilled Workforce

#2 Best State for Business

#4 Best Tax Climate.

Sumter County Economic Development continues to pursue new and expanding businesses, especially those businesses that are within the targeted industries of manufacturing, logistics and distribution operations, and agriculture. A strategic focus targeting these industries allows the organization to concentrate efforts and finite resources on higher- probability prospects in industries with a greater likelihood of benefiting from the advantages Sumter County offers.

This strategy has served the County well and will continue to be a focus going forward.

MANUFACTURING

The state is ranked among the nation's top 10 for manufacturing, home to over 20,200 manufacturing companies that employ more than 371,000 workers. Positive attributes to promote new manufacturing businesses include tax advantages, a vast talent pool and robust infrastructure. Manufacturing is one of the state's target industries. This alignment allows growth, and fosters partnerships at the regional and state level.





TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

LOGISTICS AND DISTRIBUTION OPERATIONS

Sumter County is an ideal choice for logistics, supply chain and distribution companies. Florida is home to 20% of all U.S. exporters and the second-largest foreign trade zone network in the nation. The state is a top choice for any company in search of global access and a direct path to rapidly expanding markets in Latin America and the Caribbean. At the intersection of Interstate 75 and the Florida Turnpike, Sumter County offers prospective businesses the opportunity to service the entire state with its proximity to rail, air, space and seaports. This multimodal system allows businesses to move products anywhere across the globe.

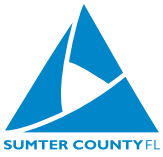


Logistics and Distribution Operations also align with the target industries identified by the state. Promoting growth in targeted areas, fostering partnerships, and creating other innovation opportunities at the regional and state level.

AGRICULTURE

As the world's population grows at an unprecedented rate while farmland acreage continues to shrink, long-term food and water security is a critical concern. To feed our rapidly growing population, farms will need to significantly increase their productivity and efficiency.





INCENTIVES

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Targeted industry incentives remain a core aspect of Sumter County Economic Development's strategy to help existing businesses expand and recruit new businesses to the county. Although incentives are not the sole decision-maker in the site selection process, they allow the County to support expansion and retention of existing businesses as well as recruitment to ensure a diversified economy that may otherwise be affected by market fluctuations. The County should create easy-to-navigate information on incentives from Sumter County as well as state and federal offerings.

To help attract businesses within the targeted industries of manufacturing, distribution, and agriculture, Sumter County offers targeted business cash incentives for companies locating and expanding their operations in the county. The incentive payouts are calculated based on several criteria including the company's capital investment, whether the company is an existing or new business in the county, international exporting status, the size of the new facility, and whether there is a research and development component to the new operation.

State incentives to be considered include an energy-efficiency retrofit program for existing businesses to promote energy efficiency and sustainability. State incentives to consider are density bonuses and reimbursement of development costs that provide improvements to the public realm.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

One of Sumter County's financial conduit resources is the Industrial Development Authority (IDA). The IDA's sole mission is to facilitate business growth and expedite processing of bond issues, with no county issuance fees.



INCENTIVES



SWOT

The sources of input for the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis for this EDSPU include the two stakeholder sessions and the stakeholder survey. The vision for economic development in Sumter County suggested by respondents in the stakeholder survey is captured below.



STRENGTHS

► Growth

- High population growth
- Opportunities for growth; Positive growth over past decades; Growth continues to be positive; Pro-growth; Controlled growth, aware of the challenges and prepared to address them; The rapid growth of the county is a viable climate for new businesses

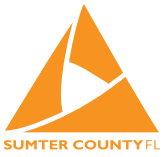
► Jobs & Industry

- Job opportunities
- Business opportunities
- Industrial parks ready for development
- Strong manufacturing, logistics potential

► Location and Transportation Assets

► Education

- Quality educational opportunities; Good schools; High achieving school district, nice facilities, growing CTE program, all students with computers, fiscally sound school district, schools, programs and students recognized at state and national level (editorial note: School District grade is a B, but many schools' grades are A's)
- Educational providers open to collaborate on training needs



► Local Government & Public-Private Partnerships

- Collaborative public private partnerships as well as public partnerships
- Support of local government; consistent governmental regulation; Easy to work with, great community partners
- Outreach in the business community
- Smart long-range planning efforts in The Villages® development
- Ease of doing business and expanding
- Partners willing to work together to resolve issues
- Incentive Programs; Good incentives for business expansion
- Responsive local government
- Reliable tax base
- Low property taxes
- Business friendly, supportive of innovation

► Quality of Life

- Natural resources including agricultural lands, bodies of water, and natural attractions, open spaces, recreational areas, wildlife, etc.
- Great combo of rural/suburban; Rural lifestyle, small town atmosphere
- Low cost of living; Not as expensive to live as other parts of Central Florida
- Low crime; safe and a good place to raise a family; Safe place
- Stable economy with foreseeable growth ahead of us

► Housing

- New housing developments under construction to attract new working age residents

WEAKNESSES

► Housing

- Shortage of Affordable housing; workforce housing options
- Housing and schools for young families are not readily available

► Roads

- Road infrastructure; road systems
- Perceived need for road improvements in south end of the County
- Traffic

► Education

- Technical college
- Lack of post educational providers / programs. Need to grow and expand quality educational training in Sumter; need a post-secondary education focus to educate and train individuals and/or upskill employers' workforce; lack of instructional staff;
- Community involvement in schools
- Availability required to meet to unite Manufacturing, Logistics, Supply Chain and Distribution partners with Education and Workforce partners to meet their workforce and business needs.
- Affordable childcare options for young families



SWOT

► Infrastructure

- Water/sewer availability; lack of pre-existing utility infrastructure (water, sewer and electric)
- Road construction, water and sewer provisions
- Internet connectivity

► Workforce

- Skilled Workforce shortages
- Workforce skills gap: there may be a gap between the skills possessed by the local workforce and the demands of emerging industries
- Training facilities are not located in the best location for County, need a strategic location for a training center
- Support services such as electrical and plumbing and landscaping service
- Salaries in municipal services such as wastewater management, and a shortage of young people wanting to attend college and explore these career areas will be ongoing issues.
- Virtual jobs with people working remotely without local connection or support to local economy

► Industries & Development

- Awareness on futuristic innovations to stay ahead of the times and growth ahead
- Cost to build a new building, very little land available zoned for manufacturing as opposed to distribution
- The cost of land and length of time for development
- Cost to build and labor that's willing to work
- Budget constraints and employee turnover
- Continuing to get the word out to local farmers that can potentially be partners in the stevia farming operations and future
- Wildwood is tearing down buildings to put up a parking garage instead of more buildings. There needs to be a "main street" where people can spend the day
- Need more in manufacturing/industrial/commercial loads and sustainable industry for long term careers and not just a job
- Businesses knowing how to find more applicants for the companies to interview

► Unbalanced Growth

- Population growth in a certain demographic could hinder finding the right employees; Unbalanced geographic growth

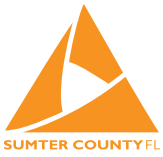
OPPORTUNITIES

► Education

- Vocational schools
- Less separation between charter and public schools as a way to establish economic diversity
- Attract technical college

► Businesses & Industry

- Medical centers
- Tourism/entertainment
- Light manufacturing/logistics/distribution
- Emerging technologies that can help support businesses
- Leverage I-75 projects in coordination with Sumter Corrections for possible jobs in road construction
- Promote ecotourism and recreational activities, which can attract visitors and contribute to the local economy
- Focus on distribution systems that support local businesses as well as those who provide service to long haul distribution
- Continue to support agriculture and understand agricultural issues



SWOT

► Employment & Workforce

- Availability of a variety of job opportunities
- Opportunities for careers and not just jobs
- Comprehensive training for skilled technical areas to grow our workforce; Training up existing workforce; Train up the existing workforce to meet demands for a higher skilled level occupation
- Encourage industries to offer paid internships and competitive wages; Encourage employees to attend college to upskill

► Funding

- Update and provide incentives to business for expansion of business (workforce and facilities)
- Find grants, etc. for expanding existing manufacturing and attracting new manufacturing businesses
- Financially support the expansion of utility infrastructure and market the industrial zoned properties located in the City of Bushnell; Continue providing support for the growth and development of Lake Panasoffkee

► Infrastructure

- Rail access
- Developing the roads for population growth; Traffic is getting worse and worse; It seems that business traffic growth is being addressed but the infrastructure [sic]

► Public Sector

- Consistent, predictable business environment
- Work with potential businesses looking to come here and involve local members of the community with regard to advancing the offerings of the community
- Create local initiatives such as creating a needs analysis for local businesses and employees
- Continue discussions about emerging industries and workforce skill needs
- Help business owners navigate or remove obstacles (construction, zoning, etc.)
- Continuing information exchanges on available local resources for business owners

Many of the weaknesses are actually opportunities to focus on

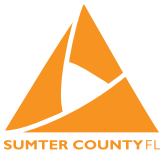
THREATS

► Economy

- Inflation
- Current economic state of the country; Economic recession or downturn
- Interest rates/inflation; continued high inflation and high interest rates could delay investment
- Difficult for small businesses to access capital

► Housing

- Housing costs
- Affordable housing; Affordable housing for a young workforce



SWOT

► Workforce

- Competitive labor market
- Retention of younger population/appeal for younger workers
- Employment opportunities that keep our graduates in the County
- Continued aging workforce

► Education

- Teacher shortages, especially for trade jobs

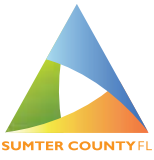
► Industry

- Supply chain disruptions
- Lack of incentives to attract businesses to the County; Build incentives based on growth of targeted industries

► Other

- Environmental concerns
- Lack of services such as malls, restaurants (outside of The Villages® country clubs), large retail brands makes it tough to attract families.
- Stronger surrounding counties; competition from other counties





GOALS, STRATEGIES, & ACTIONS

Sumter County Objectives

Position the County for Economic Development

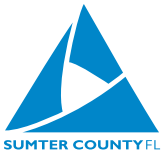
Position County Image, Business Climate, & Brand

Develop Infrastructure for Balanced Growth

Improve Quality of Life and Quality Places

The EDSPU focuses and incorporates several themes that are the basis for great planning efforts in economic development: economic resiliency, sustainability through balanced growth, and the improvement of the quality of life in Sumter. The overarching objectives are shown above, with goals, strategies and action items following for the accomplishment of these objectives.

This section of the EDSPU outlines the goals, strategies, and action items associated with the economic development programs of the organization. The three target industries of manufacturing, distribution, and agriculture are focuses, as well as the retention and expansion of existing businesses in all categories. Each goal contains language to further expand on the opportunity created by the accomplishment of the goal. This section also includes strategies to promote economic resiliency, diversity and sustainability, all key components of successful economic development.



GOAL 1: RETAIN AND EXPAND EXISTING BUSINESSES

OPPORTUNITY: The retention and expansion of existing businesses is a fundamental function of economic development organizations (EDOS). Businesses that already exist are in the best position to quickly create jobs and contribute to the tax base. Their perception and endorsement of a business-friendly community can encourage investments by others.

STRATEGY 1.1: Continue BREP (Business Retention and Expansion Program)

A Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP) can accelerate the County's economic growth, and help identify business needs that may be addressed with economic development tools such as:

- ▶ Financial Assistance
- ▶ Technical Assistance
- ▶ Access to Technical Resources
- ▶ Workforce Training and Retraining
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Permitting/Licensing
- ▶ Energy Compliance
- ▶ Assistance with Land and Buildings
- ▶ Export Assistance
- ▶ Infrastructure
- ▶ Financing and Non-Financial Incentives

Successful BREP Programs require strong strategic partnerships in the community. It is recommended that the County establish a BREP steering committee comprised of key members of the business community including:

- ▶ University/Research Institutions and Community Colleges
- ▶ Public-Private Partnerships
- ▶ Utilities
- ▶ Neighborhood Organizations
- ▶ Special Authorities
- ▶ Small Business Development Center
- ▶ CareerSource Central Florida

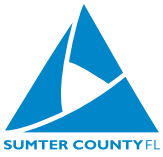
Action 1.1.1: Continue the Program

Action 1.1.2: Set Quarterly Outreach Schedule

Action 1.1.3: Update Business Climate Survey and Publish Results

Action 1.1.4: Triage Critical Business Needs & Schedule Follow-up Visits

Action 1.1.5: Deliver Targeted Assistance and monitor monthly



GOAL 1: RETAIN AND EXPAND EXISTING BUSINESSES

STRATEGY 1.2: Partner with all available resources and organizations to provide businesses the best market, technical, and financial information available to grow their business.

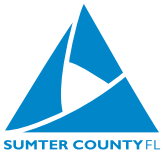
- ▶ **Action 1.2.1:** Provide opportunities for business development through relationships with federal, state, and local organizations, such as the Small Business Development Center, the Small Business Administration Center, the Florida Department of Commerce, the University of Florida-IFAS extension office, the Sumter County Chamber of Commerce, local banking institutions, professional associations, seaports, and other regional and state assistance agencies.
- ▶ **Action 1.2.2:** Connect businesses with workforce and educational agencies that can assist with workforce development and recruitment, such as CareerSource Central Florida, Lake Sumter State College, Lake Technical College, Withlacoochee Technical College, and the Sumter County School District.
- ▶ **Action 1.2.3:** Identify supply chain expansion opportunities that will foster additional growth in target and complementary industries.
- ▶ **Action 1.2.4:** Assist businesses with identifying properties for expansions.
- ▶ **Action 1.2.5:** Assist businesses with local government processes as required.
- ▶ **Action 1.2.6:** Assist in the development of new markets for agricultural products such as biofuels.

STRATEGY 1.3: Facilitate or participate in local and regional target industry meetings to understand the needs and opportunities in the industries.

- ▶ **Action 1.3.1:** Participate in Agriculture (Ag) Alliance committee meetings.
- ▶ **Action 1.3.2:** Facilitate the Manufacturing and Distribution Roundtable meetings.
- ▶ **Action 1.3.3:** Participate in the Mid-Florida Regional Manufacturing Association meetings when applicable.

STRATEGY 1.4: Provide incentives for businesses expanding in Sumter County.

- ▶ **Action 1.4.1:** Incentives can take shape in many forms, including a cash incentive based on the company's capital investment, infrastructure improvements, or any other reasonable accommodations that help to grow their business effectively.
- ▶ **Action 1.4.2:** Promote the Industrial Development Authority as one of the financial conduit resources.



GOAL 1: RETAIN AND EXPAND EXISTING BUSINESSES

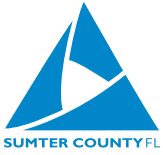
STRATEGY 1.5: Explore opportunities to promote foreign direct investment and exporting among existing companies in Sumter County.

Florida's exports are driven by small businesses. Programs that help businesses establish export capacity include the Florida Export Finance Corporation.

STRATEGY 1.6: Institute Disaster Recovery Programs for Small Businesses

► **Action 1.6.1:** Establish a Process and Protocol for Businesses to access information in a timely manner in the event of a disaster. Disaster recovery funding reinforces our communities to be resilient and agile, prepared to withstand any threat. The Florida Department of Commerce has partnered with the Division of Emergency Management to provide private sector support before, during and after a disaster. This liaison between government and the private sector during an emergency helps ensure businesses are engaged in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. FloridaDisaster.biz was created to help businesses in this process and has disaster preparedness and recovery programs and grants.





GOAL 2: ACTIVELY RECRUIT NEW BUSINESSES

OPPORTUNITY: The U.S. population and economic growth are drifting to the South and West, placing Florida and Sumter County in the fastest growing part of the nation. With global trade surging, particularly through the Panama Canal and the Caribbean region, the opportunity is available for new business growth throughout Sumter County.

STRATEGY 2.1: Assist businesses through recruiting and support relocating businesses to choose Sumter County.

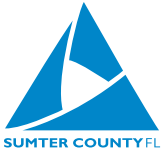
- ▶ **Action 2.1.1:** Provide resources such as site selection, zoning, permitting, workforce, and connections to agencies as required.
- ▶ **Action 2.1.2:** Provide information on all incentive programs for businesses. Create easy-to navigate information to disseminate all available incentive programs (Regional, County, State and Federal).
- ▶ **Action 2.1.3:** Provide seamless, efficient customer service for businesses, including a regulatory environment that is pro-growth.

STRATEGY 2.2: Market Sumter County's assets to site selectors, real estate professionals and developers.

- ▶ **Action 2.2.1:** Attend industry tradeshows and events targeted for new business recruitment.
- ▶ **Action 2.2.2:** Recruit warehouse distribution operations and manufacturing companies that are suited for Sumter County's market reach and align with the existing landscape.
- ▶ **Action 2.2.3:** Use Sumter County's unique assets to attract visitors to Florida, which in turn opens the doors of opportunity for business development.
- ▶ **Action 2.2.4:** Market to specific regional developers that may have an interest in developing in Sumter County.
- ▶ **Action 2.2.5:** Conduct annual surveys to keep abreast of commercial real estate needs, concerns and solicit solutions to issues hindering new industries and businesses locating in Sumter County.
- ▶ **Action 2.2.6:** Develop foreign-direct investment relationships with international site selectors to diversify Sumter County's international business presence.
- ▶ **Action 2.2.7:** On the SCED website, add Arts and Culture assets under Lifestyle

STRATEGY 2.3: Market the existing industrial site and building inventory in Sumter County suitable for capital investment and job creation.

- ▶ **Action 2.3.1:** Provide clear location assistance for industrial parks in Sumter County.



GOAL 3: BUILD A SKILLED, EDUCATED WORKFORCE PIPELINE

OPPORTUNITY: The top site-selection factors and criteria include Workforce and Labor Availability. In local stakeholder interviews, one of the challenges identified is a shortfall of prospective workers with vocational and technical educational training. This deficit affects all businesses that require employees to complete an onboarding period for the business to run efficiently. By focusing on Sumter’s growth sectors, training and workforce programs lead to job opportunities. The County may partner with educational institutions to implement neighborhood-based licensed technical training programs that are most sought by growth sector industries.

STRATEGY 3.1: Collaborate with workforce partners to better serve the existing businesses community and efficiently fill existing job market vacancies.

▶ **Action 3.1.1:** Collaborate with workforce partners to create a talent attraction campaign that focuses on recruiting and retaining a young demographic for workforce opportunities.

STRATEGY 3.2: Continue to support post-secondary training, certificate training, apprentice programs, and degree programs to provide training and skills to meet the needs of businesses.

▶ **Action 3.2.1:** Assist with the alignment of secondary school and technical school curriculum with the business community needs.

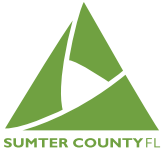
▶ **Action 3.2.2:** Communicate programs and technical certifications to businesses to increase awareness.

STRATEGY 3.3: Create a marketing awareness campaign that promotes the quality of primary and secondary schools in the county.

▶ **Action 3.3.1:** Create messaging in collaboration with the school district that highlights the accolades of the district and share with the business community.

▶ **Action 3.3.2:** Work in partnership with school, workforce, and business partners to connect the business community with students/young adults available for the workforce.

▶ **Action 3.3.3:** Promote the new high school, Middleton, with its state-of-the-art education facilities, as well as the sports program and venues that rival the top collegiate schools throughout the country.



GOAL 4: PROMOTE A TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH BUSINESS CLUSTER WITH A FOCUS ON AGRICULTURE AND MEDICINE

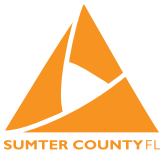
OPPORTUNITY: An emphasis on health and wellness will dramatically expand and broaden the benefits to all citizens of Sumter County. By merging these key assets, a theme of wellness which incorporates fresh food, fruits, vegetables, and the best medical facilities emerges which appeals to business leaders of today.

STRATEGY 4.1: Market Sumter County's proximity to the major universities that offer abundant opportunity from agricultural research, studies, and innovation.

STRATEGY 4.2: Enhance product development and infrastructure in key agricultural corridors to attract businesses in the agriculture sector.

STRATEGY 4.3: Continue to work with agriculture partners such as the University of Florida-IFAS extension office to further research and innovation in Sumter County.

STRATEGY 4.4: Promote agricultural opportunities and The Villages® Grown as a keystone project for agricultural and health awareness.



GOAL 5: DEVELOP INFRASTRUCTURE FOR BALANCED GROWTH

OPPORTUNITY: As part of a balanced economic development strategy, transportation, utilities and broadband connectivity are cornerstones. These strategies include methods to Identify opportunities to leverage assets and reduce barriers in the community, as well as improve transportation and access to utilities throughout the County. The County's robust and strategic planning in partnership with the cities of Sumter County provide the economic drivers of the EDSPU.

Alternate sources and storage, waste management, reclaimed water, and enhanced conservation should be studied. As natural forces and climate risks intensify, mitigation strategies become a focal point. Strategies that promote resilience at the community level must be part of the EDSPU.

STRATEGY 5.1: Partner with cities and utilities to expand infrastructure, transportation and broadband connectivity throughout the County.

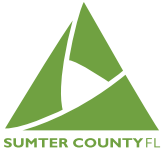
- ▶ **Action 5.1.1:** Continue to support the improvement of infrastructure and utilities at locations in the county where utilities are needed to increase the marketability of industrial sites and develop specific actions to further infrastructure development.
- ▶ **Action 5.1.2:** Identify grant opportunities that can assist cities with infrastructure expansions and improvements.
- ▶ **Action 5.1.3:** Assist in the identification of digital connectivity for clinical and administrative medical operations.
- ▶ **Action 5.1.4:** Inventory current broadband capacity and meet with providers to explore methods of expanding and increasing coverage.

STRATEGY 5.2: Partner with industrial site owners and representatives to develop sites and physical infrastructure to attract, support, and maintain business growth.

- ▶ **Action 5.2.1:** Identify and implement specific actions with property representatives to improve the site suitability for development projects.
- ▶ **Action 5.2.2:** Catalog suitable industrial sites on the economic development website and the state's product site for marketing and recruitment purposes.

STRATEGY 5.3: Create a sustainable plan for future uncertainties as a result of natural forces.

- ▶ **Action 5.3.1:** Ensure future supply and quality of water meet economic and quality of life goals.
- ▶ **Action 5.3.2:** Identify alternative water sources and storage, waste management, reclaimed water, and enhanced conservation.
- ▶ **Action 5.3.4:** Explore State Area-specific strategies to maintain a cutting-edge telecommunications infrastructure.



GOAL 6: MARKET AND EXPAND THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION HUB

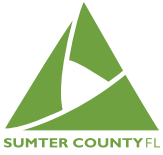
OPPORTUNITY: The considerable assets of the Florida Department of Transportation and the Florida Turnpike Enterprise System are available for the County and provide significant resources for planning and implementation of transportation improvements.

STRATEGY 6.1: Partner with state and regional transportation stakeholders to promote and leverage Sumter County's confluence of roads, interstates, railroads, and nearby airports and seaports.

► **Action 6.1.1:** Continue to support state and regional road capacity development in Sumter County's primary economic activity centers

STRATEGY 6.2: Market Sumter County's transportation assets to business prospects. Include location assistance for the major industrial parks in Sumter County.

STRATEGY 6.3: Explore the opportunity and feasibility associated with creating an Intermodal Logistics Center in Sumter County.

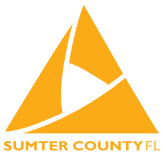


GOAL 7: CREATE A REGIONAL AND NATIONAL BUSINESS IDENTITY TO ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES

OPPORTUNITY: Florida is uniquely poised to compete in the global market because of its location close to the junction of north/south and east/west trade lanes, its large and diverse population and consumer and business markets, and its extensive infrastructure. Sumter County is also uniquely positioned to compete with its central location, natural assets, and quality of life. Economic development and tourism marketing should be seamless so that every visitor to Florida is viewed as a future, worker, resident, business owner, or investor.

STRATEGY 7.1: Promote Sumter County's brand and positioning as a competitive location for business.

- ▶ **Action 7.1.1:** Continue to cultivate Sumter County's brand by marketing the county as the right business location with a stable and steady business environment, record-setting residential and commercial growth, thriving and growing agricultural enterprises, and a core transportation hub and distribution center for Central Florida.
- ▶ **Action 7.1.2:** Conduct strategic target messaging to site selectors, real estate brokers, and business owners.
- ▶ **Action 7.1.3:** Create and implement a countywide branding and messaging campaign.
- ▶ **Action 7.1.4:** Host special events featuring opportunity sites (including tours).
- ▶ **Action 7.1.5:** Pitch stories and opportunities to media outlets that reach target audiences.



GOAL 8: MAINTAIN, PROMOTE, AND IMPROVE SUMTER COUNTY'S HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY PLACES

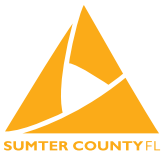
OPPORTUNITY: Creating the best places to live, learn, work, play and do business produces a quality of life desired by all. New residents and businesses are attracted to communities with a high quality of life and quality places. By developing, protecting, and promoting the County's quality places, new workers, visitors and businesses will be drawn to the area. The County and its cities all synergistically provide the platform for a superior quality of life and quality place.

Quality of life also includes natural resources and environment, as well as historical and cultural heritage, which the County must continue to protect and enhance. It cannot be measured with precision, and its definition is open to interpretation. U.S. News, in its "25 Best Places to Live for Quality of Life" report, states that affordability and career opportunities do contribute, and as important are daily commute, access to quality education, access to health care, crime rates, air quality and general well-being. In other words, "How do I feel when I'm here?"

The key elements and forms that create quality places are generally defined as the following:

- ▶ Safe
- ▶ Connected
- ▶ Welcoming
- ▶ Accessible – ability to easily circulate within, along, and between public places
- ▶ Comfortable – address perceptions about cleanliness, character, and charm
- ▶ Quiet – unless they are designed to be otherwise
- ▶ Sociable – have a physical fabric where people can connect with one another
- ▶ Promote and facilitate civic engagement
- ▶ Allow authentic experiences

Knowledge-sector jobs are faster-growing and more lucrative than professions with more routine functions. Consequently, communities are changing the way they approach economic development. Instead of differentiating themselves primarily by transportation access, low costs, proximity to natural resources, or other traditional competitive advantages, many communities today are attracting multi-generational talent by becoming desirable places to live.



GOAL 8: MAINTAIN, PROMOTE, AND IMPROVE SUMTER COUNTY'S HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE AND QUALITY PLACES

STRATEGY 8.1: Expand quality affordable housing.

- ▶ **Action 8.1.1:** Utilize the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program to provide housing resources to citizens in the county.
- ▶ **Action 8.1.2:** Promote the development of affordable site-built single-family housing for the workforce.
- ▶ **Action 8.1.3:** Increase market-rate rental housing by recommending public policy updates and providing the multi-family market analysis to developers.
- ▶ **Action 8.1.4:** Collaborate with community housing partners to promote a diverse mix of housing opportunities.

STRATEGY 8.2: Create a marketing awareness campaign that highlights Sumter County's recreation and amenities and promotes a sense of place.

- ▶ **Action 8.2.1:** Utilize marketing collateral to promote the County's recreation, cultural attractions, and other amenities for businesses to share with their workforce and use for recruitment and retention purposes.



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